

Should a "Miracle" Be seen as a mere freak of nature?

What is supernatural is done by some agent with magical or supernatural power. If something is natural it just happens. What is natural can be mistaken for the supernatural and vice versa.

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal. In other words, an event like blood coming from the eyes of a statue without trickery would be a miracle or a statue coming to life.

It is possible to believe in miracles without believing statues bleed or come to life.

Some prefer to believe that miracles are strange but there is no need for them to be as strange as that! They only take tamer miracles seriously. For many of them, a miracle is just nature behaving as if God is taking it over to drive home a point.

Miracles for them are NATURAL acts contrary to the usual workings of natural law or acts according to some definitions are natural but beyond our understanding of nature.

An example would be if a boy prays to God and wishes he had a twin brother and takes ill and they find that he had a twin but who is still a foetus inside his body and viable if taken out.

The Church says God is all-powerful and he does miracles so that we might learn his message directly or indirectly from them. They are for teaching the truth and promoting it. So the message the miracle tells is what matters. Worrying about the miracle implies you care more about the phone than the phone call.

Some things that are naturally possible would be classed as miracles. Suppose I could replicate a typed letter with a pen. That would be possibly natural yes but it is so hard to do that it amounts to a miracle. If that is possible it could be that natural forces are making you sure something supernatural is happening when it in fact is just natural.

Wisdom says:

Do not assume a miracle is supernatural or magic - instead assume that it is somehow natural though you cannot know how.

If no natural explanation works then assume it is an oddity in nature - a freak act of nature. Each natural law is not really a law but is a concise way of speaking of countless natural regularities. You are summing up countless processes as one law. It is a figure of speech. That is why a claimed or true miracle would force us to say that we were wrong about some regularity or how it engages with other ones. It calls for a revision of science for assuming it is supernatural is of no practical use.

Do not see a miracle as an exception to nature. If natural law in the universe is that there will be no trees then if a tree appears then is that an exception?

Does the law still stand? No it becomes natural law that there are no trees but exceptions are possible. So a law is replaced with a new one.

If you see a miracle as natural and as a coincidence where there should be almost totally no coincidence then is believing in it anti-nature? But why not just see it as coincidence? A coincidence and a miracle are not the same thing. They can work together but you don't need to bring miracle into the equation. So fusing miracle and coincidence is anti-natural.

Nature acts blind so you are to assume that it is blind and thus that coincidences are blind. No other assumption is rational. A miraculous coincidence is blind and purposeless.

Believers say that if a man is dead for days and recovers that we should not assume that this is a freak of natural law - perhaps because of some anomaly in the molecular subatomic world. They say we should assume it is a miracle. It is known that nature can do things that look miraculous but they are not for they are down to some random failure of matter to work the "normal" way. This seems to allow atheists and sceptics to argue that they cannot prove there are no angels on top of the mountain and thus that the angels are possible. But in fact, nature going awry is an extreme rarity. But if it explains a strange miracle-like occurrence it is just bias and going too far to say the explanation is a miracle or the supernatural. And the chance of angels being on the mountain is so remote that the atheist can regard it as proven that there are not.

Now if nature going bananas is a rarity you cannot look at a convincing miracle report and say, "It is supernatural. It is not nature going astray for that is too unlikely." That is stupid - you are refusing to admit that it is a possible example of nature having gone astray. And the supernatural should be considered less preferable to a natural explanation. It should be less likely to be correct than a natural one.

Suppose blood appears on a holy statue. Rather than suppose the freak law of nature put blood on the statue directly you could assume that it controlled the witnesses to put it on themselves and misremember their role. That is the most likely thing to happen for it is more natural to manipulate people's perceptions than to actually make a statue bleed. The belief that statues do not bleed is still protected.

Even if you see what on the face of it looks like a supernatural event you cannot show that natural law could not have made this event seem to happen. Evidence can only show something happened not what it actually was. You still have to assume it was in some way natural even if nobody understands how. Nature is bigger than any human mind no matter how intelligent.

Suppose you define a miracle not as supernatural but as natural in its oddest form. If you see what on the face of it looks like a freak law of nature being controlled by God to do a miracle you cannot show that natural law could not have made this event seem to happen. What do I mean? I said seem to happen not happen. If a brick levitates then did it really or was a natural law playing a trick on your mind? Assume the easiest alteration of natural law - it is easier for a number of people to see the brick levitate when nature tricks their perception than for the brick to really rise.

It is possible for an atheist to look for a paranormal sign that there is no God. Suppose something freaky but natural happens just as he asked - he could take it as a sign. The freak law of nature thing turns faith and religion into mere opinions.

Suppose miracles seem to happen. You never know if it is strange and unknown natural laws did the miracles. Thus they are not miracles for you cannot tell if it was the supernatural. Miracles cannot be intended to convince you that the supernatural exists when you need to assume that miracles are supernatural. Assuming is no good for it's the same as guessing. You might as well assume the supernatural exists without seeing miracles or hearing of them. If that is allowable, miracles should not be happening for they would need to happen for very serious reasons and God would only be doing them as a last resort. The miracle is not as important as its message so when you can assume you have to let others assume what they like even if it is that a brand new faith is true. You cannot use miracles as evidence for God or religion. You cannot believe their message just because you were given it but you have to use your head to see if the message is plausible. In that case, God should not have been doing the miracle but simply discreetly giving you the light that you need. Miracles would indicate that whatever is doing them is an incompetent stupid force. Miracles should not be found to be sources of comfort. Indeed they cannot be. If you think they comfort it is not them doing it for they cannot.

It will be asked at this point that if we say miracles are not really miracles but simply just strange laws of nature briefly breaking out of their restraint for a few minutes then what? Well then our faith in nature is stronger than it would be if we believe the laws are supernatural ones because we are saying it is freaks of nature not miracles that are happening.

If magic and the supernatural are true, then maybe the murderer who says he was possessed by a demon and made to kill is telling the truth. Maybe he is innocent. But what if he says he was possessed by some strange natural law or a blip in nature? It is a problem but it is bad enough if you believe in nature but worse if you believe in magic. It's something extra to give him a loophole.

Is the answer to deny the existence of the supernatural? It helps. It does not completely solve the murderer and the demon problem. If nature has freak laws then the murderer could say it was some kind of double temporarily created by nature that committed the crime. There is nothing we can do about that except to hold that if events that seem like miracles happen it is only right that they be covered up for our own sakes! They would be dangerous and opposed to our well-being.

The more miracles or freak laws of nature that people speak about and take seriously the worse the problem is! But we can be sure that when people say the supernatural does miracles so that we have both freak natural laws and then supernatural laws to deal with that the whole situation is worsened and is made more poisonous. In summary, it is better and therefore kinder to believe that reported miracles are really natural freaks and that supernatural miracles should not be even up for consideration for belief or given any credence.

If natural law can simulate miracles then does that not destroy the reliability of evidence as much as a supernatural miracle does? For example, if alien super-science could delude me all the time then that does as much harm as belief in a supernatural power doing the same. The aliens would mean that miracles can't be real signs from Heaven as would nature simulating miracles. The problem shows that it is best to attribute miracles to magic tricks done the earthly usual way and verified by liars for we know no magician on earth is going to deceive us all the time. This is not refusing to believe in

miracles regardless of the strength of the evidence for them. It is refusing to believe in miracles so as to be able to believe in evidence.

Some say a miracle is down to the immediate action of God - that is he does not use nature to do something but just does it straight and directly. Not all are happy with this understanding for the Bible says God does use nature to do things that are plainly signs. Others prefer to think that God only uses nature to do miracles.

Only a religion subject to scientific testing should be followed, if any. That is the only way to avoid being misled by alleged miracles even if they are not real miracles but flukes of natural laws.

Philosopher David Hume said that miracles are so unlikely that we are entitled to believe in none of them. He did not say that we would necessarily be right but said that it is the only practical way. Many find Hume's argument persuasive. Some believers say he is right so they choose a definition of miracle that is a bit different. Instead of calling things such as statues talking and virgins appearing to children miracles, things like answered prayers or rapid recovery from flu can be miracles. Under examination, everything looks naturally explainable but it is still rational to regard some of these events as getting over the probability barrier and thus solving the problem expressed by Hume. This broad understanding though leaves the door to superstition wide open. It is worse than the problem it tries to fix. You can say that the reason the president resigned was because you waved your rabbits foot charm at the television when he was on the news.

When a miracle seems to happen, then bringing in the supernatural to account for it says, "No natural explanation will ever be possible." And also, "No natural explanation will be seriously considered." And more tellingly, "Maybe we don't know the natural explanation but we will assume there is none." Believers in miracles are not to be trusted.