

Crisis of Faith

It is not unusual for a person to suddenly begin to grapple with their Faith. For many this occurs at, or a little after the onset of puberty (i.e., any time after the age of sixteen). This phenomenon may last for a short or longer period into adulthood and even until death. The inevitable result for many is that they lose their Faith, because it can longer provide answers or explanations to the experiences that they now encounter in their life. For some, a shocking experience trigger's the grappling with Faith. Again, for the same reason, i.e. their inability to come to terms with their experience, using the frame work of their Faith.

However, there are also many who never experience a crisis with their Faith.

Which raises the question of how it is they are able to explain the inexplicable which many, using the same frame work of Faith, failed to do.

A closer investigation of the answer to this question will most likely show that those who have never faced a crisis of Faith either have a deeper grasp of their Faith, or they have not bothered to test their Faith against their inexplicable experiences; preferring instead to consider such inexplicable experiences as attributable to the *Mystery of Faith*.

But, the concept of Mystery implies an unknown, therefore a certain degree of ignorance or lack of clarity. And to put it bluntly, acceptance of a Mystery implies a reluctance to investigate further rather than pursue the demand for clarity that is welling within the person. A very common example is the resignation with which many face the death of one who is very close to them. It is very clear from their demeanor that they question their fate as being undeserved or unfair, but dare not voice this.

Had they, within the frame work of their faith, been able to see the experience as beneficial, or even neutral, this would manifest not in resignation, but joyful acceptance, and perhaps gratitude.

Other things that spark a crisis of Faith in adulthood, is when one encounters the challenges of upholding cherished virtues with the "realities" of the adult world. For example, how does one maintain their Faith to practice true fellowship in a cut throat competitive world.

These two very common examples of triggers for crisis of Faith, it becomes obvious that the yardstick by which we measure and base our Faith is the expectation that we will have mostly good fortune. Needless to say, we do this unconsciously, and simply dissociate Faith from bad experiences of fate.

From this perspective, it becomes quite easy to see why a "faithful believer" can have a Crisis of Faith when they encounter a painful experience, because they see it as punishment or judgement, especially when they cannot see they could have done anything to deserve it.

The crisis faced by those who find it difficult to reconcile the virtues of their Faith with the realities of the adult world can also be explained with the same logic. For such, the crisis is brought on by their dilemma on whether to compromise the virtues taught by their Faith, and running afoul of their Faith, to then suffer punishment and judgement, or accept to the reality of their adult world and become successful, but become also hypocrites, suffer the consequences, or drop their Faith.

By contrast, people who live in cultures where the concept of Faith features both “good” and “bad” experiences do not encounter these crises of Faith. For example, cultures where Hinduism or Buddhism prevail, see good and bad experiences as equally helpful to a Spirit’s growth and development. Therefore, their Faith is seldom shaken by such life experiences.

Also, these cultures recognize that a person’s action will determine their future fate. Therefore, the decision to compromise one’s virtue is strictly personal and is not tied to adherence to a community belief or doctrines.

Perhaps herein lies the answer and solution to the crisis of Faith that seems more prevalent in the Western world.

Christianity, its most prominent religion promises good Faith to the “faithful”, and punishment or judgement to the “unfaithful”. The faithful defined as those who have adhered to the doctrines of their Faith. Even the secular thinking that has evolved in the Western world suffers from the same bias towards “good” experiences as the desire norm, and misfortune or painful experiences as failure with a stigma.

So, the important thing for anyone who is encountering a crisis of Faith is to recognize is that this crisis is telling them that the basis of their Faith needs revaluation. If nothing else, it should make a person reevaluate whether it is healthy to always expect only good things to happen to them. Any adult should have learned, just from observing nature that painful experiences can also lead to joy and growth. For example, the joy that can accompany or follow a prolonged period of inconvenience and pain during pregnancy.

This recognition or understanding of the concept of Faith will also give it a different and new meaning, similar to that in the non-Christian world, where faith has a more logical interpretation. Here, Faith is understood to mean an appreciation of the natural and fundamental principles that govern life. For example, *Faith in the fundamental principle of sowing and reaping*, i.e., karma. From this perspective, one is then more prone to seek for the natural fundamental principle at work in any situation that he or she encounters.

Through this search for meaning, Faith in the operation of the principle at work becomes reaffirmed through the experience. And from this we gradually grow from having Faith in the existence of these principles, to finally gaining confidence in their existence, and Conviction in their operation.

It should be mentioned that this way of looking at life's experiences is not to be confused with Fatalism, which is frankly not too different from Blind Faith. The fatalist makes no effort to comprehend the logic behind their fortune, good or bad. The only difference is that they have developed a much stronger stoic public demeanor of acceptance and not complaining. They too attribute all events in their life to the *Mystery of Faith*. Therefore, a fatalist will fail to see the opportunities for Spiritual growth that every experience presents to us.

Therefore, based on what has been said we should see crisis of Faith as a good wakeup call to begin the necessary self-examination, and search for meaning in every experience, **but** with the primary goal of extracting lessons for our Spiritual growth, regardless of the nature of the experience.

However, one can realistically only begin to make sense of one's experience when one has knowledge of the spiritual principles that govern Spiritual life. For it is upon these principles that the correct Faith can be built.

These principles are embedded in the sacred teachings of most faith, but due to their distorted interpretations it has become difficult for the average person to decipher them. For example, the average Christian may not relate the natural fundamental principle of Karma to Jesus Christ's teaching of Love thy neighbor as thyself (*What ever you do unto your neighbor, you actually do unto yourself*).

The interested reader or listener is invited to examine the book "In The Light of Truth" (The Grail Message) by Abdrushin, in which these natural principles and their workings are explored in great detail. From this knowledge one can develop for themselves a Living Faith, i.e. one which can help them gradually decipher the principles and lessons in every situation that they encounter in life.