

## **Outer. inner and secret layers to the journey**

Spiritual philosophies frequently refer to three layers or realms to reality – the outer, the inner and the secret realms. Lets explore this notion a bit to discover its usefulness. We can begin by exploring the human condition in this three-fold way.

**Outer** is neuroanatomical and to some extent neurochemical; it is the resources available to the individual or systems being examined – the people, material resources and the skill base, the options and choices open to them, the expectations and demands placed on the system whether that system is a person, family, school, camp, or political or social organization etc.

**Inner** is the psychological, the events of a given biography or of a culture's patterns and traditions,

the stages, layers, states that are operating, the dialectics this person (or system) uses to engage in and with the world; the patterns of affect that have been shaped, made available, are the most readily used and the needs that are and are not being met with the current arrangement or situation

**Secret** is the soul destiny, the [inner] child who's not yet arrived, the forced practices and the side effects and benefits of these practices, the wisdom of what is, the mission of a system, the synchronicities and curses, the blessings and obstacles, the vitality and magnetism or the frailty and fatigue, the beginning, path or fruitional quality of the gesture underlying the system's life force.

In diagnostic work, the outer is the information, the facts about how it hangs together; the inner is what works, the strategies and how to use them and diagnosing the issue that could be remedied. The secret involves the refined nuances that tell you whether, and if so when and why you would introduce that intervention – the use of paradoxical and micro interventions, for example. This can only come about when we deeply understand the person or situation that stands before us. Till then we are resorting to conventional diagnoses based on deviations from a norm, on deficits, on problems and dwelling on manifested issues. That often ends up being too little, too late to be of much help.

Conventional western medicine, for example, waits for symptoms to manifest on the material plane as a dis-ease and often this is a late stage to intervene on. Holistic medicine and eastern approaches work to sustain wellness and call on the body's memory of its own wellness to engage a resilient response, combining inner and secret resources to foster healing. We have the same choices as parents and teachers when we work with children, as well. We can wait for 'problems' to surface or show up and then address the problem behaviors. Or we can learn from the gifted, intuitive parents and teachers who head off most of this so we never even see the brief hints of disequilibrium. A gentle story here, an accepting word there, an ideal chore or part in a play that calls forth just the right character trait manages to dissolve the problem before it even starts.

By looking at the principles of living systems and seeking patterns at that level we can then look at specific situations with larger lenses and see what needs to be named or reframed, added, expressed, emphasized, counterbalanced with the inverse quality, reduced, harnessed, redirected or arrested.

This can give us the perspectivism needed to respond to the dynamics in an inner way. And if we learn to suspend our assessment activities entirely, we can create the space for the subject of our concern to inform us. The direction of thought would cease to flow from observer to observed and begin to flow from the observed back to the observer. That would open the possibilities for the transformational insights that arise easily when the secret realm is engaged.

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