Hunger, Slavery and Denial

The great thing about Fun is that the more you create, the more potential Fun there is. Until we fill every cubic centimetre of the universe with Fun, there are no limits, and it may turn out that on that day a million years hence we will discover that there is a new aspect to Fun that we didn’t know of, and we will have the great joy of doing the whole thing again.

In the meantime, we have much work to do. There are literally billions of people on the face of the planet who have no access to fun, and no experience of Fun. It is the great challenge of our lives to reach these people, to fill their lives with Fun, and to liberate them from the Demons of Misery: Hunger, slavery, and denial.

We call them demons, because being human, we must give a face to that which we fight, but each of these poetic truths contains many other poetic truths and a wealth of literal truth as well. Let us examine each in turn.

**Hunger:** This is the name I give to many of the desires of the human race that go unfilled. It encompasses physical hunger, hunger for understanding and knowledge, hunger for freedom from disease and hunger for equality, among others. There is no person on the face of the earth who does not experience hunger in one of these forms, except the truly pathetic psychopaths who are unable to become part of the race, but exist only as parasites. We may, once our hunger for nourishment is satisfied, become hungry for luxury. This is understandable, but is also the root of much suffering in the human race.

Not understanding the difference between need and want or between desire and necessity is a disease of the soul. Even when people know in an intellectual sense that there is a difference between needing a car and needing a Ferrari, their “inner child” makes no distinction, and hungers for the uselessly ostentatious. We are constantly being told to free our inner children. I recommend against it; I would much prefer as a member of your species that you free your inner adult, and learn what matters in life.

It is a truism that wanting only leads to more wanting, and that hungering for the wrong things only leads to more hungering. Practicing the piano makes you a more proficient pianist. Practicing wanting makes you a more proficient wanter. The insatiable hunger for stuff feeds on itself, a black knot of mediocrity that eventually engulfs your higher sensibilities.

Of course, as I’ve said elsewhere, replacing stupid wants with Fun is one of the keys to salvation for the human species. Wanting beauty and justice for all is a great want, and it is my want that more of us want it.

But this form of hunger I have dealt with elsewhere. It is the hunger for spiritual life that I am most interested in.

Spiritual life is an amalgam of many things. We tend to see it through the lens of religion, but this is a weakness, not a strength. Spirit is not a place with borders. It’s not a bomb-shelter that you use to hide from the world. There are myriad facets to the spiritual life, but there is only one goal for it: Fun. You knew I would say that.

I realize that I’m doing what I complain about in others; claiming that there is only one right path. I justify it in this way: I have rarely heard that a spiritual path deliberately embraces evil, or the *Not-Fun*, and in those odd times I have, I think they’re pretty much idiotic play-acting on the part of childish rejectionists. I have defined Fun to be an open-ended concept, and I doubt you can name an interesting spiritual path that doesn’t aim at it. I’ll pay for this book for you if you can convince me that one exists.

The power of religion to fill the mind is the evidence of spiritual hunger that I see all around me, all day every day. I’ve read many times that 95% of the human race attests to some form of deistic belief, desperate to come home to something, somewhere, when their time on earth is done. They hunger, but for what?

They hunger for unity with a greater entity. The mouths of their souls water at the thought of oneness. They’re just very poor at explaining it to themselves. The hunger for unity is the highest common denominator of humanity. Unity to what? you may ask. Let’s start at the bottom.

The desire to own stuff, one of the most boring versions of fun, is only a degenerate manifestation of the desire for unity. To own something is to make it part of you, to subsume its being with yours. Owning an unnecessary expensive object is to claim to be an expensive object. Our pride in expense, a form of status, is a sign of the moral weakness of the average human. To be unified with your blender is hardly a comment on your achievements, but we look to it as evidence of self-worth.

Now let’s move up the ladder, all the way to the top, to discuss love.

Love is a hunger for unity with another entity. The degree of love is the degree to which we wish to incorporate another’s being. We love people more than dogs, and dogs more than fish. The essence of a dog, loyalty, is the dog’s desire to incorporate your essence within his. To love everybody, the holy lie of the religious, is to wish unity with all. It is a great ideal, and one which receives a lot of lip service from those who would impose a belief system on us.

Sex, which in its most rewarding form is an expression of love, is a desire for joining. A kiss is a direct connection between two people, using the primary human organ of hunger for sustenance and communication.

Hunger takes more immediate forms as well. We hunger for approval, for validation and for acceptance. These are aspects of the hunger for unity, this time as part of a group. We hunger for inclusion. We descend from creatures who lived in small bands and tribes; we still feel what they felt. There is safety in numbers, provided those numbers are manageable. Now that our species must cope with inclusion in a global tribe of more than 6.5 billion, our hungers often go unsatisfied. It is one of the tragedies of life that the more potential friends we have, the fewer we are able to make.

We hunger for many things. We are satisfied by few. Perhaps if we could be satisfied with the struggle for Universal Fun, rather than the outcome of the struggle, we would be able to enjoy ourselves better. All forms of hunger of the spirit are hunger for Fun, and the hunger for Fun cannot be serviced without servicing the hunger for fun. Never forget that we have to enjoy ourselves, to be well-fed and healthy, in order to fight for what is right. Fun is not just an ideal, it is the most basic of Human Rights.

Hunger for Fun. Hunger for nothing else.

**Slavery:** This is the name I give to the bondage of the spirit and body. It is the lowest form of evil, and negatively related to hunger. The hunger of ownership is sometimes so powerful that the immoral extend their concepts of rightful ownership to other human beings. They may enslave the body as well as the spirit, forcing labour without justice. Only two hundred years ago slavery was the norm in almost every culture in the world. My own ancestors, the English, did not ban it until the 1820s, when societal revulsion against it became too strong to ignore. The United States, the richest country in the history of the world, based much of its wealth on the commerce in human lives. They also fought what until that time was the deadliest, most industrialized war in history to end it. Slavery still exists in the world today, in my own country of Canada, where women are sometimes forced into sexual servitude to the sole benefit of their enslavers. Enslavement is a greater crime than any other – worse even that rape or murder. That’s a controversial statement I’m sure, and I’m willing to be wrong, but my gut tells me it’s so.

There is more to slavery than that of the body. We enslave our fellow men with evil ideas that infest the mind like infections. We enslave them with religions, politics, laws, cravings and economic subjugation.

Religions (as opposed to spiritual quests) are collections of rules, which if followed, confer rewards upon their adherents. I have nothing against religions, other than the fact that I completely disapprove of any club founded on exclusivity. It’s very rare to find a religion that acknowledges the possibility that other religions or ways of life are as valid. Christianity and Islam are two of the biggest culprits, but my own religion, Judaism, also contains arbitrary laws for the sake of laws. Some of them may have meant something once, but now they’re just rules. Both of them claim exclusive knowledge of and adherence to divine guidance. As far as they are concerned, I’m going to hell for the great crime of being unable to agree with anything so insane.

Other religions are also guilty, of course; any religion in which the advice becomes rules is guilty of mental enslavement. There are many people, of course, who name themselves adherents of these religions while practicing tolerance. They are exceptions, sadly. I hope they can find ways to convince their fellows that tolerance includes the possibility of being wrong, but I doubt they ever will.

Politics and religion are barely separable. They are both clubs dictating ways of life. When you join a political group, or claim attachment to it, you are expected to buy into a wide variety of positions. You are not allowed to choose what makes sense and what doesn’t. You are not allowed to apply logic to your chosen style; you make easy emotional decisions which are disguised as logic. In many cases, logic and politics do overlap; the times they do are held up as justification for the times they don’t.

I have only one political position, and I can state it here in a single paragraph: Our politicians should care about people more than money, about freedom more than rules, about equality more than economics, and about protection of rights and individuals more than traditional moral positions. We should care about consensus more than winning. We should care more about Fun than power.

Note the frequent use of the word “more” in the preceding paragraph. I’m not saying we should never care about money, rules, economics or moral positions. We should care about all things, but only in the light of Fun. Too often, we allow the need to win the political competition to enslave our minds. Problems should have solutions, not positions.

Money is the worst of the enslavers. Money is worth nothing; only stuff can have a worth, and money is a measure of ability to own stuff. The desire to rack up big numbers enslaves the minds of even the most intelligent. I don’t care about money, but that is not to say that I wouldn’t like to have it, just that I don’t want to be enslaved by it. I wish for money all the time – the more I have, the more good things I can do. I’m not averse to luxury by any means, but once I have achieved a certain level of comfort and have the freedom of knowing that my life is taken care of, I need no more. The obscene riches accumulated by a few, who will never be able to spend what they already have, don’t seem to satisfy them. They still want more. They must have bigger stuff, shinier things, softer items. There is a limit to what money can do for an individual.

There is, on the other hand, no limit to what money can do for the human tribe. The difference between a gas-guzzling giganti-car and a small gas-saving eco-mobile may be the cure for leprosy for a hundred African children. The difference between an eight-room house and a twelve-room one may be rescuing ten addicts from enslavement of another kind.

There is only one cure for enslavement to money: stop accumulating it in excess and be satisfied with what you need. To remove the hooks of bondage from your mind, you must give it away. You will find it Fun.

Speaking of addicts, enslavement by chemicals is one of the tragedies of our lives. Only people who need to escape from something become addicts. People who are able to find satisfaction in life don’t need to chemicalize their brains in order to have fun. I understand addiction: I smoked marijuana for twenty-five years, cigarettes for ten. I drank, never to extremes but very regularly, from the age of 18 on. I have put all sorts of nasty things down my gullet, or up my nose, or into my lungs. Some of it was fun, but it never brought me closer to Fun. It delayed my misery, and allowed me to enjoy life, but I got nothing useful done in a quarter-century of it. I have very liberal positions on drug use: It is a medical problem and should be treated as such. That said, I am against it. Better to fix lives than to apply bandages to the soul. If you are an addict, I recommend that you forget about fixing the world for now, and fix your own life, so that when you abandon the tools of your enslavement you have a home for your soul to reside in.

We can be slaves to many things, but the worst slavery, aside from physical bondage, is the self-enslavement of the intellect. Attachment to stupid ideas costs the human race more than can ever be described. Attachment to ego is a crime. Attachment to status is a dead end. Attachment to luxury is a sign of moral atrophy. They all have one thing in common: A wilful ignoring of one’s true power, the power to spread Fun. They may all be fun in some degraded manner, but they are not Fun.

**Denial:** This is the name I give to the deliberate refusal to acknowledge Fun, or to engage in it. We deny ourselves love in the name of power. We deny others food in the name of our own riches. We deny Fun, in order to have mere fun.

Think of all the things you wish you could have. Now narrow it down to the things that really matter, and they will be Great Aspects of Fun. And yet, I predict you will find that some of them you have denied yourself deliberately. You may have refused charity, both in giving and receiving, or you may have denied compassion for yourself or others. You may have denied yourself love, because your religion says physical love is wrong unless you follow the rules. You may have denied yourself the right to choose what is best in your life. You may have denied yourself freedom to say no to what is worst in your life. We are trained in these things from childhood on.

Denial, however, is a two-way street. Some things we should deny: hunger and slavery, for example. I acknowledge here the limitations of my use of the word, but we are discussing the demon of Denial, not the angel of it.

So much of what we learn is denial. Our religions, for instance, are as built around long lists of what we can’t do. Some of those rules make sense, where they coincide with Fun, but many do not. Our society, at the time of this writing, continues to deny gays the right to and approval of marriage and societally-sanctioned love. There is no logical reason for this; it’s just a tradition to deny the rights of those we see as outsiders. The deniers come up with all sorts of weak excuses for their viciousness, but none of them hold water. They simply believe in denial as their god-given right.

Recently there has been a lot of noise in the media and among the mob about the richest countries in the world losing jobs to countries considerably less wealthy. We who have built our economies into the greatest powerhouses the world has ever seen are terrified that we will lose our superiority over those nasty foreigners. We forget in our rush to deny them equality that they have every right to jobs and decent lives that we do. Granted, it is sad that some of us will lose jobs, but the problem is not that others are gaining jobs at our expense. It’s that five percent of us control ninety percent of the wealth. The problem is that in our enslavement to money, we have forgotten that advantage for one may mean denial for many. In our enslavement to status, we have lost sight of what matters, and we are quick to deny equality to those we see as competing for our privileges and wealth. There are people in this world who could make a huge difference in the lives of thousands, or even millions, who do nothing but acquire. Perhaps they don’t believe that they’re denying others the basic needs of humanity. Perhaps they’re just fooling themselves into not caring.

We commit acts of denial every day in a hundred ways. We deny the street person a dollar. We deny other drivers a place on the road. Those acts define us as Not-Fun. We deny ourselves in denying others. We deny enlightenment and self-satisfaction to ourselves in the name of what is truly wrong with the world. We are pathetic in so many ways. Sorry, but I had to say that.

Denial of Fun is the saddest part of being a human. Some people are congenitally unable to understand Fun, and to them I say “you poor bastards” but there is little I can do for them. You, I know, are not one of them, or you wouldn’t still be reading. You can live in Fun. You are one of the lucky ones.

Fun denial comes in all sorts of disguises: war, famine, injustice, wilful stupidity and petty crime. I must reiterate here that these are the crimes of parasites, who should be eliminated from the gene pool with all haste. Sometimes war is justified on one side, but never on both. It is sometimes necessary to resort to violence to subdue the evil, but rarely. World War II was a just war to end the time of empires. World War I was an unjust war to extend the time of empires. At least, that is my semi-educated reading of the history. I would be happy to argue about it over a latté, if you can argue with an arrogant egotist like me without getting violent.

How many times, in how many ways, have you been told to stop having fun? Sometimes, perhaps, having fun is inappropriate, but having Fun never is, because it encompasses bringing relief to the grieving, fulfillment to the workplace and joy to worship. I hereby give you permission, on behalf of everyone with sense, to have Fun in every circumstance. Deny denial.

Denying oneself Fun is the stupidest thing a human can do. The fanatically religious among us are the greatest deniers of all, voluntary martyrs whose suffering serves only the weak imagination. I make no apology for saying this: God does not appreciate your suffering. God does not appreciate your martyrdom. Anyone who believes he/she/it/they does is even more of an arrogant egotist than I am. Go ahead and flog yourself if you must, but it will have no effect on your fate, and you will die a fool in pain.

I end this essay with a short note about responsibility. To truly live in fun, you have to proselytize for it. Your Fun, as I’ve noted elsewhere, is ultimately dependent on the Fun of all, and you will never achieve it unless you spread it. That’s not a rule – it’s a logical derivative of what Fun is. You have a responsibility to feed the hungry, including yourself. You have a mission to denounce and end slavery when you come across it. You have a right to deny arbitrary denial when you find it. Fun requires it. When you meet the Demons of Misery on the road to Jerusalem, pull down their pants and punch them in the balls. You will love yourself for doing so. No demon can stand in the light of Fun.