

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 29

Karika

30:

etaireṣo'pṛthagbhāvaiḥ
pṛthageveti lakṣitaḥ |
evaṃ yo veda tattvena kalpayetso'viśaṅkitaḥ || 30 ||

30. This Ātman, though non-separate from all these, appears, as it were, separate. One who knows this truly imagines (interprets) (the meaning of the Vedas) without hesitation.

Gaudapada gave an elaborate list of various misconceptions of different philosophers; he says they commit mistake of looking at reality as an object that is outside of us; they also think the object has an independent reality; they also think that " I" also has an independent reality. Gaudapada says no object can have reality, as it is dependent for its existence on the subject. So, he concludes that all these objects are non-separate from Atma, just as dream world can't have an existence from Waker.

The dreamer in dream looks upon the dream world as existing independently but when he wakes up, the dream world resolves into him, the observer. The fundamental truth is that the observed does not exist independent of the

observer. **Anything observed, ordinary or extraordinary, secular or sacred cannot exist independent of the Turiyam Atma, the observer.**

Thus, Objects are dependent on subject; hence they are Mithya.

They look upon Jagrat Prapancha as an independent entity even as a person in dream world thinks the dream is real. Once object is taken as a separate entity, then subject is also taken as separate from object, causing Subject/Object division; thus both subject and object become limited and then we can't obtain freedom from limitation. In other philosophies this limitation is never overcome; they preserve the duality and limitation is not overcome.

Wise person is one who understands that the division is just an appearance and not a reality. Citing example of sunrise, it is just an appearance; it is not real; it is result of earth's rotation. **Experience of division is not the problem; considering division as reality is the problem.**

One who knows that duality is just an appearance and that non-duality is a fact, that person alone can teach scriptures; he is a real Guru. The word Kalpayate in Karika means teaching.

Others use Veda Pramanam but they are not aware of it. Right teaching is when Dvaitam is in the beginning

but ends in Advaitam as destination; he is a real Guru. He alone can interpret scriptures convincingly.

Karika # 31:

***As are dreams and illusions
or a castle in the air seen in the sky, so
is the universe viewed by the wise in the Vedānta.***

Here Gaudapada says until one comes to Vedanta one can be a Dwaitin; but once he goes through Vedantic teaching this two-fold difference must be gone and non-dual reality must come forward. He will continue to see Dvaitam but will know it is false.

For several centuries we thought earth was stationery and planets revolved around earth; then one scientist suggested that earth is going around the sun, but world was not willing to believe him; he was persecuted; then they started discovering; truth is not based on democracy, and accepted that earth goes around the sun. Even after knowing this fact, we still experience sun going around us. So, **experience does not change knowledge; just as sunrise does not change the fact that sun does not rise or set. So also Dvaita anubhava cannot displace advaita gyanam.**

Along these lines, when we have a general awakening, the dream world is known as mithya and the dream world disappears for me. Whereas, when there is spiritual awakening from maya-

shakti, the waking

world is falsified but it does not disappear. It will continue for the awakened

person, he experiences it, but knows that it is mithya. Once the waking

world is known to be mithya, the awakened person knows that it does not exist

separate from him just like the dream world. The dream world anatma, the waking world anatma, or any anatma does not exist separate from me, the atma, the Experienter.

So, wise people understand this universe as non-factual, mithya or advaitam is understood as fact, in light of vedantic teachings. After this knowledge Dvaita experience continues but they look upon Dvaitam as Swapnam and dream is not taken as fact. Similarly Maya, when we see in a magic show a lady being cut in half with blood spilling on stage and body being separated, but we are not upset as we know it is only a magic show. So eyes report subject/ object division but Vedantic teaching tells us it is not true. Third example is Gandharva nagaram where sky-city shows different patterns of clouds; thus one can see a floating city, seemingly there but we know it is just a cloud arrangement. Even modern science says there are only photons; protons etc or it is energy in motion. Vedantin says, world is consciousness in motion.

Like the dream world, the magician's creation, or a seeming city in the sky when there are cloud Formations, which are all only appearances, in the same way from the standpoint of Turiyam, this entire Those people who are experts in Vedantic teaching also see creation as a mithya appearance. For them it is not just a teaching anymore but it has become a fact.

Karika # 32:

There is no dissolution, no

birth, none in bondage, none aspiring for wisdom, no seeker of liberation and

none liberated. This is the absolute truth.

A very important Karika often quoted by Shankaracharya. It says, from point of view of Turiyam, world does not exist; however, from body's point of view, world exists; from mind's point of view also, world exists.

This verse is a corollary of the previous verse. It is a profound and often a disturbing verse. For a Gyani, the waking world is also exactly like the dream world only. What does it mean? Let us look at the dream world first. When we are in the dream world we see many events happening. They all appear real in dream. From the dreamer's standpoint, all the dream events are really taking place. But when the dreamer wakes up, from the standpoint of the waker, it is realized that all the dream events did not really take place. They all seemingly happened but factually they did not happen. If this is understood with respect to the dream world, Gaudapada says that that this understanding should be extended to the waking world also.

The creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the waking world only seemingly happen but really they do not happen from the standpoint of Turiya atma. From the waker's standpoint they are real. Jivas coming into existence, experiencing samsara, jivas becoming seekers, following the sadhanas karma-yoga, upasana-

yoga and
jnana-yoga, coming to a guru, guru teaching, and getting
liberated only
seemingly happen. There is no question of anyone becoming
liberated. From the
standpoint of the body-mind complex, all these are really
happening but from
the standpoint of Turiyam, all these are as though happening.

For dream body, dream hunger
is real and so we go after dream food. Dream body's wound is
also real; we even
go to a dream doctor; obtain dream medicine and even pay in
dream money. Now if
while swallowing the dream medication you wake up, you find
there are no wound,
no doctor and no money. All are non-existent only after waking
up. So, from
waker's point of view dream was unreal. So also from Turiyam
point of view
world is not real even as dream body is not real to waker.
What about Pralayam?
From Turiyam's point of view there is neither Srishti nor
Pralayam; all these
exist only from point of view of body and mind only.

If Srishti and Laya are not
real it also means there is no Sthiti as well. So, if the
world is not there
then what about the people in the world? Jivas are also as
good as not there.
If so, where is the bondage of the jiva? If there is no bound
jiva what is
point of seeking liberation? **Seeking
liberation is only for one who is bound.** Seeker alone has to
do all the
seeking via various sadhanas. When seeker himself does not

exist, where is the seeking?

From Turiyam's point of view he is also non-existent.

How about liberated person?

When there is no bound person where is the need for liberation? It all depends

upon which "I" is asking? Citing an example, in such a case, one may ask should

I come to the class or not? So long as Ahamkara "I" exists, come to class, if

not, no need to come to class.

Karika # 33:

This (the Ātman) is imagined both as unreal objects that are perceived and as the non-duality. The objects (Bhāvas) are imagined in the non-duality itself. Therefore, non-duality (alone) is the (highest) bliss.

Here Gaudapada makes a very

important observation. He says Dvaitam is totally mithya. Thus, the trio of

Vishva and Jagrit prapancha; Taijasa and Swapna Prapancha and; Pragyā and

Karana Prapancha, all three are mithya and therefore between two (dvaitam and

advaitam) which is better? Naturally Advaitam is better as it is partially

Satyam and as such auspicious while Dvaitam is inauspicious. Therefore, come to

advaitam.

Why do you say advaitam is

partially satyam? Let us start with what is mithya? Whatever is negated is

mithya. Whatever is un-negated is Satyam. Turiyam is un-

negatable hence it is Satyam. Once dvaitam is negated Advaitam is Satyam. Here Gaudapada says, when advaitam remains as Satyam then the word advaitam becomes irrelevant. Advaitam has meaning only so long as Dvaitam is there. Once Dvaitam is negated, there is no more need for word advaitam. Using snake rope analogy, the rope is the support of the rope-snake when a person experiences the rope-snake. From the standpoint of the false rope-snake, the rope is called the adhishtanam of the rope-snake because rope alone lends existence to the snake. Whatever borrows existence is called mithya and whatever lends existence is called adhishtanam. Now Gaudapada says that the word adhishtanam is used only from the standpoint of the mithya snake. If the snake is negated in better lighting, the snake is known to be nonexistent and was only an appearance. Once the snake is negated, can one call the rope the adhishtanam?

Adhishtanam is adhishtanam only from the standpoint of the snake when it was borrowing existence. When the snake has been negated, the rope cannot be called adhishtanam any more. Even the word advaita adhishtanam is only from the standpoint of the dvaita world, the empirical angle.

After negating snake, rope alone remains. Once object is negated as mithya, subject alone remains as

Satyam; but once object has been negated, subject need not be called as such.

Subject just remains without subject status; so also advaitam remains with advaitam-status; divisionless remains without divisionless status.

The truth revealed by word advaitam remains; it can't be called object nor subject; nor matter or consciousness; or dvaitam or advaitam. After negating matter, the word consciousness, has no more relevance; similarly the word eternal is only related to non-eternal. Thus, advaitam status is partially mithya but its substance is still Satyam.

This atma is visualized in form of dvaita prapancha, which is mithya. Atma is imagined as non-dual substratum; the substratum status is also mithya; observer is satyam while observer-status is also mithya; witness is satyam while witness-status is Mithya. Hence it is called nameless or Amatra.

After negation of everything whatever remains is truth. Therefore the word advaitam is mithya.

Moreover dvaita prapancha exists depending on advaitam only. Thus, Dvaitam depends on advaitam hence advaitam is stayam. In the karika's first line advaitam is mithya but in second line it says it is satyam. Therefore, it means advaitam status is mithya but

advaitam, non-duality itself, is auspicious.

Karika # 34:

***This manifold does not exist
as identical with Ātman nor does
it ever stand independent by itself. It is neither separate
from Brahman nor is
it non-separate. This is the statement of the wise.***

Here Gaudapada says, the more you probe Dvaita Prapancha, the more it becomes mysterious, hence it is called Maya or anirvacharniyam; it is like a dream, we can't say it is not existent since it gives us a lot of trouble. That is why we even have prayers to prevent bad dreams. So we can't say it does not exist nor can we say it exists as well. Thus, I have never declared my dream wealth for tax purposes. Hence, it is a mystery. Matter also can't be defined. Matter or anatma or world does not exist as identical as Chaitanyam or Atma.

Anatma is inert; atma is consciousness principle, hence world can't be same as atma. Can matter exist as separate from consciousness? We can't prove existence of world separate from observer. Existence presupposes

Consciousness. So anatma is neither identical with atma nor is it separate from atma. Therefore there is an answer in the middle. Can we say it is partially identical; we can't say so as consciousness does not have parts.

In short, the world is a mystery. It is experienced but you cannot prove anything logically.

The more you go deeper, the more mysterious it gets.

Is Matter identical with consciousness?

Is Matter separate from consciousness?

I can't say matter does not exist. I can't say whatever I experience does not exist. Intellect can only be by classification; thus we have chapters in a book. World, however, is not available for categorization. The more we probe the hazier it gets. Scientists are also finding this out; they are not sure if observed object exists in an observer or not.

Take Away:

Anything observed, ordinary or extraordinary, secular or sacred cannot exist independent of the Turiyam Atma, the observer.

Experience of division is not the problem; considering division as reality is the problem. Thus sunrise is experienced but it is not real.

Experience does not change knowledge; just as sunrise does not change the fact that sun does not rise or set. So also Dvaita anubhava cannot displace advaita gyanam.

When

we have a general awakening, the dream world is known as mithya and the dream world disappears for me. Whereas, when there is spiritual awakening from maya-shakti, the waking world is falsified but it does not disappear. It will continue for the awakened person, he experiences it, but knows that it is mithya.

Seeking liberation is only for one who is bound.

In

short, the world is a mystery. It is experienced but you cannot prove anything logically. The more you go deeper, the more mysterious it gets.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy