

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 12

Mantra # 7; Karika # 11:

Swamiji said in these karikas beginning from # 11 Guadapada is comparing and contrasting the four padas. This study is for clarifying the karika. This clarification is called Svadhanya Vaidhanya Vichara. It shows the study of common and uncommon features. Two specific factors are studied for comparison. They are: 1) Ignorance and 2) Error, or misconceptions born from ignorance.

When you do not recognize a rope, as a rope, it is called Rajju Agyanam; where it is mistaken as something else; hence called an error. Error is always born out of ignorance; with knowledge there can be no more error.

Ignorance is the cause while error is its effect. Ignorance is referenced by four expressions of Gaudapada. They are:

1. Nidra: Ignorance is figuratively called sleep. When you are asleep to a fact, you are ignorant of the fact.
2. Agrahanam: Non-perception of fact. Rope ignorance is non-perception that it is a rope.
3. Karanam: Ignorance is referred to as cause or karanam. Why is it a cause? Because it is cause of error, cause of mistake or misconception, hence it is karanam.
4. Beejam: or Seed. Why seed? Just as from a seed sprout comes out, from seed of ignorance, error or mistake arises. Rope misconception is born from rope ignorance. Some mistake it as snake, some as mala (garland), some as a crack in the earth, yet others as a stick. All misconceptions are born from one seed of ignorance.

Following four factors provide reference points for Ignorance. Errors too can be referenced by these four factors.

The four factors are:

has only got ignorance. It is called pure ignorance. What does it mean? Error free ignorance is called pure ignorance; even though I am ignorant that I am limitless; I don't create any mistake because the mind is in a resolved state; as such it cannot commit mistakes. Hence called Total ignorance or also called Bliss. Ignorance becomes a problem only when it is mixed with erroneous perceptions.

Say a rope is lying in a shadow (half-lit area) and you see it partially; hence you see it as a snake causing to be frightened. Had the rope been in a pitch-dark area, and then there would have been rope ignorance, as I don't see the rope to begin with. Here Ignorance exists, but there is no wrong perception of snake. Here Ignorance is there without an error. Hence, in Total Ignorance, one knows no Samsara or there is no error. It is only in partial ignorance that the error comes in.

In deep sleep also there is no samsara. Gyani and deep sleep both don't have samsara. Only Waker and Agyani have samsara.

Shankaracharya in his Brahmasutra commentary talks of this error and calls Adhyasa. So, Gaudapada says, a sleeper has only "ignorance without error".

In Turiyam also there is neither ignorance nor error. It is free from both. It is pure Consciousness alone. It is the illuminator of ignorance and error. Why so? Several reasons are given:

1. Pure consciousness is asangaha; it is relation-less like space. Space is everywhere but not connected to anything including ignorance and error.
2. Consciousness is a higher order reality or Paramarthika Satyam. While ignorance of error is Vyavaharailka Satyam. Both can't be connected. Thus, a waking person can't be hurt by dream water, fire etc. Waker is higher order reality while dreamer is a lower order reality.

3. Prakash Tatvam: Illuminator of a thing can never be polluted by anything. Light can't be contaminated by whatever it shines on.

Karika # 12:

प्रज्ञाप्रज्ञानं च प्रज्ञाप्रज्ञानं च प्रज्ञाप्रज्ञानं च
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Prajna does not know anything of the Truth or the untruth., nor does Prajna know anything of the Self or of the not-Self; Prajna knows nothing. But Turiya is ever and it is always the all-knowing , the all-seeing.

In these two shlokas gaudapada is contrasting Pragma and Turiya and their uncommon features.

Pragma is associated with ignorance.

Turiya is not associated with ignorance.

This contrast is in both shlokas 12 and 13.

Pragma does not know anything. It is absolutely ignorant. Pragma is errorlessly ignorant and hence blissfully ignorant. Pragma does not know himself. I don't know the object or the subject. Nobody says, "I am sleeping", nor does he say, "I am Turiyam". How about others? He does not know others as well. He does not know Atma or anatma. Neither does he know reality nor the unreal world. It is state of Total Ignorance.

What about Turiyam? It is pure Consciousness, the illuminator of everything including ignorance, the state of "I don't know anything". If asked, do you know that you don't know anything, and then I am conscious of my ignorance. Consciousness is illuminator of ignorance and error; hence it is called Sarva Dhriti. Illuminator is not tainted by whatever it illumines. Imagine if light that illumines my body becomes a part of my body; when I leave everything will be dark, as light will leave with me. Light falls on body but is not connected to

body. So, Turiyam is free from ignorance, while Pragya is associated with ignorance.

When is Turiyam free? It is ever free from ignorance and error.

karika # 13:

द्वन्द्वानुपपत्तौ तद्विषयानुपपत्तौ तद्विषयानुपपत्तौ च
द्वन्द्वानुपपत्तौ तद्विषयानुपपत्तौ तद्विषयानुपपत्तौ च

The non-cognition of duality is equal in both sleep and Turiya but the sleeper conditioned in his sleep, is in the form of the cause and this- the sleep or cause (avidya) does not exist in Turiya.

In this shloka also Gaudapada is studying Pragya and Turiya. Here he talks of similarities and dissimilarities. In previous shloka only dissimilarities were discussed.

What are the dissimilarities?

Pragya is associated with ignorance.

Turiya is not associated with ignorance.

Bija nidra means ignorance. Pragya is ignorance ridden. Contrastingly in Turiya Bija nidra, ignorance is not there.

What are the similarities?

Common factors are that both are free from error.

A sleepy person has no error; he does not have notion of a limited person; it is not there in Turiyam or a Gyani as well. So Gyani and Turiyam are identical. Therefore moksha and sleep are very similar.

In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Yagyavalkya compares moksha with sleep. Unfortunately with problems we have today, we don't get sleep.

