

24 April 1967

## READING 1

## AWAKENING

## PART 1

Everyone on earth (all the animal kingdom in fact) experiences every day the change of consciousness from sleep at night to the daytime state. When one is asleep in bed one does not know it – only when one wakes up in the morning does one realise one has been asleep.

This is a sudden and profound change affecting *all* functions of body, mind and soul. The neurophysiologists have been making an intensive study of it – the change in the electrical record of the brain and so on; and they think they are getting to know all about it. But *no one* seems to have discovered (without being told) the first and most obvious thing, as described by Mr. Ouspensky (Second Psychological Lecture 1934):

It is necessary to understand that the first state of consciousness, i.e. sleep, does not disappear when the second state arises, i.e. when man awakes. It remains there with all its dreams and dream impressions. Only a more critical attitude towards one's own impressions, more connected thoughts, more disciplined actions become added to it. And because of the vividness of sense impressions, desires and feelings – particularly the feeling of contradiction or impossibility, which is entirely absent in sleep – dreams become invisible exactly as the stars and moon become invisible in the glare of the Sun. But they are all there and they often influence all one's thoughts, feelings and actions – sometimes even more than the actual perceptions of the moment.

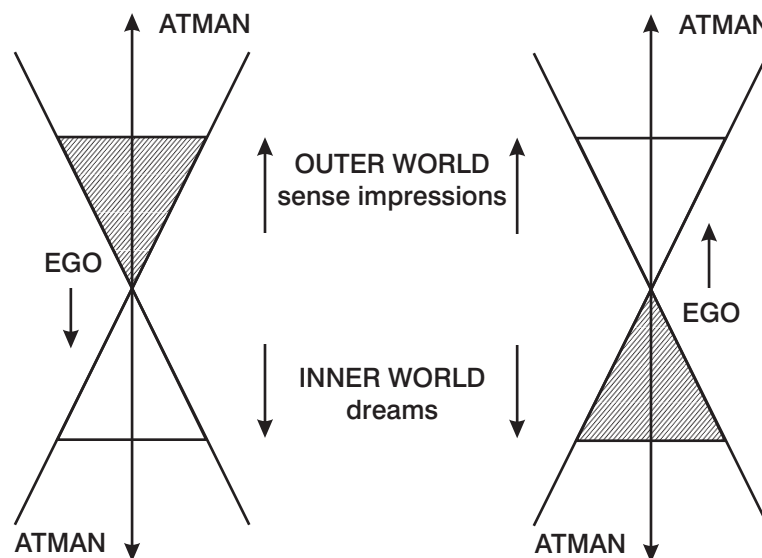
(Figures 1 & 2)<sup>†</sup>

Figure 1. Sleep at night

Figure 2. Day-time state

The great advance in this field that science has made in the last two decades has been the discovery of the 'non-specific alerting system' and the fact that the change from sleeping to waking is one of *greater integration of all the functions of mind-body together*; and not just another function waking up. Nevertheless all the detailed knowledge now accumulated about this 'Reticular System'

has not yet led the scientists a single step nearer to the discovery that the 'daytime state' is only a transitional stage to another, a *third State of Consciousness*, with a change in degree of integration fully as profound as the change when we wake up in the morning (Figure 3).<sup>†</sup>

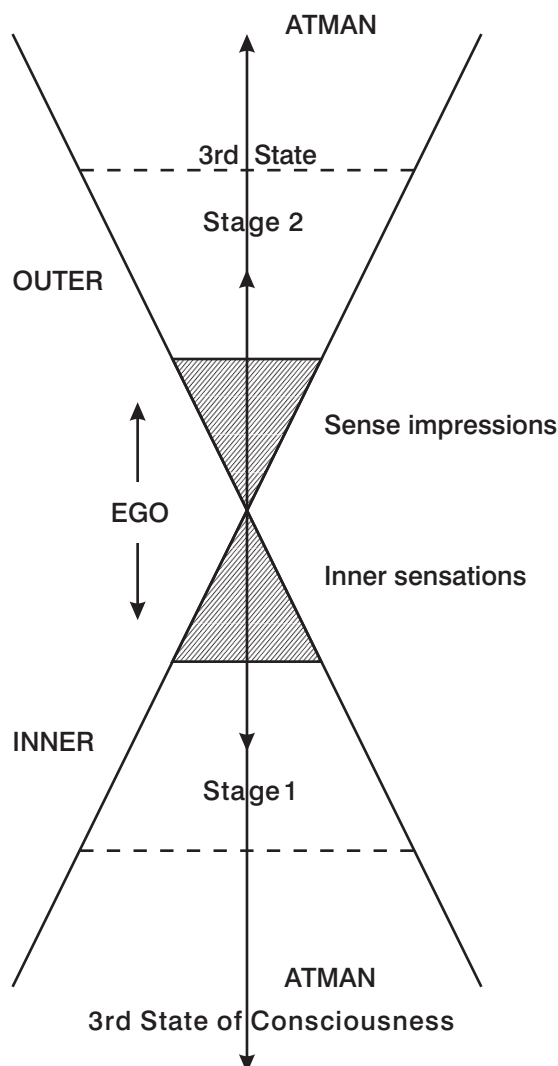


Figure 3

All of us here now know this in theory and many have experienced it in various degrees, again and again. So now we would like to hear what each of you has to say about it. During the coming week you could find answers to these questions: 1) What are the 'premonitory signs' of this Third State? How does it begin? How do you recognise it? 2) What promotes it and what commonly extinguishes it? 3) What becomes 'added' to the ordinary state, which of course goes on with all its thoughts and desires and illusions? 4) What does 'greater integration' mean to you? What usually disintegrates you again?

[**Discussion:** All this is very important to-day, when there is complete confusion on the subject. For instance, many think that drugs like hashish, mescaline and LSD produce a change of consciousness – it feels that way to the person who takes them. But an observer realises at once that the person is *more disintegrated*, though various latent functions are being released. That is a sure guide to one's own state of consciousness if one happens to be emotionally roused or excited, or in giving advice to someone who is describing a new and thrilling experience.]

<sup>†</sup>Note: Better not give the diagrams to your groups at present. They are for later when we come to consider Cosmoses.

## PART 2

But what really does 'waking up' (Third State of Consciousness) mean? From many talks with the Shankaracharya it's clear that it means 'coming to oneSelf'. The first time I heard him speak he said:

Through the Meditation we begin to be what we are. But first we have to come out of what we are not; we are *not* those turning thoughts, those conflicting desires, that changing ego. Well then, what *are* we?

And in his long Tradition there have been many similes and stories to help people to understand. Here is one that Ramakrishna was fond of telling:

'The fact is,' he said once to his devotees, 'all men look much alike from the outside, but some have "fillings" like cakes which *look* like ordinary cakes. The desire to know God, ecstatic love of Him, and Spiritual qualities like that, are the "fillings".'

Some think: 'Oh, I am in prison. I shall never acquire Knowledge and Devotion.' But if one receives the Guru's Grace, one has nothing to fear. *Before you came here, you didn't know who you were.* Now you will know. It is the Atman who, as the Guru, makes one know:

Once a tigress attacked a flock of goats. As she sprang on her prey, she gave birth to a cub and died. The cub grew up in the company of the goats; at first it was suckled by the she-goats, and later it used to eat grass and bleat like them. One day when it was full-grown, a fierce-looking tiger sprang from the jungle and attacked the flock. Amazed to see a tiger in the flock and running away with the goats at his approach, the jungle tiger forgot about them and caught hold of the grass-eating tiger which began to bleat! But the fierce tiger dragged it to the water and said: 'Look at your face in the water. It's just like mine. Here's some raw meat. Eat it!' At first the young tiger was repelled by the taste of blood, but it soon got a liking for it. Then, one night, the wild tiger said: 'What a disgrace to live with the goats and bleat and eat grass like them! Now that you realise that there's no difference between you and me, we'll go into the jungle and do some hunting together!'

Eating grass is like enjoying the usual distractions of ordinary people; to bleat and run away like a goat is to behave like an ordinary person. Going away with the wild tiger is like taking shelter with a Teacher who awakens one's Spiritual Consciousness. The 'red meat' is True Knowledge, in contrast with the 'grass' of ordinary knowledge. To see one's face in the water is to recognise one's real Self.

(Pause)

## PART 3

'Waking up' has many recognisable signs and many stages and degrees. At every new experience of it one feels 'this is it, this is the whole thing, I can never lose this, I'll tell the world and convert everyone I meet.' But though it may make a permanent difference to one's inner nature, it quickly fades from the surface mind; one falls asleep again and again; and one does strange things in the belief that one is still awake, like the man carrying a lantern, who bumped into someone: 'Brother, your light has gone out,' he was told. That is why a School is so necessary and why it's so dangerous to lose a School if you have been lucky enough to find one.

In a School one learns three big degrees of awakening. The first is to begin to *be oneSelf*, the second is to awake to the needs of other people (people *different* from oneself) and learn from them; and the third is to awake to the needs of the School, its connection with the Inner Circle, its work in the world. But that will not be useful unless you are learning to *be yourSelf* as well.

To sum up, there are many vivid descriptions in Western literature of various facets of awakening; but usually these describe the awakening of some latent function. Shakespeare knew a lot about it; yet even this (which I constantly call to mind) shows that he had not escaped from the bonds of duality:

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
 ...  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
 Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen Earth, sings hymns at Heaven's gate;  
     For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
     That then I scorn to change my state with kings.  
(from Sonnet 29)

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