

21 May 1979

## READING 3

## PART 1

We want to encourage you to apply yourselves more consistently to self-observation because, if you do, something really new and exciting will appear in relation to the four states of Consciousness outlined in the quote from Mr. Ouspensky in Part 2 of Reading 2. It may help you to read that quotation again during the next two weeks, and also perhaps to listen to this parallel account from the Shankaracharya:

S. You mentioned the dream state – there are four states: sleep, daytime state, self-consciousness (culminating in Samadhi), and Turiya or Enlightenment. All these, and other transitional states belong to the mysterious creative art of the Absolute; each state is useful and necessary for one or another purpose. One doesn't have to *choose* one or another; but stand in the middle and enjoy the pictures on the cinema (or TV) screen – see all the pictures on the screen, though only as a *silent and impartial observer*, without getting involved and moved off course. Just the passing life – the play between inner and outer – by being as much as we can in the present moment (with the Atman). If *that* is achieved you find a state beyond all the transient play of the gunas in the world we usually see; and then even the most ordinary work becomes imbued with unity, Consciousness and bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda).

(Record, 7 October 1972)

(Pause)

## PART 2

After two more weeks (and there is no reason to stop observing yourself on yet another Monday holiday!) we might return to those Lectures of Mr. Ouspensky's, which went on to say:

Mr. O. Now try to formulate what you noticed when you tried to observe yourself. You should have noticed three things: *First*, that you do not *remember yourself*; that is, you are not present in the field of observation. (He once said to me, 'It's like sitting at a dinner table where all the chairs are occupied by people you know – except your own.') *Secondly*, that observation is made difficult by the incessant stream of thoughts, images, echoes of conversations, and fragments of emotions flowing through your mind, as if trying to distract you from observing. And, *thirdly*, that as soon as you start observing, something in you starts *imagination*,<sup>†</sup> so that self-observation – if you really tried it – is a constant effort to detach your attention from imagination.

(adapted from *4th Psychological Lecture*, P.D.O.)

<sup>†</sup>Note. He uses this word for all undirected mental activity during the daytime, in much the same way as H.H. uses the Sanskrit word Vikshepa. Before trying to change it we must recognise it by observation of ourselves and others.

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