Chapter Two

Exteriorisation or Going Out of the Body

The Experience of Exteriorisation

The experience you had was that of exteriorisation or going out of the body. The consciousness went up and remained above the body for a time. The feeling or vision of oneself in the form of an egg is frequent in such cases. It is not always so, for many go out in an individualised consciousness with an awareness of a subtle body, subtle thought, subtle sensation etc. and move about in the vital or even in the physical world till they come back to the body. But when one begins, the vital body is at first a little vague and the consciousness also with the result that all is at first dim and unorganised. The serpent must be the Kundalini force which had left its coiled sleeping position in the Muladhara and taken the lengthened one in which it joins the embodied consciousness with the consciousness above.

The power of exteriorisation is one that can be used for many purposes by the Yogi when it has been developed.

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It was a partial exteriorisation, part of the consciousness going out to the scene and surroundings described by you while the rest remained in the body and was aware both of the normal surroundings and, by communication or indirect participation, of what the other was experiencing. This is quite possible and for that no form of trance or loss of external consciousness is necessary. As for the cause of such an experience, it does not depend at all on one’s own ordinary mental or other interests; it comes by a sort of attraction or touch from someone who is there on the scene and who feels the need of sympathy, support or help of some kind, a need so strong that it forms a sort of call; it is very
usually somebody quite unknown and it just depends on whom
the call happens to touch because he is open at the time and
receives the vibration and has the capacity to answer. Usually
there is a sort of identification of consciousness with that of
the person calling so that one can see the surroundings and the things
happening through him. It is the physical that becomes nervous
at these experiences and this must be overcome; as the inner
mental, vital, physical consciousness opens to things behind the
thick physical veil all kinds of experiences may happen that are
strange to the physical mind and its tendency to be apprehensive
or nervous at these things must disappear. It must be able to face
even formidable things without fear.

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A feeling like that of the shock and the stopping of the breath
for a second and as if of falling down comes to many when the
consciousness for a moment or a longer time exteriorises itself
(goes up out of the body); the shock comes from the going up of
the consciousness or from the return into the body. The Mother
used to have that hundreds of times. It is not anything physical
(the Doctor, as you say, found nothing). When this movement
of the consciousness is more normal, the feeling will probably
disappear.

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You must have gone out of your body leaving it unprotected
and there was an attack which you got rid of after coming into
the body. This part of the head from the ears down to the neck
is the seat of the physical mind — the centre of the physical or
externalising mind is in the throat joining the spine at the back.
It was an attack on the physical mind.

**Going Out in the Vital Body**

It looks as if it were an exteriorisation\(^1\) in which she goes out in

\(^1\) The correspondent reported the case of a woman who, without willing it, entered
into a state of trance at any time, even while writing or talking with someone. — Ed.
her vital body. When one does so consciously and at will, it is all right, but this unconscious exteriorisation is not always safe. The important question is what effect it has on her. If she comes out of it strong and refreshed or quite normal, there is no cause for distress or anxiety; if she comes out exhausted or depressed, then there are forces that are pulling her out into the vital world to the detriment of her vital sheath and it should not continue.

* It is clear that when you go out of your body like that you pass into a vital plane and as you are constantly attacked there and have fear, it is not desirable.

It seems to me I have explained all that to you before. Everybody goes out into the vital world in that way, but it is not indispensable to the sadhana to have these experiences and it is better to postpone them till you have the truly helpful experiences — such as those narrated in a recent letter — and can build up a strong consciousness which can enter any plane without fear or danger.

* As to your experience about the inkstand. When the vital being goes out, it moves on the vital plane and in the vital consciousness, and, even if it is aware of physical scenes and things, it is not with a physical vision. It is possible for one who has trained his faculties to enter into touch with physical things although he is moving about in the vital body, to see and sense them accurately, even to act on them and physically move them. But the ordinary sadhaka who has no knowledge or organised experience or training in these things cannot do it. He must understand that the vital plane is different from the physical and that things that happen there are not physical happenings, though, if they are of the right kind and properly understood and used, they may have a meaning and value for the earth life. But also the vital consciousness is full of false formations and many confusions and it is not safe to move among them without knowledge and without a direct protection and guidance.
Your three experiences related in your letter mean that you are going out in your vital body into the vital worlds and meeting the beings and formations of these worlds. The old man of the temple and the girls you saw are hostile beings of the vital plane. It is better not to go out in this way, unless one has the protection of someone (physically present) who has knowledge and power over the vital world. As there is no one there who can do this for you, you should draw back from this movement. Aspire for perfect surrender, calm, peace, light, consciousness and strength in the mind and the heart. When the mental being and psychic being are thus open, luminous and surrendered, then the vital can open and receive the same illumination. Till then premature adventures on the vital plane are not advisable.

If the movement cannot be stopped, then observe the following instructions:

1. Never allow any fear to enter into you. Face all you meet and see in this world with detachment and courage.

2. Ask for the protection of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother before you sleep or meditate. Use their names when you are attacked or tempted.²

3. Do not indulge in this world in any kind of sympathy such as you felt for the old man in the temple or accept such suggestions, e.g., that he was your spiritual preceptor, which was obviously false since you could have no other spiritual preceptor than Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It was because of this sympathy and the accepted suggestion that he was able to go inside you and create the pain you felt.

4. Do not allow any foreign personality to enter into you, only the Light, Power etc. from above.

² Sri Aurobindo refers to himself in the third person here and below; he wrote this letter to be sent over the signature of his secretary. — Ed.