

## REASON

*Reason can be defined in itself, in its use, and in us.*

### 1. Reason in itself:

In itself, reason is the laws of thought. These are:

- i. The law of identity: *a* is *a* (a thing is what it is)
- ii. The law of non-contradiction: not both *a* and *non-a* (at the same time, in the same respect)
- iii. The law of excluded middle: either *a* or *non-a*

### 2. Reason in its use:

- i. Formative: Reason is used to form concepts, judgments and arguments, which are the forms of all thought. Concepts are the most basic. Judgments and arguments are built upon this.
- ii. Critical: Reason is used as a test for meaning; meaning is more basic than truth—if a law of reason is violated there is no meaning, and wherever there is meaning, reason is being used.
- iii. Interpretive: Reason is used to interpret (give meaning to) one's experience in light of one's basic beliefs. Basic beliefs are more basic than experience.
- iv. Constructive: Reason is used to construct a coherent world and life view.

### 3. Reason in us:

- i. Natural: Reason is not cultural or conventional; it is universal, the same in all persons at all times. Reason is common ground among people. That is not to say that it is neutral ground.
- ii. Ontological: Reason applies to being as well as to thought—there are no square circles and no uncaused events. Ontological applies to things in the world. Does reason apply to the being of God, if there is a God?
- iii. Transcendental: Reason is authoritative and self-attesting; it cannot be questioned but it makes questioning possible. It is the highest authority.
- iv. Fundamental: Reason is basic to other aspects of human personality; its use is the source of man's greatest good and its denial is the source of man's deepest misery.