

25. Understand that the objective world is as unreal as the dream world

Mud alone is real. The pot-consciousness is born of ignorance regarding mud; mud is the basis, the substance of the pot. How can a pot exist without mud? How can effect exist apart from the cause? The world appears as multiplicity only to the ignorant. To wise people (*jnanis*), *Brahman* alone exists, *Brahman* upon which all else is superimposed. The *Atma* alone is cognised by them; there is nothing else. That is the nondualistic (*a-dwaithic*) experience.

If the world is real, it must be cognised even during the stage of dreamless deep sleep, but we are not conscious of it at all. Hence, the visible world is as unreal as the dream world. The world is imposed on *Brahman* just as a snake is imposed on a rope through illusion. The snake and the rope are not seen at the same time; the entire rope is the snake. So too, *Brahman* is all this world, all this vast variety of name and form. But this imaginatively conceived variety is fundamentally false. *Brahman* alone is true.

The sky might be reflected in a pot of toddy but does not defile it. Similarly, in this vehicle —the body— the *Atma* dwells pure and undefiled. The fruits of action, good or bad, fair or foul, adhere to the vehicle and not to the indweller, the seer.

When such wisdom (*jnana*) dawns, the dark shadows of the three types of actions (*karma*) flee before it: present actions, which affect the future (*aagaami*), accumulated (*samchitha*), and commencing (*prarabdha*) actions. Yes, even present (*prarabdha*) *karma* can be overcome. For the will of God is omnipotent, and for omnipotence there can be no limit or exception. When, through spiritual practices (*sadhana*), you win the grace (*sankalpa*) of the Lord, you can achieve victory over commencing *karma* also. Don't be discouraged on any score.

The suffering and travails of this world are illusory and transitory. Fix your mind firmly on this great fact and set out bravely on the path of spiritual practice, the practice of devotion.