

# Does “Turn your Faith on” mean Turn your Reason off?

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We have all heard the term ‘blind faith’. When we say someone has blind faith, we usually mean that they believe something without any understanding of it. They just believe it. Often they are unshakeable on the subject. Is this good or bad? Neither?

Faith is believing or trusting. Believing (in) what? Trusting (in) what? To answer my earlier question, “Is this good or bad”, I answer “Both”.

Have you ever seen a magic trick and been amazed? I still remember an occasion years ago when a man using a deck of cards performed some tricks in front of me. I could see the faces of all the cards before me as he performed. I could see that they were all normal – not all hearts, not all sevens or kings. A true mixture as I expected. These days I cannot remember any of the tricks he performed except the final one. It left me stunned. With the entire deck now widely spread out in front of me he offhandedly took hold of the card on the end and used it to turn over all the cards so that they were now face down. Every card had a back with a different design or colour. This was so startling. I was expecting every back to be identical. And they weren’t. I didn’t see him switch the deck. The cards were right in front of me at all times. It must be magic. It wasn’t of course. Thinking about it later, I realized that I had only ever seen the back of one card during his entire performance and, because that pattern was a very common one, I had easily assumed that all the cards had the same back. He had deceived me completely. My reason, however, overturned my assumption and explained the situation. Yet before the stunning revelation, I was convinced, I was unshakeably convinced that all the backs were the same. Had you asked me at the time, I may have become suspicious, just because you asked.

Because I now understand the trick, is it any less startling? No. Because we understand a miracle, is it any less a miracle? No. We understand the process by which babies enter this world but is birth any less a miracle because we do? Is it any less a miracle because it happens as often as it does?

“By faith we understand” the scripture says. Once we believe, once we have that faith, God can explain even miracles. In the passage just quoted, creation is the miracle being examined. Once we believe that God did the creating, we can understand more and more of the detail of it; the how, the when, the why.

I often ask people questions which are the spiritual equivalents of “Are the backs all the same?” I want to promote their suspicion. I want to engage their reasoning.

I ask myself how many other assumptions do I have that my reason is yet to overturn. Because a particular pattern is a common one, have I assumed that the backs are all the same?

Blind faith is good if it is faith in truth. Blind faith in something erroneous isn’t. Now isn’t that obvious? D’oh. So why this rant then? Because I am not sure we can distinguish truth from error? Reason will help us but not unconditionally. What did Jesus say in John 7:17?