

THE AWAKENING OF A DEVI

selected correspondence between
Devi Silya Muischneek and Acharya Peter Wilberg



New Yoga Publications

Excerpts from

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Devi Silya Muischneek and Acharya Peter Wilberg

Silya Muischneek

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Contents

Foreword by Acharya Peter Wilberg	6
Introduction by Devi Silya	8
S: I saw that you allow the readers to ask questions...	11
A: I was deeply saddened, indeed shocked...	18
S: I am deeply touched and moved that you wrote...	23
A: How wonderful to feel the “aliveness,...”	35
S: I bow to the wisdom you sent to me...	
S: Letter to Acharya in German...	
A: Let me assure that I take all that you write...	
Essay by Acharya on Sri Chinmoy	
S: Letter to Acharya in German...	
Continuation of letter in English	
A: Thank you for sharing your ever-deeper insights...	
A: Firstly - a sign of the good...	
Kali Murt sent to Silya by Acharya	
S: To be within your safe presence is so very powerful...	
S: Let me thank You for giving me the time and space...	
Continuation of letter in German...	
Completion of letter in English...	
S: Your being here with me...	
A: Thanks for your very rich, reflective and ...	
S: Your letter has so deeply touched me	
S: I am truly overwhelmed...	
A: I will be sending you some photographs...	
S: Thank you very, very much for the most precious...	

A: Your gracious presence...

A: Despite enduring tiredness...

S: First of all I wish to thank...

S: Just now I found your '36 ORIGINAL PRECEPTS...

S: I was kindly allowed to tell You...

A: What a delight it was to receive your photos...

S: It is still hard for me to abide in true inner stability...

A: Of course it is not possible at all times...

S: To see how incredibly alive, opening up...

A: Thank you for sharing your experience of release...

S: Reading on the bulletin board (28.7.09)...

S: This morning when I woke up...

A: My apologies for not responding earlier...

S: Can we see all at once the overall gestalt...

A: "More questions and arising thoughts to come..."

S: Today while meditating

Poems by Devi Silya

Appendix

36 Original Precepts of The New Yoga

Some basic rules and pressures
placed on disciples of Sri Chinmoy

Foreword by Acharya Peter Wilberg

Many traditional tantric scriptures or *Agamas* took the form of a questioning dialogue between Goddess and God - *Devi* and *Deva* - understood as male and female aspects of the singular Divinity called *Shiva-Shakti*. Through these dialogues the Goddess came to fully recognise and attain her own Divine nature as both pure awareness (*Shiva*) and its innately free power of action, expression and manifestation (*Shakti*).

What follows is a contemporary *Agama* in this tantric sense, being the record of a questioning dialogue - in the form of a still on-going correspondence - between a human *Devi* of this age and her male counterpart and teacher. Through it this *Devi* came to recognise and awaken to that Supreme Awareness, personified by the god *Shiva*, that is the Divine essence of us all - and to 'shine' with its brilliant light; the words 'deva' and 'devi', like 'divine' and 'devotion', all being rooted in the singular Sanskrit verb *div* - denoting free play, the light of day and of the sky - and the 'shining ones' that dwell therein.

I feel privileged to serve and have served as teacher or *Acharya* in the Awakening of this brilliant and devoted *Devi* - *Devi Silya*. I do so in the spirit of *Acharya Abhinavagupta*, who was only too well aware (and that long before the emergence of worldwide Indian guru-cults) of the cruel bondage in which gurus can entrap the most idealistic of disciples. For through 'The New Yoga of Awareness', like *Abhinavagupta*, I too "have prepared a trident of wisdom in order to cut asunder their bondage".

Devi Silya's life and letters are a living testament to the most distressful and lasting effects of such bondage - but

even more so to the lasting joys of freeing oneself from it as she has done. This was not through rejecting her inborn search for 'spiritual' truth but through rediscovering and fulfilling it; not through any repeated surrender of individuality to the demands or commands of a 'guru' but through the total affirmation of Freedom and Individuality granted by *Shiva* - that Divine Universal Awareness, which both cuts asunder all individual bonds and at the same time freely individualises Itself as all things and all beings.

Om Namah Shivaya

Introduction by Devi Silya

Long years of inner searching for the highest truth have passed. Starting this journey as a teenager, full of trust and aspiration, supported by the loving care of my mother, I was lead into deep erring, saturated by intense struggles. Despite my sincere search and the loving care of my mother, I fell into the web of an Indian master's 'spiritual' high-control and high-demand group cult. Both suffering and maturing within its confines and an ever-darkening night of my soul until, after 17 years, I eventually left this group - but exhausted, burnt out, sick and depressed. Realising that the life I led there had been completely robbed of free subjectivity and individuality, I continued to weaken. Totally stressed and in fear-filled agony I looked for help. Meeting with different voices and advice, coming from psychiatrist and therapists who promised to help and support me, I only collided with additional confusion.

Deeply unsure if in this life span I would still be blessed to find the key to a true and intimate soul-teaching, my daily search brought me to open up the website of The New Psychiatry. Much of what I had experienced I found reflected there, revealed in an all natural, solid and absolute clear voice. Looking for the source of The New Psychiatry site and also to find further expanded readings, which might very possible concern other topics of personal interest such as meditation and sacred teachings - I opened up the link section. Immediately seeing a second link - www.thenewyoga.org - I was joyfully anticipating that *this* - 'The New Yoga of Awareness' - must bear in it the very same bright shining light of understanding that I had just met on both the sites of the 'The New Psychiatry' and 'The New Therapy' - allowing me for the first time in so many years to see that there *are* truly, within this earthly reality,

like-minded people - sharing a so very similar understanding of how I have experienced life.

Starting to read some sentences written by Acharya on The New Yoga site, and admiring his photograph, in which his face vibrates in such deep earnestness and radiates such awake peace, I was encouraged to click on the button entitled 'Ask and Learn More' placed at the very top of the site's homepage. Realising that Acharya, in his role as a teacher/guru of the Highest Wisdom, invites everybody to freely ask any personal questions, I straight-away headed on to share my very difficult life situation for one more time, and as I had done many times before without ever finding the help I needed. Soon after this, I received a letter of response from Acharya in which I found myself completely understood, cared for within its truest sense. Feeling supported by Acharya's incredible clarity, captured by his soul warmth and overjoyed by the enormously rich wisdom of Acharya's words, I was encouraged to immediately write to him further and share my life's difficult situation - leading to the rich and still on-going correspondence between us - the first months of which are shared in this book.

Searching for clarity and understanding all my life, and probably many previous lives as well, it was in an *instant* that the very *key of true understanding* was found, offered to me in an open and fully generous way. My questions, endeavours, excruciating pains, hopelessness and despair, my illnesses and tremendous fears - all came to reveal their full inner meaning within Acharya's wisdom. Seeing that all I was, all I am and, more so, all I will be found such clear reflection within an ever so new life-teaching and aware of Acharya's empathic, soul-warming protection was the start of a further awakening.

To begin with, the frozenness, tension, fear and nervous rushing found free space to change - transforming naturally in tune with its own individual rhythm in time. The heavy weight, burden of anguish, depression and torment in which I was stuck and had been for many years, and the complications associated with it, which I felt unable to deal with on my own, came to light, through awareness.

To be connected to Acharya has brought me to a fresh intensity of aliveness, which I felt I had lost and also feared I might never regain. Yet through Acharya I found the doorway way back to the greater awareness in which he dwells and which his writings always point and lead to - that awareness which *actually* and at all times *is* all that we are now, have been and will be - and all that we see around us. Through it I regained a sense of the immediate freedom that Awareness alone can bring, as the sole key to free and fully individualised Beingness. The Awareness Principle and its practice through The NewYoga of Awareness have offered to me the one and only answer!

Dear Acharya Peter

I saw that you allow the readers of your internet site to ask questions. I wish to ask you if I may write to you.

It would be very helpful to hear your thoughts and insights about my troubled state of mind and heart.

I was in a high-demand cult-type group for seventeen years. I entered it at age sixteen and left because of a break-down in 1998. Since then I have been constantly troubled by PTSD symptoms, panic, fear, paranoia. All this started already within the group but I did not see why and how I came to such a state. I always thought that I must do more, adapt more to my master's teaching, follow all the countless rules strictly and leave aside more of what we call individuality.

When I left the group in 1998, I had hoped to find my way back to myself, but I was not able to find any balance, solidity or peace. Then I needed help because of psychosis and panic attacks - but more than ten years have passed now and no one could help me. I took benzos and anti-depressives. Last week my doctor wanted to give me Haldol - but all those medications alienate me more. I don't want them any more - they actively destroy the possibility of coming back to clear seeing. My psychiatrist was not able to help me, did not know anything about cult-involvement, or high-demand groups. I felt minimised in my problems, which do not leave me for a minute. She isn't even sure that what I am suffering from comes from that.

It is crucial for me to become aware of what was going on in the group and also what is going on in my life now.

My crazy path had started in 1981 - at the age of 16 - and it has not yet ended. Only deep confusion and exhaustion came of my search for unity, love and a truer sense of life. In

my psychosis, strong fears, paranoia and panic I could not work any longer – up to today. I realised only in 1998 that the group I was in was a cultish high-control and high-demand group.

I had “offered” my whole life to its mission of Peace, Oneness and Surrender. Yet each second of my life was “controlled” by the teachings of Sri Chinmoy. All I had materially and all I was as a person - was there for him. Rules, regulations and demands determined my life. I worked full time for this ‘Master’, who was said to be an ‘Avatar’. To devote time to family, the opposite sex, private holidays, individual creativity and activities was not allowed - for individuality was seen as something lesser than the Master’s person.

I was kicked out once when a man gave me a kiss. Another disciple saw this and reported it to the master. He threw me out and I lost - from one day to the other - my income, my spiritual family, my place to live. I had become an outcast and no one was allowed to contact me. Later the master called me back and said that his punishment was good for me.

He always said that if we leave him - or he kicks us out - we will lose contact with God and suffer terribly, becoming sick through cancer or other ailments. Thinking back on his words I truly have become sick - but I don’t feel that it is because I left him. It has to do with the false, incomplete teaching, the suppression and stress I was involved with and forced to commit myself to.

Because he said he was the avatar of the era I was fully trusting of him. So when I suffered it was always me who had not yet understood his teachings, was not yet pure

enough, still too selfish, not earnest enough, or not aspiring enough.

He demanded unconditional obedience. He said through this he will bring us to the golden shore, to the Supreme, in the boat of life. He wanted us to meditate on a picture of his, where he said to be in the highest consciousness. We had to meditate on this photo every day for many times.

He also had a picture of each of his disciples. No one could just enter the group without first sending him their photo. He looked at the picture and decided if his path was meant for the seeker. No one could enter without approval - he was the one to accept you or not.

He never taught me a method to meditate - he said that inwardly he will offer each one of us his/her private way to meditate. When I had questions about my inner or outer problems I wrote a letter to him hoping for his guidance. He never said anything in response to it. He pressed the letter to his heart to let me know that he is aware of my problems - that was it.

He was always talking of Oneness, Unity, Love, Compassion and World Peace. He had a room at the UN where workers, ambassadors could come to a meditation. I used to sing *bhajans* there to create a more inviting atmosphere. He met many celebrities - Gorbachov, Mother Theresa, Princess Diana, Santana, Carl Lewis, Leonard Bernstein and many more. He even wanted to get the Nobel-Prize for his mission and tireless work for world peace, as he called his 'work'. He never received the Nobel Prize and he made us responsible for his failing. We, the disciples were also those who made him feel terrible physical pain. He said it was our unwillingness to engage in the spiritual life - our lack of obedience that made him suffer such excruciating pain.

Sri Chinmoy grew up in the Aurobindo Ashram, left Auroville in 1964, albeit without the approval of the Mother, and started his own mission in America, Queens, New York.

On his path long distance running (and swimming), physical endurance, many different records and daily races were on the list. Aside from meditation, singing, reading his books, and tireless selfless service - a private life was not welcomed by him. All the rules and obligations he demanded made me a good scholar, a first class disciple, but ignoring them, or showing any private inability, was taken as sure sign that I was a loss, a failure.

What I did in my long distance running - in the Sahara, at marathons (700 miles in New York alone - a race which was invented by the Chinmoy Team) was that I trained my will power. It brought me far beyond my actual capacities - in the end I lost the ability to feel pain, whether when water was too hot or when so called negative feelings came up - I always felt that it was not important to react to them - not for me.

The physical practices had an immense attraction in my life. The energy I felt there - the challenge of transcending boundaries - was very impressive, but all I did was not grounded in my own being. Instead it was done as an offering to 'God', my 'Master'. Done, because he asked me to do it, in exchange for which he promised me Liberation and Oneness.

Having any personal interests or points of view or expressing any critical thinking meant being seen as a misfit. To say anything out of doubt, to be depressed, or to maybe look for other paths beside his own 'mission' was taken as an insult to the master - a type of egoistic useless

complaining, ungratefully ignoring the endless grace he bestowed on us.

He knew what 'life' is and how we have to 'do' it - in all my actions he was the one to tell me how far, how long, how strict I had to do what I did.

I had become a mere instrument of his will.

My true longing and inspiration for spirituality I found when I was 14 - 15 years old. My deepest wish at that time was to enter a Carmelite monastery, but I feared that I might become too separated from the outer world. I started to read the Bhagavad Gita, Meister Eckhart, Vivekananda and Yukteswar - most of all the Bhagavad Gita.

This gave me the support, insight and joy which I was looking for in my life - nothing else had any meaning or sense to me any more. Neither school, nor career, nor friends. I also had a strong affection to Yukteswar, but I knew that my age would not allow me to travel to India to live in his Ashram - so I looked around to find a teacher here in Switzerland and I meet Sri Chinmoy!

I thought that by learning about God's will and surrendering my whole earthly existence to his will alone, while leaving behind my own limited will, I might attain a profound, most secure and truly valuable existence. That by *doing* only good actions, following wise teachings and the old Hindu traditions, I would not be one to add further pain, hurt and suffering to this world.

It all turned out differently. I have no more energy, I am broken - I feel more pain than ever - nothing changed profoundly - only skin-deep. Strange, because I felt so aspiring, so fully committed - never lazy or ignoring the path's rules. Not leading a double life, as many did. My

meditations, the singing, the instrumental music group, the self-less service and also the running - all that was very fulfilling for me. It brought me great joy, as well as physical and mental strength - but nothing lasting at all. All this stopped when I left, but the fear and panic part had started already within the group. I feel now I have lost my self - I feel as if I am dying - or have died.

Where I am now - who I am now - what is my life and where am I to go?

If I started my life at plus zero (+0) then I am now at minus zero (- 0)!

I fear that in my searching, which is still very much alive, I might meet again with empty promises and beliefs. I fear that I might again fall into pain, loss and confusion - that's why I fear to follow any new path. When someone says *do this, don't do that* - else you won't become happy and healthy again - I shy back! Enough of all the strictness, the empty rules, the separations of 'good' and 'bad' - the suppression of my individual and organic existence and will - all this made me terribly sick!

As you have written, the worst that can happen is to become an object for others. This is what happened to me. I feel myself the product - the result of Chinmoy's will - and not a free, living being anymore.

I am so confused about what happened to me - I can hardly find any thought or emotion which allows me to feel balanced. I have lost self-esteem - I am a broken self. I have lost confidence in most spiritual teachings, authorities and nothing I feel is free or joy-filled any more. My life feels like a great danger for me, an immense burden - no more only a graceful act, or the valuable possibility of finding the god I was looking for.

I fear to *do* things *for* my liberation - feeling that this might get me caught up again in a net of illusion and delusion. I lack energy and hope - my soul-pond is dried out.

And I don't know what more I can do, what else I can take in, listen to.

I feel my whole system is poisoned - I don't know how to go on living.

How could I end up in such a disaster, when all I was looking for was peace, love and understanding?

I have been feeling stuck and frozen in my inner being for many, many years now.

Will you write to me, dear Acharya? However you may decide - in the meantime, I will go on reading your insightful writings.

With gratitude, Yours, very exhausted, sad and lost ...

Silya

(feminine, born 1964 in Switzerland)

Dear Silya,

I was deeply saddened, indeed shocked, to read of all that you shared in your letter - but am at least glad that you have taken the step of writing to me of your story. And whilst there is no magic wand I can wave to undo all you have been through, I feel that the very tragedy of that story gives it profound meaning. For - potentially - it makes you into one of the rare few, who by sharing and working through the painful lessons of that story, can perhaps fulfil a destiny of safeguarding others from falling into the type of “net of illusion and delusion” you describe, not to mention helping to free them from such nets.

Behind what you write about the “dried out soul pond”, in what you say about your early longing for spirituality, and in your description of the physical and emotional demands on you that you met, I can still feel in you an individual with rare and wonderful capacities for idealistic commitment, disciplined action and spiritual devotion - which makes it all the worse that these were abused in the service of another person’s ego. I therefore feel not only sad but angry for you. For, the exploitation of such spiritual qualities and capacities is quite unforgiveable, particular at the young age at which you began to engage with the Chinmoy group.

A true ‘teacher’ or ‘master’, ‘guru’ or ‘acharya’ is there to “work full time” for the self-realisation of others in and through their individuality, and *not* to demand their obedience or to order them around. Like any other human being a teacher *earns* trust and respect through their work and way of being. They do not *demand* respect as a condition for working with them!

Yet having suffered and continuing to suffer so deeply and painfully from the particular “net” you describe, I can well understand your reluctance to follow any “new path”, the fear to once again be told to “do things” for your liberation - or of meeting again with “empty promises/beliefs”. So let me assure you first of all that my life and work - indeed ‘The New Yoga’ as such - is devoted precisely to cutting through and exposing these “nets”, doing so on the basis of the highest values - absolute freedom, truth (refined through both awareness and *critical thinking*), *unconditional respect for individuality*, and “obedience” only to the awareness that flows from our innermost self.

For what is spiritual ‘Self-realisation’ if not a realisation of our divinity that comes of, from and through *the Self* - and not through the dictates and rules of any Other, whatever their self-proclaimed spiritual status or attainments? It is for this reason that I place such great and novel emphasis in my teachings on the fundamental *difference* between loosening the grip of the ‘ego’ on the one hand and surrendering or sacrificing our individuality on the other. Because to sacrifice our individuality is to sacrifice our very divinity. For whilst ‘God’ is not an individual, every individual is a unique and sacred portion of the universal awareness that *is* God - an awareness that takes *delight* in *individualising* itself as billions of beings - and in doing so it fulfils its own innate creative essence and boundless creative potentials.

For me personally “oneness, unity, love and compassion” are mere empty phrases unless their meaning is clarified in thought and ways offered to embody them where they count - not within the individual alone nor through ‘spiritual’ communities but through a living and aware relation to *other*

individuals - whosoever they are, and howsoever they find and feel themselves.

Which brings me back to your letter to me - and to you. I am glad you are being cautious about taking any further psychiatric medications, which could end up "poisoning your system" even further. I am also most glad that you now "shy back" when somebody says "do this or do that, else...".

I was sickened to read of the sickness predicted (threatened) to voluntary or involuntary 'exiles' from the group, and am also glad that you don't feel your sickness is a consequence of having left it.

Perhaps you could let me know a bit more about your current life circumstances - just where and how you are living and surviving right now, and whether you have sought support of any sort in the form of friends or family, counselling or psychotherapy - rather than doctors and psychiatrists.

As for myself and Karinji, both of us would be happy to give you all that we can in the way of personal spiritual-therapeutic counselling, and would like to offer you the freedom not only to correspond further with us, but also if you feel it would help - to phone us and receive support from us in that way. Let us know if you'd like to arrange a call.

If this proves helpful to you, you might even consider some form of recuperative stay in our small town in the UK - where you could share more of your story and where it has left you, and receive whatever guidance and support we can offer you in restoring your life and sense of self - beginning to slowly water and renourish that dried out "soul pond".

I hope also that your further studies of my essays and books will prove valuable in meeting your needs at this point in time, not only through the therapeutic forms of meditation they describe but also by virtue of the *critical thinking* they give expression to - which are there precisely to help others clearly identify and transcend distorted understandings of Hindu philosophy and spirituality and thus avoid falling into their net or pitfalls - pitfalls and nets whose grave consequences your letter is such a powerful and poignant reminder of.

You mention in your letter that your panic, fear and paranoia “started already within the group”. Could it not be that even these distressing ‘symptoms’ had meaning as healthy warning signs - expressing an inner awareness of the soul-destroying rather than soul-cultivating nature of the group - and ultimately helping you to get out of it’s entrapping “net”?

As for now, all I principally wish to do is urge you again to consider the possibility that far from being a *meaningless* ‘dead-end’ to a once hopeful life quest, what you have been through in the past and are still going through in the present, however awful, has a deep *futural meaning* within it. Life is above all learning - whether through pleasure or pain, success or failure, fulfilment or despair. And through what you have gone through there is much *learning* to be gained and gathered - learning of great value not only for yourself but for others.

By setting out to clearly identify and gather the fruits of your own life learning you will be affirming the meaning of your life and with it, your life itself. I would be happy if I and my teachings could in any way assist you in this process of *learning from, finding meaning in and validating your life* - not

despite but *through* all the things that have left you feeling so terribly dried out, lost and disillusioned.

In this process it would be useful for me if you would keep me informed as to which elements of my writings you are finding most meaning and value in at any given time, and also to seek to formulate what your own most important questions are, for example those left unaddressed or unanswered by your involvement with Chinmoy's teachings.

Looking forward to hearing from you further and helping you in any way I can.

yours respectfully,

Acharya

Dear Acharya

I am deeply touched and moved that you wrote back to me so immediately.

Thank you for all the time you offered to my situation, my life.

For many, many years in deep pain and desperation/ depression and loneliness, especially in the time after the cult, I was tirelessly searching for exactly that, what you are able to manifest. What you say is the very medicine which is shifting me out of the excessive identification with my tragedy.

In all of what you share so freely I feel aliveness, love and acceptance and most of all the highest truth. Which was always the one and only interest for me. How come that it takes so long to meet with real wisdom - alive/breathing wisdom? I would not say that I was not ready, or not looking for the real truth - that is not so. And still my confusion was the only stable fact in my life. Still now, when I feel what is true for me - I can't stay with it. I know that mental identification with what you say is one thing and the aliveness of it a completely other.

My question is, how shall I practice - in a way that does not once again become linear, one-dimensional in time? As I see it, this was one of the most distracting things I was trapped in. All my life was a race, a getting to, a reaching, an accumulation of separate so-called spiritual experiences and exercises. In this, I ignored my present moment - completely. The goal was always seen in the future - it was never now.

Yet I live within this body and I have to follow it in a linear, time-bound dimension - right?

And what I want and need is to be fully aware of the god within me, the god as me, the god as you and others - in this very incarnation, today and now - within my body/identity. So, how can I use the linear time - to “do” that?

I have to act, I have to choose - each second I am asked to do things to come nearer to unity - but nothing I do or did brings me to what I am looking for. Even in the very act of coming nearer I feel I am moving away.

My choice to follow the highest path to liberation/ understanding was exactly the choice, which made me meet with tremendous loss and confusion.

How can I be in this linear time and at the same time *be* in the Self - simultaneously spacing that which seems not to be bound by the earthly time/space field?

How can I be within death and birth - and at the same time beyond it?

Linear hopping from one action to the next, only “doing” spiritual things like meditation, reading scriptures, made me die - I truly felt like I was dying. It made me panicky, it made me paranoid. I knew that meditation and being disciplined was all good but I see that one can’t *do* love, one can’t *do* god. The massive control to *do* - and not to *be* - created death within me while at the same time I was alive!

Chinmoy even sent us out to watch our co-disciples, if they were doing something against his mission.

He was misusing women for his sexuality and to his followers he said that the sexual act is the biggest crime against spirituality. When I was 16 - before I joined his path, I had a “normal” active sex-life. I found it easy to leave that behind - for my heart was filled with a joy much greater than physical sexuality was able to offer me.

When I left I started again to be sexually attracted - but after a while my deep suppressed depression, all my stuck confusion, sadness, hurt - broke to the surface - and I lost all interest in being sexually active. I doubt that I have a mere sexual problem - you would say that I am not bodied. I need bodying - I feel I am not in my body. Chinmoy rushed me out - of my whole private existence. The body is here - but like a ship without a pilot. I often wonder why I am still alive.

Is it possible to go beyond 'average' sexuality and still live/feel sexuality - or is that contradicting?

To meet with masculine energy leads me to feel more grounded and, strangely enough, more worthy, in what I am as a woman - but I feel there might be a mistake at work. Any way, I am kind of mixed up - in the world of sexuality. In one way I feel it is needed and in another way - I feel it is binding.

Yet I don't feel like *using* sexuality to feel more grounded - that is for me a illusionary approach, or am I mistaken?

I wish very much that I can show/express to my friend that I can also love him sexually - but truly I don't know how to come to this in a wholesome way.

I read a small section in your writing where you mentioned tantra - how can I come to feel the dance of femininity and masculinity truly - *within me*? I feel that if I am not aware of both energies, as one - I don't know what sexuality is, as it seems.

May I mention that the following text of yours expresses *exactly* this, what makes me feel so lost when I meet my doctor and psychiatrist:

My doctor is a Chan-Buddhist and starts to tell me what I did wrong and that if I practice the Annapassati-practice (counting 1-10 at each out-breath) I will be healed within a year - although he only knows that I found immense confusion within the cult, nothing more.

He also says that not everybody falls for rape, or cult involvement - how is that supposed to help me? Did I know that I was in a cult? Who is aware that he/she is entering a cult? What is so different in my life that I fell into that trap?

Modern 'scientific' psychology of personal identity has no concept of the subjectively sensed self. Instead it seeks to reduce identity to a set of objectifiable 'traits' or behaviours ultimately rooted in our genes. At the same time modern social culture reduces the subjective self to the individual's mental 'self-image'. As a result individuals seek to turn themselves into an image of this image - an image of how they are or wish to be seen by others from the outside - objectively.

Thank you very much for sharing this! I feel minimised in my subjectively sensed self - in the company of those doctors.

You know, when you said that you were deeply sad and shocked about what I experienced with that "master" - I felt that I never could be angry at him. You said that you felt anger. Why do I not feel anger, as many do and even asked me to feel? I tend more to feel compassion and yet most of all I still can't understand what happened within Chinmoy so that he came to do what he did.

I find it immensely hard to shift my present consciousness away from what I am identifying with. I feel that what you say: exploitation of such spiritual qualities and capacities is quite unforgiveable, particular at the young age at which I began to engage with the Chinmoy group.

This is exactly what made me lose my self-trust completely. How could I offer myself to be so much exploited, when I at the same time feel that I am sincere?

I see a conflict there - what is it that I am not aware of doing/feeling/seeing/thinking so wrongly?

Why are my fears still strong, although I left in 1998? I feel as if I left yesterday - completely exhausted and anxious.

How come that my deep longing did not lead me to find *any* time for me? Never in this wonderful life - not even in the years post-cult. How come I stayed for so long?

Today I doubt my sincerity, my aspiration, my longing and earnestness, although not an hour passes where I feel empty of the need to uncover the hidden light.

Luckily I found your texts - I kind of came home - I feel safeguarded by what you say.

I am always reflecting on my emotions, my thoughts - is it maybe that's why I am still terribly stuck and confused?

Can't we find freedom - in thinking, in reflecting, in the moment? Is my seeking the hindrance?

What you said about a "true 'teacher' or 'master', 'guru' or 'acharya' being there to 'work full time' for the self-realisation of others, in and through their individuality, and not to demand their obedience or to order them around" made me happily aware that you for me are such a person.

Having found the courage to contact you I feel that you see right into me, to what I am up to, and as it seems you are very aware also of what happened to me while getting so trapped!

This sensing of you is a treasure for my presence - I feel I can use the space you offer me, completely freely, without panicking or closing down.

I don't understand all of what you write in your texts, and I haven't finished them all. What gave me the strongest support was a text about "identity" and "bodying" - I feel it is exactly there where I ignored my life and exactly there where I can become aware now.

Indeed, all what I have seen so far of The New Yoga is presenting me with the brightest path for all I was looking for, longing for - and all I need so badly NOW.

I so often wonder what is it that made us incarnate and how finding our way back to unity has first to lead us through terrible pain, suffering - destruction, erring and misleading?

As you said, my panicking within the cult was the beginning in coming to a way out of it. And the darkness I am in today is waking me up too, bringing me to awareness of the unity within me.

The extreme sporting I did while being in the cult was demanded by Chinmoy. Why exactly I still don't know. For me it was a way to stay bodied but at the same time it rushed me out of my body.

The fact that it helped me to feel bodied must have actually shown, as you called it in a text, a lack of natural somatic indwelling, right?

Your words are so nourishing, so vivid and clear - offering me New Life. I feel what you say is written just for me personally - fitting perfectly my very own situation. What an honourable treasure!

But when I wake up in the morning I see that although the wisdom is still resonating it is not yet fit to be consciously,

actively lived/expressed as a whole. My own individual language is not yet born. Would you say that is true?

You said that sacrificing individuality is the same as sacrificing divinity. Chinmoy wanted to destroy my individuality, that's for sure - how could he do that, while talking of the highest truth - how is that possible?

You said it is crucial to mindfully, inwardly feel the body - this is *one of the most* helpful ways for me to find my way back to myself. I haven't truly found a way to *stay* in this mindfulness feeling but I feel the security and peace - when I time and again come back to it.

Most of the day I feel very rushed, as if someone is following me - to either control or hurt me. Someone who is checking if what I am doing is right.

I don't feel safe - I feel that I am not aware of what is going on, how I am and who I am.

What to do when I forget to dwell within my whole being?

Is forgetfulness always there when I feel fear? Is fear a sign of losing awareness?

I always feel that life - 'prana', 'energy' - is being sucked out of me. Leaving my system empty. Nothing comes back to me - there is no rhythm, no circulation. My whole physical existence feels drained, used, misused and utterly frail. The only true boundary-hold I feel is when I meet fear, anxiety, nervousness, depression.

How come I lost so much of my life-energy? Was it my overkill in activities?

Many ex-Chinmoy-people are having problems from their time in the cult but very rarely feel as I feel. Most people are

settling in on other paths, or have given up the spiritual life all together.

For me to leave my search is impossible! And I know that nothing that happened ever was useless as such. But will I become aware of *me* - aware of why the whole tragedy embodied itself in me?

What did I do so wrong? And how to live on from this very moment, not only thinking about my life but bodying it?

How can I stay in awareness without identifying with it as ever changing emotions and thoughts?

How much I would love to be there. I feel that there is true liberation - the moment I would stop believing that what I am in this body is something I possess. I am lived, thought and breathed - is that right?

But how to make choices in this?

How to choose one thing and not another, if I am free of ambition and identification with the person I am?

Will I not lose myself again? Or is awareness taking care of my life on all levels always? Without my human personal will to interfere?

My god, so many questions - I am not even sure if my questions have a right to be?

If it is only curiosity it won't come to anything inside me - it will only please my mind - make me feel happy and mentally convinced. If knowledge finds no relation to what I am, or to others, it is all empty phrases - that's what you said to me. Thank you for this!

In my desperate situation your texts are so very important - my only wish is that it all stays *with* me - becomes embodied...

I don't wish to look for another therapist. What I experienced was a heavy extra load of pain with them. If I do not know for sure beforehand that my helper, he or she, is aware of what you are aware of I am afraid I won't be going anywhere. I just have no strength left for colliding with a type of 'helping' that is wounding me, minimising me. I am sure you are with me on this.

Since my cult-exit in 1998 I have been staying with my boyfriend, who is the most loving person to be with. He supports me soulfully and deeply, he is strongly loving and soft at heart at once.

I also have an elder brother. He works in a psychiatric institution, called Burghölzli, in Zürich as a night-nurse. I don't see him regularly - almost never. I find it too hard to explain myself to him since my sadness is always questioning me.

I lost my most beloved brother Lauris a short while after the exit. He died - this made me feel it was me, in my depression - that could not hold him on this plane?! We had been very close and intimate.

I had a sister too. She died when I was six and she seven. A car hit her body (an alcoholic man) and after a year she died.

Also, my dad died - he became blind some years before his death and I was so shocked to see that he had manifested the wish I cherished for so long. My wish and strong prayer was that, please god, he would make me blind - so I could not see the falseness. I felt that way it is easier to see the truth.

Why and where do such wishes and dreams arise? And is it the ego which creates the feeling that my dad's blindness and the early death of my brother and sister happened because of my personal misbehaviour? Is it the ego that feels

that other people's tragedies are a result of my lack of responsibility? What to do with such fantasies, thoughts and reflections?

Sometimes I go meet my mother, this is more regular, she is over eighty years old and has been reading Rudolf Steiner all her life. Like me, she was always on the seeker side. She was the one who brought me to Chinmoy - unfortunately she didn't see in advance who he was! She left after just a short few weeks. My mother is actually the only one to whom I can be open about my problems, my fears. She is accepting of me in my own ways, not burdening me at all.

I am supported financially by health insurance since I can't work. After each five years, I have to send a new medical certificate - to let the insurers know if my sickness has become better or worse. My last certificate was last week - so the next one won't be needed till 2014. I am happy that I am not obliged to see any psychiatrists/ doctors if I don't feel like it. I did not know this, so I went to see a psychiatrist over and over again. It was terribly hard - I wrote her more than 27 letters and she never said a word to them - never! All she said was that she didn't find it good that I was nervous all the time - and so "full" in my head - but I could neither dream this away, nor wish it away - this racing stress has become me.....

Dearest Acharya - is there no one here in Zürich who works the way you do? Do you have any sessions here, any meetings at all? I am afraid to talk to you on the phone. I am not a good spontaneous (English) speaker, though seeing you I feel it would be easier?!

Have you heard of the Ananda Marga group? As I recall, they also use the name-title Acharya - probably many Indians do that? I am not sure if you belong to some other

group as the name The New Yoga might suggest? Your and Karinji's offer to happily give me all you can, in personal spiritual-therapeutic counselling - has already started to shine deep and brightly, within my being. I just don't know yet, how to proceed...?

Would you let me know in which town you reside? Maybe one day I will find a way to meet you?

My wish to share more of my story is tremendous - I can hardly handle the joy you kindled within me. I was not at all prepared!

My greatest anxiety lies there where I see that I am still very much confused. Will I, in this instability, find a way to become one with what I seek? Nothing seems to stay - the light meets me but finds no expression out of me.

I will go on reading your essays with greatest interest. I wish to thank you for sharing them so freely.

May I ask you what you mean by "Life is above all learning - whether through pleasure or pain, success or failure, fulfilment or despair"?

Are you saying that equally, in failure or success, life won't lose its true value/meaning? Or are you saying that life itself is learning - however it presents itself?

In all my suffering and dramatic experience lies the light to uncover darkness - do you also mean that?

How can I gather the fruits of my past - if at the moment they seem kind of rotten?

What I was looking for in the life with Chinmoy was a living, breathing spirituality. A master who can see what is going on within me, and who helps me when I meet with hindrances.

I wanted to be involved with my whole person, to become a wholly humble and ego-less server for humanity's liberation, a path, which helps me to see the Real Life, prior to the meshes of ignorance.

I wanted to find a teaching that allows me to become Awareness of ALL, the universal energy and the earthly play, that which ever IS - the One which is untouched by birth/death/loss/gain, beyond the ever changing cycles of pain/desire - yet still finding expression here, out of the Life that is sustaining all, beyond personality and action.

I wanted to become a free instrument of the highest order - empty of egoistic planning and achieving - and in becoming a pure instrument, living in accordance to the will of god (is there any - apart from me?) to finally find ways to offer with my own life a light to other people.

I was convinced that if I enter life blindly, without true knowledge, without living *within* the understanding of my being, I would not be able to follow my destiny in a meaningful way, which is to exist and *be* in a way that is wholly loving and aware, for my friends and loved ones.

I am sure that much of what I have said has been repetitive...maybe even a chaotic expressing? I still hope that it has helped you to you see better into my present situation.

My deep confidence in your understanding allows me to send you my words, just as they are.....

Thank You and all gratitude to you - Acharya - sincerely,

yours,

Silya

Dear Silya,

How wonderful to feel the “aliveness, love and acceptance that I sensed as still within you, now *shine out* and *come alive* in your second letter! For as you may know, ‘shining’ is the very meaning of *deva* and *devi* - the Sanskrit for ‘god’ and ‘goddess’.

And yes, “my god, so many questions”. Thank Godness!!! When we cease to feel questions in our lives and in life as such, we cease to truly live - to journey yet further on its endless adventure in consciousness, finding and giving form to ever new dimensions of meaning and truth. Were the attainment of some ultimate and final state of enlightenment to be the *sole* meaning of life, our true lives - that eternal and ever-on-going adventure which allows us to attain ever-greater depths of truth, explore ever more dimensions of awareness and fulfil ever more of our boundless individual *potentials* of awareness - would have *no* meaning.

I am glad that you have already been able to find important points of meaningful connection between your own most personal feelings and questions and elements of my own texts or ‘tantras’. And whilst there are many questions in your letter - how to practice, how to “be in this linear time and be in the Self”, how to “go beyond ‘average sexuality’ and still live/feel sexuality?”, how “to feel the dance of femininity and masculinity truly - within me?”, “what to do when - I forget to dwell within my whole being?” there is not one for which you will not come to find a plentiful supply of answers if you continue to study my *tantras* and make those connections.

For example you write of an “accumulation of separate so-called spiritual experiences/exercises”. Yet from what you have read, you may have already understood that The New

Yoga is based on a fundamental distinction between 'experiencing' of any sort, 'spiritual' or otherwise, and *awareness* on the other. Put plainly, though it is rooted in great and profound experiences - and can in turn lead to them - it is not essentially about 'experiences' but to do with abiding in and identifying with the pure awareness of all that we experience.

You ask "How can I stay in awareness, without identifying with it, as ever-changing emotions and thoughts?" This question is precisely the one that is *overcome* by learning to distinguish between awareness as such (pure awareness) and 'experiencing' (anything we are currently aware of). Through this distinction we learn to recognise that the *awareness* of a thought or emotion is not itself a thought or emotion - that the awareness of fear and anxiety for example, is not itself anything fearful or anxious. The distinction is, instead of saying to ourselves "I feel this" or "I think that" we drop the word "I" and say to ourselves instead "*There is an awareness of feeling this*" or "*There is an awareness of thinking that*" (the basic 'mantram' of The New Yoga) and *identifying* with that awareness, rather than with whatever it is we happen to be aware of.

In other words it is precisely by identifying with pure awareness - in contrast to any emotions and thoughts we are aware of - that we are *freed* from identification with our fluctuating thoughts, emotions, sensations and states of being. Paradoxically however, identifying with awareness is exactly what also allows us to *freely* enter into our experiencing more fully - feeling and bodying without fear of losing ourselves in it or sacrificing awareness to it. Experiences come and go in time and space. Awareness is the spacious field of time and space in which they arise, come and go. Abiding in a pure awareness - above all of our

immediate sensual and bodily experiencing - is what allows us to come to an experience of the divine nature and dimensions of awareness itself. Indeed this is the *defining principle* of The New Yoga - 'from a new awareness of experiencing to a new experience of awareness'.

These are things I have written about in countless essays on site as well as in all my books on The New Yoga. I repeat them here just to emphasise that however abstract some of its formulations may *seem*, I feel it is vital that you also seek to understand the essential philosophy or 'principle' of The New Yoga - 'The Awareness Principle'. For all the practices of Awareness that constitute The New Yoga arise from that Principle and its most-carefully worded precepts, just as this Principle and its precepts (for example the distinction between awareness as such and anything we are aware of) are ultimately the key to all of the questions you ask.

The precision of the philosophy, principles and practices of The New Yoga is not a precision of yogic postures or sectarian rules but a precision of *language* - of wording. For the aim of that philosophy is above all to provide a new and much clearer *language* by which to articulate the truths of particular traditions - and to free them of ambiguities and distortions. Only by learning this new language can those truths also be fully felt, experienced and 'bodied' - a term that is itself an important part of the new *vocabulary* of The Awareness Principle.

Some traditional teachers, bound to the languages of their cherished traditions, fear the very *newness* of the New Yoga - as reflected in the greater precision and refinement of its language. Others are *deeply appreciative* of this new language - seeing that it offers valuable answer and insights of a sort not provided by any of the spiritual traditions,

teachings, schools and sects they have hitherto studied or been involved with, and/or finding that it gives them a much clearer and less distorted understanding of the inner truths of those traditions and teachings - not least that of Kashmir Shaivism.

I suggest - simply as an analogy - that you see your further studies of The New Yoga *als ein ernstes, gedankenvolles und denkwuerdiges Studium* - for there is also a very rich background to its personal, cultural and historical evolution, drawing as it also does on the rich spiritual traditions of German thought (including Marx, Heidegger and Rudolf Steiner). This is hinted at in the sections on the site about myself and The New Yoga.

That is why it can help to see reading and study of The New Yoga as a *language learning process* - not one that unquestioningly borrows from and imposes some traditional Hindu spiritual language on the student - but one which has arisen precisely by *questioning the meaning of that language* - thereby coming to understand and experience its truths in a new and clearer light (in particular the tantric tradition of 'Kashmir Shaivism').

Of course there will be things not so easy to read and understand. So it would also be just as important that you put questions to me about elements of my teachings that you don't fully understand, as well as sharing those that make immediate sense to you. On a practical level, besides exploring the wealth of material on the archive section of the website (and also in the blogs and correspondence files of other students) I would suggest that you perhaps order one or more of The New Yoga books - not least 'The Awareness Principle' itself, but also 'Tantra Reborn' and 'The New Yoga - Tantric Wisdom for Today's World'. (The latter is currently in the process of being republished, but

you could order a copy from Karinji or use the on-line e-book. And do also feel free to subscribe to my bulletin board and read the posts of others as well as myself. For me it would also be *particularly helpful* and very much appreciated if, in the future, you could name the specific essays on the site (and/or books) that you have read, or quote from in your letters.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do suggest all this not in order to be didactic, but to open up and offer you a possibility - that of engaging in a type of pre-arranged and regular personal 'correspondence' course on The New Yoga, based principally on questions arising from your reading, yet in which your most *personal* questions and concerns need not in any way be put aside - but can instead be taken up as opportunities for a deeper philosophical and practical 'education in awareness', one embracing also its higher, trans-personal dimensions. The aim would above all be to help you to replace all remaining *confusion* that you feel with a new and deeper clarity - intellectual and experiential, emotional and spiritual, personal and trans-personal.

But let me also offer a response to at least some of the most important further *personal* questions you shared in your letter, in particular one I think relates to the importance of intensive and thoughtful study.

"how could I offer myself, to be so much exploited, when I, at the same time, feel that I am sincere?"

There is a sense of shame hinted at here that I see as unnecessary. When I referred to the *young age* at which you began to engage with Chinmoy, what I was thinking of was simply the combination of sincerity on the one hand and, on the other hand a quite *natural* lack of that type of personal

and spiritual *discernment* (including not only personal but *intellectual* knowledge and discernment) that comes only with age. Again therefore, I see you as having no need whatsoever to feel shame, let alone question or doubt the shining sincerity of your motives, but could instead give that 16 year-old (!!!) some compassionate understanding for its youthful lack of discernment. For without that naturally lacking discernment, your sincerity could not have been exploited in the way it was.

And once a young person has entered such a "net", even with the very best and most sincere of intents, the "net" itself closes in - making it more difficult for the necessary freeing discernment to grow, or even *putting every obstacle in the way of its growth*. Seen in this way, you did nothing wrong. No shame. And your experience during and since your involvement with the group has now taught you - rightly - to be discerning and 'wary' - even to the point of paranoia. And for good reason. For behind 'paranoia' and in the very word is also *para-noein* - 'heightened awareness'. And to be *wary* is also to *beware*, just as to *be-ware* is also to *be aware*.

'A-ware-ness' deutet auf das *Wahre* - es heisst vollstaendiges *Ge-wahren*, *Wahr-nehmen* und *Be-wahren* des *Wahren*. Das ist genau das, was Sie jetzt machen.

My suggestions are in some way a response to another question, the one you raised about life as *learning*. "*Do you say that equally, in failure or success, life won't lose its true value/meaning? Or do you say that life itself is learning - however it presents itself*". Life has meaning independently of what the ego sees or feels as failures or successes. For me true success lies in finding that meaning - in living out of 'the will to meaning' (Frankl) rather than an egoic will 'to succeed' or to simply 'be happy'. And there is often *more* learning and

meaning to be gained through *failing* than succeeding, a learning out of which can come a more *meaningful* sense of 'success' than that of the ego? As we know, a successful life that lacks meaning is empty. Failure on the other hand holds within it the germs of learning - of new understandings of oneself, other people and the world. The same can be said of anger towards others, which if felt and followed within *oneself* can lead to a deeper way of seeing and *understanding* the other - and with it a capacity for compassion rooted in that understanding.

In this sense I do not see compassion as something opposed to anger, but rather as something that can grow from the transformation of anger into aware understanding. With respect to Chinmoy I am glad that you can feel compassion for him, so long as you can feel at least the same degree of compassion for yourself, and so long as any anger that is there within you is not directed solely towards yourself.

Anger, like other emotions, is not just something we are *aware of* - it is itself the felt surface of *an awareness* - a pointer to some aspect in oneself or others. In this sense I see it as one of the most profoundly spiritual emotions - being a huge potential *womb* of insight and awareness into oneself, other people and the world as a whole.

"How come that my deep longing - did not lead me to find any time for me? Never in this wonderful life - not even in the years past-cult?" Perhaps with this deep question in mind, you will understand in your own way how I came to the very definition of 'meditation' in The New Yoga: namely as *giving ourselves time* - in particular time *to be aware* of every aspect of our lives and life-world, time to *re-gather* our awareness of all that has passed and all that approaches us from the future, time to regather time itself and in this way regather our sense of ourselves, other people and our world as a

whole. All this in the stillness of pure awareness - out of which in turn, will arise a *new* awareness of ourselves and others, and a growing capacity not just to 'be aware' but to *be* that very awareness.

The question of *how* to practice yoga, tantra and meditation is one question - and not an unimportant one at all. The question of *what* 'yoga', 'tantra' and 'meditation' essentially *are* is another question. The many exercises in awareness and forms of meditation that constitute The New Yoga come out of asking this second and deeper question. (see my Introductory Essays)

Understanding meditation as giving ourselves 'time to be aware' means that in one sense there is only one 'practice' that needs to be exercised with the greatest discipline. That is the discipline of never allowing oneself, even for one minute, to be *rushed* - either by oneself or others (including teachers!). So first of all be patient with yourself! For not only your learning but that deep re-embodiment of Self that you seek will take time - and deserves time.

Finally, in answer to another question of yours, I use the name form of Acharya not because of membership of any group but because it means a 'preceptor' - one who offers *new* foundational principles for life - and also traditionally denotes a teacher who is both aware and learned, possessing both embodied and intellectual awareness. I explain this in a talk I gave recently on The New Yoga that you might find helpful. The model Acharya was Adi Shankara or 'Shankaracharya' - the 7th-8th century founder of Advaita or 'non-duality'. Abhinavagupta and all of the 9th - 11th century teachers of Kashmir Shaivism were also *Acharya* - teachers or 'gurus' with great culture and learning, with exquisitely *aesthetic* intellects, all of whom acknowledged the vital role of clear and undistorted

intellectual cognition in cultivating and granting recognition to awareness - as well as in providing the safety of the *clearest possible conceptual framework* for the powerful spiritual transformations that Awareness can bring about.

Such frameworks require constant renewal to the context of every new era to free spiritual traditions from creeping distortions. Hence the comments of his teacher, Somananda, on Abhinavagupta himself: *“Abhinavagupta has made the blazing Sun of commentary [on Tantra] manifest that is bent on extirpating the darkness of misleading, wretched commentaries lacking the refinement of good teaching and tradition ... [and] by its flashing lustre, melts the coagulated stream of innumerable bonds.”*

Then there is the clear statement of intent by Abhinavagupta himself - now increasingly recognised by Western contemporary scholars and *tantrikas* as the first great synthesist of Indian yogic and tantric thought. *“There are dull-witted people who are confused themselves and throw the multitude of creatures into confusion. Having bound them fast with fetters, they bring them under subjection with tall talk of their qualities. Having thus seen creatures who are simply carriers of the burden of gurus and their blind followers, I have prepared a trident of wisdom in order to cut asunder their bondage.”*

Ergo.

I recognise that there is much in your letter I have in awareness but not found time to respond to in detail. So again, should you wish to share more by phone - and also discuss in more depth how I and also Karinji can continue to serve you best, please do let us know - since language will not be a problem. Karinji is herself a native German speaker, and - as you may know from the site - both my parents were German, which I understand well (my mother,

incidentally, came to England from Freiburg, where we still visit relatives of mine from time to time). Our location in the UK is a town called Whitstable - near Canterbury in South-East England. You may also like to know more about Karinji herself, which you can do by going to www.newyogainitiations.blogspot.com/

in the meantime I continue to
sense and hold you in awareness...
and may the *devi* that is your vitality continue its *shining*,
finding its crystalline reflection in
ever-greater clarities *of* awareness

Acharya

Last Letter of the book

Dear Rajmu

Today while meditating and chanting Rajmu-Shiva, my soul-body grew larger, broader and very much lighter - losing the stamp of physical age. I felt myself growing stronger - from within *and* without, reaching and extending with a not only far more up-right posture (bodying the K-tone sound that links **Kali** and the back or Rücken in the way you describe) but also felt as if this expansion knows no bodily boundaries for this body in this space-time.

This body seemed to beyond-itself, each cell a whirling breathing, like an ever new little universe of its own - expanding.

Feeling myself as space itself, sides and directions of space were all one - there was 'as much' of an 'in-front' space as there was behind, no less a down than an up. I could say it was an all-round circling space - therefore free of sides - but for me it seemed there as if this space had no 'form' any more at all - not even a circling form.

I see it is hard for me to find the right words - but I was also seeing *this ongoing forming* of things as signs or *linga* in the way you refer to - when a chair is not chair - but more like a continuous chair-ing?! No fixed forms to see as such, neither as space, nor as 'objects' in it.

In this way I came to see the Shivas-murti too lose its material density and melt into one form-ing along with the room, with me, with the wall - with no more objects simply standing around besides or separate from each other - but with their differencing nature continuing to presence. All felt as if it were floating as and within a warm subtly whitish

light - in which differing colours softened their boundaries of red and blue and became like *one* 'melody' of colour, yellow and green being *one* 'tone' - and no more colours separate. This space and everything in it as a wave - breathing-rainbowed light.

In this awareness I was reminded of a symbol which I saw painted in front of several house entrances during my travels in India - the sign of the atom. I can't say why exactly this symbol comes to my mind, seeing space loosing its commonly perceived character of being filled with objects. Maybe it is because my feeling of this constantly new forming of objects, from a freer space - a very profound 'beginning' - the point where matter first comes to light as we see it? The con-firmation dance of atoms - in the whirling light of awareness itself.

While being aware of this 'one-ing' of space with its emerging matter, I also felt a deeper more secure emotion of being at home within this body - thus capable of a truer belongingness to all there is. Still feeling like a visiting *client* in the root meaning You taught me of the one who is 'called' - called to this earthly plane. Yet I felt as 'at home' 'here' as also 'there' in that other plane - this means moving home!

Thank You deeply for Your gracious guidance - for being with this life of mine.

In all I read in Your writings I find my sole haven - my soul heaven - and each day the most precious gifts.

Your thoughts always directly link to what I am - with such joy, such wonder and such freeing light - not only for me, but also ever more for my beloved friend, my mother!

I wish to tell You also that in this 'work' I sense a greatly important, rewarding inner teaching about the darker sides of human-life – yet knowing You are with me in Awareness, I feel blessed and able to continue.

All Gratitude

Silya



Silya Muischneek, born in Switzerland in 1964, joined the cult of a seemingly 'respectable' Indian guru – Sri Chinmoy - in 1981, when she was only 16 years old. Driven by the noblest of spiritual values and ideals she devoted the next 17 years of her life to his 'mission'. Doing so meant obeying the strict rules and demands of Chinmoy, for whom the obliteration of individuality was the most important spiritual discipline and every sign of individuality a form of disobedience that needed to be punished.

When she left the cult in 1998, Silya was a broken woman whose sense of self and contact with life had been deeply damaged - leaving her physically, emotionally and spiritually sick. For ten years she found herself in deep pain and with no help or useful advice, medical or spiritual.

Then, early in 2009, she came across the website and writings of a little-known European thinker, teacher and yogin – **Acharya Peter Wilberg** – finding that they not only gave deep insight into her still-present pains and spiritual questions, but also addressed these questions from a very different perspective than any other teacher. So instead of rejecting all further association with 'spiritual' teachers or 'gurus' she entered into correspondence with him.

Now Silya Muischneek invites the reader to share, through this book of her correspondence with Acharya, the Golden Key she found through his teachings – 'The New Yoga of Awareness'. For these are teachings in which sacred Individuality and unity with the Divine are not seen as opposites in any way. They allowed her - after many difficult years of painful confusion and suffering - to once again breathe free and express her own freely individualising life in an all-new way, thus coming to a new and true awakening of Self and Awareness – 'The Awakening of a Devi'.

www.thenewyoga.org