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A Test of Faith

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The philosophy of a skeptic: *show me the proof and then I'll believe*. People who call themselves realists are given to following logic and will trust only where reason leads them. But here's the rub when it comes to logic and reason, it's all open to interpretation. Have you ever heard the expression *common sense is not so common*? Our view of reality is born from insights which are either reason-based or faith-based. Of the two, faith is the more reliable source. Why? Because even though reason-based insights are indeed valid to a certain degree, this validity is not absolute. Reason is subject to many different understandings. And the reason for this becomes evident when you understand that logic and reason are things of limitation. They are limited because they are bound by the scope of one's personal experience and are thus prone to error. From a purely intellectual standpoint your assessment of the world is drawn from what you directly perceive. But *your* experience in life is not the only experience of life. There's a whole universe of goings-on which fall outside the bounds of your conscious awareness; therefore, it is inevitable that your assessment of anything based on just the observable evidence of your experience will have some fault. Reason alone can only take you so far because if you don't have a sense of the full collection of experiences life has to offer (which are infinite), what can you really profess with any certainty? To be led by reason is comparable to the classic analogy of putting the cart before the horse. You are not led to faith by reason. True reason is actually the product of faith, not its source.

So while the reasonable mindset says, *Show me the proof and then I'll believe*. The faithful mindset says, *I'm just going to believe*, and then life rewards this trust by revealing to you the proof of your faith. The faithful approach to life may seem perilous in its method which is why we call it "taking a leap of faith." It's a leap because in faith the reason which justifies your belief becomes evident only after you accept whatever baseless idea has unexpectedly arisen in your mind. Whenever any unsubstantiated notion simply appears in your thoughts, a notion which is unmotivated by any particular yearning on your part, understand that this is an impression which is presenting you with the opportunity to be guided by faith (instead of sight). By choosing to simply accept whatever this curious notion may be without demanding a reason for it or some kind of evidence to support its authority, by taking that leap of faith which is being offered to you, you will always find yourself (inexplicably) standing on the solidest of grounds.

Faith begins within and extends throughout. It is an inner assurance; an unjustified certainty. That sense of life's full picture (which when reason alone takes the lead in directing you, you will be cut off from) is available to you when you embrace faith. It is irrational to hold out for tangible assurances before allowing yourself to believe in the

thing that has been incessantly tapping you on the shoulder. Tangible is really just another word for superficial. And though you can't touch, hear or perceive the things you realize through faith in any tangible way (in faith you simply *know* that something is right, true or real), what is recognized in faith has genuine substance.

To simply believe because, after analyzing your own personal (and limited) view of the situation, you reason that this must be how reality is, is no great feat. Indeed it is tantamount to ignorance. Where's the brilliance in guessing? And you are brilliant, even if you don't yet realize it. And if you want to realize the true splendor of that brilliance, at some point you're going to have to take that jump. And you're going to have to keep taking it over and over again. There's no way around it. Each jump reveals just a little more of your shine. Your truest self is awesomely great and as it happens fearlessness is inherent to greatness. And there is no more superior demonstration of fearlessness than to leap into something which, though *known* to you, is yet a complete mystery to you. It's a mystery because you initially have no credible explanation as to why you know what you *know*. And even after you do gain the ability to explain your faith to yourself (for remember even while you cannot reason your way to faith you will, through faith, realize the reasons which validate your faithful understandings) you will be hard pressed to explain the reason for your faith to anyone else who is predisposed to being skeptical about the very same thing which you so ardently believe in. So though, in faith, you will clearly see the thing of your faith evidenced all around you and it may seem a marvelous wonder to you how anyone could miss it, those predisposed to skepticism cannot be made to see what you see through logical arguments. They, like you, will have to make their own leap of faith before they will see with the same clarity as you regarding a matter of faith. They, like you, will realize the greatness that is within them only by embracing a mindset of fearlessness.

Part of what you must learn along the way to Self realization is to stop resisting life, to stop doubting yourself, and be fearless. And every time you exercise your faith you are embracing more of your inherent self-assurance. But how can you tell whether the impressions in your mind are the outcome of reason, the invention of hollow wishful thinking or a genuine opportunity of faith? There is a test you can do. It is a simple thought evaluation. When what you're thinking comes with the promise of something you've been yearning for, then this is probably a case of wishful thinking. When what you're thinking seems to fit perfectly with your knowledge and perception of any given situation, then this line of thought is likely the product of reason. But when what you're thinking seems to arise within you from out of "nowhere," and as far as you are aware of at that moment has no credible support in its favor to validate its authority (other than an inner feeling that it's right or true), then here it may very likely be an instance of a Higher Hand's offer to guide you. Though you won't initially understand it, if you want to be led by faith you'll just have to trust it. And this trust must be without condition. You have to be willing to surrender.

This is in no way an avocation for you to suspend your curiosity. You should always be discerning in life, but don't let your inquisitiveness prevent you from keeping an open mind. Never stop asking questions and demanding that ideas actually make sense, but at the same time have the patience to let that sense unfold rather than insisting that everything add up within the frame of your immediate awareness. You have to learn how to allow yourself to be led. There is a tremendous advantage to simply seeing where

things go. Know that if you allow faith to guide you, all your questions will be answered. The only stipulation is you have to relinquish your control because you can't be both the leader and the led. So pick the role you want to play. When you are led, you don't get to control the outcome or the circumstances of the situation you're in but you may rest assured that you are making productive progress. When you are a leader, though you think you can control the outcome and the circumstances of the situation you're in, you are almost certain to suffer some kind of pain for your assuming this responsibility. This is because you have chosen to take the lead in spite of the fact that you're basically traveling blind and you don't know where all the landmines are. But in being led, you are essentially assuming the role of an active witness. And though trials may touch you, when you walk by faith, they will not hold you. They will carry you to your next step. So just let go.

Know that the greater your desire to control any given situation, the less faith you must have in the thoughts you keep about that situation. In faith you own the confidence to simply *know* and let be because you know the reasons will soon follow.

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