

The History of the Tree of Knowledge

In the beginning ... as the story goes ... there was the big bang. And the universe was created. It was the beginning of time and space and the universe was filled with pure energy. The energy then decomposed into matter and the matter formed stars. After billions of years these stars decayed and exploded and the heavier matter formed planets around new stars. One of those planets was our own Earth. Then as the earth cooled and chemical reactions occurred, some of these chemicals had the ability to reproduce themselves out of the chemical soup around them - and primitive life was born.

Then life started to evolve. Survival of the fittest. Early creatures started to adapt - developing better ways to find food and keep from becoming food for something else. Survival consisted of eating - defending - and reproducing. After billions of years - life became more complex. Living creatures developed a nervous system - eyes - ears - touch - smell - taste - life had become smarter. Better eyes for finding food - better camouflage to prevent from becoming food. Better mating skills. Life got smarter - but life was still dumb.

The Bible says, "Thou shalt not eat of the Tree of Knowledge". The Church of Reality says, "Who's hungry?"

Then humans evolved. Just erect apes at first. But apes had already started communication as did many other species of animals. The communication allowed one individual to pass information on to others for the purpose of surviving. Most of this information was limited to hunting, defending, and mating, but individuals who could communicate survived better than those who did not. Humans developed language which allowed them to communicate much more complex ideas. An individual could invent something - like how to start fire - or the wheel - and pass that knowledge on to other individuals. Thus new people could start with the knowledge base of the previous generation and build on that. The process - which started with verbal communication - represents what we call the Tree of Knowledge.

Eventually humans invented writing. This allowed an individual to write down information that could be communicated to other individuals who were in different locations in both time and space. Writing facilitated communication and allowed more knowledge to be distributed and - for the first time - stored outside the mind of a person. Knowledge could be stored in the form of books.

Then - the printing press was invented. This allowed for mass printing of books, magazines, newspapers, and written knowledge could be spread and stored in huge quantities. More people sharing more knowledge. Then came the telegraph - the telephone - pictures - movies - recorded audio - television - planes - trains - cars - radio. Knowledge exploded. And the knowledge tree continued to grow.

Eventually we invented computers. Computers could not only store information - but could process information. A computer can take a simple thought process - like sorting and choosing - and do it much faster and more accurately than the human brain. Computers became an enhancement to the Tree of Knowledge in that they give the tree itself the ability to think. We are no longer limited to storing information. We can create smart processes to process this information for us and help us understand the reality around us. Now we have the Internet - e-mail - digital video - instant chat - databases - spreadsheets - robots. And it continues to grow. And the more it grows - the further we distinguish ourselves from the other species of life on this planet.