

Maya: As 'False values'

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### Question:

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*Why should one understand 'Maya' or the 'principle of ignorance'? What does understanding of Maya constitute?*

*(or)*

*How come 'attaining Self-Knowledge' is linked with 'understanding Maya'?*

*(or)*

*Why one should know 'what is false' and 'what is true'?*

*(or)*

*Define "falsehood".*

*(or)*

*How come knowledge-acquisition is dependent upon understanding falsehood?*

*(or)*

*How does Maya influence our decision-making capabilities?*

*(or)*

*How does "our values" influence our judgemental abilities?*

*(or)*

*How come our 'values' define our 'beliefs'?*

*(or)*

*Why do we make mistakes? How come "mistakes-in-valuation" are more dangerous than all other mistakes?*

*(or)*

*What are the kinds of falsehoods that affect our judgemental capabilities? How does these falsehoods limit our lives?*

*(or)*

*How come 'mis-judgments' are creations of Maya?*

*(or)*

*From spiritual point of view, what sort of "falsehoods" affect one's course of life?*

*(or)*

*What are 'true-values' and 'false-values'? What are their characteristics?*

*(or)*

*How come our lusts and longings influence our evaluation skills, and define 'our values of objects' and 'our priorities in life'?*

*(or)*

*How come 'lamenting the loss of dear ones' is a form of ignorance?*

*(or)*

*Why do we consider important things unimportant, inessential things essential and vice-versa? What is the role of Maya in this categorization?*

*(or)*

*How does Maya work, in our day-to-day lives?*

*(or)*

*When do rituals, ceremonies and other religious practices bind? How come such 'binding' is a working of Maya?*

## **Answer:**

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Everyone wants to know and realize the Truth, but Truth cannot be known and realized as Truth unless ignorance is known and realized as being ignorance! Hence arises the importance of understanding Maya, or the principle of Ignorance.

People read and hear much about Maya, but few understand what it really is! It is not enough to have a superficial understanding of Maya; it is necessary that Maya should be understood as it is, in its reality. **To understand Maya, or the principle of Ignorance, is to know half of the Truth of the universe! 'Ignorance' in all its forms must disappear if the soul is to be established in the state of Self-knowledge.**

**Therefore, it is imperatively necessary for humanity to know what is false, to know it to be false, and to get rid of the false by knowing it to be false!**

What is the essential nature of falsehood? If the true is known as being true or if the false is known as being false, there is no falsehood but only a form of knowledge. **Falsehood consists in taking the true as being false, or the false as being true, that is, in**

considering something to be other than what in itself it really is!  
**Falsehood is an error in judging the nature of things!**

**Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of knowledge:** 1) *purely intellectual judgements about facts of existence; and 2) judgements of valuation, which imply the appreciation of the worth or importance of things.*

1. Purely intellectual judgements or 'beliefs' derive their importance from being related to 'values' in some way. Divorced from 'values', they have meagre importance in themselves. For example, no one takes much interest in counting exactly the number of leaves on a particular tree, although from the purely theoretical point of view, such information would be a form of knowledge! Such information or knowledge is treated as unimportant because it is not vitally connected with 'other values'.
2. Intellectual knowledge becomes important when it enables man to realize 'certain values' by giving him control over the means to their realization or when it enters into 'valuation' itself as an important factor, modifying or in some other way affecting the accepted values.

**Just as there are two kinds of judgement, there are two kinds of falsehood:** 1) *mistakes in accepting as facts those things that are not facts, 2) mistakes in valuation.*

**Mistakes in valuation can be committed in the following ways:**

1. in taking as important that which is unimportant,
2. in taking as unimportant that which is important, or
3. in giving to a thing an importance other than the importance it really has.

**All these falsehoods are creations of Maya.**

Although Maya includes all falsehoods, from the spiritual point of view—there are some falsehoods that count and some that do not count very much. If a person takes a throne to be higher than it is, it would be a falsehood, but one that does not matter very much. On the other hand, if a person regards the throne as the be-all and the end-all of his life, that would be a falsehood which substantially affects the course and significance of his life. On the whole, **mistakes in valuation are far more effective in misleading, perverting, and limiting life than mistakes in purely intellectual judgements about certain objective facts.**

## **Mistakes in valuation arise owing to the influence of subjective desires or wants!**

- **True values** are values that belong to things in their own right. They are intrinsic; and because they are intrinsic, they are absolute and permanent and are not liable to change from time to time or from person to person.
- **False values** are derived from desires or wants. they are dependent upon subjective factors; and being dependent upon subjective factors, they are relative and impermanent, and are liable to change from time to time and from person to person.

For example, an individual who is very thirsty and is in a desert like the Sahara thinks that nothing is more precious than water; while someone who has at hand an abundance of water and who is not very thirsty does not attach the same importance to it. In the same way, a person who is hungry considers food very important, but the individual who has had a full dinner does not even think of food until he is hungry again. [The same thing applies to other 'lusts' and 'longings', which project imaginary and relative values onto those objects that will fulfill those lusts and longings.](#)

**The 'value of sense objects' is great or small according to the intensity or urgency with which they are desired.** If these lusts and longings increase, the corresponding objects assume greater importance. If they subside in their intensity or urgency, the objects also lose much of their importance. If the lusts and longings appear intermittently, those objects retain possible value when the lusts and longings are latent, and actual value when they are manifested. **These are all false values because they are not inherent in the objects themselves!**

When in the light of true knowledge all lusts and longings disappear completely, objects vested with importance through the working of these lusts and longings immediately lose all their borrowed importance and appear meaningless.

**Just as a coin that is not in current use 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 all exist, and they may be known and seen; but they no longer mean the same thing. They hold false promise of fulfillment to an imagination perverted by lusts and longings; yet to tranquil and steady perception, they are seen

to have no importance when they are considered as separate from the soul.

### **(False Values::)**

#### **➤ [Taking the unimportant as important]**

When a loved one dies, there is sorrow and loneliness; but this sense of loss is rooted in 'attachment to the form' independently of the soul. It is the 'form' that has vanished, not the 'soul'. The soul is not dead; in its true nature, it has not even gone away, for it is everywhere. Nonetheless, through attachment to the body, the form was considered important. All longings, desires, emotions, and thoughts were centered upon the form; and when through death, the 'form' disappears, there is a vacuum, which expresses itself through missing the departed one.

If the form, as such, had not come to be surcharged with false importance, there would be no sorrow in missing the one who has passed away.

- ☛ The feeling of loneliness,
- ☛ the lingering memory of the beloved,
- ☛ the longing that he or she should still be present,
- ☛ the tears of bereavement, and
- ☛ the sighs of separation,

they are all due to false valuation, the working of Maya. When an unimportant thing is regarded as important, we have one principal manifestation of the working of Maya. From the spiritual point of view, it is a form of Ignorance.

#### **➤ [Taking the important as unimportant]**

On the other hand, the working of Maya also expresses itself by making an important thing look unimportant. In reality, the only thing that has importance is God; but very few persons are really interested in God for His own sake. If the worldly-minded turn to God at all, it is mostly for their own selfish and mundane purposes. They seek the gratification of their own desires, hopes, and even revenges through the intervention of God of their imagination. They do not seek God as Truth. They long for all things except the only Truth, which they regard as unimportant. This again is the blinding 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.

➤ **[Giving importance to a thing other than the importance it really has]**

The working of Maya also expresses itself by making the mind give to a thing an importance other than the importance it really has. This happens when rituals, ceremonies, and other external religious practices are considered to be ends in themselves. They have their own value as means to an end, as vehicles of life, as mediums of expression; but as soon as they assume claims in their own right, they are being given an importance other than that which belongs to them. When they are considered important in themselves, they bind life instead of serving the purpose of expressing it.

When the inessential is allowed to predominate over the essential by giving it wrong importance, one has the third principal form of ignorance concerning valuation. This again is the working of Maya.

– Meher Baba

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Source ::

Discourses, Pg:: 370-374

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