

Giving is Human Nature

When we think of evolution we think of "survival of the fittest". We think of male lions fighting to the death to take control of a pride of females, killing the male cubs, and breeding until a stronger male comes along and takes over. Indeed, this is one common mode of evolutionary advancement, but another survival strategy is cooperation. Individuals band together for the common good pooling their resources for the gathering of food or the common defense. Penguins huddle in great masses to preserve body heat to survive the antarctic winters. Packs of wolves hunt and bring down prey together. Bees live as a super organism in the form of a hive. There are even interspecies alliances that are necessary for survival. If not for the bacteria growing in our stomachs we would all starve to death without the ability to digest our food. The predator relies on the success of the prey for, without prey, there would be nothing for the predator to eat.

The reality of human nature is that we are social animals that evolved to be extremely interdependent in order to survive. We are in fact so interdependent that very few of us could survive out in the wild on our own. We have evolved language to communicate with one another, allowing us to share complex information and form great societies of individuals with highly specialized skills. When you look around at the stuff that you own, how much of it was made by you from raw materials that you found out in the wild in nature, that you fashioned into something without the use of any tools other than tools you made yourself? Probably not one single thing. The words that you speak and that you hear in your mind are words that were invented by other people. Almost all of your personal reality was created by the human community that you live in. Humanity is by nature a social organism.

Our evolution is through our cooperation. We are evolving through the evolution of society. We are progressing by growing the Tree of Knowledge. We receive knowledge from our ancestors and pass it down to our children. Each generation adds (or something takes away from if we ignore reality) something to the Tree of Knowledge so that new generations start with more tools than the previous generation. The rate of our evolution is based on the rate that we give back to the Tree and increase the knowledge of the human race. In the Church of Reality we call this {In: Intellectual Tithing}.

If we only take from the Tree of Knowledge and give nothing back, then we fail to evolve. If we damage the Tree with false information, then humanity takes a step backwards towards extinction. But if we give freely of ourselves and share our knowledge, then we as a human race all evolve forward in the Sacred direction towards a better future. Thus giving is necessary to achieve the goals of our individual and collective self interest.

Besides our collective knowledge, being generous and taking care of one another helps us to survive. Everyone has times in their lives where they are sick or injured and need to rely upon others to take care of them until they recover. We do that because it is in our own self-interest to be selfless and generous to others so when we need something, there are people who take care of us. The open hand is for both the giving and the receiving. It isn't about what is fair, it is about what works best.

To that end the Church of Reality realizes the collective nature of humanity and therefore incorporates this fact into our reason for adopting the open hand. Our self interest depends upon our selfless generosity. It is what propels humanity forward.