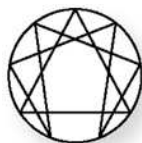


Original: http://ancienttraditions.org/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=10&MMN_position=23:22 2008-08-15
 Link here: http://blog.lege.net/content/Faith_vs_Belief.html
 PDF "printout": http://blog.lege.net/content/Faith_vs_Belief.pdf



Ancient Traditions Community Church

information

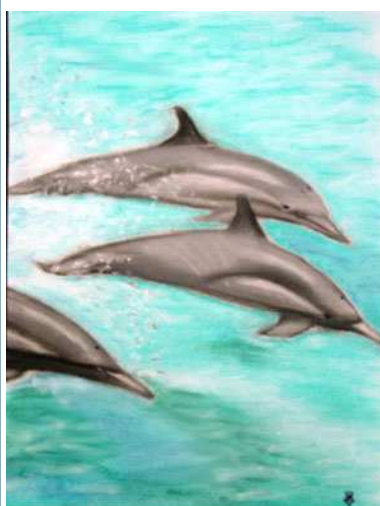
- Introduction
- About Our Church
- The Gurdjieff Work
- Ongoing Activities
- FAQ's
- Articles
 - Faith vs. Belief
 - Willing Power
 - The Essential Message
- Photo Gallery
- Downloads

calendar

< August, 2008 >						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	01	02	03	04	05	06

search web pages

faith vs. belief



"Faith is not the same as belief." Nearly every time I present this postulate, I am met with a long pause or a raised brow. The daring will finally ask, "How can that be possible?" Like many words in the English language that are taken as synonyms, these two words actually express quite different concepts. But in order to understand the difference, one must explore deeply the processes of the rational mind we know -- and the non-rational mind we don't know. It behooves us to examine just what we mean by the word "knowing", also.

Do you remember believing in Santa Clause? The Tooth Fairy? The Easter Bunny? Do you remember the hope of anticipation, the joy at discovering mysterious gifts, the peace of "knowing" such benign beings looked after us? My youthful worldview was shaped by such beliefs and the experiences that seemed to "prove" them. As my physical brain matured and I gained practical life experiences, Common Sense began to form, which I define as the ability to assess the probability of information being true or useful if acted upon. Eventually my young but skeptical mind demanded a higher level of proof, and failing that, concluded from the evidence that Mom and Dad were the true providers of the gifts. When my beliefs changed, my World View likewise was forever changed.

History tells us that society once believed the earth was flat. Adventurers were mortally afraid that a ship could sail off the edge of the planet to certain death. People once believed that the sun and moon were just out of the reach of birds. Whole cultures develop Common Sense, too, as humanity matures and the knowledge derived from practical experience is preserved and passed down through the generations. Curious, skeptical minds found ways to gather the evidence needed to deduce that the earth is in fact round, that the sun and moon are quite far away -- and our collective World View likewise changed.

Beliefs, then, are mental constructs, conclusions about reality. My perceptions are continuously filtered and shaped by my World View. My experience is a product of these interpretations, and as such cannot "prove" my beliefs. Think about it: if not for the indwelling Presence at my core, I would be unable to recognize this phenomenon. My conditioning would hopelessly trap me with no possibility of escape. My awareness allows me to inwardly detach from my own processes, where I can observe them with objectivity. When I examine my life, I realize that my beliefs continuously change over time. The faculty of formulating beliefs, or working hypotheses, was meant to serve as a frame of reference to help us navigate through life with integrity and purpose. As I gain ever more practical knowledge validated in the manifested world, my beliefs come closer to describing reality. Unfortunately, we mistakenly accept beliefs as reality, fearfully clinging to them as we would a life preserver.

So what, then, is Faith? Our limited, finite minds cannot directly perceive the All, or God. However, we can perceive "evidence of things unseen". We can use our minds to intuit the Presence of the Eternal Creative Power. Just as we "know" Love by experiencing it -- even though it is impossible to pick it up, or to perceive it with the physical senses -- so we can "know" God. Since God must be the Essence of Every-thing, God is also my Essence. I can intuit that my relationship to God is akin to the relationship each individual cell has to my body as a whole: I am a microcosm within the Macrocosm.

Have you ever wondered why we are driven to search for our Source? Why we persist in grappling with questions that are beyond our ability to comprehend? These pursuits are evidence of Faith: the upwelling of an innate, non-rational "knowing" that there is far more to Life than meets the eye!

There persists the belief that a seeker must be saturated with the "right" set of beliefs in order to "produce" Faith. This brainwashing does produce "group-think", a most formidable force capable of controlling fearful people, disempowering them by cultivating distrust in their own perceptions. In such a state we accept beliefs just because others share them -- how could so many people be wrong? Even though 1000 people believe differently than I, my hard-won truth is not negated. In fact, society may be unconsciously waiting for those of us with the courage to step forward and declare that the Emperor is wearing no clothes. There is no need for fear, guilt or shame when letting go of beliefs that no longer serve one, that defy one's maturing Common Sense, one's deepening Understanding, one's emerging Faith. Clearly, this is rather the mark of a growing, evolving Human Being.

Beliefs can actually block Faith. Many of us, unable to swallow the beliefs put forth by some churches, turned a "deaf ear" to the inner promptings of Faith, even declaring ourselves to be "atheists". I experience Indwelling Faith whenever the Mind attains stillness and the Heart opens, even if only for a moment. Externally acquired beliefs change; Indwelling Faith endures. Faith informs me that I will come to know who I am by finding God within.

As published in *Heart Links* magazine, Summer 2005 issue.

Created on 2005-06-20 00:08:54 by admin
 Updated on 2005-08-23 01:23:35 by admin

log in

Username	<input type="text"/>
Password	<input type="password"/>
Remember Me	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="button" value="Log In"/>	
New Account Signup Forgot Your Password?	

Copyright © Appalachian State University 2002 - 2003
 This Site is powered by phpWebSite © The Web Technology Group, Appalachian State University
 Theme by R. Scott Baer
 phpWebSite is licensed under the [GNU LGPL](#)

(In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, this material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes.)