

## ***The Logic of Love***

### **Chapter 21: Freeing One's Self from Past Experience**

*Don't let what you're being get in the way of what you might become.*

-Harry Palmer

Deciding to have faith in God is not like any other decision. Faith defines the nature of one's existence and establishes a moral and ethical framework for relating to other people. It offers the ultimate carrot: the invitation to personally God and the experience of consciously receiving God's love. And all it asks in return is a complete identity makeover, accessorized with beliefs that you'll be expected to pay for before you're allowed to try them on.

It is fair enough to say that the first step of faith is indeed a leap. But faith does not have to leap over reason. Faith does not require us to leave our intellects behind as we begin to walk the path of spiritual discovery that leads to God. The first faith-step must be a leap because there are some things in life that shouldn't be stepped in, but are, nonetheless, important to get past. Therefore, faith wisely leaps over all obstacles to love. Faith dares to soar above doubt, uncertainty, and the vast abyss of the alogical. But the biggest hurdle that the initial leap of faith must clear is past experience.

If we are to consider embarking on a relationship with God, then we need to separate the wisdom of our experience from the experiences themselves. If our understanding of faith in God is striving to touch transcendent Truth, then it must have a universal appeal. One way to peer into this perspective is to ask: "Would I reach this same conclusion regardless of my upbringing and environment?" The value in approaching faith this way is that it provides an opportunity for all people to be unified by a common understanding of faith, even though the experience of faith is subjective and often too deep for words. Theology becomes a stumbling block if the definition of faith is not appropriate for all people at all times.

When the understanding of faith in God takes on this type of universal appeal, then the drawing power of faith is eternally secure. Every time the gravity of selfishness pulls us down to the animal level of a more materialistic outlook, faith, like the wind, powerful yet unseen, lifts us up. Faith is both attitude and action. Love-motivated faith liberates hope, validates trust, and justifies idealism. Faith encourages acceptance of ourselves even if our current state of character development is but a faint reflection of that which we strive to be.

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