

## MIRACLES HAVE TO BE UNCOMMON

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal. It is like dead men should stay dead but one man, say Jesus, rises from the dead. It either opposes the uniformity of how nature works or it shows nature is not that uniform after all. Either way, nobody has the right to say a miracle in principle has nothing to do with science for science is all about what the uniformity involves and how it works. That science cannot look at the supernatural is not the point. It can still look at what it does to nature. Religion tells you a half truth when it says, "Miracles are not the domain of science for science cannot investigate the supernatural but only the natural."

Is nature so uniform that if a miracle happens we are extremely unlikely to notice it or find it? Obviously yes. You can suggest somebody rose from the dead in the past but nobody noticed for it was away back 5 million years BC or on another world. Thus it is very hard to believe a witness to a miracle.

Miracles can also be described as magic acts that are said to have been done by God. He is supposed to do them as signs that such and such a religion is the true religion and the others are wrong. How nice that God wants to create differences over trivial matters! How nice that religion is put before people! It was particularly cruel of him to make us so suspicious of and hostile towards differences.

David Hume said we could believe in a miracle only if the people lying or being wrong would presuppose a bigger miracle. People who don't believe in miracles say that it has never been known for it to be more miraculous for people to be lying or mistaken than for them to have experienced what they said they experienced. This argument suggests that we need to do so much investigating in relation to miracles that events accepted as miracles have to be very rare indeed.

Reason and many religions insist that the fewer miracles you have to account for something the more rational and mature you are. Religion often assumes that miracles are rare. Religion does not like too many miracles for they can lead us to bypass the authoritarian clergy or scriptures who claim to be divine channels. They often agree with us that miracles can only be accepted as a last resort and when denying them would be saying that a bigger miracle of deception has happened. So they are saying that any miracle they believe, they believe it reluctantly. They will say that is respecting miracles like the resurrection of Christ to admit that it is so convincing that it makes them override their scepticism and reluctance.

So you have to believe as few miracles as possible – the principle that the simplest interpretation is the most logical and probable supports this. For example, if your clock jumps off the mantelpiece it is more likely and rational that there is something natural that made it do this and not a poltergeist.

Religion agrees that it is more likely that a miracle story is really just a mistake or a lie or both than a real miracle. And it says that it should not be trusted until it proves that it can't be a mistake or a hoax. You can't run a religion if you are going to encourage people to believe every story for then the lying prophets will be able to create a new religion based on their lies and errors with the assistance of miracles that are nothing more than conjuring tricks.

If some trusted person is accused of a crime that he really has done says a demon pretending to be him committed the crime we would have to believe him if absurd alterations of nature happen. The more common they are the more we would have to believe him. So we should only believe in so-called miracles when the evidence is irrefutable and there is no chance of hoaxing being involved. If miracles are uncommon they still make us a bit less sure that the man is guilty. Miracles lessen the strength of evidence and truth and so they are evil. If you think that God interferes with nature a lot of the time you will go to Spain on holiday instead of going to hospital to have a cancer removed and depend on God to take it away.

Human testimony alone can verify a miracle. If ten people see a miracle and one liar says they are frauds then we can't believe in the miracle and God wasted his time. Why can't we believe? Because if there is any doubt at all, a miracle should not be believed. Remember how miracles must only be believed as a last resort. If a miracle is against natural law or is the work of some natural law that we don't know about then this is very serious.

If a miracle were true any witness, person who knows and has talked to the visionary and about the experience or a visionary, who would say it is a fraud would either be struck dumb or die suddenly but naturally. Or if the witness were not even there God would see to it that he would be exposed.

Now, when God does a miracle he cannot be sure if somebody will contradict the witnesses or not and destroy the miracle. He may see in the future that this will not happen but since his vision does not cause the past but is caused by the past it is no help to him. He will not be able to see what something will result in unless he does it. So, God can't do the miracle.

All miracles have their enemies – even devout and pious ones. They give information that may not tally with the rest and which casts doubt on the reality of the apparition or miracle.

The Catholic Church has approved several miracles that witnesses or the evidence challenged. The appearance of Mary at La Salette was held to be an imposture by a deranged nun and a court of law decided that it was the nun. The Jews, according to Matthew, said among themselves and not just for others to hear that Jesus was a fake and that they were scared of a fake resurrection. When the men accused of fraud and deception talk like that among themselves it shows they are sincere. God would not do miracles when the miracle is no use without a Church to authenticate and verify it when that Church cannot be trusted.

If miracles happen God would have to do them before everybody or before witnesses whose veracity and sanctity and sanity and intelligence could be proved. It seems that it is wrong to say that anybody who says they saw a miracle is boasting of their honesty so it can't be from God for the Bible says God hates showing off. If they feel it is helping God then they are not boasting but just have to say they are good for his sake. But it is obvious that it is arrogant to expect or want people to believe you if you say that the tooth fairy appeared to you. You want them to aggrandise your outstanding honesty and truthfulness even to the point of getting them to agree with you if you say five and five are nine.

If miracles are nonsense that does not mean events that could easily be claimed to be miracles don't happen. Some of these events will be impossible to explain naturally. There are loads of things that there is missing or corrupted evidence for so that is to be expected. You don't want to be too generous in saying events like that are often miraculous in case you get caught out. It is safe to pick out a few. Saying miracles are rare is a good mask and a good excuse for getting people to believe in miracles even if they don't really happen. If miracles don't really happen at all, the rarity of some that look believable makes perfect sense. It is like the part-time psychic - if you don't do it too often it is harder to get found out and you seem more authentic. Miracle mongers and fake psychics and those who see wonders that merely look like wonders are all enablers of possible deception.

Predictably too, some religions report plenty of miracles from centuries ago and moan that the age of miracles is passed or not far off it. That is what you would expect too if the miracles never really happened. They are slotted in the past safely out the researcher and scientist's way. The miracle deserves a bad name and these antics do not help!

If creation is a miracle as religion says then you are not allowed to believe in any more miracle signs for seeing that all things have been created is the only sign you need. So all new miracles are just unnecessary arbitrary displays of power and reflect badly on God. Plus the claim that God won't show us all his miracles because he does not want to force us to believe would be disproven by the miracle of creation itself. Therefore it is right to be like St Thomas and demand to see the miracle before you believe in it or to demand miracles before you will believe in the gospel.

If God accepts the as few as possible doctrine then it follows that he only needs one well-attested miracle. For example, if he raised Jesus from the dead, that is the only miracle he needs to do and he will do no others.

The attestation is so important that we would need to be able to see this risen Jesus!

Miracles by definition are uncommon but possible miracles are uncommon and that is what we would expect if miracles don't really happen at all.

## HOW THE RARITY OF MIRACLES OPENS DOOR TO FRAUD

Religion says a miracle has to be very uncommon for God is able to teach us and show us where the truth is. It needs that format in order to make a good impression plus the more miracles are reported the more careless people will be with investigating them and so it will be easy to fraud.

Natural causes can sometimes do such strange things that you end up having no evidence that it was natural and not a miracle. Mysteries like that happen. Such events being rare can be an excuse for declaring them to be a miracle. But rareness in itself is not an excuse. But people often want it to be! Believers if they take the uncommon aspect seriously then need to question and challenge and refute miracle claims they disagree with. If you decide a miracle is real then any that contradicts it needs to be examined and dismissed. The person who investigates your favourite miracle is only doing what you would do to miracles that are not part of your religion.

## MAIN THOUGHTS

How relevant is rarity to a miracle? Is a miracle defined as a rare supernatural event? If it is defined thus that is to say,

-We can dismiss reports of miracles in a place where they are very common and rife regardless of whether the reports are good or bad.

-The rare overrides the supernatural origin or possibly supernatural origin of the miracle.

- We define a miracle as rare for then it is harder to disprove it. An occasional magical event is harder to refute than a regular one. This is good news for religious charlatans.

Rarity is part of the definition of miracles so believers are saying, “miracles are so rare and that is how we know they are miracles.” This is begging the question. This clearly is, “I reject all miracles as nonsense but there are ones I want to believe in.” Miracle believers then accuse people of being over-sceptical but this is worse! If rarity is that important then why not find a way to turn some rare natural anomaly into a reasonable substitute for a miracle?

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