



# Human Energy Systems

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## People's Auras Interact and Intermingle

An energy field surrounds all living beings. The word “aura” is often used to describe this field. “Aura” has roots in the Greek language, meaning “vapor” or “breath.” Our personal auras constantly mesh with those of our surroundings. When people live together, their auras intertwine, and if they are intimate, this connection is particularly strong.

For instance, they say that after a few years, couples often start acting and speaking similarly. This is because their energy fields are constantly intermingling. They become very sympathetic in terms of their vibrational patterns, and some will say that they know what their partners will say before they actually verbalize it. In extreme cases of auric resonance, they might even begin to resemble each other physically.

When I speak about the aura, I don't want to get preoccupied with its colors and other visual characteristics. I know certain people have a clairvoyant facility for seeing textures or hues, relating them to emotions and intelligence. These abilities are impressive, and almost anyone can learn to develop them with the right training.

The aura can be sensed in other ways, however. For instance, as our energy fields make contact with another person's energy field, we can sometimes feel it brush up against us. We can also smell the aura. The point is that we do not have to see someone's aura, or a place's aura, to know what it is like. We can trust our intuition about our reactions and feelings.

Our subtle senses always pick up on these vibrations. We sense

the aura all the time and use various phrases to describe it. It can be noticed as a light that surrounds a particularly joyful individual, and we might say that the person looks particularly bright or radiant that day. We remark that children have an aura of innocence about them as we tune into the purity of their emanation.

Depressed people seem as if there is a fog hanging over them. The representation of the cartoon character in a comic strip that constantly walks around with a grey cloud above his head is not far removed from reality. We mention that an individual is red with anger or green with envy. This reflects what we actually see with a more subtle vision.

We sometimes perceive authority figures to be much taller than they really are. A professor of mine was barely five feet high, yet he spoke with a dignity and confidence that made him seem much taller. It was the energy he projected that made him look imposing or larger than life. We call this an aura of authority. We also say people put on airs or have a particular air about them.

The aura is routinely recognized and perceived. But because its form is so subtle, the language we use to describe it does not necessarily make the association clear or direct for us. The point, however, is that we don't necessarily have to be conscious of something for it to have an effect on us.

### The Aura's Layers

The human aura comprises different layers that interpenetrate

one another, and each represents varying degrees of subtlety and grossness. The physical body itself constantly emits or discharges an aura of electromagnetic radiation, such as heat, which can be easily measured with the right instrument. There is also an electrical charge that passes just above the skin and changes in amplitude with the person's emotions.

Just beyond the physical body, we find other layers of a yet more subtle nature. Closest to the physical dimension is the pranic, or etheric, sheath, which is responsible for the physical vitality of the organism. It extends several inches from the physical body, and it ranges in hue from bright blue to gray-blue. We see this subtle field most strongly in healthy people who seem to have a zest for life. They literally radiate vitality.

The emotional body extends about a foot from the physical, and it is the most colorful of the subtle sheaths. It reflects both transient moods and enduring sentiments. The more extroverted the personality, the more luminous and expanded this field. Emotions are seen as multicolored currents of energy, and the dominant hue represents the dominant emotion being felt. A color such as green, for example, relates to a sociable or nurturing sentiment. Orange is indicative of sexual ardor, and rose is related to sentimentality.

The mental field is bright yellow, and it extends more than 2 feet from the physical body. When a person has clarity and focus, this body tends to be brilliant. The body takes on a more muddy or clouded appearance when confusion dominates the mind. The mental body is surrounded by thought forms that represent longstanding attitudes and beliefs. The more that people are worried and preoccupied, the more thought forms there are surrounding them. There are convolutions in the mental body when one's thinking is warped — full of worries or mental agitations — particularly when one engages in mental delusions or other distorted ways of thinking.

There are yet more subtle sheaths that relate to the person's spiritual aspects. For instance, there is a higher emotional body that relates to emotions of a devotional nature: both in terms of devotion to helping humankind as well as spiritual devotion to God. Another body is the causal, or higher mental body, which is a deep golden color and houses the unconscious impressions of our experiences across incarnations. Within the causal body exists the seeds of mental attitudes and orientations that shape the course of a person's life. Some dreams originate in the causal body.

The causal body is oval or egg-shaped, and depending on one's spiritual development, it extends about 3 feet from the physical body. It represents the glorious effulgence of the soul. There is also the bliss body, which we connect to in deep meditation or prayer, and it is brilliant and iridescent. It relates to experiences of the most sublime nature, and one can actually see it as a shimmering white light surrounding exalted people such as saints. It is often depicted in the religious artwork of just about every culture as an oval or halo surrounding the head of a deity or saint.

There are still higher bodies that relate to more transcendent states of knowledge, and they are of an even finer "material." One can experience them during successively deeper states of meditation. At the highest point of meditation, however, the being transcends all bodies and forms, becoming one with the whole. At that point, one's identification with the individual self dissolves.

The lower sheaths combine to make up the individual mechanisms of the body and personality, and these are discarded after death. The higher emotional, causal, and bliss bodies are not reformed after each incarnation; rather, they survive the demise of the physical body and the personality. A spiritually inclined individual will shed the lower bodies quickly after death, whereas a person tied to these lower aspects will not easily be rid of their influence. They will reincarnate to quickly pursue the process of purification again.

### Vehicles of Consciousness

Ultimately, our true nature is beyond all bodies and forms. The pure consciousness, the true self, is eternal and changeless; it is unaffected by this world. Each level or body is simply a kind of filter that manifests the consciousness differently. Those able to connect to their original purity in this physical body will become free and open channels for their divinities to be expressed here on Earth.

All our bodies, physical or subtle, are actually vehicles or channels for consciousness. Whenever we are fixated on the physical dimension, our awarenesses are taken up with our physical states. We can say that in such instances, our identification is with physical consciousness, which is what we experience when we eat, play sports, have sex, care for our health, and so on.

We become less identified with

the grosser aspects of our existence the more subtle our consciousnesses are. Thus, when we are reading a book or sleeping, there is less preoccupation with our physical presence. In such cases, the consciousness is predominantly in the mental or causal body. During experiences of religious reverie, the consciousness is often in the bliss body, as the thinking mind recedes into the background of one's awareness.

Just because there are different levels of this consciousness, however, does not mean that we should neglect one aspect or another. Each level is interrelated. The challenge is how to achieve a balanced state of being and integrate one's awareness throughout the different levels. If we fail to look after our physical bodies, for example, this has consequences for each of the other sheaths, which means our vital energy, emotional stability, and mental acuity will be affected.

Until I reached my midtwenties, I did not have much connection to my physical body. Ironically, I only began to appreciate it when I started to practice hatha yoga. As I connected with the spiritual side of my nature, it became apparent how important the physical vehicle was for my development. By taking steps to improve my lifestyle, I created conditions that benefited me physically and therefore spiritually as well.

The point is that there is really no separation between the physical, intellectual, or spiritual aspects of being. When we carry awareness throughout, whatever we do will reflect a higher vibration of thought or action. We will seek those qualities that support the life or light within us: in our food, our environment, our thoughts, and our interactions with others. Even our physical bodies will benefit in that they will become more refined in terms of appearance, texture, and smell. We

will also attract more refined people to ourselves.

The concept of vehicles or bodies relates to different expressions of consciousness. The physical body has no consciousness of its own, and neither does the mind. When the higher consciousness is filtered through the mechanism of the mind-body, a sense of individuality arises. When the consciousness is withdrawn from the body or mind, the person is said to be dead or asleep, and there is no experience of individuality.

Finally, when the consciousness maintains alertness in the physical body but rises beyond the level of the mind, the person is said to experience samadhi, or superconsciousness, which is beyond all bodies. This state has variously been described as perfect serenity, knowingness, or the bliss of the Absolute. One can achieve this state here on Earth. It is not necessary to drop the physical vehicle to attain it.

### Organs of the Subtle Body

We have organs and senses that allow us to function and maintain our physical organism, and there are also structures that perform important functions for the subtle bodies. These mechanisms are known as the chakras. They are energy centers that are referred to in the ancient Hindu scriptures, and they are also of interest in Western esoteric literature.

There are seven major chakras specifically located at the base of the spine, the lower abdomen, the solar plexus, the chest, the throat, the brow, and the crown of the head. The chakras appear as whirling disks of light, each with a different hue. They function as channels to absorb and filter energy from the atmosphere. They also connect the vital, emotional, and mental bodies with one another.

Each of these centers is responsible for a certain level of physical

and mental functioning. In the average person, the chakras are activated only to the extent that normal functioning can be maintained in the world. In people where a specific trait or ability is pronounced, these channels might be more open than the norm. In spiritually inclined people, however, the chakras take on a particularly intense and luminous quality.

As an interesting example of how the chakras connect the physical and mental states of nature, I remember a rather rotund fellow I met during my travels in India. This individual had an imposing belly. In India, this is often a characteristic of someone with a powerful position or of considerable affluence, and it might be someone who lords over employees or servants. Interestingly, the third chakra is also known as the power center. In the case of this individual, a prominent third chakra (it was visible in the subtle field from quite a distance) resulted in an obvious characteristic in the physical area of this chakra's dominance, specifically a large belly.

There are also several minor chakras mentioned in the ancient texts with specialized importance. Some are used to absorb or internalize the prana (vital energy) from the environment, such as those in the feet and hands; others play supporting roles to the major centers. There are small chakras in the palms, fingertips, toes, nipples, earlobes, and lips. Many of these correspond to erogenous zones in the body that are titillated when these chakras are activated.

The energy absorbed by the various chakras is distributed throughout the subtle nervous system by channels that crisscross the vital body that the ancients called nadis. They are also known as meridians. There are literally tens of thousands of these fibers, which function as the subtle counterparts to the physical circulatory system.

When the life energy flows freely throughout these nadis, the person will experience health and well-being. In areas where there are pranic blocks, disturbances often manifest as physical illnesses. In the modern lifestyle, stress, cigarette smoking, and overeating are the most insidious elements that promote clogging in the vital system. Polarity therapy, Reiki, acupuncture, and reflexology all work by unblocking these subtle nerve passages.

Of the countless nadis in the subtle body, three major ones are emphasized in the Hindu scriptures. These nadis, along with the chakras, represent what is referred to as the subtle nervous system. Two of these nadis relate to the ebb and flow of activity in the physical sphere. They are known as the ida and pingala. The third channel, around which the ida and pingala wind, runs through the physical spinal cord. The Hindus call it the sushumna.

This middle channel is the most cherished by yogis because the energy that rises through it relates to the awakening of consciousness. This energy is known as kundalini, or serpent fire. For most people, this mystical energy lies dormant in the root, or base, chakra. They go about their business without realizing the potential that this force represents.

Through practices such as hatha yoga, meditation, and special breathing techniques, kundalini can be coaxed to rise like a serpent from its lair. As it pierces the chakras, the person will experience some very sublime states, indeed. Without the kundalini's power of purification, the soul cannot experience the deep states of transcendence, which blow the mind beyond the field of mundane (worldly) consciousness.

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