

‘Fear’ is always born of the recognition of the ‘other’. You are never afraid of yourself. To protect yourself from your own ‘fear’, you build imaginary fortresses around you and yours, generally with more money, better position, a large house and so on.

‘Why all these?’, If anyone asks, our reply must necessarily start with, ‘I am afraid...! Afraid of what?’ The answer can be only, ‘Of something other than myself’.

So, wherever there is the concept of the ‘other’, there is fear, restlessness, agitation, worry, anxiety, each following the other. So, anyone who recognises or cognises, something other than his own Self, the Brahman, will be afraid of the ‘other’.



यदा कदा वापि विपश्चिदेष
ब्रह्मण्यनन्तेऽप्युणुमात्रभेदम् ।
पश्यत्यथामुष्य भयं तदैव
यद्वीक्षितं भिन्नतया प्रमादात् ॥ ३३१ ॥

*yadā kadā vāpi vipaścideṣa
brahmaṇyanante'pyaṇumātṛabhedam,
paśyatyathāmuṣya bhayam tadaiva
yadvīkṣitam bhinnatayā pramādāt.* (331)

331. Whenever the wise man recognises even the least difference in the infinite Brahman, at once, that which he sees as different through mistake, becomes a source of fear to him.

The same idea as in the previous verse is being elaborated. Whenever, at any time, even for so much as a fleeting moment, you recognise the least difference in the infinite Brahman, fear starts. The very object that you ‘see’ as other becomes the source of all your fear¹.



¹ dvitīyādvai bhayam bhavati. – Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad-1.4.2
From plurality indeed all fear arises.

श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायशतैर्निषिद्धे
दृश्येऽत्र यः स्वात्ममतिं करोति ।
उपैति दुःखोपरि दुःखजातं
निषिद्धकर्ता स मलिम्लुचो यथा ॥ ३३२ ॥

*śrutismṛtinyāyaśatairniṣiddhe
dṛṣye'tra yaḥ svātmamatim karoti,
upaiti duḥkhopari duḥkhajātām
niṣiddhakartā sa malimluco yathā.* (332)

332. *He who identifies himself with the objective universe, which has been denied by hundreds of Śruti-s, Smṛti-s and reasonings, suffers one misery after another, like a thief, for he indulges in something forbidden.*

The scriptural lore, time and again, declares that the objective phenomenal world is an illusion. The Upaniṣads (Śruti) and the books of traditions (Smṛti) advise us, in hundreds of passages, to withdraw our identifications from all our delusory misconceptions. Yet, if anyone identifies with the perceived objective world, he comes to live sorrow after sorrow, each one competing in its poignancy with the earlier one.

Man is subjected to such misery only because he is disobeying the law of life as discovered and described in the scriptures. Scriptures are the reference books to know the right way of life. He who disobeys them must end in misery. He comes to suffer not only sorrows in the outer world, but also the disappointments, defections, regrets and agonies of the mind, like one who has defiled himself by an ignoble act.

One who has demeaned himself by a self insulting act, not only suffers the chastising whip of the neighbours; but even when he is not kicked by others, he sits in his own chair and kicks himself, regretting, 'Tut, Tut, why did I do it? I should not have done that'; similar self-criticisms knife him from all sides.

Just as an individual who has committed an ignoble act suffers the physical consequences of the act, as well as his own