

# **Maps of Consciousness**

## **The Approach**

Self inquiry helps us to understand how and where we get stuck. We can better see our self defeating habits and responses.

## **Awareness**

Peace and well being come from your essence. Being with whatever comes, rather than against or indifferent, opens the door to a deeper sense of who you are. Try to accept all that arises in you – feelings, thoughts and sensations – experiencing them as deeply as possible.

Its also helpful to know and understand the patterns that arise from your conditioning, your experience and your ancestral inherited traits. Once we see the triggers and action of habits and patterns, they begin to loose their power. Maps can help us here.

## **Maps**

Maps are ways of systemising, quantifying and qualifying our experience. They can be used to “map” the laws of our inner existence as well as those of the phenomenal world. We use maps to help us to navigate in outer or inner terrain.

For example Mendeleev created a map to describe the structure and behaviour of the atomic elements, the periodic table of the elements. Physicists have sort to name and map the fundamental forces governing matter and energy – gravity, electromagnetism, the weak force and the strong force.

Similarly humans have always sort to map consciousness. When you’re on the spiritual journey of becoming who you are its often helpful to know where you are and to find that someone in another place and another time has journeyed that way before. There is often a universality to these maps that transcends differences of time, place and culture.

For example philosophers, journeyers and researchers, past and present, East and West, have recognised different levels of consciousness, which they have attempted to map. In different maps there might be three, seven, twelve or more levels. These might be thought of as different levels of consciousness or different levels of reality.

## **Inner and Outer**

Scientists have always sought to gather data and attempt to define the laws that govern phenomena. Theories are proposed and tested. This then gives scientists the ability to predict phenomena. Scientists attempt to define the laws that govern the outer world.

In a similar way psychologists have attempted to make maps of the inner world. Jung for example proposed a cartography of the psyche comprising ego, personal unconscious, collective unconscious, shadow, anima, animus, as well as other archetypal images and forces. He also attempted to define the dynamics of the psyche through an understanding of the functions of suppression, projection and so on.

Sages and mystics of the past, through contemplation, attempted to articulate the laws which govern consciousness. For example the vedantic sages said there were three levels of consciousness – deep sleep, dreaming and waking consciousness, each with its characteristic mode of perceiving self and the world.

So we can see the relevance of maps for describing outer phenomena as well as the inner landscape of the soul and the functioning of consciousness.

But please always remember...“the map is not the territory!” Try to trust your own experience. Don't get hung up on the map. Use the maps you find to help you. Play with them. Put them down when they don't seem relevant.

### **Some useful inner maps**

#### *Traditional*

Astrology; four elements; five elements; I Ching; Tarot; Levels of being/consciousness, as defined in Eastern as well as Western alchemical and gnostic traditions.

#### *Modern*

Jung's four functions; Myers-Briggs; Enneagram; Twelve elemental types; Wilber's four quadrants and so on.