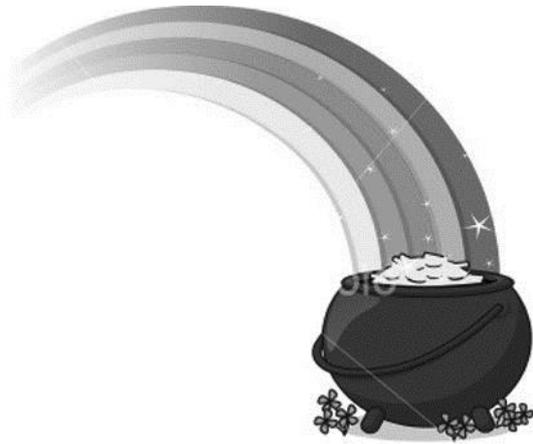


What is a Rainbow?

How do you feel when you see a rainbow? Almost without exception the response will be somewhere along the lines of, “uplifted,” “happy,” “hopeful” or maybe even “lucky.” Has there ever been a negative response to seeing a rainbow light up the sky even on the most dismal and dreary of days? Regardless of mood, its appearance will, for the most part, engender feelings of light and magic whilst holding prospects for a future where the ‘streets are paved with gold.’



The ‘pot of gold,’ of course, is the reward should you be able to locate the end of the rainbow, assuming you know which end of the rainbow it has been placed!

With this in mind, let’s not forget the rainbow is also an optical illusion, the result of sunlight passing through raindrops. It is a mere ‘trick of the light’ that plays upon our imagination and leads us down blind alleys searching for

something we have absolutely no chance of finding. Why? Because ‘it,’ being the rainbow as well as the pot of gold, doesn’t exist!

However, despite its illusory nature, the rainbow is revered across many cultures as a symbol of unity; easy to see why as seven colours, in perfect symmetry, come together in a single miraculous event. In esoteric teachings it defines the bridge to higher consciousness, known as the ‘Rainbow Bridge’ which, through the power of the mind, links man to his Soul.

This begs the question, how can something that is founded upon illusion provide the inspiration for the ultimate in spiritual attainment - enlightenment? Maybe we have to look closer into the nature of the rainbow and its illusory qualities to find an answer.

Collins English Dictionary offers the following definitions of the word illusion:

1. *a false appearance or deceptive impression of reality*
2. *a false or misleading perception or belief*
3. *(psychology) a perception that is not true to reality, having been altered subjectively in some way by the mind of the perceiver*

There are common threads of false perception and false appearance, based upon misguided beliefs, but it is the third definition that provides a clue into how we may understand the nature of illusion and with it the rainbow – “*a perception, not true to reality, which has been altered in the mind of the perceiver.*” The answer to understanding the true nature of the rainbow, therefore, lies in the mind of the perceiver; it is not the nature of the rainbow that is illusory but our **perception** of it.

In other words, if we can simply enjoy the natural beauty and radiance of the rainbow **as it is** without chasing after the pot of gold we believe is at the end of it, we may stand a chance of leading a lighter and brighter life. Or is it really that simple? Maybe we have to know a little more about the rainbow itself before we can really understand how it relates to us as individuals.

Wikipedia offers the following definition of a rainbow “*The rainbow is not located at a specific distance, but comes from an optical illusion caused by any water droplets viewed from a certain angle relative to the sun ray's.*” the definition continues “*a rainbow is not an object, and cannot be physically approached.*” Not very helpful really, is it? Other than confirming the rainbow’s illusory nature and introducing one or two additional parameters it does little to assist us in understanding how it is formed. The scientific approach is clearer.

A little bit of science

Certain conditions must be met in order for a rainbow to appear. First of all there must be a source of white light; in this case we'll use the sun. Then there must be a transparent object, such as a raindrop or crystal, and the final requirement is the presence of an observer. However, the mere existence of these parameters in the same moment is not sufficient; they must come together in a specific geometric alignment.

The observer must be between the sun and the raindrop and the angle between the point at which light enters and exits the raindrop must be 40 – 42 degrees (a double rainbow occurs at 50 deg); the observer only sees the rainbow if these conditions are fulfilled. If he/she moves then so does the rainbow, it is not at a fixed location in the sky and is always relative to the ‘eye of the beholder.’

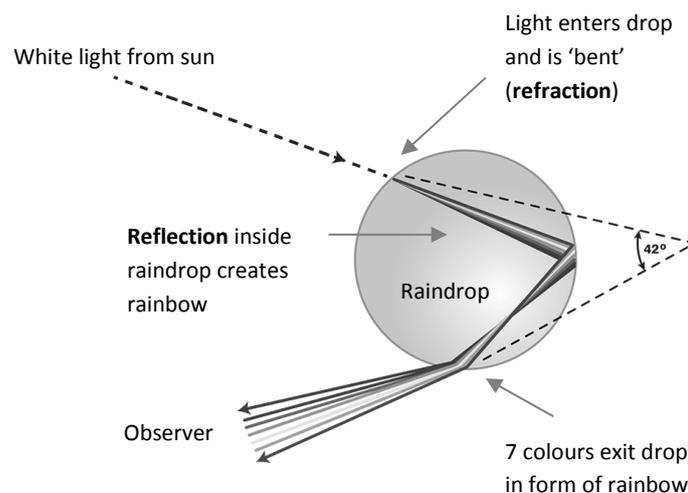


Fig. 1

Fig. 1 shows how white light from the sun is refracted (bent) as it enters the droplet causing the seven colours contained within it to spread out in the form of a rainbow. These colours reflect upon the internal ‘walls’ of the raindrop until they reach a point of exit. If this exit angle is 40 to 42 degrees, relative to the viewer, then a person on the ground will see a rainbow in the sky.

In summary:

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1. All raindrops refract and reflect sunlight in the same way, but only the light from some raindrops reach the observer's eye. This light is what constitutes the rainbow for that observer.

2. A rainbow isn't a 'thing' and it doesn't exist in a particular 'place.' It is an optical phenomenon that appears when sunlight and atmospheric conditions are in alignment - **and when the viewer's position is at the right angle to see it.**
3. Raindrops are not the only objects that create rainbows. Prisms, crystals etc. produce the same effect. The quality they all have in common is that they are transparent – in other words, clear.
4. As a rainbow is not a 3d object it casts no reflection or shadow. The only way to view a rainbow in a mirror is if the rainbow is behind you, even then it will not be the same rainbow as the colours are reversed. For the same reason, it is impossible to see a rainbow in a mirror directly, such as when rainbow light moves across a wall containing mirrors. As it is not an object in this 3d reality it doesn't exist and is therefore incapable of appearing in the mirror.
5. The only place the rainbow does exist is **inside** the raindrop or within the white light that created it.

Now we know what constitutes a rainbow we can use the same parameters to explore our inner nature and see how it influences the practical reality of day to day living. The fifth statement is particularly valuable and bears repetition, "*the only place the rainbow does exist is **inside** the raindrop or within the white light that created it.*" In effect, it exists in a non-physical realm.

With that in mind let us consider the premise that the rainbow is an illusion. Both dictionary definition and scientific findings agree this is so, yet nevertheless, the rainbow **does** exist. It exists in the form of light. Whether the rainbow is visibly present or not, wherever there is white light, wherever there are raindrops, there exists the rainbow; it is only our limited perceptions or beliefs that prevent us from 'seeing' it. In other words, once again, it is our 'vision' which determines our 'reality.'

If we perceive the rainbow as an object then we enter the world of illusion, if we view it as it really is then we step into a world where all is light; rainbow light. Which reality do you prefer to see, the real or the unreal? Taking this a little further, if we choose to look outwards when it is raining, for instance, we will see a grey, dismal day and no doubt experience the dreary emotions that tend to come hand in hand with such meteorological conditions. But what if, instead of seeing pouring rain, we see raindrops, each one containing all the colours of the rainbow. How magical would that be? And how would it make us feel? Of course, we have just shown that sunlight is a pre-requisite for the appearance of a rainbow and there is usually very little evidence of that on the days used in this example. However, the light of the Soul is **always** present, whether we are aware of it or not, and if we behave just like the raindrop and make ourselves available to receive its light, we will BE a rainbow. And then all we have to do is walk...

How to Walk a Rainbow?

As we have just surmised, the technique of *walking the rainbow*, rather than chasing it, lies in **being** it. When, through honest self-reflection, you are able to be a clear channel through which the pure light of the Soul may flow, you are as the raindrop, and all the colours of the rainbow **reflected within you** radiate outwards into daily life.



The rainbow itself is an allegory for the window through which you experience reality, its **apparent** deceptive nature being used as a yardstick to determine the real from the unreal - the way you believe yourself to be and the image you present to the world is **potentially** as much an illusion as the rainbow, a mere trick of the light obscuring the reality of life as it really is.

However, a rainbow is not a 'mere **trick** of the light,' it appears as a result of the **behaviour** of light. This opens up a whole new perspective on our understanding.

Light is simply being itself and the rainbow is merely the result of its interaction with another form, which in this case is a raindrop. When we take the time to examine the natural phenomena occurring in our physical world we can gain tremendous insight into realms in which we have no understanding or experience.

We can now clearly see **an illusion is entirely dependent upon our perspective on the reality within which it is experienced.** In our physical world the rainbow is defined as an optical illusion – it is not an object therefore it doesn't exist. In a like manner the physical body has no form in the realms of light and so it must be an illusion. The more we can open our minds to the infinite possibilities that other realities exist beyond those we perceive to be true, the greater our chance of transcending the limitations imposed on us by day to day life on planet earth.

Remember the only part of you that has physical form is your body; the remainder is made up of many subtle layers – thoughts, feelings, emotions and, most importantly in this instance, light. All too often we experience any one of these subtle layers and want to make them our own; we make them the entirety of who we are instead of just allowing them to flow through us, as is their true nature. We become the 'depressed' person or the 'happy' person or even the 'light' person and this is the image we present to the world. It is this perception we have of ourselves and others that, just like the rainbow in this world, is an illusion. It is not who we really are.

The more we can 'get out of our own way' and allow the beauty of our true nature to shine through, the more attractive is the light we deliver. Ask yourself the question, are you experiencing life **as it is** or through the filters of your judgemental beliefs? Maybe it is time to change the record and play a more harmonious tune?

Stillness Speaks contemplation cards help you to change the record! Being specifically attuned to attract the light of the Soul, they encourage you to align with its qualities; each choice in your daily life is therefore made from the perspective of the 'bigger picture' and life becomes richer and more wholesome as a result. In effect, you sing a far more inclusive and 'lighter' tune - you become the rainbow.

'Manifest the beauty of your Soul.... walk a rainbow through your life...' is therefore the transformational act of conscientiously, moment by moment, cleaning your windows; the clearer they become, the more beneficial are the effects and the more you realise, YOU are the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. All you have been searching for is right here, right NOW, **inside!**

