

Aham Devo



Aham Devo (2020)

Liner Notes

Shantala Music

www.shantalamusic.com

Originally released as a video, Heather and Benjy are joined on this single by the incredible cellist Jami Sieber, and Grammy-winning wind players Steve Gorn, and Nancy Rumbel, to weave a musical tapestry of hope, connection, and creative possibility.

What emerged with these great musicians brought tears of joy and gratitude – wildly exceeding even the vision of this composition Benjy originally had in a meditation in early spring of 2020.

Based on a traditional Shaivite Tantric text from Kashmir Benjy learned from the scholar Chris Tompkins, *Aham Devo* contains a message about our innate and authentic Self that feels so important in these times of COVID-19.

Lyrics

Here's the Sanskrit text of the song:

*aham devo na cānyo'smi
brahmhaivā'ham na śokabhāk
saccidānandarūpo'ham nitya-mukta-svabhāvavān*

Here's the English translation:

*I am the Divine. I am nothing else.
I am not a receptacle for fear, for I am the Highest alone.
I am made of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. My truest home is my highest Self, Who is forever free.*

The mantra which follows, *Śivo'ham*, literally means, *I am Shiva*, and by extension translates to *I am pure Consciousness*. It appears as a part of many longer mantras, such as the *Atmastakam Śivo'ham* mantra.

This mantra, dating back to the eighth or ninth century CE, clarifies that we are much more than just our physical bodies: “I am not the mind, the intellect, the ego or the memory. I am not the ears, the skin, the nose, or the eyes. I am not space, not earth, not fire, water, or wind. I am consciousness and bliss. I am Shiva, I am Shiva.”

We hope that you enjoy this musical offering as much as we enjoyed making it, especially in this time when the best way we can show our love for one another is to maintain our physical distance ... yet another reminder that our highest Self is truly transcendent of the limitations of this physical dimension. With this piece, we send out our love and offer this as a beacon of hope to you all.

Musical Credits

Benjy Wertheimer: Esraj, guitars, vocals

Jamie Sieber: Cello

Steve Gorn: Clarinet, bansuri flute

Nancy Rumbel: Oboe

Heather Wertheimer: Vocals

Mixed and mastered by Benjy Wertheimer at Wolf Cub Studio in Portland, OR