

Chapter One: The Union of Shiva and Shakti

I offer obeisance to the God and Goddess,
The limitless primal parents of the universe.

They are not entirely the same,
Nor are they not the same.
We cannot say exactly what they are.

How sweet is their union!
The whole world is too small to contain them,
Yet they live happily in the smallest particle.

These two are the only ones
Who dwell in this home called the universe.
When the Master of the house sleeps,
The Mistress stays awake,
And performs the functions of both.

When He awakes, the whole house disappears,
And nothing at all is left.

Two lutes: one note.
Two flowers: one fragrance.
Two lamps: one light.

Two lips: one word.
Two eyes: one sight.
These two: one universe.

In unity there is little to behold;
So She, the mother of abundance,
Brought forth the world as play.

He takes the role of Witness
Out of love of watching Her.
But when Her appearance is withdrawn,
The role of Witness is abandoned as well.

Through Her,
He assumes the form of the universe;
Without Her,
He is left naked.

If night and day were to approach the Sun,
Both would disappear.
In the same way, their duality would vanish
If their essential Unity were seen.

In fact, the duality of Shiva and Shakti
Cannot exist in that primal unitive state
From which AUM emanates.

They are like a stream of knowledge
From which a knower cannot drink
Unless he gives up himself.

Is the sound of AUM divided into three
Simple because it contains three letters?
Or is the letter 'N' divided into three
Because of the three lines by which it is formed?

So long as Unity is undisturbed,
And a graceful pleasure is thereby derived,
Why should not the water find delight
In the floral fragrance of its own rippled surface?

It is in this manner I bow
To the inseparable Shiva and Shakti.

A man returns to himself
When he awakens from sleep;
Likewise, I have perceived the God and Goddess
By waking from my ego.

When salt dissolves,
It becomes one with the ocean;
When my ego dissolved,
I became one with Shiva and Shakti.

Chapter Two: Salutations to Sri Nivriddhi

I bow to my Guru, Nivriddhi,
Who, by slaying the elephant of Maya,
Has made a dish of the pearls
Taken from its temple.

It is by his grace
That all the moon-phases of sadhana
Culminate in the full moon of realization.

The water of his grace
Washes the soul so clean
That he regards even Shiva as unclean,
And does not wish to be touched
Even by him.

Alone, there is no happiness.
Therefore, the pure Consciousness
Assumes the forms of Guru and disciple.

He has attained the great status of Guru
By possessing no status.
His wealth is his ability
To rid us of what does not exist.

He is like an astrologer whom Shiva,
Weary of assuming individual forms,
Has commissioned to find an auspicious time
For the regaining of his own state.

Though present, he is not seen.
Though he is light, he does not illumine.
Though he always is, he is not in any place.

He is indescribable.
In his unity, where there is no duality,
Words become silent.

How can he destroy what does not exist?
How can he be called "the Destroyer"?

By these verses I have made a finish of duality,
And also honored my beloved Sri Guru.

How wonderful is his friendship!
He has manifested duality
In the form of Guru and disciple
Where there is not even a place for one!

He becomes as vast as the sky,
Including the entire universe within himself.
Within him
Even darkness and non-existence dwell.

The words, "Guru" and "disciple"
Refer to but one;
The Guru alone exists as both these forms.

The moon spreads her soft light,
Pervading the entire sky.
It is she herself
Who enhances her own form.

Nivritti is not an object of knowledge
Which requires various proofs
To show that it exists;

There is no doubt that he is the Guru.

Salutations to the holy feet of the Guru
Whose actionlessness is absolute,
Without any trace of activity.

Chapter Three, a sampling:

It is true that these four levels of speech
Are conducive to soul-liberation,
But with the destruction of ignorance,
These also are destroyed.

Salt dissolved in water
Continues to exist as taste;
Sleep dispelled continues as wakefulness.

In the same way, although the four levels of speech
Are destroyed along with ignorance,
They continue to live as knowledge of Reality.

In the same way,
Ignorance, while it remains,
Is the cause of false knowledge;
And when it vanishes,
Is the cause of true knowledge.

But, living or dead,
This ignorance entangles the individual
By binding him
With either slavery or a false sense of freedom.

If freedom itself is a kind of bondage,
Why should the word, 'freedom', be given to it?

If someone bewails
The loss of a broken vase which never existed,
Would we consider that person wise?

Sadashiva
In the Shiva Sutras,
Has declared that knowledge itself is bondage.

If the Self, which is pure Knowledge itself,
Requires the help of another knowledge,
Would that not be like the Sun seeking help
Of another light?

Could one who was ignorant of his own existence
Wander about to various countries in search of himself?

Also, if the Self,
Who is himself pure Consciousness,
Thinks, 'I am conscious of myself -- I am He!'
Such knowledge would be bondage.

This kind of knowledge is deplorable,
Since it conceals the original Knowledge
And fosters the illusion of freedom.

Therefore,
When the ego of the individual is destroyed,
And ignorance vanishes,
The four levels of speech --
Which are ornaments of the four bodies --
Also vanish.

When ignorance, being utterly dejected,
Enters the fire of Consciousness
Along with her organs,
Nothing remains but the ashes of knowledge.

Though one's shadow may not be seen at noontime,
Still it remains under one's feet.

The requirements of the four levels of speech
Cannot be satisfied even by their self-sacrifice.
I have satisfied them by bowing my head
At the holy feet of the Guru.

When the four levels of speech are destroyed,
They remain as that knowledge
Which is itself a kind of ignorance.

Chapter Four: Knowledge and Ignorance

By looking in a mirror, one perceives his own identity;
But that identity was already there.

In the same way, relative knowledge gives the understanding
Of the identity of the world and the Self --
But it is like using a knife
To cut another knife.

Fire, in the process of annihilating camphor,
Annihilates itself as well;

This is exactly what happens to knowledge
In the process of destroying ignorance.

The cresting of a wave is but its fall;
The flash of a bolt of lightning
Is but its fading.

Likewise, knowledge,
Drinking up the water of ignorance,
Grows so large
That it completely annihilates itself.

This absolute Knowledge is like
The intrinsic fullness of the moon,
Which is unaffected
By its apparent waxing and waning.

Likewise, that which is Consciousness Itself
Does not possess the quality of being conscious,
And is, therefore, not conscious of Itself.

If absolute Knowledge required the aid
Of some other kind of knowledge to know Itself,
It would be nothing but ignorance.

Of course, light is not darkness;
But, to itself, is it even light?

If there is a pot, a pot is perceived,
And if the pot is broken, its brokenness is perceived;
If there is no pot at all,
Is not its absence perceived as well?

It can be seen, therefore,
That he who perceives that there is nothing
Does not himself become nothing.
The Self has this same unique kind of existence,
Beyond both existence and non-existence.

The ultimate Reality
Is neither an object to Itself
Nor is It an object to anyone else.
Should it then be regarded as non-existent?

In a tank the water may be so clear
That it appears non-existent;
Though one who looks into the tank may not see it,
Still it is there.

Similarly,
The ultimate Reality exists in Itself,

And is beyond the conceptions
Of existence or non-existence.

When a jar is placed on the ground,
We have the ground with a jar;
When the jar is taken away,
We have the ground without a jar;

But when neither of these conditions exists,
The ground exists in its unqualified state.
It is in this same way
That the ultimate Reality exists.

Chapter Five: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss (Excerpts)

These three attributes, Sat, Chit, and Ananda
(Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss),
Do not actually define Brahman.
A poison is poison to others,
But not to itself.

Camphor is white;
Not only that, it is soft.
And not only that, it is fragrant as well.

Just as these three qualities signify
One object -- camphor, and not three objects;
So the three qualities,
Sat, Chit, and Ananda,
Are contained in one reality.

It is true that the words,
Sat, Chit, and Ananda,
Are different,
But the three are united in one Bliss.

When water is falling in drops,
We can count them.
But when the water is gathered
In a puddle on the ground,
It is impossible to count the number of drops.

In the same way,
The scriptures describe Reality
As Sat, or Existence,
In order to negate its non-existence.
They call it Chit, or Consciousness,

In order to negate its unconsciousness.

The Vedas,
Which are the very breath of the Lord,
Declare It to be Ananda, or Bliss,
Only in order to negate the possibility
Of pain existing in It.

Thus the word, Satchidananda,
Used to refer to the Self,
Does not really describe Its nature,
But merely signifies
That It is not the opposite of this.

The fact is, if we try to know That,
The knowledge itself is That.
How, then, could the knowledge
And the object of knowledge remain separate?

So the words Sat, Chit, and Ananda
Do not denote That;
They are merely inventions of our thought.

These well-known words, Chit, Sat, and Ananda,
Are popularly used, it is true;
But when the knower becomes
One with That to which they refer,

Then they vanish
Like the clouds that pour down as rain,
Or like rivers which flow into the sea,
Or like a journey when one's destination is reached.

Of course, what exists cannot be said not to exist;
But can such existence be called "Existence?"

In blissfulness
There is no feeling of unhappiness;
But can it, for that reason, be called "Bliss?"

Existence vanishes along with non-existence,
Consciousness along with unconsciousness,
And bliss along with misery;
In the end, nothing remains.

Discarding the veil of duality
And all the pairs of opposites,
That alone remains
In Its own blessed state.

If a face does not look into a mirror,

There is neither a face before it
Nor behind it.
Likewise, He is neither happiness nor misery,
But pure Bliss itself.

Even before the sugar cane is planted,
The juice is within it;
But its sweetness is unknown --
Except to itself.

Pure Consciousness is beyond
Both generalizations and particular statements;
It remains ever-content in Itself.

After such a discourse,
That speech is wise

Which drinks deeply of silence.

Truly, there is neither bondage nor freedom;
There is nothing to be accomplished.
There is only the pleasure of expounding.