



**THE CHURCH *of*
CONSCIOUS HARMONY**

Introduction

While the Work teaches that *one cannot do, but one can Work*. We might take liberty and rephrase that saying this way: one cannot do, but one can have faith. In a recent movie about Ram Das, he shared how when he gave Maharishi some LSD capsules, Maharishi took all of them at once! Ram Das was dumfounded, but as he watched the Maharishi, he realized the Maharishi was teaching a lesson about faith: there is something more powerful, more real, deeper than the physical.

There is a low-grade tension between the Work and the spiritual lineage of Judaism and Christianity. It can be summarized by two sayings. The first, from Moses who tells the people of Israel, hungry, tired and wandering the wilderness that God will provide Manna in the wilderness every morning. The second, from Mr. Gurdjieff, who quipped: Don't expect roasted pigeon to fly into your mouth. These two perspectives represent the contrast and union of faith and work.

A. Defining Faith

The English word Faith comes from the Greek word *pistis*, which among other things can mean trust, grounded in a guarantee one has, but also a deeper kind of thinking or perceiving, in that sense, faith comes very close to having an intuition and following through with it.

The essence of how we define faith is in contrast belief. By faith we don't mean belief. Bernadette Roberts, in unparalleled 18-point summary of her definition of faith, went so far as to say that faith is not only the means but also the end. Faith is God. Faith is seeing darkly, dimly even though one day we will see face to face. Faith is truth. Faith is hope and love. In that sense, one aspect of faith is faithfulness, shifting the noun to a verb.

One of the most important definitions of faith comes from the Bible, in the Book of Hebrews Chapter 11:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.” – Hebrews 11.1-3

Notice the similarity with Emilie Cady's *Lessons in Truth*:

"Faith does not depend on physical facts or on the evidence of the senses because it is born of intuition, or the Spirit of Truth ever living at the center of our being. Its action is infinitely higher than that of reason. It is founded on Truth ... reasoning or intellectual argument is founded on evidence of the senses and is not reliable."

Peppered throughout Maurice Nicoll's *Commentaries*, a reader will come across various statements along these lines: “No faith is required in the Fourth Way” or even something like: “Faith is opposed to the Fourth Way.” That is because in the Fourth Way one of the primary invitations is to seek, to learn, to discover, to know for oneself. To test the spirits. To verify everything, as much as possible. This theme shows up in the teaching on the Four Ways, especially in contrast to the Way of the monk. Recall:

the ascetic (who lives by will),
the monk (who lives by faith), and
the Yogi (who lives by concentration of the mind).

Having said that, there are at least two positive aspects of faith in the Work that we will explore tonight, Greater Mind and Scale.

B. Greater Mind (or Psychological thinking)

Greater Mind of “psychological” or “spiritual” thinking, which are both set in contrast to limited sense-based thinking, or what the Work often refers to as Formatory thinking, or even sometimes as superstition.

The presupposition in the Work is that no one can develop internally, psychologically, spiritually, by means of sensual based thinking alone.

“I will remind you that we were told that unless we believed in the existence of Greater Mind we could not assimilate the Work – that is, take it in so that it becomes a part of us and thus influences us. The ability to reach the level of psychological thinking depends on the conviction [faith] of Greater Mind...” September 20, 1952, Vol. 5, p.1622.

Greater mind = something higher, deeper than just this.

Plato and Aristotle on temple steps in Athens picture this distinction. Though Aristotle was Plato’s student, he would evolve to understand reality very differently than his teacher. In the famous painting of Aristotle and Plato on the temple steps, Plato is point up to heaven, and Aristotle is pointing to earth. Plato taught that only the Ideas are real everything on earth is a copy of the Ideal. Aristotle taught that only the physical was real, and because we could study and know a particular we could then know the universal. It is no wonder that Plato represents the realm of faith in the invisible, and Aristotle became the father of science, focusing on the reality of the observable, measurable, visible. In our era, this tension has been eased by the discoveries of quantum physics which show us that at the heart of reality is emptiness, formlessness, pure energy, and that the observer influences what is observed. In a certain sense, this is what we mean by Greater Mind – we are a part of something much bigger and majestic and mysterious than we could ever comprehend.

C. Scale

Connected with the notion of Greater Mind, faith is clearly related to the Work idea of scale. Commenting on the biblical definition of faith mentioned earlier from the Book of Hebrews, Nicoll says that,

“The writer goes on to describe how through the possession of faith certain things have been done. Now although it may be true that nowhere in the Scriptures is faith exactly defined, but chiefly its effects, certain things are said about...to show it has to do with an inner perception of scale. If faith cause a person to perceive in one’s mind that a world, invisible to sense, lies above the seen world and is the cause of it, then one perceives things in scale – that is, in terms of higher and lower levels.” September 20, 1952, Vol. 5, p.1624.

And also:

“Thus *sense and faith describe two ways of thinking, not opposites, not antagonistic, but on different levels.* For without the perception of scale and levels, things are made to be opposite when they are not so, and Man’s mind is split into either – or, which leads to endless confusions and mental wrangles and miseries...A person who cannot perceive scale, visible or invisible...will be shut

to the intuitions that only faith opens out to every mind that hitherto has been asleep in the senses and the limited world revealed by them.” September 20, 1952, Vol. 5, p.1625.

Illustration: ants and humans and Dog year 7 – human 1

Conclusion/Summary

Faith is a way of being.

Faith is more than knowing.

Faith is even more than believing.

Faith is aware of the bigger, deeper beyond.

And thus, one becomes someone who is able to do.

Homework

If you are new to the Work:

Study the ideas of scale and understanding. The index of the Commentaries is useful to find excerpts on the topic. Ask long-time Work students, Work partners and Journey Group members for their insights, as everyone learns through the exchange.

For everyone:

Practice Self-remembering by remembering scale each day. What lies above me in this moment? What is a higher level of seeing behind my current attitude, perspective or experience?

FAITH

TRUTH IS UNBELIEVABLE - thus we need Faith.

"But I tell you the Truth, and that is why you do not believe me."

BELIEF IS DIFFERENT THAN FAITH

BELIEF:

Is an intellectual assent, a reflective assurance. It is a conviction of propositions presented based on evidence. It is a reasonable assent to hold true what cannot be immediately verified. It involves intellect and even reason.

Belief is our OWN exercise, and thus it will always be subject to doubt and its reverse - unbelief or no belief. In other words, belief is not stable.

Anything we actually know, does not require belief; thus once we know something there is no longer belief. BELIEF, THEN, DEALS WITH THE KNOWABLE - or what eventually can be known - and is therefore RELATIVE. FAITH, on the other hand, goes further, goes beyond anything that is knowable to the mind, intellect, and consciousness. FAITH DEALS WITH THE UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE, THE ABSOLUTE - thus it is ABSOLUTE. *Belief is relative.*

FAITH:

Is "Seeing darkly what we shall one day see face to face." In the end, Faith gives way to vision - to heaven. *Paul John of*
Everything created knows its maker. *(Cross!)*

1. A SUPERNATURAL GIFT, not of our own doing.
2. IS PRE-REFLECTIVE OR PRE-CONSCIOUS, whereas belief is always reflective or conscious.
3. HAS NO ADEQUATE DEFINITION. Is not in our heads - not a concept.
4. An obscure CERTITUDE = a truth-sensor, a seeing, knowing; even an indefinable presence.
5. BEYOND REASON; may even be unreasonable - Tertullian: "I believe because it is absurd."
6. DEALS WITH THE UNKNOWN. Knows in unknowing or not-knowing, thus it is not subject to doubt, or disbelief. We do not know how we know Faith, it is just "there".
7. NOT AN EXPERIENCE. As a non-experience, Faith is the most mystical experience we have. It does not come and go - as do experiences. If we had perfect faith we would not need any experiences. Thus perfect Faith is no-experience. As experience decreases, faith increases - because experience IS self.
8. SELFLESS. Self is experience, and needs experiences to grow. Where experience can be self-serving, self-satisfying, addicting,

dependent, etc., Faith is selfless. Experience may get in the way of recognizing Faith - though experience can help identify Faith by what it is not - not an experience, that is. (Because it is selfless, Faith is not fully recognized so long as self remains).

9. **BEYOND BELIEF.** Faith enables us to get distance on our beliefs, to question them, even doubt them. It keeps us from falling into illusions, errors and rigidity, or being gullible and brain-washed. Faith is the admission that we do not intellectually know. *Question beliefs... even try & doubt.*
10. **PERFECT FAITH IS perfect love, trust, and lack of fear.** (The fine-line). *You don't reach that line until faith is consistently tried.*
11. **IT IS INFUSED CONTEMPLATION AND THE DARK NIGHTS OF THE SOUL** (seeing darkly) according to St. John of the Cross.
12. **IT IS THE INNER EYE THAT SEES GOD** - ultimately it is THE EYE SEEING ITSELF - "We shall know, even as we are known" (by God, that is). Thus we gradually "put on the mind of Christ" - know as Christ knows.
13. **FAITH AND TRUTH ARE THE SAME THINGS** - God's side is Truth, our side is Faith. **Faith is God in us; Truth is God in Himself.** *Coin*
14. Faith is **LIKE A MUSTARD SEED THAT MUST GROW** - but how can God grow? There cannot be more or less of God, only more or less of self. Thus as self decreases (and belief decreases), God (Faith) increases. (As Faith increases, belief decreases).
15. Faith is **CENTRAL TO CHRISTIANITY**, but not to other religions. Others have it, but is it not central.
16. **GRACE:** The dynamic activity of Faith in us. God's dynamic life in us (not merely His presence) is the medium of growth - of transformation, sanctification, deification, transfiguration, even transubstantiation. To be totally transformed into Christ is "salvation". Growth in grace is what the Sacraments are all about: Christ still with us - his life being duplicated, recapitulated in ourselves.
17. **FAITH IS NOT ONLY THE MEANS TO GOD, BUT THE END.** Belief is not a sufficient means to God, only Faith is sufficient means. "I am the Way (the means), the Truth (unbelievable) and the Life (our life), no one goes to the Father but through me".
18. So in the end we learn: **FAITH IS GOD, AND HAS BEEN ALL ALONG.** Thus both the MEANS AND THE END ARE GOD.

NOTE:

1. **Universality of Faith**, but differences of beliefs (one and the many, or one Faith and many beliefs).
2. **Faith is non-exclusive**, whereas belief is exclusive (one-to-one).
3. **Faith is non-dualistic** (same for everyone), while belief is dualistic (always multiple).