

MIRACLE SEEKERS OPEN THEMSELVES TO CHARLATANS

Miracles are events like magic. Religion says God does them. God makes all things out of nothing so he can do them. Making things out of nothing is a miracle.

If magic and miracle do not happen, then believers have been misled or fooled. Even if some not all have been fooled, there is a risk of being taken in by a con artist or charlatan who pretends to miracle powers.

Religion has to pretend that miracles are rational in the following sense: God does them because they are really needed and he does them to prove his presence and love. It follows that you need people to provide the testimony to miracles and the evidence they happen. You have it all second-hand or third-hand or whatever-hand. That could be risky. No - it is risky.

There has to be some category of claim that must not be believed without sufficient evidence. If it is not miracle or the supernatural then its nothing! This is not about being biased or unfair. It is what we need to do. That's all.

It follows that the less evidence that is provided and or given to the people for magic and miracle and supernatural the more they are being encouraged to put out the welcome mat to charlatans.

Why are miracles so important to believers? People are drawn to miracles as they think they show there is a magic power that can sustain and help them.

When faced with a challenge such as cancer some say, "I cannot do this. I need the help of a higher power." Why not believe that you have a psychic power that will come to your aid should you be unable to help yourself? Better to do that than run after religion and God. Those who promote miracles are manipulating the vulnerable.

The only justification for following miracles would be if they lead people to live better lives. It's the miracle within that should count - the miracles of forgiving and compassion etc. If people don't experience that miracle then there is something wrong with chasing spectacular miracles and visions.

Jesus said that those who see the miracle are not as blessed as those who believe and don't see. Why is that a good thing? It is like he thought that people sacrificing for faith and religion on the basis of the hope that its true were better than people who sacrificed and knew it was true. That is nonsense. You only take big risks if the evidence calls for it. Also, Jesus said exactly what you would expect a charlatan to say. Many charlatans have been inspired by his foolish doctrine. And their victims have seen it as the green light to put themselves at risk of being taken in.

You hear a lot about people being exploited or deceived by those who proclaim miracles to be true. Those of us who dismiss the supernatural never get taken in. If we pretend that some medicine works when it doesn't, at least we are making a naturalistic claim that can be tested. We will soon be exposed as frauds. But with religion its different. It cannot be tested. All who support miracle stories are somehow involved in the exploitation of the innocent.

If miracles are not believable or if they do not happen, then clearly those who claim to perform them are taking advantage of other people and particularly vulnerable people. Even if they are telling the truth, they are still encouraging people to take a risk and that is evil.

Religionists who are on the quest to experience miracles, or if not miracles then belief in miracles, open themselves wide to deception. St John of the Cross had plenty to say about that. He said seeking revelations and miracles was a vice as it was so dangerous. But that contradicts the fact that if God wants you to experience them then you cannot resist and should seek them in case he does. And the Church says God inspires us. Thus if we seek miracles he may be inspiring us to do so. We should seek them as long as we think he is. John was right. Little did he realise that belief in God is bad because it contradicts his advice by encouraging illuminism and credulity.

The miracle-chasers evidently think their religion is so ridiculous or out of touch with reality that they need to see miracle or a sign from God before they can manage to believe. Those who go to miracle shrines may not expect a direct miracle that will astound science but they will expect to experience, at least, the miracle of sensing the divine presence and experiencing God's power to heal the heart.

The sceptic will not encourage people to run after miracles so that they end up in the clutches of charlatans. The serious miracle supporter will. And if its not done by word it will be by example. The sceptic will not be rebelling against science to tell people that condoms help make HIV rates worse and that the world is only 6000 years old. The miracle believer might. And the miracle believer does exalt his beliefs over the authority of science. It's bad in principle.

If the seekers of miracles don't have the miracle experience disappointment will ensue and who is going to help them pick up the pieces??

Miracles seem to heal and comfort people. But despite the good - assuming it is good - miracles are a bad thing overall. Belief in miracles has led to more harm than good. For everybody who is helped, there is ten who has been led into superstition and robbed of a lot of money by miracle mongers looking for donations. These miracle mongers range from fortune-tellers to the likes of US Televangelists. Even Jesus warned that fake Christs would come with great miracles and be able to lead even the elect astray. If God were all powerful, he would have things arranged so that belief in miracles would be good.

Whatever the cause of so-called miracles is, it is not God. Those who promote miracles have more concern for what they want to believe than in promoting beliefs that are generally wholesome and therapeutic. Miracles lead more to evil than good. The short-term benefits come at a long-term price.

Belief in miracles, when you see how fake miracles such as those of the US televangelists, Hindu "holy" men and Medjugorje and so on are the most popular, has mostly bad fruits. The quality of the fruits is never explored and its the quantity of seemingly good fruits that gets the attention. Religion, in its duplicity, ignores the dubious fruits in order to pretend that some miracle sites such as Lourdes are good. They accuse us sceptics of miracles of throwing out the baby with the bath water. We do not. There is not enough good coming from belief in miracles to make the propagation of that belief acceptable. If we refuse to believe in any miracles, we will not be led astray and fooled. It is better to wrongly think that miracles never happen, than to think they do happen. Not believing in miracles does no harm.

A person might be totally honest but a liar in relation to a miracle claim. It's the one lie one can never get caught out for telling. If somebody stares at a spot on the wall and says they are seeing the Virgin Mary there is no proof that they are not seeing her. This problem means that a miracle is a bad fruit in itself.

Believers in miracles whether they know it or not are putting their own spiritual pleasures before the wellbeing of others. No wonder they can be so nasty and vicious if the authenticity of their precious miracle is questioned.