



A Course In Astral

WEEK 2

HOW TO ASTRAL PROJECT

By Mark Pritchard

Astral Projection

Astral projection is consciously leaving physical body and going into the Astral plane of the fifth dimension. Every time that we go to sleep this takes place unconsciously, but there are techniques to go there consciously and on this course I will explain some that I have seen to be most effective.

Sleep is required to project, because it is with sleep that the Astral body separates from the physical one. The two bodies are attached by a silver cord which stretches infinitely, it sends messages between one body and the other and which enables the person in the Astral body to go back to the physical body as soon as they wake up from sleep.

When you carry out the Astral projection technique it causes you to go through the process of sleep consciously, you are then aware of all the processes (sometimes just some of them) that take place within the transition period between wakefulness and sleep, until the two bodies separate.

In this topic will look at techniques to prepare for the Astral and one very effective technique of Astral projection.

Establishing the Foundation for Astral Travel

(Focussing the mind and being aware of what you are doing)

Before we look into a technique for Astral projection it is important to prepare the grounds for it, because if you can get the first two exercises in this topic right it will be easier to get into the Astral, and you will be able to go into the Astral much more often. If you don't do this, the techniques given to project are less likely to work.

To successfully project you need to concentrate on the exercise you are doing, without being distracted by other thoughts or by anything else.

To be able to do this there are two basic exercises that help to prepare for it:

1. To be aware of whatever activity you are doing in a given moment in daily life.
2. To practice concentration/visualisation each day.

When you are aware of whatever activity you are doing in a given moment in daily life you train the mind to be focused upon one thing and cut down the chatter so that when you do your exercise of projection you are more able to concentrate upon the exercise.

You also prepare for the technique of Astral projection by learning to visualise, because many of the techniques use visualisation. To develop the ability to do this you carry out exercises of visualisation, these train you to visualise and train the mind to concentrate on one thing intensively. When you go to project then the mind is already trained to concentrate and visualise and the projection is more likely to succeed.

Both in trying to Astral project and in trying to be aware of what you are doing in daily life; the main obstacle is the continuously chattering, daydreaming mind.

The Problem of the Chattering mind

Much of the failure in Astral projection comes because the mind is not trained to be on one thing, it is used to chattering away all day, then when you try to do an exercise to project, the mind carries on chattering, the thoughts that were so active during the day continue to be active and they interrupt the technique that you are doing and therefore Astral projection fails, so we are going to look into training it, thereby increasing the ability to focus it on what we need to.

It is of course necessary to use the mind, to be able to think and plan, remember things, solve problems, create/invent things, carry out tasks etc, but the problem is that its activity is so compulsive, it just runs of its own accord it is difficult for it to be on one thing and to be profoundly concentrated for any period of time, rather it is scattered and the thoughts go on and on, like a wheel turning around and around. It should be a tool that is used, indeed it becomes one if we progress enough on the esoteric path, but in any

case the mind must be focused in order to experience the Astral and that takes training, it's not something that happens overnight, it requires a great deal of effort but it is something that we can start with right away at this stage of the course and which will benefit everything that follows.

If you are not concentrated when trying to project then you will either get taken into sleep by a thought, or will become restless and unable to sleep, either way being able to concentrate fixes the problem.

By having the mind chattering all day it causes one to live in a state of daydreaming during daily life rather than being aware of each moment. This daydreaming continues at night except that it becomes real in the Astral plane and produces the dreams, by learning to be on what you are doing during the day, by being aware of what your doing at any given moment, you are learning to act with consciousness, rather than simply thinking all the time. If you do this throughout the day, the mind will be less active at night when you want to project and you will have greater awareness in your dreams. Ultimately, if you can learn to be in consciousness and to use the mind as a tool, it is possible to direct the mind at will to any task such as projection and to be successful in it.

The ability to have control over the mind and to use it effectively as a tool is ultimately part of a much deeper esoteric work, because the different elements that make up the mind and emotions which we call 'egos' have to be observed and eliminated. A new kind of astral and mental body needs to be built and the consciousness radically transformed. These are beyond the scope of this astral course and will be explained about in the esoteric course.

But for now we will look into two very simple but very effective ways to prepare for the Astral, to be aware of what you're doing in daily life and to train the mind to concentrate and visualise:

Exercise 1

Being Aware of what you are doing during the Day

If you can get used to being upon what you are doing then, when you go to Astral project, you're used to being on one thing and the mind has much less activity, because when we are on one thing, the mind gets quietened.

This also has an effect upon the quality and type of dreams at night. At night, all kinds of dreams take place; many of these (although not all) are projections from the subconscious. What happens during the day in the psyche continues at night in dreams, it's just that there is no physical body to bring you back to the world when dreaming, therefore the various images of the mind are projected onto the Astral plane and those things become real in the dreams. By waking up and being more aware, more conscious of what you are doing during the day, at night the same thing happens and you are more

aware and more conscious of what you are doing. In another topic I will give the technique whereby you can realise that you are in a dream and to explore the astral in that way.

The important thing is to concentrate upon whatever activity you are doing at the time and to do only one activity at a time. Even if you have a lot of tasks to do and are under pressure, deal with the most important one, giving it your full attention, even if it is just for a few moments before you have to do another task, give whatever you are doing at that moment your full attention.

You need to be aware of whatever you are doing throughout the day, this can be difficult to do, but to help to get to that, concentrate upon three activities that you do each day, making the effort to use them to practice being aware of what you're doing. Any activity can be used, but try these three, however well or difficult other things are going during the day, use these three activities to anchor yourself in awareness:

1. Washing yourself.
2. Putting your shoes on and taking them off.
3. Eating.

Concentrate upon each of these activities, not allowing the mind to interfere, if you have thoughts go straight back to the activity you are doing, investigate how concentration works, then apply it throughout the day.

Exercise 2

Concentration/Visualisation

Moving on to the second technique to help to prepare to Astral project, practice concentration/visualisation for ten minutes each day.

Take an object, it can be any object (one popular object for this exercise is a lit candle), sit down and place it where you can see it clearly, then concentrate upon it in great detail, observing how it looks, textures, shapes, colours, the material it is made of, the way that light reflects on it, etc, discovering everything you can about it. When you have clearly seen it, then close your eyes and recreate the object exactly as it is in your mind. If there are things that you cannot recreate because you didn't look at them properly, or if the image is fading away, open your eyes and look at it again, study it, then close your eyes and recreate the image again in your mind. Keep doing this process so that you visualise it as clearly as you can.

This type of exercise gently trains the mind in visualisation and concentration, which are vital for Astral Projection. Try to do it regularly, at least once a day for ten minutes at a different time from your Astral projection exercise whenever is convenient for you.

If you want to do this for more times each day then do it, but increase it very gradually, because the mind needs to be educated and you shouldn't force it.

How to Astral Project

There are two main types of techniques used for astral projection – with concentration/visualisation and with mantras. I will explain more about mantras in another topic and will give the different visualisation techniques as the course progresses.

To begin to astral project I will give an effective technique you can try which is concentration/visualisation on the heart.

Sleep is needed to be able to project because it is with sleep that we detach from the physical body, so you need to be in a position in which you can sleep, lying down in bed for example. The best position to lie down in is on your back, so I recommend that you do that. Then you need to be able to relax the body (as explained in last week's topic) because tension holds us into it. Without moving go straight from the relaxation to practising Astral projection.

Exercise 3

A Technique for Astral Projection – Concentration on the Heart

For this Astral exercise, you can try concentrating on the heart. I have found this to be a very good technique to use. It is one of the main techniques for astral projection.

The heart is not only a vital organ of the physical body, but in esotericism it also has a spiritual aspect.

There are different ways of concentrating on the heart but begin with this one and if you wish, experiment with the other ways over the next two weeks. I will mention the other ways after explaining the first exercise to begin with:

The Exercise

After lying down on your back and relaxing; concentrate on the heart. Try to be aware of the heart beating, feel each beat and concentrate upon each one of them. If you can't feel it you can imagine it beating. But the more you learn the exercise the easier it is to feel the heart beating without any aid.

If you really focus your mind on it you can begin to project. There are a number of different things, sensations etc, which happen as we leave the body, you may feel all of them, some of them, or none of them, in which case you may just find yourself there in the Astral without being aware of projecting.

After relaxing, you may feel that your body becomes very heavy, yet at the same time strangely you feel very light. As you concentrate on the heart you may find the beats intensifying, a small noise, very high-pitched, whirring like a motor inside your head, a feeling of not being able to move. Then a kind of an electric sensation passing through the body, as this happens you may feel yourself rising up, lifting up out of the body. As you lift, you have projected. You're in the Astral.

Sometimes during the exercise you may get a feeling of immobilisation, but don't worry, let the projection happen, continue with the exercise and you can eventually float upwards, don't be distracted from it by any of the sensations that are taking place or you can lose it. If you are sure that you have projected but feel as though you can't move, as though you are paralysed, then roll over on your side and get up that way.

You may have projected just a little way, in which case you may wonder whether you actually are out of the body, so you can check to verify that you have actually projected. To do this, get up from the bed, do it really, not mentally, but do it very slowly and deliberately, without sharp, sudden movements. Then you'll see that you are in the Astral, take a look around at the place that you are in, whether the room is exactly like it is normally, if there is anything strange.

If you're still not sure then jump in the air and try to fly, if it's the Astral you can fly and a whole new dimension is open to you to explore. Just don't try jumping out of the window.

If you have projected higher, then you know that you're in the Astral, so explore by walking outside your house and flying, or by concentrating on or visualising a place that you want to go to, then you go there rapidly.

The sensations of projecting can sometimes be different to the way that I have just described, for example, when you are concentrating you may feel the beats intensifying, as they get stronger you feel that you're moving with them, the sensation increases as you go higher and higher with each beat, until you rise up out of the body.

As I explained earlier, I found my first experience a bit frightening, going into the unknown, not knowing if I would ever come back. But experience has taught me not to worry, we dream every night, we are in the Astral but nothing bad ever happens to us, we don't get stuck out there, we have a silver cord that attaches us in the Astral body to the physical body, it stretches infinitely long and is never broken unless we die, which doesn't happen by projecting, it doesn't just snap (although there is a limit to how far we can go in the universe). Nor can we get out and not be able to find a way back. The silver cord always pulls us back, we only have to move during sleep or wake up and we're back in the body. The difficulty is staying out there long enough. It so easy to get pulled back, then you usually begin to fade away, or travel backwards at a rapid pace until you fall back into the body.

There are sometimes negative entities in the Astral, I will explain about these soon in another topic and show you how to deal with them, but don't worry you'll survive until then.

It can help to hold onto an object so that you are not pulled back so quickly while you are there. It's also important to watch that there are no large emotions or egos such as fear or elation at being there, because these can be enough to pull us back straightaway. You also need to be as aware as possible and to maintain that awareness for as long as you can, because any daydreams there actually turn into dreams and before you know it you're in a dream and you don't realise that you projected until you wake up from sleep.

The Astral is best done in a relaxed way, forcing it can interfere with the exercise, so it's important not to force it, do it for as long as your body allows it, it's better to gradually train the body, then you become trained to sleep like this instead of falling to sleep in the usual way. Sometimes you may be trying and not be able to sleep, so when you feel that you have tried for long enough, change to a more comfortable position that is better for sleep.

It's important to practise this exercise a lot, because it can be difficult, the more you try the more you learn about it. Much persistence, patience and dedication is required, you need to keep going every night, even if you have no success for a while, then all of a sudden you find that it works. If you don't keep going then what you have built up can quickly be lost and you have to build up the daily momentum again.

Ways to Concentrate on the Heart

There are different ways of concentrating on the heart, here are some of them, explore them over the next 2 weeks and find out which works best for you:

1. Feeling the heart beats- You simply direct your attention to your heart with the purpose of focusing on your heart beats and trying to feel them throughout the body until your whole body is a heart beat. If you maintain the concentration on the heart beat without random thinking you should be able to astral project.

2. Visualising the physical heart- Direct your attention to the heart with the purpose of focusing on your physical heart inside yourself through visualisation. That is, explore the heart in detail everywhere; the chambers, the arteries attached to the heart, the texture of the muscle, surfaces, etc. Explore in this way in the inner and outer parts of the heart, try to find out how and why is made that way, using your imagination which gives you an instant insight into it if you do it right.

3. Visualising yourself being your heart inside your physical body- Again you direct your attention to the heart in exactly the same way as number 2, but this time imagine that you are the heart inside your own physical body visualising how it feels to be the heart pumping the blood, how it feels when the blood arrives to the heart, etc.

4. Visualising that your physical body is a heart – Direct your attention to your heart, then imagine it expanding and becoming your physical body, the same size as your physical body, explore the heart and its beating like that.

5. Visualising your heart as a Temple - Direct your attention to your heart and visualise it being like a temple, a place with light and with the layout of a temple as you imagine or know one to be.

Gradually get used to any of these techniques, particularly lying down on your back if you are not used to it. Start with 10 minutes and then if you feel tired just go to sleep and try again the next time you wake up in the night or early in the morning, it could work at any time, for example if you wake up just 30 minutes before getting up from bed it could be the time that works.

Don't be afraid of not being able to go to sleep, because this will only be an obstacle for your exercise, it won't let you try the exercise whole-heartedly and your efforts will be wasted.

If you feel that you can carry on with the exercise for more than 10 minutes do so, but do not force yourself. Forcing is counter-productive because then you do not feel like doing it the next day as you have experienced discomfort.

If you try to project more often it is much better as the body and the mind get used to it without being forced, you enjoy the exercise and you want to do more of it. This is very important, because for astral projection you need consistency, which means you need to try literally every night because that is how you learn how to do the exercise and you can correct whatever you are doing wrong.

There is a need not only to make efforts, but also to make those efforts properly. If you don't do an exercise just because you don't feel like it, you will be giving in to laziness and will be far less successful, if you try it sporadically, then you are just fighting the odds, you are always a beginner and you never go further into the exercise itself, but only hope for a lucky chance. On the other hand, you shouldn't force your body and mind when doing an exercise to the point of agony just because you want a result quickly. As you can see there is a need for a methodical approach to the exercise.

Another very useful approach to improve at astral projection when using the technique of concentration on the heart is to try the exercise for 10 minutes well before going to sleep. This is because you become more familiar with the exercise, you have less chances of being taken away with thoughts and you know exactly what you need to do for that particular exercise on that night.

Astral projection can be a very sensitive exercise, if you do anything out of place the exercise can be over in a split second. By that I mean that during the exercise feelings of

fear or excitement or getting involved with the process that is taking place and wanting to almost make it happen by trying to accelerate its process can make the exercise come to an immediate end. For this reason the exercises need to be done every day so that you see all these obstacles for yourself and know what to do. In this way, with daily practice you learn more about how to do it. Astral projection demands patience and persistence, you need to be prepared to learn from each attempt you make and explore further into the exercise. Then the results will happen seemingly by themselves, sometimes without you expecting it at all.

Recap of the Weekly Exercises

These are the exercises to practice this week:

1. Being aware of what you are doing during the day.
2. Concentration/visualisation on an object.
3. Astral projection by concentrating upon the heart.

Also continue with the two from last week:

1. Relaxation – do it before practicing projection.
2. Remembering dreams.

You need to be doing all the exercises given so far each day to succeed properly in the astral. Persist with all these exercises on the course with determination, without giving up, look into the obstacles that you face and continue until you overcome them. Sometimes this is quite difficult; nevertheless, with determination and persistence you will succeed.

Some people are able to achieve the Astral quicker than others, but however long it takes keep going until you get it, because it's well worth the effort.

Here are some variations on the relaxation technique from last week that you can try:

1. Relax all the muscles of the body in one go, that is, let all the muscles of the whole body to go loose at the same time. You can try again and again if you need to until you feel you are relaxed, although this type of relaxation is pretty fast it really relaxes the whole body straight away.
2. Relax each muscle of the body by tensing each muscle slightly and then immediately letting it go loose, you go through the whole body this way. Paying attention to parts of the body that could be tense.



Questions and Answers

Astral Projection

Q - Are factors like noise (young kids), position of sleep, sharing a bed, age, linked to your ability to Astral travel?

A - Noise and sharing a bed can distract you, but if there is no alternative you have to get used to it so that you don't notice it. The position of sleep is the one that you find works best or is practical, but lying on the back works best for most people. Age makes no real difference, it only exists here, but children are less burdened by their egos than adults. As one becomes more involved and caught up with life, one gets more asleep psychologically, however, this can be reversed and the ability to travel can be increased beyond what it was in childhood.

Since I've started this course I have "tried" Astral travel a few times. The closest I got was a sense of a small deep black kind of void in front of my closed eyes. This seemed to get larger / deeper filling the whole room. As this happened I would feel (rather than hear) "flashing lights". However, I would still be aware of things like the TV on or my kids playing in another room. In fact if anything, I would be even more aware of these distractions. Then everything would go back to normal. Does this sound like I'm on the right track? Also when trying this I was very aware of my breathing which sort of distracted me - should you breathe deep or shallow?

By learning to concentrate on the exercise, you will forget about the distractions. You should also forget about the breathing if you are not using it to project.

In your relaxation exercise approximately how long should you spend relaxing your muscles for?

You spend whatever time it takes to relax your muscles, which is normally about 5 minutes once you learn to do it properly.

I've been trying to astral travel several times now and I can feel myself getting close. I've even had some of the experiences mentioned in the lecture but before I get anywhere I lose concentration on my heart either because my heart rate becomes more shallow and it's really difficult to concentrate on it or I become distracted by my own breathing. Can you please give me some advice on what to do?

It helps to imagine the heart, then you can keep focused on it better. With practice you don't lose it like this.

Once feel the heart beat, then visualise and concentrate on the heart, forgetting about the breathing, letting it return to normal, if you think about breathing at any time, go straight back to the heart. Eventually with some practice, the distraction from the breathing will subside. It's a small ego that is affecting you.

If my daughter had not woke me - what are the chances that I would even remember the experience I had in the astral

If you are doing the retrospective exercise with your dreams, you would have a better chance of remembering it, but it's still possible to not realise it has happened when you wake up in the morning. The lucid dream usually ends in two ways, you either merge into a dream, in which case you have to remember it when you next wake up, or you go back to your body, whether woken up by something in the physical or not.

I've tried to Astral Project numerous times and still no success. I can relax my body to the point where my body is tingling, almost as if it has fallen asleep, like what happens when you sit on your foot for a long time , after that nothing. Sometimes, this feeling gets really severe and my body feels like it's contorted into odd positions even though I'm just lying on my back. This also is hard to explain. One time, while I was trying to project, I was in steady relaxation for about 15 minutes and during the other five minutes my body felt like it was sideways even though I was lying on my back. Is this my Astral Body moving? Or am I doing something wrong? Are there any dietary precautions I should be taking?

I have the same problem about the heart beat being too faint and becoming obscure because of the breathing. Should breathing be a conscious effort? I mean 1..2...3...4 Hold...1...2...3...4...

When you Astral Project how conscious are you of the experience? Would Astral Projecting be as conscious as being in the physical body?

Once you relax, you need to concentrate on the exercise without paying attention to the sensations that are happening.

When your body felt like it was sideways even though you were lying on your back, your Astral body had already split, this was your Astral Body moving, although other parts of the Astral body can also move separately from the physical body. Next time, slowly get up from the bed and you can find yourself in the Astral. You were not doing anything wrong, you were very close.

As far as dietary precautions go, the main thing is not to eat a heavy meal before you sleep.

When the heart beat becomes too faint and obscure, you should visualize it and you will find it again, once you do, then return to normal breathing. With practice you don't lose it like this.

When you Astral Project you are conscious of the experience, just as conscious as being in the physical body. However there can be times when it is a bit dreamlike, but these are the exception.

Could I have projected and taken off in flight even though trying to move at the time was impossible? I have also flown before by the way. It is one of the most exhilarating experiences. You come away feeling 10 years younger and oh so relaxed.

Yes you could have eventually projected and taken off in flight. Normally if you can't move, you just wait a little longer and you drift up a bit and can get out. Or you could try to see if you could get out by rolling over on your side, then out of bed. But struggling and sharp movements can easily wake you up in the physical.

Sometimes, when trying the exercise, and start feeling a heaviness, almost pressure in my head and I start feeling as if I am being tilted and in a circular motion and I feel dizzy - I can carry it on but I have never got beyond this and I never feel as if I have fell asleep. Am I doing the exercise correctly? Also can you concentrate on breathing because sometimes breathing blocks the feeling of the heart beating.

If you feel as though you are being tilted and are moving in a circular motion and this is quite noticeable, you can try slowly getting up from the bed to see if you are in the Astral, because you may just catch the moment after you have split. But if you are not quite there, it's important to concentrate on the exercise you are doing, that focussing of the mind will bring about the split.

If you are concentrating on the heart, forget about the breathing, let it go on normally and stay just with the heart. You can concentrate on the breathing alone as an exercise if you want to experiment with that, but remember to stick just to that, don't switch between it and the heart or anything else, or you may easily spoil the exercise.

I tried it relaxing my body, the heartbeat was there and I could feel my heartbeat even shake the bed in rhythm. When I tried to project... nothing. Are you asleep when this happens or are we in that in-between stage of sleep and awake? Maybe I'm trying too hard?

It's not that you are trying too hard, but you are getting too physically involved with the heartbeat, you won't then be able to sleep and it is needed for the projection (watch you don't get emotionally involved either, with tension for example).

Make sure you carry out the relaxation exercise first of all, then concentrate on the heartbeat, but relax into it. Try also to visualise the heart a bit more when you do it. You may find that other exercises like mantras help you to relax more into the projection, until you learn more about how it works.

Don't give up on the heartbeat though because with a bit more practice you could get somewhere with it. It can take a lot of patience and persistence to get it.

We are in that in-between stage of sleep and wakefulness when the splitting of the Astral and physical bodies takes place, but as soon as you have projected the physical body is asleep.

When do you know it's the right time to try to get up and travel?

If you notice that the Astral body is moving about, parts of its body are moving, the face, the leg rises up, the hands or fingers are moving etc. Then take a chance and get up gently and naturally. When you get up, jump almost convinced it's the Astral so that you can fly, then you will check where you are.

Sometimes you just rise up a little way and you may not feel as though you have projected, but you also need to get up to check. Other times though the projection is obvious, or you already find yourself in the Astral.

I keep practicing the exercise, except I place my hands on my chest to better feel my heart beat, should I do this? Also, my heart does beat faster and faster, but then it feels like I have to fight to breathe, which usually breaks my concentration. What should I do?

First of all you need to get your hands off your chest, because, it is distracting you and you are becoming too involved with it.

Secondly, as you start the practice relax and go gently into the practice, when you begin to feel your heart beating carry on as though your heart has always beat that way and keep your concentration on the practice. Then, you will feel the first signs of astral projection.

However, once the signs appear again you need to be concentrated in the practice and not get involved in what is happening, this is very important, because with your excitement or your fear you either get stuck at one point or the exercise will come to an end.

Keep going you are not very far from achieving it.

I just tried the heart beat exercise. I asked for divine help to keep my mind clear and focused, to keep evil away, and to assist me in projection. I laid down and relaxed my body twice. Then I focused on my breathing. First I felt the beating in my ears. Then my feet up to my calves tingled and the tips of my hands. Now I was hearing the beating in my chest. Then I felt this circular motion in the centre of my chest near my heart, my feet, and my hands. Then I only remember waking up, I didn't get to the jumping part. How am I progressing? What was this? Was it just in my mind or what? Should my eyes be open or closed?

Yes you are getting there; you were splitting into the Astral when you woke up.

Try to keep going with the exercise no matter what is starting to happen to you due to the splitting. Watch out for emotions too because they can easily wake you up.

You should have your eyes closed, sleep will arrive better and you are less likely to be distracted.

How do you know when to stop concentrating on your heartbeat and know you're out of your body?

When you actually lift up out of your body, when part of your astral body moves independently of the physical one, or when you have gone through the stages of projection and feel paralysed.

When I am trying to astral travel, I get all these sensations, my mind is fully awake and I feel that my body is dense and unable to move. Am I supposed to fall asleep and then wake up? I have been unable to astral travel.

You will do better to pay less attention to the sensations and to concentrate upon the exercise regardless of what sensations are taking place.

You also need to forget that you are falling asleep, just relax and make sure that there is no anxiety or tension; you can often feel that you are still awake when you have actually projected. So continue with your exercise until there are definite signs of projection itself.

Since I heard in the lesson about concentrating on the heartbeat I nearly tested that every day. In the evening I always fall asleep so I tested in the afternoon which gave me some more results but I only get some of the first things you describe; peep in the ear and feeling heavy. Are there any other techniques, which are a little more effective?

It sounds as though if you keep continuing with this one you will get some results. There are exercises that suit some people better than others however and as you go along the courses you will get different ones. It's a matter of trying them and being very patient.

I enjoy the lectures a lot and especially the last one. It led me immediately to an astral travel again, the best and most convenient one I have had. It was my first but short flight. I have been practicing one year now to consciously project and my efforts were sort of forced, uncomfortable, experiments. I have had many questions, trying to solve all of them by myself, which was not easy. So, I consider this web-site truly precious. The questions that had been torturing me mostly are:

- 1. What kept me mostly worried was the lack of control. Why don't I have control on the movement of the astral body? In the first months it was very difficult to**

move the astral body; I was mostly floating above the physical body. Only after one year I started walking a little and flying, and spending more time astrally.

2. Why can't I see clearly?
 3. What is the reason and the purpose of those loud sounds which resemble the sound of bird flying? The grosser the sounds the more painful and difficult it was to detach the astral body. I remember once after a projection I had no strength to move for half hour. Also, there are strange sensations to be felt on the body, as if streams of something flow, especially on the side of the neck and at the base of the spine (a very uncomfortable push). Sometimes it feels as if the astral body raises slowly upwards and sometimes it feels as if it withdraws from the lower to the higher parts of the body and then leaves through the head.
 4. A usual problem was to get stuck on the body and only few parts detach. It's a real struggle to detach completely.
 5. It is very very confusing that when I walk astrally through the house I open the doors normally. How is it possible for the astral arms to touch and open the material doors? Doors which are closed physically seemed to be open and vice versa.
 6. When is the best time to astral project? Usually, I am a little scared to project in the night (perhaps a childhoods fear of darkness) so I project during the day, which can be done only during holidays though. In the night I can see very poorly which is a problem. On the other hand I wonder how do I see and perceive the light since the astral eyes don't function with the light as the physical ones. Is there any way to perceive the places and objects more clearly, with more light? I guess not, it's a rather stupid question. But do tell me your opinion on it.
-
1. It's because you need to increase your level of consciousness, this will increase with the exercises on the course and the whole esoteric work. It also improves with experience.
 2. Again it is due to the level of consciousness, but it can also be due to the interference from an ego or an outside entity. If this happens again use a conjuration (another topic) then you will see clearer if this was the problem.
 3. You need to be less identified with the sensations of the body, there are symptoms, but the egos can exaggerate them, it's better to stick to the exercise you are doing (for example, if you are on the heart, concentrate just on that, or a mantra etc) until the moment you are out. Even if you are coming out don't get identified with what is happening or the sensations, continue the exercise. Yes you can go out either way.
 4. If a few parts of the body detach, slowly and naturally get up because the split has already taken place.
 5. You can open the doors because they are in the astral and are made of astral matter, just as we can move things in the physical world with the physical body.
 6. You can project at any time, you just need to sleep, many people have a great success with an afternoon nap, they are not too tired when they try. The night has its own advantages though; the atmosphere is quieter and more conducive to mystical things.

The fear is something that can be overcome.

The astral eyes see astral things just as the physical ones see physical things. Clarity in the astral is due to the level of consciousness, the interference of entities and what is being shown, the consciousness is woken up by spiritual beings when they need to teach or show something.

In general I have always been a light sleeper and maybe that is why I am finding astral projection difficult. What is the most important feature in reaching the astral? The sleeping on the back, listening to the heartbeat or the relaxation? I never sleep on my back but I am trying to train myself, also blocking outside noise, but I haven't made much progress. Is the main part of listening to the heartbeat to block out the subconscious thoughts and day dreaming so that they don't mask the astral?

You can be in any position that is comfortable. The thing that most helps the astral is concentration, concentrating fully on the exercise that you are doing, that is why it is important to practice it with the exercises on this course and to concentrate upon what you are doing during the day.

I have been doing the concentration on the heart beat exercise. I have been doing it and all of a sudden a rushing to the head feeling happens and then I feel like I am floating above my body. It is quite a pleasant releasing feeling. I can't see anything but black. I still have my eyes closed. Should I try opening them or will that break the exercise?

You should open your eyes when you reach that stage, because you have already gone into the astral. It will only break the exercise if you do it before you split.

I'm currently doing the course and had an interesting experience last week that's given me quite a lot to think about. I would appreciate your thoughts and any advice you may have regarding this matter.

Firstly, and quite fortunately, simple self-observation is something I have been practicing for over a year now and can appreciate how self-awareness here would translate to the astral.

About 6 months ago I recognized I was having recurring dreams. One night I was even able to 'redirect' a dream by thinking "Nah uh. I'm not going there tonight." and didn't. These are not 'bad' dreams or nightmares by the way.

After last week's lecture, when I went to bed I was beautifully relaxed, concentrating on my heartbeat, suddenly I thought "(main content of dream)!" and that instant the buzzing symptom began with great intensity. It was quite remarkable. (Although I am quite familiar with the buzzing sensation, I find it really, really uncomfortable and am trying to work through what I believe is fear, which prevents me from completely separating.)

I dislike the buzzing sensation so much that, in this instance I put my fingers in my ears in an attempt to dull it. After a short period of this I gently returned to my heartbeat, and with great hilarity realised that it was my astral body with which I had tried to block my ears, etc!

To me, there are two issues that stand out. 1 - The thought connection to a previous dream event that clearly became a trigger to commence separation, which has never occurred with me before, and 2 - (Although I haven't got to your lecture on

Intuition) the feeling I get is there is something I need to learn further by dealing with this dream/issue in the astral. (Even if it is to simply determine whether it is additional egos making mischief, but I actually suspect not).

Fear, avoidance and denial seem to be the obvious 'egos' in this experience. So, if for the time being I set these aside, my curiosity and enthusiasm is fired, fear allayed, and I have room to develop more courage needed to actually separate. Hopefully with the potential to learn something, which I feel may just hold something of deep significant importance to me.

Thank you for you for providing simple access, and presenting this and other Gnostic matters with a responsible approach.

The decisions you make in the physical regarding what you are going to do in the astral translate into the astral that very night, so you find yourself doing or not doing them, depending on what you decided.

Concentration on the heart is a very powerful exercise. If you have been very relaxed and concentrating on your heartbeats, it is very likely that your concentration on the heart triggered off the steps for real astral projection, to the point you were out of your body and closed your astral ears. You simply missed the separation as you may have drifted on and off from sleep. The dream you mention could not have triggered off that type of projection you experienced simply because, if you have projected with a dream you would have found yourself within that dream immediately.

There is certainly a lot to learn from dreams; it is very good that you are using your intuition for your dreams. It could be the case that in that dream your are being shown aspects of yourself, or something that you need to be aware of, that is something only you can decipher with the help of your intuition and looking into your life as you live it.

Fear of the unknown is very common in life, there are a lot of things in life that were the subjects of our fear, but we got on with them and now we do not even remember to be afraid of them. Think of a piece of fruit that you do not know of, would you eat it? Your answer would be no, but a person who knows the fruit will eat it and even enjoy it with no thought of fear. It is your courage and determination to go through whatever you need to go through, to experience conscious astral projection, that will change your approach to your practices and you will see later on how much you will enjoy that wonderful

feeling of actually leaving your body, so that when it won't happen you will long for it so much, simply because out there, there is so much to learn so much to see, so much to experience for yourself!

I've tried to concentrate on my heart in both the lying and sitting positions but getting no joy. At moments I can feel it ever so slightly flutter but mostly I can't feel a thing. What am I supposed to sensing? Am I supposed to be sensing anything? If however I hold my breath I do feel it pounding in my chest. What to do?

You need to be visualising the heart, even if you can't feel it very well. The more you do this the more you will gradually begin to feel the heart. Later on you will feel your heart as soon as you concentrate on it. But getting visualisation right is the key to it. Maintaining the visualisation will enable you to project with this technique.

It is important to practice visualisation for at least 10 minutes a day; the more you do it the more you will explore your heart and get interested in what the heart is esoterically. Visualisation will also help you in any other astral exercise that you do, because you learn to focus the mind.

Mark Pritchard