

An introduction to the illusion

In a way, the world seems trapped in the illusion of man... but it is man who is trapped, not the world. The world will always be there for us when we open our eyes, and will care for us as we begin our journey back to peace.

There was a time in my life when I knew everything but peace. I didn't know it, but my spirit was trapped in the illusion of man. Hinduism calls this illusion "Maya", the physical and mental reality our minds have accepted as truth. It is the world man created on top of the world. It is the great illusion, the "dream of the planet".

Three years ago I begin a journey of self - examination. I began a trip inside my head to organize my memories into an understandable time line so that my past wouldn't appear so scattered and cloudy. By doing this I hoped to bring some peace to my mind and to my life. As I began to look within myself, I realized the world I lived in wasn't real.

This was obviously a pretty big revelation for me and I'll use these journals as an attempt to put together an understanding of my awakening and the steps I used to identify and overcome the root of my unhappiness. I want to do this because I never believed I could be this happy, alone, in a room, with absolutely no noise, and no distraction without being afraid of loosing myself in my mind. We never really loose our minds... we just get lost in them, buried under layers and layers of untruth. This will be a documentation of how I found my way out. I didn't really know what I was doing at the time except that I was on a quest to bring my mind peace and experience true happiness no matter how unconventional or controversial the method may be.

My entrance into enlightenment was like an insane whirlwind where everything I ever knew was brought into question. It was a trip though time, a re living of my child hood, a battle between what was real and what I once perceived as real. It had to be the most amazing experience of my life. Three years later, when the dust settled, I was left with a quiet mind and an unconditional love for everyone and every thing. I know I sound like some deranged hippie... but it happened to me. I am not writing this to convince anyone of anything... I'm writing this as an exploration of how I became so lost and how I found my way out.

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As I struggled to free my mind from its own trappings, I read several books and found there are two types of teachers. The first type were all basically telling me the same thing; in order to break away from their fear, let go of their anger, release their depression and achieve true happiness and inner peace, they had to rise above the "Maya" (illusion) and see the world beyond the limitations set upon them by mankind.

Don Miguel Ruiz in his book, "The Four Agreements", described this illusion as "the collective dream of billions of smaller, personal dreams, which together create a dream of a family, a dream of a community, a dream of a city, a dream of a country, and finally a dream of the whole humanity. The dream of the planet includes all of society's rules, its beliefs, its laws, its religions, its different cultures and ways to be, its governments, schools, social events, and holidays.... the humans who live before us teach us how to dream the way society dreams".

I wish I could describe the revelation I had after reading this statement. I realized the blue prints handed to me as a child were only guidelines, traditions, limitations passed on though generations of children to other children. I built my foundation on those guidelines and, like it or not, they were governing my current reality. As I continued my journey I took out different pieces

of my lifetime and looked at them from a different perspective. The unseen chains binding my spirit soon became visible and I realized that what I knew to be true... may not be.

Of course, this didn't happen all at one time. It's difficult for me to go back now in my mind without going forward. As I write each sentence, what I did to get where I am makes more sense, but at the time, I really had no idea what I was doing. All I knew was that something was wrong and, instead of distracting myself from it, I wanted to finally figure out what it was. Unfortunately, while I understood that there was something greater out there beyond my own understanding, I had difficulty seeing past my limitations to grasp the idea of it. I was trying to overcome years of living in an illusion, using tools from the very illusion I was trying to overcome, to find something I didn't truly understand. In order to overcome my limitations, I confronted them, and came to a different understanding of how our world works and its effect on my mind.

There are ancient Hindu texts that refer to life as a game, a play. Shakespeare wrote the same thing, "all the world is a play"... this is a very profound and eye opening statement. If the whole world is a play... then everything we have come to accept as real, in actuality, is not real. I've come to understand that we individually create the world we live in from outside stimulus... we form our foundation then create an illusionary world, on top of the natural world, inside our head. We then place our illusions into the "dream of the planet" or "mass consciousness", a collection of illusions created by human beings through time.

Each civilization is different because it pulls only certain ideas from this mass consciousness to govern themselves by. Then they protect their collection of ideas by passing them on to each new generation. The leaders of these civilizations hope each new generation will not only believe in what was created, but expand on these beliefs to secure their survival.

The problem is, somewhere along the line, we forgot it was just an illusion... a guide line, an idea, a set of traditions passed across generations to assist in the survival and happiness of mankind. Somehow, especially in western civilization, our guidelines and traditions became the laws of the universe. Which is very interesting considering the universe has absolutely no laws other than those which create its own complexity. The ultimate, unchanging reality that lies behind all the objects and activities of our "Maya" (illusion) are beyond our conception. This is because we see ourselves as separate from the universe, or god, or whatever you call the origin of your spirit. This is especially true again in western civilization where the universe is set up as a monarchy where there is a ruler, God, and his subjects... those who are not God. Since we are not God, we are separate from God and therefore separate from the universe God created. This "separateness" is the foundation of western civilization. This "separateness" has created an illusion so far beyond nature that it is beginning to collapse in on itself.

So, it appears human consciousness has forgotten its identity by separating itself from the "natural universe". Hinduism refers to this natural universe as "Brahman". The "Upanishads", the collection philosophical and meditative doctrines that make up the foundation of Hinduism, are designed to help those who seek enlightenment become one with Brahman, one with the source of all things, and free from the limitations of Maya, the illusion. Buddhist doctrines are set up in the same fashion. Buddhists believe that, "when the mind is completely freed of attachment or craving, the person enters Nirvana." Nirvana, to many in the west, is considered a cloudy state of consciousness achieved by excessive drug use or a place of ultimate peace with bright flowers and fields to run through with fairies and unicorns. This is far from its actual meaning. Nirvana, in Buddhism, is described as "liberation, inward peace and strength, insight to truth, the joy of complete oneness with reality, and love toward all creatures in the universe". It is the end result of breaking from the illusion and remembering that you are one with the source of all things. There are many similarities between Buddhism and Hinduism, and both eventually say the same thing... if you are searching for true happiness, it can be found by breaking through the illusion, the game, the veil of society. True happiness can only exist in reality.

In my studies I realized that most of the collective teachings accepted into western civilization have nothing equal to the Upanishads or doctrines of Buddhism... no where in the traditions provided by our parents does there appear to be a guideline designed to question our reality. I am generalizing here, but from my own experiences I have seen very few parents who raised their children above the illusion. Our culture is not designed to break away from itself, it is designed to protect itself, therefore, we do not see life as illusion, but as reality.

This thinking is propelled further by westerners who follow the Abrahamic, monotheistic faiths, such as Judaism, Islamic, Christianity, and Mormonism. They perceive themselves as separate from their God in the same way a commoner thinks himself separate from his king. When, in reality, we are separate from the natural universe as "if a drop of water from a vast ocean thought itself separate". The difference between western and eastern religions is that eastern religions are not actually "religions". They are more of a philosophy designed to help us see the illusion so we understand that we are one with the natural universe and not separate from it.

The religions of western civilization provide no doctrines to break us from our illusion. This is because our religions are part of the very illusion we are trying to break from... and they don't really want us to know that. In fact, they will go to great lengths to convince us that *there* way is the *only* way. Religion is often the foundation one uses to build experience. To break free of that illusion would mean losing the very foundation on which the framework of their life is built. This is probably why most people avoid doing it and opt to start another collection of amusing ceramic monkeys.

So, since our cultures and religions are designed to inhibit us from breaking free of our illusion, western man is left with a most unique opportunity. He or she must break free of the illusion on their own.

My first step toward my awakening was questioning what I perceived as real. The illusion of mankind exists only in our mind. Our creative mind gives our illusion life, which, in return, becomes our reality. When illusion becomes reality, we are controlled by illusion. Then we share this reality with others. The sharing of this illusion has a direct effect on the physical world. When enough people believe in an illusion, reality is lost and all that exists is the illusion of mankind. When the illusion becomes the focus of civilization, they are completely separated from nature and the natural universe. To be completely separated from the natural universe is to be completely separated from peace. The opposite of peace is fear. Then we pass this separateness onto our children.

And it was passed onto me.

It was passed onto you.

The good news is, civilization is just an illusion passed on through generations. In fact, I couldn't think of any better news. With this understanding I began to realize the source of my unhappiness was coming from inside my mind. I started to understand that the unhappiness I was feeling wasn't real. It was a byproduct of ideas I accepted into my head when I was younger. Apparently unhappiness is an inherited trait.

No, this is not an attack on my parents, this is not an attack on anyone... this is just a search for understanding. Placing blame on others for the problems of the world implies that you are separate from that problem. We cannot bring peace to ourselves telling someone else to be peaceful.

This is a curse of western man. We focus on changing the world outside ourselves instead of focusing within. We try to change mass consciousness by outwardly changing and rearranging the illusion that governs it. This creates a great deal of confusion because everyone has a different idea of what should be changed based on their perception of the world. So, when we try

to change the outside world hoping it will bring us peace and happiness, we must first convince others that the change needs to be made... then hope the people we've convinced will convince others... and so on. As time passes we hope to have enough people believing in our idea that it will manifest itself in the "illusion" and, by changing everyone else, we will achieve peace and happiness.

This is a very difficult task as there are only a few men and women who brought peace into mass consciousness... and they were already at peace. Those who try to bring peace into their lives by telling others that something other than themselves can bring peace, create more confusion for those governed by the illusion. This, in return, separates our society and brings us further and further away from the peace we seek.

A good example of how our culture becomes separated in the pursuit of outward happiness can be seen during the western revolution of the nineteen-sixties. The children of the sixties revolted against the ideas of their parents by proclaiming we should be focused on living in a world of peace. This was the first time in recorded history that such a concept had been placed into the mass consciousness. So, we, as a global community, set out to find a way to create world peace. Well... that's a very nice goal... but each person has a different idea of what *peace* is, based on their interpretation of stimulus provided by the illusion of western civilization. So, first one would have to convince others that their idea of world peace was the right one... or be convinced by another to believe in their idea. Eventually, groups were formed to demand that we should be living in a world of peace. The goal still seemed overwhelming, so the groups formed larger groups and shouted even louder that we should be living in a world of peace. After a while, the groups realized they would have to do something to actually start the ball rolling toward this goal. So the groups started arguing about what our first step toward world peace should be and then broke off into separate groups to focus on what they believed to be the most important step in achieving world peace. Some groups believed we should be kind to animals first, or the trees first, or take care of the poor first, get rid of the nukes, convert the world to Christianity, provide better housing for the less fortunate, or my favorite – the "retire to a golf course and leave it up to the next generation" group.

So, group after group began taking donations to create pamphlets to get other people to become members of their group. Once they had enough money and members they could begin their step toward the ultimate goal of living in a world of peace. Problem was, they seemed no closer to the goal than when they began. For example, those trying to save the animals soon realized they couldn't save all the animals at one time, so each group began dividing into much smaller groups to protect the animals they thought were most in danger of becoming extinct. More money was donated, more pamphlets were created, and more members were brought in to save one animal from extinction. This was at least somewhat of an obtainable goal... not world peace... but the animal was quite appreciative.

So...we've had a century of group forming... a separateness under one common goal... an ultimate goal we will never achieve because it's based on our individual and collective illusion of what world peace *should* be. The secret is, the world is already peaceful... we have just separated ourselves from that peace. It is the illusion that separates us. We must first be peaceful before we can bring peace. If we truly knew what peace was, we would already be living in it. Unfortunately, the goal seemed so overwhelming that most of the baby boomers gave up and bought sport utility vehicles.

What does that have to do with my journey? Well, while I was lost in the illusion, it was my goal to achieve true happiness. Based on the information given to me, I believed true happiness came in the form of a house, a wife, a car, money, sex, excitement, a few pets, more sex, salvation, love and all the things I was shown on TV. My life's goal was to obtain these things so I could finally be happy. It's the American dream. This was the goal I set out for myself when I was twenty. I spent a great deal of energy over the next eleven years on several separate goals thinking they would all come together to create the ultimate goal of true happiness as outlined by our illusion...

in reality I was creating a journey toward “things” to bring me happiness. What’s interesting is I already had the ability to be happy, to be peaceful. Happiness is inherent to us. As I said before, the problem was I kept using concepts provided by the very illusion that formed the foundation of my depression. It was like trying to fix a broken table with a broken hammer.

The fault in my original thinking was that something outside of myself was causing my depression. Therefore, something outside of myself could bring me peace. Instead of projecting the illusion outward, we must question the illusion inward and search through the layers upon layers of societal programming for the truth behind our illusions. After eleven years of searching for something outside of myself to complete me, I changed the direction of my search.

Over the next three years I learned peace cannot be obtained, it must be remembered. Happiness is our birthright the true step toward peace is an inward journey where we shed our untruths and remember our true nature... remember that we are already at peace.

Therefore, to slowly change the mass consciousness, to bring mankind out of the illusion, we must first free ourselves from our own mind since it is perpetuating the very illusion controlling it. This is a reachable goal. We are not trying to change the world, we are simply trying to bring peace to our own mind. A goal is only out of reach when we focus on changing things outside our control. To change our world, to break free of the illusion, to remember peace, we only need to change our mind.

The process will be gradual, the changes will be slow, but as each one of us returns to peace, the mass consciousness will shift and the direction of man will change back to reality, back to nature.

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If peace is your goal, then you are not at peace. Peace and happiness are not goals, they are just a state of mind... the state of *your* mind based on *your* foundation. Peace means to exist without want, live without worry, express without anger, be grateful for another day while being loving to all, for we are on the same journey. If peace is your goal, then you are not at peace. Peace and happiness are not goals, they are just a state of mind... the state of *your* mind based on *your* foundation.

“Peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the mindset of those things and still be calm in your heart.” - Unknown

Freeing my spirit from the illusion was like being reborn. I had to begin my journey with an open mind and soon realized I would not find peace and happiness in an illusion... because it is not real. Something can give the feeling of happiness... but that slowly goes away with time. Ultimately, the goal of life is to be peaceful during the journey.

The future does not exist, there is only the present. We are heading into a time of great uncertainty guided by the ideas and values of our ancestors. Maybe it’s time we stopped to take a look around at we’ve created.