



## **Asleep To Our Own Nature, by Richard Shiffman**

Right now we humans are asleep to our own nature, the sages tell us. Each of us is ensconced in the dream (or perhaps the nightmare) that we have woven around ourselves. We might seem to be awake, but in actuality we are like sleep-walkers who have only just enough awareness to keep from tripping all over themselves and stumbling into walls. We still manage to function; in other words, we do what we have to do in order to get ourselves through the day--but in a spiritual sense we are almost totally unaware of where we are, who we are and where we are headed. And we are largely oblivious to the magnificence that surrounds us and is within. When I was in India I visited the Taj Mahal. In the very center of the hushed mausoleum I noticed a line of black ants making their way dutifully across the vast marble floor. It occurred to me that we humans are very much like those ants. We exist in the very shadow of the magnificent temple of Life. The wonders of the cosmos are arrayed on every side. And yet we go about our daily tasks, clutching our single grain of sugar and ignoring the vast spiritual context for our lives. The great Jewish mystic and founder of Hasidism, the Baal Shem Tov said: "Just as a small coin held over the eye can block out the sight of a lofty mountain peak, so too can the vanities of living block out the sight of the Infinite Light." -- Richard Shiffman, <http://vedanta.org/lit/article.Science.html>