

14 May 1979

## READING 2

### PART 1

Our discussion groups are already doing so well, particularly the newest, that they can now help us to reconstruct certain parts of the Western system which P. D. Ouspensky taught in his Psychological Lectures during the 1930's. It was just before his death that he used the word 'reconstruct' rather than follow slavishly much that was already out of date. So much has been discovered in those 50 years (half-a-century!) both scientifically and through practice of techniques like Meditation, that we need to hear again just those parts which have stood the test of time.

In his first lecture he maintains that by the way of development, the individual can not only find True Knowledge but can become a different being, and puts these questions: What does it mean to become a different being? Which qualities and powers can be developed in man and how can this be done? Why cannot everybody become different beings? And the answer (he said) was simple: *Because they do not want it.* For the fact is that in order to achieve this, the individual must want it very much and for quite a long time. 'The transformation of individual man depends on his own will, on his persistence, and on the kind of help he may be lucky enough to get...'

First, by the way of development man acquires new powers, faculties and properties of which he usually has only a vague and distorted idea. And, secondly, by the way of development he also acquires powers and faculties which are not at his command but which he ascribes to himself. No one would buy costly things if he thinks he possesses them, so the most important thing is to see himself *as he is* in contrast to what he *can become*. The most important and most misleading of these qualities is 'consciousness' or 'conscience' which are different sides of one and the same thing.

**Comment:** We know now that to become a 'different being' means to be what one really is and shed all that one imagines but is not.

### PART 2. FOUR STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Though there are many shades and degrees of consciousness, let us begin with the big changes which all of us experience every 24 hours – sleeping and waking. This is how he described them:

There are four states of consciousness possible for individual man, but he lives only in two. It is as though he possesses a four-storeyed house but lives only in the two lower storeys. The first or lowest state is sleep at night – a purely passive state which may be deep and dreamless, or if dreaming, all his psychic functions work without any direction by him. Purely subjective pictures from his inner store of memory and modified by vague perceptions and sensations coming from his body, fly through the mind, leaving only a slight memory trace, or more often no trace at all.

The second state comes when man wakes up in the morning. This second state, in which we are now, i.e. in which we work, talk, imagine ourselves conscious beings, and so forth, we ordinarily call 'waking' or 'clear consciousness', but really it should be called 'waking sleep' or 'relative consciousness'.

Though electrical tracings of brain waves clearly show the differences between dreamless and dreaming sleep (called now 'Rapid-eye-movement' or 'REM' sleep) and the average daytime state, yet they tell us nothing at all about the two further states, and moreover miss certain fundamental facts like the abrupt change in space-time sense, and in the feeling of I, and this further point Mr. Ouspensky goes on to make:

It is necessary to understand here that the first state, physical sleep, *does not disappear* when the second arrives, i.e. when we wake up in the morning. It remains there, with all its dream impressions, only a more critical attitude towards oneself and others, more connected thoughts, purposive and disciplined actions and a dependence on clock-time, become added to it; and because of the vividness of daytime sensation and feelings – particularly the sense 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 influence our thoughts, feelings and actions. Often more than the actual perception of the moment.

**Comment:** Now today we know this at firsthand because in every half-hour we pass through (if only for a few moments) both those two lower states as the Mantra rhythm takes us to the stillness. We also know what 'psychological waking up' feels like, as witness this from one of the new groups:

After a period of meditation Dr. Connell looked invitingly at Colin Adamson who responded as follows:

After last week's meeting when I woke up on Friday morning I tried to remember the reading about awareness and found, to begin with, that my mind was a complete blank. Then I remembered the picture over there and then your (Dr. Connell's) voice and then I remembered the definition. And I tried to compare that with other sorts of memory I have had on those occasions in my life when I have suddenly woken up, and although some were very long ago, they are all linked... one of the memories was shortly after the war, in this house doing 'Movements (to music)' when I suddenly realized who and where I was – and that linked up with everything.

And at the same group were good observations from actor Tony Anholt and others and the reminder from Ingrid Benning: 'Does it depend on the amount of Attention? I feel the main thing is balancing the two (sides of the mind). Ordinarily we are not trained to do this; our education is geared to using just one side.'

Since both Mr. Ouspensky and the Shankaracharya based everything on Self-observation, we recommend that during the coming weeks you observe and produce first-hand observations like the above, without as yet, jumping to conclusions or forming theories.

### PART 3

Speaking of 'psychological sleep', Mr. Ouspensky continued:

All the absurdities and all the contradictions of people and of human life in general, become explained when we realise that people *live in sleep*, do everything in sleep and do not know they are asleep. It is useful to remember that this is the psychological (or 'subtle') meaning of many fairy stories, and ancient myths and doctrines, of which the best known to us is probably Christianity. For all through the Gospels is the idea that men live in sleep and must first of all awaken. The Gospel teaching demands awakening but does not say how to awaken.

**Comment:** Somebody asked me once if ‘I believed in capital punishment’. My off-the-cuff answer was that it’s not a question of belief; the evident fact is that both the criminal and those who judge and hang or shoot him can be equally (though differently) asleep as well as the crowds who applaud or protest.

The beauty of our situation is that the Fully Realized director of our Meditation has shown us that very little has to be done, but this must be done patiently every day.

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(Note: The quotations from P.D.O. in this paper have been adapted by F.C.R. from the *Psychological Lectures*.)

