

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

# Man's Subtle Bodies and Centres

*The Aura, the Solar Plexus, the Chakras...*



Izvor Collection



P R O S V E T A

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P R O S V E T A

## Chapter One

# Human evolution and the development of the spiritual organs

Every human being possesses a physical body which is made up of different organs. Even tiny children know that. Ask them where their eyes are and they'll show you; or ask them to show you their mouth, their ears, their nose, their little legs and they'll delight in pointing to them. Later on, when they go to school they learn that man possesses five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch, and that each of these five senses has its own specific function; that the function and sensations of the sense of touch, for instance, are not the same as those of sight, taste or hearing, and so on.

All of man's contacts with his environment are based on his five senses, and it is for this reason that he seeks to make the most of them and exploit all their possibilities; this is why, especially, he is constantly trying to enhance and vary the sensations his eyes, ears, skin, etc. can afford him. The various sensations experienced by human beings through the medium of their senses differ

considerably in importance as well as in intensity. Take the question of taste, for instance: who can deny the wealth and variety of the sensations provided by the sense of taste when one treats oneself to a particularly delicious meal? Or take the sense of touch: when a man and woman caress each other they experience very intense sensations. In fact it is often thought that the most intense sensations are those provided by sexual pleasure, but this is not at all certain. It may be true, in general, but it is not true for everybody. Certain artists endowed with very great sensitivity of sight or hearing are far more deeply moved by colours and sounds than by the sexual act, which may even leave them indifferent and unmoved.

But as the majority of human beings are not so highly evolved as that, we can truthfully say that the two senses which govern the world today are those of touch (which includes sexuality) and taste. The senses of sight, hearing and smell seem to be relatively unimportant. In fact some people are totally indifferent to scents, sounds and colours unless their personal interests are involved, just as animals have developed a very keen sense of smell, sight and hearing because they need these senses for their own protection and in order to find food.

You know all this, already, of course. I realize that. But I mention it in order to draw your attention to certain conclusions that have certainly never

occurred to you. For thousands of years human beings have been doing all they can to increase the variety and intensity of the sensations and perceptions transmitted by their five senses, and it is this play on the keyboard of their five senses that they call culture and civilization. Well, all I can say is that I find this very inadequate. However great the degree of refinement of the five senses, they will always be severely limited because they belong to the physical dimension and can never reach farther than the purely physical to explore what lies beyond.

Nature has planned other keys for this keyboard: yes, a sixth and even a seventh and eighth sense, far more intense and far more powerful. At the moment, though, human beings confine themselves to the use of their five physical senses: they refuse even to acknowledge that there are other dimensions waiting to be explored, other sights, scents and textures to be experienced. So it is not at all surprising that they are unable to enjoy new and more varied, richer or more subtle sensations. How can you explain the fact that while depriving their five physical senses of nourishment, some people have perceptions which put them into transports of delight: the scope of their consciousness is broadened and they experience an impression of fulfilment, majesty and immensity?

Human beings must realize that if they keep trying to multiply and amplify their physical sensations they are doomed to bitter disappointment, for these sensations are severely limited. Why? Because each organ is specialized: it has a specific function and can provide only those sensations which correspond to that function. If we want to experience fresh sensations we shall have to turn to other organs, organs which, although we don't know it, we all possess.

Observe the behaviour of human beings: they can look at whatever they please, they can taste or touch or buy whatever they like and yet they always feel that something is lacking. Why? Because they don't know that in order to feel fulfilled and enjoy the extraordinarily rich and powerful sensations they hunger for, they are going to have to stop relying exclusively on their five physical senses. In this respect Orientals are capable of experiences that would be utterly impossible for Westerners. In India or Tibet, for instance, there are yogis who live in holes in the ground. In darkness and complete silence the senses are deprived of all nourishment, and by constant meditation the yogi reduces them to a state of numbness. When the senses cease their activity, they no longer absorb the psychic energy intended for the subtle force-centres; these centres are awakened and the yogi begins to see, hear, smell and touch the fluidic elements of higher



realms of reality. And this is why these exceptional human beings do everything in their power – some of them, for years on end – to suppress all visual, auditory and olfactory sensations and eliminate all movement. The only activity left to them is that of thought, and eventually they even cease all mental activity in order to live in total communion with the Deity.

God has endowed the human soul with certain latent faculties, but someone whose life is too absorbed by the things around him can prevent these faculties from developing. What do you do when you want to meditate, for example? Don't you close your eyes in order to turn all your attention inwards? Incidentally, while we're on the subject, let me mention something: when you meditate, don't keep your eyes closed for too long at a time, otherwise, as you are not Indian yogis yet, you are liable to fall asleep. Open your eyes briefly from time to time, without letting yourself be distracted by your surroundings, then close them and open them again, later. It is certainly advisable to close one's eyes when meditating, because this helps one to shut out one's surroundings and concentrate on one's meditation, but if you keep your eyes closed for too long sleep creeps up on you.

That's the way it is: when you open your eyes you wake up and when you close them you are preparing to sleep. It is a pattern which has been

etched into the brain for millions of years, and when nature, always faithful and true, sees you closing your eyes, she says, 'You're closing your eyes? You're sleepy? Well, we'll soon fix that!' and before you know it she has plunged you into a state of profound 'meditation.' When you open your eyes, on the other hand, it is the signal that it's time to wake up: everything comes to life, the motor starts to hum, the brain, the arms and legs all begin to stir. Yes, just one little movement, your eyelids which fluttering, and a world of activity is set in motion.

This question of opening or closing one's eyes is very important. Sometimes someone will tell you, 'Open your eyes!' But this is a manner of speaking because your eyes were already open. What do they mean? What eyes are they talking about? There are other eyes which see more clearly, which have a far deeper, more spiritual vision. The eyes of your physical body may be open, but you possess other eyes and they are still shut. From time to time, however, one realizes that they do exist and that it is possible to open them.

But in order to open one's spiritual eyes, the eyes which see the subtler aspects of reality, one has to close one's physical eyes. And then, at other moments the exact opposite is true: when you close your physical eyes your spiritual eyes close too, and when you open your physical eyes

you open your spiritual eyes at the same time. As you see, there are some very subtle distinctions to be made here, and little by little you will begin to distinguish them more clearly and use them in your daily lives.

Westerners have honed the life of the five senses to a high degree of perfection and they are convinced that that is the way to know all there is to know and to attain happiness. They know a great deal, that's true, and they experience a wide variety of sensations, but their five senses devour every drop of psychic energy so that they have none left for the spiritual dimension. In the West, people live too much in their physical sensations; they have no energy to spare for the cultivation of other faculties. Too many sensations. 'At least we're alive,' you might say. Yes, to be sure, you're alive. But it's a life which conceals the true life. It is important that you understand this and that you eliminate from your lives many different sensations which prevent you from perceiving things as they really are.

The use of drugs is more and more widespread today. People try to escape from the insipid monotony of their everyday lives with the help of opium, hashish, marijuana, cocaine and heroin. These drugs produce certain sensations of clairvoyance, clairaudience and so on which give the user the illusion of having reached a

higher state of consciousness. But it is only an illusion. In the long run they lose even their ordinary intellectual faculties and ruin their health. Although these drugs have been used for hundreds of years in the East and in South America they are obviously inadvisable. They are extremely harmful to the nervous system.

Hindus and Tibetans know a great deal about plants; the science has been handed down from one generation to the next for thousands of years. If you eat certain plants, apparently, they will enable you to survive for weeks without food, others will enable you to spend days and nights in the snows of the Himalayas without suffering from the cold. At least so I have heard; I haven't tried them for myself, but it is quite possible. I believe in the power of herbs. There are also certain very potent herbal preparations which can be used to produce visions or astral projection. There are books in which one can read of how witches in the Middle Ages knew the secret of certain ointments or salves with which they smeared their bodies before taking part in the Sabbath. In fact it was not their physical bodies which took part in the Sabbath but their astral bodies. A few doctors have managed to get hold of some of these recipes and experimented with them, and they have found that the phenomena they describe are absolutely authentic. Of course, it is very difficult to be sure of reproducing the

exact formula because they are never very clearly described, but all these ointments contained certain stimulants capable of inducing astral projection.

But enough of this for the moment. I mention these things simply to show you that there are extremely potent products which can give access to planes higher and more subtle than the physical, but that these products are often extremely dangerous. For this reason I advise you never to use them. The best method is to seek the sensations of fulfilment, freedom, buoyancy, joy and delight that you yearn for by purely spiritual means. True disciples don't rely on external props, they know that God has placed all they need within them: gold and every other gift of nature. All the products of all the laboratories and pharmaceutical companies of the world exist in abundance within themselves. All they have to do is fetch them out and use them. Wouldn't it be a pity if you spent ten or twenty years in an initiatic School without ever learning to exploit your inner resources?

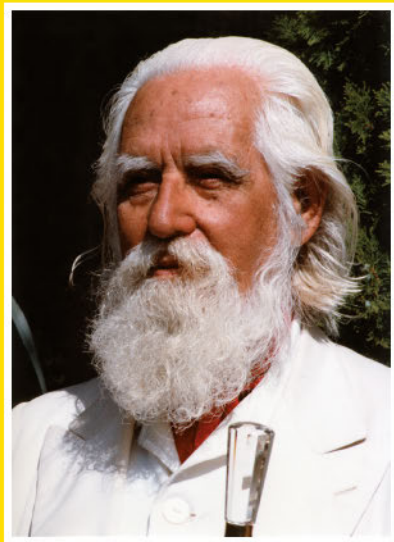
Each of our sense organs provides us with a partial knowledge of the world, and it is interesting to note the hierarchy that exists amongst them. The sense of touch is concerned principally with solids. One cannot feel gaseous or etheric matter at all and liquids only to a certain extent: the sense of touch specializes in solid, tangible realities. The sense of taste concerns what is liquid. If you object that a

piece of toffee is solid enough, but when it is in your mouth you can certainly taste it, I would have to tell you that you haven't studied the question very well: you can only taste what is in your mouth if it is being melted and liquefied by your saliva. And what about the sense of smell? This sense allows us to perceive odours, that is gaseous emanations. So the nose is also concerned with matter but it is matter of a subtler nature, for its particles float in the air. When we come to the sense of hearing we find that it is no longer concerned with matter but with waves and vibrations. The same is true of the sense of sight: sight brings us to the threshold of the etheric world. So this is how the senses are graded, as it were, hierarchically, ranging from the densest to the most subtle.

Now, if we want to penetrate into the astral world we can no longer rely on our five senses, we need another sense especially adapted for the purpose and capable of perceiving even subtler forms of matter. Anyone who has not developed this sixth sense cannot even be aware that there are other levels of matter, other regions. He never imagines that the universe is threaded through with other vibrations which can afford sensations far vaster and more intense than those known to him. If we want to touch something we have to be very close to it; to taste something, even more so. We can smell the scent of a flower from a certain distance;

sounds can travel quite a long way to us, and we can see things which are even farther away, for our eyes are fashioned in such a way as to enable us to receive information and instructions from very far away. As you can see, with marvellous intelligence, nature has established this hierarchy amongst the five senses. But her work did not stop there: other senses must now put us in touch with vaster and more remote regions of the universe.

Until man has developed the organs designed to put him in touch with more exalted entities in higher, subtler regions, his knowledge will be severely limited. He may talk, write, explain, criticize and pronounce judgment, but he will always be in error, because he will know only one side of reality. If he wants to grasp the whole of reality he must practise until he succeeds in awakening other faculties that have always been there, within him, but which are still asleep, waiting until he is ready to use them. In the far distant past, when man had not fully taken possession of his physical body, initiatic tradition tells us that he lived mainly out of his body, in a state of astral projection. Later on, when his spirit began to penetrate more deeply into matter, he developed the faculties that enabled him to work on the material level (the five senses) and neglected his mediumistic faculties. But he did not lose these faculties; he still possesses them.



*The French philosopher and spiritual Master, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900-1986), was born in Bulgaria and came to France in 1937. Although his work addresses many aspects of initiatic science, he explains: 'The questions with which we are faced will always be the same: to understand who we are, to discover the meaning of our lives and to overcome the obstacles which we find on our path. So, do not ask me to talk to you about anything else; I will always return to the same subjects: our development, our difficulties, the path to be followed and the methods we need to follow it.'*

**'For thousands of years men have worked to multiply and amplify the sensations and perceptions entering their consciousness through their five senses, and it is this play on the keyboard of the senses that they call civilization and culture. Well, is this not rather meagre? However much we cultivate and refine our five senses they will always be severely limited in scope for they belong to the physical plane: they will never be capable of exploring any reality above or beyond the physical. Until human beings recognize that there are other areas that invite exploration, other dimensions to see, touch and breathe, they will never experience new, richer, more far-reaching or subtler sensations. Each of our organs is specialized: it has its own particular function to perform and it can convey only its own particular type of sensation. In order to experience other, new sensations, we must call into play those other, subtler organs and centres which we all possess.'**

**Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov**

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