

30 January 1978

### READING 3

#### OBSERVER

#### PART 1. (Chiefly for new people)

Perhaps we can now admit with some confidence that there *is* a third state of consciousness of which we've all had glimpses characterised by suddenly 'waking up' and feeling free of our prison. We want more. How do we set about it?

For householders leading active lives there is just one reliable way – to establish an 'Observer' who can watch what is going on, provided he himself does not get involved. There is only one part of the brain to which we have immediate access during the day, and over which we can acquire a measure of control – that is the front of the brain behind the forehead (technically called the 'pre-frontal lobes'). It is in this part we have to set up an 'Observer'; he is only of course a 'locum tenens' or caretaker, but he plays an important role in attention.

Our Western System put it this way:

Each person inhabits a three-storeyed house in which there are many dwellers and servants most of whom claim to say 'I' and represent the whole person while 'on stage'; only to be quickly displaced by another who sees things quite differently. One makes a purchase, another writes the cheque and all the others have to find the money! There is no caretaker and the owner of the house is away for an indefinite period. What can be done in this unhappy situation? One of the servants (who is particularly disgusted with the state of the house) gets a few of his friends together and they agree to appoint one of their number as 'deputy steward'. Together they do what they can improve matters – like getting the cook to confine herself to cooking, turning the gardener out of the kitchen, getting the chauffeur to work in the garage, and expelling a few drunks and crooks out of the house altogether! As soon as possible the real steward will come, complete the task according to the wishes of the Owner, and prepare for His return.

These are the steps immediately ahead, and just now we have to find and establish this 'deputy steward as Observer'. At least he could keep us meditating twice a day!

(Pause for remarks and questions)

Certain other similes are used to promote understanding of this idea. It helps, for instance, if we regard these pre-frontal lobes as 'the *stage* on which the actors in the individual drama play their respective roles'.

There is another simile used by Mr. Ouspensky and the Shankaracharya – a *cinema show*. These pre-frontal lobes are like the screen in a cinema show, where the power is in the pelvis (at the meeting point of the autonomic division and the sex centres at the base of the spinal cord), and the source of light is the pure consciousness of the Self or Owner at the Centre. Here is how they have expressed it:

In his first book, *Tertium Organum*, Mr. Ouspensky wrote:

The infinite sphere by which we represent the world to ourselves is continuously changing. In every consecutive moment *it is not* what it was before, a constant stream of pictures, images, relations is going on. It is for us as it were the screen of a cinematograph upon which the swiftly running images of pictures appear and disappear.

But where are the pictures themselves? Where is the light throwing the image on the screen? Whence do the pictures come and whither do they go? If the screen is part of our own brain, so our consciousness is the light penetrating through our psyche which throws the stores of our impressions ('sense data') on the screen as the images which we call 'life'. But from where do the impressions come to us? *From the same screen.* And herein dwells the most baffling mystery of life as we see it. We are creating it, and we are receiving everything from it.

(*Tertium Organum*, 2nd Edition, p.113)

Later he taught that our consciousness (like 'light') varies in intensity. In deep sleep there is no light there; in the daytime it varies from a candle to electric light; in self-consciousness it is like an arc lamp or neon-glow; and in the fourth state (Turiya) it is like the light of the sun.

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And the Shankaracharya says:

In another simile he gives the example of the cinema show, where the film is being shown on the screen and the people keep on looking at these moving pictures. On the screen you see mountains, buildings, seas, and fights, love scenes and religious scenes. All types of scenes are being enacted on this screen. Some people watching are like the puppets, and they get animated by the scenes.

One should be able to see the things which are happening in the world – but only as a silent Observer. See all the pleasures on the screen, but don't be involved and moved off-course.

All the exciting things which are shown on the screen do not colour the screen itself – the screen is pure white. It has no colour of its own – it just reflects the colours which are thrown on it.

So should we become like a screen where every part of the activity takes place – is allowed to take place – but we should become pure white and not be entangled with any of the colours of the world.

(Record, 3 October 1972)

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## **PART 2. (For the 'old hands')**

Here is a good description of what Readings 1 and 2 were meant to lead up to:

When the audiences of the three New Zealanders began on the 8th January, Mr. Howitt (N.G.H.) began:

This is my first question. I frequently experience a state where everything is brought to a still point. There is just the present as it is. There is no desire, nothing to be achieved; one is without any knowledge of oneself. In this state everything I have felt to be myself vanishes. Everything I feel myself to be has vanished, the relative 'me' has gone and I remain alone.

One has nothing of one's own, it is so obvious that it is the Param-Atman that has given us everything. At this time I find a powerful confidence arises, one feels oneself to

be unlimited, blissful, silent. One feels powerful enough to move mountains. At such times there seems to be only the universal.

What is the contradiction where one loses everything, feels one has nothing of one's own, yet at the same time feels powerful enough to move mountains?'

S. I would like to give the illustration of a battery being recharged. Whilst it is being charged nothing is being taken out of it. In the same way there is the universal (Samashti) and the individual (Vyashti). When you are in tune with the universe, when there is oneness between Samashti and Vyashti, this oneness is established only when you are still, at rest and in peace. Whilst this communication is established you are getting power, your battery is being charged. This stillness, peacefulness and being one with the universe, this is also known as Meditation (Dhyana).

N.G.H. It seems that it is very important for the Vyashti aspect to disappear or dissolve, and there is a Christian text which I'd like His Holiness to explain, for it has meant a lot to me; it just says: 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. but if it dies it brings forth much fruit. (John 12: 24)

S. The greater the concentration the greater is your experience of the power which is flowing from the universal. And what you have just said about the disappearance of the Vyashti with a view to getting the feeling of the universal, that is correct. But the greater the concentration, calmness, and quiet around you (the greater the stillness) the greater is your experience of the power, which actually is flowing all the time, though we are not able to catch it because our *manas* is not still. It is not until we are still and able to concentrate that we get it.

(Comment F.C.R.). All this describes the state of 'attention' when our batteries are being recharged. We have already established that what is here called 'Manas' corresponds to what we used to call 'the mechanical parts' of all our chief functions – not only 'thinking' but 'feeling,' 'moving' and others. For H.H. all these are operated by the 'moving part' of mind (Manas).

N.G.H. (cont.) What I want to know is, when this happens, there is a powerful desire to share this experience with others; what is the best approach to this? Wanting, in some way, to help others – how can others be led to this?

S. Just as you have experienced this, let others also experience the same, in the same way in which you have experienced it. You cannot possibly transmit your experience to them, but you can lead them to experience for themselves what you have experienced.

(Record, 8 January 1978)

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We'd like to conclude this paper with a verse that follows the one that N.G.H. quotes from St. John's Gospel, since it points to the inevitable transience of those moments of wakefulness:

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he is going.

While you have the light, believe in the light that you may be the children of light...  
(John 12: 35, 36)

That time, for us, is Here and Now.

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