

MANDUKYA KARIKA- LECTURE 87
SWĀMI DAYATMANANDAJI

जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुं।

पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः॥

*Jananim Sāradām devīm Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum
Pādapadme tayoh shritva pranamāmi muhurmuhuh.*

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः ।

भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाग्ँसस्तनूभिः ।

व्यशेम देवहितं यदायूः ।

स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।

स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः ।

स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

हरि ॐ॥

Om Bhadram Karnnebhih Shrnnuyāma Devāha |

Bhadram Pashyemākshabhiryajatrāha |

Sthirairangaihi Tushtuvāngasastanūbhihi |

Vyashema Devahitam Yadāyūhu |

Svasti Na Indro Vrddhashravāha |

Svasti Nah Pūshā Vishvavedāha |

Svasti Nastāksharyo Arishtanemihi |

Svasti No Brhaspatirdadhātu ||

Om Shānti Shānti Shāntihi ||

Hari Om||

O Gods may we always hear with our ears what is auspicious.

O worshipful ones may we with our eyes always see what is auspicious.

May we live our allotted lives hale and hearty offering our praises unto thee. May

Indra of ancient fame bestow auspiciousness on all of us.

May the all nourishing *Pūshan* be propitious to all of us.

May *Garuda*, the destroyer of all evils, be well disposed towards all of us.

May *Brihaspati* ensure all our Welfare.

Om Peace, peace, peace be on to all.

We are studying Mandukya Upanishad, second chapter called Vaitatya Prakarana.

Gaudapada had categorically stated that not only the dream state is a *Mithya* state, but the waking state is a real state. No, this is our real, what is called opinion, faith and we are behaving accordingly. Gaudapada says, no, anything that is experienced, that means the waking state, the dream state as well as the dreamless state or deep sleep state, all are experiences. And if there is an experience, there must be an experiencer. And the experiencer alone is unchanging, the experiences are continuously changing. Anything that is changing acquires a name *Mithya*. So, this is how we must understand, but don't say that it is unreal. That is why I prefer to give the example always. Four blind men touching four parts of the elephant come to four different opinions. There is nothing wrong, they are touching a real elephant only. We are all living in the real reality only. Our problem, like blind men, when we are touching, so to say, a waking state, we think that is real. When we are touching, so to say, the dream state, we think that alone is real. Because our action, our reaction, our happiness, or unhappiness in the dream state. We never think it is a dream while dreaming. We think it is just like waking state. Similarly, when we are in deep sleep, we never think we are in deep sleep. That is the most realistic state. We are so happy!

But what happens? The sleep state changes into waking. Waking changes into dream. Dream again changes into deep sleep. Deep sleep again changes, thus goes on the circle. This is what Gaudapada wants to say. This is a point we must keep in mind. Whatever is experienced depends upon the experiencer and whatever is dependent is changing. Whatever is changing is called *Mithya*. Is that unreal? No! That's why I prefer to call it partial reality. For example, I told you, you put your two fingers and in between two fingers, you look at anything. Everything that you look at appears to be small, not because the object is small, but because the instrument we use is limited.

Here the instrument is the mind for all the three states, waking, dream and deep sleep. Minus the mind, then there is pure consciousness only. Let us not again mistake. In deep sleep, is there mind? Yes, there is a type of mind. Not that it is absent. This type of mind is called *Karana Sharira*. *Karana Sharira* means very subtlest form, causal form. It is there, but in *Turiya*, in *Nirvikalpa*, even this, no *Jagrat Manah*, no *Swapna Manah*, no *Karana Manah*. And therefore, that never changes. That is the subject.

This was the development we have seen. The objector, that is our own doubts from within our own minds, come and say, if everything is changing and to know that everything is changing, there must be an unchanging experiencer, perceiver. Who is that? And for that, Gaudapada has been giving the answer until the 15th Karika or Shloka.

Who is that? There is nobody else. It is the *Atman* with the help of the mind. Mind is called *Maya*.

Maya is made up of three *Gunas*, *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. And this *Maya Shakti* is called, in practical scientific terminology, Time, Space and Causation. And when

the *Atma*, having created a mind, looks at himself, just as we look at a mirror. It is a beautiful example. You stand in front of a mirror, but you put on thick black specs. Your own reflection appears to be black, a little less black, a little reflection also will be a little more clearer. And then you put on a very thin coloured glass and your reflection is almost like yourself. But if you want a complete picture, pure picture, reflection, you remove every spec. This spec is the mind. And when we remove the mind, what remains? Only pure reflection. This is what Patanjali Rishi wants to convey, *Yoga Chittavrutti Nirodha*.

What is *Chittavruti Nirodha*?

Another way of defining it is, remove all the three *Gun*as. Then there is no difference between such a mind and such an *Atman*. That is why Sri Ramakrishna says, *Shuddha Atma* is one and the same. So, the answer to our own deep doubt is, who is *Kalpa*? I am imagining myself. I mean, here we must understand, a pure *Atman*.

This is what Gaudapada wants to convey in the 16th *Karika*.

Jeevam Kalpayate Purvam

tatho bhavan prithag vidhan

bahyan adyatmikanschaiva

yatha vidyaha tatha smruthi

What does Gaudapada say? First, the *Atman*, or *Jivatma*, or God, projects first to himself. That is, he becomes endowed with a mind. So, this is called *Jivatma*. God with mind is called *Jivatma*. Thereafter, various objects, which are external as well as internal, that means the external world and the thoughts in the mind. So how does he do it? Why is there so much of difference between one person's experience and another person's experience?

So, he says, *yetha vidya tatha smruthi*

Purva Janma Karma, Purva Janma Samsakara and Purva Janma Smruti. Jati, Ayu, and Yoga

This is why every *Jiva* appears to be creating his own world. Let us analyse one by one. So, what is the answer? *Prabhu* means the pure *Atman*. Even before the creation, remember, before the creation there is no world. When there is no world, there is no experiencer of the world. Both come together. So first comes *Jiva*. *Jiva* means a mind is created. I don't know from where. He himself, through the mind, looks at himself and he thinks, I am one, I was one, but now I am innumerable. He forgets I was one and he thinks I am one among the infinite number of things.

Purvam Jeevam Kalpayate. Kalpayate means imagines, pure imagination.

Remember, imagination can be done only through the mind. Therefore, as soon as *Jivatma*, that is mind is created, the mind itself creates, I am a *Jiva*, and it tells you are a *Jiva*, everybody is a *Jiva*. This whole creation is divided into two, the living and non-living. So, first thing that comes out is *Jivatma* with the help of the mind. That

universal mind is called *Maya*. That is *Maya Shakti*. So, *Brahman* plus *Maya Shakti* is called *Ishwara* or what Sri Ramakrishna calls, I prefer to call it *Shakti*. So, *Purvam Jivam Kalpayate*. And then suppose there is a *Jiva*. A *Jiva* is useless. An experiencer cannot exist without experience. And that which provides the experience is called the world, *Loka*. So, *Loka* and *Jiva*, they come automatically together just to enjoy a little bit of fun. Now imagine you are standing in front of a mirror and as soon as you stand, and of course you also provisionally think there is sufficient light that you can see your reflection. Now if somebody asks, which came first? You first came and stood in front of the mirror and then the reflection came or the reflection came first and then you noticed yourself. The question is useless because there is no such order. It is simultaneous. You remove yourself. You also get away from the mirror. Your reflection also gets away. As soon as you stand, come within the periphery of the mirror, then you will see that you and your reflection, you see the reflection. So, which came first? You or the reflection? This is the eternal question. The seed or the tree? The egg or the chicken? There is no such order. And yet the very basis for thinking about the world. The world is not thinking about the world. It is only the *Jiva Atma* endowed with reflected consciousness is thinking about the world. So just for our understanding, the first thing is *Jiva* and next is the world. Next is the experience. All this order is given. Even though there is really no order, but order is enumerated or mentioned for the sake of understanding. Not that there is really any order. It is another way of vainly arguing about this is why am I like this? Because of your *Purva Janma Karma*. And why are you in your *Purva Janma* like that? Why did you imagine? Because of its *Purva Janma*. Where is it going to end? That is why this type of argument is called infinite regress. There is no answer. That is why creation is called *Anadi*, beginningless. We don't need to say when did it start. It is enough to say I am suffering and there is a way out. I can be what is called immortal, *Amrita*. I can be all-knowing, and I will be eternally infinitely happy. That is possible. There is a way out. That much only we must understand.

As I mentioned earlier, Buddha gives this beautiful example. Somebody was struck with some very hurtful arrows and the person fell down. He happened to be a philosopher. That is the trouble with philosophers. So, then he started thinking. What is this arrow? What is it made up of? First, I must find out. Is it made up of wood or metal, or gold or silver? Supposing it is made up of gold. Then after pulling out the arrow, what am I going to do with that gold? Will anybody think like that? Buddha is telling. Nobody will think like that. The person will be crying out in pain. And, so, what is the way? What is the way to take out the arrow, and to rub some ointment, and to quickly get rid of the pain as soon as possible? That person is called a wise person. But the person who goes on thinking all these pros and cons, he is called a philosopher.

That is why Sri Ramakrishna says philosophy is not going to help. If you understand, throw away all your books and then set about doing what the scriptures are telling you. For that, as you well know, Ramakrishna has given a very beautiful example. A man was working in a town, and he visits home only at weekends. So, a letter had come during the week that when you come at the weekend, you bring such and such things which are lacking here. And this man had

misplaced the letter. And it took some time for him to catch hold of the letter. And then he read it. What did he do? Previously he forgot and misplaced. Now he tears it to pieces and throws it away because he understood. What shall I do? These are the things I have to buy. My wife has written to me. My child has written to me. I must procure them and take them home. This is what is Ramakrishna's highest wisdom. Study the scriptures. Squeeze the essence. What is the essence? That you are bound. There is a way out. Your Guru will tell you and then follow your Guru. And very soon, by the grace of God, if you do what your Guru instructed you to do, you will be free. That should be the real attitude. That is called wisdom. And that is what we need to understand. So, all these questions are not necessary. Who came first? *Jiva* came first. World came first. Or they came simultaneously. Or how did it come? These are only for passing time. Time pass. Real is that you are *Brahman*. You are the *Atman*. And that is what every sage is proclaiming at the top of his head. *Shrunvant Vishve Amrutasya Putra*. There is a way out.

This is what Gaudapada is trying to convey to it. *Jeevam Kalpayate Purvam*. At first, *Jiva* is imagined. Not created here means always remember. According to Advaita Vedanta, creating always means imagining. That is why it is called *Mithya*. So, *Jeevam Kalpayate Purvam*. First of all, a what is called limited being, that is *Atman* associated with a mind is imagined. And after that, the *Jeeva* is endowed with consciousness. And with that consciousness, with that mind, he imagines. What does he imagine? *Bhavaan*. Various things. That is to say the entire world, living, non-living, etc. So, what is *Pritak Vidar*? Different types. What are those different types? They can be classified into two. That, not only that which is outside, but inside. Outside, what we call the world. Inside, what we call our knowledge about the outside objects. Outside world is called *Sat*. And our understanding, our grasping, our knowledge of the outside objects is called *Chit*. Outside is *Sat*. *Chit* is within us. And we react. And that reaction is called *Karmaphala*. And according to *Karmaphala*, our world is different. Other person's world is different. Mother's world is different. Mother's body-mind are different. Child's body-minds are different. Everybody's body-minds are different. Mosquito's body-mind is different. Everything is different from everybody.

Then, what is the cause of this difference? A man is poor. Another is rich. One is learned scholarly. Another is illiterate. One is very powerful. Another is weak. One is very fortunate, and another is very unfortunate. So, why, if we have to imagine, then why can't we imagine and equally be happy, rich, powerful, learned, etc. without any difference with anybody? For that, the answer is given. Well-known answer, *Karmaphala*. And *Karmaphala*, if we do some action, first of all, we do an action according to our knowledge and then according to our desire, knowledge as well as our *Samskara*. For example, Ravanaasura, he wants to enjoy other people's properties, other people's women, other people's property, other people's power. He wants to destroy them. He wants to rob what belongs to other people. But for that also, tremendous intelligence, strength, ability, skill, everything is needed. Remember very clearly, a thief must be more intelligent, more energetic, more skillful than the person whom he wants to rob. Otherwise, if that fellow is dull, very first instance, he will be caught. So, Ravanaasura had all those qualities. That is why

Hanuman exclaims, *Aho Rupam, Aho Balam*. He is almost equivalent to Rama. But because of his evil *Samskaras*, he has to be destroyed. Hanuman exclaims, Hanuman is an impartial judge. Hanuman can appreciate Ravana's strength, his skill, his knowledge, his everything. But he was having knowledge. But he was not having the wisdom that if I do this *karma*, I have to experience my *karmaphala*, which is going to be my destruction. Of course, now this is the way anybody will explain to you. But there is wisdom every story has got. Actually Ravana was a much more intelligent person. He was a wise person. He was a devotee of God. His only motive was that I want to obtain *Nirguna Brahma*, who is equated to Rama. And for that, the help of, the grace of *Saguna Brahma* is needed. And that *Saguna Brahma* is called Sita Devi. That's why he kidnapped Sita Devi, it means. Never ever misunderstand that Ravana kidnapped like a man, lustful man, kidnaps a woman and wants to enjoy her. No. He knows. Why, how do we know? Sri Ramakrishna gives the clue to us. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, especially the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, is most marvellous light through which not only we understand his words but through that very light we understand the scriptures also very well. One day, Ravana's wife, Mandodari, she was a very beautiful woman, very wise person. She saw her husband was putting on all sorts of dresses to allure Sita Devi. Now, look at the fun here. Sita Devi is supposed to be *Maya Devi* and it is the *Maya* whom this Ravana had captured. But this is not ordinary *Maya*. This is *Maha Maya*. So, he wants to create *Maya* for the *Maha Maya*. Look at the fun. So, through *Maha Maya's* grace, Mandodari was telling, why are you assuming this form and that form? You assume the form of Rama and immediately Sita will fall for you. And then Ravana laughed. I don't know where from he got this idea. That is Sri Ramakrishna got the idea. But, Ravana laughs and says, Mandodari, if I assume the form of Rama, even Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, even a billion Sitas stand before me, I cannot be tempted. Ravana knew very well that he wants to attain to *Nirguna Brahma* the only way is *Saguna Brahma*. He caught hold of *Saguna Brahma*. He did *Upasana* of *Saguna Brahma*. And then, *Nirguna Brahma* had no option but to come there. And that *Brahmakaara Vritti*, in which case I would like to call it *Sita Kaara Vritti*, has to be destroyed, which is standing in the way of Ravana to attain the *Parabrahma*. That is what Rama had really done. This is the *Antarartha* of *Ramayana Rahasya*. You will have to understand.

So, here he is telling, this is all a play, a *Leela*, as I mentioned earlier. So, why there is so much difference between two brothers, two sisters? It is all because, *Yatha Vidya Tatha Smriti*. *Vidya* means knowledge. *Smriti* means *Samskaara*. What is the difference? *Vidya* means knowledge. Suppose you have a knowledge of a gun. So, you obtained a gun. That is knowledge. But how are you going to use the gun? For what purpose? You want to destroy the wicked people? You want to destroy cruel animals and safeguard the lives of people? Or you want to kill people after going mad? Everything depends upon the *Samskaara*. That *Samskaara* can be divided into *Sattva Samskaara*, *Rajo Samskaara*, *Tamo Samskaara*. So, knowledge being equal, how that knowledge is used, that is a different matter. This is the difference. So, our *Karmaphala* depends not only upon our knowledge, but how we really put that knowledge to use.

That is being expressed by Gaudapada here. *Yatha Vidya Tatha Smriti*. A *Jiva's* condition, status in this world is completely dependent upon what he did in the previous life. And it depends upon what is his knowledge, what does he think the knowledge with this world is, what does in his previous life, this particular *Jiva*, his idea or understanding of what the world is. That beautiful description we are going to come to later. So, in the 16th Karika, God first projects the world. Thereafter, various objects, some are external, and some are internal. That is to say, the external world and the internal world. And why did he create with so much of difference? As is the knowledge, so is the memory. That is how we have to understand. Then, naturally, that question comes. Who created this *Jivatvam*? Myself. And who created the worlds? Myself. Who created this division of my experience, every *Jiva's* experience, as waking, dream and dreamless state? Myself. So, what is the way out? How to get out of this bondage? Sri Ramakrishna tells a beautiful analogy. Once there was an argument with Mathur Babu. Sri Ramakrishna and Mathur Babu. Because Mathur Babu was modern educated and he is a firm, somehow misunderstanding or wrong knowledge, that even the creator of a law cannot break the law. But he should have come into India and asked this question. Of course, Mathur Babu was there. But he did not get an Indian education. He got a Western education. For all practical purposes, he could not change his body, but he changed his mind. It is all just like Western, English educated person. As though he was a foreigner. And this is what he said. Sri Ramakrishna gave a categorical reply that the Lord is all-powerful. Anybody who can make a rule also can break it. And I will make a little bit of fun with you that we are all experts in it. We make the rule, especially on the first day of the new year. I will get up at five o'clock and sit like a stone in deep meditation for two hours. Even if the whole world is being bombed, I will not move from that place. So, next day, one hour. After that, you see, I am not accustomed for such a long time. So, my legs are aching. So, slowly, slowly, I will reach my goal. And second day, forty minutes. Third day, ten minutes. Fourth day, *Areh*, everything is in the mind. After all, is it necessary to sit? I can think of God while sitting in the easy chair. And then, next, why easy chair? I can even lie down. After all, everything is within the mind. And he practices it. And then, he goes to deep sleep state. What a marvellous meditation I have. So, who made the rule? Myself. And who broke the rule? Myself. How many times we are making rules? That means new resolutions. And how many times we are breaking? See?

So, Sri Ramakrishna said, God who made the rule can also break the rule. Why the question of God comes? Because, the example Madhur Babu gave us, if there is a hibiscus tree which can yield only red flowers, it can never ever produce white flowers. That was the argument. Sri Ramakrishna said, God can do anything. He can make. He can break. Again, he can make. Again, he can break, any number of times, he can do. Madhur Babu, as usual, did not believe. But he could not argue with his own Baba. So, he went to sleep convinced that Baba is okay but sometimes his brain does not work properly, I have to prompt him. Next morning, Sri Ramakrishna went for answering calls of nature. He saw a red hibiscus tree. On the same branch one was a spotlessly pure red flower, and another was a spotlessly white flower. And then he broke the entire branch. Otherwise, this fellow will suspect there may be two plants there. Then, he broke two branches from two

separate trees. He is a modern man. What is called *samshayatmika manas*. So, he brought to Madhur Babu's room, threw it, and said, there you are! Madhur Babu looked at it, folded his hands and said, you are right, Baba. I will never ever argue with you!

So, what is the point? The point is, nobody will believe that I created the world. I created my bondage. If I have created my own bondage, I also can break it. Sri Ramakrishna used to sing a song. There is a methodology for catching a fish. Some fishermen, they use a small bamboo basket. There is a small opening for the fish to enter. But once they enter, they get caught. And then there is a way. The way they entered is always open. All that they need to do is turn their back and then come out of that. They will be free. But once they are caught, they think there is no way out. And then after a good night's rest, the person comes and then takes out the whole bamboo and so many fish are trapped there, and they will be dead. And with that, there is a song that there is a way, and the way we enter into this bondage, that very bondage door is open for us to come out also. Since we can go in, we can also come out. And yet, because of *Maha Maya's* power, we cannot do it. A man who can make the rule can break it. We, an *Atman*, voluntarily entered into this world imagining that I am this and he will come out. He can come out, but meanwhile the dream continues I cannot get out, I cannot get out like that. So, what is the way out? There is a way out. What is it? Stop imagining you are bound.

And this teaching, Gaudapada gives with two examples, Karika 17 and 18. This is a well-known example, *Rajju Sarpa Brahnti*. In semi-darkness, somebody is looking, and he sees something. Earlier he had an experience of a snake. It was very frightening. He never thinks what is the relationship between this object and that. So, in that semi-darkness, something resembling a snake is there. Maybe because of wind, it also might be happening to move. So, this person imagines that it is a snake. And then it brings terrible amount of fear. Sometimes heart attack also can happen. And he is suffering. Suffering is the result whatever be the other *Lakshanas*. So, this is what he says. Then what is the way out? So, two points we note down here. One point is for a person to mistake one object for the other, three conditions are necessary. Insufficient light, not complete darkness, not complete light, but semi-light. We should be able to see there is something. And then we must be having some kind of good or bad experience in the past of some other object. And that object must be similar to the thing that we are witnessing in front of our eyes. Semi-darkness, similarity, something experienced previously. Combine these three and then what is called *Adhyasa*, superimposition, will come. So here is a person. He saw crystal clearly that there is a snake. Absolutely there is no doubt in his mind. And he wants to run away. And his legs are locked. Like the Divine Mother locked the legs of Sri Ramakrishna when he wanted to meditate. He wants to run away. Sometimes he cannot run away. We dream sometimes like that. And then he is shouting but no sound is ever coming from the mouth etc. And fortunately, somebody looks at him, understands the situation, brings light. What are you frightened of? It is nothing to be frightened of. That is nothing but just a harmless rope. As soon as light is brought up, immediately what happens? First of all, semi-light is gone, full light has come. Secondly, I am not seeing something. I am

seeing exactly I know what it is. And third, there is no similarity, no relationship between what I experienced before and what is in front of me. I am just seeing a harmless something. That is what Gaudapada wants to remind us through these two 17 and 18 karikas.

Anishchita yatha rajju andhakare vikalpita

sarpa dharadvih bhavaihi tadvat atma vikalpitaha

As the rope whose real nature, when not known, because of semi-light is imagined to be a snake or a water-lime or a bent stick or a garland and so on. So also, the *Atman* is imagined by our minds in various ways. So, various ways. This is a very significant statement. The *Atman* is imagined in various ways. How many ways? Myriads of ways. That is going to give us from verse karika 20th until 28th karika how different people think different things are the *Atman*. *Atman* means reality. We will come to that later. The clear meaning is *yatha*, just like *andhakare*, *Andhakara* means not total darkness, it is semi-darkness. *Anishchita rajju*. There is a rope lying down there. But that rope is not clearly seen because of the semi-light. That is called *anishchita rajju*. The real nature of the rope is not ascertained as it is. When it is not ascertained it is subjected to various imaginations what is called superimpositions. What are the superimpositions? It can be not only a snake, it can be a *sarpa*, it can be *jaladhara*, a stream of water. It can be a bent stick resembling like a snake. Or it can be a beautiful garland lying there. In many of these temples so many hundreds and hundreds of old garlands are thrown out. Even in the Ramakrishna ashrams if you see the dustbin so many old, faded flower garlands are kept out. So, depending upon what a person's imagination is dominant at the time of looking at this *anishchita vastu*. So uncertain *vastu* he can think it is a snake. He can think it is a stream of water. He can think it is a bent stick. Or he can think it is a *mala*. So many things. So many other examples. A man may look at what is called a silver shell. He can mistake it as pure silver. So, anything is possible. This is the example Gaudapada is giving.

The *atman* is the *rajju* or rope and various ways we go on superimposing. Various ways mean what? Various means, first, this is the waking state, this is the dream state, this is the deep sleep state. Secondly even in both waking and then dream state according to our *yatha vidya yatha samskara*. So, I may think I am a poor man, I become rich, I am an ugly man, I became beautiful, I am a rich man, I am being murdered, I am a powerful man, I am kicked out of my post by a rival or some unknown power, I lost all my property, or I did not get what I want. All these are on that one *atman*. What does it mean? It means whatever we think it depends upon consciousness. When you think a rope, it is consciousness as rope. When you think a man, consciousness as man, consciousness as woman, consciousness as a house, consciousness as external, consciousness as internal, consciousness as the waking, consciousness as the dreaming, consciousness as the sleeping. We have discussed it earlier in the first, what is called, *Agama Prakarana*. So, it is superimposition. Different people superimpose upon *Atma*, different conditions. I am a man, I am a woman, I am an animal, I am a plant, I am an insect, I am amoeba, I am a rock etc. All these are possible. So, who is doing all this? Oneself. There is nobody else. So,

what does this mean? First of all, I forget that I am the *Atman*. And next is, I think I am such and such. So, I think I am not the *Atman* is also as imagination. I know that I am such and such an object is also as imagination. That's what Gaudapada wants to convey. And that is what Advaita Vedanta wants to convey. And that is what Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother, want us to understand.

We will proceed to 18th verse. Same, continuation of the earlier example. Gaudapada says,

Nischitayam yatha rajvam vikalpo vinivartate

Rajjoreva itichadvaitam tadvat atma nischayaha

When the real nature of the rope is ascertained all illusions about it disappear and there arises the conviction that it is the one unchanging rope and nothing else. Even so, if the nature of the conviction regarding *Atman* will come when upon the cessation of I am the waker, I am the dreamer, I am the sleeper completely subside. So let us go to the Sanskrit verse. *Yatha rajvam nischitayam*, when sufficient light is brought that is the only condition. Earlier, *anischitayam*, uncertain. Why? Because of semi-light. But here, *nischitayam*, bright light is there. Without any mistake, I can see what is in front of me. It is not a snake, not a garland, not a stream of water, not a bent stick, not anything else, but purely it is a rope. As soon as I come to know, what happens? *Vikalpa vinivartate*. *Vikalpa* means all sorts of imaginations. It is going to bite me. It is poisonous and I am going to die. What happens when I die? All these are *Vikalpas*. *Vikalpa* means very suffering type of *Samskaras*. And all those *Samskaras* depend upon what? Earlier, it depended upon the *Agnana*, ignorance of the truth. Now, the knowledge of the truth. Then what happens? All *Vikaras*, everything instantaneously *vinivartate*, disappear. Then what happens? *Rajjo eva iti*, this object which all this time I had been imagining as a snake, as a bent stick, as a stream of water, or as a garland, or completely what happens? It is all unreal, *mithya*. Then what happens? *Eva mithi, advaitam nishpadhyate*. That *advaitam* means that one truth. *Advaita* means here, we are not talking about a philosophical school. *Advaitam* means the only truth. What is the truth? What I am seeing, what I am hearing, what I am tasting, touching, or smelling is nothing but God. And then who am I? I am also God. This knowledge results. *Tadvat Atma Vinischaya*. So, everything is *Atma Vinischaya*. Everything is *Atman*, everything is *Brahman*. I am the *Atman*, I am *Brahman*. That is what he wants to say. And the real nature of the rope is ascertained under bright light. All imaginary illusions, or every illusion is imaginary, about that imagined object. That is, this is a snake, etc., disappear at that very moment. And this is what Sri Ramakrishna says. Suppose there is a room, for a thousand years it is dark, and you strike a match, immediately light will come. How much time will it take for that darkness to disappear? There is no *krama*, there is no order. Light comes, darkness disappears. It is a simultaneous process. *Tadvat Atma Vinischaya*. As soon as we come to know what I am experiencing is nothing but the *Atman*, as soon as that comes, all the delusions will go, all the *avasthas* will disappear, and then I become the only person.

Just I want to add a little bit Shankara Bashya. Because what I have explained is what is dependent totally upon Shankaracharya's commentary. He says, in Sanskrit of course, when it is determined that it is nothing but the rope alone, then all illusions regarding the rope disappear. And the non-dual knowledge that there exists nothing else but the rope. There is no duality about the rope. It is non-dual knowledge. It is not a snake, it is not a streak of water, it is not a stick, it is not a garland. All this knowledge of the rope becomes firmly established. Then only we know that I am without decay and death, immortal, fearless, one and without a second.

ajau nitya shashvatoyam na anyathe anyamane sharire

This is what we have to keep in mind. Gaudapada here says clearly, as long as this truth, what truth? That there is only *Atman*, and that *Atman* is only one. There are not many. Upon this *Atman* is superimposed the entire, what you call, fourteen *lokas*, all the three, *Jagrat*, *Swapna*, *Sushupti*, *Avasthas*, the billions and billions of living and non-living things. Everything is superimposed, just as in that earlier example, upon that harmless rope, all these things are imagined. It is all nothing but imagination. And until we know there is only one pure *Atman*, we will continue to mistake that *Atman* as *Anatma*. When we mistake *Atma*, it is known as *Anatma*. When we mistake that *Atman*, it comes to be known as *Jivatma*. And various *pranis*, living and non-living, all the fourteen, *Chaturdashya Bhuvanaani*, everything, that becomes the truth.

That is why, when we look at the world, nobody says that it is not *Satyam*, it is *Mithya*. Nobody says. We know. How do you know? If you see a snake, you will fear. Now, here is the fun. All this example is about mistaking a rope for a snake. But here I am adding something. There is no mistake. It is daylight. You see a snake and it is coming towards you. And what do you do? You simply, you may become struck dumb or you may become immobile or you may run away or you bring a stick and wants to kill the stick. Take this example. So, this is not that example. No. What I wanted to tell you is that you are seeing that snake is also a *Mithya*. You are seeing yourself, I am the body and this particular body can be destroyed by that particular body through its poison. Everything is nothing but *Kalpana*. The example is given to make us understand waking is also *Mithya*, dream also is *Mithya* and deep sleep is also *Mithya*. That is the point. So many people, great philosophers, that's why so many schools of philosophy, *Dvaita*, so many schools of *Dvaita*, so many schools of *Visishtadvaita* and so many schools of even *Advaita* have missed this truth. Either because they did not come to the Upanishads and studied the Upanishads under a proper teacher, a realized soul like *Vipalada*, etc. or like *Keno Upanishad* and so they did not know the truth and that's why they come to wrong conclusions. So, they do not know how to interpret the Upanishads, come to a false conclusion, convinced that that is the reality and go on propagating that reality. Reality is one but false conclusions are many. How many? Infinite number are there.

But Gaudapada lists from this 19th onwards until 20th. He goes on telling how different people think of this *Atman* in different ways. But having given this example, Shankaracharya, he did not comment upon all these things. Only

Anandagiri, the *Tikakara*, the sub-commentator, he pointed out who these philosophers are. Without his help, it is really difficult for us whom Gaudapada is really referring to. We will proceed to 19th. How different people they advocate different systems of philosophy. I want to warn you now. What does it mean? It means that it is not that you read a particular book and some thought appeals to you and you think that must be the truth and you start following it. No! Very clearly you have to understand that we change our schools of philosophy at different times in different ways. For example, when we are in the waking state, our school of philosophy is one type of philosophy. When we are in the dream, it is another type of school of philosophy. When we are hungry, it is one type of philosophy. When we are doing something else, another type of school of philosophy. That is to say, whatever we are convinced is the reality, that reality alone we consider as what we call the only absolute truth. And we are convinced of it. But our ideas about that reality goes on changing from minute to minute even. I will deal with this from our next class onwards and any questions we will deal after this Shanti Path.