

Belief in a miracle is an assumption that is based on many huge assumptions

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal. Miracles are events that seem to be against nature or the way natural law usually runs. In other words, they cannot be explained by nature. Examples are the Blessed Virgin Mary appearing to children, the unexplained cure of incurable illness, blood coming out of nowhere on Catholic communion wafers, the sun spinning at Fatima in Portugal in 1917 and most importantly Jesus Christ coming back to life after being dead nearly three days. It is thought that only God can do these things. If miracles are nonsense then the world religions collapse. Christianity falls for Jesus is dead. Islam falls for the Koran is not divinely created.

MAIN THINGS:

Question your magical and supernatural assumptions more than anything else. What seems to be against or bigger than nature needs the most examination.

Assumptions are not all equal. It is unreasonable to assume the wet patch on your carpet just appeared and was down down to the dog answering natures call. Assumptions must never contradict evidence. Evidence must allow for them.

Many think they believe in miracles when they do not. Assuming something is true is not the same as believing in it though it can look like it.

If somebody tells you they believe you have the right to test them for assuming.

Believers in miracles say unbelievers just assume miracles are not believable or not true. The Christians say that the unbeliever argument that Jesus probably did not rise from the dead for dead people stay dead is a fallacy and a mere assumption thus a useless argument. They say nobody can rise naturally from the dead but that there could be a power, usually understood as God, that is bigger than nature that can raise you up. Notice what they are doing here. They are saying God will not start making it naturally possible! They are telling God what to do with nature. They accuse unbelievers of saying that if there is a God then he should not tamper with nature and does not do things any differently from how he set up nature to do them. But surely even if that is a mistake then what they do is a bigger mistake.

William Lane Craig believes, once you suppose God exists, it's more likely than not that miracles take place. This gets him around the fact that miracles don't present themselves as very likely which makes some reason it is wiser not to believe in them at all. But Craig is saying miracles happen therefore God does them and as there is a God that makes them likely. There is no logic in that view. You need to work out that God does miracles and then decide if he has done so. The cart cannot be put in front of the horse.

A MIRACLE CLAIM INVOLVES MAKING TOO MANY GUESSES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Religion has to make loads of assumptions in order to say a miracle is real.

It assumes the following is wrong, "I am faced with a good miracle claim. The witnesses are of the highest caliber. I assume that the miracle is an error of nature. Its not a miracle but like nature accidentally doing what looks like a trick." That is a way out of saying witnesses are liars or incompetent. The error is nature not theirs. There could be an element of both especially as we know everybody errs or fails in accuracy somewhere. We only accept a testimony if we decide the context shows that if there are inaccuracies they shouldn't overthrow the testimonies. We are talking about undetected inaccuracies and maybe even lies.

Miracle believers assume that a miracle will not fake a miracle. We have to test to see if people are faking but there is no way to test if a miracle is faking. For example, maybe Jesus died and a miracle stole his body from the tomb? If only God can raise the dead then no miracle can show that for the miracle might fake a resurrection.

To say God exists and evil does not prove otherwise is to assume no evil can refute God. That is a sweeping claim. It is too big for a mere guess. It is to state a theory and no theory is truly a theory unless it lets you have a way to show it is wrong. The God assumption is behind the miracles assumption.

IDENTIFY AND CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

It is vital that we question and test our assumptions for assumptions can colour what we think and lead to us depending on

wrong information. The assumption that magic or miracle happens is top of the list for questioning. If natural assumptions need revising supernatural ones need it more for it is so easy to get wrong. And the supernatural demands investigation for you cannot start believing magic reports just because somebody says so.

Believers have to presume that miracles happen. They never know one way or the other if miracles happen for sure. Also, if they think miracles happen they cannot prove that they have selected the right miracles to try and believe in. They object that they are not 100% sure miracles happen but they are sure enough because there is evidence.

Occam's Razor says that if you find a gift on your table all wrapped you assume somebody brought it in even if you cannot explain how. The gift got there naturally. You can't assume that it might have been a ghost that put it there. Occam's Razor recognises that you must assume things are natural even if it is hard to see how. If you don't you lose the reality check.

What happens then if you do? You should be given the same credibility whether you said the gift was from a human visitor or whether you say a goblin miraculously materialised the gift. The Razor is for putting a check on making assumptions that will get you totally carried away and make you totally ridiculous.

If I have the right to presume that a statue of Jesus can drink milk and eat a steak I cannot complain if somebody presumes that 2+2 are miraculously 5. I cannot complain if the police assume that a poltergeist robbed my car even though the notorious local thief was seen loitering beside it. The whole world will be a place of chaos if too many follow my example. People will suffer and die. I should have the sense to avoid exotic presumptions instead of complicating things more than I need to.

If miracles do not happen or are impossible then the evidence is misleading. If I believe in miracles, it is not because of the evidence for miracles - even if I have it - but because I PRESUME THAT MIRACLES ARE POSSIBLE THEREFORE I INTERPRET THE EVIDENCE AS POINTING TO THEM. It's all personal interpretation. To base God and his deeds on your own interpretation is really to make an idol - you worship the mental representation of God you have made and not the real God if there is one. If the pro-miracle presumption is reasonable then we render reason useless.

You can never prove that if a miracle happens that it had anything to do with the direct action of God. You will have to give primacy of place to the most straightforward and uncomplicated explanation. You can never prove that a simple supernatural explanation will do. You can never prove that if there is a supernatural explanation that this explanation is simple. Just because something is supernatural does not prove that it is less complicated than a natural explanation.

Religion accuses those who are sceptical of miracles of assuming they do not happen when they have not considered the evidence. This ignores the fact that most sceptics have done so. It ignores the fact that the sceptic tries to be neither pro-miracle or anti-miracle and gets down to examining the evidence. It ignores the fact that every religion is sceptical of miracles except a few miracles. Catholics deny the existence of the tooth fairy simply because she is a miraculous being. But they believe Jesus rose again in the miracle of the resurrection. This is pure blatant bias and prejudice. And its setting such prejudice as an example to others particularly the vulnerable and the uneducated and the thoughtless. Suppose a man went to a heritage centre at night and experienced apparitions of people dressed in old fashioned clothes and saw them walking around glowing with light. The investigators go and they see that there are statues there of people of olden times. They reason it was an over-active imagination that was behind it. They ignore the man's clear testimony that the beings were moving around and glowing and were not the statues. They are right. Yet religion argues, "We believe in miracles because we trust the testimony that they have happened." Bad methodology religion bad! It only leads to cherry-picking of what testimony to miracles you will accept and what one you will not.

The believers assume an event is a miracle while the sceptic says that it is a mystery and might be. The sceptics refuse to believe because there is no evidence. But they are to remain open to belief and to further light.

The believers lie that there is evidence for the miracles. Sceptics realise that if something magical is tampering with nature then the evidence might have been tampered with by it. It is for the sake of the evidence that they choose to keep supernatural assumptions out of it and avoid religious ideas that would be prejudicial.

The believers assume that the supernatural is the best (least complicated) explanation which means they are only guessing that it is really is. If they say they believe it - how can they? They are only guessing. How can they know that a supernatural explanation is less complicated than a conspiracy theory explanation?

The believers in miracles are making the biggest assumptions not the sceptics. The believers are necessarily biased and untrustworthy. The sceptics are the voice of reason. If both sides are guilty of believing what they want then the believers are worse.

THE PROBLEMS IN DETAIL

The sensible Christians go in search of evidence to show their belief in miracles is justified. They do not guess or assume that a miracle has happened. They only consider miracles when somebody has experienced a possible miracle and claims a miracle happened. But do such Christians exist? One wonders!

It is wrong to use miracles as explanations for mysteries. And that is what Christians do - they think something cannot be explained so they assume it is a miracle. A notorious example is the alleged apparitions of Mary at Lourdes in 1858. They claimed no explanation was possible but the supernatural. If you don't understand how the Turin Shroud was made, that does not entitle you to say its a miracle. Saying it might be is bad but you could say worse. To say its a miracle is to merely assume that it is. It is too big of an issue to simply assume. You need strong evidence. It is dishonest to say that you have evidence that something may be a miracle and then to say that this is evidence that a miracle happened. You are trying to hide the fact that you do not believe but merely assume.

It is wrong to use miracles to get around facts one does not like. For example, if your local saint is caught abusing children sexually, don't say, "I believe a demon possessed him and made him do it. He is therefore innocent." If you say that, you are only assuming. You are not believing.

Religion is often guilty of assuming that miracle x is evidence for the truth of religion and miracle y is not. That would be arbitrary and thus a dishonest way to approach evidence.