

## CAN EVIDENCE JUSTIFY YOU BELIEVING IN AN IMPROBABLE MIRACLE?

### CAN ACTUAL EVIDENCE OUTWEIGH THEORETICAL IMPROBABILITY?

#### What's a Miracle?

A miracle is an event that is not naturally possible. That does not mean it is necessarily impossible. There could be a power greater than nature such a god that can do it. A miracle is a supernatural event. It's like God doing magic. A miracle is when God does magical things like raising Jesus from the dead.

Miracles are likely or unlikely. To say they are likely means its no big deal if one refuses to take one's cancer treatment in the belief God will take the cancer away. To say they are somewhere in between likely or unlikely also says it doesn't matter if you get the treatment or not. Believers and sceptics agree that miracles are unlikely but differ as to the degree of how unlikely they are.

To say miracles are unlikely means that we need very good evidence for holding that they happen. It also means that they are so out of the ordinary we need to see and understand the evidence ourselves. We cannot depend on authority. You may answer, "If I am told I have cancer, I do not ask for a whole investigation." But if you had any suspicion you would have the right. If you should have any suspicion you would have the right. We should question things if we see a reason to. A miracle needs to be questioned. You can't believe just anything and everything supernatural.

#### Gradation - Meriting Investigation

What if miracles are claimed? Not all deserve investigation though you may still do so.

STAGE 1: Ask if it is

A miracle that is important

A miracle that is not important.

The lesson is that only important ones deserve investigation

STAGE 2: Ask if it is:

Reported by living witnesses who will talk

Reported by dead people near the event who were in a position to know

Reported by dead people long after the event

If it is the last one then do not waste time unless others are wasting time on it and need to be answered.

What we see from that is that we are not entitled to care about the New Testament.

It is true that there are many random miracle claims and paranormal events that cannot be disproven. But they cannot be proven either. So we have to assume something. But what? The sceptic will assume they would be disproven if we hadn't lost the facts. The believer will say they might be proven if we had the facts. You cannot be both sceptic and believer. But if a miracle demands that you believe in it then it is by default a false bigoted miracle. Reject it! The resurrection of Jesus and the miraculous Koran are thus eliminated as not only ungodly and impious but unworthy of consideration. They command you to believe or go to Hell forever so that shows you how abominable they are!

#### Difference

You cannot approach a spiritual, miraculous or magical claim the same way as you would an allegation that the cat drank the milk.

First, the reason is that it is not the same. A magic claim is different from a natural claim.

Second, if a miracle is an exception to the way nature works you have to be damn sure for the sake of science which needs nature to behave in a regular way in order to do its job. To falsely assert a brick floated in space is to attack science. If it is true then at least the religious claim that religion respects and uses and trusts science is still being cared about.

Third, a magic, miracle, religious or spiritual based claim needs stricter and different criteria to what any other claim needs because it is very much out of the norm. Murder is not really that normal which is why you need solid good evidence that the person was murdered. Miracles are even less normal.

### **Hearing of some miracles is enough to refute them!**

Religion says it is irrational to say miracles do not happen when you will not investigate before you speak. But this overlooks the fact that some claims are untrue and realising they cannot be true is investigation enough. If some get it wrong, and dismiss true miracle claims that is not the fault of the principle. The principle is even more vindicated then.

Plus religion tells you what miracle claims to investigate. In other words, it is putting a bias in you. You would not be investigating unless you suspended your belief that the story does not seem to be true. It knows you cannot investigate them all.

If a miracle is not worth believing but is actually genuine then you have to give people evidence that it is worth investigating. There is difference between evidence that shows something is worth checking and evidence that you need to check it out.

Religion never gives you evidence that something is worth looking for evidence for. It is not a true friend of evidence.

### **Evidence can Outweigh Theoretical Improbability**

Some say we cannot say a miracle is too improbable to be believed in for we don't know what is improbable. It could in theory be true that a miracle could be as likely as it is unlikely. But we are talking about our knowledge here. Is a miracle likely or unlikely as far as we are able to know? The question of a miracle really being likely or unlikely is different to the question of how well we can know what it is.

David Hume was a philosopher who showed that belief in miracles is superstitious. He said that it is very probable to our minds that the sun will rise tomorrow. He would say that it is very improbable to our minds that it will not. He did not say that miracles are violations of natural law and conclude that "natural law doesn't change so miracles are impossible". He was saying miracles could be possible but they are very unlikely in our perception. He was not saying they really were unlikely but only that we have to see them as unlikely. We do not believe that if we put water in our fuel tanks that it will turn into diesel.

Christianity says that Hume said that miracles must be assumed not to happen because we need to assume nature does not change. They argue that it is false to say that nature is that fixed. But this point is actually irrelevant. Hume never said nature was that fixed only that we have to approach it as if it is.

By natural law, he only meant not that it was strict law or real law but that it was probable that x will happen and not y.

Hume was merely saying that miracles are so improbable we are entitled to hold that even if there is excellent evidence for them that it is not enough. For example, excellent evidence that Jesus rose from the dead is nothing in comparison to the evidence that dead people stay dead. This is the only rational approach. He is not being dogmatic and refusing to consider the evidence. Yet Christians ALWAYS misrepresent his argument and say he is. They say he is rejecting miracles as nonsense without considering the evidence for them. A faith with an attitude like that is hardly dependable when it comes up with evidence for miracles! It is unfair and uncharitable and peppered with religious bigotry.

Christians say that Hume is doing the wrong thing in having actual evidence outweighed by theoretical probability. They say actual evidence does outweigh theoretical probability. For example, they say its true that it is very improbable for dead people to rise but the evidence says there was one exception: Jesus. They say that is very improbable to get a perfect hand while playing bridge but it can happen. This is their proof. But though the perfect hand is theoretically very improbable it is possible without the supernatural. In relation to the resurrection, we are not talking about something that is naturally very unlikely but about something that is supernatural and not natural at all. The Christian view about actual evidence and theoretical probability is irrelevant as regards the resurrection. But though it is theoretically very improbable it is possible without the supernatural.

The religionists do not believe that actual evidence outweighs theoretical probability. They are lying when they say they believe that. If they had a dream that came true and in which it was presented as a miracle proof that Jesus was a fraud they would not believe it. And dreams that seem to be prophetic or clairvoyant are quite common. That lies have to be told in order to defend belief in miracles is enough to put us off them and those who say they happen.

The religionists deliberately neglect to tell us that even if actual evidence outweighs theoretical probability it doesn't always. For example, if you had the codes to start a nuclear war and sound witnesses told you that they had a vision of

Jesus that you should use them for God has a plan you should not listen.

Actual evidence outweighing theory about probability does not apply to miracles.

READ THIS CAREFULLY: The religionists deliberately forget that belief in evidence itself is based on theoretical probability. You theorise for example that the evidence is real and not planted by aliens or some unknown conspirator for those scenarios are improbable. Maybe they are not improbable but you have to assume that they are. From this it is clear that theoretical probability should always be put before actual evidence because it is only down to theoretical probability that you believe in evidence at all.

Belief in the supernatural intrinsically stops you appreciating evidence.

When we weigh up evidence we must necessarily presuppose that there is no supernatural force tampering with the evidence.

Supernatural beliefs make you biased and immune to logic and evidence. For example, if you believe God raised your Messiah from the dead and the CCTV shows trickery you can say the Devil did something to the CCTV. Without authentic commonsense the world and life is f\*\*cked.

Nobody can say that the evidence for miracles comes before the theoretical improbability that miracles happen when miracles are intrinsically anti-evidence. Without evidence we cannot even work out what is probable or improbable. The whole thing falls apart.

Christians deny that we should put theoretical probability before the evidence. They say we may believe improbable things if the evidence supporting them is sufficient. But they are tricking us. We are not talking about theoretical probability at all. It is the idea that we make an assumption about what is probable or improbable. Do we assume that miracles are likely or unlikely? We are saying that rather than making assumptions let the evidence point us in the direction of seeing what is probable or improbable. If you let the evidence tell you what is theoretically probable then you cannot believe that Jesus came to life when so many dead people stay dead.

Evidence that is there is outweighed by our theories about what is probable. But if the evidence says something is probable or improbable then do not accuse those who follow it of advancing their ideas of theoretical probability. They are letting the evidence talk - not their theories.

The religionists' reasoning only makes it possible that miracles happen. It still does not mean we may believe in them.

Evidence however strong is never proof. You cannot prove that the person you see killing another really did it. Maybe you took a fit of insanity. Maybe it was a demonic trick.