

Reality to be experienced and consider that the life of the flesh is full of saṁsāra sorrows. They hold that the experience of the Reality is the acme of evolution, the state of complete fulfilment. They all accept and base their arguments upon the declarations of the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Therefore, the difference in their explanations should be considered as having been due to the difference in the types of students they addressed during their respective times. Some students, in their total identification with the body consider themselves to be the body. Such students can have but one relationship with the Supreme that they are entirely different from It. Accordingly, they have been told that they are entirely different from God. Such students are addressed by Ācārya Madhvā, and his school of thought is known as ‘dvaita’ or ‘dualism’.

The second type of students, slightly more intellectual, insist, ‘I am a composite being, comprising an anatomical structure with physiological functions and also a psychological entity with intellectual abilities. I am the body as well as the jīva, the individuality, the thinking-feeling entity.’ The psychological and intellectual entity has the glow of reflected divinity, just as in the achievements of an artist or a scientist there is certainly a spark of divinity. Such students are addressed by Śrī Rāmānujācārya. He says, “You are not separate from Truth. You are a part and He is the whole.” This school of thought is viśiṣṭa-advaita or ‘Qualified non-dualism’.

The third variety of students, however, are the intellectual giants, who through sādhanā, develop a subtle intellect and discriminate between the Real and the unreal. They have the capacity to live up to their convictions by fully accepting what is Real, ever rejecting what is unreal. As a result of their dispassionate discrimination, they consider themselves to be entirely different from their matter vestures and realise their identity with the Supreme, the Brahman. Such students are

addressed by Śrī Śaṅkara, for he says, “Thou art nothing but Brahman.” This school of philosophy is known as ‘advaita’ or ‘non-dualism’.

All three points of view are explained in this verse, now under discussion.



अत्रात्मबुद्धिं त्यज मूढबुद्धे
त्वङ् मांसमेदोऽस्थिपुरीषराशौ ।
सर्वात्मनि ब्रह्मणि निर्विकल्पे
कुरुष्व शान्तिं परमां भजस्व ॥ १६१ ॥

*atrātma-buddhiṁ tyaja mūḍha-buddhe
tvāñ māṁsa-medo'śthi-puriṣarāśau,
sarvātmanī brahmaṇī nirvikalpe
kuruṣva śāntim paramām bhajasva. (161)*

161. Cease to identify yourself with this packet of skin, flesh, fat, bones and filth, O foolish one! Instead, identify yourself with the Brahman Absolute, the Self of all, and gain the experience of supreme peace.

In this verse, Ācārya Śaṅkara is advising the students to give up their false and painful identifications with the anātman. What is to be renounced is only the idea ‘I am the body’, renounce not the house, nor the wife nor the children. Money, position, status in society and so on, need not be given up but only the idea, ‘I am the body’ is to be totally renounced. Those who consider themselves to be the body, whose constituents are the skin, flesh, fat, bones and filth are addressed as ‘fools’ by the Ācārya.

Giving up the identification with this packet of faith, (Ātmabuddhi) the sense of ‘I-ness’ should be redirected into the right channel, towards the unchanging, eternal Self everywhere, the Brahman. Thus, fixing the identification in Brahman, which is the Ātman, the Self, come to experience and enjoy supreme peace.