

## MIRACLES AND MYSTERY

Witches, Catholics, occultists and paranormalists - and hundreds of others love to say that they cherish and embrace mystery. That is a deceptive cultural conceit. Trying to explain everything naturally shows no tolerance for mystery in any spiritual or religious sense. Neither does saying metaphysical or paranormal powers are the solution. A solved mystery is not a mystery. All these approaches, whether naturalist, mystical/supernaturalist or paranormalist all speak of answers as to why or how something happens. For example, a paranormal person may say that Jesus seemed to rise from the dead because his followers were mediumistic and made a mistake - it was not a resurrection but a summoning. That is as much cause and effect as a naturalist saying that Jesus escaped the cross and fooled his followers. Naturalist explanations can only be so many but once you assume mystical and psychic and miracle explanations you end up disavowing the intellect for there is no limit on what you can come up with. The best thing to do is to be a critical thinker which means admitting you always don't know all the answers. Sometimes it is enough, if you are a naturalist, to know what is not the answer. Eliminating the miraculous does not mean you necessarily claim to know what the natural explanation is. Evidence - a gift from God?

Evidence is good in itself. If God exists there should be evidence for him and evidence against him. It will be his gift. That is good. You need to be given the evidence against him to see if it really is evidence against him. So only evil can be evidence against God. If God is good then evil has to be good evidence against him. If it is not then evil is not really evil. So for that reason God will not ask us to take recourse in saying, "There is no way for God and evil to fit so it is a mystery." It is evil to take that line. Religion says that God gives us the gift of miracle, eg resurrecting men and holy apparitions etc, as evidence. But evil being so seirous speaks the loudest. If evil is evidence against God then it overrides miracles. Evidence or perceived evidence can conflict and you have to let the tenstion be if there is no easy answer.

### A Miracle Is?

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.

Religion uses miracles as evidence for the truth of its claims. The claims are typically doctrinal ones or historical ones for religion usually depends on philosophy to deal with the morals/ethics.

Miracles cannot be signs from God when all we can do is assume that they are signs but we cannot use them as the basis of faith. The claim that we can only guess needs proving.

### Faith or a Guess?

If a miracle, a statue bleeds or Jane's blindness just vanishes, is reported, the believer who has some honesty can say,

# ONE It is a mystery how it happened so it may be supernatural.

# TWO If it is supernatural, should I call it an act of God or an act of magic? Magic means whatever overrides cause and effect - for example, magic can make a stone come alive.

# THREE It is a mystery how it can agree with a loving God if he has done this miracle instead of intervening to save children from burning to death. (Note we are only wondering if it fits a loving God)

# FOUR It is a mystery why he has shown this miracle to me so that I can be his witness and thus he honours me while babies starve.

# FIVE It is a mystery how it can reveal a loving God if he has done this miracle instead of intervening to save children from burning to death. (Note we are now wondering it not only fits a loving God but more importantly reveals his love. Fitting a loving God does not mean that if God exists then he must be love.)

There is too much mystery here. All believers in miracles are therefore doing is guessing they happen. They guess that x, y and z are miracles and that a, b and c are not either because they do not want to believe or are related to a contrary religion.

Most believers will not want to think of these five mysteries or even try to. They are too willing to believe and that is a warning sign. You need enough objectivity from them to take them seriously. But is not in them. If a reported miracle has too many cranks running after it then it is not worth considering as real. With different miracle claims, we have to weed out the ones that attract rubbish lovers for we cannot look at them all.

Don't forget that if God wants people to do that much guessing then that is a mystery too! Its another one!

Too much mystery is a sign that the believers have left the land of the rational.

The mysteries on the scale

So, anyway, if you have to choose one mystery or the other then which should you choose? What mystery is the most important?

The most important mystery is the first one - the first one asks if it might be supernatural. An event cannot reveal anything about what God could be like or is like unless he supernaturally creates the event. The idea is that actions give some insight into what we are like as people and God is no exception.

There is no way one can get past the second mystery. Nobody can prove that the supernatural and magic are two different things. Thus when you cannot really make a distinction between a claimed miracle or a claimed magical occurrence all the believer can do is say something above nature happened and leave it at that.

We do not understand nature terribly well though we often think we do and we need to understand it and what it can do before we can say that some event is above the power of nature, that it is something that nature cannot do. All you can do is guess that an event is a miracle. You cannot be even reasonably sure. In fact, when you have to guess anyway you would guess that it is natural.

The rational person guesses that event x is natural instead of guessing that it is supernatural.

You cannot know if a miracle is evidence of magic or not. We cannot interpret a supernatural event as a miracle for it could just as likely be magic. To believe in a miracle causes a problem and the more belief the bigger the problem is. You may believe it is not magic but a holy act of God but as you know you may be wrong you are carrying the attitude, "If I am wrong about that I believe it is magic as my second choice." Magic is a bad thing to believe in even if it is only half-believed in or is a suppressed belief. Your second choice says something about you. Magic is typically seen as a degrading belief where a power can just change a monstrous person into a sin as if the person is some kind of machine or object.

What if you are just going to make assumptions about the miracle?

In other words, is it wiser to assume that it could be supernatural or to assume it reveals the love of God? You could assume both.

All you need to assume is that it supernatural and leave it at that. You cannot go through life assuming more than you need to.

If a miracle is to be evidence for the undecided it is more important for it to reveal God's love than to fit God's love.

What then if you already believe?

If you want to believe in God, the mystery of how a supernatural claim may fit his love is more important than the mystery of how it reveals his love. It does not reveal his love if it cannot fit. Show how it fits and then how it reveals if it reveals.

The insult

A miracle healing happens. A man's blind eye is cured but what about the little girl in the wheelchair behind him crying out for death in her agony? How can that in any way agree with the idea of a loving God? A God who does a miracle such as curing a paralysed hand and lets children burn to death could have no other option or he could have his priorities wrong.

If you think faith in God is what matters regardless of what the problems are then you will choose the mystery that the healing is supernatural as the crucial one. This would show that you believe that people exist for religion or faith in God - religion and faith then do not exist for people.

If people come first in your view, you will not risk condoning some being letting evil be done to them or doing it to them.

We must try to avoid creating mystery where there is no need to. A guess means you are making a mystery. A guess is a mystery. A guess or a mystery is very wrong if it is human suffering we are talking about. It is not a guessing matter.

Religion is mystery

Miracles are evil for they claim to defend religious belief and religion is full of seemingly contradictory and crackpot doctrines that are called mysteries beyond reason. But you should not believe in a paradox except as a last resort. You could get a revelation from God commanding that babies be killed and be told or say it is a mystery. Don't be smug and say that will never happen. You are making it possible and religiously motivated killing does happen. To make it possible is as malicious as doing it. You are certainly saying that God should not send down rain on the starving millions in Africa which proves you are a fanatic just because of that one belief.

Who says that when a miracle happened it happened for a sensible reason? God.

But God is strange and full of mystery and we cannot understand fully what he is up to. We might think God made a tyrant sick to soften the tyrant's heart when the tyrant is a changed man when he recovers. But how do we know the tyrant has changed for holy reasons? He might be just trying to exorcise his guilt or appear superior. So we are none the wiser about what God was up to.

Religion is full of stuff that it says it cannot explain. It calls it truth beyond reason and not against it. The three persons in one God, God allowing us to suffer, the Son of God dying on the cross and the nature of God are examples of such mysteries. Mystery means paradox. It looks like a contradiction and we only have the word of the religion that it is not.

Miracles are mysteries beyond reason as is the purpose for which they were done if they point us to the mystery of God and if they are the work of that God. If it is fine to assume that miracles authenticate mystery then it is fine to assume that miracles prove nothing for they say nothing for they could be a mystery themselves so we cannot presume to know why they happened or who performed them.

Amorality

The rule that we must not see mysteries where we need none tells us that, if we decide to believe in God, then instead of believing that evil and God are compatible in some way beyond our intelligence we should believe that God is beyond good and evil, amoral, not immoral (unless you hold that a being that refuses to be moral is being immorally amoral) for that eliminates the mystery. Miracles are evil when they call on us to believe because of them for we should check out the reasons against them being signs first and they don't encourage that. The doctrine that evil is a mystery is more important and foundational than revelation through miracles so this doctrine has to interpret miracles for us and it is a mistake to let miracles interpret it. But the mystery is illicit and so are miracles and so miracles more probably indicate an amoral God if they indicate a God at all.

Risk of enslaving

Mystery is a good excuse for saying that if two doctrines contradict each other both are true for it is not a contradiction for the solution is a mystery. It is exactly what you would expect fake prophets of God and fake religions to say. A miracle is necessarily a mystery so miracles give charlatans a great advantage.

Miracles are mystery if they are signs for they show that instead of God giving us more light to see what is right without miracles he chooses to do miracles so that we will bend the knee before prophets who will tell us his will. So miracles are saying that you must not think for yourself for you will only lead yourself astray but be obedient to these prophets and agree with what they tell you. In Catholicism, miracles are taken as calls to rules we cannot understand and which nobody accepts such as birth-control being sinful. So miracles tell you to turn away from what you think you know and forget about it. They don't care if you were right the first time! Miracles and religion empower men.

If religion is man pretending to have the voice of God, then man needs people to imagine miracles in order that he can convince you God must approve of his teachings. If enough people imagine or invent miracles, some of the accounts will seem very plausible indeed. Coincidence will see to it. It is only when you look at it statistically that you see the plausibility vanishes.

Mystery of Evil

Religionists cannot fully explain why evil and suffering happen in a way that makes sense. They take refuge in the insulting

cop-out and tedious cliché, “It is a mystery”. If God exists all he wants from us is a choice. And that choice is if we will follow him in living a good life or want him or not. But the choice has to be us intending to follow him for the sake of doing good even if God only seems good but is actually non-moral or evil. That is not choosing God but putting good above him and following him conditionally - "God if you are not truly good then at least I am good. I only respect you in so far as I assume and think you are good."

No matter what God is like, if all that is asked for is a choice then we do not need to be able to kill or be too bad. If we cannot comprehend the methods of the Lord then would the Lord think we are humble when we assert that he does miracles to give us theological light? Would or could anything be stranger than God raising Christ from the dead and not delivering the world from sorrow and if not sorrow then religious error? Why didn't he send a pile of angels disguised as men to every area so that everybody who is open to the truth could learn from them? The angels can see the heart so they would know what to say and how to impress the person. Miracles except angels doing that testify only to divine incompetence and stupidity.

To applaud miracles is to applaud black magic. And there are several reasons for that estimation and most of the miracles we ever hear of are fit only for being put down as passive aggressive acts of God at best. A God that claims to be love but leaves babies to suffer because no miracle will happen for them but who deigns to do some trivial miracle such as raise one man out of billions from the dead is definitely passive aggressive. We have to have the compassion to take the thing according to how it looks. That is what humans do and what God has made us to do if he exists. If God's plans are so odd then why can't he miraculously hurt a baby? It makes no sense to say he can leave a baby to suffer while he turns wafers into Jesus but he cannot miraculously cover that baby in weeping sores out of nowhere. Such doctrines make those who adhere to them passive aggressive too.

So?

The miracles-are-evidence doctrine leads to bigotry for it is a lie. Catholicism has no right to order people to take out of miracles the meaning she wants. If the miracles claim to be evidence for faith then they are deceptive. The thinking behind miracles is rotten so miracles are rotten.

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