Mandukya Upanishads, Class 19: Chapter 2 Introduction

Greetings All,

Swamiji said we have completed Ch.1 called agama prakranam. It has this name as the Upanishad occurs in this chapter and Vedas, Upanishad is a part of Vedas, are called Agama. Vedas come from god through Guru shishya parampara in a flow. This pipeline is guru shishya parampara. The word Agama also has another meaning; it means Agama Shastra, which are not the Vedas. This agama is different from Vedas but also originates from God and comes through to us in a parampara. Thus Shaiva agama shastra describes how to build Shiva temples; Vishnu Agama shastra, again deals with how to build Vishnu temples, etc, they all deal with temples, worship, and mantras. While we accept agama shastra for purposes of worship and their methods of puja we don't accept their philosophy. In Mandukya Upanishad, Agama means Vedas themselves. Since Mandukya Upanishad occurs in Chapter 1, hence it is part of Vedas; hence it is called Agama Prakaranam. The Karikas in Ch. 1 are subsidiary to the Upanishad.

Now we are going to enter Ch. 2. called Vaithatya prakaranam that has 38 verses. All 38 verses are karikas. In these 38 karikas Gaudapada analyzes an important word that occurs in Mandukya Upanishad's mantra # 7. The focus is on the word "Prapancha Upashamam"(PU). This word when compounded in Sanskrit reads as Prapanchoupashamam. This word is analyzed in this chapter. Another crucial word occurring in mantra # 7 is " Advaitam". This word is of deep significance. This word is analyzed in Chapter # 3, consisting of 48 Karikas. Now we will find the connection between PU (Prapancha Upashamanam) and Chapter 1. The word is used to define Turiyam, the Prapanchoupashamam, the fourth quarter of Atma. What does it mean? Prapancha means Universe; it also refers to the three

fold prapanchas described in padas 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Pada # 1 is Sthula Prapancha or gross universe; Pada # 2 is Sukshma prapancha, subtle universe and the third pada is Karana Prapancha, the causal state.

Whenever we use of the word Prapancha in mandukya Upanishad it means Pada Trayam and they should rise in our minds.

Upashamaha means free from all three prapanchas or the Turiyam. In Turiya Chaitanyam the three padas don't exist; that is Vishwa, the waker; Taijasa, the dreamer; and Pragya, the sleeper, all are absent in Turiyam. Through this the entire world is negated in Turiyam. This word, Upashamaha, is also called Prapancha Nisheda padam, a world destroying word.

What is significance of world negation, a very important part of Vedanta teaching? What is world negation? What can you negate? Do you negate an existing thing or a non-existing thing? Does negation have an object? Vedanta says both are not possible. An existent thing cannot be negated because it is existent. Can you negate a non-existent thing? Vedanta says, since it does not exist, it need not be negated. So, whatever else is negated should be different from an existing thing or a non-existing thing. Negated thing can't be under Sat category and negated thing can't be under Asat category as well. So it should be Sat Asat Vilakshanam. Therefore Vedanta says prapancha, the world negated by Upanishad, is not under Sat nor Asat category; it comes under Sat Asat Vilakshanam category. This comes from mantra # 7.

If world is not under "existing" or not under "non-existing" categories, Vedanta says it comes under " seemingly existing category"; or "apparently existing category"; or per Vedanta, under "Mithya category".

There are many examples given by Vedanta such as: Mirage water, that appears as if it is existing but when you get close you realize it is negated. Similarly, with Rope and

snake; it is also as though existing, but it is not existing as when I go near it; it is not there. It makes me afraid; hence it is not a part of non-existing category. Now, dream is neither "in existing: nor "non-existing" category. So Prapanchoupashamam is Mithyatvam. Mithya has no good English translation. The closest one can mean is " unreality". Upanishad does not use the word Mithya; it uses word Prapancha.

The chapter is called Vaithatyaprakaranam; Vaithatya means Mithyatvam or unreal or unreality and prakaranam means chapter. So this chapter is unreality-revealing chapter, Unreality of the three padas. What is conclusion arrived at from enquiry is described in chapter # 3.

Conclusion briefly:

Since whole world is Mithya, it should not be with Turiyam. Rope snake can't be counted to pull up anything. Dream money can't be counted for buying a house. What ever is mithya should not be counted upon. World is "as good as not there". There is no first, second and third padas; there is only Turiyam. Hence it is Turiyam. World is and will be experienced, but it is mithya.

Corollary of Prapanchoupashamam is Turiya advaitam. Then comes final question, if Turiyam is advaitam, how do you account for the word Turiyam, the fourth pada? The statement the fourth one is non-dual is not a right one. Vedanta says, ignorant people say it is the fourth; but wise people don't call it that. Wise people call it Advaitam. So chapter 2 will naturally lead to advaitam. So PU and Advaitam are complementary.

So chapter two's content is unreality of world. Upanishad has revealed this unreality of world but Gaudapada wants to re-establish the Vedantic teaching. So method of reasoning used must be known. Some idea of it comes from Indian system of

logic known as Nyaya shastra and tarka shastra, that are methods of reasoning. The field is called epistemology.

It is used up in this Upanishad.

Method of reasoning: Before using the method you should gather general knowledge, gathered by perception, also known as Vyapti or co-existence. Citing example of co-existence, fire and smoke co-exist. In olden days Yagas were performed and they experienced that where there is smoke there is fire. This is knowledge of coexistence or Vyapti gyanam. Nowadays you can see it for example in cigarette smoke.

Then suppose one day you see at a distance on a hill only the smoke. Fire is not visible to your eye. Here you apply " where there is smoke, there is fire" logic. You infer there is fire there. It is not perceptual knowledge; it is inferential knowledge. Inference is presented in a particular manner called "Anumana Vakhyana".

It should have four components per Tarka shastra:

1. Mountain is the paksha or locus about which I make an inference.
2. Mountain has fire; it is called sadhyam or conclusion.
3. Because there is smoke, the indicator, it is also known as Hetuhu or the reason.
4. Drishtantaha: an example, as in a yagashala. Because in yagashala you got Vyapti Gyanam or knowledge for inference.

Gaudapada uses this method of Indian logic to arrive at unreality of world. Gaudapada calls world of existence s jagrat prapancha, experienced only in waking state.

His analysis of jagrat prapancha is as follows:

Pakshaha: Jagrat parapancha is the locus.

Sadhyam: Conclusion reached is , it is unreal or mithya.

Hetuhu: I will give reason later on the sixth karika.

Drishtatantaha: the example is swapna prapancha.

Inference is jagrat prapancha is mithya like the dream world. But there is a problem. If you give swapna parapancha as an example, will all people accept swapna prapancha as unreal?

Citing an example: Someone says, he is intelligent like Einstein. We accept Einstein was intelligent. So example has to be acceptable to teacher and student. Similarly all accepts the fact that Swapna prapancha, dream world is unreal, and then it is fine. Generally most people accept Swapna is unreal. But there are some philosophies that don't accept this. For them this example will not work; so gaudapada keeps jagrit prapancha aside for now.

He starts with Swapna prapancha and seeks to establish it is unreal. So once swapna prapancha is proved unreal then we can then go to Jagrat prapancha.

So first topic is swapna prapancha mithyatvam in karikas 1,2 and 3. Thereafter using swapna parapancha as an example he establishes jagrat prapancha's mithyatvam; this is in karikas 4 through 18.

Gaudapada establishes this through Shruti pramanam, Yukti pramanam and Anubhava Pramanam; using all three he establishes Swapna prapancha is mithya. He first uses Yukti, reasoning; then Shruti, scriptures; then anubhava, experience. Thus he establishes Swampa Prapancha mithyatvam.

Take Away:

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy