

# Mandukya Upanishad, Class 25

## Karika # 16:

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16. First of all, is imagined the Jīva (the embodied being) and then are imagined the various entities, objective and subjective, that are perceived. As is (one's) knowledge so is (one's) memory of it.

Continuing his teaching Swamiji said, by taking the dream example, Gaudapada established that world of waking is not much different from that of dream; both are Mithya; both derive their existence from the Observer; so long as “I”, the observer, enjoy the dream world, it is real; but it will last only as long as I am under the spell of the dream. Once I wake up, I become an Observer in waking state; the dream world’s existence is stripped off.

In Jagrat Prapancha, it also appears real to me; but Gaudapada says it is also relative, as here too, its existence depends on the Observer; thus, if I go to sleep or dream or go to another world of reality, the Jagrat prapancha loses its reality.

Gaudapada concludes from all this that any objective world (observed world) is only relative world; in its own time, it is real, but in another plane, determined by the

observer, it  
loses its reality. As Pramata changes, Prameya also changes.  
So the question  
comes up, if every Prameya (experience) is a relative reality;  
what is absolute  
reality? Gaudapada says absolute reality has to be Aprameyam.  
**What is that absolute reality which exists  
but is not an object? The answer is "I" the Atma alone can be  
absolute reality.  
The Atma lends reality to the relative world.**

So, Gaudapada says, I the  
Atma, project a relative reality and then lends reality to it.  
From my vasanas  
I project as a dream and then lend existence to the dream. The  
tragedy is that  
I forget that the dream depends upon me.

I am doing a noble service to  
dream world by giving it existence; but it gives me samsara  
and frightens me  
with experiences. So, I withdraw help to the dream world by  
waking up. So, I,  
the Atma, with Maya Shakti have created Jagrat prapancha. This  
Jagrat prapancha  
(Waker's world) having borrowed reality from me, now threatens  
me; so to  
deflate this world, the Jagrat prapancha, only way out is to  
wake up. Every  
Guru's goal is to wake up the student. Gaudapada says, I, the  
Atma, with Maya  
Shakti have created the jagrat prapancha world. Similarly,  
with Nidra Shakti I  
create the swapna prapancha.

Atma Agyanam is a longer  
nidra.

Now Guadapada wants to give us the order of creation. Creation is a cyclic process; so it has no beginning or end; however for purpose of discussion we have to begin somewhere; it is like a round table conference that is set up to get around the ego's of VIP's. So, Gaudapada says to understand creation we should start with Jiva Srishti.

Atma, with help of Maya Shakti projects Jiva. Jiva gets a body that depends on his/her karma of the past; he also gets an appropriate environment to be born in; he also gets an appropriate raga, dvesha and vasanas. I create all this, as the Lord of the jiva. After that, Jiva runs on its own. The 16<sup>th</sup> Karika, the last line, gives us how the Jiva runs its course (self sustaining cycle of world)

The Jiva looks around the world; obtains knowledge; here experiences are registered; he will then classify the world (a subjective judgment).

Citing an example for this, Swamiji said, say two people come this class. They may feel it is a source of joy or sorrow based upon Gyanam and memory that it was joyful or sorrowful. He remembers things as joyful or sorrowful. He then wants to repeat the joyful experience and he avoids any sorrowful experience. This is known as Pravriti (attachment) and Nivriti (aversion). Thus the process is as

follows:

Gyanam> memory>

Pravriti and or nivrthi ( Karmas).

This is called Yatna. Pravrithi Nivrithi karmas produce papam and punyam through Adrishta Phalam, also called Agami Karma. Some Agami karmas fructify in this life while others wait to fructify in a future life.

Hence re-birth becomes necessary to complete our Agami Karmas. This cycle goes on, birth after birth. It is an eternal cyclic process, punarapi jananam and punarpi maranam.

How will God help me. He can wake me up to the fact that “ I” am Satyam and Jagan is mithya, a defanged cobra.

As long as I see objective world, world is real; I am ensnared; but once I Know I am the truth, I wake up.

Thus:

Yatha Vidhya tatha smrithi;  
Yatha smrithi Thatha Ichha; Yatha Ichha Tatha Karma; Yatha Karma tatha Phalam  
Yatha phalam Tatha Punarjanmam. This is the cyclic process of Punarapi jananam and punrapi maranam.

**Karika # 17:**

**aniścitā  
yathā rajjurandhakāre vikalpitā |**

17. As

*the rope, whose nature is not really known,, is imagined in the dark to be a snake, a water-line, etc., so also is the Ātman imagined (in various ways).*

Gaudapada had pointed out that Swapna Prapancha is only a relative reality; it has only a borrowed reality from I the observer.

Now Gaudapada gives an example; it is the famous Rope Snake example; it is famous in vedas. Gaudapada was Shankaracharya's acharya's Guru.

This example is a very old one cited in scriptures, well before Shankaracharya made it famous.

Kambaramayana also cites it, as an example.

**The Rope Snake:** A rope is not clearly seen when there is partial light or partial darkness. It is partially recognized as something is lying down in front of me.

It is partial knowledge; that is the problem. In darkness, I don't see

anything, thus ignorance is bliss. In total brightness, I can see the rope, so

here knowledge is bliss. Partial ignorance and partial knowledge are both problems.

There is general knowledge

(samanya gyanam) that something is in front of me; Vishesha Gyanam, that a rope

is laying in front of me is not there. This partial ignorance

has two powers:

Avarna Shakti (Concealing power) and Vikshepa shakti (Projecting power).

Avarana Shakti covers the

rope partially; I don't know it is rope. The covering of the ropeness of rope

is Avarna Shakti; then Vikshepa shakti comes up and it projects anything other

than a rope. Generally it projects anything we are afraid of.

Citing an

example, if I have a stomach ache and I don't know why, I imagine the worst

possible scenario such as say cancer.

This power of projection is called Vikshepa

Shakti. Due to this power we see an imaginary snake. Reality is that there is

no snake at all it is just a projection of my ignorance.

Now, this non-existent snake

can cause havoc in our lives. It will be classified as a relative reality, like

a projected dream.

Who lent this reality? I have

lent this reality. Why is called relative reality? Because, when I go near it,

it disappears in wake of knowledge. So, nor is it non-existent nor is it

existent. It is sufficiently real to frighten, but not sufficiently real, to

continue when I go near it. Gaudapada says world comes under this reality and

it can't be driven away by rituals. The only solution is to go near and see;

then we realize there was no snake to even go away. The torchlight of shastram

is required to go near and see, says Gaudapada.

“In partial darkness, a rope is partially known; it is projected as a snake or a streak of water or as a crack on earth; it is mistaken.”

In same way there is only I, the Turiyam who started the drama and is trapped by it's own drama, through Maya shakti, the cosmic ignorance. Turiyam is mistaken as Vishwa, Taijasa and Pragma. “I” am none of them but Turiyam.

To recap the message of Gaudapada:

Therefore the snake is neither nonexistent nor existent. Three points are important to note.

1. The rope-snake is seemingly existent and in Vedanta it is called mithya. This mithya snake will cause problems to the observer. This is point one.
2. The second point that is very important is that the mithya snake is understood as mithya snake only after knowing the rope and until the person knows the rope, the mithya snake will never seem like the mithya snake. For the ignorant observer, mithya snake is satya snake only. Therefore it will cause all the problems that a satya snake causes. This is called suffering from fear, or mini samsara caused by mithya snake, which is

for the time being is a  
satya snake.

3. When does the problem go away? The third point is that the problem caused by mithya snake will go away only by one method, which is the observer knowing the rope completely. Now he knows the rope partially. He should know the rope completely, which is the knowledge that rope is rope. In the wake of complete knowledge the problem caused by the so-called satya snake, which appeared satya till now, is solved for good. So what is the solution? It is the knowledge of the substratum.

#### Karika # 18

niścītāyāṃ

yathā rajjvāṃ vikalpo vinivartate |

rajjureveti cādvaitaṃ tadvadātmaviniścayaḥ || 18 ||

#### 18. When

*the real nature of the rope is ascertained all illusions about it disappear and*

*there arises the conviction that it is the one (unchanged) rope and nothing*

*else; even so is the nature of the conviction regarding Ātman.*

The rope snake can be removed

by only one method; by removing cause of rope snake. Cause of rope snake is

ignorance. Ignorance has produced snake. This is obtained by gaining rope knowledge.

What is it? Whatever is

lending reality to rope, that lender, is called Adhishtanam.



We need to know  
that Adhishtanam, the projector, supporter and experiencer.  
One has to know only one thing, the clear knowledge  
of rope, that it is rope and rope alone. Once rope is known as  
rope, all false  
projections recede. Rope knowledge drives away all Mithya or  
Avidya, all are  
gone in one stroke. One rope alone remains.

Similarly,  
for the dreamer, in dream, the dream world is satyam. For a  
waker, in waking,  
the waking world is satyam. Both "satya" worlds are causing  
havoc for the  
ignorant person. As long as the self-ignorance is present,  
both the waking and  
the dream worlds will appear as satyam and both of them will  
cause samsara in  
their respective states. What is the remedy? Self-knowledge is  
the remedy. This  
knowledge is that I, the atma, should be understood as Turiya  
chaitanyam. When  
I claim that I am Vishva, the waker, it is partial knowledge  
and it will cause problems.  
When I claim I am Taijasa, the dreamer, it is partial  
knowledge and it will  
create problems.

When  
I claim that I am Prajna, the sleeper, it is partial knowledge  
and it will  
create problems. When I

claim  
that I am Turiyam; it is complete knowledge.

So, also, if you gain  
knowledge of Turiyam with help of Shastras, Vishwa, Taijasa,

Pragya all  
relative realities go away and only the absolute truth alone  
remains.

**With Best Wishes,**

Ram Ramaswamy