DOI: 10.20911/21768757v56n3p657/2024

FAITH AS VIRTUE: THE NECESSITY OF DOUBT

A fé como virtude: a necessidade da dúvida

Mesfer Alhayyani *
Ali Sharaf **

ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on the role played by doubt in shaping faith as a mental state in humans. In contemporary discussions on faith, doubt refutes a theory or supports another. However, the crucial question remains: is doubt an essential element inherent in faith? This paper argues that doubt is a fundamental and necessary component of faith, especially when considering faith as a virtue. The first part of this paper sets the framework for this study by addressing some crucial relevant questions, such as what the necessary aspects of faith are. Is faith a virtue? The second part argues that, given the account of faith developed in the first part of the study, doubt is a necessary element and component of faith for it to be considered a virtue. This study's methodology is founded on critically examining primary and secondary sources relevant to faith as a virtue and engaging in conceptual and argumentative analyses.

Keywords: Faith. Doubt. Virtue. Necessary Conditions. Basic Good.

RESUMO: Este artigo centra-se no papel desempenhado pela dúvida na formação da fé enquanto estado mental dos seres humanos. Nos debates contemporâneos sobre a fé, a dúvida refuta uma teoria ou apoia outra. No entanto, a questão crucial mantém-se: será a dúvida um elemento essencial inerente à fé? Este artigo defende que a dúvida é uma componente fundamental e necessária da fé, especialmente quando se considera a fé como uma virtude. A primeira parte deste artigo estabelece o enquadramento para este estudo, abordando algumas questões cruciais relevantes, tais como: quais são os aspectos necessários da fé. A fé é uma virtude?

* Kuwait University, Kuwait City, Kuwait.
** Kuwait University, Kuwait City, Kuwait.

A segunda parte defende que, tendo em conta a descrição da fé desenvolvida na primeira parte do estudo, a dúvida é um elemento e uma componente necessários da fé para que esta possa ser considerada uma virtude. A metodologia deste estudo baseia-se na análise crítica de fontes primárias e secundárias relevantes para a fé como virtude e na realização de análises conceptuais e argumentativas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fé. Dúvida. Virtude. Condições Necessárias. Bem Fundamental.

1 Introduction

Contemporary discussions on faith revolve around the psychological aspects of the attitude to faith. While conversations about faith typically occur within the realm of philosophy of religion and often involve religious contexts, it is essential to note that faith can also be directed toward non-religious propositions, e.g., "Sarah has faith that God exists" and "Sarah has faith that her friend will pass the exam easily"[1]. The debate on the cognitive aspects of faith has led to contrasting theories. Some theories posit that belief is an essential element of faith, whereas others contend that belief is not necessary for faith. Most contemporary theories of faith use the argument from doubt to show that faith requires belief or non-doxastic attitudes. For instance, Howard-Snyder (2013, p. 361) argues that "being in doubt about something [or a proposition] need not be at odds with having faith that it is so". This reasoning aims to show that having faith, unlike belief, is entirely compatible with being in doubt about a specific proposition. For example, having faith in God is compatible with a certain degree of doubt. In other words, having faith in God does not necessarily require (or imply) having a high degree of certainty regarding the truth of the proposition "that God exists". We usually have faith in propositions that we are not entirely sure about their truth, such as that God exists, that my friend passed a test, etc.[2]

On the other hand, some contemporary theories of faith disagree with Howards-Snyder's view by emphasizing that doubt is compatible with belief. Hence, doubt is not a challenge to doxastic theories of religion. For instance, Malcolm and Scott (2017, p. 4-6) describe some arguments

[1] In the contemporary literature, faith is taken to be, or reduced to, a propositional attitude. In this sense, faith is a mental state that is held towards a proposition. For an alternative view, see Kvanvig (2018, Chapter 3). Faith, as a mental state, encompasses both religious and non-religious contexts. However, for the purpose of this study, the analysis and examples will specifically focus on non-religious faith.

[2] The view that faith is compatible with doubt appears in several works of contemporary thinkers, such as Pojman (1986), Schellenberg (2005), Audi (2008), and McKaughan (2013).

in which belief is compatible with a certain degree of doubt, and thus, doubt is not a challenge to doxastic theories of faith[3]. They conclude that the challenge to non-doxastic theories of faith is to "either recognize and defend the faithfulness of the religious fictionalist or explain why fictionalism is not enough for faith" (MALCOLM; SCOTT, 2017, p. 15). According to this objection, if we reject belief as a necessary condition for faith, we cannot distinguish between genuine faith and pretend faith (or fictionalist faith), and thus, faith requires belief.

Thus far, we have seen that contemporary faith theories use doubt to reject or support a particular account of faith. However, this paper intends to give more attention to doubt's role in shaping and maintaining faith by arguing that doubt is a necessary component of faith, especially when we consider faith to be a virtue.

2 Aspects of Faith

One might ask: what are the necessary aspects of faith? Arguing for an account of faith will be a framework that helps us later in the study to see doubt's role in shaping and maintaining faith, especially when considering faith as a virtue. In this section, we argue that having faith in the proposition *p* requires three elements: a cognitive aspect, an affective aspect, and a capacity to withstand contrary evidence. In other words, for an individual *S* to maintain faith in the proposition *p*, they must (a) hold a belief in *p*, (b) view *p* favorably, and (c) demonstrate resilience in the face of evidence that opposes *p*. Ultimately, this account of faith will help us to illustrate the role of doubt and its necessity when considering faith as a virtue.

One way to argue for the cognitive aspect of faith is by considering the old-age problem of faith and reason in philosophical discussions. If faith does not involve a mental component, namely belief, why has the longstanding issue of faith versus reason persisted for centuries? If faith does not include belief, there would not be any conflict between faith and reason, and philosophers would not debate the rationality of faith. For example, Swinburne (2005, p. 138) defines a person with religious faith as "the person who has the theoretical conviction that there is a God". On the other hand, Alex Rosenberg states, "By definition, faith is belief in the absence of evidence" (*apud* HOWARD-SNYDER, 2013, p. 368). Richard Dawkins pushes this claim further, writing, "Faith is belief despite, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence" (*apud* HOWARD-SNYDER,

[3] For objections to Malcolm and Scott's view, see Howard-Snyder (2018).

2013, p. 368). The tension between faith and reason arises from the fact that faith is seen as an attitude that inherently involves belief, even in the absence of evidence supporting the truth of the propositional content of faith. This tension arises only if the propositional content of faith is believed. It is important to note that one can rationally accept or assume *p* without solid evidence for its truth, but one cannot rationally believe *p* without such evidence. Therefore, the most plausible explanation for the enduring problem of faith and reason is that philosophers traditionally view faith as partially consisting of belief.

Another way to argue for the cognitive aspect of faith is by considering commitments relevant to faith. Having religious faith in proposition *p* necessitates an absolute commitment to its truth and logical consequences, often requiring significant sacrifices. However, such commitment is only achievable if one genuinely believes in the propositional content of their faith. For instance, a devout individual who believes in the existence of God would demonstrate practical commitment by engaging in prayer and adhering to divine commandments. However, this commitment is contingent upon genuine belief in the proposition, such as the belief in God's existence. Achieving such a commitment without genuinely believing in the propositional content of faith, mainly when significant sacrifices are involved, presents a difficult challenge to reconcile. Therefore, religious faith in proposition p appears unlikely to exist without a corresponding belief in *p*.

While the preceding argument has primarily addressed religious propositional faith, similar logic can also be extended to non-religious propositional faith. Suppose, for example, a group of friends has unwavering faith that their friend will succeed in their chosen career path. They can only maintain this faith if they are fully committed in practical terms to the truth of their belief and its logical implications. This commitment might entail significant sacrifices, such as investing time, resources, and emotional support into their friend's endeavors. However, their commitment to this belief hinges on their genuine conviction. If their friend demonstrates a lack of dedication, fails to meet academic or professional expectations, or exhibits behavior inconsistent with their goals, the friends may begin to doubt their belief. In such circumstances, the friends' ability to maintain their practical commitment to their faith becomes uncertain, as it relies on genuine belief rather than mere pretense or wishful thinking. Thus, sustaining a pragmatic commitment to a proposition of faith necessitates genuine belief in its propositional content, especially when faced with the prospect of significant sacrifices.

Thus far, the paper argued that faith involves a cognitive aspect where the agent believes the propositional content of their faith. However, is the mental element sufficient for having faith? The short answer is no.

Before delving into the second aspect of faith, it is essential to elaborate on why simply believing that *p* is inadequate for possessing faith that *p*. This elaboration will pave the way for introducing the second necessary condition for faith.

Arguing that the belief that *p* alone is enough for faith that *p* presents implausible implications, leading to absurd conclusions. Beliefs arise from judging a proposition to be accurate, resulting in beliefs about various matters, such as believing there are some books in my office or that I am typing on the keyboard right now. Now, let us examine the following *reductio ad absurdum* to illustrate the flaw in assuming that belief that *p* is sufficient for faith that *p*:

(1) The belief that *p* is sufficient for faith that *p*.
(2) I believe that there are some books in my office.
(3) I believe that I am typing on the keyboard right now.
(4) Therefore, I have faith that there are some books in my office (from 1 and 2), and I have faith that I am typing on the keyboard right now (from 1 and 3).

While we contended that faith necessarily involves a cognitive aspect (belief), this argument demonstrates that belief that *p* alone is inadequate for having faith that *p*. This assertion is underscored by the fact that this assumption yields absurd implications, as exemplified by (4). Hence, faith requires something more than a cognitive attitude.

Examining how we use language when we express our faith helps introduce the second aspect of faith. We usually express faith in propositions that we consider suitable or desirable. For example, Alston (1996, p. 12) argues that one's faith that democracy will eventually be established everywhere "implies that [she] looks on this prospect with favor". According to this reasoning, we can believe that democracy will be promoted everywhere in the world if we consider democracy to be suitable or desirable. Moreover, Audi (2008, p. 97) argues for a similar view: "If I do not have a favorable attitude toward something's happening, I cannot have faith that it will". For this reason, it seems odd or absurd to express faith in propositions that are not considered reasonable or desirable, such as "I have faith that I will die tomorrow". Thus, although the cognitive aspect is necessary for faith, it is insufficient. It seems that faith also involves a positive affective aspect.

It follows from the previous discussion that faith involves a cognitive aspect (where the agent believes the propositional content of their faith) and an affective aspect (where the agent has positive affection or positive evaluation towards the proposition of their faith). The second (affective) aspect of faith may include many attitudes that involve positive feelings towards the propositional content of faith. For example, Alvin Plantinga

(2000, p. 292) describes the person of faith as someone who not only believes that God exists but also "finds the whole scheme of salvation enormously attractive, delightful, moving, a source of amazed wonderment". Plantinga's perspective elucidates the nature of attitudes encompassed by what we label as the affective aspect of faith. In Plantinga's framework, faith entails a favorable assessment rooted in emotions like love and gratitude.

Before introducing the third aspect of faith, following the same strategy we used in presenting the second aspect is helpful. Now, let us assume that the cognitive and affective elements are sufficient to have faith, and this reasoning will reveal the third aspect. In many cases, we might have mental and affective attitudes toward a proposition, yet we may lack faith. Suppose, for example, I am in London tomorrow (given that I have already booked a ticket and intend to go there) and desire to be there tomorrow. It is a good thing since I plan to meet some friends there. Nevertheless, I do not identify my attitude as faith. It would be odd to say, "I have faith that I will be in London tomorrow". Similarly, I may believe that tomorrow will be a sunny day, and I desire it and consider it a good thing to have a sunny day. Again, I would never identify my attitude towards tomorrow's weather with faith. But why?

We could think of many possible scenarios in which one satisfies the cognitive and affective requirements for faith, yet one lacks faith. Having faith also necessitates resilience to maintain a belief even when confronted with contrary evidence regarding what we believe. Unlike mere belief, the capacity to withstand contrary evidence can explain why faith is not promptly susceptible to alteration. It is widely held that beliefs have a mind-to-world direction of fit[4]. The propositional content of belief represents how we utterly understand the world (given our available evidence). According to this view, beliefs are subject to revision when there is a mismatch between the world and what we believe, i.e., if what we think is not true, then the content of our belief should be revised to fit the world and not vice versa, as beliefs "aim at truth" (WILLIAMS, 1973, p. 137). So, what distinguishes mere beliefs from faith is that the latter involves, unlike beliefs, resilience even in light of contrary evidence.

Recall the example where I merely believe and desire to be in London tomorrow. If I am faced with contrary evidence, e.g., hearing that a storm might affect the flight schedule, I may revise my belief "that I will be in London tomorrow". I would easily give up believing that because, unlike faith, I lack any sense of resilience. On the other hand, suppose I have faith that God exists, and my faith is challenged by some arguments that I read against the existence of God. In this case, I would still have faith

[4] Anscombe (2000, p. 65) uses the phrase 'direction of fit'.

as long as I: a) believe that God exists, b) have positive affections towards the existence of God, and c) can resist current (and future)[5] contrary evidence to the belief. In this sense, faith, unlike mere belief, is a flexible (but not fleeting) attitude that can be sustained even when faced with contrary evidence.

3 Faith as a Virtue

In this section, we intend to determine whether faith is a virtue, given the account of faith we developed in the first part of the paper[6]. When considering faith as a virtue, many authors focus on faith in the religious context. For instance, Adams (1984, p. 3) argues for faith as a virtue by discussing it spiritually to show that "it is a prominent and very well-known feature of Christian tradition that faith is regarded as a virtue". However, this paper evaluates faith as a mental state in which the propositional content of faith may involve religious or non-religious propositions. The question now is: Is faith a virtue?

Kantians and consequentialists may answer the question by pointing out that 'virtue' means a good thing about a person. The discussion about virtue in this context will be theoretical talk about states of affairs or acts of the will. On the other hand, a more fruitful answer can be found in the Aristotelian approach. Some Aristotelians argue that virtue is a disposition of character we need to have a flourishing human life[7]. While others, like Chappell (1996, 27), contend that: "it is a disposition of character which instantiates or promotes responsiveness to one or more basic good". Despite the different definitions of 'virtue,' they are not necessarily in conflict; we need virtues to have a flourishing human life because 'flourishing human life' involves responsiveness to one or more basic goods[8]. 'Is faith a virtue?' can be paraphrased as 'Is faith needed for a flourishing human life?'

To answer this question, we need to show what essential goods that faith is a responsiveness or a source of responsiveness. However, before doing that, let us impose two restrictions on what we mean by 'basic good.' First, *x* is a basic good if *x* is either evident good (i.e., a good that we

[5] Howard-Snyder (2013, p. 386) argues that the ability to resist contrary evidence that faith requires does not only involve resisting current counterevidence but also resisting possible contrary evidence in the future.
[6] According to Jeffrey (2016, p. 393), the recent literature suggests that faith is a virtue, where "faith is a disposition to trust either in a person or in the truth of a proposition".
[7] See Hursthouse (1991, p. 224).
[8] According to Audi (2011, p. 294), it is uncontroversial to assume that "virtues constitute praiseworthy elements in a person's psychology".

usually think is unimaginable to deny its goodness), self-evident good (i.e., a good that we feel is self-defeating when we deny its goodness), or both. For example, seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are evident goods to the extent that utilitarians built their moral system on their goodness. These goods give us a *prima facie* reason to act unless one is a philosopher who could deny the prospect of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. On the other hand, being wise – the ability to critically evaluate an argument, to build a clear and sound argument, to point out inconsistencies about arguments, etc. – is a self-evident good (and, of course, an evident good). It is self-evident good because trying to argue against it successfully (if possible) would involve critically evaluating the argument, building a clear and sound argument, and pointing out inconsistencies.

The second restriction on what we mean by 'basic good' is that basic goods are fundamental; that is, *x* is a basic good if and only if *x* is sought for its own sake. Rationality, for example, is sought for its own sake. To illustrate this point, consider the following dialogue:

1) Sarah is in a hurry because she wants to be ready at 8 am.
2) Why does Sarah want to be ready at 8 am?
3) Because (…).

Note that the question in (2) requires further explanation, and blanks in (3) can be filled with many varied reasons, such as "she has an important meeting with her associates at work." Now, let us consider another dialogue:

4) I will visit Japan this summer because it will be a joyous trip.
5) Why do you want joy?

The question in (5), unlike (2), looks puzzling because (in normal circumstances and non-nihilist conversations), we recognize joy as a basic good that need not be reduced to something else. This also applies to fun, pleasure, happiness, satisfaction, delight, etc., which we usually consider basic goods that do not require further explanation and are sought for their own sake[9].

After we have clarified what we mean by 'basic good,' let us return to the central question of this section: 'Is faith needed for a flourishing human life?' Given the account of faith and the account of 'basic good(s)' that this paper defends, faith is a virtue needed for a flourishing human life because faith involves responsiveness to some basic goods. From the

[9] We consider here 'being irreducible' and 'not requiring further explanation' as one characterization of 'basic good(s).' However, some authors like Chappell (1996, p. 28) and Finnis (1980, p. 62) differentiate between the two characterizations. Our primary goal here is to show why faith is a virtue but not to argue for a unique account of basic good(s).

above discussion regarding basic goods, faith is sensitive to two basic goods: truth and what we shall call 'positive emotions'. In section 2.0., we argued that faith involves a cognitive aspect, namely, believing in the propositional content of faith. So, faith seems partly responsive to truth since belief 'aims at truth' (WILLIAMS, 1973, p. 137). Truth, in this sense, is a basic good.

Given our account of basic good(s), truth is a self-evident good sought for its own sake (requiring no further explanation). Truth is a self-evident good of the same sort as being wise, as discussed, because arguing against it is not worth having. Consider the assertion that truth holds no value and is not worth pursuing. Such a statement inherently undermines its own worthiness as if it were true; no assertion would hold value (including this one). Conversely, if it were false, then the claim itself lacks merit. Furthermore, truth is fundamental because knowing that Sarah is seeking truth provides a sufficient understanding of her actions without additional explanation.

In section 2.0., it was argued that faith also involves an affective aspect, namely, having a positive evaluation of the propositional content of faith. This may include many positive feelings towards the object of faith, such as love, hope, gratitude … etc. Positive emotions like love and hope are often considered self-evident because their intrinsic value is intuitively understood and universally recognized across cultures and societies. Love, for example, fosters emotional connection, empathy, and altruism, leading to healthier relationships and increased well-being for both the giver and recipient. It promotes cooperation, compassion, and a sense of belonging, which is essential for social cohesion and harmony. Similarly, hope is cherished for its capacity to inspire perseverance, resilience, and optimism in facing challenges and adversity. Hope provides comfort, inspiration, and a sense of purpose, vital for psychological well-being and personal growth. As a result, positive emotions, like love and hope, are universally recognized as intrinsic goods because they contribute positively to human flourishing, enhancing both individual lives and the fabric of society as a whole.

Moreover, positive emotions are sought for their own sake because they inherently contribute to our well-being, happiness, and satisfaction. Positive emotions, such as love, hope, and serenity, are valued for the positivity and fulfillment they bring. They enhance our subjective life experience, promote psychological resilience, and foster healthy relationships and social connections. As a result, people naturally gravitate towards experiences and activities that evoke positive emotions, seeking them out as ends in themselves rather than a means to an end. Positive emotions are basic because knowing that Sarah is seeking hope or love provides sufficient understanding of her actions without additional explanation.

Based on the preceding analysis, it can be inferred that, according to our account of faith, it qualifies as a virtue as it contributes to a flourishing human life by encompassing attitudes such as belief, which pursues truth (a basic good), and positive emotions like love and hope (basic goods).

3.1 Faith and Doubt

It was argued in the introduction that contemporary theories of faith have broadly utilized doubt as a tool to either challenge or bolster specific conceptions of faith. However, this paper explores doubt's significance in profoundly shaping and sustaining faith. It argues that doubt is an indispensable element of faith, particularly when faith is regarded as a virtue. In this section, some arguments are described to show that faith is compatible with doubt and necessary for having faith. Before introducing the arguments favoring this claim, we must consider what we mean by 'doubt.'

People have different views about the relationship between faith and doubt. In most works, doubt is used as an argument against doxastic theories of faith. This reasoning aims to show that faith does not require belief since faith is compatible with doubt, while belief is not. For instance, Pojman (2001, p. 137) takes a clear position by arguing that doubt is 'the absence of belief'. In the same line of thought, Howard-Snyder (2013, p. 361) argues that "being in doubt about something need not be at odds with having faith that it is so". Pojman and Howard-Snyder, among others, aim to show that believing the propositional content of faith is not necessary for faith by relying on the argument from doubt[10]. This view is challenged by showing that belief is also compatible with being in doubt. For example, Malcolm and Scott (2017, p. 3-7) consider three notions of 'doubt' and argue that, after careful examination of the literature, 'doubt' refers to something we believe with less certainty, where belief is compatible with doubt[11].

To illustrate the point, let us consider the following example. Imagine that I firmly believe that my daughter will achieve a perfect score on her math exam due to my confidence in her mathematical abilities. Let us take the scenario further: my wife expresses concern, revealing that our daughter played video games the previous night instead of studying. Naturally, this revelation introduces doubt into my initial belief. Despite this doubt, I still maintain my belief, albeit with diminished certainty. It is crucial to distinguish between holding a belief and possessing evidence to grasp the essence of doubt as a component of belief with reduced certainty.

[10] Similar reasoning appears in McKaughan's work (2013, p. 106-107).
[11] For an alternative view, see Schellenberg (2014, p. 4) who argues that when someone is in doubt 'she is not in a state of belief'.

The degree of confidence in my belief is contingent upon the available evidence. Initially, my confidence level may be high or moderate, reflecting my trust in my daughter's math skills. However, upon learning about her lack of study, my confidence may diminish moderately, as I still believe in her abilities despite the setback. Thus, in both instances, I believe in my daughter's success, albeit with varying degrees of certainty based on the evidence presented.

Having outlined our conceptualization of faith as a virtue and emphasized its compatibility with doubt, we now introduce three arguments that show that doubt is a necessary component of faith, especially when considering it a virtue that seeks basic goods we need for a flourishing human life.

The first argument revolves around the idea that faith is incompatible with absolute certainty. We shall call it *the venture argument*. Previously, it was argued that faith is compatible with a degree of doubt, but the question here is: is faith compatible with certainty? It seems implausible to claim that faith can be held towards propositions we have absolute certainty about. For example, it sounds odd to claim that I have faith that 1 + 1 = 2. This oddness is because we tend not to express our faith in propositions that involve absolute certainty, such as mathematical truths.

On the other hand, we usually express our faith regarding things that we are not sure about their truth. For example, no one would feel anything odd when I express my faith that my friend overcame his financial problems because, despite my faith (and belief that my friend will overcome the issues), I may experience some doubts regarding my faith depending on the available evidence. Of course, by maintaining my belief against increasing contrary evidence, I risk becoming delusional. However, I can still keep my belief to some extent, and this sense of resilience is valuable to me in maintaining my faith[12]. This idea of faith being an adventure beyond evidence can be traced back to Kierkegaard (1846/1968, p. 180), who defines faith as "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness"[13]. This reasoning shows that faith is not only compatible with doubt but that doubt is necessary for faith. Furthermore, this level of doubt is what gives faith its ethical value. Suppose, for example, I heard from my friend's physician that my friend is well and does not need medical assistance. After this new piece of evidence, I would be sure that my friend is cured, and thus, expressing

[12] This quality can be understood in terms of the account of faith we defended, where faith is a mental attitude that does not involve a cognitive aspect, but also an affective aspect and resilience.

[13] The same reasoning appears in several works. For example, see James (1896, p. 9), Creel (p. 1994, p. 330-344) and Helm (2000, p. 122-123).

my faith that he will overcome his illness is odd and has no value because I am sure that my friend is okay. On the other hand, before knowing that from his physician, my faith is valuable because I lack that certainty. Therefore, doubt is not just a tool to support or undermine a particular theory of faith; it is a necessary component of faith when considering faith as a virtue.

The second argument is relevant to the third aspect of faith we defended. We shall call it *the tension argument*. If faith is a mental attitude that involves resilience towards contrary evidence, then doubt is necessary for having faith. How can faith be a resilient attitude if we have certainty about the truth of the proposition of faith? If faith is an attitude that involves resilience, then there should be a tension between what is true and what is not true, and once this tension is over, say for knowing that it is true (or not), then faith would not be a resilient attitude. For example, imagine that I have faith that my spouse will receive a promotion at her work; since I am not sure about the truth of "that my spouse will receive a promotion at her work," my faith can be resilient in the light of contrary evidence. Once the tension is over, say after I hear that she received that promotion (or not), faith would not be a resilient attitude. This example is in line with what we argued in 3.0. Faith is a virtue because it is needed for a flourishing human life, especially in seeking essential goods, such as truth. In this sense, faith as a "virtue allows for fallibility" (AUDI, 1995, p. 456) since I am not sure about the truth of the proposition of faith. Given this, what makes faith a virtue is that it involves pursuing truth. Once the pursuit is over, faith would not be a virtue in that sense. Hence, doubt (understood as a lack of absolute certainty) is essential for having faith.

The last argument is about the motivation behind our actions. We shall call it *the intentional argument*. One way to recognize a virtue is by understanding the motivation behind our actions, and "action from virtue is not a behavioral concept, in the sense of one defined in terms of *what* is accomplished as opposed to *how*" (AUDI, 1995, p. 450-451). According to this reasoning, action stemming from virtue is not solely defined by behavior in terms of what is achieved but rather in how it is accomplished. Consider the scenario where John, a devoted father, believes that his daughter, Sarah, has the potential to achieve greatness in the future. He has faith in her abilities and dreams of seeing her succeed. Driven by this faith, John consistently provides Sarah with love, support, and encouragement. He spends quality time with her, engages in meaningful conversations, and offers guidance to help her pursue her passions and goals. John's actions are motivated by genuine faith in Sarah's potential and a desire to see her thrive. Despite their challenges and doubts, John remains steadfast in his faith and supports Sarah wholeheartedly.

In contrast, imagine another father, Mark, with a daughter named Sarah. However, Mark's motivations differ significantly from John's. Mark is primarily concerned with how others perceive him as a father and fears being judged by society if he does not fulfill his parental duties. Although he outwardly expresses faith in Sarah's abilities, his actions are driven by a desire to maintain a positive image rather than genuine faith in her potential. Mark provides for Sarah's basic needs and spends time with her, but his interactions lack sincerity and depth. Despite appearing to do the right thing on the surface, Mark's actions lack virtue because they are not rooted in genuine faith or goodwill toward his daughter.

These scenarios highlight the importance of intentions in determining the virtuousness of actions. While both fathers may engage in similar behavior, John's actions stem from genuine faith in his daughter, making them genuinely virtuous. On the other hand, Mark's actions, driven by selfish motives and a desire to avoid criticism, lack virtue despite outwardly appearing commendable. Unlike Mark, experiencing doubts (believing with less certainty) when faced with contrary evidence would not affect John's faith and actions. It seems plausible that John maintains his faith and intentions while acting from faith despite the doubts. On the contrary, it is unclear how Mark can still perform these actions when he lacks good intentions, especially when faced with contrary evidence that threatens his beliefs. This underscores the significance of acting with sincerity and goodwill despite the doubts rather than merely going through the motions to fulfill societal expectations. This reasoning leads us to distinguish between actions that result from good intentions that can coexist with doubts and actions that are generated by other motivations, such as self-interest, which cannot be maintained in light of contrary evidence.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to push contemporary philosophical discussions further by arguing that doubt is compatible with faith and necessary for faith. To achieve that, in the first part of the paper, we defended an account of faith that involves a cognitive aspect, an affective aspect, and resilience to contrary evidence. Moreover, it was contended that faith is a virtue, showing that faith is needed for a flourishing human life because faith is sensitive to two essential goods: truth and positive emotions. Lastly, we introduced three arguments to the claim that doubt is necessary for faith.

The paper lays the groundwork for future investigations into the intricate relationship between faith, doubt, and virtue, offering avenues for explo-

ring how doubt shapes virtuous actions and moral decision-making. By demonstrating the indispensability of doubt in shaping and sustaining virtuous faith, this study opens up promising avenues for further inquiry. Future research could investigate the psychological mechanisms underlying the interplay between faith, doubt, and righteous action, exploring how individuals navigate uncertainty while striving for moral excellence. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that this paper does not delve into the epistemology of faith, as it lies beyond the confines of its scope. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to recognize that various attitudes, such as trust and friendship, entail a degree of resilience that surpasses mere evidence. Paradoxically, doubts within these contexts do not diminish the value of such attitudes; instead, their perseverance amidst uncertainty underscores their virtuous nature. Furthermore, while this study primarily analyzed faith within a non-religious framework, examining religious faith could enrich discussions on the necessity of doubt, particularly concerning faith's virtuous dimensions.

An additional aspect worth noting is the contribution this paper makes to the ongoing dialogue between philosophy and theology. By integrating doubt into the concept of faith, the paper bridges a significant gap between philosophical inquiry and theological doctrine. This dialogue opens up new perspectives on how theological concepts can be informed by philosophical rigor and how philosophical theories can benefit from theological insights. The interplay between doubt and faith provides a rich field for both philosophers and theologians to explore, offering deeper understanding and greater nuance in discussions about human belief systems. This study thus not only advances philosophical discussions but also invites a collaborative effort between philosophy and theology to further explore the profound implications of doubt and faith in both secular and religious contexts.

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Article submitted on 16.05.24 and approved on 08.10.24.

Mesfer Alhayyani holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Manchester (UK – 2021). He is an assistant professor of Islamic Philosophy at Kuwait University. **Contribution to the text:** structuring, introduction, first and second topics, and conclusion. Orcid.org/0009-0006-6588-5630. E-mail: Mesfer.alhayyani@ku.edu.kw

Address: Ardiya, Block 3, Street 2, House 41
Farwaniyah, Kuwait.

Ali Sharaf holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from SUNY at Buffalo (USA – 2021). He is an assistant professor of Eastern Philosophy at Kuwait University. **Contribution to the text:** structuring, introduction, third topic, and conclusion. Orcid.org/0000-0001-7301-0961. E-mail: Ali.sharaf@ku.edu.kw

Address: Al-Qosour, Block 7, St 26, House 27
Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Kuwait.