

Experience has quite definitely shown that some reasons for holding a belief are much more likely to be justified by the event than others. It might naturally be supposed, for instance, that the best of all reasons for a belief was a strong conviction of certainty accompanying the belief. Experience, however, shows that this is not so, and that as a matter of fact, conviction by itself is more likely to mislead than it is to guarantee truth. On the other hand, lack of assurance and persistent hesitation to come to any belief whatever are an equally poor guarantee that the few beliefs which are arrived at are sound. Experience also shows that assertion, however long continued, although it is unfortunately with many people an effective enough means of inducing belief, is not in any way a ground for holding it.

The method which has proved effective, as a matter of actual fact, in providing a firm foundation for belief wherever it has been capable of application, is what is usually called the scientific method. I firmly believe that the scientific method, although slow and never claiming to lead to complete truth, is the only method which in the long run will give satisfactory foundations for beliefs. It consists in demanding facts as the only basis for conclusions, and in consistently and continuously testing any conclusions which may have been reached, against the test of new facts and, wherever possible, by the crucial test of experiment. It consists also in full publication of the evidence on which conclusions are based, so that other workers may be assisted in new researches, or enabled to develop their own interpretations and arrive at possibly very different conclusions.

There are, however, all sorts of occasions on which the scientific method is not applicable. That method involves slow testing, frequent suspension of judgment, restricted conclusions. The exigencies of everyday life, on the other hand, often make it necessary to act on a hasty balancing of admittedly incomplete evidence, to take immediate action, and to draw conclusions in advance of the evidence. It is also true that such action will always be necessary, and necessary in respect of ever larger issues; and this in spite of the fact that one of the most important trends of civilization is to remove sphere after sphere of life out of the domain of such intuitive judgment into the domain of rigid calculation based on science. It is here that belief plays its most important role. When we cannot be certain, we must proceed in part by faith—faith not only in the validity of our own capacity of making judgments, but also in the existence of certain other realities, preeminently moral and spiritual realities. It has been said that faith consists in acting always on the nobler hypothesis; and though this definition is a trifle rhetorical, it embodies a seed of real truth.

Q-1 According to the author where does belief play an important role?

When evidences are not clear and immediate actions are required, belief plays an important role. Belief provides the validity for the judgments made in one's own capacity. Belief is also important in the matters related to morality and spirituality.

Q-2 What justification does the author claim for his belief in the scientific method?

The author believes the scientific method is the most effective method to make conclusions. According to him, scientific method, even though slow and never leads to complete truth, is the best method as the conclusions made through this method are based on facts. He further adds that even this conclusions can be tested again and again with the emergence of new facts. Also, scientific method consists of publication of the evidences on which conclusions are made. This helps the new researchers and makes the process more credible.

Q. 3) Do you gather from the paragraph that conclusions reached by the scientific method should be considered final. Give reasons for your answer.

The argument of the author in the passage gives the impression that conclusions made by the scientific method can not be considered final. Author claims that even though conclusion reached via scientific method are factual and provide satisfactory foundations for a belief, but the scientific method does not guarantee complete truth. Hence conclusions reach by scientific method are not necessarily final.

Q. 4) In what circumstances, according to the author, is it necessary to abandon the scientific method.

According to the author, there are certain situations where scientific method can be abandoned. In daily life, sometimes immediate actions are required. In such circumstances actions can be based on scientific methods rather actions are taken considering the incomplete evidences at hand. Usually matters of greater concern require swift actions. In such conditions, belief derives the decisions.

Q. 5) How does the basis of "intuitive judgement" differ from that of scientific decision?

The basis of "intuitive judgement" is different from

that of scientific. Intuitive judgements are made without considering facts instead belief plays an important role here. whereas, scientific decisions are made on tested evidences and facts. Civilizations have over the period of time tried to remove the domain of intuitive judgements with that of scientific, but in situations where urgent decisions are required intuitive judgements play a crucial role.