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## What Separates us from the Animals?

What is different about us that distinguishes us from other life forms on this planet? Is it our opposable thumbs? Is it that we walk upright? Our intelligence? Our soul? Genetically, we are very similar to all the other animals, yet we clearly rule the world. What is it that makes us different? What makes us different is that we have a Tree of Knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge is the sum total of Human Understanding. It represents the collective knowledge of humanity.

The Tree of Knowledge is the sum total of all human knowledge that can be passed on between individuals. It is everything we have learned as a species. In the broadest sense - it's the totality of everything that everyone knows that is in some sharable form. Printed material - data archives - video - recordings - stories passed on by word of mouth. These all are knowledge that is contained in the Tree of Knowledge. And it is this shared knowledge that is what separates us from the animals. We are different because of the vast amount of knowledge that we as a species share.

The human race can be viewed as a super organism that is made up of individuals. In many ways we are similar to a hive of bees. Bees are far more biologically linked together than humans in that a bee is nothing when taken out of the context of the hive. Just as the cells of our body are individual life forms, we don't look at them as individuals. In the case of humans - and bees - the individual is the human or bee.

What separates humans from animals is our huge amount of collected knowledge that we share as a species.

However - in the case of bees - they are so tightly coupled that one could easily make the argument that it is the hive - not the bee - that is the individual. The hive shares a common mind that the individual bees are but members of the hive mind. These individuals share a common purpose and act as a single organism. And to that extent - it is the hive - not the bee - that acts. Getting stung by a bee is very different than being stung by the hive.

We humans have some hive-like properties. If you take a baby and have a wild animal raise it - is the result more animal than human? I think it is. The individual would only have the knowledge of personal experience. It would not have the knowledge that is available to humans raised by other humans. The vast majority of our personal knowledge is not knowledge we learned on our own - but knowledge we were taught from the collective knowledge of mankind. And it's that collective knowledge that I'm calling the "Tree of Knowledge".