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Contra Descartes. Antecedents and Universality of Faith and Reason

Abstract. *In this article we attempt to demonstrate the initial coherence of faith and reason that cannot exist one without the other. Faith cannot be without the perception of reason, reason is based on faith. We contemplate faith not only as a religion, but more broadly, as universal for human beings. It involves not only faith in God, the Koran, Bible or other kinds of Holy Scripts, but also faith in ideals, faith between people, states, faith in future, etc. Firstly, we concentrate on the primary universality, restricted coherence of these phenomena in the life of a human being and mankind. This has been considered a great deal; however, we are interested in the impossibility of the existence of faith without reason and reason without faith. When subjectivist, Berkley, states that only sensation exists, but not objects, he is positive about it, he believes in his primary cognition. Similarly, when dialectic materialists make claims about the objective existence of the world and objects, they have an absolute faith in their primary cognition. To prove this they use practice as a criterion of the realness of what they say. In their primary cognition they also believe, though absolutely, in the realness of this judgment. Primary cognition based on faith in the self, can be obvious, or latent, or unobvious in the form of absolute assurance. That is to say, faith, trust in the self, even in our own doubts, are primary cognition for a human being. Misfaith in the self, our own senses and judgments is based on primary trust-faith in the rightness of such an attitude to them. When Rene Descartes says: «cogito ergo sum» – «I think therefore I am», from this epoch of new science and ever after «cogito» (think) it was believed the first reliable cognition (act of faith and mind) primary is his faith in the realness of thought, faith-cognition (initial act of mind). Often this is not acknowledged. Faith in the realness of thought, as an initial act of thought, precedes the thinking process or occurs at one time. However, if faith-cognition is concurrent, it still precedes by substance, if not by time. This logic was first introduced by Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in a different aspect.*

Keywords: *Contra Descartes, Faith, Reason, philosophy, theology, rationalism, universal, primary, science, religion.*

Faith and Reason, their unity and correlation is a fundamental issue of human thought, philosophy, psychology, culturology and theology. The subject has been contemplated by every prominent philosopher of the past and present, not to mention Augustine, Ghazali, Tertullian, Avicenna, Berkley, Kant, Descartes and others.

We attempt to show primary correlated universality of both faith and reason for an individual that underlies every vital creation of a human being.

Mahatma Gandhi's belief was known to be based on the reason and morality in his humanism, on the unity of holy books of different religions: "I believe the Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta are as god-inspired as Veda... However, I assert that I know and realize true sub-

stance of teaching of Holy Books. I refuse to acknowledge whatever interpretation no matter how scholarly it is, if it contradicts reason and morality"¹. [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. My Life/M. Nauka, 1969. – C. 475–476; Asadullaev I.K. Novaya Paradigma. Ontology/Dushanbe: R-graph, 2011–C. 195].

Mahatma Gandhi's words express the restricted relation between faith and reason, each without the other leading to the end of human faith and reason.

¹ Gandhi, Rajmohan (2006). Gandhi: the man, his people, and the empire. University of California Press. ISBN 978-0-520-25570-8. Retrieved 7 February 2012; Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. My Life/M. Nauka, 1969. – C. 475–476; Asadullaev I.K. Novaya Paradigma. Ontology/Dushanbe: R-graph, 2011–C. 195.

We do not outline the problem with exploring the history of the problem in our article; however, we should point out the fact that Aristotle endeavored to define the outlines of the solution to the problem. For instance, Aristotle pays considerable attention, in "Metaphysics", to significant aspects of the concept of the belief: "But the belief is connected with judgment (and indeed, the one who possesses a judgment is not capable of not believing this judgment)... Further, each judgment is accompanied with the belief, and belief – with persuasion, and what concerns persuasion – it is accompanied with reasonable grounds (logos)"²

Here we would like to add that belief is always conscious. The conscious belief is a form of knowledge. Firstly this is not merely belief in judgment, but belief in validity (truth) personal judgment. Second, and most importantly, the conscious belief in the validity (truth) of one's personal judgment itself, is a basic judgment as a foundation of any thought. Trust and belief are realized. Man's belief stands as the primary trustworthy knowledge. And only after this may there be the idea: "I think, consequently, I exist".

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Here we would like to add that belief is always conscious and conscious belief is a form of knowledge. This is not merely belief in judgment, but belief in validity (truth) of personal judgment. Most importantly conscious belief in the validity (truth) of one's personal judgment is itself a basic judgment as a foundation of any thought. Trust and belief are realized. Man's belief stands as the primary trustworthy knowledge. And only after this may there be the idea "I think, consequently, I exist".

In this article we attempt to demonstrate the initial coherence of faith and reason that cannot exist one without the other. Faith cannot exist without percep-

tion of reason, reason is based on faith. We will contemplate faith not only as a religion, but more broadly, as universal for human beings. This involves not only faith in God, the Koran, Bible or other kinds of Holy Scripts, but also faith in ideals, faith between people, states, faith in the future, etc.

Firstly, we will concentrate on primary universality and the restricted coherence of these phenomena in the life of a human being and mankind. This has been considered a great deal; however we are interested in the impossibility of the existence of faith without reason and reason without faith.

Faith plays a significant role in exercising reason. Reason and practice without faith cannot be. If we think of maxims of Augustine⁴ and Anselm from Canterbury – "I believe to comprehend" and Abeliar's maxim – "I comprehend to believe", these were about religion. Even when a man realizes that practice is a criterion of realness, his knowledge is based on faith-assurance that it is such, not otherwise. When a man is aware of something, he is sure that he knows, is real and true. He can think of the falseness of any cognition, but even then he believes in the falseness of cognition. Reason is based on faith, while faith is based on reason.

Proving this is simple. Take a piece of bread, for instance. Before a man ever takes a bite of it, he sees it, but not completely. A man is not supposed to know something completely. To see completely what a piece of bread consists of, a man cannot do on principle. But the process of eating requires of him to trust his senses and reason, which tell him that it is normal bread and it can be chewed and eaten. A man shall, based on reason and senses, believe in the edibility of food. Without such faith fulfillment, life cannot be. And such it is at every step.

To see and know everything is a capacity of God or Demon Laplace, but not of man. At the same time it has to be pointed out that sheer faith cannot be: faith rests upon senses and reason, it is realized. When you sense something, regardless of whether you trust your senses or not, you trust your primary attitude towards senses and this attitude prompts you whether to trust this sense or not.

The origin of each human life manifestation is based on credit of yourself, on faith in the realness of your senses and thoughts, on faith in your own reason. Even if you do not trust a certain sense, it is based on faith and your assurance of your rightness about the falseness of a sense.

² Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. The work in four volumes. Vol. 1. // Moscow: "Mysl". – p. 431.

³ Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. The work in four volumes. Vol. 1. // Moscow: "Mysl". – p. 431.

⁴ Augustine of Hippo (2008). *Confessions*. Chadwick, Henry transl. New York: Oxford University Press.

In other words, before every cognition there is primary cognition – your confidence, faith in realness about senses, judgments, logic, concepts, reasoning about the self and the world. First and foremost there is confidence in the self, in your reason and senses that can tell you of the realness or falseness of all subsequent senses and thoughts. First and foremost there is confidence in you. Even when you do not trust yourself, you trust the realness of such non-confidence in you.

A man always lives through expressing his attitude to the world and the self. Thoughts and senses about the world and self can be highly different. Primary knowledge is about trusting this attitude towards the world and the self in most different aspects.

Primary knowledge-confidence is universal for human beings. Man always trusts himself even in the most paradoxical instances, when there is no trust in the self and to self: and in the events of mistrust to a self there is faith in realness of such mistrust to self. Primary faith – cognition – is faith in own reason (we are not talking about abnormalities).

In the beginning of all thought and sense there is confidence in the self, faith in the realness of these thoughts and senses, irrespective of whether they are eventually right or wrong.

A person is helpless before the powers of Cosmos and the Planet; however they admit his existence and even aggression in relation to the surrounding nature. All this is possible under conditions of cognition of the world, however, this cognition is incomplete. One other problem originates hereof, which suggests that incomplete knowledge is actual throughout the history of mankind; it is always incomplete, but in many instances it is sufficient to exercise the actions of the man and mankind, adequate to the conditions and epoch.

And all of this is impossible without primary cognition-faith. In any direction: progressive, distortion of the mind, when it serves distortion of the mind, while primary faith serves as distortion of faith.

Faith and reason do not contradict one another. Only unilateral ideas have distorted this unity. This includes atheists and fundamentalists, they attempt to use reason against reason, they do so by distorting its great humanitarian concept, castrating its humanity, channeling it against mankind. But one cannot suggest that faith is ostensibly secondary and submits to reason. In fact, faith is illuminated by reason; they are one whole, faith opens up its reasonable origin. Three origins determine the hope of mankind: faith, reason and humanity.

Faith and reason are universal for man and mankind, but in their manifestation they can be aimed at

distortion, castration of both faith and reason. We cannot go without faith due to the probability of an alternative future.

For instance our knowledge of the fact that a chair is solid is not subject to doubt, it is always solid. We are absolutely sure about that. Our absolute confidence however, essentially consists of our faith in a fact that a chair remains solid. Meanwhile, there is a probability that its solidness will change, although this probability is low. But probability is always there. The future is always probabilistic. Thus, we cannot make a step without faith in probability of one or another alternative.

But we do not notice our faith in the fact that every future moment the chair will remain solid. Not notice and this is the so called grounds for the synchronization of the future in our consciousness. Hence the illusory judgment: “a chair is solid beyond time”. We get distracted from the acceptable possibility of having the chair transformed to something unsolid some time in the future. It may be endlessly unlikely but it is possible.

Synchronization of the future in consciousness when vector of time is reviewed only as the present, is typical for man, although everything in the entire world is constantly undergoing a transition from present to future. Future is probabilistic, although probabilities can be infinitely minor. Under such circumstances human beings attempting to synchronize the future in their conscience, fail to notice the key- primary faith, cognition with regard to the great world, which seems sustainable beyond time and absolute by many aspects. He fails to notice his faith in the sustainability of things; he believes they are beyond time and beyond primary faith-cognition.

We discuss this in order to stress the primary point: the future cannot be absolutely inevitable, it is always probabilistic, with a great probability of options of minor and infinitely minor probability. Thus every moment we believe in occurrence of one or another, but this often occurs incognito, captive of future synchronization in conscious, when we fail to notice the probability of the future and our faith in occurrence of one or another.

This proves once again the universality of faith for human beings. Concurrently, we emphasize the universality of reason, conscious, as was stated by Viko and prefaced by Mahatma Gandhi.

Kant associated faith with *a priori* knowledge. He admitted the limited indisputability of experience, however, at the exit into allness of judgments based on faith, a prior cognition begins. In the concept of this

study, though, we assert the impossibility of indisputability of experience without a prior faith in it.

When subjectivist, Berkley, states that only sensation exists, but objects do not, he is positive about this, he believes in his primary cognition. Similarly, when dialectic materialists claim the objective existence of the world and objects, they have an absolute faith in their primary cognition. To prove this they use practice as a criterion of realness of what they say. In their primary cognition they also believe, though absolutely, in the realness of this judgment. Primary cognition, based on faith in self, can be obvious, or latent, unobvious in the form of absolute assurance. That is to say, faith, trust in the self, even in our own doubts are a primary cognition for a human being. Misfaith in the self, our own senses and judgments is based on the primary trust-faith in the rightness of such an attitude to them. When Rene Descartes says: “cogito ergo sum” – “I think therefor I am”⁵ [“Cartesianism (philosophy): Contemporary influences” in Britannica Online Encyclopedia. Descartes, René (1644). The Principles of Philosophy (IX). Rene Descartes “Meditationes de prima philosophia, in quibus Dei existential et animae humanae a corpore distinctio demonstrator”, 1647]., from this epoch of new science and thereafter “cogito” (think)⁶ [Bertrand Russell (2004) History of western philosophy pp.511, 516–7] was believed to be the first reliable cognition (act of faith and mind); his faith is primary in the realness of thought, faith-cognition (the initial act of the mind)⁷ [Rodis-Lewis, Geneviève (1992). “Descartes’ life and the development of his philosophy”. In Cottingham, John. The Cambridge Companion to Descartes. Cambridge University

Press. p. 22. ISBN 978–0–521–36696–0]. Often this is not acknowledged. Faith in the realness of thought as an initial act of thought precedes the thinking process or occurs at one time. However, if faith-cognition is concurrent, nonetheless it is preceded by substance, if not by time. This logic was first introduced by Ibn Sina (Avicenna)⁸ in a different aspect.

Considering primary cognition-faith, we are convinced that reason and faith are based on their inseparability, their reflection in one another.

Reviewing such an uncommon phenomenon as fundamentalism, a cause of misfortunes for man and mankind, we are forced to remark an existence of twilight recognition in human life that one almost cannot get free of. It is impossible to break completely free, but the entire essence of human development and life is aimed at freeing us from the twilight of conscious and faith. And the best in human life is associated with the unanswered impulse to break free towards true conscious and true faith.

We can add here that the Holy Word was given not to dead nature or animal life but rather to a human with his conscious and heart. Hence, without conscious and heart it is impossible to understand the Holy Koran, and other charismatic books: the Bible, Avesto, Veda and Gatt. This is the most crucial principle of peace-loving behavior in the spiritual sphere for all mankind. This is also most important principle of rationalism.

The remarkable essence of human humanism is not about bringing forward differences of various types of the Holy Script – Koran, Bible, Zend Avesto, Ved and Gatt, but rather about understanding their universal essence, consisting in humanity, high spirituality, in unity and universality of faith and conscious.

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