

THE

Nothing

BY

AVATAR MEHER BABA

Avatar Meher Baba's Message
Given for the Occasion
of
His 73rd Birthday
on 25th February 1967

"Births and Deaths are illusory phenomena. One really dies when one is born to live as God, the Eternal who is beyond both Birth and Death."

—MEHER BABA.



Avatar Meher Baba

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JABALPUR : 25th FEBRUARY, 1967

Introduction

THERE are some eternal questions which have been asked again and again. They were asked in the dim past, they are asked now and they will be asked again in distant future. The questions are : "How did the Infinite become finite?" "How did the One without a second become many ?" "Is the world a reality or illusion ?" etc.

Meher Baba, the Avatar of the present age, answers these questions. He says, "It is due to Maya, the principle of Ignorance. The existence of the finite is **apparent or imaginary**. The Undifferentiated, the Unqualified and the Indivisible **ONE appears** to be many. Maya, the Master-illusionist, produces **seemingly** existent worlds out of Nothing." He adds, "When a person becomes spiritually perfect, he knows that nothing exists but God, and that what **seems** to exist in the sphere of duality and capable of being grasped by the intellect is illusion. For the spiritually perfect man to whom God is the only reality, science, art, music, weakness, strength, good and evil are nothing but dreams."

He further adds, "All activity everywhere in creation is but a play of everything and nothing. When there is a complete cessation of this activity, the Nothing prevails. When this Nothing is attained, you have Everything."

Maya, a Sanskrit word, is composed of Ma and Ya. 'Ma' means 'not' and 'Ya' means 'That which is'. So, Maya means 'That which is not' or briefly 'The Nothing.'

On the occasion of Beloved Baba's 73rd Glorious Birthday, we have great pleasure in presenting as love-offering to all Baba-lovers Avatar Meher Baba's Discourse on "Maya" in the form of a booklet entitled "The Nothing." This discourse was published in Meher Baba Journal and later compiled in book forms under the title of "Discourses", "God to Man and Man to God", etc.

The above discourse was delivered in four parts. In the first part Beloved Baba says that Truth cannot be known and realized unless falsehood is known and realized as falsehood. There are two kinds of falsehood:

(a) mistakes in taking as a fact that which is not a fact, and

(b) mistakes in valuation.

Mistakes in valuation can be committed in three ways:

(a) in taking as important that which is unimportant, e. g. death;

(b) in taking as unimportant that which is important, e. g. God; and

(c) in giving to a thing an importance that is other than the importance it really has, e. g., rituals, ceremonies and other religious practices.

All these falsehoods are creations of Maya.

In the second part He says that all false beliefs are as much creations of Maya as are false values. The illusion that the soul is the mind or the body is the work of Maya.

In the third part He says that false beliefs are of two types:

- (a) those which arise from careless thinking; and
- (b) those which arise from vitiated thinking.

Falsehoods of the first type are less harmful than those of the second. With the shedding of the last vestige of falsehoods created by Maya, the soul knows itself to be God, the only reality.

In the concluding part He says that Maya is not illusion; it is the creator of illusion. Maya is not false; it is that which gives falsity. Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal real. Maya is not duality; it is that which causes duality.

Our effort will have achieved its desired result if Baba-lovers discuss these questions with others who had so far no opportunity of going through Beloved Baba's "Discourses" and thereby bring them in the indirect "contact" of MEHER BABA, the Living AVATAR of the present age.

— P. G. N.

MAYA

DISCOURSE BY MEHER BABA

Part ONE

FALSE VALUES

*E*very one wants to know and realise the Truth; but Truth cannot be known and realised as Truth unless ignorance is known and realised as being ignorance.

Hence arises the importance of understanding Maya or the principle of ignorance. People read and hear so much about Maya, but few understand what it really is. It is not enough to have superficial understanding of Maya. It is necessary that Maya should be understood as it is, i.e., in its reality. **To understand Maya or the principle of ignorance is to know half the Truth of the universe.** Ignorance in all its forms has to disappear if the soul is to be established in self-knowledge; therefore, **it is imperatively necessary for man to know that which is false, to know it as false and so to get rid of it.**

What is the essential nature of a falsehood ? If the true is known as true or if the false is known as false,

The Essence of a Falsehood

there is no falsehood, only a form of knowledge; **falsehood consists in taking the true as false or the false as true, i.e., in considering something to be other than what it is.** So falsehood is an error in judging the nature of things.

There are two kinds of knowledge : (i) intellectual judgments about the facts of existence and (ii) judgments that imply the appreciation of the worth or importance of things, i.e., valuation.

Two kinds of knowledge

Purely intellectual judgments or beliefs derive their importance from their being related to values in some way : divorced from values, they have no importance. For example, no one takes much interest in counting exactly the number of leaves which exist on a particular tree, although from the purely theoretical point of view such information will be a form of knowledge. But such information or knowledge is treated as unimportant because it is not vitally connected with other values. Intellectual knowledge is important (i) when it enables values to be realized by giving control over the means or (ii) **when it enters into valuation itself, modifying or in some other way affecting it.**

Just as there are two kinds of judgment, there are two kinds of falsehood : (i) mistakes in taking as a fact that which is not a fact; and (ii) mistakes in valuation. Mistakes in valuation can be committed in three ways : (a) in taking as important that which is unimportant; or (b) in taking as unimportant that which is important;

Three types of Mistakes in valuation.

or (c) in giving to a thing an importance that is other than the importance it really has. **All these falsehoods are creations of Maya.**

Although Maya includes all falsehoods, there are some falsehoods that count and others that do not count.

The heavy price of Mistakes in valuation. If a person takes a throne to be slightly taller than what it is, it would be falsehood that does not very much matter.

On the other hand, if a person takes the throne to be the be-all and the end-all of his life, that also would be a falsehood; but it would be a falsehood that affects the course and significance of his life substantially.

Mistakes in valuation are far more effective in misleading, perverting and limiting life, than mistakes in purely intellectual judgments about objective facts.

Mistakes in valuation arise owing to the influence of subjective desires. **True values are values that belong to things in their own right : they are**

F a l s e values arise due to the influence of subjective wants **intrinsic, and are absolute and permanent, not liable to change from time to time or from person to person.**

But false values are derived from desires and are dependent upon subjective factors : being dependent, they are relative and impermanent, liable to change from time to time and from person to person.

For example, a man, who is very thirsty and is in a desert like Sahara, thinks that there is nothing more

precious than water, while the man, who has at his hand abundance of water, and who is not very thirsty, does not attach the same importance to water.

Examples In the same way, the man, who is hungry, considers food as very important : but a man, who has had his full dinner, does not even think of food until he is hungry. **The same thing applies to other lusts and longings that project imaginary and relative value to those objects that will fulfil those lusts and longings.**

The value of sense-objects is great or small according to the intensity or urgency of these lusts and longings. If these lusts and longings increase in intensity or urgency, the objects assume great importance; if **False values** they subside in their intensity or urgency, **are derivative and relative** the objects also lose much of their importance; and if the lusts and longings appear intermittently, those objects retain possible value; when the lusts and longings are latent, they have actual value when they are manifesting themselves. All these are false values, because they do not belong to the objects themselves. When in the light of true knowledge, all the lusts and longings disappear completely, objects which were vested with importance through the working of these lusts and longings, are immediately deprived of all their borrowed importance and are seen to be empty or unimportant.

Just as a coin that does not have currency is treated as false though it has a kind of existence, the objects of lusts and longings, when seen in their

emptiness are treated as false, though these objects might continue to have some kind of recognition. They are there and they may be known and seen to be in existence but no longer mean anything they do not have the same importance; they are empty. They hold false promise of fulfilment to an imagination that is perverted by lusts and longings; but to the tranquil and steady perception they are seen to have no importance, when they are taken apart from the soul.

When a beloved one dies, there is sorrow and sense of loss, but this feeling of missing someone, whom one has often seen, is rooted in attachment to the form independently of the soul. It is the form which has vanished, not the soul. The soul is not dead; in its true nature, it has not even passed away; for it is everywhere. But through attachment to the body, the form was considered as important; all longings, desires, emotions, thoughts were centred upon the form, and when through death the form disappears, there is emptiness. **If the form, as such, had not come to be regarded with false importance, there would be no sorrow for one who has passed away.** The feeling of loneliness, the lingering memory of the beloved, the longing that he should still be present, the tears of bereavement and the sighs of separation are due to false valuation; they are the working of Maya. **When an unimportant thing is regarded as important, we have one manifestation of the working of Maya.**

From the spiritual point of view, it is a form of ignorance.

On the other hand, **the working of Maya also expresses itself by making an important thing look unimportant.** From the spiritual point of view, only God has importance. But very few persons are interested in God. If the worldly minded turn to God at all, it is usually for selfish and temporal purposes : **they seek the gratification of desires, hopes and revenges through the intervention of the God of their imagination; they do not call on God as Truth.** They long for all things except the only Truth, which they regard as unimportant. This again is the blinding up of vision caused by the working of Maya. **People pursue their happiness through everything except God, who is the only Unfailing Source of Abiding Joy.**

The working of Maya also expresses itself by giving to a thing an importance that is not the importance it really has. This happens when rituals, ceremonies and other external religious practices are considered as ends in themselves. They have their own value as means, as vehicles of the inner life, as a medium of expression; but as soon as they are allowed to exist in their own right they are given an importance other than that which belongs to them. Then they bind life instead of expressing it. **When the inessential is allowed to predominate over the essential, there is the Third principal form of Ignorance concerning valuation.** This again is the working of Maya.

Taking as unimportant that which is important

Giving wrong importance to a thing

MAYA

Part TWO

FALSE BELIEFS

The shackles, that hold the soul in bondage, chiefly consist of wrong values or falsehoods concerning valuation. But some falsehoods of the nature of wrong beliefs also play an important part in holding the soul in bondage. False beliefs implement false values, but they also gather strength from false values in which the soul has been stuck up. All false beliefs are as much creations of Maya as false values; and **false beliefs as well as false values are among the clutches which Maya uses in order to hold the soul in ignorance.**

Maya becomes irresistible by taking possession of the very seat of knowledge, which is the human intellect. It is thus difficult to surmount Maya, because with the intellect under its sway false beliefs and illusion are created and upheld. Barriers to the realisation of the Truth are the results of attempts to justify erroneous beliefs. **The intellect functioning in freedom prepares the way to the Truth, but under the influence of Maya it creates obstacles to understanding,**

False Values and False Beliefs are the Clutches of Maya.

Intellect Plays in the Hands of Maya

The false beliefs by Maya are so deep-rooted and strong that they seem to be self-evident: they take on the garb of veritable truths, and are accepted without question. For example, men believe that they are their physical bodies and it does not occur to them that they may be other than these bodies. **Identification with the physical body is assumed without proof: and they hold the belief all the more strongly because it is independent of rational proof.**

Man's life has been centred upon the physical body and its desires. To give up the belief that he is the physical body involves the giving up of desires pertaining to the physical body and the false values which they maintain. The belief that he is his physical body is conducive to the physical desires and attachments; but the belief that he is other than his physical body runs counter to the accepted desires and attachments. Therefore, the belief that he is his physical body becomes natural; it is easy to hold and difficult to uproot. On the other hand, belief that he is something other than his physical body calls for convincing proof; it is difficult to hold and easy to resist. But all the same, when the mind is unburdened of all physical desires and attachments, the belief that he is his physical body is seen to be false and the belief that he is something other than his body is seen to be true.

Even when a person succeeds in shedding the false belief that he is the physical body, he remains a victim of the false belief that he is his subtle body. His life is

Identification
with the Subtle
Body.

centred upon the subtle body and its desires. To give up the belief that he is the subtle body involves the giving up of desires pertaining to the subtle body and the false values that they maintain. Therefore, for him the belief that he is his subtle body becomes natural; and the belief that he is something other than his subtle body calls for convincing proof. But when the mind is unburdened of all desires and attachments pertaining to the subtle body, the person gives up the false belief that he is his subtle body as readily as he gives up the false belief that he is his physical body.

But this is not the end of false beliefs. Even when a person drops the false belief that he is his subtle body he cherishes the illusory belief that he is his ego-mind or the mental body. **Man cherishes false belief because he relishes it. Throughout his long life as an individual soul, he has fondly clung to the false idea of his separate existence : all his thoughts, emotions and activities have assumed and confirmed the existence of the separate 'I'. To surrender the false belief that he is the ego-mind is to surrender all that has seemed to constitute his very existence.**

In surrendering the false belief that he is his physical or subtle body, it is necessary to surrender various desires and attachments; it is the giving up of something one had for a long time. But in surrendering the false

belief that he is his ego-mind, he is called
Shedding the Last Falsehood. upon to surrender the very core of what he thought he had himself been. To shed this last vestige of falsehood is therefore the most difficult task. **But this last falsehood is no more lasting than the earlier falsehoods, that seemed to him to be unchallengeable certainties : it also has its ending; and it comes to be shed when the soul renounces its craving for separate existence.**

When the soul knows itself to be different from the physical and psychic bodies as well as the mind, it knows itself to be Infinite: as soul, Soul is beyond Thinking and Doing it merely IS. With the mind the soul appears to think; with the subtle body it appears to desire and with the gross body it appears to be engaged in action. **The belief that the soul is doing anything is a false belief.** For example, a man believes that he is sitting in the chair; but in fact, it is the body which is sitting in the chair. The belief that the soul is sitting in the chair is due to its identification with the physical body. In the same way, a man believes that he is thinking, but in fact, it is the mind that is thinking. The belief that the soul is thinking is due to its identification with the mind. It is the mind that thinks and the body that sits; the soul is neither engaged in thinking nor in any physical actions.

Of course, it is not mere mind or mere body that does the thinking or other physical action; for, mere mind and mere body do not exist. They exist as illusions of

The Belief that the Soul is the Agent of Actions is False.

the soul and it is when the soul falsely identifies itself with them, that there arises the thinking or the doing of things. **The soul, the mind and the body taken together are the agent of actions or the limited 'I'.** But the soul in its true nature is neither responsible for thinking nor for actions. **The illusion that the soul is the mind or the body and the illusion that the soul is the agent of thinking or actions is created by Maya or the principle of Ignorance.**

In the same way, the belief that the soul experiences the pleasures and the pains of life or is going through the opposites of experience is false. **The soul is beyond the opposites of experience.** But it does not know itself as such; and it takes on the experiences characteristic of the opposites because of identification with the mind and the body. **The soul**

that is confused with the mind and the body becomes the recipient of pains and pleasures; When a man thinks that he is the most miserable person in the world, he is entertaining an illusion which comes into existence through Ignorance or Maya. He is really not unhappy but imagines that he is unhappy, because he has got mixed up with the mind and the bodies. Of course, it is not the mind by itself or the bodies by themselves which can have any experiences of the opposites. **It is the soul, the mind and the bodies together that become the Subject of dual experience: but the soul, in its true nature, is beyond the opposites of experience.**

Thus, it is the mind and the body that constitute the Agent of activities and the Subject of dual experiences.

However, they do not assume this double role in their own right, but only when they are taken along with the soul. **It is the ensouled mind and body that become the Agent of activities or the**

Subject of dual experience. But the process of ensoulment is based upon ignorance : the soul in its true nature is eternally unqualified, unmodified and unlimited; it appears to be qualified, modified and limited through Ignorance or the working of Maya.

MAYA

Part THREE

TRANSCENDING THE FALSEHOODS OF MAYA

Countless are the falsehoods which a Maya ridden man endures in the stupor of Ignorance; but **falsehoods carry within themselves their own insufficiency.**

Discerning the
Falsehood

This brings us to the question : "How do we discern the falsehood as falsehood ?" There is no way out of the falsehood except by knowing it as a falsehood but this knowledge of falsehood as falsehood would never come unless it were in some way latent in the falsehood.

The acceptance of falsehood is always a compromise. Even in the depths of Ignorance, the soul gives some kind of challenge to the falsehood, and however feeble it may be in its initial stages, this is the beginning of that search for the Truth which annihilates falsehood and ignorance. **In the acceptance of falsehood there is restlessness, deep suspicion and fear.** For example, when a man considers himself to be identical with the physical body, he does not fully

reconcile himself to this belief. In entertaining this false belief, there is fear of death and the fear of losing others. If a man depends for his happiness only upon the possession of forms, he knows in the heart of his heart that he is building his castles on slippery sands, that this surely is not the way to abiding happiness, that the support to which he so desperately clings may any day give in. So, he is deeply suspicious of his grounds.

Man is aware of his own insecurity. He knows that something is wrong somewhere and that he is counting upon false hopes. Falsehood is treacherously unreliable; he simply cannot afford to endure it for ever. **Falsehood bears the hall-mark of being incomplete and unsatisfactory, temporary and provisional; it points out to something else; it comes to the person as hiding something which is greater and truer than what it seems to be at its face value. Falsehood betrays itself; and it leads man on to know the Truth.**

False beliefs are of two types : (I) those which arise from careless thinking, and (II) those which arise from vitiated thinking. **Falsehoods of the first type are less harmful than those of the second. Untruths of an intellectual nature arise from intellectual mistakes, but the falsehoods that count spiritually arise from the vitiation of the intellect, through the operation of blinding desires.**

The difference between these two types of falsehoods may be brought out by a physiological analogy. Some

troubles of the vital organs of the body are functional, others structural. Functional diseases arise because of some irregularity in the functioning of an organ; there may be nothing seriously wrong with its structure, it has become sluggish or irregular and needs merely stimulation or correction in order to function properly. Structural diseases come into existence because of the development of some deformity in the structure or constitution of the vital organ. The fault of the vital organ is of a much graver nature; it has become damaged or rendered inefficient due to some tangible factor which has entered into the very constitution of the vital organ. When the kidney is sluggish the trouble is merely functional; but when there is a stone in the kidney, the trouble is structural. Both types of troubles can be corrected; but it is far easier to correct functional than structural troubles.

Falsehoods that arise from some fault in the use of intellect are similar to functional troubles, while those that arise from the vitiation of the intellect are similar to structural troubles. **Just as functional troubles are easier to correct than structural troubles, falsehoods of the first kind are easier to correct than falsehoods of the second kind.** In order to correct the functional troubles of the kidney it is necessary to give it a better tone and strength; but in a structural trouble like the formation of a stone it is necessary to perform an operation. In the same way, if falsehoods arise from mistakes in the use of the intellect, it is necessary to be

Analogy of Functional and Structural Troubles

Importance of Purifying intellect

more careful in the use of the intellect; but if falsehoods arise from vitiation of the intellect, it is necessary to have purification of the intellect, which requires the painful process of cutting out those desires and attachments which are responsible for vitiating the intellect

Falsehoods of vitiated thinking spring from initial mistakes in valuation; they arise as a side product of a psychic activity in the pursuit of certain accepted values; they come into existence as a part of rationalisation and justification of the accepted values. If they did not affect human values or their realisation, they would immediately dwindle into insignificance, and lose their grip upon the mind. When false beliefs derive their vitality from deep-rooted wishes, they are nourished by false seeking. If the error in false beliefs is purely intellectual, it is easy to set it right, but the false beliefs, nourished by false seeking are the citadels of Maya; they involve much more than intellectual error, and are not diminished by mere counter-assertions of an intellectual kind.

The cutting out of the desires and attachments that vitiate thinking is not a matter of intellectual proposition; it requires right effort and right action. **Honest action is a preliminary to the elimination of spiritual falsehoods.**

Clarity of Perception comes from Inner Purity. The perception of spiritual truths requires clear thinking. **True clarity of thought is a fruit of a pure and tranquil mind.**

Not until the stripping off of the last vestige of Maya created falsehood, is God known as the Truth;

only when Maya is completely crossed, there arises God as Truth the supreme knowledge that God is is known after the only Truth. God alone is Real. Transcending Falsehoods God is One Infinite Reality; all divisions which are conceived within this Reality are false and do not actually exist.

When God is considered as divisible, it is due to Maya. The variegated world of multiplicity does not effect the partitioning of God into several different portions. There are different ego-minds, different bodies different forms, but only one soul. When the one soul has different ego-minds and bodies, there are different individualised beings, but this does not introduce multiplicity within the soul. The soul remains indivisible. The one indivisible soul is the origin of different ego-minds, which do the thinking and doing, and go through numberless dual experiences; but the one indivisible soul remains beyond thinking and doing and beyond all dual experiences.

Differences of thinking do not create Divisions within the Soul

Different opinions or different ways of thinking do not introduce multiplicity within the one indivisible soul for the reason that there are no opinions or any ways of thinking within the soul. All the activity of thinking along with its conclusions is within the ego-mind, which is finite. The soul does not think; it is only the ego-mind which thinks with the background of the soul. Thinking, and the knowledge that comes through thinking, are both possible in

the state of imperfect and incomplete knowledge which belongs to the finite ego-mind. In the soul there is neither thinking nor the knowledge that comes through thinking.

The soul is infinite thought and infinite intelligence; in this infinite thought and intelligence there is no division of the thinker, the thinking and the conclusions of thinking, nor duality of subject and object. It is only the ego-mind with the background of the soul that can become the thinker. The soul, which is infinite thought and infinite intelligence, does not think or have any activity of the intellect. Intellect and its limited thinking comes into existence only with the finite ego-mind; **in the completeness and sufficiency of the infinite intelligence there is no need for the intellect or its activities.**

Soul is Infinite
Thought and
Infinite Intelli-
gence

With the shedding of the last vestige of falsehoods created by Maya, the soul not only knows its reality to be different from the gross, the subtle or the mental body, but **knows itself to be God, the only reality.** It knows that the mind, the subtle body and the physical body were the creations of its own imagination.

God is the only
reality



MAYA

Part FOUR

GOD AND MAYA

God is infinite by being above the opposites of duality. He is above the aspects of good and evil; small and great, right and wrong, virtue and vice, happiness and misery. If God were good

God is beyond Duality rather than evil or evil rather than good, or if he were small rather than great or great rather than small, or if he were right rather than wrong or wrong rather than right, or if he were virtuous rather than vicious or vicious rather than virtuous, or if he were happy rather than miserable or miserable rather than happy, he would be finite and not infinite.

Whatever is infinite transcends duality; it cannot by definition be one term in a duality; therefore that which is truly infinite cannot be considered to be the dual part of the finite. If the infinite is regarded as existing side by side with the

The Finite cannot be the second part of the Infinite finite, it is no longer infinite, for it then becomes the second part of duality. So, the existence of the duality as an Infinite God and the finite world is illusory. God alone is Real, Infinite and One without a second. The existence of the finite is only apparent, false and not real.

How does the false world or finite things come into existence? Why does it exist? It is created by Maya or the principle of Ignorance. **Maya is not illusion; it is the creator of illusion. Maya is not false; it is that which gives falsity. Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal real. Maya is not duality; it is that which causes duality.**

The World of Finite Things is a Creation of Maya

For the purposes of intellectual explanation, **Maya must be looked upon as being infinite. It creates the illusion of finiteness, it is not itself finite.** All the illusions which are created by Maya are finite, and the entire universe of duality, which appears to exist due to Maya, is also finite. Universe seems to contain innumerable things but that does not make it infinite. Stars may be countless; they are a huge number; but the collection of stars is all the same finite. Space and time seem to be infinitely divisible, but they are nevertheless finite. **Everything that is finite and limited belongs to the world of illusion; but the principle which causes this illusion of finite things must, in a sense, be regarded as not an illusion.**

Creations of Maya are Finite

Maya cannot be considered as finite. The finite is limited in space and time. Maya does not exist in space and cannot be limited by it. **Maya cannot be limited in space, because space is itself the creation of Maya. Space with all that it contains, is an illusion, dependent upon**

Maya is not Limited by Space

Maya; Maya is in no way dependent upon space. So Maya cannot become finite through space.

Nor can Maya become finite because of time. Though Maya comes to an end in the state of super-

consciousness, it is not finite for that reason. **Maya cannot have a beginning or end in time, because time itself is a creation of Maya.** Any view that makes Maya a happening that takes place at some time and disappears after some time, places Maya in time and not time in Maya. **Time is in Maya; Maya is not in time.** Time as well as all the happenings in time are the creations of Maya; time comes into existence because of Maya and disappears when Maya disappears. **God is a timeless reality and the realisation of God and the disappearance of Maya are one timeless act.** So, Maya is in no way limited by time.

Nor can Maya be considered to be itself finite for any other reasons; for, if it is finite, it would be an illusion; and being an illusion it would not have any

potency to create other illusions. **For the purposes of intellectual explanation, Maya is best regarded as both real and infinite, just in the same way as God is usually regarded as both real and infinite.**

Among all possible intellectual explanations, the explanation that Maya, like God, is both real and infinite

is most acceptable to the intellect of man. But **Maya cannot be ultimately true.** Wherever there is duality there is finiteness; the one limits the other. There cannot

be two real infinities. There can be two huge things; but there cannot be two infinite entities. If we have the duality of God and Maya and if both are regarded as co-ordinate existents, then the Infinite Reality of God is considered as the second part of a duality. Therefore, **the intellectual explanation that Maya is real does not have the stamp of final knowledge, though it is the most plausible explanation.**

There are difficulties in regarding Maya as illusory and there are also difficulties in regarding Maya as ultimately real. Thus, **all attempts of the limited intellect to understand Maya lead to an impasse.**

**Intellectual
Difficulties in
understanding
Maya**

On the one hand, if Maya is regarded as finite, it itself becomes illusory and then it cannot account for the illusory world of finite things; therefore Maya has to be regarded as both real and infinite. **But** on the other hand, if Maya is regarded as ultimately real, it itself becomes a second part of the duality of another Infinite Reality, namely God; from this point of view, therefore, Maya actually seems to become finite and therefore unreal. **So Maya cannot be ultimately real though it has to be regarded as such in order to account for the illusory world of finite objects.**

In whatsoever manner the intellect endeavours to understand Maya, it falls short of understanding. It is not possible to understand Maya through the intellect;

**Maya is God's
Shadow**

it is as unfathomable as God. **God is unfathomable, un-understandable, so is "Maya unfathomable, un-understandable.** So, they say : "Maya is God's shadow."

Where a man is, there is his shadow also; so where God is, there is this inscrutable Maya.

But though God and Maya are inscrutable for the intellect working under the domain of duality, they can be thoroughly understood, in their true nature, in the final knowledge of realisation. **The enigma of the existence of Maya is not cleared up until after realisation, when it is seen that Maya does not exist in reality.**

Maya does not exist in two states. **In the original unconscious state of Reality there is no Maya and in the self-conscious or super-conscious state of God there is no Maya.** Maya exists in God's consciousness of the phenomenal world when there is the consciousness of the gross world, the consciousness of the subtle world, or the consciousness of the mental world. **Maya exists when there is no self-consciousness but only the consciousness of the imagined other, and when consciousness is helplessly dominated by the false categories of duality.**

Maya exists only from the point of view of the finite. **It is only for illusion that Maya exists as creator of unreal and finite things. From the point of view of the Truth nothing exists except the Infinite and Eternal God.** **When the illusion of finite things has vanished, with it has also vanished Maya or the creator of this illusion.**

Self-knowledge comes to the soul by looking within, and by crossing Maya; in that self-knowledge, it not only knows that the different ego-minds and bodies never existed, but also that the entire universe and Maya itself never existed as a separate principle. Whatever reality Maya ever had is swallowed up in the indivisible being of the One Soul. **The soul knows itself to be what it has always been, eternally self-realised, eternally infinite in knowledge, bliss, power and existence, and eternally free from duality.** But this self-knowledge is inaccessible to the intellect and it is incomprehensible except to those who have attained realisation.

Corrigendum

| PAGE | Line | |
|------|----------------------|--|
| ii | 7 | Shift inverted coma after is to which. |
| 5 | 5 | Add coma after anything. |
| 11 | 2 | Read 'identifies' for 'indentifies'. |
| 13 | 5 | Add hyphen after Maya. |
| 16 | Last line | Add hyphen between Maya and created. |
| 17 | 11 | Add coma after bodies. |
| 22 | Last but one line | Delete inverted coma before Maya. |

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Age after age, I come amidst mankind to maintain my own creation of illusion, thereby also awakening humanity to become aware of it.....My advent is not to destroy illusion because as it is, it is absolutely nothing. I come to make you aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion which is nothing but the shadow of my infinite Self, and through me you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness

—Avatar Meher Baba.