

JHU-EC – Maze – Chapter 5 – Yaqui

Before discussing the three major western religious points of view found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, a brief treatment of the mysticism found in the sorcerer-shamanistic tradition of the Mexican-American Indian would be of interest. The main source of information is Carlos Castaneda's account of apprenticeship to Don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian Man of Knowledge. This account covered four books and a period of about 15 years. The similarities between this body of knowledge and the eastern Taoist, Buddhist thought are amazing. In one instance, the numerology appears to indicate a relationship to the chakras. To provide somewhat of a wider view, the additional sources are included concerning the Mysticism of the Pueblo and Oglala Sioux.

The universe viewed by the man of knowledge is mysterious and awesome. He keeps things in perspective – especially his own relative importance. One way in which this is done is to use his own death as his advisor. It is our eternal companion and remains always to our left side, waiting for the time to tap us. One of the greater difficulties in becoming a man of knowledge is to address the internal dialogue and its maintenance of mental constructs. Don Juan describes the "Internal dialogue" in our heads. This dialogue assures, reassures, makes up the world given us by our senses. This internal dialogue seems exactly like the cittavritti of yoga. Various techniques are employed involving the crossing of the eyes and the staring toward the horizon while walking.

When "seeing" is accomplished, a world of light and fibers is seen. Animals and man are luminous beings which look as eggs with light fibers emanating from them like little spikes. The will appears to be visible as a thicker fiber coming from the lower abdomen and can be used to perform feats normally considered physically impossible. Death when viewed while "seeing" is merely the dissolution of the fibers into the background and is thus a natural event not filled with remorse or attachment. This switching from ordinary reality to nonordinary reality is preceded by "stopping the world". That is, to make the world stop performing as you wish it or construct it. Of course, you cannot stop the real world, but only your constructed world. Once this world is stopped, you may begin to refine the art of "seeing".

Another technique aimed toward living as a man of knowledge is "erasing personal history". This involves limiting and eventually eliminating any past, details about yourself known to others and to your self. In this way you will not be bound by the expectations of others and cramped in your actions. In addition, this lack removes much of the restrictive aspects of memory which binds us in the moment.

Losing self-importance is another aspect of behavior. This involves a widely held Indian idea of reverence for all living things, regardless of size or utility. The realization that although man eats plants and animals, the plants and animals will eventually eat man, serves to bring reverence and humility. This humility also limits the petty feelings of importance or pride which cause man so much difficulty because of the way in which we make our world, we tend to take ourselves much too seriously. This losing of self-importance entails asking and apologizing to plants before picking them.

The loss of importance is accomplished easily when death is used as an advisor. Whenever wisdom is sought death is available for advice. With death as their advisor, men drop the pettiness which comes with never thinking one will die. Action takes precedence over talking. It is necessary to take responsibility for one's actions and this does not involve time for petty thoughts or worries because one never knows when death might tap. The procedure is to know why one acts and then proceed fully without remorse or doubt. Regular men, feeling themselves to be immortal, have time for second-guessing and remorse. A man of knowledge has time only for decisions. He takes full responsibility for all that he does and accepts the consequences if any without reproach. Relative to death all decisions are equal -- there can be no big and small decisions.

Hunting is another aspect of being a man of knowledge. A hunter leaves very little to chance and lives a very tight life. A hunter must develop the secret of being accessible and inaccessible to Power at just the right times. The normal man makes himself very available to others and to powers which drain him and make him weak. To be inaccessible does not mean to hide from others, but to touch the world around one only sparingly. This moderation of living is very much like the Taoist sage. When one worries about things, one tends to cling and thereby lose energy. A man can be always in the world, and remain inaccessible because he does not squeeze it out of shape. Instead, he simply taps it lightly and then moves on without leaving a trace. This idea of being in the world but of the world is found in several religions. One of the last items in becoming a hunter is to disrupt the daily routines of life. When one's life is routine and boring one becomes predictable, accessible, and the hunted -- instead of the hunter.

The following excerpts are direct quotes concerning a warrior's acts. Following certain passages, additional explanations and parallels will be mentioned.

A rule of thumb for a warrior is that he makes his decisions so carefully that nothing that may happen as a result of them can surprise him, much less drain his power.

This is similar to some aspects of karma yoga in which a wise view of the results of one's actions allows one to act wisely.

To be a warrior means to be humble and alert like the Taoist sage crossing the frozen stream in winter.

A warrior asks a question, and through his seeing, he gets an answer.

This seeing is probably similar to the prajna eye of vision developed by the buddhist. Indeed, one of the techniques used by Don Juan is to train the eyes to see two separate images. Looking between these two images one sees what is to be seen in accordance with the feelings in one's heart.

What matters is that a warrior be impeccable.

Accumulate personal power: it makes the world and its mysteries, if not clear, at least less awesome.

That should be the essence of an explanation, but that is not what you seek.

You're after the reflection of your ideas.

The average man seeks certainty in the eyes of the onlooker and calls that self-confidence.

The warrior seeks impeccability in his own eyes and calls that humbleness.

You're after the self-confidence of the average man, when you should be after the humbleness of a warrior.

The difference between the two is remarkable.

Self-confidence entails knowing something for sure; humbleness entails being impeccable in one's actions and feeling.

A warrior takes his lot, whatever it may be, and accepts it in ultimate humbleness. He accepts in humbleness what he is, not as grounds for regret but as a living challenge.

Humbleness of a warrior is not the humbleness of a beggar. The warrior lowers his head to no one, but at the same time, he doesn't permit anyone to lower his head to him.

This serenity and acceptance of one's position is similar to the eastern philosophies. This attitude leaves one calm and in control of one's thoughts and, to some extent, one's destiny.

Do not bow your head to reason.

Knowledge and power. Men of knowledge have both.

And yet none of them could tell how they got to have them, except that they had kept on acting like warriors and at a given moment everything changed.

A sorcerer seeks to act rather than to talk and to this effect he gets a new description of the world -- a new description where talking is not that important, and where new acts have new reflections.

This description of the world is a new view as when one is born again or when one's horizons have been enlarged. The "when" of the experience is sudden but unpredictable like the reaching of samadhi and other forms of revelation. Although the wind plays an important role as power, talking for its own sake is of no practical value in this system.

Knowledge is frightening, true: but if a warrior accepts the frightening nature of knowledge, he cancels out its awesomeness.

There is nothing in this world that a warrior cannot account for.

You see, a warrior considers himself already dead, so there is nothing for him to lose. The worst has already happened to him, therefore he's clear and calm; judging him by his acts or by his words, one would never suspect that he has witnessed everything.

The Taoist sage appears confused, as a child.

Knowledge for a warrior is something that comes at once, engulfs him, and passes on.

A warrior acts as if nothing ever happened, because he doesn't believe in anything, yet he accepts everything at its face value.

He accepts without accepting and disregards without disregarding.

He never feels as if he knows, neither does he feel as if nothing had ever happened.

He acts as if he is in control, even though he might be shaking in his boots.

To act in such a manner dissipates obsession.

Treating all things equally and dispassionately without making judgments and without pretending to know any other thing.

A warrior needs nothing. A warrior understands that life in itself is sufficient, self-explanatory and complete.

If a warrior needs solace, he simply chooses anyone and expresses to that person every detail of his turmoil. After all, the warrior is not seeking to be understood or helped by talking he's merely relieving himself of his pressures. This is if he is given to talking.

The following passages refer to don Genaro, a friend of don Juan's, who is a man of knowledge and an impeccable warrior.

Genaro cannot kill anyone, simply because he no longer has any interest in his fellow men. By the time a warrior is capable of conquering seeing and dreaming and having the awareness of his luminosity, there is no such interest left in him.

Be not concerned with the ups and downs of your fellow men. A man of knowledge cannot possibly act towards his fellow men in injurious terms hypothetically or otherwise.

This seeming paradox of not caring and yet doing no harm is similar to the Taoist verse in which the sage sees the people as straw dogs. As the sun treats all things equally, so must the man of knowledge be not concerned with the ups and downs of others. These are illusion to some extent and part of another's karmic difficulties.

A man of knowledge is in control without controlling anything.
A warrior is always ready.
To be a warrior is not a simple matter of wishing to be one. It is rather an endless struggle that will go on to the very last moment of our lives...
Nobody is born a warrior, in exactly the same way that nobody is born a reasonable being. We make ourselves into one or the other.
Something in the warrior is always aware of every change.
It is precisely the aim of the warrior's way to foster and maintain that awareness.
The warrior cleans it, shines it, and keeps it running.

This seems very much like following the Tao. With heightened awareness, one can make subtle changes which require no effort and thus be in control without forcing control on anything.

A warrior never lets his guard down.
A warrior must use everything available to him to close his mortal gap once it opens.
A warrior dies the hard way.
His death must struggle to take him. A warrior does not give himself to it.
There is no flaw in the warrior's way. Follow it and your acts cannot be criticized by anyone.
The will develops in a warrior in spite of every opposition of the reason.
The true art of a warrior is to balance terror and wonder.

This system seems to place great emphasis on will without excluding the other qualities.

As a warrior one can rejoice in the triumph of his fellow men, if they are triumphs of the spirit.
When a warrior learns to stop the internal dialogue, everything becomes possible.
A warrior cannot complain or regret anything.
His life is an endless challenge, and challenges cannot possibly be good or bad.
Challenges are simply challenges.
The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary man takes everything either as a blessing or as a curse.

A warrior must be fluid and must shift harmoniously with the world around him. whether it is the world of reason, or the world of will. The most dangerous aspect of the shifting comes forth every time the warrior finds that the world is neither one nor the other. One must proceed in that crucial shifting in one's actions as if one believed.

A warrior believes without believing.
A warrior doesn't believe, a warrior has to believe.

This shifting again appears an apt description of following the Tao. When this is not done, one comes to an early end.

A warrior considers all the possibilities and then chooses to believe in accordance with his innermost predilection. A warrior, or any man, for that matter, cannot possibly wish he were somewhere else: a warrior because he lives by challenge, an ordinary man because he doesn't know where his death is going to find him.
Having to believe that the world is mysterious and unfathomable was the expression of a warrior's innermost predilection.

The wise course of action is often to do nothing. This is illustrated by don Juan's comment in response to how an old man like himself of over 65 be so strong. "I've told you that the secret of a strong body is not in what you do it but what you don't do." Another dimension of being a warrior is practicing "not-doing". Sounds suspiciously like the Taoist, wu wei, non-action. The first step in storing personal power (te) is to practice not-doing.

Doing is what makes that rock a rock and that bush a bush. Doing is what makes you yourself and me myself.

To look at something is doing, but to "see" something is not-doing,

The world is the world because you know the doing involved in making it so. If you didn't know its doing, the world would be different
That rock is a rock because of all the things you know how to do to it. I call that doing. A man of knowledge knows that the rock is a rock only because of doing, so if he doesn't want the rock to be a rock all he has to do is not-doing.

After placing the pebble on a large boulder, don Juan suggests to Carlos that to be not-doing, he must join the boulder and the pebble. The description brings to mind the I-Thou relationship in which the superficial qualities of an object like size, color, use, etc. are transcended, as the viewer merges with the object. In the practice of not-doing, one realizes the world to be one of feeling. One begins to feel the "lines of the world" and these enable him to more easily practice not-doing. Not-doing is not a matter of understanding, but a matter of practice and experience.

Another interesting aspect of this Yaqui system is referred to as rings of power. This view is very similar to the Kabbalistic cosmology of the universe.

Let's say that when every one of us is born we bring with us a little ring of power. That little ring is almost immediately put to use. So every one of us is already hooked from birth and our ring of power is joined to everyone else's. In other words, the rings of power are hooked to the doing of the making the world. For instance, our ring of power, yours and mine are hooked right now to the doing this room. We are making this room. Our ring of power are spinning this room into being at this very moment. A man of knowledge, on the other hand, develops another ring of power. I would call it the ring of not-doing, because it is hooked to not-doing. With this ring, therefore, he can spin another world. We all have been taught to agree about doing, don't have any idea of the power that that ring brings with it. But, fortunately, not-doing is miraculous, and powerful. You are a man of that world, and out there, in that world, is your hunting ground. There is no way to escape the doing of our world, so what a warrior does is he turns his world into his hunting ground. As a hunter, a warrior knows that the world is made to be used. So he used every bit of it. A warrior is like a pirate that has no qualms in taking and using anything he wants, except that the warrior doesn't mind and doesn't feel insulted when he is used and taken from.

In several ways this description is very close to the Yogic view of citta shaping itself into forms which we expect. In purpose in both cases being to dispense with the dependency of the single view and make yourself available to both views depending on your needs and wishes.

Another parallel with Yogic philosophy is found in what don Juan calls the "cubic centimeter of chance".

All of us whether or not we are warriors, have a cubic centimeter of chance that pops out in front of our eyes from time to time. The difference between an average man and a warrior is that the warrior is aware of this, and one of his tasks is to be alert, deliberately waiting, so that when his cubic centimeter pops out he has the necessary speed, the prowess to pick it up.

Chance, good luck, personal power, or whatever you may call it, is a peculiar state of affairs. It is like a very small stick that comes out in front of you and invites us to pluck it. Usually we are too busy, or too preoccupied, or just too stupid and lazy to realize that that is our cubic centimeter of luck. A warrior, on the other hand, is always alert and tight and has the spring, the gumption necessary to grab it.

One of the ways suggested to "get beyond time" in the Mahayana tradition is described by Eliade as "taking advantage of the "favorable moment" (ksana)". This obtains instantaneous enlightenment for one so taking it. From a Christian viewpoint, this might be seen as divine grace.

The use of symbols and numbers in the accounts of don Juan has been fairly limited. In one instance, using kernels of corn, don Juan explained that the number of man is 48. I saw no particular significance to this except that it is four times 12 or 16 times 3. But, after studying the chakras, it struck me that the number of petals on the first five chakras totals 48. As we shall see later don Juan's system appears centered in one of these lower five chakras and not in the upper two.

Although not a symbol in the usual sense of a diagram, the moth plays quite an important role as the ally and the bestower of knowledge. When knowledge comes it is described as similar to golden dust falling as if from a moth's wing. There is somewhere an intricate relationship between the moth and man. The Indians appear to have recognized this.

The two materials silk and wool have been used by various religious cultures for ages. Each of these substances is especially used in science when dealing with static electric charge. One produces a positive and the other a negative charge.

In meditation, it is recommended that the person sit upon a layer of wool or silk or both to insulate them from the earth currents. Silk in various forms is made by spiders (a clear mythological connection) in their webs and most abundantly (commercially) by moths. It is accomplished by the larvae in the form of a cocoon from which the emerging moth will rise. It is interesting that a head on view of a moth, with its feathery appendages extending outward on either side of its head, looks very much like the ajna chakra which symbolizes the third eye and wisdom. The further connection with wool, which is taken from the coat of various animals, especially the "sheep" (lamb), is that if improperly protected, moths will rapidly consume wool. There is some kind of cycle at work here which is just beyond my grasp at this point.

Dreaming takes on additional significance in don Juan's system. Dreaming is something that one practices until one can use it to travel and to gain knowledge. The description sounds very much like the Yogic siddha of astral travel or out-of-body experience. Some of the steps involve trying to look at your own hands during a dream and then glancing quickly at the surroundings in an attempt to make them remain. It is dangerous to stare continually, however. In dreaming, after one has sufficient personal Power, one may become aware of a "double". This double appears to others to be no different than your normal self. It has special powers of travel and speed not normally possessed by your regular body. It is important that one never meet one's own double face to face, or death will result.

The final concept to be discussed involves the most elaborate diagram given as well as the most important concept, The Totality of Oneself. First of all, a few excerpts from the introduction of the diagram. Don Juan describes the eight points as the "eight points on the fibers of a luminous being."

A sorcerer says, as you can see in the diagram, that a human being is, first of all, will, because will is directly connected to three points, feeling, dreaming, and seeing; then next, a human being is reason. This is properly a center that is smaller than will: it is connected only with talking. We may say that every one of us brings to the world eight points. Two of

them, reason and talking, are known by everyone. Feeling is always vague but somehow familiar. But only in the world of sorcerers does one get fully acquainted with dreaming, seeing, and will. And finally, at the outer edge of the world one encounters the other two. The eight points make the totality of oneself.

The final two points are connected only to will and will never yields to talking or reason. There then exist two spheres of activity with their centers at reason and will. The first "ring" is sustained by reason and includes talking, whereas the second, more inclusive "ring" is sustained by will and includes dreaming, seeing, and feeling as well as the other two points. Reason and talking correspond to the head, feeling to a point just below the sternum, will to a point below the navel, and dreaming and seeing to either side of the chest by the ribs.

A description of the Totality of Oneself follows specific descriptions of the final two points, the tonal (toh-na'al) and the nagual (nah-wa'hl).

Every human being has two sides, two separate entities, two counterparts which become operative at the moment of birth.

The **Tonal** is described as follows:

“social person, a protector, a guardian, usually becomes a guard; organizer of the world; sets chaos of the world into order; everything we know and do as men is work of tonal; makes sense from perceptions; tonal in all of us has been made into a petty and despotic guard when it should be a broad-minded guardian; anything we have a word for is tonal; name it and its in tonal; since only a description of the world at large exists, the tonal is that also; everything that meets the eye; begin to groom it as the moment of birth; first breath is power for the tonal; tonal of human is intimately tied to birth; begins at birth and ends at death; tonal makes the world (not creates); cannot create or change anything; function is to judge, assess and witness; witnesses and assesses according to tonal rules; creator that doesn't create a thing; makes rules by which it apprehends the world (“creates” the world);

Tonal is like an island upon which we have everything; there is a personal tonal for each one and a collective tonal for all of us at a given time (tonal of the times); tonal of the times makes us alike; personal tonal makes us unique; everything we think the word is composed of; from birth we start to develop tonal – it is important to our functioning – it opaques the shine of the nagual. From the moment we become all tonal we sense our incompleteness and compensate with tonal items of opposites (good and evil, etc.)

We sense that there is another side to us. But when we try to pin down that other side the tonal gets hold of the baton, as a director it is quite

petty and jealous. It dazzles us with its cunningness and forces us to obliterate the slightest inkling of the other part of the true pair, the nagual.

Making the tonal weak is indulging; warrior has proper tonal; average man may have a “right” tonal; it is very vulnerable, cannot stand mistreatment; holds things, builds things (not creation); proper tonal is just right, balanced and harmonious; there are roughly speaking two sides to every tonal. One is the outer part, the fringe, the surface of the island – related to action and acting, the rugged side. Other part is the decision and judgment, inner tonal, softer, more delicate and complex.

For a proper tonal everything on the island of the tonal is a challenge; greatest challenge is the bid for power; tonal shrinks at times, especially when it is embarrassed; tonal is shy; when tonal is taken by surprise, its shyness unavoidably makes it shrink; once a man’s tonal has shrunk his nagual will take over and achieve extraordinary feats.

Tonal must be convinced with reasons, nagual with actions, until one props up the other.

Tonal rules; tonal must be protected or you die; boosting the tonal allows the nagual to emerge. This boosting is called personal power.

The **nagual** is described as follows:

Part of us with which we do not deal at all; part of us for which there is no description; no words, names, feelings or knowledge; located beyond boundaries of tonal; located where power hovers; at time of birth and a while after, we are all nagual; has consciousness; is aware of everything; lapses and feelings is the nagual; more convenient to recount its effects than to explain it with items from tonal; no matter how clever the checkpoints of the tonal, the nagual surfaces inadvertently; it is like a voice that comes from the depths; it is responsible for creativity; it is only effect; impossible to explain how it works; only part of us that can create; Power comes from nagual; when you are all nagual, you are in nagual’s time; affairs of the nagual can be witness only with the body, not the reason.

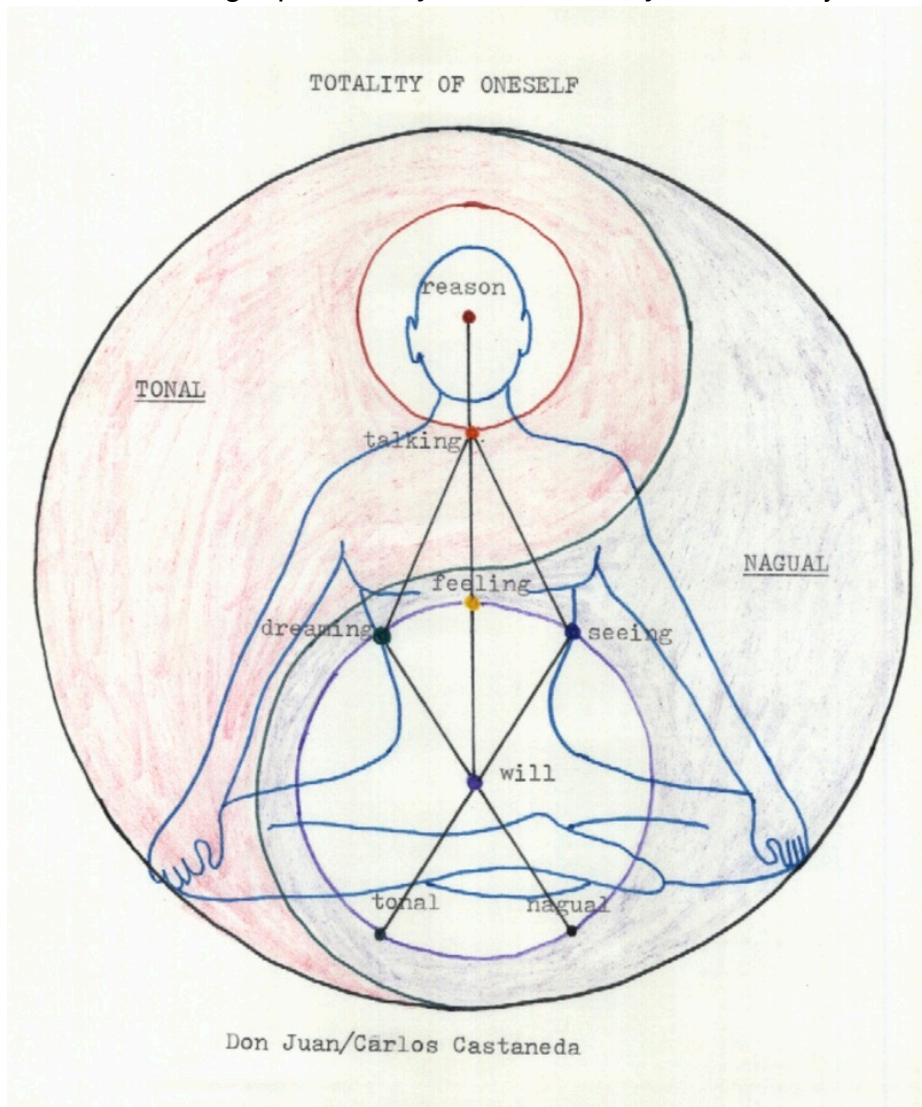
It is impossible to resist the urge to attempt comparisons with some of the Eastern ideas. The use of the word breath as power for the tonal appears to link the tonal somewhat with the soul or “inner organ” of Samkhya composed of the buddhi, ahamkara, and manas. Repeated statements in all religious scriptures to become as a child again seem to support the statement that “we are all nagual for a time after birth”.

Lao Tzu made quite a point of the incessant naming and that the Tao was reached or followed only by dropping and letting go of our multitudinous names and things. In the Lesser Maze the tonal seems to fit quite clearly the octahedron,

tetrahedra and cube. The whole apparatus of individuation and ego and judgment. Nagual is said to be located beyond the boundaries of the tonal. This clearly leaves the sphere of the dodecahedron, or the middle way. Striving to follow this middle way, or the warrior's way, eventually results in knowledge and power. Nagual does not appear to differentiate prakriti from purusa or dodecahedron from icosahedron. The nagual has consciousness and yet it creates which are the characteristics of purusa and prakriti respectively. Like the Tao, it cannot be named or explained, only its effects can be recounted. It is "like" this or that, but it is "not this, not that". Affairs of the nagual can be witnessed only with the body, not the reason. Indeed, only the body, cube, is touching the sphere of the dodecahedron. This touch is only at the eight points and is witnessed, but cannot be made to conform to the rules of reason. As in the Yogic process where shrinking the egoic apparatus allows the true reflection of purusa, the tonal occasionally shrinks (sometimes from shyness) allowing the nagual to emerge. Nagual's time is the transcendence of space-time limitations as we know them. Boosting the tonal, with increased personal power, occurs when one lives as a warrior. Then the eight points truly form the totality of oneself, just as the eight steps of Yoga or

the eight-fold path of Buddha brings about oneness.

The diagram is taken from don Juan's description of where the points are located on the body. The circles are added to show the possible commensuration with Eastern symbolism. The location of the nagual and tonal was not specified, although hints were made that they are in some way related to the genitals. This could very well find parallels in the kundalini serpent power of sakti. A study of this Yaqui mysticism has proven of great value in providing insights into each of the world religious views.



A few additional comments from a cursory reading of the Oglala Sioux and the Pueblo Indians. The Great Spirit, Wakan-Tanka, of the Sioux has many characteristics similar to Brahman or the One God. Rites (7) of the Sioux illustrate a humility and refinement of religious ethic and ritual which exceed that of present day Christianity. An idea which ran consistently through all the accounts is the eminent worth and equality of all the people of Wakan-Tanka – not only the two-leggeds, but the four-leggeds, big and small, and the winged peoples.

A final question of why the number 48 should be the number of man has sparked some conjecture based on the extra reading. In all of the Indian cultures offerings and ritual are made in six directions. These directions are thought to be derived from the sun and its motion. It traverses the sky from approximately East to West, establishing two of the directions. From season to season, it travels North to South from solstice to solstice. Finally, it goes above during the day and below during the night. Thus the six directions approximate the points of the compass although did not originally correspond to them, plus the zenith and nadir. These six directions can be seen in the tetraktys, with the seventh being the center of the universe or simply the warrior offering the rite. Renewing the discussion of angles, six is the only way to get lines at right angles (90°) to each other and still cover all three dimensions of space. Perhaps, when don Juan spoke of 48 being the number of man, he was referring to the six possible directions for each of the eight points in the totality of oneself. In either case, the match with the number of petals in the first five chakras serves to strengthen an esoteric relationship across the world. What else might modern man learn from his ancient Indian brothers and their Wakan-Tanka?

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