

~ *Monkey Mind* ~

Mingyur Rinpoche

The monkey mind is neither bad nor good. The important thing is the relationship between you and monkey mind. If you treat your monkey mind as your boss or enemy, then there is a problem. The monkey mind is restless and crazy, and you do not want a crazy boss. Or, if you try to fight with monkey mind, then monkey mind becomes your enemy. And that enemy will always be there in your mind.

On the other hand, if you make friends with monkey mind, actually, monkey mind is quite good. The monkey mind is useful and, eventually, monkey mind transforms into wisdom, love, compassion, and awareness. Therefore, the relationship with monkey mind is really important.

One important thing in order to make friends with monkey mind is that you have to get to know each other well. That is very important.

Now, I will tell you a little bit about how monkey mind causes problems.

So, one day you go to the bathroom and look at the mirror and, suddenly, you see something on your face, maybe new wrinkles, or the wrinkles were already there, but you did not recognize them before. Or maybe your right cheekbone is bigger than your left cheekbone, or your nose is crooked, or you have a pimple or something like that.

And then your monkey mind says “Oh dear! There is a problem with my face!” like the cheekbone. Then you are a little bit worried, and after finishing using the bathroom, you come back and have breakfast, and while you are having breakfast, you are thinking about your cheekbone again, “Oh, the cheekbone! Yes”.

What happens is that our brain has neurons, what I call “gossipy neurons”. They love to gossip and talk to each other: “Oh, that cheekbone is ugly. That is an ugly face”. And then, more and more neurons come

together, and they become a group, and the group becomes bigger and bigger.

How can we work with the monkey mind? The key point is that if you try to fight it, it does not work. If you listen and believe, "Yes, I am ugly. My cheekbones are terrible", it does not work. What you have to do for the meditation practice is to free monkey mind in a very skillful way. What is the skillful way? The skillful way is making friends with monkey mind. How do we make friends with monkey mind? Giving a banana does not work! You need to give a job to monkey mind. If you give a job to monkey mind, then you become the boss, and monkey mind becomes your employee, and its job is all these different meditation techniques. And then, slowly, slowly, your mind becomes calmer and more peaceful. Not only calm and peaceful but also pliable and workable. Now, monkey mind becomes better, nicer, wiser, and kind. Then monkey mind becomes beneficial for you. The issue is the relationship between you and monkey mind. That is the issue, but monkey mind is neither bad nor good.