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## **A Man of Knowledge**

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The Yaqui people consist of several tribes living in northern Mexico, in the state of Sonora. Carlos Castaneda, as a young anthropologist traveled to the Sonora desert and met a Yaqui sorcerer, whose fictive name is don Juan Matus (DJM). Castaneda spent years with DJM trying to understand his extremely sophisticated praxes but in vain. His books relate mostly personal experiences and encounters experienced during a period of heightened awareness.

The events that have unfolded during such periods of heightened awareness had minimal connection to the conscious awareness of his daily life. The teachings of DJM were, therefore, related to the mastery of awareness in a separate level of reality. Such an understanding of reality is linked to an extremely old tradition: the tradition of the ancient "**Toltec seers**".

Regarding the tradition of the Toltec seers DJM says (1):

Whether prompted by curiosity, or hunger, or error, they ate power plants. Once the power plants had produced their effects on them, it was only a matter of time before some of them began to analyze their experiences. In my opinion, the first men on the path of knowledge were very daring, but very mistaken.

In order to become **a man of knowledge** one had to fulfill four stages of awareness. DJM explains these stages as follows (2):

The first step is the decision to become apprentices. After the apprentices change their views about themselves and the world they take the second step and become warriors, which is to say, beings capable of the utmost discipline and control over themselves. The third step, after acquiring forbearance and timing, is to become men of knowledge. When men of knowledge learn to **see** they have taken the fourth step and have become seers.

To become a warrior is not only a matter of self control in the daily existence; it is a state of being quite different and mystical. Here is how DJM explains it (3):

Warriors prepare themselves to be aware, and full awareness comes to them only when there is no more self-importance left in them. Only when they are **nothing** do they become **everything**.

How can one be nothing and at the same moment become everything? Warriors are flexible enough to be **anything**. But they have a rule that applies to everyone. The first precept of the rule is that everything that surrounds us is an unfathomable mystery. The second precept of the rule is that we must try to unravel these mysteries, but without ever hoping to accomplish this. The third, that a warrior, aware of the unfathomable mystery that surrounds him and aware of his duty to try to unravel it, takes his rightful place among mysteries and regards himself as one such mystery. Consequently, for a warrior there is no end to the mystery of being, whether being means being a pebble or an ant, or oneself. That is a warrior's humbleness. **One is equal to everything** (4).

According to DJM **seeing** is something different that is beyond the five senses. He explains this capacity to Castaneda in the following way:

You wanted me to describe **seeing** to you so you could begin to think about it, the way you do with everything else. In the case of *seeing*, however, thinking is not the issue at all, so I cannot tell you what seeing is; it is something you cannot think about (5).

**Seeing** is not a force, but rather a way of getting through things. A sorcerer may have a very strong will and yet he may not see; which means that only **a man of knowledge** perceives the world with his sense and with his will and also with his **seeing** (6).

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- (1) **The Fire From Within**, Carlos Castaneda, Pocket Books, 1985, page 3.
- (2) **Ref. 1**, page 23.
- (3) **Ref. 1**, page 128.
- (4) **The Eagle's Gift**, Carlos Castaneda, Pocket Books, 1985, page 279.
- (5) **A Separate Reality**, Carlos Castaneda, Pocket Books, 1985, page 86.
- (6) **Ref. 5**, page 148.