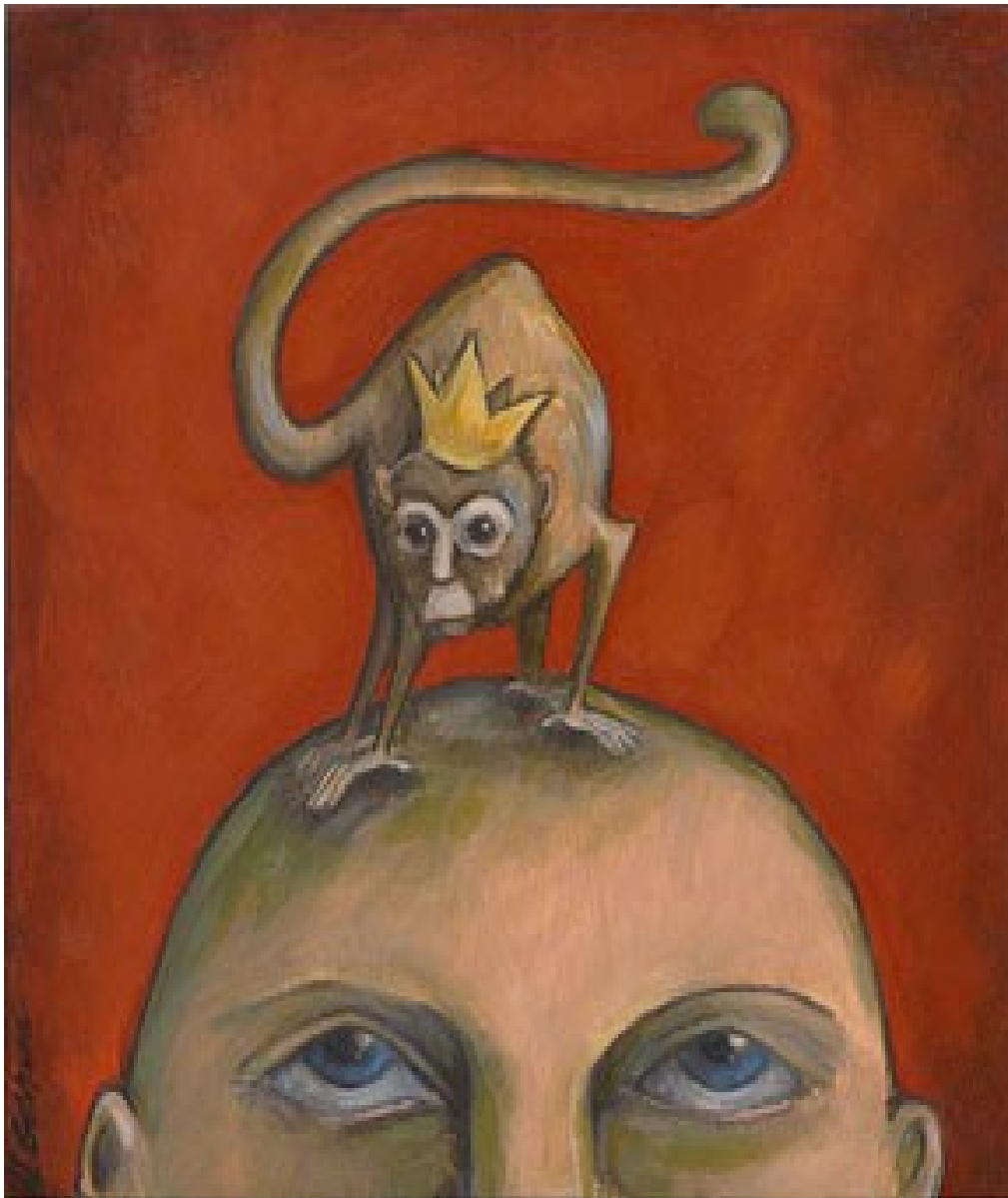


# Attachment

## Monkeys in the Mind



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The Buddha sat quietly under a tree, waiting for an arrogant fool to finish speaking. The fool thought he was a great teacher and came to ridicule the Buddha and his teachings.

“I have heard all about your teachings, and you have fooled many people with your stories. I am not so gullible, because I have been teaching good people for many years and my students are everywhere. There is one thing I have come to know about you. You are always talking about rapture and bliss and have nothing else to teach. You are very attached to rapture and bliss and talk about it everywhere. I can assure you that rapture and bliss are transitory, and are not liberation. Your attachment to these lower states is evident to everyone, and is shameful for a man who lives a homeless life to be teaching pleasure, as if it were some way to end suffering. Your teaching leads many people astray, and those who follow your doctrine of pleasure will only fall into the hells.”

The Buddha waited some time allowing the teacher to fully speak his mind. The Buddha started laughing for a short time, and smiling at the teacher said, “I

*am happy that you have come to tell me these things. I have never heard such ideas, so I am glad to hear these things. I am learning, but I am confused. What do you mean by attachment? What do you mean by attachment to bliss?*

“Attachment is a very common word. You don't understand it's meaning? You are teaching and you don't understand attachment.”

*I am sorry, my friend. I don't understand what you are saying. You use of 'attachment' must be different than mine. How does a person know if they are attached to something?”*

“You know you are attached to rapture and bliss, because you and your followers are always wanting states of bliss and rapture. This leads to lower desires unsuitable for the holy life.”

*Forgive me, but I love to eat every day, and I also like to lie down to sleep every day. Are these attachments also?*

“Don't joke with me. I am not a fool. These are

requirements for your life, and you know these are not attachments. It is greed, when you want more than your requirements to live. You teach people to become attached to bliss and happiness, which is not required for life. This is not correct dharma for anyone on the spiritual path.”

*“ I may understand you. If something is not required for living, and we desire that thing, and indulge in it, we have an attachment to it. Correct? ”*

“You are attached to it, whether you indulge in it or not, because your mind hungers, and that hunger creates the attachment.”

*“Where is this hunger that creates attachment? ”*

“You know it is your body and mind.”

*“It is a feeling or emotion inside the body, right? ”*

“Yes.”

*“And when we feel that feeling or emotion, it creates attachment, whether we indulge that feeling or not. ”*

“Yes.”

*“Sometimes when I sit under this tree, the sun moves and it hurts my face and body, and I want to move into the shade. It is not essential to my life, but it does hurt, and I move. Am I attached to freeing myself from pain when this happens?”*

“Yes. This is attachment. Like I said, you have become to attached to pleasure, and so you immediately run from the sun, because it hurts you. A real mendicant would not run from a little pain, but would learn patience, acknowledge that life is pain, and learn to endure pain, because it is the first step on the road to freedom.”

*“Pain is the the way to freedom?”*

“Yes, enduring pain is part of the practice, which leads to freedom.”

*“Pain is also a feeling or emotion inside our bodies, and people try to avoid pain. So if I understand your teachings, if pain is not threatening your life, it is to*

*endured, unless it truly threatens our life.”*

“Yes, you are beginning to understand.”

*“Hunger, greed, or desire are also feelings or emotions inside our bodies, which we are to endure, unless it is good for our life, like eating and sleeping, and any time we go beyond preserving our life, in pain or pleasure, we have attachment?”*

“Yes, you have attachment, whenever a feeling or emotion occurs inside your body, which is not for your survival, and they are to be resisted and endured, not followed, because they are attachments. You are getting close to understanding the holy life.”

*“Thank you. How is liberation related to attachment and these emotions and feeling inside the body?”*

“I am glad you asked this question. Liberation is the final release from attachment, from the destruction of those attachments. Desire is extinguished. Greed is extinguished, and you are free of lower feelings and emotions. Do you see the beauty of this liberation?”

*“Yes, I see. But how can all feelings, emotions, and desires be destroyed, so that only the one's for survival remain?”*

“When you endure and avoid all attachments, except the one's for survival, detachments are destroyed, and you come upon that state which is freedom.”

*“How does enduring and avoiding something cause it's destruction. I avoid the mid-day sun, because it hurts my skin, but that does not destroy the sun?”*

“Don't try to be clever and trick me like I was one of your followers. You know I am talking about things inside you.”

*“OK, if I avoid my mind, endure it, it will stop? And what will stop it? How does avoiding anything stop anything? What principle is this?”*

“I have heard you were a very tricky talker and confused many people, and I'm not playing your game. Everyone knows that to end desire you have to suppress and avoid desire. You can not indulge in

desire and hope to end it. It is the same with attachments. You can not end your attachment to bliss by indulging in it.”

*“You are right. We can not end attachment by indulging in it, and we can not end attachment by avoiding it. If you were to end all your desire and all your attachments, your mind and heart would be dead. There would be no way to survive. This is not freedom. This is death.”*

“How do you know?”

*“My friend, the desire for food arises. At the moment the desire arises, you don't know how much food you will eat or what kinds of food. What you call attachment can't be determined until someone decides that person has eaten too much, and who will decide? There is no mechanism inside a person that will decide what is good and bad attachment, good and bad desires. After the desire has arisen, it is neither good nor bad. It is only afterwards, when the desire is followed, that we judge whether that desire was attachment. If all desire and attachment is cut off, we no longer have the ability to survive.”*

*“Suppose a man wanted to stop a stream. He puts rocks in the river as high as the water level to stop the water. Can that man stop the water in that river?”*

“No, the water will build up and go over the rocks, and continue downstream.”

*“Exactly. If that man continues to put rocks into that stream, is there any point where he will not need to put more rocks?”*

“I see what you are saying. There is no end to the rocks you will need, because the water will continue to rise higher and higher.”

*“Exactly. A hungry man, a man filled with desire, attached to everything, when will his hunger be stopped? You can block the fulfillment of his desire with rules and pressure, make him feel guilty, but his desire will eventually rise up and go over those rocks, and he will eat until he is satisfied.”*

*“If I see a beautiful sunset, my eyes see and my mind*

*goes out to that sunset, and my heart reacts with joy. How do I kill that, and if I kill that experience, or kill that mechanism, what kind of liberation is that? It is a living death. The mind and heart work for our survival, and if we break that mechanism, kill it's ability to function correctly, we will die quickly.”*

*“Many enlightened being have gone along the path to final liberation, and they were able to see the beauty of a sunset, and say “What a beautiful sunset.” They were not dead. They had not destroyed any part of their heart and mind. They were able to laugh and cry as a human being, but they had gone beyond all that.”*

*“But that liberation is achieved through advanced mediation, and seeing Nirvana.”*

*“What meditation gives you liberation by seeing Nirvana?”*

*“You can silence your thoughts in meditation, and then you can enter Nirvana.”*

*“Can you? Can you do it now? Can you keep your*

*eyes open, and silence your thoughts right now and enter into nirvana?”*

“Keep my eyes open? I have never done that, but I am sure I can. I will do it now.”

“OK, my thoughts are silenced, and now I enter into Nirvana and liberation, and I am at peace.”

*“What do you see?”*

“I see the infinitude of space. I have left this world and there is the cosmos before me, all the lights of the sky are there. Nothing can disturb me. All desire and attachments are destroyed.”

*“Who is seeing this?”*

“I am.”

*“Where is this “I” feeling”*

“It is in my heart.”

*“And where I am sitting is on the other side of this*

*vision of the infinitude of space?”*

“Yes, of course, but this vision is beyond this world, because it is a vision of infinite space and all the stars of the sky are there.”

*“OK, but what about that monkey?”*

“What monkey?”

*“The monkey coming in to eat your stars!”*

“Stop that! That monkey has no place here in my meditation. There are no monkeys in the infinite sky of Nirvana. What are you doing? I can't get that monkey out of my vision.

“You are a trickster, and magician. You have put these images in my mind?”

*“Images in your mind? I just spoke of a monkey, and you created the image, just as you have created an image of Nirvana, and as you say, they are all images in your mind. But you are right, the image of the monkey and nirvana are beyond suffering,*

*because they are not real.”*

“Nirvana is real!”

*“Yes, Nirvana is real, but it is not an image in your mind, and no monkey can go there. When you find Nirvana, you will not have a monkey eating your stars. Your Nirvana can have a thousand monkeys eating stars. Do you see them now eating the stars?”*

“Stop that! You have ruined my concentration. I can't think anymore.” Pointing his finger at the Buddha, he says, “You are hurting me deeply with these lies and trickery. You are a dangerous person.”

*“No No, my friend. I am not dangerous. You are dangerous, telling everyone that a mental image is Nirvana, and cheating them out of their real liberation and wasting their life. If monkeys come into their Nirvana and start eating the stars, what will you say to them?”*

“I don't know. Every time I try to see Nirvana now, there are monkeys there, and I quit. I am nervous that I will always see monkeys there, because you

have put a spell on me with your magic. Take these monkey's away.”

*“OK, let's take the monkeys out of your mind. You have excellent concentration ability, developed over many years.”*

*“With your eyes open, go back into your vision of Nirvana, where the monkeys are eating the stars. Do you feel this vision from your heart again?”*

“Yes. I am at my heart seeing Nirvana, but I know there are still monkeys there.”

*“Exactly. The monkeys are still there. Now merge the heart into Nirvana. The space of Nirvana expands and surrounds your physical body, and your heart goes into that space, becomes the center of that space. Merge with nirvana until it totally surrounds your physical body. Have you got it?”*

“Yes, I feel myself amidst the stars, and the monkeys are surrounding my head on all sides moving around. I cant see them well, but I feel them jumping around. The monkeys are not in my control.”

“This is a strange feeling. Something is happening to me. I am suddenly very quiet, and from somewhere, maybe at the edges of Nirvana there is a pleasant feeling.”

“Now my heart begins to become light and blissful. My whole body is becoming very relaxed and pleasant. I hear silence here.”

“Uh-oh! What is this! My heart just exploded with bliss! My Lord, what is this? Giant waves of bliss keep coming into me, and my whole body is engulfed in ecstasy. What are you doing to me?”

*“Where are the monkeys? Where is Nirvana?”*

“I feel the monkeys, but they are quiet now, and only a few stars are there near my head.”

*“Yes, Now relax and fall into the ecstasy. Let it engulf you.”*

“I can barely speak. My mind has become the waves of ecstasy, and I can't use my eyes anymore. I am

more the waves of ecstasy than I am my body or mind, and my body is rocking with each wave of ecstasy. I am like a drunk riding these waves of ecstasy. This is very nice”

*“Where are the monkeys?”*

“The monkeys are gone! This must be Nirvana! It is total bliss.”

*“No no, this is just a first step.”*

“A first step? My Nirvana is gone! The monkeys are gone! I am in ecstasy, and this is the first step! I don't believe it.”

*“Your body is rocking in waves of ecstasy. The heart is in the waves of ecstasy. You need to fall away from the heart, and let it go on without you. Fall away from the heart. Float away from the heart.”*

“This is too extreme. I am totally lost in ecstasy. I need to shut my eyes. Even my breathing has become ecstasy. I don't know how I can talk.”

*“Where is attachment now? Where is desire, clinging, bondage?”*

“Ha ha ha, I don't think they can exist. I don't know anything except ecstasy! When I fell away from the heart, I think the heart was the clinging, the cause of attachment. It was clinging to the waves of ecstasy, It was the clinging! It was attachment. It was also the ecstasy.

As I float away from the heart, I float away from the ecstasy, and it grows stronger, but It is no longer Me. It seems a distance from me somehow, but very strange. I feel and see my head has flashes of another ME. I don't know how to explain this. I feel I have a separation from it all, and then an image, idea, or thought flashes inside the bliss, near my head, which is an image or feeling of ME. It is just a quick flash of the feeling of me. I witness it from a distance, and I know I am not that quick feeling of ME.”

*“Yes, this is true. When you see the flashes of bliss passing through the heart, do you also see the flashing feeling of you inside your body?”*

“Yes! I see that now. That is the heart and it flashes the feeling of me inside my body. Is this what causes attachment?”

*“Yes, this feeling of Me in a body at the heart, and Me feeling flashing around your head are attachment, clinging, bondage, and you are seeing attachment occur from a distance. Consider this carefully, seeing all this from a distance, is the ecstasy you have found part of that bondage, part of that clinging, part of that attachment?”*

“This is a deep question. Let me consider this slowly, and see this happening. I see the clinging, the grasping, occur at the heart. There is flash of knowledge as Me and my body. That flash of knowledge does not bring ecstasy, it brings pain, and when I float way from it, the ecstasy resumes. The knowledge of me in a body is not desirable knowledge. That knowledge kills ecstasy! So, I see that ecstasy is the opposite of clinging and grasping which leads to attachment. What an extraordinary discovery! I am attachment, clinging, and bondage. They are ME! How amazing to see this. This must be Nirvana?”

*No No, my friend, this is just a little insight into attachment. From ecstasy you can witness what attachment is. That is all. We need to keep going.”*

*“Fall away or float away into ecstasy, and let the Me feelings fade into the distance, and what happens? What do you experience?”*

Well, I have ecstasy, which is totally separate from the ME at the heart. But the ME at the heart creates the entire world now. I feel a ball of consciousness flashing ME. Before it was just the body-Me feeling. Now the whole world is the Me feeling, and that knowledge seems to be flashing like before inside of ecstasy, but it is a giant ball of world-Me consciousness. When the knowledge of Me-world flashes, I feel that this knowledge is not ecstasy. Ecstasy is coming from somewhere else.”

*“Yes, Exactly. The ecstasy is not from the Me-world consciousness. Now just as you floated away from the heart-Me, float way from the world-Me. Silently, ecstatically, float away from the world-me.”*

“OK. I feel I am at two places at once. I feel the world-me as a big ball of consciousness. When I have that knowledge flash, I am inside the ball of consciousness, and when I am floating away from it, I am nothing, but the nothing knows it is outside the ball of world-me.”

*“Yes, exactly. Stay as Nothing, merge with Nothing, and separate, float away.”*

“Wow! What is this? I am Nothing. I am floating. The world-me ball is floating, and somehow behind me I know there are stars. What is this?”

*“This is a beginning.”*

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