

CHAPTER II

MAYA

Maya as the Cosmic Power of the Lord-Maya as the deluding power (Avidya)-Maya as the liberating power (Vidya)

Maya as the Cosmic Power of the Lord

48. *Maya* is to *Brahman* what the snake in motion is to the snake at rest. Force in action is *Maya*, force in potency is *Brahman*.

49. As the water of the ocean is now calm and next agitated into waves, so are *Brahman* and *Maya*. The ocean in the tranquil state is *Brahman*, and in the turbulent state, *Maya*.

50. The relation of *Brahman* to *Sakti* is that. of fire to its burning property.

51. *Siva* and *Sakti* (Intelligence and Energy) are both necessary for creation. With dry clay no potter can make a pot; water also is necessary. So *Siva* alone -cannot create without the help of *Sakti*.

52. Desirous of seeing *Maya* I had one day a vision: A small drop slowly expanded and formed itself into a girl; the girl became a woman and gave birth to a child; and as soon as the child was born, she took it up and swallowed it. In this way, many children were born to her and were devoured by her. Then I knew that she was *Maya*.

53. The snake itself is not affected by the poison in its fangs; but when it bites, the poison kills the creature bitten. Likewise *Maya* is in the Lord but does not affect Him, while the same *Maya* deludes the whole world.

Maya as the Deluding Power (Avidya)

54. A certain *Sadhu* lived for some time in a room in the temple of Dakshineswar. He did not speak to anybody and spent his whole time in meditation on God. One day, all of a sudden, a cloud darkened the sky, and shortly afterwards, a light wind blew away the cloud. The holy man now came out of his room and began to laugh and dance. Upon this the *Master* asked him, "How is it that you, who spend your days so quietly in your room, are dancing in joy and feeling so jovial today?" The holy man replied, "Such is *Maya* that envelops this life! No trace of it was there before; but suddenly it appears, in the serene sky of *Brahman*, creating the whole universe, and is dispersed by the breath of *Brahman*."

55. Rama, *Sita* and *Lakshmana* went to the forest as exiles. Rama walked in front, *Sita* in the middle, *Lakshmana* behind her. *Lakshmana* was very anxious to have always a full view of Rama; but as *Sita* was in the middle, he could not have it. Then he prayed to *Sita* to move aside a little; and as soon as she did so, *Lakshmana*'s wish was fulfilled, and he saw Rama. Such is the arrangement of *Brahman*, *Maya* and *Jiva* in this world. So long as the illusion of *Maya* does not move aside, the creature cannot see the Creator-man cannot see God.

56. A holy man used to look and smile at the chandelier prism day and night. The reason for his doing so was that he saw various colours through the prism-red, yellow, blue etc. Knowing these colours to be false, he realised with a smile that the world also was equally false.

57. *Hari*, wearing the mask of a lion's head, looks indeed very terrible. He goes where his little sister is playing, and roars hideously. She is shocked and terrified, and shrieks out trying to escape from the frightful creature. But when *Hari* puts off the mask, the frightened girl at once recognises her loving brother and runs up to him, exclaiming, "Oh, it is my dear brother after all!". Such is the case with all men. They are deluded and frightened and made to do all sorts of things by the inscrutable power of *Maya* or nescience, behind which *Brahman* hides Himself. But when the veil of *Maya* is removed from the face of *Brahman*, one does not see in Him a terrible and uncompromising *Master*, but one's own most beloved inner Self.

58. If God is omnipresent, why do we not see Him? Observing from the bank of a pool thickly covered with scum and weeds, you will not see the water in it. If you desire to see the water, remove the scum from the surface of the pond. With eyes covered with the film of **Maya**, you complain that you cannot see God. If you wish to see Him, remove the film of **Maya** from your eyes.

59. As the cloud covers the sun, so **Maya** hides the Deity. When the cloud moves away, the sun is seen again, when **Maya** is removed, God becomes manifest.

60. The mythical swan can separate milk from the water with which it is diluted, and drink only the milk, leaving the water behind. Other birds cannot do this. God is intimately mixed up with **Maya**. Ordinary men cannot see Him apart from **Maya**. Only the **Paramahansa** can reject **Maya**, and reach God in His purity.

61. If you can find out the nature of **Maya**, the universal illusion, it will leave you just as a thief runs away when detected.

Maya as the Liberating Power (Vidya)

62. In God there are both **Vidya Maya** and **Avidya Maya**. The **Vidya Maya** takes man towards God, whereas the **Avidya Maya** leads him astray. Knowledge, devotion, dispassion, compassion - all these are expressions of **Vidya Maya**; only with their help can one reach God.

63. It is **Maya** which reveals **Brahman**. Without **Maya**, who could have known **Brahman**? Without knowing **Sakti**, the manifested power of God, there is no means of knowing Him.

64. It is only due to **Maya** that the attainment of supreme knowledge and final beatitude becomes possible for us. Otherwise who could even dream of all this? From **Maya** alone spring duality and relativity; beyond **Maya** there is neither the enjoyer nor the object of enjoyment.

65. The cat catches her kitten with her teeth and they are not hurt; but when a mouse is so caught, it dies. Thus **Maya** never kills the devotee, though it destroys others.