

**Review of Leaving the Body: A Complete Guide to Astral Projection by D.S. Rogo.
Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice—Hall, 1983**

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Rogo's aim in this book is to provide members of the general public with a simple yet comprehensive guide to systems for the induction of the out—of-body experience (OBE) or “as-tral traveling” as it is termed in occult circles. The OBE is an experience in which one has the impression that consciousness or the center of awareness is outside the body. Typically this impression is accompanied by a realistic perceptual—like experience of the immediate environment from the out—of—body perspective, and on occasion the experience may venture to more distant setting and even to surrealistic realms.

Leaving the Body describes eight basic technique for OBE induction, many of which can otherwise be found only in esoteric texts. As codified by Rogo the techniques respectively emphasize dynamic concentration, progressive muscle relaxation, dietary control, breath-ing/ yoga/mantra, the Monroe techniques, visualization, dream control (through lucidity), and guided imagery. In presenting each induction technique Rogo outlines its rationale, enumerates the fundamental steps of the procedure, and offers some evaluative comments in the light of the OBE literature. The general reader who is curious about “astral travel” will find the book readable, comprehensive, and possibly inspirational. Rogo makes no outrageous claims for any of the techniques, an approach for which he should be given due credit. One might quibble over Rogo's apparent acceptance of certain re-search findings too much at face value, the oversimplification of some concepts and theories, and the inclination to refer to the OBE as if it necessarily entailed a literal, exteriorization of consciousness, but this is not the sort of book in which finer points of interpretation can be pursued in any depth.

Although it is not Rogo's primary concern here, Leaving the Body would also be of some value to the professional OBE researcher. One of the major difficulties in this field of study is that currently available methods for the laboratory induction of the OBE are not very effective: that is, they do not evoke an OBE in every participant and those experiences that do occur are all too often very pale imitations of spontaneous (“real life”) OBEs. Rogo will have performed a service to OBE research if his book proves to assist the parapsychologist in the development of an efficacious OBE induction procedure. There also may be a less direct spin—off for parapsychologists, as Charles Tart notes in his foreword to the book. If some reader, can promote the capacity to have an OBE virtually upon demand they would make most valuable participants in psychological and neurophysiological studies of the phenomenon; progress in our understanding of the experience there-by could be facilitated.

Again, as far as the Lucidity Letter's audience specifically is concerned there may be rather more limited appeal in Rogo's book. Chapter Eight, "Projection through Dream Control," does describe the methods of Oliver Fox and Sylvan Muldoon for realizing dream lucidity, but lucidity researchers already would be well acquainted with these classical techniques. The potential, value of Leaving the Body for lucidity researchers really revolves on the actual basis of the statistically attested association between proneness to dream lucidity and the occurrence of OBEs. Does this association encourage the notion that the techniques surveyed by Rogo could be used to engender openness to lucid dreaming? Some psychologists who regard the OBE and the lucid dream as phenomenologically equivalent may have such an expectation, but in my assessment, practice in OBE induction would have only indirect and thereby marginal effects upon the incidence of lucid dreams. Thus a few procedures in Rogo's book may develop an ability to keep a goal "primed" in the subconscious mind, and most procedures (if applied successfully) would tend to broaden participants' ideas of what their mind is capable of. Such factors in turn may well enhance people's progress in some lucidity training programs. Nevertheless that such benefits would warrant the expended time and effort is a moot point, and in any event current lucidity programs do tend to take due cognizance of these factors. Such secondary advantages aside the OBE techniques generally would not usefully be applied to lucidity research. Like Rogo (p. 132) I regard the OBE and dream lucidity as distinct phenomena. Certainly some OBEs do arise under conditions conducive to lucid dreaming, and hence lucidity can be employed as a vehicle for an OBE, at least by some folk. But the converse relationship need not hold, and indeed the conditions which the book's techniques seek to effect for the occurrence of an OBE are on the whole not those from which lucidity would necessarily be expected to follow. In short if psychologists wish to improve their experimental techniques for OBE induction and those for the facilitation of lucid dreams, Leaving the Body probably will be thought-provoking only in regard to the former.

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