

Faith in Furthering the Whole

The word faith originally meant having confidence or trust. We have confidence that within the Earth Interbeing every being has its own life yet lives in ways that further the life of the whole – the Earth Interbeing. Let's take ourselves as a teaching example.

People have about 37 trillion cells within our being, give or take a few. Each cell has a life of its own, as much alive as any life form. The cell goes about its daily life of eating and wasting, of having children, and healing from injury, and whatever else you can imagine a healthy cell doing. Beyond living its own life, however, every cell in our body in some way furthers the life of our being, the whole. A cell does not fully comprehend why it puts together this enzyme that gets shipped outside its cell membrane into the great unknown. If the cell gets the nutrients it needs to live and to make the enzyme and has its wastes carried away, it does its thing as a not fully comprehended but mutually beneficial interaction with other cells.

Not knowing the whole being does not stop the cell from making the enzyme that furthers our lives. It willingly does its part to further an unknowable whole.

To continue this metaphor, let's say a few tissues over, a cancerous cell appears. Lots of possible stories about what caused it, but the whole being now has a problem. Cancer cells have their own purpose of mindlessly making as many more cancerous cells as it can. It willingly harms other healthy cells for self-benefit by stealing their nutrients and dumping their toxins on them. The cancer ignores the suffering it causes to the degree that the cancer kills the being and itself as well.

The self-centered live like cancer cells. They have faith in their capacities to survive by harming others. They don't need others because they have faith that their technologies will get them through. The self-centered Western culture produces nothing that furthers life on Earth. It lives by destroying life on Earth.

Those who further life on Earth know that we live as part of a greater whole, the Earth Interbeing. Our sacred path gives us the confidence (faith) that people can learn how we can live in ways that further life on Earth once we stop destroying it. Our faith in the sacred grows the more we know ourselves as part of something much greater than ourselves, the majesty and miracles of life on Earth.

We have stories about the ancient sacred ways to further life on Earth. furthering life. Over the past 3.5 billion years, give or take a few, life has learned how to how to live interdependently in mutually beneficial ways harmoniously and as equals living among equals. DNA encoded these ways to free life to unfold itself.

Ancient people knew these ways and embodied them within the cultures they grew. Indigenous people still live these ways the best they can within a world overrun by capitalism. These ancient cultures saw themselves as part of something larger than themselves and identified with life and Earth as a whole, as an Earth Interbeing. People have lived in harmony and balance with other beings and the Earth for about 7 million years, give or take a few.

We know that the work of restoring the Earth Interbeing from the ravages of capitalism goes way beyond what we can do on our own, but we have the sole responsibility to stop ourselves from harming the Earth Interbeing more. We stop acting like cancerous cells and rid ourselves of the wrong view of self-centeredness. We join the lineage of life survivors.

The sacred path of life strengthens our confidence that the Earth Interbeing will escape its projected omnicide. We believe that together we can cultivate the conditions for the survival of the Earth Interbeing. We have faith in the sacred path to further life on Earth.

Not knowing the greater whole in which we live does not stop us from removing the ways we harm the Earth Interbeing. We faithfully do our works as a part of an unknowable whole.

Life has many manifestations, many forms. Yet we all interdepend and cooperate with each other for our lives and mutual wellbeing. We pollinate plants to gather nectar; we renew the soil by dropping our leaves in the autumn; we grow oak trees by burying acorns to eat in the winter but then forget where we put them. Eventually people will learn how to live in ordinary ways that also further life on Earth. The Earth Interbeing will continue to unfold in all its unknowable sacred ways.

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