

FAITH

– by Eugene Halliday

Some thinkers, called 'rationalists', hold that what is not **reasonable** is not worthy of human attention, that **faith** is not reasonable, and that therefore faith is not worthy of human attention.

The interesting thing about this viewpoint is that those who hold it do so believing that they are right and reasonable to do so. But such thinkers have unconsciously accepted that '**to be right**' and '**to be reasonable**' are the same. Let us see if this is so.

Those who believe in **reason** fall into two groups;

- (1) those who think that reason can of itself, from within itself, analyse and describe the whole of reality without needing any experience of the material world; and
- (2) those who believe that experience of the outer world's things and events is the source of all our mental activities, and that the physical stimuli received by the sense organs are the sources of all our ideas and thinking processes.

The **second** group believe that they can prove the **first** group wrong by pointing out that every man is first a baby with a physical body which is acted upon by the material facts of its environment. They say that this proves that the **physical sense organs** have been acted upon only by the facts of the **physical world** before there can appear any expression of **reason**, and that therefore it is demonstrated that reason is dependent upon physical experience and cannot without this experience bring out from within itself any truth.

The second group also claim that they themselves are right in their view because their ideas and thinking processes are all based on their **experience** of the outer world of physical things. This greatly simplifies their way of looking at the world and at life, and therefore seems to them to be a preferable viewpoint. "Of two explanations of anything", they say, "Always prefer the simpler".

No doubt it is very tempting to prefer the simple to the complicated. We all find in us sympathetic echoes for the 'simple life'. Obviously, if life is really simple, and all we have to do is learn a few simple rules, and then we can really live. "Once upon a time", say the lovers of the simple life, "life was simple - people had uncomplicated minds and simple feelings. People were not yet corrupted by civilisation, were still in tune with nature, and nature herself was friendly. By day the sun, and by night the moon smiled with love for mankind. It was the Golden Age".

"The Golden Age", a lovely warm sound. But if we were to go back into that remote period of human history, we would find a situation considerably less simple than the lovers of the simple life suppose. Even in those days there were unpredictable events, storms, tidal waves, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, diversions of rivers, floods and famines.

And there is another fact against the belief of the second group. They cannot prove that everything in their minds has originated from the physical stimulation of their sense organs. Every human being comes into the world as a baby, and, if the baby is alive, there is something inside the baby, that is **life**. And this life is there **before the baby begins to reason**.

If the baby does not first **live**, then no amount of external stimulation of its physical body can cause reason to appear inside it. Thus we are forced to see that **life is prior to reason**.

Now, as **life** is before **reason**, how can it be possible that reason could **fully** understand life? **Reason** is like a baby, and **life** is like its mother. **Life**, the mother, has given birth to **reason**, a baby. Can the baby fully understand its mother?

The life of the real human being is a power that can do three things; it can **feel** itself, **move** itself, and **form** itself. We know that not all our life processes are rationally understood. We know that our reason has not penetrated all veils, nor solved all mysteries. The believers in reason should remember that their conviction that reason can solve all problems is but a hope and a belief, not a proved fact. This means that, contrary to their beloved rational principle, they **live**, not by reason but by **life's** powers beyond reason.

No sincere rationalist can say that he lives by reason. At most he can say that reason is one of the aids to the conduct of life, an **aid** created by **life** itself. And the creator can never be as small as that which it creates.

Life is infinitely greater than reason, and reason knows this. Sincere human beings give reason its due, will allow that reason is useful in solving mechanical problems, and so on, but they will not allow that

reason can justifiably claim authority over every function and department of **life**.

All the most valuable human relationships are held in being by **life** functions beyond the grasp of reason. The greatest of all facts that human beings have to accept is the fact of **feeling**. Life not only moves and thinks, it also **feels**. And it is here in the realm of **feeling**, that reason is practically powerless. So little is reason able to make itself effective here that the rationalists and materialists who use it have had to outlaw feeling as not controllable by reason. They say that feelings are "**subjective**" and must be ignored. No rationalist, materialist scientist has ever had feeling on his laboratory table, laid out ready for dissection. The rationalists and materialists say, "Let us get rid of whatever cannot be put on the laboratory table. Let us get rid of whatever is not objective. Let us get rid of feeling". But this is to get rid of **life's** subtlest aid.

By "**objective**" the rationalist materialists mean "Whatever can be clearly defined", whether it exists in the **material world** as an object which can be located in space, or in the **mind**, where the 'object' is a clearly defined **idea**. An **idea**, if clearly defined, can be viewed as an 'objective' fact. But a **feeling**, which cannot be clearly defined, is not controllable by the reason. A relation of two clearly defined triangles in the mind can be controlled by the reason and so may be called 'objective', but a relation between two feelings, which cannot be clearly defined, cannot be controlled by the reason. So the rationalist materialist calls **feeling** 'subjective' and refuses to consider it. By 'subjective' he means **belonging to the living 'subject'**, the **living** being which **feels** and in so doing stands beyond the reach of reason.

Feelings are beyond the grasp of reason. **Faith** is a special kind of **feeling** that enables us to walk where reason cannot go, "through the valley of the shadow of death", secure in the knowledge that something beyond reason is caring for us. It is **faith**, not reason, that tells us "**GOD is LOVE**", faith that holds we human beings together in relation, and FAITH that will finally lead us into the paradise we all seek.

- FAITH is not a mere attitude of mind; it is a FORCE able to mobilise our energies and direct them to the attainment of definite ends.
- On every level of being, FAITH is the great mobiliser.
- FAITH is an act of WILL.
- FAITH is the awareness of path-making-power moving in the direction of our desires.
- FAITH works by releasing power in us.
- You can never kill the will to self-determination. You can convince it that, in a finite situation it cannot get its own way, but you cannot convince it that it could never get its own way.
