

Out-of-Body Experiences

Part III

Out-of-Body Experiences in the Etheric Body

(Experiences close to the Physical Body)



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1 About the "Substance Ether"

Over all the world and in all cultures, the etheric body and the ether were known in the mystical or magical secret teachings. Thus, there exist many very different names for the ether, sometimes not recognizable anymore as being related to the ether.

Depending on religion, way of thinking and magical use, various aspects of the ether were emphasized or described differently. This leads to a high diversity of notions and ideas, which results in confusion and misinterpretation.

In India, for instance, the ether (akasha) was understood as the substance from which tones and sounds are formed.

Historical facts about the ether

The term "ether" was coined by the theosophists, mainly by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831 – 1891) and Charles Webster Leadbeater (1847 – 1934). Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541) wrote about the "sideric body" – under this term he understood something similar to or the same as the etheric body. After theosophy, "ether" is a linking substance between the astral body (transcendent) and the physical body (material).

Other names for "ether" in the non-physical sense are: fluid, chi, ki, prana, od, bio-plasma.

Ether as lifeless substance (if something like lifeless ether exists at all) and ether of a living human may be as different as matter in a test tube and living matter/ a body of a highly evolved being.

In theosophy, the ether is a substance which represents a link to the astral matter.

Proof of the ether

So far, physics couldn't proof the ether. It is an unfortunate fact for the occult sciences that in the 19th century, when a lot of discoveries were made, phenomena about newly discovered radiations were claimed evidence for the existence of the occult ether.

These anticipations made the defenders of the "ether theories" untrustworthy. The superficiality of their postulates was a great mistake of the parapsychologists of that time.

Surely, paranormal phenomena can still be observed. But still they are physically unverifiable. We have to think of the fact that all physical measuring methods are basing on mechanical or electromagnetic parameters. Everything which is beyond this measurability is, automatically, unverifiable. Thus, it is not scientific to deny everything which lies beyond those measuring methods right from the start. No one in natural science would assert that anything beyond measurability doesn't exist at all.

Ether in physics

In the 19th century, light was understood as a wave phenomenon. A wave needs a carrier medium. But because light is even able to cross the empty space, this carrier medium could not consist of matter as it was known until then, and thus, a still undiscovered matter was postulated – the ether. Later, when quantum physics defined light as a wave as well as a particle, this postulate became invalid.

The communication between physics and parapsychology was disturbed since 1900, due to the rash interpretations of the parapsychologists. Thus, both sides defined the term "ether" in very different ways. They attempted to disprove the opponent's theory with arguments of the own definition of ether, not with the opponent's definition. Thus, agreement was barred from the beginning on – they were talking at cross purposes, insulting each other as fantasists or as narrow-minded.

Recently, the term "ether" comes up in physics again – mostly in unacknowledged outskirts of physics, to explain gravitation through a moving ether (in the 19th century, when ether was postulated as carrier medium for light, it was postulated to be static). But these theories have nothing to do with the occult term of ether.

2 Other Terms for Ether or similar Phenomena

Bioplasm is a term for etheric substance especially used by East European parapsychologists – it is believed there that it can be made visible through Kirlian photography. The term was coined in 1966 by the Russian scientist V. S. Grishenko as a term for the 5th state of aggregation (the other four states being solid, liquid, gaseous, plasmatic). After Grishenko, bioplasm is identical with the vital force.

Chi (Chinese)/**Ki** (Japanese). The Chinese call the etheric energy "Chi". There is a Taoistic discipline similar to yoga where it is believed that through sexual energy (water, abdomen) working together with fire (belly), a new form of energy is developed (Chi) – likewise to the development of water vapour from water and heat. This is the reason why deities and Buddhas are often depicted with a big belly in China, which is a sign that they possess a great amount of Chi energy.

Fluid substance is a term coined by French occultists. Regarding this subject, Hector Durville and Albert de Rochas are known.

Ectoplasm is a common term in spiritism. This term refers to a very dense etheric discharge, which is believed to be responsible for materialisations and various poltergeist phenomena. Ectoplasm develops through an inner alchemic process in the abdomen. It can be emitted from the body in different ways:

- it can evaporate from the whole body surface like fine mist
- in its densest manifestation, ectoplasm can flow out of orifices of the body, slowly and in a honey-like consistency, whereat it vaporizes at the edges

In common language use, "ectoplasm" is understood as the dense manifestation which is flowing out of body orifices. Its colour is light to dark grey. Ectoplasm does not have to be homogeneous and can contain granulate material. In a few experiments, ectoplasm has been successfully photographed. There have been attempts to make measurements on ectoplasm, but those tests showed very varying results without any

significance (electrical conductivity, Albert Freiherr v. Schrenk-Notzing, 1862-1929, Munich, physician and parapsychologist). For searching photos of ectoplasm in the internet, the term "teleplasm" is useful as well.

Od is a term which is rather rare in recent esotericism. In my opinion, this is a knowledge gap, because the observations connected to "Od" are a valuable addition to the Eastern notions of Prana and Chi. Our occidental researches – although they are not acknowledged – allow us an experimental access to the most fundamental esoteric facts. Maybe it will once be achieved to bring structure into the maze of traditions from all over the world through these researches.

The term "Od" was coined by Karl Freiherr von Reichenbach. Reichenbach was a chemist, natural scientist, industrialist and discoverer of creosote and paraffin. He did very thorough research on polar emanations of objects and persons, using the help of the observations by "sensitive people".

English translations of Reichenbach's books:

- *The Odic Force: Letters on Od and Magnetism*. Book Tree; Facsimile edition (2000)
- *Physico-physiological researches on the dynamics of magnetism, electricity, heat, light, crystallization, and chemism, in their relations to vital force*. New York, J. S. Redfield; Boston, B. B. Mussey & co. (1851)
- *Somnambulism and cramp*. New York, C. Blanchard (1860)

Orgone is a term coined by Wilhelm Reich (1897 – 1957), referring to an energy that was postulated by him initially as "biological", later as "primordial cosmic" energy. He stated to have found this kind of energy during the conduction of "bion experiments", as he used to call it. He conceptualised the science of "Orgonomy", basing on a system of postulates and theorems.

Prana is a term from the Indian Yoga. Under this term is understood a vital energy which can be accumulated in the body through breathing techniques.

After the teachings of Indian Yoga, vital energies are inhaled with the breath. In the human body, these energies are divided into different qualities and used to awaken the chakras (energy centres). There are five kinds of Prana energies, the Pranavayus:

- Prana (which influences the heart/Anahata chakra)
- Apana (Muladhara/root chakra)

- Samana (Manipura/navel chakra)
- Udana (Vishuddha/throat chakra)
- Vyana (whole body)

The Prana energies flow through the body in different energy channels, similar to the meridians in acupuncture. The most important energy channels are:

- Sushumna – central channel in the spinal column
- Ida – left to the Sushumna
- Pingala – right to the Sushumna
- Medha Nadi – this Nadi is less known and runs along the vertical axis on the front side of the body

The exercises which deal with the control of these energies can be found in various types of yoga and are used as techniques to "awaken the Kundalini".

3 About the Etheric Body

The term "etheric body" has partly become established in language use. While a "body" may be understood as a carrier for consciousness – with all its functions of perception and ability to operate – this does not apply to the "etheric body". It is not a body as in this sense of a carrier for consciousness. Furthermore, there is no "etheric plane" as living environment like e. g. the astral planes. Ether is rather a subtle substance, which is closely connected to the physical body and can adhere to the astral body as long as the astral body is in proximity of the physical body. It is rather from a practical view that it is called etheric "body".

While the astral body is loosening from the physical, it takes more or less of etheric substance with it. Due to this adhering vital substance, the quality of appearances and perception is changing. This intermediary phase is characterised through a couple of strange and unique aspects – which is why an own term for this kind of phenomena was only practical.

There is great misunderstanding arising from the fact that, after a longer distance of the "etheric body" to the physical body, the etheric substance returns to the physical body and from then on, the astral body remains without etheric matter – it is only called astral body then. This astral body continues the "excursion" – and the principles which are taking effect now are totally different from the principles before in the etheric state. In practice, this leads to confusion: persons which are less versed in theory interpret these differences of experience as differences of perception and abilities, and ignore the existence of an etheric state. The two phenomena are not longer distinguishable for them. This has the effect that many people, e. g. researchers on lucid dreams (LD), classify both phenomena as one and the same occurrence.

A short comparison of the terms "etheric body" and "astral body"

The astral body is the transcendent body with which we are wandering through transcendent worlds.

The etheric body is composed of the astral body plus the etheric emanations of the

physical body. These emanations are connected to the physical body through the silver cord and, when surpassing a longer distance to the physical body (in many cases, between 10 and 20 m), they are pulled back to it via the silver cord. After this has happened, the OBE (out-of-body experience) with the etheric body changes into an astral travel.

Robert Crookall wrote in "The Techniques of Astral Projection" (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1981, Paperback Ed., p.88):

"Mediumistic people have loose vehicles of vitality and always tend to extrude part of that along with the Astral Body - but this enveiling feature generally returns, along the "silver cord" to the physical body, so that originally composite "double" becomes simple."

The belief in an etheric body can be found as early as in ancient Egypt. There it was called "Ka", the "breath soul". In the ancient Egyptian illustrations, this "double" is often shown with one finger pointing at its mouth – this is a hint to "breath". Like in other cultures, the ether is considered to be linked with breath ("sigh out one's soul", e. g. in German "die Seele aushauchen" means exactly "exhale the soul").

The etheric body in theosophy

In theosophy, the etheric body is seen as a link between astral body (transcendent) and physical body (material). After theosophical teachings, the etheric body is about a hand's width larger than the physical body.



The etheric body is about a hand's width larger than the physical body.

Fluid body

This is another term for the etheric body. The term "fluid body" was used by French scientists and has established as well in language use. There were two French scientists who did important research on the fluid body/ etheric body – Hector Durville (1849 – 1923) and Albert de Rochas (1837 – 1914). Unfortunately, both are mainly forgotten today.

Hector Durville was a French magnetizer who did research on the aura and its structure. He was a co-founder of the "Institute for Magnetism" in Paris. The main part of his books can be found only in French and also in German.

English literature:

- *The Theory and Practice of Human Magnetism*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016 (original book in 1912)

Eugène Auguste Albert de Rochas was a French military engineer, spiritualist researcher and leader of the "Ecole Polytechnique" in Paris. Together with E. Palladino, in his house at Voiron, he conducted experiments which aimed at making the human fluid body visible. He was member of the society for scientific psychology ("Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Psychologie", Carl du Prel). He made Reichenbach's findings about the "od" known in France. Most of his books are only available in French, some in German.

Further synonyms for the etheric body

- *Vital body* (theosophy)
- *linga sharira* (yoga, theosophy)
- *etheric double* (occultists)
- *pranamaya kosha* (yoga)

4 Perception in the Etheric Body

When being in the etheric body, we are in most cases very close to the physical body. As soon as the person moves on, the consciousness changes into the astral body (which is contained in the etheric body) and the etheric substance flows back to the physical body.

Many report that, when being in the etheric body (that means: consciousness is in the etheric body), their sense of sight doesn't work and only darkness can be perceived. Through concentration, it can be achieved sometimes to shift consciousness into the astral body – then, seeing is possible.

Example:

"After having stepped out of the physical body, everything is dark around me. Gradually, I develop sight, which takes some minutes. This means that at first I can only see blackness, then I have a hazy sight and finally I can see clearly, colours included." (Alex)

5 Loosening of the Etheric Body

Now we will deal with consciously leaving our material body through loosening and separating our etheric body from the physical. Many times, this happens unconsciously and we only realize this process going on when it is already happening.

The etheric body can be separated from the physical body in various ways. The most important ways are "taking off" and "stepping out".

The most important requirement for the process of separation of the subtle body is a deeply relaxed state or an ecstatic state, often in connection with overtiredness – as can be seen in some shamanic or ecclesiastical rituals which promote ecstatic states. Principally, the ability to loosen the subtle body is inherent in all humans; thus, separation is often happening spontaneously. But natural relaxation before or after sleep is connected with tiredness, which results in low awareness, so that the person is hardly able to stay in the state between sleep and awake and will mostly fall asleep. This is the reason why spontaneous separation hardly occurs in the evening before falling asleep (you're too tired then), but much more frequently in the late morning. A weekend with longer sleep, for instance, is especially suitable – when we fluctuate between sleep and awake and a certain awareness remains because we are already well-rested. Similar circumstances apply to an afternoon nap, which is why OBEs are sometimes occurring here, depending on individual predisposition.

It is easier for young people than for older people to come into a state of deep relaxation (better muscle relaxation, lower blood pressure).

Requirements:

- deep relaxation
- staying long enough in the state between sleep and awake
- sufficient awareness to avoid drifting into dreaming and fantasising

Conducive aspects:

- low blood pressure
- lying; especially lying on the back
- expectant attitude

5.1 Taking off

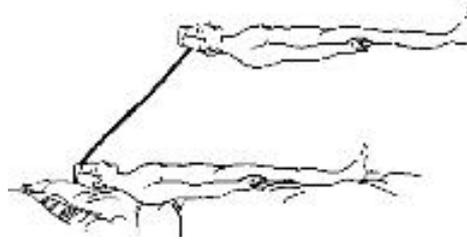
The term "taking off" or "take-off" was chosen because it indicates a gradual, soft loosening from the physical body. During this process, in most cases the subtle body floats upwards. But it can also float sideward or glide down through the mattress. Mostly, these events happen spontaneously. People often experience such a kind of "taking off" while sleeping or while half asleep, however they mostly don't know to explain the situation due to a lack of information.

The loosening of the subtle body happens more or less passively and on its own in the process of taking off. Only the deep relaxation itself – which is required for a consciously performed process – is actively induced. The only active component of the following passive phase is an attentive observing of the process itself (which is required to guarantee the awareness that is needed, otherwise you'll fall asleep).

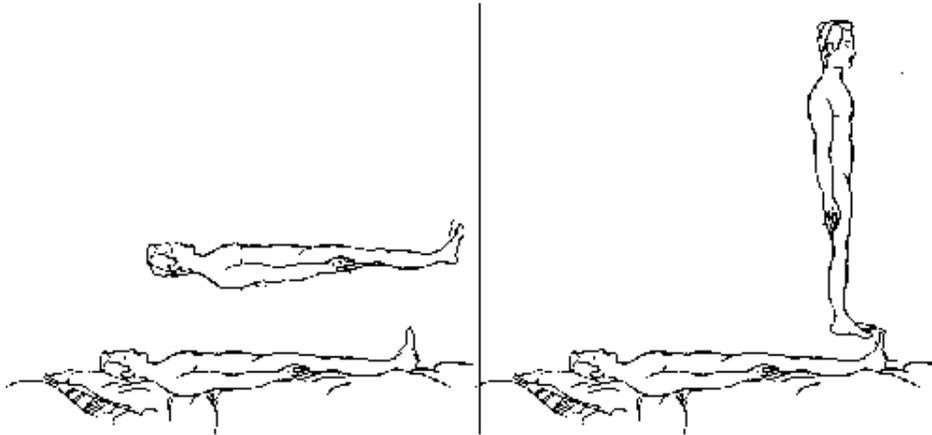
After countless reports (and own experiences), the etheric double developed during the take-off is connected to the physical body through a cord, the so-called silver cord. This silver cord can be seen in the pictures below. It can be fixed to various parts of the body (often forehead, back, chest).



Phase I: The etheric body loosens slightly from the physical.



Phase II: The etheric body takes off, connected to the physical body through the silver cord.



Phase III: The etheric body goes up and falls down again several times, swaying over the physical body, then it stabilizes and begins to wander around.

Typical characteristics of a "take-off"

The process of taking off has typical features in both its preliminary stage and during the process itself. Even after the separation, the experience is different from astral travels or lucid dreams.

Typical symptoms before, during and after take-off"

- floating upwards
- falling down
- swaying/rocking
- sometimes rotating
- sensations of wind (may happen when the process develops into astral travelling)

- floating or standing in the room
- vision: blackness or "real environment"
- clear sensing of objects in the room (as long as they are not seen)

Initial stages/preconditions for causing a take-off

- spontaneous: in the early morning in bed/during an afternoon nap
- willfully induced: deep relaxation/ trance/autohypnosis
- in narcosis (ether anesthesia, nowadays not common anymore)

Theosophical explanatory model

Occultism and theosophy explain the process as follows: the connection between the subtle and the material body is loosened. This loosening can be caused by mechanical occurrences like vibrations and slow waves of the etheric body.



During the process of loosening, the etheric body loosens only a few centimetres up to a hand's width from the physical body.

In a state of deep relaxation, the fluid body floats upwards vertically, often accompanied by swaying and rocking movements, and may fall down again several times (falling dreams), then float up again.

There are four stages:

1. fluid loosening
2. fluid body repeatedly goes up and falls down

3. fluid body sways

4. fluid body begins to wander around

A few examples:

"When this happens, I use to flow upwards just as if I was a balloon. The first time when this happened I was frightened, because I reached the ceiling but still the floating did not stop. I went through the stonework as if it was only a fata morgana. I could see every fibre of the bricks and the mortar and could even smell it." (Gauri)

"I woke up at about 3 AM. I meditated for a short time while still lying in bed and then I fell asleep again. Soon, still during the process of falling asleep, I could clearly feel a kind of separation of my body, in fully conscious state. It felt as if I was gently floating to and fro. I remember that I was astonished by the ease of this loosening. I floated, lying on my back, from my bed to my wife's bed and then I slowly turned around." (OBE Letter 102)

"Yesterday evening, during meditation – when my thoughts finally stopped to tell me chaotic things – my body went completely weightless. I felt as if my body was floating about 20 cm above the floor. At the same time, I felt extremely far from the world. I didn't hear sounds and didn't see pictures – everything simply was black. Only occasionally, some little pictures appeared like undefinable, dark being, similar to wafts of mist wearing masks ... but I was able to remove these pictures through ignoring them. But the feeling that I had during these few seconds (about 30 seconds, I think) was indescribable and wonderful. Simply pure happiness." (OBE-Forum, October 2000)

"First, I heard sounds like swooshing or buzzing etc. Then, these noises vanished and I could see pictures – mostly they were abstract, e. g. colourful streaks or mosaics, but sometimes also concrete pictures e. g. landscapes. Afterwards, everything was completely black, silent and very peaceful. It was an almost cosmic and happy feeling of peace. Then, experiences of movement followed, like floating etc." (Ballabene)

"After an eutony workshop, I woke up during the night – I felt myself floating upwards. Throughout the whole process, I didn't have any visual perceptions. I floated upwards in the same position as my physical body – in dorsal position.

When I felt a resistance in front of me, I thought: 'That's the ceiling – after what they say, I only need my willpower to get through it'. I wanted to go through the ceiling and I succeeded. I felt the masonry with my whole body. Every part of my body was permeated with this sensation. I smelled and tasted masonry. I floated on until I reached the next point of resistance. I thought: 'The roof truss – I want to go through it too!' I succeeded. Again: every little part of my body felt wood, even the wood fibres and the roof tiles. My whole fluid body was permeated by these materials. Then, I felt that I was floating above the house (I still couldn't see anything). It felt so free and infinitely large. For a short time I enjoyed this feeling; then, suddenly, I was drawn back into my body. This experience was so curious, wonderful and memorable and it was the decisive motivation for me to start with occult yoga." (T.)

"While falling asleep or maybe shortly after, I felt that I was floating above my bed. It took me some seconds to become aware of this fact. At the same time, I heard a clear swooshing, like from a wind that blows round the corner. I couldn't see anything, so I concluded to return to my body to gain more energy. Immediately, I sank down swaying. I felt my body ever more clearly, beginning from my feet on. But then I realised that my breathing became erratic and this drew me back completely into my physical body. But, through concentrating my consciousness in the Anahata chakra, I succeeded to return to the floating state, about few centimetres above my body. Strangely, I was able to estimate the distance to the body quite precisely even without vision. Soon, I sank back and awoke, seamlessly, in my bed." (Na.)

"The first times when I became lucid in my dreams, I found myself in a state of stiffness during the return: as soon as I became lucid in a dream, I either returned voluntarily into my body – out of fear – or I simply was drawn back into the physical body. During the phase of voluntarily returning, I could perceive that I was floating and falling. When being drawn back into the physical, I immediately got into an intermediate state, in which I was hovering

some hand's widths over my physical body. At this, I felt stiff and like fixed. I could sense the physical body beneath me. This physical body beneath me I perceived as if it was an empty vessel. Then, the fluid of my floating subtle body began to flow into the physical body, whereat I was seeing flashes here and there, until my whole body was flashing. This whole process of flowing in was accompanied by a swooshing noise and ever tiny part of my physical body began to vibrate. Finally I felt a pain that spread in my body like lightning, similar to what I would feel during an electrification. From that moment on, I could completely identify myself with the physical body, but every part of my body felt heavy and I could move only with some effort. Occasionally, I experienced a return to the physical body without this state of stiffness with all its side effects." (Sa.)

"Nearly every time before the fluid body takes off I get the intensive feeling as if my body was charged with electricity. This feeling grows ever stronger before the process of separation, sometimes so strong that it seems unbearable, though the sensation as such is not unpleasant. It seems as if my fluid body was pressed through every pore with full power. I can intensify this state willfully. If the fluid body is separated once, there follows – in most cases – a feeling of great relief and joy." (La.)

"After I had separated from the physical body, I moved through the room for a while. My sight was very hazy, so I followed the walls with the help of my hands. Then I wanted to go back into my body, but I didn't know how. So, I laid down beside the left side of my material body and tried to slip into it. But I didn't succeed. After a second attempt, I opened my eyes and believed to be back, but I couldn't move my body. After I had moved away again about one metre from my physical body, I tried repeatedly to return into it in the same way as before. At this, I felt a resistance at the right side of me (the side that was turned towards the physical body), as if I was bumping against angular stones. Finally I slipped back into the physical body." (Dh.)

"After my morning meditation I laid down again, whereat I was energetically strongly activated. I observed the various vibrations in the body and then fell asleep. After a while – I still was a bit awake – I felt that my legs were

being pulled up in a comfortable and smooth movement (I was laying half on my side, half on my belly). Eventually my upper body moved upwards as well, until I stood bolt upright on my head, apparently only slightly supported by my arms. The position of my arms seemed impossible in the physical body, so I realised in which state I was. I enjoyed this for a few seconds, then I fell back into my body, light as a feather." (Ra.)

"Sunday morning, I stood up early and laid onto the floor. I relaxed my body and concentrated on my vision. I guess I fell asleep during the exercise, for I cannot remember any transition between the exercise and the following state. However, I suddenly regained clear consciousness and found myself standing about 2 metres away from the place where I had laid down. I was able to move freely. The body sensation was completely different, so that I immediately had the impression of being inside of a subtle body. I tried it again, and this time I gained double consciousness – I was conscious in my physical body and in the subtle body as well. Although I still was inside of the physical body, I could freely move the limbs of my subtle body. Every time my subtle arms immersed back into the material body, I could feel a pleasant warming sensation in the corresponding part of the latter. I repeated this many times. The material body was in a state of stiffness, and when I retreated into it, I could overcome this stiffness only with effort and after some time had passed. This time, I experienced new phenomena: swooshing noise in the ears, images of landscapes passing by. Then darkness throughout a few seconds. Subsequently, the sensation of being carried upwards by the wind. Completely weightless, I swayed to and fro. The latter sequence of sensations stayed the same for over a year in all my OBEs and led to a journey ‘carried by the wind’ (during which I couldn’t see anything) and finally to entering another (astral) world – with enhanced, especially vivid and colourful vision." (Ballabene)

5.2 Rotation as a Special Form

Occasionally it will happen that we have the sensation of floating upwards, whereat we spin around our own axis. This axis can be located at several parts of the material body. Mostly the axis lies at the head (forehead) or in the middle of the chest. An

axis at the belly would also be possible (around the navel).

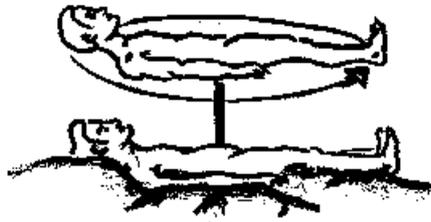
Examples:

"I was already lying on my back for some time to ease my sciatic pain. I oscillated between awake, doze and sleep. Suddenly, I felt that I was floating upwards (with the subtle body) and began to rotate slowly and horizontally above the material body, with the subtle head as axis. This occurrence made me aware of my state, and I gained consciousness and I was able to observe things just like during the day. Now I tried to accelerate this rotation, hoping that this would separate my fluid body from the material body. The fluid body rotated very fast, but stayed connected to the physical." (Ballabene)



Continuation of the above observation:

"After this, I tried to shift the rotation axis from the back of the head to the loins, which worked out without problems. Now the fluid body rotated around the body's central axis."



Further examples:

"On that day I was a bit sick and feverish. Still I didn't lay down but attended to my business. After a few hours, I went to the bedroom to take something out of the cupboard. When I saw my bed, I suddenly felt my physical exhaustion. So, very spontaneously, I laid down. But as soon as I had pressed my head into the pillow, suddenly my head was pressed down in the forehead region. It felt as if someone nailed my head into the pillow. Instantly I couldn't move my head anymore. Everything went black and now I was rotating clockwise and upwards. After three or four rotations, I floated upwards"

with my arms stretched forward, through a passage that felt like a dark and warm tube. I was pulled upwards as if by a magnet. The whole process was very fast but also very gentle and I didn't have time to even become aware of what was happening. But intuitively I knew it was a take-off. Still the excitement was disturbing so that unfortunately the process was interrupted. Gently, as if with an invisible stretcher, I was brought back downwards until I was in my physical body again." (Gauri)"

"I came into deep relaxation relatively fast and then I began to sink down, deeper and deeper, as if I would sink through my mattress down to the floor. And now I knew I was in my etheric body, although I was sinking down this time instead of floating upwards. Then something happened which I never have experienced before: I began to rotate, and my head was the axis. I spun round about ten times, ever faster, and finally I stopped and began to stabilize, then I stood upright and could start to wander around." (Corra)

"I went to bed at 11 PM. While I tried to fall asleep, I noticed that my brain was completely active, but finally I managed to sleep. However, I had ceaselessly thought about how I could achieve to have an OBE. . . I remember to have been in a dream then, together with another person, and the dream felt very real to me. I stood in front of the great pyramid in the Egypt desert, it was night, and I could see billions of stars in the sky. I can't remember who this other person was, who was close to me and began to speak: 'That's the place, exactly here it will happen!' During this dream, I still thought about OBEs and how I had read once that it is possible to come into a meditative state through dancing around the fire. So, I imagined a great fire, and while this other person was standing behind me, I danced around the fire, hoping to reach a meditative state.

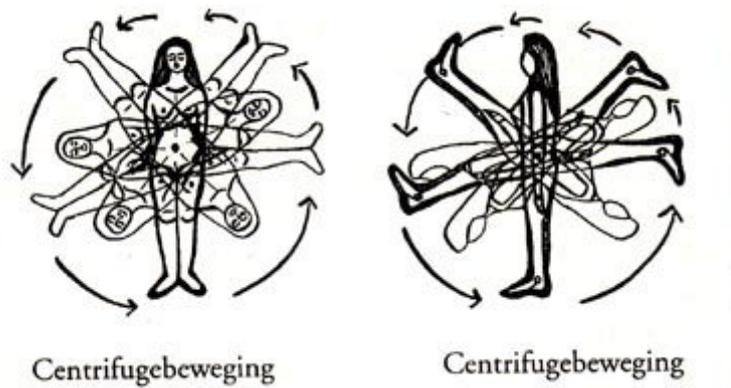
And suddenly I found myself in my room, half out of the body, and it felt as if the room was rotating very fast. I had the same state of consciousness as in the dream, but this time I was in the darkness of my room, ever rotating very fast. This was so intensive that my breathing became intensive too, and I clenched my teeth and opened my lips so that I could breathe. My breathing was fast and I was trembling, although I had said to myself for a thousand times: 'when it happens, then just accept it happily.' But I was rotating so

fast and not only horizontally, but also up and down and in every direction, so that I became afraid. And there was a horrible sound.

I thought of my body again. I dug my fingers into the wall behind my head to stop the rotation. Then I opened my eyes, the sound ebbed away. My state of consciousness was still the same. I closed my eyes again to overcome the dizziness. While I was lying on the back in my bed, I noticed the time on the clock: 1.21 AM. So I turned around and opened my eyes. It really was 1.21 AM. I closed my eyes again for a while, gathered my thoughts, and then I saw the time on the clock again, but before this, I saw my mental eye: it was big, round and black. It was 1.25 AM. I turned round, opened my eyes, and again I was right: it was 1.25 AM. I told to myself that I had seen something true. I got up to drink a bit of water and then I went to sleep again." (OBE letter 169)

From the book "Door het Raam" (Through the window) by Sten Oomen, Sigma, Utrecht, 2000, p. 249 (translated by Alfred Ballabene/Corra):

"On another occasion, when my astral body began to rotate around its own axis, I said to myself braggingly: 'I can do everything as fast as possible.' Thereupon, encouraged by this thought, my astral body began to make these centrifugal movements which I know since a long time, and it rotated ever faster and faster."

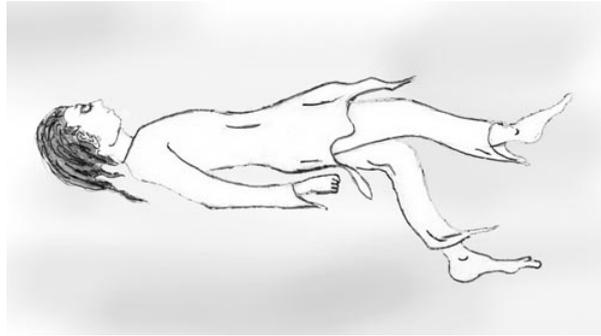


Picture from Sten Oomen: Door het Raam (through the door)

"Carried by the wind"

This "airstream" is most likely the fluid substance which moves along the body surface. It is the dynamics of the energetic body set in motion, as it is known from Kundalini

phenomena. A similar thing is sometimes described in the "descent of the spirit", where the "wind" is flowing down over the body from the crown.



"Carried by the wind"

Some Examples:

"I became conscious when I already had left the physical body. Now I was floating in lying position, tilted left, just as if I was carried by wind or lying on an invisible stretcher. This state is called 'carried by the wind' because it actually really feels as if you were floating in airy heights where the wind is strong. This effect is caused by the fluidal matter which is stirred into motion. I've had this kind of take-off several times before and I knew what was happening. But this time it was a bit different. There was someone with me, but I couldn't see her. I could only feel her presence. She was an otherworldly guide. 'Move both arms to the left, then it is easier', she told me. So I moved my arms to the left side of the body and all of a sudden I was floating even faster and gentler, into the darkness. Though I didn't know where I went and I still don't know it because I soon lost consciousness after this." (Gauri)

"Now there's something that kept my thoughts busy recently, because I simply do not know what it is. Maybe you know the answer. Shortly after stepping out of the physical body, I get a feeling that could be described as a fast drive, as if I was racing around horizontally. This is quite uncomfortable and sometimes even frightening, especially when I can't see anything. But when I see something then I always realise that I don't move relative to my surroundings – although the feeling of racing around remains. Maybe it is only a triviality, but if I had an explanation for what is happening there, I could maybe let go without any fears and look where this leads me." (Amanda, OBE letter 36)

From the book "Door het Raam" by Sten Oomen, Sigma, Utrecht, 2000, p. 251 (translated by Alfred Ballabene/Corra):

"In the night from 27th to 28th february, I felt the breath of body separation blowing in my neck again. I felt a strong energy around my whole astral body, blowing against me like a giant hair dryer, which made me try frantically to hold on so as not to be blown out of my material body. . ."

5.3 Dreams connected to unconscious Take-Off during Sleep

If take-off happens during sleep, we don't experience the separation consciously, but we are able to remember certain dream scenes from which the typical stages of separation can be interpreted. The process of separation is perceived as becoming lighter and floating upwards. During the process there is a constant up and down and also a swaying and rocking.

Stages of Take-Off and the connected Dream Symbols

- **vibration::** is hardly perceived when being asleep
- **falling dreams:** the fluid body floats up a few centimetres and falls back again and again into the physical body, which can result in waking up suddenly and startled
- **elevator dreams:** the fluid body floats up vertically, but glides back a bit; however, not so fast and abruptly as in the falling dreams and not completely back into the physical. There is no startled awakening here.
- **swaying dreams:** the fluid body has floated up to the maximum strain of the silver cord and sways back and forth, fixed by the silver cord (like a tied balloon)
- **wind dreams:** could be connected to the "carried by the wind" sensation, maybe a change to astral travel

Dream Examples

The most reports below are examples for demonstration and they are not doubtlessly related to take-off but can also have other meanings. Only in rare cases, the symbolism

can be verified when right afterwards a conscious take-off is experienced.

Falling dream

"I stood in front of the shell of a new house. There were wooden stairs on the outside which looked like chicken ladders. I climbed up. When I nearly had reached the top, I slipped and nearly fell down, but I managed to hold on. In the same night, I had another dream of this kind. I climbed up into a tree on a ladder, holding a cat in my arms. I slipped again and fell down."

Elevator dream

"Enclosed in the elevator of a high-rise building I can't get out at the floor wanted. I am unable to press the right button, because the board is chaotic. Sometimes the velocity of the elevator is so high that the floors are just racing by. In this way I move up and down. Every time the lift reaches the highest floor I feel uneasy due to the great height. And I never manage to get out, because the elevator seems to have its own life and doesn't give me time to get in or out." (S.)

Another elevator dream

"Inside of a staircase there is a platform with a wicker chair, which floats up and down in the staircase like an elevator. I am sitting on this chair and I'm not exactly feeling good, for there are no handrails, neither on the platform nor on the ledges of the staircase. The elevator is going ever higher until, finally, the platform reaches the ceiling. I am waiting with unease for what is going to happen, when the platform turns – similar to a paternoster – and floats downwards again.

In the following dream I see about 8 to 10 lamps hanging down the ceiling, assembled by long tubes of brass. I'm taking a pleasure in climbing up the tubes and jumping down again. This for many times. I am feeling safe due to the low height." (S.)

Sledge ride

"In a sledge I slid up and down the hills with breakneck speed. It was night and nowhere anyone to be seen. There I saw a drained pond. With childish joy, I slid up and down the slippery slopes." (C.)

Cable car

"With some others I decided to go up a mountain with a cable car. We had serious problems, because a storm made the cabin sway dangerously. Thus, we did not succeed and after a long drive we arrived, got back again where we had started. We now decided to go by foot, but after each attempt to climb the mountain, we slid down again, because the slope was too steep. Again we tried to go per cable car. This time we had a calm drive, and we glided above a plain with fantastically bizarre shaped rocks and big crystals." (T.)

Floating

"I stood in an unknown landscape, looking around attentively. Suddenly I realised: 'This is a dream!' and I formulated the impulse 'float!'. At this, I floated up with great effort until one to one and a half metres above ground; I wasn't able to go higher. There was a lamppost, which I used to pull myself higher. To my astonishment, now my feet began to sway. In the next moment I was sitting on a chandelier, swaying through the whole room on it."

Whitewater ride

"I am riding a kayak in whitewater. I am enjoying this ride very much. I have a good equipment, so the dangerous waves can't do any harm to me, which makes me happy. I am saying to myself that I have conquered the water and now I am trying the same method to take to the air. This requires great effort, but still I manage to stay in the air with my boat for a few minutes."



Up and down in a cable car

"I am wandering through a valley, when I see a kind of quarry. In front of the quarry there is an office with two women. I see that a man tries to ride up on the slopes of the quarry with a motorbike, but it doesn't work out. Now I am getting on a motorbike too, but I am not riding up the steep and impossible way. I take another way close to the difficult way, and this second way is nearly straight and easy to ride. This way is working out for me.

Up on the mountain, I am in a skiing area together with my daughter. We are skiing down the slope, which is very funny, then we're sliding down the slope on plastic bags to the mid-station and we are enjoying it. At the mid-station, we get into a cable car to go further downwards. But it isn't that nice inside of the cable car. I want to get out, but it is too late, the cable car is already departing. It is too loud and the cable car is going down the mountain too fast. At the valley station, the cable car is slowing down almost as if it was a merry-go-round."

"Fastened with a short rope on the waist, I am hanging down a rocking hang-glider, whose cord is held by the gurus. Looking down everything looks small like toys. At once in a next scene I am in a room, floating underneath the ceiling, my head stuck in the corner between wall and ceiling. In next moment I awoke." (J.)

In the above experience it is possible that the person landed in the etheric body after the dream, because he was finding himself floating underneath the ceiling of a room. It is likely that this second part of the dream wasn't dream anymore, but a very short OBE in the etheric body and, thus, can proof the connection between symbolism and unconscious take-off. In the following experience it is similar: the person became conscious during the dream and found herself in the etheric body, so this too may be a proof that the dream symbolism was related to unconscious take-off.

"I had some meaningless dream, but I became half-conscious at some point. I jumped down from the roof of a high-rise building on which I had climbed before to have a perfect starting point for flying. I spread my arms and flew upwards. Firstly I had to fight to maintain straight-line flight because I was uncontrolledly swaying to one side, but I deliberately tried to keep flying upwards. I succeeded and flew at a height of about 50, 60 meters above woods,

mountains and valleys. But this was only for short, because everything around me vanished and I found myself being in the etheric body. As this happened, I began to slowly fall down back into my physical body, but I managed to come out again before I was drawn back completely and so I was able to start a short OBE." (Corra)

5.4 Stepping out

The denomination "step out" is to make clear that this process is a willful and active separation from the physical body.

To leave the body in a state of trance, deep relaxation methods basing on physical perception are most helpful. Mere imaginations and visualisations as they are used in autohypnosis are not suitable. E. g. the rocking and swaying in a boat – which is a useful method for inducing a stepping out (see chapter 9) – should not be imagined, but it should be tried to feel this sensation of rocking and swaying physically. The imagination is just an accompanying aspect and is of secondary importance.

After my experiences, the methods around the process of stepping out had a higher chance of success than methods of taking off. However, this cannot be generalized, because there are considerable individual differences in this area. But this method has its disadvantages: there are some efforts to make – e. g. standing up between 4 and 5 AM – and furthermore, this state mostly lasts only for a few minutes in most practitioners. Nevertheless it can be trained in order to have longer experiences. It is possible that longer astral travels can be made with this method as well.

The method of stepping out means to perform a difficult balancing act between sleep and awake. To induce this state it is also necessary to work on perception of the physical body (through listening to the inside of the body, circulation of energy etc.). The shifting of the consciousness from one state into the other happens subtly and mostly imperceptible. Occasionally it may be difficult to recognize if the consciousness already has shifted into the etheric body. It happens easily that we confuse the respective body perceptions, and as a result it may happen that we move our physical body instead and by doing this, we are immediately brought out of the trance state.

Another point is that we mustn't get lost in fantasies and imaginations, because in this method of separation it's not the visual sense which ought to be active but rather the "inner sense of touch". Drifting off into spontaneous imaginations leads to dreams and reverie and thus results in falling asleep.

Mobility

If the conscious process of separation has succeeded once, the fluid body can move completely free. There are all intermediary stages between a sensation of material-physical heaviness and a dream-like lightness.

Heaviness, weight

When stepping out "densely", the fluid body behaves similar to the physical body – it has weight and it's not possible to float or fly. According to occultism, this depends on the amount of fluid substance which has been taken with the subtle body during the separation. In the etheric state, we're actually inside of the astral body, whereat the astral body takes some of the denser fluid substance with it. This denser matter stays attached to the astral body and depending on the amount of matter adhering to the astral body, the phenomenon can differ between more mediumistic-dense and dream-like astral states. That means that the transition between the etheric and astral state is smooth.

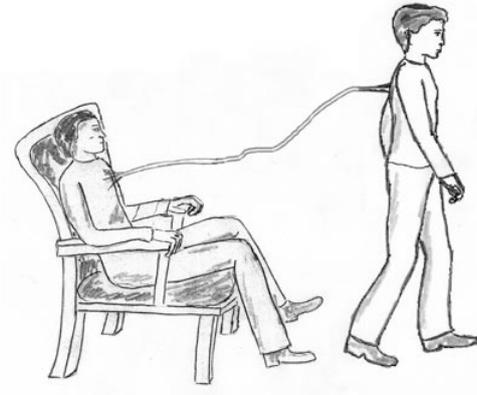
Vision

In denser states, vision is mostly not possible at the beginning and the state rather resembles the half-awake, imageless state in which one has been before. After occult teachings, etheric vision does not exist, but only physical or astral vision (because there exists no etheric plane as such). If the consciousness has not yet shifted into the astral body, the astral senses are not active yet and so we find ourselves wrapped in blackness as if we had closed our eyes. It happens then that one does not have the courage to go further and to step out into the blackness. But in this state it is mostly possible to sense your surroundings through a kind of inner space perception, which can be quite precise – I am able to perceive all objects as dim shapes, just like a bat, and I can even sense their colour. And it is also sometimes possible to gain vision by concentrating on it, giving the silent order "I want to see now" or "I can see now".

Maximum distance from the physical body

After a certain distance from the physical body has been covered, we may feel a pull in the back, preventing us from moving further. This is caused by the silver cord, which obviously can only be perceived when being in the etheric state, but not in astral

travelling. In the state of "false awakening", there is no silver cord perceived as well (or only rarely).



After having moved to a certain distance from the physical body, I felt a pull in my back or in the back of my head. I wasn't able to move further then and was pulled back into my physical body immediately.

There is different information as to the maximum distance from the physical body in various reports. Sometimes only a few metres are mentioned, sometimes more than 50 metres. In my experiences, the distance was about 50 metres. In our opinion it is possible that the maximum distance can vary depending on one's energetic state. It seems that, in a state of higher vibe and more energized, the maximum distance is increasing. It may also happen that the consciousness shifts completely into the astral body and the fluid matter is drawn back to the physical body. In this case, the astral body can move free from then on.

Perception of body and of the environment

The intensive perception of the body in this state often results in people believing in a non-physical, transcendent world. But a full perception of the body is actually not an evidence for another world. Of course I too believe in a transcendent world and are convinced that it exists, but one should not simplify things so much.

5.5 Spontaneous Partial Body Separation

When overtired, it often happens that one has the sensation as if a double of one's one hand has moved – just one short movement and that was it. This has nothing

to do with muscle twitches; it is far subtler. Very rarely, in an overtired state, it can occur that one is floating away with the whole body just for a very short distance and immediately wakes up again.

6 The Silver Cord

The most usual term is silver cord or astral cord. I prefer the term silver cord, because I experienced it as an etheric phenomenon and every term which contains the word "astral" leads to misunderstanding. However, I don't exclude the possibility of the existence of an astral cord. After the theosophists and others, there exists an astral cord which connects the astral body to the physical. The following article is focused on the etheric phenomenon of the silver cord.

When separating our subtle body from the physical body, especially for beginners it's mostly not easy to go out of the physical. We often find ourselves being hold back by a kind of tough, rubber-like mass and we have to make a greater effort.

"At the beginning, it was often not easy for me to come out of my body. I was often hold back by a tough matter that was all around my body. On some occasions I could feel how stringy fibres tied me to my physical body, and I actually heard them squeaking like rubber as they were strained by my efforts of coming out and finally they were torn. Later it became easier and nowadays I usually don't have to make such an effort to come out. However, when in etheric OBE states, I'm mostly pulled back into my body after a certain distance. It is the silver cord pulling me back. Sometimes I can feel the pull in my back or in the back of my head." (Corra)

Even if the rubber-like mass can be overcome, a cord will remain that ties the fluidal body to the physical body. This cord is called the silver cord. The maximum distance from the etheric body to the physical body can vary between a few meters up to more than 50 meters, possibly depending on the energetic state (amount of energy and auric state resp. vibe).

"I was standing before my altar now, but it was only a few meters from my physical body when I felt a kind of 'energized' sensation in the opposite chakra

of my Anahata chakra and I was slightly pulled back. In the next moment, I was drawn back completely into my physical body. I knew, this must have been the silver cord, which was tied to my back between the shoulder blades and pulled me back." (Corra)

If the silver cord can break and if this means death

It's not at all probable that the strand could break - it's like a gas and you cannot break or cut a gas. But if something like that should occur, the person will be weakened and perhaps become sick, but it would not be so harmful so that the person would die (this opinion of mine is in contradiction to the opinion of the theosophical teaching.)

Observations and Descriptions of the Silver Cord in Literature

Robert Crookall: "The Techniques of Astral Projection", The Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, 1981, page 49: :

"The silver cord is not a physical feature. It was likened by Bertrand to 'a kind of elastic string', by Muldoon to 'an elasticlike cable', by Turvey to 'a spider's cord' which was 'silver' and which 'extends and contracts as an elastic cord', by Gerhardi to 'a coil of light', 'a lighted cord', 'a thin ray of light' and 'the silver cord' (which he observed was behind his Astral Body as he moved forward [comment by the HP's authors: here there is no difference made between astral and etheric body, which is why the silver cord is mentioned in the same breath with the astral body here]). Home likened his to 'a silvery-like light', Huntley described 'a feeble thread', Miss 'P.L.' 'a cord', Mrs. Larsen 'a current of mysterious influence', Sigrud Kaeyer 'a connexion'. Rebell described 'a thin luminous ribbon', Mrs. Boorman 'a stream of light', Wirt 'a silver cord or chain', Mrs. Gilbert 'a cloudy-looking cord', the Tibetans 'a strand or cord', Mrs. Cripps 'a shaft of sunlight', Stuart-Young 'a thread', the Anon. lady 'a beam of light', Mrs. 'T.D.' 'a smoky string', Mrs. 'Prothero' 'a slender, slightly luminous cord', Dr. Simons 'an elastic force', etc.

These people who independently gave such similar descriptions of what they saw include Britons, Americans, Frenchmen, Tibetans, Latvians, etc., clergymen, doctors, authors, musicians, etc. Many of them had never heard of the Astral Body or of astral projection."

How the silver cord looks like

Where the silver cord goes into the physical and fluidal body, it broadens conically. Its colour is described as white or silver.

It seems that the fluidal matter itself can sometimes be experienced as being of a silvery colour. The following experience was made in a state of higher auric vibe, so it is likely to interpret the silvery colour as a sign that the etheric body was in a lighter and refined form here.

"I looked at my hands because I wanted to know if I could see my energetic body and my aura in colours. But I was a bit disappointed to see that my skin looked just like normal. As I watched closer I saw, however, that my body was coated with a silvery shine. This seemed to be the colour of the fluidal matter in my higher state. It looked fascinating to me." (Corra)

Experiences of the silver cord

"Several years ago I once experienced the silver cord when 'stepping out' in trance. Out of the body, at a distance of about 1 m or 1.5 m I turned around, face to the physical body. As usual in proximity of the physical body, I was without visual perception and in absolute darkness. Feeling a touch on the centre of my chest, I reached out for it and felt something with smooth surface formed like a cone, diameter at the basis (centre of the chest) about 15 – 20 cm, getting smaller to a diameter of about 5 cm at a distance of about 30 cm from the body. At this diameter (5 cm) it transformed into a cord, leading in direction of the physical body. In every other OBE of the type of 'stepping out' in trance, I paid no attention to the silver cord, but at a certain distance (ca. 50 m) I used to feel a pull. Then I was stopped as if tied and fixed at my backside. Instantly I was drawn back to the physical body. This happened very often and reduced my expeditions to a short duration, frustrating me." (Ballabene)

"... then I reached for the silver cord, which I had never done before, so I had decided to do it in my next OBE. And now I felt it, it was attached between my shoulder blades and was about as thick as a garden hose. It was exactly the point on my back which I often felt being 'energized'. Unfortu-

nately I was very impulsive and didn't pay further attention, focusing on the main intention that had made me want to have an OBE." (Corra)

"I will add another experience of witnessing the silver cord. You may use this data as an excerpt or in whatever way you see fit.

I was travelling with my family on a cross country trip in a van. The trip was very long and tiring. I was sitting in the rear of the van in a relaxed state drifting in and out attention to the conversation of others. Without any of the usual symptoms of "humming" or "vibration", I found myself standing still in the middle of the highway watching the rear of the van from a distance of about 50 yards. I watched the van become smaller as it moved on. I then noticed a shiny, very thin (wire-like) line with a noticeable shimmering silver tone extending from the van to me. The cord was not taut but flowed in a loose, easy, consistent wave-like manner (there was no stretching, sudden movement, or appearance). Although the cord was thin, I could perceive it visually for a distance of at least 100 yards. When I began to consider my circumstance, I was immediately back in the body. I knew that this was the silver cord." (John B., 1999)

Descriptions of the silver cord seen by mediumistic persons as observers

In addition to the observations of the silver cord as an own experience, there are cases where the silver cord was seen by other mediumistic persons. Here a report from: S. Muldoon, H. Carrington, "The Phenomena of Astral Projection", Rider & Company, London, 1969, page 71: The Hout Case No. 2, in which the doctor tells of seeing the exteriorized etheric bodies of three different persons, while the latter were undergoing surgical operations.

"In each case I was able to see, at least part of the time, the astral cord that united these spirit bodies with their physical counterparts. This was represented to me as a silvery shaft of light which wound around through the room in much the same way as a curl of smoke will drift indifferently in still atmosphere. When the magnetic force would draw the spirit close to the physical body, this cord was more apparent, as though more concentrated. At other times this force was indistinguishable to me ... ")

Positions of silver cord connections

"While I was moving away from the physical body, the silver cord was connected to the backside of the subtle body. Turning around, face to the physical body, the basis of the silver cord was sensed at the front side. It seems that the root of the silver cord always is directed towards the physical body. The most frequently described locations of the root of the cord are back and chest respectively and back of the head and forehead respectively. The position is affected by the focus of consciousness – being either focused on the body or mentally focused. At both ends at which the silver cord enters the bodies (physical and etheric body), the end of the cord broadens like the connection of a tree root."
(Ballabene)

I suppose that the silver cord can be connected to any part of the body, though some few places are preferred:

- forehead
- back of the head
- chest
- abdomen
- spleen region

Silver cord as rotational axis

See chapter 5: "Rotation as a Special Form"

Silver cord positioned in the stomach region

"I was in blind etheric state, floating above my physical body. I felt that I was tied through a cord to my physical body, it must have been the silver cord. It was attached to my belly this time and I was swaying, like a balloon, from side to side." (Corra)

"After I had practised, I fell asleep and I had the following experience: during practising I wish to go out with my etheric body and so I focus on the

stomach region. After a second attempt, trying harder to concentrate, I finally succeed to separate from the physical body and I am finding myself hovering horizontally over the body, at a height of about 50 cm. It is only for a short time, but nevertheless I can see and feel the silver cord, which is leading away from the stomach region. It is quite strong, about 10 cm in diameter." (AL)

Length and thickness of the silver cord

Concerning the length of the silver cord, very different observations are reported. There seem to be great individual variabilities. Diameter and length are correlated.

"Several years ago I once experienced the silver cord when "stepping-out-in-trance". Out of the body, at a distance of about 1 m or 1,5 m I turned around, face to the physical body. As usual in near-body distance I was without visual perception and in absolute darkness. Feeling a touch on my chest I reached out for it and felt something with smooth surface formed like a cone, diameter at the basis (breast) ca. 15 - 20 cm, getting smaller to a diameter of about 5 cm at a body-distance of about 30 cm. At this diameter (5 cm) it transformed to a cord, leading in direction of the physical body." (Ballabene)

Sylvan Muldoon describes how length and thickness of the silver cord change depending on the distance to the physical body. Within a few feet of the body, it is quite short and thick. As the subtle body separates from the physical, the cord gets thinner and thinner until it is not thicker than a spider's web.

Héctor Durville gives similar information, stating that the cord uses to be very thick at the beginning of the separation and gets thinner with increasing distance. He adds the fact that the cord seems to stay considerably thicker in the cases of some persons, especially at the point where it is attached to the body.

Function of the silver cord (theoretical considerations)

The etheric substance penetrating the physical body has been experienced (by occultists) as connected to vitality. A lack of etheric substance in human body is postulated to cause weakness or sickness. On the other hand, an accumulation of this substance – induced by a number of exercises in Yoga, Taoism, Kung Fu etc. – seems to lead to mediumistic and parapsychical abilities. While OBEing (etheric OBEs), a

part of the vital body separates, forming a fog-like double: the etheric body. To prevent a permanent loss of etheric substance which is bound to the double, there seems to be a preservation mechanism in which the silver cord takes part, connecting the dissociated etheric matter to its source in the physical body. Thus, a separation of etheric matter with no return is prevented.

Sounds during the separation of the silver cord (fluidal matter) from the physical

"I was in a state between sleep and awake, when I woke with a start because of a loud noise and a kind of 'pain' in my neck. It's hard to describe this noise, because it's hardly comparable to anything I know. I would compare it most likely to a thick rubber band that is stretched and then torn apart. The sensation that I had was similar to this description, too. I felt that a kind of rubber bands led from my neck and upper back. These bands rebounded very suddenly and it was a real 'punch' in the neck that I could still feel after waking up." (Sh.)

The formation process of the silver cord

Threads observed when separating:

"In my OBE's performed with the technique "stepping out in trance", my subtle body seemed to be tied by many elastic cords to the physical body as if being attached by a glue-like, stringy material. I intensified my rocking motions and at last I was able to tear these cords apart (at least that was what I sensed). It may be that only a part of the strings were torn and another part, situated in a somehow favoured region and more densely arranged, were assembled to a single, stronger "string", the so called "cord" I am dealing with. Statements of some authors, in which the base of the silver cord is described to be of root-like character or to be composed of many cords, may be interpreted in this way." (Ballabene)

Statements of authors, considering the silver cord as composed of many threads: Robert Monroe gives detailed descriptions of the silver cord in "Journeys out of the body" (various editions).

Yram: "Practical Astral Projection"; New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc.; 3rd Impression, 1977, p. 75, writes:

"Where the cord joins the double it consists of thousands of very fine, elastic threads, which seem to suck the double into them."

A report from Mrs. Huber-Ring in: Arabella 7 (1977), p. 80 (documentation by M. Speich):

"Then I suddenly felt that I was floating above myself, maybe at about 10 – 20 cm height. But at the same time I felt a pull between my physical and my 'astral' head, which was equally strong. I got the impression of white, elastic, flat rubber bands which broadened. It was uncomfortable. The pressure developed into a dull 'knocking' and the bands were tightly stretched."



Reports in myths and traditions which can be interpreted as reports of the silver cord

Bible

Ecclesiastes 16:6-7

[6] *Remember him – before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well,*

[7] *and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

Taoism

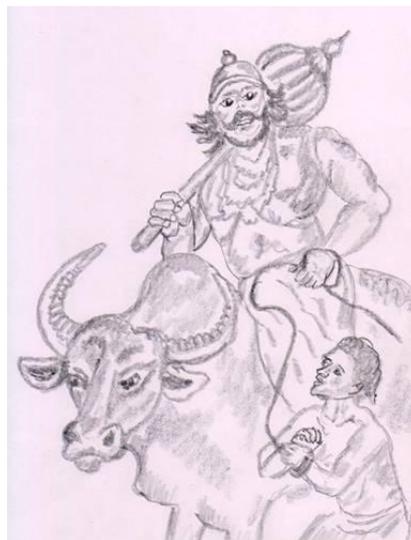
In Taoism, it is sought to achieve the development of a light body through 'circulation of light'. In most depictions of this light body, a strand can be seen which connects the light body to the vertex of the meditating person. Strictly speaking, it is the fontanel

region through which the subtle body leaves the material body in Taoism (Pho-Wa techniques).



From: "Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte", by Richard Wilhelm, with commentation from C.G. Jung, page 129 (German edition). Text: meditation 3rd phase – separation of the spiritual body from the physical body, as an independent body existence.

Hinduism



The soul is carried away by Yama (the god of death).

According to Indian mythology, the god of death Yama has a rope with which he binds the deceased and leads them to the underworld. On the picture above, Yama is not visible. It immediately suggests itself to associate this rope from mythology with the silver cord.

Shamanism

A detailed explanation concerning the 'rope-trick' by Mircea Eliade, from the book "Schamanismus und archaische Ekstasetechnik" (German edition), 1951, Rascher Verl., Zurich, page 402 – 405:

"The rope trick has a long history in India and is associated with two shamanic rituals, namely the 'dismemberment initiation' of the future shaman by 'demons' and the following ascension. We remember the 'initiation dreams' of the Siberian shamans, in which the aspirant experiences the dismemberment of his own body by the souls of the ancestors or by evil spirits. After this, his bones are collected, soldered with iron, the flesh is renewed and the future shaman has a 'new body' when he is resurrected. This body allows him to get stabbed with knives and sabres, to touch red-hot metal etc. without getting hurt. Remarkably, the Indian fakirs are said to perform the same miraculous deeds. In the 'rope trick', they kind of perform the same 'dismemberment initiation' which the Siberian shamans are enduring in a dream. By the way, the rope trick – though having become a speciality of fakirism – is also known in countries far away like China, Java, the old Mexico and the medieval Europe. In Europe, many texts mention – latest from the 13th century on – the same miracles in witches and wizards that also have the ability to fly and to become invisible – in the same way as shamans and yogis. [...] With the help of a rope or a ladder (as well as a vine, a bridge, a chain of arrows etc.), the gods descend to the earth and the humans (shamans) ascend to heaven."

Germans, Greeks



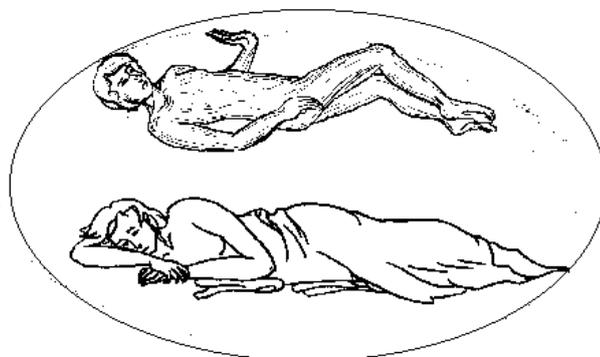
In old myths very often the three Norns are mentioned – Urd (fate), Werdandi (what is to become) und Skuld (guilt), spinning the cord of life, measuring it and cutting it.

7 The Etheric Web

In theosophical teachings, the human astral aura is shaped like an egg surrounding the material body. This theory states that the aura does not become indistinct with growing distance, but instead the aura has a well defined surface. This surface of the aura is elastic and if people are close together, the aura is compressed but does not mingle with the aura of the other person.

The surface of the aura has a special structure, the so-called "etheric web". This is a web of filaments of denser astral and etheric material and observed by clairvoyants as a web formed of thin, light emanating cords.

The etheric web shields the individual from intrusions and inhibits thought forms and earthbound spirits from entering the individual's domain. In psychologically disturbed people, this etheric web is thought to be damaged. The damaged parts are described by clairvoyants as black holes in the aura (the rest of the aura is seen as colored light). People with damaged etheric webs are in danger of becoming obsessed. Further on, these persons are helplessly susceptible to emotions of others as well as to suggestions of earthbound spirits. Compared to mediumistic people, the mechanisms of the way in which susceptibility works is different: in the case of mediumistic people, the sensitivity has its origin in the chakras, as opposed to the black holes of mentally ill or unstable people. The chakras serve as ports for different inputs and outputs – besides other functions – and can be closed and opened willfully.



Observations of the auric web by Guru Ananda:

"The auric web encloses the human, shaped similar to a bell and at a distance of about 70 cm. The aura does not become blurred with increasing distance from the human body, but it has a clearly distinct shape. This outer boundary is formed by the so-called barrier web. This barrier web is an etheric-astral protective shield, which exists for the purpose of inhibiting the intrusion of foreign auric elements."

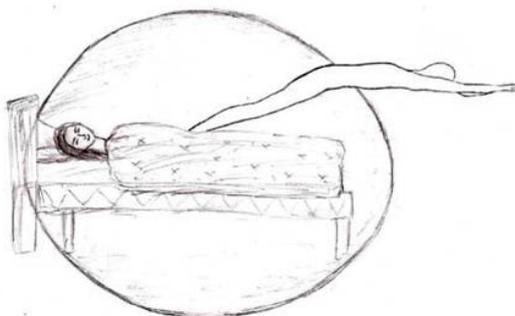
Guru Ananda, who had the ability to see auras, reported the existence of an auric barrier web that gives the impression of a barrier – like a strong spider's web – which works as an obstacle when passing through it consciously. She perceived the auric web as being beige-coloured and having a fibrous structure.

Other examples for experiences of the etheric web:

Penetration of the auric 'egg'

"I woke up and felt a pressure around me which seemed to come from everywhere. Everything was dark and narrow and I couldn't see anything. It felt as if I had dived into deep waters.

As soon as I became aware of my situation, I gently floated forward – without any effort on my part – as if I would make a dolphin's jump in slow motion. As soon as I had shifted my body forward I felt that I broke through a barrier with my head. This barrier felt like the water surface, similar to when you're coming up from the depths and break through the surface. I came out of the 'egg' and gently landed on the floor next to my bed. Still I couldn't see anything and the blackness around me was all-pervading. But I had a tactile perception which helped me orient myself. After a few steps my vision came back as I grabbed hold of the walls." (Gauri)



An impenetrable shell

"I experienced the existence of the etheric web only once so far. I was in my subtle body and I was blind and a bit dazed in that state, and I groped around me, trying to feel anything. At a distance of around 70 or 80 cm, there was an invisible, solid wall, which surrounded me completely. In the first moment I was a bit alarmed, but then I thought that this must be the etheric web, of which I had read about half a year before. I've never had experienced this directly until then. It was an invisible, solid and hard wall, which was impenetrable for me. Although I could 'see' something, there was only something dark with a dull yellow colour around me, as if I was stuck in a thick shell which was hardly translucent. However, I wanted to proceed, so firstly I just crawled on the ground, trying to go through the barrier. After a few seconds, my environment became dream-overlaid and I found myself in a dream of flying. I am not sure if at this point I was still in the proximity of the physical body or not. I had some energetic activity right after this, so I guess I was in the etheric body then. But the OBE continued to be dream-overlaid due to my lack of consciousness." (Corra)

If the human's subtle body is developed enough, it will loose more frequently from the material body again and again while sleeping, hovering a few centimeters above the physical body – a state which easily causes dreams of flying. Sometimes the astral body may take off a bit further – in this case it is likely the astral body and not the etheric body – and then there is the possibility of coming in contact with the auric barrier web. This is felt as an obstacle for the take-off, which is expressed in dream symbols that prevent one from flying higher:

- electrical power lines
- spider's webs
- grid
- branches in the treetops
- closed windows in rooms with high ceilings

Examples:

Electrical power lines in dreams

In Muldoon's view, these power lines are real power lines which are perceived due to their odic radiation. The following aspects are arguments against this theory:

- the lines in dreams do not correspond to a technological reality, e. g. very dense webs of power lines or power lines in natural places
- this symbolism is also occurring in modified versions, e. g. cobwebs, glasshouse, ropes etc.

"I was about to leave a house in Stadlau, when my awareness increased gradually. With more attention than before, I watched the environment in which I found myself now. I thought that it was completely different to the real Stadlau. Now I was interested in seeing my birth house and a moment later I was there, visiting the house and comparing the rooms to those of my memories. Then I left the house and rose into the air in order to return quickly to the place where I had started my excursion. But the street was traversed by power lines, so densely that there was not even a little gap where I could fly through. I wanted to find out if I would be electrified or if sparks would fly – as I had been reported by some of my friends when they told me about their dreams. Thus, I approached the power lines deliberately so as to break through them. What I felt was a kind of burning or electrification, which I can hardly describe because there is no similar sensation in the physical body. But the sensation was the same that I had in former experiences when separating from my physical body. In those, I sometimes had tried to pass a door, whereat I felt the door as a foreign matter that burned me. In this dream, the effect of the sensation was a general 'bodily' weakening. When I had passed through the power lines, I saw another web of power lines above me. As I was already feeling weakened, I was not motivated to make a second attempt. Thus, I glided back to the ground without perceiving any obstacle this time. Below, I found a lush meadow of dewy grass, where I laid down on my belly, stretching my arms and legs to absorb the earth energy. Indeed, I felt refreshed after that and so I was able to continue my journey." (Ballabene)

"I was flying very high over a vast, barren landscape. When I wanted to fly even higher, I noticed two ropes above me that crossed each other. Although there would have been plenty of space in between, I suddenly had the impression that I would not be able to break through. I knew, when I would arrive at the ropes, I could be electrified and then I would fall down. So I decided to go back to the earth. And I actually fell back to earth faster than I would have liked to." (DA)

"I was flying by night over the city, park and river. There were bow-taut wires in the air, which I did not see at first so that I ran into them. The wires sparked and I thought there was a short circuit somewhere." (Ma)

"My dear aunt and I were flying over a wonderful landscape. In mid-flight I saw power lines in the air. I knew that if we passed them I would be drawn back into my physical body. We ran right into the lines and in an instant I was back in my body, waking up with vehement jerks in my spine." (Corra)

"I dreamt of telegraph lines. Then I remembered that Swami Vayuananda was doing research about them at that time. So I approached the wires and tried to investigate their structure, wherefore I was biting into them. The substance of which the wires consisted was cold and like something between rubber and pudding, and it was easy for me to bite through them. The thought rushed into my head: 'This is just like ectoplasm!', and I was very satisfied with this newly discovered aspect." (Ca)

It is likely that in these dreams we experience a spontaneous separation, in which the astral body leaves the physical body without any etheric substance. In this case, the astral body has to break through the etheric surroundings. These can be felt as an obstacle, which our subconscious interprets in dream symbols like described in the above experiences.

It is also known that some mediumistic people report that in cases of obsession the spirits are often saying that they cannot leave the obsessed body because they are hindered by a magnetic field – this may be for the same reason: it is likely the etheric web which keeps them closed in.

When leaving the physical body with the etheric body, the etheric web is not perceived,

for it is made of the same material as the etheric body.

Addition: meaning of dream symbols (by Corra)

Just a little hint on the dream symbols: I kept having dreams where I was enclosed somewhere and couldn't find a way out. Walls and closed windows and doors hindered me from going anywhere and I felt caged. However, this was in a long phase during my life where I felt spiritually caged and had no opportunity to grow inside. Thus, the symbolism here was related to my inner problem and surely not to the etheric web. With this I just want to say that one should not forget that dream symbolism can have different meanings depending on the situation and on the individual.

8 Verification

So far, there is no full evidence for the existence of subtle bodies. Experiments are very difficult to do, because these states of trance – especially in the unfamiliar environment of a sleep laboratory – are not reproducible so easily and so often. This is different in astral travelling or lucid dreaming, which happen in the measurable REM sleep. Through slight awakening impulses a conscious state can be induced.

To interpret body separation as hypnagogic happenings would simplify the situation too much. The two states are very different from each other. One shouldn't take explanations so easily. There are some detailed reports and we got letters of people with experiences that clearly suggested the separation of a subtle body. There are a few reports where even other persons could observe the separation, and other verifications like this. It would be too easy to consider all these people liars or consider them unable to think and observe critically. I had the impression that they were honest people.

In the context of spiritualist surveys, separation of the etheric body has been induced through mesmerising ("magnetisation" by passing one's hands over the body). There exist various demonstrations of these separations, e. g. observations by sensitive persons or the use of calcium sulfide plates, which were induced to emit light by the etheric double.

9 Practical Advise

General advices For inducing a separation of the etheric body, a balance between sleep and awake is needed. In this state it should be possible to feel the body perception shift into the fluid body (this can be felt in typical signs like floating of the legs, of the arms, or feeling lighter). Afterwards, willpower is needed to separate the subtle body. For this, the fluid body perception has to be increased actively. This should not be confused with the physical body perception, which happens sometimes (not because of ignorance, but because the sensation of both states is nearly identical as long as one does not move). Especially at the beginning, the differentiation between physical consciousness and a consciousness directed inwards is not easy and it happens all too often that we may confuse the corresponding types of body perception. Additionally, we must not lose ourselves in fantasies and imaginations, because in the process of separation it is not the sense of sight which ought to be promoted, but the motoric perception. Otherwise we'll get lost in dreams and reverie.

If the conscious process of separation has succeeded once, the fluid body can move completely free. The transition between material-physical heaviness and dream-like lightness is smooth, all stages in between can occur depending on the density of the etheric body (resp. the amount of etheric substance which adheres to the astral body). It's best to try different methods to induce separation, because the chances of success vary individually. By testing out various methods, we are able to find out what works best for us. There is no danger for healthy people in practising body separation (sometimes literature exaggerates this point, maybe because people want to look like knowing and advanced persons, so they emphasize the dangers and the uniqueness of the phenomenon).

9.1 Preparatory Exercises to Develop an Imaginary Sensory Perception

With the following exercise we train awareness of sensations like pressure, heaviness and warmth. This exercise is particularly suitable for training imagination of sensory perception. Thus, it helps us to perceive and guide our own energies better.

The exercise is done while sitting or standing upright.

Compressing an iron rod

We imagine that between our hands we hold an iron rod (about 2 fingers thick). Arms are a shoulder's width apart and the iron rod is in contact with our palms.



We feel the iron rod against our palms.

Now we try to compress this iron rod. Of course this is not so easy, because an iron rod is very hard. Only slowly we achieve to compress the iron rod. While doing this, we feel the pressure on our palms and we realise that the iron rod gets hot because of the pressure – we feel the heat on our palms.

At the end, we have compressed the iron rod so far that our palms are only a short distance apart now. The iron rod has turned into a red, glowing orb.



The iron rod turned into a red glowing orb. We feel the warmth on our palms.

We can very clearly sense the heat of this red glowing orb on our palms. Now we slowly bring this ball of energy to our chest. We let its warmth stream into our chest and from there the heat spreads over our whole body, we can feel that.



Warmth flows through us.

Continuing the exercise in order to reach deep immersion

For this, you can lie on a mattress or sit in a tilted body position (about 45°) in an armchair with adjustable backrest, which prevents you from falling asleep too easily. The head should not be bent too much backwards, because then your mouth will open automatically and you'll start to snore, which will undoubtedly break up your concentration. With the head slightly bent forward, the imagination of tilting forwards will be promoted later (tilting out of the body).

You focus on your body (the whole body) and you feel through it; if possible, together with an inner spatial perception. As a continuation of the exercise above (pressing an iron rod), now we feel a centre of heat inside of our chest. It is possible to continue the exercise in different ways, but now in sitting or lying position. The steps described below are not to be imagined in your head (!) but you should try to really perceive the described imaginations by feeling through your body.

- we let the energy circulate through our body, whereat we feel inside how this "bundle of warmth" wanders forth from our chest – usually up the back and down the front
- we focus on our feet, and, from there, the legs, and we fill our body with warmth and energy
- instead of warmth, it is also possible that we feel how the ball of energy gives us a tingling or "electric" feeling – we can let the tingling or "electricity" wander through our body in the same way as warmth
- our inner perception should be focused on the suggestion "my body gets heavier and heavier"; or, alternatively, the feeling of getting lighter and lighter and to float upwards

Alternative versions:

- "feeling into the body": sense the blood circulation (but do never practice directly on the heart!)
- second version: we sense the heat of our body and feel how our breath animates our body and flows through it
- warming exercises: we develop the sensation of heat in our palms or soles of the feet. Then, we let this sensation wander or circulate through our body

- "Body scan": we focus on our body surface, but only on a very small area of a few centimetres, and we feel through our body in this way as if we would scan or palpate it. In so doing, we experience our body in a new way
- Pore breathing: we imagine to breathe in and out through our whole body surface. This may be easier to do when not imagining to breathe air but instead strength, love, pureness etc.
- perception of swaying/rocking back and forth (as if sitting in a rocking chair)



Take the feeling of rocking back and forth with you into your immersion or semi-somnolence.

- listen into your body and feel how warmth is flowing through it
- let your consciousness oscillate between body and space, following your breathing rhythm (exhaling: imagine to expand your consciousness into the room before you; inhaling: focus on the centre of your body)

While going deeper and deeper into the state of immersion, it is not necessary to feel the whole body. It's possible to let your focus wander from one part of the body to another, or to concentrate only on a certain part. The key of it is the monotonous process of concentration, which allows the body to relax and fall asleep, but your mind will stay alert instead. During these exercises, a deeply relaxed state is reached. Sometimes you may doze off and then wake up again, whereat you will go on with the exercise automatically. When falling asleep, a false awakening may occur (see chapter 10).

In contrary to oscillating between light sleep and awake, falling asleep deeply leads to failure of the exercise. Falling asleep can be prevented by:

- upright body position (adjust backrest)
- fresh air
- slightly lower temperature (less warm blanket or clothes)
- turning on a dim light (but not candles – it's too dangerous to light candles while you're not able to watch them) or let the curtains a bit open in case you drew them, in order to regulate the lighting conditions – dim light conditions are best

First signs of loosening – first opportunity to induce a conscious separation

While we are still occupied with the concentration exercises explained above, after a certain time typical symptoms will occur. They are a sign that our fluid body begins to loosen, our consciousness shifts towards the fluid body now. Those typical signs are:

- feet or hands begin to float (as if we would sit in water)
- the body feels lighter and somehow different (it's hard to describe but you'll feel that something is different from normal)
- IBE (in-body-experience) phenomena can occur, e. g. vibrations, acoustic perceptions, seeing with closed eyes

The process of separation



"The second body seemed to be connected to the physical through thousands of elastic threads."

When trying to induce the body separation for the first times, the process often takes a lot of effort and is unsuccessful many times, because the fluid body is drawn back to the physical body again and again. It seems as if we are stuck to a rubber-like mass or as if rubber-like, tough bands are tying us to our physical body, similar to a stringy mass of glue. Sometimes it even can be heard or felt vividly when these strings are tearing. According to occult teachings, these bands are made of etheric matter. Before we can separate our etheric body, we have to overcome the resistance of this tough, rubber-like etheric mass.

"I managed to come into the state where I felt that my etheric body was loosening from the physical. I immediately tried to pull myself out of the material body. For a few moments, it seemed to work and I was straightening myself. But while doing this, I felt, how a kind of sticky fibres tied me to my physical body. As I slowly floated upwards, I heard how these fibres or threads squeaked as if they were made of rubber. I managed nevertheless to stand upright, but when I tried to go one step forward, I was drawn back into the physical body almost immediately." (Corra)

There are several methods to overcome the resistance of the etheric mass:

- swaying/ rocking out, gaining more and more momentum
- pushing yourself away
- rolling out (when in lying position)
- swaying out (when in lying position)

During the whole process of separation, we mostly aren't able to see but instead we're wrapped in blackness. This is mostly the case after the separation as well, at least for a certain time, which is while many people are scared at this point and don't dare to go any further. But we shouldn't get frightened by the fact that we can't see anything, there's no reason to fear, and after a few metres, mostly our vision is activated automatically. While not seeing, we mostly have a kind of inner space perception, which can be so precise that we may even perceive colours without seeing them. It's like seeing with another sensory organ than with the eyes.

Floating upwards

"When this happens, I use to flow upwards just as if I was a balloon. The first time when this happened I was frightened, because I reached the ceiling but still the floating did not stop. I went through the stonework as if it was only a fata morgana. I could see every fibre of the bricks and the mortar and could even smell it." (Gauri)

Rolling out

"I woke up, lying in lateral position, and I noticed that the upper part of my body was rocking to and fro. As soon as I had realised this, I already knew that my consciousness was in the etheric body. Now I tried to intensify this rocking movement willfully and subsequently I succeeded to roll out of the body with my etheric double." (Gauri)

Standing up

"Sometimes it happens that I stand up from the bed in a normal way. Everything looks exactly like during the day, except for the fact that I am stepping out of the physical body with the etheric double. I have some difficulty to separate the threads which are tying me to the ectoplasm mass, but with some effort I finally manage it. Very often it occurs that I am able to see even before I stand up. Sometimes everything is dark around me, though. But as soon as I have taken two or three steps, I am able to see." (Gauri)

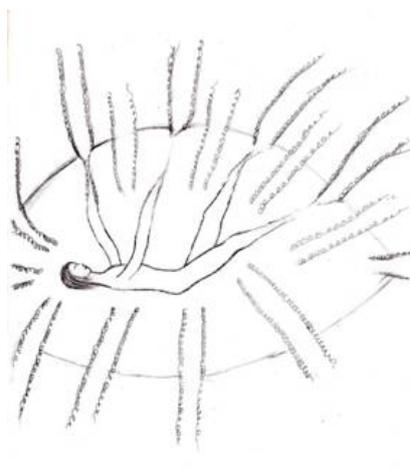
Magnetic pull

"Sometimes it happens, in dreams where I am dancing or making smooth movements, that my consciousness shifts directly into the etheric body. The dream was merely a scenery for what really happened inside of my body. There I am in my own ectoplasm, winding to and fro like an eel, performing movements as if my body was without bones. But these movements aren't willfully controlled by me. My arms seem to be long and without hands, and they are pulled by something – my legs, too. There seems to be a kind of magnetic tube around me. When my arms or legs come closer to one of these tubes, they are sucked in the direction of the tube, whereat they are stretched out and prolonged.

Sometimes it is bright around me, warm and comfortable, and sometimes it

is completely dark, narrow and hot, as if I was trapped inside of an egg that is filled with a sticky liquid. The higher the vibration of my consciousness, the more comfortable and lighter this state is for me. Mostly, the state is very comfortable. There is a lightness in my movements, a looseness and a good feeling, so that I enjoy this very much. Often, taking off of the subtle body occurs when I am aspirated by one of those magnetic tubes. It is as if I am being transported to the outside through a living tunnel through a smooth gliding movement. It feels very comfortable.

In the other case, when the state is dark, narrow and stuffy, it is not comfortable at all and I don't try to come out, for I can guess that I would only end up in some near-earth plane. In this case, I simply focus on the centre of my chest with the intention to wake up – which works out in every case."
(Gauri)



9.2 Fluent Transition between Etheric Body Separation and Astral Travelling

Floating out with feet first ('conveyor')

"This kind of body separation occurs when I am sleeping in prone position. I am gently carried out at my feet, exactly as if I would lie on a conveyor. This feels very comfortable though I can't see anything during this. However, I try not to open my eyes for I'm afraid I could open my physical eyes instead – because this has happened once and of course it had led to an immediate end of the state. After I have been carried in this way for a few meters, I

spontaneously straighten myself and then I float forwards in upright position. At this point it occasionally happens that I am floating through some gate or small tunnel. Right after this, I find myself in a city or in some landscape that looks just like on the physical plane. I am sure that every time when this kind of take-off happens to me, I'll end up on a near-earth plane." (Gauri)

Floating out with feet first/ partial projection

"At times it occurs that, when floating out with feet first, I realise that I don't have a completely formed body. I don't realise this by looking at me, but I realise it by the changed manner of perception. I am travelling for a long time, floating, and my field of vision is very wide – it would not be possible with normal eyes. From this wide field of vision and from the fact that I never blink, I conclude that this kind of vision is not connected to any sensory organ. I don't even have a bodily consciousness. I think, in these cases I am sending out an energetic orb and my consciousness shifts into this orb. Often, I pass by obstacles which I could never get past with a human body, or at least not with my current body mass." (Gauri)

Floating downwards and how magnetism affects sleeping position

"I experienced this kind of separation only two or three times in all these years of yoga, so it is very rare. I can say for sure that, in those cases, I was always lying on my back, which is a very uncomfortable sleeping position for me. I simply can't fall asleep when being in dorsal position, no matter how I place my limbs and head. But there is one exception: when it rains, I HAVE TO sleep in dorsal position, because then it feels completely contrary: it feels very calming and comfortable. At this, it is not important if I can hear the rain or not. It hasn't anything to do with that. The phenomenon has to be connected somehow to the energetic poles.

Back to what happens: when this kind of separation occurs, I always fall through my bed. It is dark around me and my fall is gentle.

I experienced my arrival only once: I had ended up in a low plane. I held out my right hand before me and looked at it. My hand was thin, with long nails, and I wore a very precious ring on my middle finger." (Gauri)



Astral stepping out after etheric stepping out

"When I have succeeded in separating my etheric body, it occasionally happens that I have an astral travel right after. At this, I concentrate on the centre of my forehead with the intention to project. After that, immediately darkness is falling around me and I feel as if being in a merry-go-round which is racing forward, whereat a strong wind is blowing.

Or I am 'thrown' onto the ground, then I am spun around my own axis a few times and then floating upwards. In this kind of exit, I'll always see veils of colour.

Another version: I sit in meditation position (in the etheric body), doing a few mudras with my hands and within a moment I am floating upwards in the same position." (Gauri)

9.3 Separation Process caused by Overtiredness

Sceptics who don't acknowledge out-of-body phenomena will interpret these phenomena as disorder in the cerebral functions or as hypnagogic phenomena. But this is inconsistent with the fact that in this out-of-body state the room can be seen from another perspective, or it is even possible that other rooms beyond the field of vision can be entered and events there can be perceived.

Keeping guard

"Guru Ananda was ill and she needed my help. So I sat on a relatively uncomfortable wooden chair at the side of the desk and I tried hard to keep my eyes open. But this didn't work very well, so I did a bit of gymnastics by turning my head and moving my arms to keep myself awake. However, every now and then I found myself being at a distance about one or two metres from the chair, close to the desk. Every time when that happened, I was not aware of the situation in the first moment, and only a few seconds later I realized that this couldn't be reality. 'I am supposed to sit on the chair, because I have not moved at all', I said to myself and moved my body again to gain full wakefulness. This helped and I was back on my chair again.

This happened countless times. Apart from the change of location, there was no difference compared to my normal state. I saw the room as I saw it usually, in all details, but my body was remarkable light in the other state." (Ballabene)

Keeping guard, second time

"Guru Ananda was ill and I sat by her side to keep night watch. I had been sitting there for hours already and I became very tired, but I did not even allow myself to have a short nap. After a few hours, the following happened: my etheric body toppled out of the physical body again and again. As soon as I noticed this, I moved my body to wake myself up. I did not allow myself to fall asleep. This occurrence repeated every few minutes during about two hours." (Ballabene)



The etheric body kept toppling out again and again.

S. Muldoon, H. Carrington, "The Phenomena of Astral Projection", Rider & Company, London, 1969, pp. 89-90: The Rosseau Case.:

The name of the subject in this case was not given. I caption it "The Rosseau Case" merely because it was translated for me from the French by my friend, the writer, Victor Rosseau. The subject, a soldier, says:

"We left Monchiet in the afternoon, and, after a dreadful march along a muddy road, mixed with melting snow, we reached Beaumetz in the night. A short halt, and we started for Vailly, on the firing-line. We entered a trench about a mile long, which seemed to us interminable. The liquid mud was up to our knees. The frozen rain made it impossible to see.

Finally, we reached the spot where we were to relieve a French battalion. We were in one of the worst of the trenches. H. and I were chosen for guard duty at the same time. We were so fatigued that we had not the strength to curse our bad luck. We were prostrated and frozen to the bones, starving with hunger and with nothing to eat.

There was no possibility of lighting a fire and not an inch of dry ground on which to sit; no embrasure in which to light a pipe, to stave off the pangs of hunger. Neither H. nor I would have thought before this time that human beings could suffer so much.

Several hours passed for me in this horrible situation, and then everything changed in an unforeseen manner. . . I was conscious, absolutely conscious, of finding myself outside my body. I knew that this was I a real and conscious spirit literally freed from the corporeal organism. . . From without, I examined my wretched body at tired in green-grey, the body which had formerly been my own. But I looked at it with complete indifference, as if it belonged to another. . . I knew that my body had to suffer in an atrocious manner, but I, that is to say, my spirit, felt nothing.

As long as I remained in this state of existence, it seemed to me that it was a perfectly natural happening. It was only when I re-entered my body that I was convinced of having gone through the strange experience. Nothing could destroy my absolute, certain, and intimate conviction that on this night my spirit was temporarily separated from my body. . . "

Article from the newsgroup: alt.out-of-body Date: Sat, 02 Mar 1996 (from G. Fidler) (with his permission)

"I would like to share my one and only outerboddy experience. This happened maybe 10 years ago. I was on a camp with handicapped kids, one of the kids became ill and we took him to hospital. He was an epileptic and hit himself on the face repeatedly. The kid (maybe 16 years old and very strong) was lying on the bed in a waiting room and I was holding his hands to stop him hitting himself, I had my eyes closed and was resting against the bed as I was very tired. I was waiting for one of the other camp leaders to come and pick us up. I found myself floating down the corridor just outside the room. I was near the entrance to the hospital, and saw one of the camp members coming inside, but he was not the person I had been expecting, so I thought I was imagining things. I could see everything very clearly, his worried expression, he had changed his clothes, I seemed to be floating about a metre in front of him.

When he reached the room we were waiting in, I was back in my body, I realized I couldn't have just been imagining him walking in. I thought that perhaps this experience was due to the fact I was holding this kid's hands in a very tired yet concentrated state, and the fact that he was transmitting some sort of epileptic impulses through me. I would love to hear of any similar experiences or comments on this."

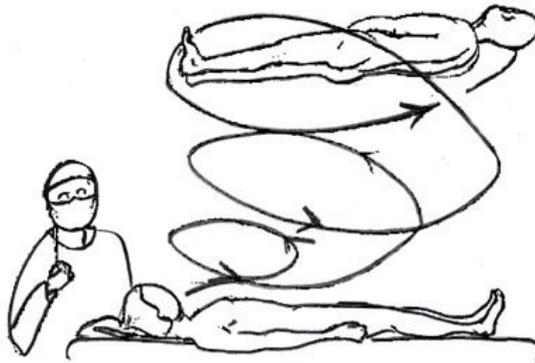
9.4 Separation caused by an Accident

"In the night after the car accident I woke up. I saw many, very high and light beings standing around my bed. I knew that they had come to take me with them. I had no fear. I felt that I was separated from my body and I felt a new but still familiar atmosphere – the atmosphere of death. I became one with it, and a deep feeling of love and protection, a feeling of coming home, filled me inside. It was wonderful. Suddenly I heard a voice behind me: "your wounds are not that severe. You don't have to go because of them." Immediately I was drawn back into my body. But I didn't want to go back, because the longing for my otherworldly home, that I had found again, was too strong. I tried to separate from my body again and I succeeded in doing this without any

problem, for my longing helped me. I floated upwards and went away, but I have no memory of where I went." (T.)

9.5 Separation during Narcosis

Nowadays, anesthetic techniques have been improved and are more precise. Separation of the subtle bodies does not longer occur during narcosis. However, in times where ether anesthesia was common, separations were happening quite frequently. Reports about this are from this period of time.



Redrawn after a picture from S. Muldoon and H. Carrington, "The Phenomena of Astral Projection", p. 56. There you will find some reports on separation during narcosis.

After countless reports, it seems to be typical for this separation during an operation – a separation that has been induced by force – that one has the sensation of "whirling out and up like a propeller".

9.6 Experience of Second Body in an (Religious, Shamanic) Ecstatic State

From a letter – with kind permission. Some words about the person's world view that have nothing to do with the topic OBE have been left unchanged because they give precious insight into the psychic environment.

"Oddly, I had my first astral experience when I became a Christian. Suddenly, I was standing before Christ (the moment before I was in a prayer

meeting). What was so interesting to me at the time was that I thought everyone knew I had left the room, as far as I knew I had left the room. It was reported to me that I fell on my knees during the experience.

At the time I didn't think of it as astral travel, I'd never heard of astral travel. Strangely, to me it didn't seem odd, however it was amazing and it altered my perceptions radically. I was so overcome by my new experience and perception of reality that I gave no thought to what people might think of the things I was reporting to have experienced. Now I am much more careful to whom I speak and what I say.

The next OBE I had was during a church service. It was way up in the mountains and this very old gentleman was preaching. He stopped in the middle of his preaching and said there is someone here with a message in tongues, which I will interpret. All of a sudden I was floating above the church hall. It was a very pleasant experience. Someone said to me that I was to give a message in tongues, I remember replying 'no way not in front of all these people'. Just as suddenly I dropped back into my body, feeling that I'd done something very wrong (not given the message). After a moment the speaker just continued to preach.

For several days I felt dejected.

Since those days (I was a teenager) I have had many experiences in the realm of the supernatural. Some which occurred during times of meditation. However, my experiences have some significant differences to those I read about in books on the astral world and such. In particular, I have on several occasions met with spiritual entities that were evil.

Also, on two separate occasions I had the chance meeting with people I befriended who turned out to be highly psychic but also in league with evil spiritual forces. One knowingly (but he was highly deceptive) and the other was quite unaware, on a conscious level at least.

I do not denounce everything that is not regarded as a Christian experience as being 'of the devil'. But unfortunately I do acknowledge the existence of evil. Mind you, I would rather not. But to ignore the danger would seem to me folly. Everything doesn't boil down to good and evil, and a lot of Christian ideologies are very narrow and exclude any other possibilities. There are things that we just don't understand that shouldn't be given labels until we have true knowledge. However, for whatever the reason and whatever they

are, I know that there are spiritual beings that are dangerous to man. These beings have intellect and purpose. They need not be referred to as demons or devils but they should be referred to as dangerous.

I'm with you on your premise that everyone can have an experience with God. However, I don't believe that spiritual awakenings come without a price. The truth is I have no doubt about the existence of God, nor do I doubt the existence of the devil. But the more you know the more you are accountable for. The more you have taught the more responsible you are to live up to those teachings. The more you judge so much the more you shall be judged.

It would be good to teach people caution in stepping forth regarding spiritual matters. To be aware that whatever knowledge is gained, whatever truths one is made aware of, one becomes responsible for, to embrace, uphold, live and die for. It isn't just a fun thing to do."

10 False Awakening in the Etheric Body

"False Awakening" is the term for a state in which, after classical view, one dreams to get up and to do all the things one usually does after waking up (getting dressed etc.). In my opinion these aren't normal dreams. It's a different process: while thinking of getting up (or rather while we are subconsciously getting prepared to get up), one sets free the astral body and performs the usual morning activities automatically. According to written records and reports, this is equivalent to the phenomenon of the "forerunner" (description further below). A fact that highly suggests that false awakening is no normal dream is that it can occur in all transitional forms between unconscious and fully conscious states. In the conscious states it is possible to astral travel from this state.

The false awakening state can be induced through meditation and concentration. If we try to enter the false awakening state consciously, the typical character of the "dream" will change, because now of course we don't have the intent to eat breakfast or to get dressed, but instead we e. g. will sit in our chair, meditating, with the intent to continue the meditation. That means, we are going on meditating in the "dream". The meditation becomes the subconscious expectation (instead of expecting to get up, eat breakfast etc.) and so it works as an awakening impulse.

10.1 Common (spontaneous) False Awakening

As far as I can remember, I experienced false awakening in the morning for several times. Firstly, it seemed to be a special sort of dream and it didn't seem to be worthwhile to spend deeper thoughts about this kind of dream. This point of view changed when it turned out that the false awakening state could be used as an OBE technique. Later this became my preferred method to start OBEs. Through this practice and especially through the higher state of consciousness which I had in comparison to nor-

mal dream-like false awakening, I could gain deeper insight in the mechanism of false awakening.

The common form of false awakening is observed by many people. But as the happening does not seem to be anything worthwhile to think of, mostly no one pays attention. It is simply considered an unimportant dream, in which the typical morning expectations of getting up induce a corresponding dream activity.

Examples for common false awakening:

"I got up, brushed my teeth and did all the things I normally do in the morning. Only later, I really woke up and realized that I had dreamt everything and that I didn't have been awake in reality." (Ballabene)

"I got out of my bed, went into the kitchen, made coffee and went to the bedroom again to get dressed. Back in the kitchen, I saw myself again in pyjamas. This annoyed me. I returned to the bedroom and put on my clothes again. But again, back in the kitchen, I was in pyjamas. Now my mood was ruined. Shortly after this, I awoke and realized that this had been a false awakening, but the anger remained." (Ballabene)

"It always happens when I am in a restless sleep, especially when there is something important to do on the next day. Obviously my subconscious is hurrying on ahead in these cases and so I wake up and think I am really awake physically. I go into the bathroom, then try to open the water tap, but it does not work. If it does, then no water comes out of it.

Sometimes I want to make a coffee first, but the coffee machine does not work too, or I can't turn off the light because the light switch is defective somehow. But instead of becoming aware of the state I just reflect on why things do not work and then I get annoyed. Mostly this upset about all the defective things makes me wake up." (Gauri)

"I already had gotten up and dressed and now I was about to put on my shoes. Firstly, I put on the right shoe and tied the shoelaces, then I did the same with the left one. When I was finished with the left shoe, I saw that the right shoe was untied. So I began to tie the laces again. Having finished, I noticed that the left shoe was untied. In this way, I tied the shoelaces again

and again until I woke up – I think, out of anger." (Ballabene)

"The most recent false awakenings have been during the past month, and they have been virtually identical. I am asleep (naps, mainly) and decide it's time to wake up. I get out of bed and walk out of my bedroom (which is always exactly as it should be). But as I walk through my house, it's very different from my real house, and I'm surprised that my house is much nicer than I thought it was! Then I find myself waking up again, and repeating my actions. And then again. Sometime between the second and third 'awakening', I realize that I'm dreaming. By the 4th or 5th awakening, I'm beginning to become frightened that I won't be able to wake up again, because every time I do 'wake', it feels so real that I don't know I'm dreaming until I'm out of bed and walking through the house. I never 'do' anything, just walk through the house.

Usually I have 5 awakenings, but the last time it was 7. Towards the end of these, I'm completely aware that I'm sleeping, although it hasn't occurred to me to try to direct the dream because it has always tended to turn into a nightmare that I can't wake up from. Until the last dream. I realized I wasn't as afraid. I began checking myself during each waking, asking questions like, 'Does this really look like my house?' And the answer was no, so I knew I was still asleep.

What is very strange about this last series of false awakenings is that although I know I'm asleep, I become afraid that I won't be able to wake up because of the loop I seem to get stuck in, over and over again. It feels like one part of my brain is fully conscious and the other is deep in REM sleep. The conscious part becomes afraid that the sleeping part won't be able to join it, to get back in sync. I feel like there are literally 2 of me.

Anyway, when I wake for real from these, I am slightly paralyzed. I cannot open my eyes or move, but I lay there and wonder if I'm really awake this time. After a few minutes, I cautiously open my eyes and do something like look at the clock or turn on the light (something I don't do in false awakening) and even though I know I'm really awake, it's still many hours until the feeling of the experience leaves me.

I have had lucid dreams before, partly and fully, but even when I'm fully lucid and directing the dream, I still never feel as completely conscious as I do in

false awakening." (Reported by Staci, USA)

From a letter (Chris):

"I had a similar experience where I had 5 consecutive false awakenings at 7 AM. Every time I went back to sleep and when I woke up it was 7 AM. Finally I realized that it was my destiny to wake up at 7 AM and then I got up and it was really 7 AM. It was so vivid ... I think it was an OBE ..."

Answer (Alfred):

I believe that the false awakenings are unconscious OBEs - that's the reason why it is simple to transform them into a conscious OBE - if you succeed to influence the false awakening as far as it works with something like meditation or imagination or concentration (even if this practices were done in a dull state of mind), because this mental occupation will increase the awareness of your state.

10.2 False Awakening and the Forerunner Phenomenon

By observing several features of false awakening as an OBE pre-state, I came to the conclusion: false awakening is no dream, but an unconscious state of OBE. This hypothesis of mine is sustained by a special kind of clairvoyant observations of a human double (etheric body). This observation is called "Vorbote" in German (perhaps it is called "forerunner" in English - I do not know the English term for sure). The forerunner is the observation of the double of another person. This person, actually coming home, unconsciously announces himself at home by means of his spirit body (exactly etheric body), producing sometimes a kind of poltergeist phenomenon - because you can hear the steps, sounds of the coat etc. This phenomenon very often is reported in the northern regions of Europe (in Norway it's called vardøger, which can be roughly translated with "spirit predecessor" or "warning spirit") and several people even get used to it so that they have no further thoughts about that fact, but instead start to prepare the lunch for the husband who has announced his coming in this way. For several times my mother in law has observed such an announcement of mine and has told me about it - so these are not simply theoretical considerations of mine.

An example from a letter (OBE Letter 320):

"... I went to bed although I was not really tired and everyone else in the house was asleep. Something made me sit up and look towards the hallway. At that time I saw my mother standing there as plain as day with her hand on the light-switch to the kitchen, and she was staring at me but not moving. I asked her if I had somehow awakened her. There was no answer, but she was no longer standing there, only darkness in the empty hallway. ... I definitely got up and awakened my mother, asking her if she had been standing in the hallway previously. She said no, and she could not explain that incident ..."

10.3 False Awakening as a Pre-OBE State

False awakening as a preliminary stage of out-of-body-experiences (OBEs) can be distinguished from common false awakening in the following main points:

- the false awakening is induced consciously and deliberately
- it does not contain stereotype automatisms/ repeating patterns of common morning activities
- characteristic are mental automatisms, which are used here as auto-hypnotic methods – they allow to fall asleep, but still a remaining wakefulness is maintained through monotonous techniques (mostly a cyclical exercise like energy circulation or heat circulation in the body)

Realisation of false awakening

The conscious induction of a false awakening is accomplished in the following way: we have to be in a slightly tired state (state of disposition for sleep – mostly in the early or late morning. Sometimes it turns out to be quite useful here when you tend to wake up shortly for several times during the early morning, when you're still tired but have slept nearly enough). In this state, we concentrate for about half an hour on a monotonous, cyclical process – suitable exercises are e. g. OBE-inducing imaginations, meditation, energetic circulation, exercises of body perception (for instance warming exercises as mentioned above). Concentrating on such a monotonous process within a phase of falling asleep results in a kind of posthypnotic suggestive order, which is

repeated automatically after the deeper phase of sleep has ended and we are again in a phase of lighter sleep. Firstly, this automatism is continued unconsciously, but in doing so, we remember our original intention, and the following active concentration leads to full consciousness in the state. The false awakening turns into a state where we can suddenly decide consciously what we do and we can become aware of our subtle body, beginning to explore our surroundings.

OBE process in false awakening

As explained above, the consciously performed meditation or affirmation leads to a higher awareness and wakefulness in the state of false awakening, so that conscious self-reflexion is gained – which, in turn, allows us to remember our original intention (to have an OBE). Thus, we will try to go out of the physical body consciously. If we are already outside of our body when becoming conscious, it is advisable to step back into the physical body and step out again consciously, otherwise the whole thing may turn more easily into dreamlike states again.

There is another difference to spontaneous, common false awakening. While during spontaneous false awakening we are concentrated on stereotype automatisms in an introverted manner, in consciously induced false awakening we can decide freely – we can leave the house, or do experiments, or concentrate on our forehead chakra to induce an astral projection (while we are still lying in bed in etheric state) – which is easier in this state, because we are already in the etheric body (an astral projection would shift our consciousness into the astral body and thus we would be free from the weight and restrictions of the etheric matter). So there are two possibilities to perform a body separation while we are still in an etheric IBE state: either stepping out of the body as described in the chapter "Loosening of the Etheric Body" – with this method we will mostly end up being in the etheric body. Or we are concentrating on our forehead chakra (or "looking through" the forehead chakra) to induce a separation with the astral body.

Another difference in comparison to spontaneous false awakening is the quite frequent occurrence of other persons inside of the room. These persons are obviously trying to keep us from going on (a kind of guardian of the threshold) to disturb our will and intentions. E. g. they may turn on the light or tell you to go back to bed. These distractions through other "people" may be subconscious mechanisms in order to maintain sleep (similar when you have the urgency to go to the toilet and in your dream you're actually going to the toilet – which is a mechanism of reassurance to say: "you have

already voided your bladder, you can go on sleeping now").

"Nearly in every false awakening I am distracted by noisy people that are walking up and down my room. At the beginning I asked myself why this unsettled situation occurred and I hoped that it would cease. In fact, through a period of time these disturbances ceased, but the result was not a better and uninterrupted practising. On the contrary, I used to fall asleep. Obviously, these disturbances motivated me to practise with even more concentration, because I had to gather all my concentration in order to get not disturbed. This struggle helped me to focus better on the exercise. Thus, the disturbances had something good about them." (Ballabene)

"The day before, I had talked with my Guru Vayu about the process of false awakening and about if and how the subconscious influences the process. He told me that the subconscious sometimes creates certain phenomena in order to keep us sleeping. In this way, OBEs can be prevented with success by the subconscious. I had never experienced this and found it interesting. Obviously, this fact had kept my thoughts busy, for I had such an experience myself in the night: I woke up in my own ectoplasm. It surrounded me like a mass which I tried to get rid of, because I wanted to go out. It was dark around me, but I could barely see my surroundings. Unfortunately, I wasn't completely conscious but slightly dazed. As soon as I had freed one of my legs from the sticky mass and was about to get out with the other leg too, suddenly my Guru Vayu was standing in front of me. 'Go back, Gauri, you have to sleep', he said in a fatherly tone. I stared at him completely confused. In spite of my muzzy state of consciousness, I found it very strange that my Guru demanded from me that I shouldn't leave my body and, in doing so, missing an OBE. This was so totally contrary to his opinions. I was bewildered. Because of this absurd situation, suddenly I remembered what my Guru Vayu had explained to me the day before. 'This was not my Guru', so I thought, 'it is my subconscious that tries to prevent me from having an OBE by creating a psychogon.' As soon as I had finished this thought, the face of my supposed Guru took an expression that clearly showed that I had caught him. It was like 'this didn't work out at all'. My subconscious had chosen my Guru as a 'watchdog' appearance, knowing that I am listening to him. But the sub-

conscious had not expected that what this 'Vayu' had said was absolutely not compatible with the teachings of the real Vayu. Unfortunately, this finding didn't help me much in that moment, for I awoke in the physical body nevertheless. My excitement about the occurrence had caused me to wake up." (Gauri)

"I was lying in my bed and I was in the etheric state, I could clearly tell this from the typical signs and body sensation. My awareness was low, though, and I was going on meditating. As soon as I found myself in this state, my mother and my brother came into the room and told me to come for dinner. Due to my unconscious state, I considered it a real situation like in everyday life and I called out to them, I would be there in a minute. As I did this, I woke up in my physical body and was annoyed that I found myself being fooled again." (Corra)

Regarding the persons which are disturbing us there, it does not seem totally clear who they are: are we encountering inner imaginations, psychogons (pseudo-lives, enlivened thought forms) or astral appearances of living or dead persons – or are maybe all these options possible?

Further experiences:

The good advice

"This is an example for a typical dream-like scene as it occurs when inducing a false awakening through the above mentioned technique, sitting in a chair: my wife came in without turning the light on. She told me that the window was open and I could get a cold, I should rather go to bed." (Ballabene)

Swinging out of the body

"I sat in my armchair, trying to continue with my exercise 'listening to the inside of my body' despite distracting noises outside. V. lay in his bed stirring restlessly, E. went into the room and talked to someone (relatives that didn't live in our house). I took these occurrences for real. 'Just don't let yourself distract and go on', I thought. And indeed, I succeeded to focus on my exercise. Concentrated on listening inwards, soon I didn't hear the noises anymore. Instead I realized how my subtle body was loosening from

the physical. This situation was a wake-up signal for me – I became aware of what was happening and was able to think clearly. I didn't succeed to leave the physical at once, I only managed to sway a bit out of the body. By combining the swinging movement with my breathing, I was able to intensify this 'swinging' and, in this way, got out of the physical without further efforts. I went through the door and out onto the terrace . . . " (Ballabene)

Unswerving

"I sat in my armchair (backrest with inclination of ca. 60°). It was 3 AM. In false awakening, I continued my meditation. As I sat in the chair with closed eyes – it is almost always impossible to tell if you're physically awake or in a false awakening – A. went into the room (I supposed it was A.). Then she turned on the light. I noticed the light in this orange colour that occurs when light is seen through closed eyes. Then, A. left the room. I didn't allow that anything of this disturbed my meditation, until I could clearly feel this lightness of my body, as it can be felt when consciousness shifts into the etheric body. On the next morning, I asked A. if she had come into my room during the night. She said no, and it was obvious to me that all these things had happened in the state of false awakening." (Ballabene)

The annoying family

"As I woke up I laid in the bed of my old room in the house where I used to live years ago. My mother and my brother were in the room as well and again this time they tried to prevent me from going out of my body. I was half conscious and knew that I could separate my etheric body from the physical. I kept concentrating on my etheric body, although I still felt my physical body. My consciousness shifted more and more towards the etheric body and I could sense the circulation of the fluid matter around me. While my mother and brother kept talking nonsense to upset me, I was ignoring them, because I was familiar with this state and knew I had to keep focus. I still felt the circulation of the etheric matter and slowly I felt myself wrapped in darkness as I floated upwards. Then the separation was done, although I still was in the etheric body and felt quite heavy. Firstly, I did hardly notice the difference between the state now and the state before, but I realized that it was dark now in the room and I was alone, my mother and brother were gone suddenly." (Corra)

Go to bed!

"I had drunk a bit too much coffee in the evening. So I was fully awake and it was useless to even think of sleep. Thus, I left my bed and sat down on my chair, wrapped myself in some blankets and made myself comfortable there. Here I tried to calm down my restless thoughts and to find relaxation. Some time had passed – obviously I had fallen asleep in the meantime – when I heard that G. A. approached me (there exists a kind of empathic space perception, which allows to recognize a person without seeing). G. A. had left the world of the living about 15 years before, but she kept visiting me in these states quite often, so I was used to her and didn't think of the encounter as something unusual. 'Stop sitting there and go to bed', she said, 'it is already 4 AM'. I opened my eyes (the physical eyes) and went to bed. Only on my way to bed I realized that I had been fooled by a 'guardian of sleep' and thus, I had missed a possible OBE." (Ballabene)

I never have had sleep paralysis in false awakening, I could immediately move my body and so I never knew if I was in false awakening or in awake state. For this reason, I had to go on with my meditation or affirmation until I had definite OBE symptoms. Even then, I can decide consciously if I move my physical or my fluid body.

Another hint on how to keep a suggestion which is long enough: at least half an hour of suggestive imagination/ meditation is necessary to cause an automatic repetition of this monotonous activity after the slow-wave sleep phase. Thus, it can occur that you fall asleep too early when having a great need to sleep, and so you'll only have a normal sleep then (without false awakening). Well, with a bit of coffee in the evening I could sometimes help to stay awake longer – but I'm doing this very rarely and only when the need to have an astral encounter is very urgent.

Summary

As the body is unable to move due to sleep paralysis, our subconscious uses the subtle body as a replacement, and this is the crucial point. It means that our consciousness is already in our subtle body, and so it is very easy to get into an OBE state through false awakening. It is assumed that people who tend to have spontaneous false awakening do have a natural disposition for OBEs.

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