

What is the difference between a human-being and an animal? – Nick Maartens

God created animals to live by instinct – human-beings were created to live by discipline. To illustrate the point – third generation finches bred in cages without any material to use to build nests, when provided with grass, twigs and leaves, immediately built perfectly shaped nests with all the characteristic features of their kind. Who had taught them to do so? Also, consider the bee. Bees all over the world, without being able to communicate with each other, all build honeycombs with hexagon shaped cells with sides that are exactly of the same length! What are the chances of you and I, living in different parts of the world, without sharing plans, building two houses that look exactly the same?



Human-beings, on the other hand, were created to live by discipline. The human baby is born with a primitive instinct to suckle, but apart from that, all other important patterns of behaviour have to be instilled by disciplining the child. That is why education is so important. Children learn by the example that is set by parents, teachers and others around them. Paul, the great teacher, said: *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ"* (1 Cor.11:1). He also said the following: *"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you"* (Phil.4:9).

In the light of what Paul said, every Christian parent and teacher should be able to say to their children: "Everything I say, everything I do and everywhere I go, you may say, do and go. Someone once said: "Children will sometimes do what you say, but they will always do what you do." Parents and teachers are supposed to lead by example.

Whose example and teachings are you following to build your character?

The Word of God states: *"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

Furthermore, Jesus said: *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Today, Godly principles are often being ignored and it is no wonder that more and more people are starting to behave like animals – they react to what they instinctively feel: unrestrained lust, greed and violence.

When people abandon Godly principles that are meant to regulate social life, human behaviour becomes very vicious indeed."

Comments by Annemie Nel

(Annemie is the daughter of Nick Maartens and teaches English at Focused High School, Matatiele).

The following poem by Thom Gunn illustrates the point that there is a difference between animals (living according to instinct) and humans (living according to will). In this poem we see the devastating effects of men who do not know what their purpose in life is. They are trying to find (seek) a goal in life, but they do not realize that theirs is a spiritual problem and that they are actually missing the purpose for which they were created. Instead of finding fulfillment in Jesus Christ, they are seeking answers in worldly ways. Ironically enough, the poet does mention the fact that saints (men of God) “complete their purposes”. By this we can see that he actually does know where the answer to completeness, absoluteness, peace and rest lies, but he is just not brave enough to make that decision in his life. Unfortunately a life of sin creates a vicious circle. Sin leads to unhappiness which in turn creates a feeling of restlessness. This feeling of restlessness drives people to seek for an answer to the emptiness that they are experiencing and the answer must be found, either in God as He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, or in the world. If the sinner chooses to look for the answer to his restlessness in Christ Jesus, the cycle can be broken, but if the person chooses to look for the answer in the world, it just leads to more frustration, as this present world system, in the ethically bad sense of the word (world) has been organized upon the principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition and pleasure.

Matthew 11:28 - “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” - says Jesus Christ.

Psalms 46:10 - “Be still and know that I am God”

Philippians 4:7 - “And the peace of God, which transcends all human understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”

On the Move

BY THOM GUNN

The blue jay scuffling in the bushes follows
Some hidden purpose, and the gust of birds
That spurts across the field, the wheeling swallows,
Has nested in the trees and undergrowth.
Seeking their instinct, or their poise, or both,
One moves with an uncertain violence
Under the dust thrown by a baffled sense
Or the dull thunder of approximate words.

On motorcycles, up the road, they come:
Small, black, as flies hanging in heat, the Boys,
Until the distance throws them forth, their hum
Bulges to thunder held by calf and thigh.
In goggles, donned impersonality,

In gleaming jackets trophied with the dust,
They strap in doubt – by hiding it, robust –
And almost hear a meaning in their noise.

Exact conclusion of their hardiness
Has no shape yet, but from known whereabouts
They ride, direction where the tyres press.
They scare a flight of birds across the field:
Much that is natural, to the will must yield.
Men manufacture both machine and soul,
And use what they imperfectly control
To dare a future from the taken routes.

It is a part solution, after all.
One is not necessarily discord
On earth; or damned because, half animal,
One lacks direct instinct, because one wakes
Afloat on movement that divides and breaks.
One joins the movement in a valueless world,
Choosing it, till, both hurler and the hurled,
One moves as well, always toward, toward.

A minute holds them, who have come to go:
The self-defined, astride the created will
They burst away; the towns they travel through
Are home for neither bird nor holiness,
For birds and saints complete their purposes.
At worst, one is in motion; and at best,
Reaching no absolute, in which to rest,
One is always nearer by not keeping still.