

# On the Superfluous Extravagance Of Meditation

By Dr. J

Uh-oh. Now I've done it. I've defiled the Holy of Holies. I've given the sacrosanct a raspberry. Nobody bad-mouths meditation. It is the one human practice that is beyond reproach. Meditation heals. Meditation enlightens. Meditation alters your brain waves in a good way. Meditation relieves stress and calms the spirit. Meditation makes you happy. Meditation connects you with the divine consciousness. Meditation can do it all. Oddly, though, you can be a total jerk, twit, ninny, or Bozo (I would prefer to use here a reference to a certain dark anatomical orifice of evacuation, but delicacy of feeling forestalls me)—you can be any one or all of those, I say, who meditates and, when you're not meditating, remain a total jerk, twit, ninny, or Bozo (or that other unmentionable thing). I've always wondered about that ironic inconsistency.

So maybe meditation isn't the quick-fix transformational tool it is touted to be. Or maybe it is transformational, but only over a long period of time—like most Asian spiritual disciplines—you know, chop wood and carry water, and then chop more wood and carry some more water, and some more, and some more. There is method in this madness. A leads to B where at long last you may realize that A *is* B, or that there is no A or B to begin with. The joke's on you. Such are the fruits of meditation.

But let's look at the meditative context. Where does meditation take place? Not in terms of location as in the meditation hall or in your special meditation room or hut, but in the context of your life. You meditate because you are trying to change the way things are for you. This may be a sincere attempt to alter your accustomed reality or, more shallowly, to enhance your lifestyle as a "spiritual" person who seeks an elevated consciousness above that of the common rabble. In other words, your meditation is all of a piece with your special diet, your organic fiber bed sheets, your yoga mat, and your progressive politics. It's another one of the trappings of the enlightened consumer.

Yet, the use of meditation as a sincere effort to alter your accustomed reality is essentially no different than using it to appear trendy. Why? Because you've taken your life as a context for meditation for granted. You've overlooked the elephant in the room. You've ignored the fact that your life—its quality, its circumstances, its limits and possibilities—are all your own creation down to the last detail. So if there is something lacking in your life, if it has aspects that trouble you, aspects that set you looking for change, for improvement, for that magic bullet that will set you free, you yourself are the creator of those troubling aspects, that sense of lacking something vital to your well-being, that need for a major change in your experience of life. Choosing to meditate doesn't get you

outside of the illusion. It's just another aspect of it that you have created as an entertaining sideshow. Where will it take you that isn't still part of the illusion? It is no longer a secret that your consciousness collapses quantum wave potential into a holographic semblance of a physical reality. What you seem to experience is made up of packets of energy—quanta—arranged as three-dimensional pixels on a screen. Your conscious observation collapses those pixels into what you perceive to be physical reality—the raw material of your life in time and space. So your life is actually an illusion, a dream, a made-up theatrical production playing for your entertainment. Because you think it is objectively real and “out there” independent of yourself, you have a sense that you are enclosed in time and space and surrounded by objects, circumstances, and other people to whom you have to adapt. A is not B and because there is a difference, a gap between them, you believe that you need to find a way to bridge the gap. Meditation is one of those ways. However, the perception of a gap to be bridged is an illusion just as your life and identity are illusions. Because the thing you want to fix or improve is an illusion, the means you choose to fix or improve it is an illusion as well.

So what is meditation good for? It is only another aspect of a grand illusion. If meditation is something that is fun and entertaining for you to do, then you might play around with it for a few weeks or months and then move on to something else as the novelty wears off. Just remember that there is nothing *compelling* about meditation once you understand that you are creating the occasion for doing it as well as the one who does it. Don't take it seriously. As psychologist Dr. Kirby Surprise (no kidding) notes in his book, *Synchronicity*, “Meditation isn't hard; you do it even when you're not aware of it.” When you forget the sensation of the clothing you're wearing, for example, you are meditating. You have shifted your awareness into a focus of attention that excludes your clothing. You forget your clothing altogether because you are meditating on something else.

When an infant begins its dream (aka being born), it isn't meditating. Here, I'm referring to meditating as a purposeful activity. As it grows and develops, it plays and imagines, but isn't meditating. It is more interested in having fun than in suppressing its dream. It is appreciating the illusory reality it is creating. Bit by bit, it gets pushed and shoved, repressed and denied, all of which are circumstances of its own making, but which appear to come from outside itself. This false impression occasions the awareness of other possibilities than the unpleasant ones, and the search is on. Not realizing the scope of its creative capabilities, it tries to do the best it can within the limits of the reality it has created for itself. Thus, life happens.

Feeling trapped, alone, and inadequate in a variety of ways, the emergent adult tries to find a means of escape. For many, this is when meditation happens. It happens for the simple reason that we do not credit ourselves with the creation of our entire reality, and as a result, we cannot appreciate the beauty and wonder of it. We are told in some spiritual traditions that it is illusion or *maya*, and therefore

terribly misleading and should be avoided. We may even be told that we are making it all up, but we are never told that it is fun and meant to be played with. We need to meditate instead so that we may be highly-evolved and spiritual and free of *maya*. So the bottom line is that when you meditate, you don't appreciate the wondrous illusion you are creating for the very reason that it is an illusion. Illusions are by definition bad, deceiving, and dangerous. You can't possibly have an appreciation for an illusion and then just go ahead and get off on it. What happens to A and B? A is an illusion and B isn't, so we run from A to B, but how do we know that perceiving A as an illusion isn't just more illusion? "All the world's a stage", etc. So maybe when you meditate, you are in effect saying to the divine presence, or Cosmic Wow, or whatever, "Even though I can make up anything I want and have it, I suspect that it's a cheap trick meant to scam me, and I don't want any part of it. Screw you, I'm gonna meditate!"

You see, meditation is a symptom of mistrust, a choice based on doubt. There's a show going on, probably a medicine show, and the audience—you—is going to be sold a worthless tonic at an exorbitant price. At least that's what you are suspecting. Naturally, then, you can't fully enjoy the show because *IT'S AN ILLUSION*, and there are going to be some bad consequences. If Dr. Feelgood is handsome, and the dancers are pretty and somewhat talented, you won't let yourself appreciate it because *THEIR INTENTIONS ARE BAD*. Over time—or the illusion of it—you have built up the idea that *LIFE'S INTENTIONS ARE BAD*. You can't trust the entertainment. There will be a price to pay. The tonic won't make you feel better either. Best turn your back on the whole damn show and *MEDITATE*.

Why isn't a delicious lunch or a really funny joke as good or better than making your mind blank? Notice that *making* your mind blank is very different from allowing blankness into your mind. The first is a strategic technique; the second is spontaneous and purposeless. "Well," you say, "God might enlighten me when my thoughts are stilled." How do you know you're not enlightened during a good lunch, Jack? If you're meditating, then you're not enlightened yet, which means that you don't know what enlightenment is to begin with. In a moment of serene clarity brought on by deep meditation, a chuckling voice may suggest to you brightly, "Why not have a really nice lunch?"

Meditation is a con, pure and simple. It makes you feel like you're doing something important and special that will reveal the truth of ultimate reality. But there's nothing outside yourself to reveal. You *are* the ultimate reality. The only thing keeping you from enjoying it is the thick fog of your *mindset*, which separates you from your own creation of reality.

Look. You create your experience of the world, which you take for reality. But you don't realize that that's what you are doing, so you formulate strategies for dealing with a reality outside yourself. Those strategies become your mindset. They include everything from who you think you are (Who *do* you think you are,

by the way?) to your notion of the meaning of life to your toothpaste preferences. Into this twisted melange you introduce what you think is an outside factor free of your own interference, which will give you the ultimate truth of your essential being. That outside factor is meditation. But there is nothing outside of your own consciousness that you can consciously be up to. So where does that leave meditation? It's sitting in a car with the motor running, waiting for a quick getaway. But the only thing it can get away from is the consciousness that created the car with its motor running and somewhere to get away to. Meditation is its own destination, and you are already there. Go have a nice lunch instead. A good laugh wouldn't hurt either.

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