"Exploring the Spiritual Paths in Eastern Religions in Correlation with Jung's Four Personality Types"

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Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) did not intend to make a contribution to the study of world religions or to interfaith dialogue. He had stepped into the inner circle of Sigmund Freud's disciples and had become his "chosen one, his crown prince and successor." That was in 1910; but two years later Jung's lectures and publications, which he thought expanded Freud's psychoanalysis, turned Jung into a pariah. Thus began a period of mental illness evidenced by his own *Red Book*[1] and the search for any support for his perspectives that had caused Freud's rejection of him and his research.

His quest took him into alchemy, astrology, tarot and other esoteric systems that had observations and languages for personality differences. But the real breakthrough came when he found what appeared to be ancient psychological systems in Asian religions, especially Hinduism.

So, what is there in the study of other religions that can be valuable for us? My friend Huston Smith is credited with saying, "You can't know your own religion without knowing another religion." And as a student I had the privilege of listening to Thomas Merton at the Trappist monastery in Gethsemane, Kentucky, say, "Learning about different religions enriches your faith in your own." "Understanding other religions can deepen your understanding of your own." "Exploring other religions is a path to deeper self-awareness in your own faith."

I will not claim that Jung intended to understand his own religion or other religions. He did find in Asian religions multiple perspectives that he tried to summarize in his *Psychological Types* that he completed in 1921.[2.] Working with his observations of the mentally ill patients whom he was treating and models from the esoteric systems he was reading, Jung found four psychological types, that could be multiplied by two (introvert and extrovert) plus another two (judging and perceiving) for totals of four, eight, twelve or sixteen. Then an extra element was added for an either/or/maybe when there was doubt in the classification. Yes, all of this was presented by Jung in the 600 plus pages of the study that became the foundation for most of the Neo-Jungian counseling systems.[3]

Decades later when questioned about where and how he learned of the four psychological types, Jung said that he discovered them in the *Upanishads,* 108 ancient books almost equally divided as mystical and devotional texts.[4.]

The context for Jung's discovery can be suggested as fourfold: the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions had brought representatives to share their own religions; intrafaith organizations began talking among themselves as religious conservative or liberals, the oldest of which, the International Association for Religious Freedom continuing to the present from 1900; the beginning of the academic study of religions at Oxford, Harvard, and the Imperial University of Japan; and the translations in studies like the *Sacred Books of the East* (Max Müller's 50 volume set) making Hindu, Buddhist, and

other sacred texts available in translation from their original languages. Yet, with this cacophony of voices Jung would discover his four psychological types that so resembled the four spiritual paths of ancient India.

Varieties Of Religious Experience

At least twenty centuries ago in India the variety of religious experiences was observed and classified into four broad categories. They were called the four tendencies (Sanskrit: *saṃskāras*), paths (*mārgas*), and practices (*yogas*). The four *saṃskāras* were inclusive of differences in personality, perception, and life purpose (later, the caste system). Spiritual paths (*mārgas*) were more important to them, so they saw everything converging into one's spiritual pilgrimage. Then they added some concepts that went beyond the observed evidence with concepts of *karma* (causality) and *saṃsāra* (rebirth). Thus, they constructed a system that saw one's past lives effecting one's present in everything from caste to how one should use one's faculties. These extra beliefs took nearly universal observations about the tendencies we develop emotionally, physically, rationally and intuitively and made them into what is now called Hinduism. However, the observations about the four tendencies would appear in many other ancient systems (astrology, tarot, indigenous religions.)

Three Indian leaders of the 19th century Hindu Renaissance are responsible for introducing this fourfold paradigm or model of religious experience to the West. They were Rāja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833),[4] Pratap Chundra Mozoomdar (1840-1905),[5] and Svāmī Vivekānanda (1868-1902).

Vivekānanda & Mozoomdar

Svāmī Vivekānanda (1863 -1902) used fourfold classification of personality and the corresponding variety of spiritual paths in his teachings. He was the third Hindu teacher to share this idea with the West, appearing at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. The second was the Brahmo Samaji leader, Pratap Chundra Mozoomdar.

Svāmī Vivekānanda used this fourfold classification of personality and the corresponding variety of spiritual paths in his teachings. Many other Indian teachers since Vivekānanda have used the exact English terms which he shared with Roy and Mozoomdar for his presentation of Hindu psychology and spirituality. Vivekānanda taught that the religious tendencies or faculties governed an individual's way of seeing the world, how one organized their response to life, and how and what one would be taught – even concerning the notions of *karma* and rebirth.[6]

Svāmī Vivekānanda used this classification of personhood and the corresponding variety of spiritual paths in his teachings. Vivekānanda believed in teaching each person according to his/her spiritual tendencies or its corresponding point of view. Each

tendency had a path, a practice, a way of knowing, a set of teachings, and a way of experiencing the Absolute governed by one's past *karma*.[7]

Vivekānanda used the ancient Hindu taxonomy of four religious tendencies in his books on the four paths of spiritual development: *Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga,* and *Karma Yoga*. Each *yoga* (discipline, practice) was seen by him as the path (*mārga*) for a different type of spiritual experience, each path leading to a potential experience of the Absolute.

More Western thinkers became aware of this model for interpreting personality differences at the end of the nineteenth century. Pioneering psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961) made use of this four-fold system. Jung was no doubt indirectly indebted to Vivekānanda, but this concept had become so popular and watered-down that Jung did not ever acknowledge Vivekānanda as a source for his own theory. This "map" or "paradigm" had become popular and diluted through use in certain circles (liberal religionists, spiritualists, Theosophists, popular culture). Jung may not even have known whom to attribute the bringing of this Indian theory to the West and to his own attention.[8] There are times that he claimed that he first discovered the "four psychological types" in his study of the Upanishads. Jung also said that he "rediscovered" the theory in Indian scriptures, as well as from Chinese alchemy and Western alchemical and astrological theories.[9]

Jung's construction of his four psychological types so closely parallels Svāmī Vivekānanda's four books on the four religious paths (*mārgas*) that his claim to not having borrowed from Vivekānanda raises doubts. For some reason, Jung left out a number of features in the ancient spiritual psychologies which suggested structures in the personality which bring about harmony, balance, and epistemological differences. But Jung emphatically stated that he was doing science and not epistemology[10] – even though our psychological or religious perspectives seem to determine what we consider real and true.

Vivekānanda's and Jung's classifications of spiritual tendencies and psychological functions can be viewed in the following table:

Saṃskāras	**Practice & Path**	**Tendencies (Vivekānanda)**	**Functions or Types (Carl Jung)**
Jñāna - ज्ञान	*yoga & mārga* योग - मार्ग	Intellectual	Rational (thinking type)
Rāja - राज	*yoga & mārga*	Mystical	Intuitional (intuiting type)
Bhakti - भक्ति	*yoga & mārga*	Devotional	Emotional (feeling type)
Karma - कर्म	*yoga & mārga*	Practical	Sensate (sensing type)

In each person, according to Jung and more explicitly in the Neo-Jungians, one

dominant center of experience becomes the final arbiter of all experience. If this were not so, the person would be divided – confused, indecisive, purposeless, even pathological, schizophrenic, etc. The various ways of interpreting life experiences are individually prioritized so that one can decide more quickly about what one needs and wants. One way of knowing becomes the superior function for each individual's personality or "ego" and contributes to a more purposeful life and a sense of being a unified self.

Jung's model can be briefly summarized as follows:

1) The *thinking* function - organizes, establishes order, classifies, identifies and makes plans. Its notion of causality is linear--from cause to effect.

2) The *feeling* function - connects the experiencer personally with life. It is the "liking and disliking function." Whatever is happening is given an emotional tag. This function is principally past-oriented as some time is required to become joyful, angry, sensitive to the experiences involved.

3) The *sensing* function - operates directly from the "five" senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling. This is an active and present function; it is the experience of seeing and not the feelings or thoughts about it. Its time frame is the present.

4) The *intuiting* function - sees the whole from parts. It sees the entire situation from fragments. Intuition synthesizes the other functions' "data" into a coherent whole or "unitive order." Its time frame is totally different from either the thinking ("linear"), feeling ("past") or sensing ("now") experiences of time. Once a pattern or outline is "seen/intuited" it leaps to the conclusion. It arrives at the "future" as already here and now.

Jung's Indirect Contribution to Interfaith Dialogue

Each of the tendencies (*saṃskāras*) brings together what has been observed as religious experiences into patterns and a model for understanding. Centuries of observations suggested that an individual could *center* in one tendency and its way of perceiving. That becomes a characteristic way or pattern for perceiving "truth" as "spiritual" or "religious." The other tendencies would be subordinated to the primary one. The fourfold model or paradigm of religious or spiritual experiences has amazing usefulness. It has provided terms in almost every language to help articulate what humans have taken to be holy, sacred, true, or of ultimate concern.

The perspective of any single tendency can be used to subordinate other spiritual paths or tendencies. Thus, one can remain centered in a devotional faith and practice and find mystical and rational experiences subordinate to it but compatible and supportive. Thus, they are taken as less true than one's own centering. This will become more apparent as each tendency is described in more detail.

Devotional Religious Experience

Devotional religion is a form of human experience gaining knowledge of the mystery and meaning of life as personal and relational. It is often described as the way of the heart with love as its most consistent metaphor. When this love inspires awe and wonder, it brings forth gratitude. And characteristically there is a feeling of unworthiness, that one is not owed or entitled to such an unmerited gift. So many devotional traditions call this experience "grace" in a multitude of languages.

Devotional religion is distinctive because this gift of love is not impersonal, but from a source that can be personally named, with whom one can have a personal relationship, with whom one can talk or pray, with whom one can commit one's life. And one can respond to the gift of grace by becoming an agent of grace, giving back to others and to life what one has received spiritually – and perhaps materially. In English the generic word, god, is turned into the name for the Personal Other, God the absolute giver of life and eternal salvation.

Almost in every religious tradition worldwide there is a jealousy factor in devotional religion. The personal God is claimed exclusively for one's own group, sect, denomination or tradition. But there are those in all devotional traditions that are universalists, who see God as Isaiah the Hebrew prophet did, as God of all with salvation for all.

Perhaps Martin Buber's conception of the I-Thou relationship captures something to the personal, intimate quality of the God-experience in devotional religion. But those who use Buber usually do not realize that he was searching for an expression of a mystical paradox of an unknown other with whom intimacy appeared. Still, the I-Thou appropriation does describe the devotional experience of many saints.

Devotional religion is necessarily theistic. That is, its personal experience of a personal God is conceived and expressed in language and metaphors of human personhood. Such anthropomorphism must be honestly owned by the devotional religionist as the price of centering in this religious pattern. It can be either monotheistic and polytheistic. In the twentieth century devotional religion is by far the most popular and often described religious type.

The inadequacies of devotional religion, with its projection of human personhood upon the cosmos, have been attacked by religious and secular rationals from Confucian scholars to Enlightenment philosophers to founders of modern psychology like Sigmund Freud and to theologians like Frederick Schleiermacher. Yet, for all its difficulties, the experience of divine grace has been as transformative for millions of those who follow the devotional path.

Actional Religious Experience

Actional religion is the form of human experience using the senses and movement to gain knowledge of the mystery and meaning of life as energetic and creative. Its very sensate nature makes it observant and realistic, seeing awe and wonder in nature's gifts of beauty and bounty. Its experience of grace is impersonal but no less intense and real. Life gives. Its blessings are adored and celebrated.

Celebration is ritualized, probably first as play, then formally as set aside moments in the chaos of time. Anniversaries remember great events as holy days and symbolized them in *sensate* [the term Jung used] ways with song, dance, ritual movements, art, story. The human voice chants and sings in a myriad ways in the many actional traditions. Actional spirituality can sense the many stimuli of ordinary reality being under the rule or control of one unifying power, such as God (Abrahamic religions), Kannagara (Shinto), or Mother Nature (some indigenous religions). Despite this multiplicity and its potential for chaos, there is order and fair rules to be followed. In rituals, persons, groups and traditions can be connected together in order and unity, with little need to articulate beliefs and theories about the mysteries of life. These rituals are often believed to have

been divinely given. Practice and participation need only be the assent of observing the community's rituals. A priest or priestess would lead in precise ways governed by tradition. Both observer and participant could directly experience the transcending moment of order as beauty and of shared ritual as community.

For the actional (sensate) religionist there is no religion at all without sensed beauty. There must be beautiful art, music, movement in dance, and voiced in sacred chants. Ritualistic religion is often criticized as the most primitive of religious paths. Yet, absence of religious experiences using our senses has impoverished traditions that have condemned art, images, symbols, music or dance as sensual and leading to sin. There seems to be a human ability to sense life's mysteries physically.

Cognitive Religious Experience

Cognitional religious experience is a form of human experience gaining knowledge of the mystery and meaning of life as rational, principled and ideational. It is centered in human reason's idea of reality as consistent, following the orderliness of the seasons, stars and mathematics. Finding the principles is thus metaphoric, a quest that seeks order in chaos and constructs natural rules elevated as principles. In China Confucian philosophers were particularly creative in identifying the way (*dao* - 道) of heaven (*tiān* - 天) and the principles or standard of propriety (*li* - 礼) by which heaven ruled. This very function of human reason thrives on a process of questioning, study, learning, and construction. Yet this process can become quite conservative, especially if principles that are deemed holy and sacred last for centuries with little apparent change. But the very love of knowledge (*philo+sophia*) has its own transcendent element, a freedom to learn something new. This can require a reconstruction of principles that once held a community together.

For individuals, the cognitive (rational) experience of the mysteries of any aspect of life can inspire awe and wonder. It is not unlike solving a problem in mathematics or science that was "unsolvable." Experiencing the power and beauty of mind or consciousness can be a peak experience for one so gifted. And the notion of being gifted with unusual rational capability is crucial to whether the experience is taken as spiritual or not. Does it point beyond the personal self (the small ego, as it were) or does it inflate and create an arrogance of intellectual superiority? Other religious paths see this as the very danger of the rational path and its humanism. Human reason can center in itself, making the individual its own ultimate concern – a common pathology of cognitional religion with in hubris, arrogance, and conceit.

Yet, there are exemplary religious rationals through the centuries who have displayed a remarkable humility, simply because the human intellect can never know enough. There is always something more to explore, to learn, to ponder, to interpret, to construct into a theory or principle. That is the rational's path to awe, wonder and mystery – the good, true and beautiful of life all pointing to the Divine, to God, to Mystery, to the Transcendent.

Mystical Religious Experience

Mystical religious experience is a form of human experience that finds unity in the chaos of a sensed world. It professes a direct knowledge of the oneness of life, of one's own life interconnected to all other beings, animate and inanimate. It is most often found

with those who practice types of meditation that silence words or observe one's "chattering monkey mind" from the viewpoint of a witness. Observing oneself is said to be the "left brain" (the rational) being monitored from the perspective of the "right brain" (the intuitive). Thus, in the same way, the reasoning, doubting, and questioning faculty is silenced or subordinated to intuition.

Then too, the feeling function with its passions, fears and angers must also be silenced or subordinated. The retreat "away from the world" has been the quiet place for a mystic to have the time and space to master this part of strengthening the intuitive function. And finally, the emotional function's distractions must be stilled. To silence the disturbances of the senses, meditation tends to require the beginning practitioner to use a fixed sitting posture (in *yoga* an *āsana*) or rhythmic walking or even jogging to quiet sensate stimuli from distracting during meditation.

But meditation is not mystical experience per se. It is only the placing one's self in an opportune state of consciousness and non-distracting activity to be ready for an experience of oneness, unity, merging into something other than the self – the small self, that is, in most traditions that make such distinctions. Conceiving, symbolizing, articulating the mystical experience is problematic. It is an altered state of consciousness, altered by the very process of controlling other ways of confirming reality (rational, sensate, emotional knowing). And one must come out of or down from the mystical experience to talk about it. However, that said, the witness and expressions of mystics are some of humanity's finest literary creations. As early as the Upanishads and throughout the ages in so many religious traditions, there is the awe and wonder of mystical union with the divine, absolute, ultimate, God, Life, Consciousness. These, in their varying metaphors and similes, have inspired a perception of humanity as capable of things better and more beautiful. While gratitude is a primal characteristic of every spiritual path, mystics just do not anthropomorphize life's gifts or sources of grace. The unmerited blessings of life become an intuition of life's interrelatedness.

Critics have attacked mysticism as anti-rational or even pathological, its ecstasies as "divine madness," its retreat as other-worldly and lacking social concern or engagement. Mysticism's pathologies are said to be grand deceits and confusions of an inflated ego – sometimes labeled as megalomania and even mental illnesses. But these pathologies do not negate the intuitive capacities revealed in the exemplars of this path such as Rumi, Hazrat Inayat Khan, St. Teresa of Ávila, St. John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Merton, Rabbi Isaac Luria, Baal Shem Tov, Kabir, Sri Aurobindo, Lao Tzu, Nagarjuna, Milarepa, Dōgen Zenji, Kobo Daishi and so many more. Its healthy expression is unity with life itself.

Integral Religious Experience

And there may be a fifth path unifying the other four into one. This stage entails complete mastery and direct knowledge of all four spiritual tendencies (sensate, emotional, rational, mystical). It integrates them to be used appropriately, each according to its strength or in a unified way. The individual would function, momentarily or for longer periods, appropriately in whatever type of functioning that is called for. There would be, momentarily or for periods, perfection of being in emotional, rational, intuitive, and sensate situations and a utilization of introverted or extraverted functioning

(inner- and outer-directed processing of experience).

Jung never found a living example of psychological integration. However, he refused to go and see if Ramana Maharishi (1879-1950), widely believed to be a saint, had reached that level. When Jung visited India in 1937 to receive several honorary doctorates, he was just a short train ride away from Ramana's ashram.

True saints have been hard to find. My own search found someone who seemed to be an example of this integral stage of spiritual development, Shin'ichirō Imaoka.[11] Yet, Lawrence Kohlberg,[12] Carol Gilligan,[13] and others have shown that one cannot judge a moral or psychological stage far above one's own. Jung's failure is a fair warning to us to enter interfaith dialogue with an open mind and a readiness to learn from other religious perspectives. And there just might be the possibility of being inspired by others who do not to share our tradition or even our religious type.

So what have we learned?

Did you recognize your own religious path? How you worship? What are your religious practices? Do you combine or utilize several types of religious practice? If you can recognize your own modality of religious faith and practice, you will better understand religious differences and perhaps even appreciate their perspective and experience.

Have you tried talking to other Christians – that would be intra-faith dialogue. It's usually safe to ask others about their community and their involvement in it, and then how they worship. What is their religious practice? They probably combine several modalities of religious practice with or without struggle or inner conflict. There may be opportunities to learn and grow in both your and their faith journeys.

If you want to get into deeper dialogue, ask how their faith ministers to life's existential crises. You can use the standard crises of death, freedom, chaos, violence, illness, meaning.

Or you can ask about the strengths and weaknesses of each religious path or centering, first confessing the weaknesses of your own religious type. This means comparing your real with their real, your ideals with their ideals. The oldest mistake, besides not knowing how to listen, is comparing my ideals with the realities and failures of your tradition's history and practice.

If you really want to test your skills, engage the religious conservatives and liberals among your friends, or even in your own family?

The last suggestion is the most difficult. Some semanticists say that language makes us human, yet language is probably our greatest tool as deceivers. For it works both for deception and revelation. Talk is cheap. Watch out for normative terminology, privileged terms and hidden assumptions. Or better yet, try actional dialogue with a work project with other religionists for peace, alleviating poverty, or attempting social justice.

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This world needs religious people showing the way from being a violent, aggressive, polluting, deceitful species on the planet to each of our faith's vision of a saintly child of the Divine, a son or daughter of God. Yes, we even privilege ourselves with our religion's ideal of our already being human, "in the image of God."

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Let me close by quoting from a sermon of my wife's father, the Rev. Dr. Imre

Gellérd,[14] who practiced interfaith dialogue with fellow religious leaders and intelligentsia imprisoned in the Romanian gulag.

Thus speaks the message of Jesus:

> "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done," and if I have undertaken the work of mankind's redemption, you too should assume your own responsibility in this historical work. But how? Well, God does not ask more from us than we are capable of doing. He does not place upon our shoulders a burden greater than we can bear. He does not demand from us that we roll boulders; carrying tiny grains of sand is enough. God does not expect that we save the world; He commissions to redeem a single orphaned person – yourself. And if you have managed to make a handful of people good, you have done a great deal in the work of redemption. A word of comfort, an act of compassion is a small fire in the dark night – the night of selfishness, envy, malice, warmongering. But these small flickering flames, the simple gestures of loving hearts, when summed up, eventually will save the world.

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NOTES

1. Carl G. Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*. Ed. S. Shamdasani, tr. M. Kyburz, J. Peck and S. Shamdasani. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009.

2. Carl G. Jung, *Psychologische Typen* (Rascher Verlag, 1921) translated into English 1923; reprinted as *Psychological Types* (Princeton: Princeton University Press and London: Routledge, 1971).

3. My critiques of Neo-Jungian's sixteen personality types in "A Critical Review of Myer-Briggs' Interpretation of Jung" and "A Mild Study of Peter Tufts Richardson's Four Spiritualities Mixing Carl Jung's Personality Types and Myers-Briggs Sixteen." [available on Academia.com]

4. Rammohan Roy had shared this concept with none other than Max Mueller. P. C. Mozoomdar (also Majumdar) toured England and American and spoke to much larger audiences. See especially Majumdar's 1883 talk to Unitarian ministers, "Protestantism in India."

5. The first to come to America was the reform Hindu, Pratap Moozumdar [P. C. Majumdar], a member of the Brahmo Samaj – the Society of God. His first trip to the West was in 1873, visiting England and Germany. He visited the U.S. three times, in 1883, 1893, and 1900. He clearly articulates the four *margas* in his "Protestantism in India," delivered in 1883 and published in *Lectures in America & Other Papers* (Calcutta: Navavidhan Publication Committee, 1955), p.184.

6. Combining *karma* and rebirth (*samsara*) to the empirical observation of the different tendencies unnecessarily links a Hindu solution to the problem of fairness in the universe with the personality types.

7. George M. Williams, *The Quest for Meaning of Svāmī Vivekānanda* (New Horizons Press, 1974).

8. I worked on this problem for a book on "Jung and Hinduism" to trace this dependence. At the time I thought Jung had plagiarized from Vivekānanda. I decided to quit the project because I could not find from whom Jung had taken these ideas. Prof. Harold Coward took over as editor and finished the project.

9. Jung “discovered” this theory in translations of the Upanishads, he wrote.

10. The idea of more than one epistemology is so alien to Western thought that Gregory Bateson’s attempt to present a multiple epistemology with only thinking and feeling as “ways of knowing” met with little interest. See his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972) and *Mind and Nature* (1979). While the thinking/rational way of knowing is measurable and can be declared scientific, one needs another way of knowing to experience love as genuine and true, or beauty as experienced by the mind’s eye or ear.

11. George M. Williams, *Cosmic Sage: Imaoka Shin’ichirō – Prophet of Free Religion* (Uniquest Publishing, 2019)ß.

12. Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development*. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1981); and Kohlberg; Charles Levine; Alexandra Hewer, *Moral stages: a current formulation and a response to critics* (Basel, NY: Karger, 1983).

13. Carol Gilligan, *Mapping the moral domain: a contribution of women's thinking to psychological theory and education.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

14. Judit Gellérd, *Prisoner of Liberté: Story of a Transylvanian Martyr* (Uniquest Publishing, 2005).