

# Maya (Illusion), Duality, and Unity

By Gurani Anjali

"The veil of maya, the veil I can't see..."; until you see the veil, you cannot remove the veil to see behind the veil. There are so many coverings in life, so many veils. Many of them, just like your thoughts: One thought and then another thought and each thought gives way to yet another thought, until the final thought has arrived and then even that thought has to go and be removed by another thought and then another thought. And it carries on and on and on and it seems that finally you got it. You got the thought, you got the idea, yes this is it. And when you look through that thought, that idea, and it seems alright, you say, "Yes, this is it." But then there are more thoughts, one after another, they keep banging away at the *jiva* (a living being). Now why is the *jiva* in this predicament? Why did we get landed with such a battle? We are kept busy twenty-four hours a day, every second, every breath we take, why are we kept busy with all these thoughts? Some thoughts last two minutes, some thoughts take hours and some thoughts keep coming back and saying "You're not done with me." These are the veils of *maya*.

Veils of *maya*, veils of thought, are stronger than the veils that are physical, those that have form and color. Those veils that are inside the mind are more powerful than that which you see you see with your eyes. The *jiva* is simply caught in a jam, like the fly that is caught in a honey jar. And you have to get out of it! "The veils of *maya*, the veils I can't see." So once we reach reality, we begin to see the real. But then the thoughts are still there with the reality. "See the Tree" The tree is there for a purpose, just like you. Just like me. There is a reason for our existence and there is a reason why we are here. See the Tree. What does it do? It is quiet, it is silent, just like you and me. We are silent most of the time. In fact, we are silent all the time. It is difficult to realize that, but we are silent. And yet it appears that there is so much noise. But is the noise in us or is the noise outside of us?

There are so many facets to a diamond, and like that, we are. And the tree is, also; it has many sides to it. How do we see the tree? How do we see it? Do we just look at it with our eyes, or do we become the tree? Do we put our hands into the branches of the tree, and just get into it? Or do we just look at the tree and say "Let's see, this is a maple, this is a dogwood, this is a this or that," we name it. In naming it, we fix it. We give it a place in our consciousness to remain there for us forever and ever.

But like the tree, we too are changing. The tree changes with every season. As a matter of fact, every second it is changing- just like you, just like me. But how do we see each other? How do we become one another? How do we go into each other's bodies? How do we live for each other? How does the tree do it? How do we do it? These are thoughts. Now from these thoughts you will multiply many thoughts. But they are all thoughts. They're all words, language. When the language is silence and there are no more words- then what? Ah, to be a Yogi. Turn and look at all those around you. Look at the person in front of you. You don't have to go too far, you don't have to look at too many bodies. They are all made of the same stuff, all these bodies, the same thing. All the bodies are the same. No body is different. What a wonderful thing to know - that all the bodies are the same - they are made up of the same stuff: the five senses (*indriyas*) and the

five elements (*bhutas*). But together with the five elements and the five senses, we look for the expression, the character, the power, the intensity, the might and the glory of that which we see. You must go beyond the substance and come to the realization that this individual has something more than just the five senses and the five elements.

So we look at the bodies and we know, right away at one glance, one glimpse -- if you have an education -- that the body is made up of not only the elements and the senses, but the mind and much more. But above all we look for character in a person - sometimes character cannot be noticed right away because the individual changes so much. Anything that is moving is subject to change so you see the change. But in that glimpse, in that moment, you are looking for the highest nature of man. And that is why we look - we look from one face to another face, to another face, to another -- and we keep looking. You know, just like frogs and squirrels, we look. It's just an amazing thing to see how we look. We may be driving in a car and doing this too - we're just looking. We are looking -- and -- we are looking for the expression. That expression that goes beyond just what we see. Look for that. We look for the character. We look for the expression- what expression are we looking for? What do you think we are looking for when we look at someone? We are looking for unity. But in this world of duality, it is very hard to find unity. You will only find duality in this world. But we're looking for unity. Now when we look for unity, we are looking for the one without a second. In unity, there cannot be two - there can only be one. But in this world of duality, it's very hard to find one. You will always find two. That two has to become one. That's very hard to find, very difficult. This world of duality must *be* for this world to continue and to sustain itself as a world of many expressions. The expressions are very beautiful. And we do get impressed from time to time and that impression leads to depression. Isn't that wonderful to know? Now in order to have the unity, one has to have the totality, the oneness, the one without the second. But in this world of duality, there can only be duality. Therefore, the yogi or the seeker after truth must at all times consider the power of meditation and sit from time to time and allow for stillness to enter in. Because in that stillness you will find unity, the oneness, the one without a second.

In this world of duality there always has to be friction; and we don't like this friction because we are born of unity. We don't like the friction, the friction causes a fire. Just like taking a match and striking it. But you need that friction for movement to take place and creation to become. It is an overpowering affair of life. Absolutely necessary. But we have gone through so many experiences of life and lived through so many trials and tribulations, that we don't want the pain. We want the oneness - in everything we do - we say, " Oh, let us be together." But in this world of duality you cannot have the unity. You just cannot have it. You can have commitment, but that, too, can change. You can have agreement. Someone may agree with you for that moment, for that place in time. But talk two weeks later, commitment becomes "Oh, that was then, this is now." It changes.

In the world of duality all we can have is duality. And that is wonderful because if it weren't so, this world wouldn't continue. It wouldn't continue as it is. And then you wouldn't know what tears are, what suffering is, what pain is. You wouldn't know that. Therefore, the *dharma* is very important and the *sanga* is sacred. In the *sanga* there is the unity of oneness. Even though the members may be all of different expressions and different characters, still within the *sanga*, there is that mood moving within the *dharma*. The *dharma* is always protected by seekers after truth.

The *yoga dharma* has lived for years and years, because there is the *sanga*. There is always someone who will uphold it through blood, sweat, and tears, to continue it. Because the *dharma* is sacred, the *sanga* is sacred. But in this world of duality, all that there is, is the you and the me, the us and the we. Remember this. It is very hard to find unity. You can find commitment, you can find agreement. All this lasts for a period of time. But in the place called meditation, we rise and we leave behind the world of duality and we go into that sacred place where there is non-duality. Where the spirit within you rises, the *atman*, *purusha* nature will rise and meet the flame that is rising up. That flame never goes down, no matter what. Consider the flame of a lamp, even if you take that lamp and turn it over, the flame will still go up. Like that we rise and we move and we go far away from this dualistic state of life. It's a wonderful place to be in but because we have a body and we can talk and we have the senses, we must live in this world of duality. Therefore we must remember that there is a time and place for everything. We have to see what is and what is not. We must see that.

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