

# Reason at the Crossroads: Delving into the Tension of Belief and Awareness of Thinking Armada Riyanto's Perspective

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to explore the tension that occurs between belief and conscious thinking. Life is often confronted with something rational and irrational. Rational refers to conscious thinking (ratio), while irrational refers to belief (faith). Reason becomes a mediator to explain beliefs that are essentially difficult to understand by reason. Reason allows for a dialogue between belief and conscious thinking, so as not to fall into an unequal understanding. Humans need to use reason optimally in order to reach an integral understanding of the beliefs they hold. The method used in this study is a qualitative method through literature study. This study found that the tension between belief and reason is natural, because the task of reason is to question or criticize so that humans do not fall into blind belief. Belief without reason will actually lead to superstition, while reason without being based on faith will fall into nihilism and relativism. The contribution of this study is to the harmonization of the two worlds, rational and irrational, and philosophical reflection as a way to find holistic truth. Reason is the basic guideline in elaborating between belief and conscious thinking.

**Keywords :** *Reason; Belief; Ratio*

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sebab tugas rasio adalah untuk mempertanyakan atau mengkritisi supaya manusia tidak jatuh dalam kepercayaan yang buta. Kepercayaan tanpa ratio, sejatinya akan menjurus pada supertisme, sedangkan akal tanpa didasari oleh iman akan jatuh pada paham nihilisme dan relativisme. Sumbangan penelitian ini pada harmonisasi dua dunia yang rasional dan irasional, serta refleksi filosofis sebagai cara menemukan kebenaran yang holistik. Akal budi menjadi pedoman dasar dalam mengelaborasi antara kepercayaan dan kesadaran berikir.

**Keywords :** *Akal budi; Kepercayaan; Rasio*

**Abstract:** Tujuan penelitian ini menyelami ketegangan yang terjadi antara kepercayaan dan kesadaran berpikir. Kehidupan kerap dibenturkan dengan suatu yang rasional dan irasional. Rasional mengacu pada kesadaran berpikir (rasio), sedangkan irasional mengarah pada kepercayaan (iman). Akal budi menjadi mediator untuk menjelaskan kepercayaan yang secara hakikinya sulit dipahami oleh rasio. Akal budi memungkinkan adanya dialog antara kepercayaan dan kesadaran berpikir, sehingga tidak jatuh pada pemahaman yang timpang. Manusia perlu menggunakan akal budi secara maksimal supaya sampai pada pemahaman yang integral atas kepercayaan yang dianut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ialah metode kualitatif melalui studi kepustakaan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa ketegangan antara kepercayaan dan rasio adalah hal yang wajar,

## Introduction

Reason is a concept that refers to all human abilities. Reason helps humans think, understand, make ethical considerations and act correctly (Natalia, 2023). In her understanding, reason contains two different elements, namely reason and budi. The word reason is definitively identified with rational or intellectual ability, while budi refers to the morals or ethics that a person has. Thus, it can be understood that reason actually describes the human capacity to think logically, as well as being able to act wisely.

Referring to the perspective of scientists, the consciousness of thinking within the framework of science originates reason from matter, as depicted in the Big Bang event (Riyanto, 2025: 49). However, this view cannot be absolute because there is no evidence of human consciousness, namely that reason comes from similar matter. This is in line with Armada Riyanto's view. Quoting Thomas Aquinas, Riyanto said that consciousness (reason) should not be narrowed down to the material aspect of human presence, in the form of the brain (Riyanto, 2025: 50)

In its development, reason experiences a crossroads, between the rational and empirical with the irrational or mystical. This reality is clearly seen in the meaning of "Belief" and "Thinking Consciousness". In his understanding, belief offers a simpler framework of thought, which is based on concrete experience and even tradition. Belief does not require complete reason. Reason is directed to submit to belief. According to Muhammad, et al., belief is born from a process that slowly accumulates into a form of belief, in other words, belief is belief in a particular product or attribute (Muhammad et al., 2023). Riyanto said that when someone chooses to believe, reason seems to be stopped from thinking about what is believed (Riyanto, 2025: 56).

In the belief of reason, it is often no longer seeking knowledge about what is believed. There is a tendency that when someone thinks and finds a reality that is contrary to what is believed, rebellion will arise, lawsuits can even lead to heresy (Riyanto, 2025: 56). Even in the history of rational civilization, every effort to think and the results of thinking that turn out to try to reach the real truth and contradict public belief, then the effort will reap great law. This clearly happened to Socrates who was sentenced to drink poison because he tried to teach children to understand the real reality of life.

The reality of life sometimes demands sacrifice, especially when the rational and logical collide with the irrational or belief. However, the real reality of life requires a rational mindset. Life should not be subject to blind belief. Life needs to be understood and comprehended with sufficient reason (Jeremiah, 2022). Thus, the meaning of life will arrive at the ideal truth, where reason works deeply and as it should.

As commonly understood, there are things in this world that can only be understood with "belief", but cannot be explained in "thinking consciousness". This situation clearly shows that human consciousness (reason) also has limitations. There are realities that are apparently beyond the reach of reason. But everyone must try to achieve the highest awareness in order to understand the complex reality of life. A person needs to use reason to the maximum in order to arrive at an integral understanding. Quoting Plato, Sumaryono emphasized the importance of reason as a tool to achieve truth and justice (Sumaryono,

2013: 130). Meanwhile, Aristotle focused on the use of reason in achieving eudaimonia (happiness or good life) through ethical living. The main source of this research is the book "Is thinking" written by Armada Riyanto. This book has briefly discussed the tension between belief and thinking consciousness. The journals referred to include Tinambunan, ERL (2020). Reason and Faith in Religious Life: Dichotomy or Harmony; Unwakoly, S. (2022). Critical Thinking in Philosophy of Science: A Study in Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology, each of which discusses the role and position of reason in humans. Based on this, this study will first explain how reason plays a role in the midst of the tension between belief and conscious thinking.

## Method

The method used in this writing is qualitative research in the form of literature study, critical analysis of the book "Is Thinking: Wings of the Philosophy of Relasionality of Liyan (Other). In addition, the author also uses other references such as books, news, and journals to support this writing.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Definition and Function of Reason

According to the term, reason comes from the word reason, which refers to the power of thought, mind and memory. While reason is understood as an inner tool which is a combination of reason and feelings. When combined, reason can be formulated as a healthy mind (Natalia, 2023). According to Angelina, reason without reason cannot be called healthy reason (Angelina, 2020). Reason can only be called healthy reason if reason is together with reason.

Teguh said that reason has several functions. First, intellect, to maintain awareness, understand, analyze, conceptualize, reflect, give reasons and imagine. Second, the freedom to consider, be careful, choose and make decisions (Teguh, 2023: 167). KBBI simply explains the difference between the words rational and virtuous. A rational person is a person who has reason, namely clever or clever. While a virtuous person is a person who has goodness, namely wisdom, good behavior, generous, and kind. This shows that the two realities are closely related. Reason functions to provide control over what is bad or good, which is produced or thought by reason. Then this is projected by reason to give birth to good character, good character and good deeds.

In everyday life, reason almost takes over and determines everything that humans do. According to Thomas Aquinas, something good comes from reason, because reason cannot negate it. The nature of reason in this context is free (Jeremiah, 2022). According to Natalia, reason is often identified with the brain. The brain is the nerve center located in the human skull cavity, which systematically regulates human life (Natalia, 2023). On this basis, the brain is often considered as "I" but "not the true me", because the true me is in the deepest conscience (Teguh, 2023:168). Because of this, it is not uncommon for humans to deify their reason, and consider reason as their true identity. Negating this opinion, Rochais said that true identity is in one's inner self and not in reason (Rochais. 2024: 74).

According to Natalia, the basis of reason is real, logical and reasonable (Natalia, 2023). That is what is meant by the dimension of truth for reason. Reason finds it difficult to grasp something absurd, because in it there is no autonomous truth or can be explained by language. This is in line with Natalia's view of Ratio (reason). According to her, human reason can only accept things that can be logically explained so that things beyond reason cannot be accepted because they are unreasonable. However, this understanding is not intended to deny things that are unreasonable. Reason continues to work in its logic, but there are dimensions, realities, and spaces in this world that cannot be reached by reason itself. According to Armada, the realm of truth is as far as it can still be explained or spoken, because truth is a component of language (Armada, 2025: 57). This explanation definitively aims to emphasize that what is meant by truth is when something can be captured by the five senses and understood by common sense.

According to Teguh, reason plays a role as a digester, processor and disseminator of information so that the body reacts according to needs. Reason will connect logic, enrich understanding, explain cause and effect, and solve problems (Teguh, 2023:167). Quoting Thomas Aquinas, Sumaryono said that in reality reason always precedes the will and commands the will in such a way that the will always directs itself to its object according to the command of reason (Sumaryono, 2013:130) This reality shows that reason has a big role in directing and controlling human will.

## 2. Reality of Trust

Belief in various views is often identified with a belief. Belief definitively refers to a certain concept that someone believes in. In the context of religion, belief is often defined as belief (faith) in a higher reality, such as God (Tinambunan, 2020). However, belief can also lead to broader beliefs, including belief in oneself, others, or certain values.

From a theological perspective, belief (faith) can refer to the relationship between humans and God. In various religious traditions, faith is seen as a revelation given by God to humans. Christianity makes faith one of the theological virtues, alongside hope and love (Tinambunan, 2020). According to the Bible, faith is the belief in what is hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (cf. Hebrews 11:1). At this stage, belief becomes the main foundation for humans' moral and spiritual relationship with God. In addition, Christians believe that the sources of true faith are the Scriptures, Tradition and Magisterium.

Belief in the context of philosophy is often analyzed from an epistemological perspective, which is a study of belief and knowledge. Philosophers such as David Hume and Rene Descartes have discussed the reality of belief that is tested and formed. Descartes, for example, emphasized that belief must be based on a systematic attitude of doubt and logical thinking (Copleston, 2021: 102). On the other hand, Hume emphasized that belief is often influenced by emotions as well as everyday empirical experience.

Riyanto argues that in belief people are often blinded, where they only continue what is believed from generation to generation without ever asking about their beliefs (Riyanto, 2025:57). Riyanto gives an example, that various sermons published on social media, teach

that heaven is a place to fulfill worldly desires, where there are angels in it. In the realm of reason, this is certainly difficult to accept, but because belief goes beyond reason, people become subject to it.

According to Angelo, belief in human life functions as a tool to overcome uncertainty, doubt and anxiety (Angelo Luciani Moa Dosi Woda, 2024). Humans build teachings or dogmas to provide certain hopes. The goal is for humans to have reasons and strong foundations in their life's pilgrimage. Humans can interpret life in their own way. In uncertain situations, such as deteriorating health or natural disasters, belief provides strong hope and a sense of security so that humans have the spirit to continue their lives.

In addition, belief also has a negative side, especially if what is believed is embraced blindly (Riyanto, 2025:57). In some cases, uncritical belief often causes conflict or other crimes. People act anarchically because they are too dogmatic about certain beliefs or religions. Therefore, it is important to develop a balanced belief, which remains in line with the ratio or awareness of logical and systematic thinking.

### 3. Thinking Awareness

Thinking awareness (ratio) is an ability possessed by humans, especially in their efforts to reflect, analyze and make decisions based on critical and logical thinking. In this context, thinking awareness not only acts as a tool to understand the absurd reality of the world, but is also used as a guideline in making decisions and actions in everyday life (Unwakoly, 2022). In other words, thinking awareness in this context becomes a basis for human intellectual and moral development.

One of the foundations of thinking awareness is the ability to think critically. In this case, the reality of critical thinking involves a sharp analysis of an argument, information, and various existing assumptions (Unwakoly, 2022). Humans with good awareness will be able to consider everything from a complex perspective, and be able to criticize evidence, and draw reasonable (logical) conclusions. This process is very much needed in dealing with massive information or in believing in something that is difficult to explain with reason. By thinking critically, humans will not fall into errors of judgment and are able to decide everything wisely (Susyanto, 2019).

In the context of philosophy, thinking consciousness not only refers to cognitive abilities, but is also directed at the search for truth, existence and morality. Definitively, Rene Descartes emphasized the importance of reason in the process of thinking and the search for true truth (Copleston, 2021: 102). Rene Descartes put forward a systematic method of doubt, namely a doubt about everything that cannot be proven clearly and reasonably. His expression, "Cogito, ergo sum" means that thinking consciousness is the basis for understanding self-existence. In this case, Descartes wants to position reason as the main tool or means to achieve true knowledge.

Besides Rene Descartes, there is also a philosopher who talks about reason, namely Immanuel Kant. Kant argued that human reason has limitations in understanding and comprehending reality (Tinambunan, 2020). Kant definitively distinguishes between "what humans can experience" and "reality that is beyond human experience". According to Kant,



conscious thinking does not only include logical thinking, but must also take into account the cognitive structures that shape human experience (Copleston, 2021: 105). With this argument, Kant wants to emphasize that reason is very much needed in understanding the limitations of human knowledge.

#### **4. Tension Between Belief and Conscious Thinking**

In the Western mentality, belief and faith are often considered the same. In line with this, Wilfred Cantwel said that belief is identical to faith. Wilfred Cantwel continued that the tendency to express faith with belief and reduce it in reality requires intellectual agreement (reason) (Schumann, 2003). This is in line with what Augustine said that belief basically comes from the will. It is the will that chooses to believe with the help of reason which then formulates mature considerations (Tinambunan, 2020).

According to Armada, reason helps humans to believe, not just blindly believe but on a real, reasonable foundation, or in Armada's language, it can be expressed and explained (Riyanto, 2025:57). Groome said do not try to understand in order to believe, but believe in order to understand (Groome, 1980:82). This reality describes how belief arises in humans.

Riyanto definitively reveals the striking difference between belief and conscious thinking. He explains that in belief people are often not made to feel uncomfortable (Riyanto, 2025:57). People often do all actions and their whole lives are simply intended to continue what is believed from generation to generation. People don't even put the slightest room for questions about what is believed. Armada defines this phenomenon as blind belief (Riyanto, 2025:57). On the other hand, in conscious thinking people continue to ask about a reality or about every experience. Reason is not allowed to simply submit to every phenomenon, but continues to see, judge and act. In other words, consciousness will continue to react especially to things that are considered less logical or reasonable.

Armada provides a simple example to illustrate the tension between belief and conscious thinking. According to Armada, the history of Galileo Galilei has made this tension so real. In his time, Galileo conducted empirical experiments and argued about the truth that the universe is truly centered on the sun (Heliocentrism), while the Church believed that the center of the universe is the earth (Geocentrism), as stated in the Holy Scriptures (Riyanto, 2025:58). Due to the incident, Galileo received intervention from the Church and the Church declared Galileo a heretic with his discoveries. At that time there was fear within the Church, that if many people chose to embrace the truth of the products of Galilean science, then the foundation of the Church's faith, which came from the Holy Scriptures, would collapse. The Holy Scriptures lost their place in the lives of Christians and became merely obsolete books, without needing to be taken into account.

However, Armada emphasized that this kind of tension should not have happened. Armada argued that there was an error in this incident, because it mixed up God's Revelation (Holy Scripture) with physical science, as Galileo did (Riyanto, 2025:58). These two realities should not be compared, let alone placed in a space of competing truths. These two realities are in different realms, because of their methodologies. Science has a methodology that is continuously developed, updated, tested and changed. While the Holy Scriptures do

not have a methodology like science, which can be changed or updated just like that. In Christian teachings, the Holy Scriptures are an absolute truth.

Citing Gadamer's view, Wranke said that the rationality of belief cannot be measured by an ideal of absolute knowledge, complete enlightenment or unhindered consensus (Wranke, 2021:263). However, belief needs to be continuously evaluated in addition to in a practical context, as is the case in the level of knowledge, enlightenment and openness regarding world developments. This view wants to show that the way of understanding belief in its truth is different from the way of viewing knowledge in its truth. The reality of belief cannot be proven empirically like knowledge. There is a side or space that can never be understood or understood by reason logically, therefore people then call it belief (faith). There is a hidden dimension and this dimension can only be understood by believing.

## **5. Reason as a Mediator of Tension**

In definitive terms, reason is the entire mental capacity possessed by humans to think, judge and understand something wisely. In this context, reason functions as a tool to regulate and balance the various views or beliefs that a person has (Riyanto, 2025:49). Reason does not try to reject a belief, but continues to try to understand in its wisdom (Adnan & Che Yaacob, 2023). Reason also does not reject belief, but continues to compromise and discuss reality that cannot be understood in its entirety. In this context, there are several ways in which reason 'exists' as a mediator.

### **1. Harmonizing the Two Worlds**

In everyday life, the world always presents two different realities of life, namely the rational and the irrational. As a pure force, reason enables a person to find common ground between belief (faith) and rational understanding (Tinambunan, 2020). In line with this, Natalia said that reason enables a dialogue between belief (faith) and thinking consciousness (ratio) (Natalia, 2023). In other words, reason functions as a link between the world of belief and thinking consciousness.

In addition, Armada said that the nature of reason is to long for truth (Riyanto, 2025:60). The truth offered in belief (faith) is not the same as the truth of knowledge, such as  $4 \times 4 = 8$ . Cultural and religious truth (belief) are actually within the scope of meaning. As contained in the Christian faith, truth truly requires grace from the highest reality. Copleston said that basically humans can reach the truth, but must continue to ask for God's grace and who need God's grace to adjust to the saving truth. (Copleston, 2021:16).

Copleston argues that reason has its part to give human belief. Once a person has a belief (faith), reason has a role to affirm or validate it (Copleston, 2021:18). If the belief is in line with reason, then there will be no negation from reason. Reason will submit to the choice that has become a will. When the choice has culminated in the will to decide, that is where there is harmony, between belief (rational) and consciousness of thinking (rational). They are no longer two separate things (duality), but become one harmony that complements each other. In line with this, Pope John Paul II in the document on fides et ratio stated that (belief) faith and consciousness of thinking (ratio) are not only equivalent, but are more elaborate in it. Faith without reason will actually lead to superstition (supersti-

tion), while reason without being based on faith will fall into nihilism and relativism (John Paul II, 2000).

## 2. Critical Reflection

Reason plays an important role in the process of philosophical reflection. In this realm, reason is defined as an act that shows intelligence through actions or speech (Adnan & Che Yaacob, 2023). Reason invites humans to reflect and question beliefs that may have been held for a long time. This process does not only involve critical thinking, but also targets introspection, the impact of which not only leads to strengthening but also to changes in beliefs (faith). Therefore, reason here is used as a tool to explore and understand the complexities inherent in beliefs, especially in relation to rational thinking. There are several things that are part of the existence of reason.

First, encourage critical questions. Reason in this context tries to provoke everyone not to accept beliefs at face value, but to question, analyze and understand deeply (Astini & Arsadi, 2021). The basic questions that can be asked are "What is truth? What is the universe? or Who created the universe?" Such questions present the complexity of meaning, between the space of belief and conscious thinking. By stimulating someone to continue to ask questions, reason indirectly helps someone to continue to understand the fundamentals of the beliefs (faith) they hold.

Second, encouraging openness to new ideas. The questions raised in reflection ultimately result in openness to new ideas. These ideas enrich and deepen understanding of the reality that is believed (Kamal et al., 2025). This openness is important in responding to the ever-changing world situation, where new understanding and knowledge emerge from various sources or means. In this context, reason tries to help everyone not to be trapped in dogma, but to be able to adapt and be flexible to developments and situations of the times.

Third, facing uncertainty. In philosophical reflection, reason helps people to face uncertainty about various questions that are often asked (Natalia, 2023). Maybe when someone questions a long-held belief (faith), confusion, anxiety and even worry arise. At this stage, reason plays a role in managing this uncertainty with constructive methods. Reason tries to bring an understanding that uncertainty is part of the process of finding true truth.

Fourth, personal transformation. Philosophical reflection directed by reason can lead to personal transformation. When someone evaluates beliefs (faith) continuously, this allows someone to find that there needs to be a change in life. Changes that can lead someone to a deeper understanding of the beliefs (faith) they hold (Keban & Riyanto, 2024). In this context, change can refer to the concept of thinking, understanding of values or even changes in behavior or actions.

## 6. Implications for Decision Making

Belief and awareness often offer two different realities. Belief is often in uncertainty, while awareness always questions things that are not concrete or real. In this case, reason becomes a means to help affirm these two realities that are considered different (Wranke, 2021: 263). Reason refers to the overall ability that humans have to understand and recognize the life they live. When someone uses reason wisely to reflect on their beliefs, that



person will be led to a deeper meaning and reason for choosing to believe. Riyanto said that by using reason, a person integrates their beliefs with rationality, which culminates in achieving a more holistic decision (Riyanto, 2025: 59).

At this stage, there is a compromise between the space of trust and conscious thinking. Reflection based on reason can help someone to make decisions that are consistent and consequential. In line with this, Riyanto also said that expertise in questioning assumptions and evaluating evidence is the most important part of making the right decision (Riyanto, 2025: 62). Quoting Johnson, Susyanto said that decision making based on critical analysis tends to produce better results (Susyanto, 2019).

In complex situations, reason helps to map or search for uncertainty. When faced with the reality of belief (faith), reason offers possibilities to consider the risks of choice. Riyanto in this context shows that by using reason, a person can identify the consequences, thereby avoiding undesirable results (Riyanto, 2025). Amalia said that it is important to first analyze the risks before making a decision, between choosing to believe (have faith) or not, so that in the next journey you will not be trapped in confusion or emptiness (Amalia, 2022: 98).

## Conclusion

Reason plays an important role in exploring the tension between belief and conscious thinking (ratio). Reason becomes a mediator or bridge between these two realities. The existence of this mediator allows the creation of a dialogue as well as harmony. Belief and conscious thinking (ratio) are no longer in two separate realms, but complement each other. However, continuous philosophical reflection is still needed. Reason tries to bring an understanding that uncertainty is part of the process of finding true truth. Life must always be questioned, in order to gain new understandings or perspectives. Life should not be solely subject to assumptions that are built without foundation. Life must be criticized, evaluated until it reaches the courage to make decisions and culminates in a more mature and holistic self-transformation.

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