

## **Born free?**

To be human and beyond

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A very healthy and helpful way of understanding moral virtue—the result of proper keeping of the moral precepts—is to prevent oneself from being a “split personality.” As a split personality, we are literally beside ourselves with lust, hate, delusion and fear.

A “split” person is not a real person, but one more subhuman than human. He tends to enjoy killing, stealing, misbehaving sexually, lying, clouding his mind with drinks or drugs.

## **When we are immoral**

Whether we are Buddhist or not, when we kill, steal, sexually exploit another, lie or cloud our mind, we have failed ourselves; we have lost our humanity because:

we do not love what is most sacred to humans—our life;  
we have stolen the happiness that others have earned;  
we have violated another’s freedom and dignity as a person;  
we have alienated ourselves from the good in others;  
we have dimmed, even doused, the inner light of our life.

We are not experiencing life, but only existing in its shadows, lurking, waiting to pounce at others in their moments of weakness, loneliness and unhappiness.

## **A true person**

We can only be **happy** as a unified person, a single-minded individual, when our head and heart go warmly hand in hand, in loving embrace. Then, we can **think** more clearly and creatively—with feeling. Then, our **feeling** sees truth and beauty—minding it every moment.

Being personally unified is like playing the right notes, singing the song right and sweet. We are happy who sing; we are happy who hear it. Otherwise, we have killed what is beautiful; we have taken what can never be ours; we only touch the body but never feel the love; our lying habits blind us from true reality; our drugged dark mind just weighs down crushing us. We are not even human, not even alive, much less good.

## **Psychotic**

We are each and all born psychotic: we have no proper perception of space or time, no consciousness of cause and effect. We totally disregard any needs of others but our own; but we have no ability to satisfy our needs. We rely on others for our survival and yet we show them no consideration, much less gratitude. We never understand that others have needs and rights of their own.

As a baby, we are unable to live by ourself; we cannot adjust ourself to the needs of a society that shares and supports one another. We are an unborn human, not yet human. We do not know reality and are easily deluded. We are simply insane.

### **Born mad**

We are all born insane. Scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, philologists, educationists, philosophers, learning specialists, the wise, have shown how we only gradually gain bits of sanity. Slowly, we learn how to live with ourself and with others. Slowly, we learn how to interpret the messages of our senses so that they fall into patterns which give our experiences meaning.

Yes, fortunately, we have all the tools for sanity when we are born—unless we are brain-damaged or genetically imperfect. Even then, we can still somehow be helped, or understand in simple ways what goodness is.

### **Love begets love**

The wonder of being born is that we have these tools for sanity and goodness. But we must be taught early by others how to use it. Only a human can humanize another—it starts with **loving** another; love begets love. That's how we become human—with love and compassion.

When a baby is wrongly or poorly taught how to be human, it may be unable to make sense of its world, and may remain permanently undeveloped in some vital areas of its personality. Yet, it is better to be **late learners** than to remain subhuman. Even when we lack full humanity, we still have an ability to learn, to change, to be better.

### **Change is better**

For this reason, the Buddha's key teaching is about **change**. When we understand change, we know this universal **truth**, we grow and develop into true humans. When we truly understand and feel **beauty**, we touch the divine. When we understand and accept that this beauty is impermanent, too, we become **divine**.

Being **divine** means to accept others and the world just as they are. The world is always incomplete, even broken

Our **compassion** helps keep it together, to heal it.

We **rejoice** in the moments of togetherness and healing.

Having done our best, no matter what the outcome, remain **equanimous**, heart and mind in the embrace of peace and goodness.

Then, we are truly divine even when our body is human. We are destined to even higher things: to be truly **free** in every way.

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