

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

WELL, YOU HAVE 'FAITH' IN X.
EVERY POSITION IS A FAITH
POSITION. IT ALL COMES DOWN
TO FAITH.



IEAAH
INLAND EMPIRE ATHEISTS, AGNOSTICS & HUMANISTS



Freethinkers Around Redlands



Victor Valley



Atheists & Agnostics

FAITH

AN ATHEIST
DISCUSSES FAITH

Well, you have 'faith' in X. Isn't every position a faith position?

"Faith" can mean many different things:

- faith1 - a synonym for trust,
- faith2 - religious belief without evidence,
- faith3 - a synonym for religion,
- faith4 - a proper name.

If by "faith" you mean "trust" then yes, we all trust our senses (we have no choice), and I trust the scientific method as our most reliable way to know facts about the world around us. This trust is faith1, but it is misleading to call this just plain "faith". When I mean 'trust', I say "trust", and when I mean 'religious belief without evidence' I say "faith (faith2)". The only reason people ever must talk about faith is if they don't have evidence. When we have evidence, we don't appeal to faith, a mutual exclusivity.

Every position is a trust position, we can't be experts in everything. Knowing we can't be experts in everything is not faith2. However, you can "trust the conclusions of experts because of the method they used and evidence they have", but you can't "faith2 the conclusions of experts because of evidence" because faith2 is religious belief without evidence. If your ideas all come down to faith2 then faith2 is good enough for all the religions you don't practice as well. To be fair; I do however trust my senses are providing my consciousness with an accurate model of reality. I have no choice, and neither does anyone else including yourself whether you admit it or not.

This is a philosophical conundrum known as "external world skepticism" which is the view you can't know anything about the external world (or even if there is such a thing) - you can only know about the internal world of your own mind. Close relatives of this are "solipsism" (the theory that only the self exists, or can be proved to exist) and "the problem of induction" (Instances of which we have had no experience resemble those of which we have had experience. Reason can never show us the connexion of one object with another, tho' aided by experience, and the observation of their constant conjunction of in all past instances." -Hume).

Think of the scientific method with theories based on observation of repeated instances. No solution is on the horizon, but we seem to be able to function reliably, so pragmatically we have to assume reality is real, existence exists, and we can sense it through our senses.

To an atheist, faith connotes a blind trust in supernatural claims that have no evidence to back them up and many of these claims often persist in spite of sound evidence to the contrary. Equating faith in the scientific method or evidence gained from repeatable experiments to faith in supernatural claims that have no evidence is nonsensical to a rational person. Historical texts (Bible, Qur'an, Vedas, Tripitaka, Shreemad Bhagavad Gita, Torah, Talmud, The Agamas, Kojiki, Kitáb-i-Aqdas) that claim extraordinary deeds – miracles – that refer back to the same texts for the evidence of the deeds do not pass the test for reasonable evidence.

If a high school science book stated that there was a large ring of teapots circling the planet Pluto, scientists would not take the statement appearing in a science book as evidence. This claim would need to be confirmed by many other scientists using the scientific method and published for peer review. The proof would have to be reproducible from henceforth. A religious person generally believes that all other faiths besides the ones they themselves were born into are wrong. Atheists believe that only one more than that is wrong.