

Is There a Valid Way To Test for Real Spiritual Life?



It's yours, take it,
Leap like a lunatic
Over the chasm below
Erupting as you go
Your true self awaits you
NOW you will know

The Great Leap of Faith artwork & quote above are by JANE EVERSHED

It is today, my dear, that I take a perilous leap. Voltaire

Things can fall apart, or threaten to, for many reasons, and then there's got to be a leap of faith. Ultimately, when you're at the edge, you have to go forward or backward; if you go forward, you have to jump together. Yo-Yo Ma

We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal, and then leap in the dark to our success.
Henry David Thoreau

Great Inspiration or Foolishness?

This concept of “leap of faith” has been around for a while – and probably everyone who uses this analogy is impressed with their great wisdom. No one can really expect to find and know, they say, in the end we must take a “leap” in the dark to it (“And how do I know?” they reason, “Because this is my personal experience – and what could be more valid?”)

They are leaping, and this in the dark, so no wonder they wind up in different places (still in the dark?) with no valid test as to whether their “truth” is right or wrong!

And if someone wants a religion of this type, more power to them, but they are wrong to attribute this approach to the Christian paradigm. Christianity (as detailed in the *Bible*) sees this approach as dangerous, deadly, invalid, foolish and absurd. The Bible approach to growing in faith is just the opposite; it is a coming into light, not leaping into darkness:

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” John 3:20 - 21

In Christianity there is a discipline of faith – of growing faith; it is a faith built on evidence, yes, even personal experience and confirmation. It is a growing faith built on faithfulness and diligence in seeking, finding and testing. New Age and Eastern religions are based on a faith conjured up in one's mind – not Christianity! And since they are leaps into the dark, there is no real follow-up work or discipline required – you simply leap from dark into darkness.

And unlike these “dark” religions there is a fairly good test of Christian faith:

“I may be doing a lot wrong, but God is doing a lot right!”

Paradoxically, an awareness and understanding of our sinfulness and helplessness increases rather than decreases (as one would probably expect) over time/with progress.

We see a good example of this in Jesus' parable:

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:9 - 14

True spiritual awakening (into light, not dark) is a growing realization of helplessness and hopelessness in ourselves, others, things . . . an awareness of our shortcomings – where before we would flatter ourselves that we were from good to excellent, we now see ourselves as from wretched to poor.

No one can take a "leap" into Christianity – it is not a faith based on feelings or thoughts, but is evidenced by:

- ✓ a new birth,
- ✓ new life,
- ✓ a growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ,
- ✓ greater humility (the only way to find greater grace),
- ✓ power!; power to change; not an internally developed or imagined power, but one infused into a person.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. ^{2Ti}

3:1 - 5

We should take great care (nothing else has 1,000th the importance ETERNALLY) not to "fall for" false religions (or notions of the Christian religion) – and even more we should be careful not to foolishly leap for or into them! There is The Way – which we find, in the light, in the *Bible* and through the disciplines the *Bible* outlines for growing in faith, grace and knowledge. These are the only true and valid evidences of Godly (versus devilishly) spiritual life!