

## Brahman And Maya

Swami Tejomayananda

Brahman And Maya is a free translation in English of [Brahma Ani Maya](#), a hilarious piece written in Marathi by Pujya Swami Tejomayanandaji (in his early twenties) on 9 March 1972. In this piece Swamiji humorously probes into the Vedantic Truths that underlie our day to day experiences.

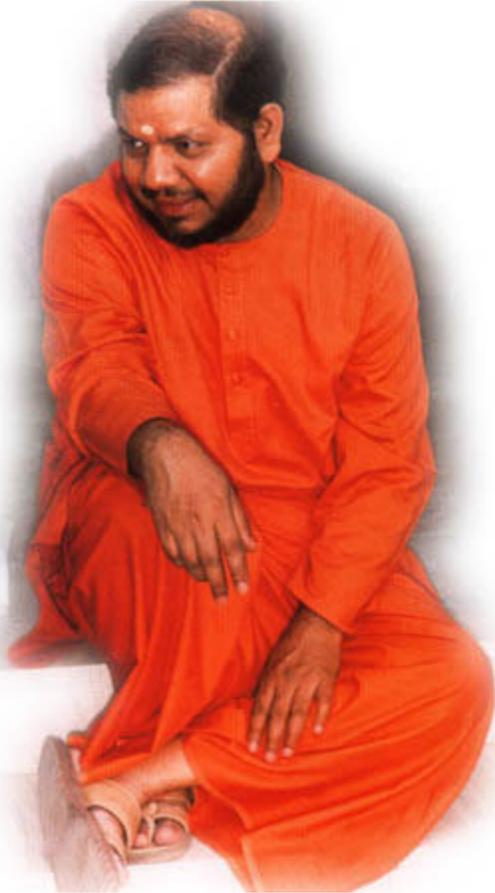
### Scene 1

In an extremely wondrous garden roses of different hues are swaying in ecstasy. The light of the early dawn has speckled them with its dewdrops which shine as pearls lending an additional grace to the beauty of the garden. Just then, a group of young girls giggled and gaggled their way there.

One of the girls cried out in sheer delight, "Aha ! Just look at all these beautiful flowers that have blossomed here. I'd love to put one of them in my hair." And she ran to fetch it. But one of her friends cautioned her about the gardener but who cared?

She touched a flower and was about to pluck it when, suddenly, a voice boomed loudly, "Who is it? STOP ! THIEF !"

The girl's hands shook and shuddered. No flower came her way, rather, an over-protective thorn, pricked her finger. But the gardener devilishly gleamed and curled his huge moustache, content with the fact that he had at least caught someone today. His attention was ever fixed on the flowers waiting for an opportunity for someone to touch even a single one of them so that he could let out his roar. The beauty of the flowers never really bothered him.



### Scene 2

After some time, a Krishna bhakta came along chanting, "Shri Krishna Govind Hare Murare, Shri Krishna Govind....."

"Ah ! What beautiful flowers !" he remarked, " O Krishna, You have Yourself created these flowers so that they may be offered in worship unto You. I will make a garland of these lovely roses and decorate them around Your neck, O Krishna."

Singing Krishna, Krishna, the Krishna bhakta ventured closer to pluck, and once again the voice boomed, "Who is it ? STOP ! THIEF !"

The elderly gardener was a stern disciplinarian of sorts. No sooner did anyone touch the flowers

than he would bellow out loud, suddenly appear out of nowhere and swoop down on his prey. Otherwise, he was simply invisible to the naked eye.

As soon as the booming bellow descended on his ears the devotee lost all sense of devotion and landed on the other side of the road cowering from sheer fright.

Pleased with the wondrous effect that his voice had, the elderly gardener went back to his hidden lair waiting for his next prey. God also seemed to be pretty pleased with him. Soon, a young cajoling couple chanced to come there..

### Scene 3

Love is blind, or blinds one. So they say, and here is ample proof.

So lost were the couple in each other's love that they were not aware of others around them. Slowly but surely, both reached the predestined spot. Now, let's listen to their sweet nothings.

"Oh ! This garden is so cute !" said the girl.

"Ah yes, just like you, my love." said the boy.

"What ? Like me? What a comparison !!! I am not so long and large, am I? And there is no green grass growing all over my body.....What are you talking about ? Had I known earlier that you were so devoid of poetry, I'd.....Anyway, let that be. Say, have you seen these pretty roses? You must get them for me. You had promised that, if need be, you would pluck flowers from Heaven just for me. Remember? Let the Heavens be as they are. But, for the moment, get these flowers for me "

Hearing these words, the loverboy's heartbeats beat even faster. He realised what a big mistake he had committed.

The devilish visage of the gardener and his fierce moustache flashed in front of his eyes. From his fallen face one could easily infer that he had encountered the gardener earlier too. But, on the surface, he laughed and said, "You yourself are my most precious rose. Why do you need this flower then?"

"Nothing doing. I just want that rose."

"Okay, I'll get it." Left with no choice the youth threw furtive glances hither and thither and reached the vantage point and .....then, .....

The moment the blind lovers had even the faintest suspicion of the presence of a third entity other than their twin - blessed one, they walked away from the scene of disaster and didn't stop till they reached home.

### Scene 4

"What did you say? This garden is for sale? Good, consider it sold. I'll take it." So saying a trader went in search of the owner of the garden and returned after some time accompanied with a few labourers. The labourers immediately started plucking all the rose flowers. The trader stood there watching it all and so was the gardener. But now he couldn't even let out a whimper of protest. Mustering up enough courage, he softly asked of the trader, "Sir, why are you plucking all the

flowers?"

"WHAT ?" the trader screamed back at him. Then taking pity on the poor fellow he winked at him and laughed out, "I'll make Gulkand (a herb made of rose petals) out of it.

Now, let's see - how many of the above 4 or 5 people actually saw the flowers. What a question? Of course, everyone saw the flowers. But Vedanta asserts, "No. None of them saw the flowers."

"Well then, you mean to say, they saw donkeys? Your Vedanta says anything. Nothing is clear."

"Wait.....Listen carefully.

The first girl saw the beauty of her flower - bedecked hair. The bhakta saw the beauty of Krishna's idol. The lover saw the blossoming of his beloved's face. And the trader had set his eyes on the Gulkand.. The gardener never even had time to notice them. In short, everyone saw merely their own vasanas or desires. Failing to notice the flowers all of them established their own personal relationships with them. And this alone is Maya !

We never really see any object or person in totality. We see only our own preconceived notions about them, in them. And this is Maya. For example, we don't see a radio or a cycle as a radio or a cycle, rather, we see it as my radio or my cycle. And were some one to just mention to us that our radio is not functioning properly, we would feel so offended as though he had said that we ourselves had some defects in us. Why is this? Because of Maya. Since, in essence, this relationship is itself delusory, Maya has ensnared everyone in its spell of delusion and make believe. So much so that even the spell of delusion is itself a delusion.

Vedanta teaches that whatever we see, hear, feel..... is all, in reality, a delusion, but being within the web of Maya, we have ourselves superimposed names and forms upon various objects and deluded ourselves completely. Just as a rose is not the beauty of any bedecked hair, nor is it any trader's Gulkand, but is actually, merely a rose. In the same way, what we consider to be the jiva or the jagat is, in essence, Brahman itself. And what we are lost in is Maya. And thus, Vedanta emphatically asserts,

***Brahma satyam jagat mithya,  
jivo brahmaiva naparaha***

***Brahman is the reality. This world, a mere transitory phase.  
The jiva is not separate from Brahman.***

Indeed, it is difficult to understand and assimilate this Truth but he who has searched for the Truth has verily found it. The rest are drowning themselves in the ocean of Maya.