

Miracles in the Light of Science

"In the affairs of life it is impossible for us to count on miracles or to take them into consideration at all in our use of reason" - Kant

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 as a god that can do it. Science needs the rule "There is no such thing as a physical impossibility" to be able to function. But religion by contrast says that there is no such thing as a physical impossibility if there is a God.

A miracle is supernatural. Its really magic and superstition under a different name. If a power can instantly remove an incurable terminal disease, then it can guarantee bad luck for those who walk under ladders. Magic and superstition and fortune-telling assume that like produces like. In other words, symbols of death in a tea cup mean that death will happen. In prayer, the belief that you invite a God of love into your heart will make you more loving. Again it is like produces like.

Science is about searching for natural causes only. That does not mean it simply does not comment on the supernatural. It presumes that everything is natural and rules out the supernatural on principle. If you think nature can be tampered with by a power greater than then it follows that science can prove nothing for you don't know what this power has been doing.

It is vital for science to be able to test something. If an effect is reported is made science tries to make it happen again.

Science understands and learns from how events repeat themselves.

Miracles do not repeat themselves. For example, randoms going to a holy well get cured but not all.

As miracles are not repeating themselves it is held that miracles need not be eliminated from scientific explanation.

But if that is so it can also be held that they can be just ignored. They are not important. Needing no elimination does not amount to needing one. It makes it optional.

Also, miracles will be eliminated for science talks about singularities, unrepeatable miracle like events which are nevertheless natural. It does not talk about miracles.

Some believers say that something always repeating itself in experiments shows that there is complex information involved that only an intelligent spirit or God could devise and convey. That is the design argument and is against the scientific principle that evidence not how something looks must have the say.

Some say that a singularity is the reason why we have life on earth. A singularity is a once off. A singularity is assumed to have started life on earth. But that is an odd assumption. A singularity could have made circumstances that accidentally produced life. There is still no basis in science for saying an intelligent supernatural or non-natural force give rise to the first life.

Science is a method not a set of doctrines and beliefs. The method might result in doctrines and beliefs but these are not what science is about. The method is about testing and if theories about how things work are wrong or doubtful, science will test to work out if they can be revised. If not then they will be dropped. By default, what is about testing and checking and revising could mislead or be wrong. But it is still more worthy of trust and of being regarded as alone being of supreme importance than religion and dogma and other things that refuse to update and revise and change.

Science has to assume that miraculous and magical things cannot happen in order to function. The miracle believers and their alleged miracles oppose science and so are to be seen as superstition.

Scientists are often accused by religionists of claiming that science is the only way to truth. Science holds that truth is just there and it hopes to discover it. It does not say it has the resource to discover everything. Science merely says its discoveries are the best verified truths not that they the only truths. Science then is superior to religion.

It is only miracle believers who make that false accusation against science. They refuse to admit that scientists hold that science in principle is the only way to certainty about some truth. It does not follow that scientists think that the only truth is truth that will be scientifically verified.

Scientists see some things as inexplicable. Other scientists disagree. When scientists disagree on what kind of God or not exists or indeed if any exists. It follows that it is dishonest of religion to argue, "Science backs our miracles up".

You should only believe in a miracle as a last resort when you have eliminated the possibility of lying or mistakes having been made. Few of us can be a match for the scientists for it is all so complicated and so we can't know who is right.

Some feel that certain things happen in science that are unintelligible to our minds but not necessarily to the mind of God who is smarter than us. If what happens is unintelligible these people say that that opens the door to belief in miracles for they are unintelligible as well. It does not. It is like saying that if you would steal five pounds you would steal a computer. The argument does not allow for belief in miracles. It does the opposite. If we think nature is unintelligible that is our problem and not a problem with nature. Miracles are different for they boast that nature cannot understand them. There is a total difference between believing that something unintelligible cannot be understood in principle and that something unintelligible can be understood in principle but we are just not able to.

Believers might say that science has verified that an event was inexplicable. But no scientist can say it was a miracle for inexplicable does not equal miracle. It only means they don't know why it happened. Unusual things do happen and we still have much to learn. Science used to say lightning was inexplicable. What happens is a religion tells you that certain inexplicable events are miracles and miracles are evidence that its message is true when all it is doing is assuming that miracles have happened and are from a reliable source like God. It is saying that the inexplicable is a miracle when it seems to have happened to support its theology and is just inexplicable but not a miracle when it does not - this system is sheer fraud and deception for it is rigging the evidence. In that case miracles cannot count as evidence at all and it is a waste of time bringing scientists in to investigate. Religion is only guessing therefore no sensible God would waste time doing miracles just for that! It is all a con.

Science is about evidence and assessing it. It is that simple.

When science shows that men are aggressively sexual, it comes into conflict with religion which says that grace from God can address that making it untrue potentially for all men and definitely untrue for those who accept Jesus. Arguments about miracles are really about how God works on people perhaps in ways that nature cannot explain so that they behave in way that nature cannot determine. For example, God is not going to make a wafer bleed for show. It will be used as a trigger for his changing of what is inside you and other people.

Miracles pose as evidence for a holy book being written by God or a religion being made by him. Calling miracles evidence and speaking of evidence for miracles is actually window-dressing. Religion and faith do not care about the evidence aspect at all but pretend they do. It makes their rubbish look respectable. The believer accuses the skeptic of miracles of claiming to know evidence wise that they never happen and that is impossible for you cannot examine all the evidence for everything in the universe. Maybe if a miracle never happened in this universe it could happen in another one. The sceptic might have a problem. Suppose she has. Then it is worse to say that the evidence must show if God loves us and then to say you know there is nothing that refutes that love. That is what the believer uses as the selling point for miracles. But an argument that is immune to any evidence that it is wrong is no good and is just a scam. You may as well affirm it as contradict it or just not care either way. Remember that the love thing is core to what a miracle from God is supposed to be about!! That makes the uselessness of the argument far worse.

The sceptic is being reasonable. The believer is not. Don't say the sceptic is being more reasonable than the believer. The sceptic is not just more reasonable but the only reasonable one. Choosing the best of two terrible options makes you reasonable not just more reasonable than those who choose the worst.

Miracles are antagonistic to science. Science believes in investigating everything and questioning all things while miracles advocate faith. We are expected to believe in miracles on the basis of science and what science says about human reliability and so on which is a contradiction. There were no scientists to back up any miracles done by Jesus and we are expected to believe in them more than anybody else's. Science has done a lot of harm, think nuclear weapons and so on. But would we really be better off without it? We wouldn't know about germs and disease prevention. If somebody invents a useless pill that he says cures cancer, science will expose him. But if the person claims that there are invisible forces in the pill that science cannot detect there is nothing one can do to stop him. People who are in remission or who got better normally will think it was the pill did it. People will be fooled, they will be conned, they will be exploited and truth will be put beyond reach for verification will be impossible with supernatural claims. The point is it is better to think scientific than to think supernatural. It's safer. To present faith as an additional means of knowledge with science is totally fallacious. What faith is this knowledge? Islamic, Hindu, Baha'i?

People say that miracles are unlikely so even if they happen we have insufficient reason to believe in them. Religion can have only one response to this: "How do you know what's likely?" This reply shows how religion refuses to be self-correcting. Science looks for evidence against its discoveries as well as evidence for them. Faith looks for only the evidence for its claims. It is inherently biased and unfair. It leads to aggression that is aroused by fear.

Suppose religion is right to see a miracle as a sign. It says miracles are signs of God's love and signs from him concerning what doctrines he wants us to believe. But even if they are, they are far more signs of the presence of the supernatural because God's love and his doctrines cannot be understood or believed correctly without the supernatural stamp. They cannot be signs of the supernatural unless science verifies them as supernatural. But it cannot do that.

It makes the best sense to see miracles as nonsense and to see them as unbelievable even if they do happen. They do not make any sense.

Science depends on the assumption that miracles and magic do not happen and that we can learn how nature works and see that nature has laws and structure. There would be no value in experiments if magic can interfere. Believers, like scientists and unbelievers, say dead people stay dead. The believers add that Jesus was an exception for he rose again. But how do they know that he was the only exception? They say the evidence tells them. But evidence is not everything! Perhaps resurrecting happens a lot and no evidence is left behind? What gives them the right to assume that dead people staying dead is really a regularity? The person who does not believe that anybody rose is more supportive of regularity than they are. The supernatural attacks science. It denies regularity. It cannot be tested. It provides then no direction for doing research.

It is not only a miracle being supernatural that is the sign. It is the miracle being supernatural and rare and a once-off. If a spring issuing water cured all warts supernaturally it would not be seen as a sign. It would only be seen as a sign if it supernaturally cured some warts. A miracle being rare and a once-off makes it a miracle far more than its being supernatural does. This means three things:

- You have to show the event was provably or probably a miracle.
- You also have to disprove other similar miracle reports for it has to be rare to be a true miracle.
- To hold that ongoing miracles happen would mean that science is unreliable. Perhaps there is no sun at all but a miracle makes us think there is one.

The miracle then puts a huge burden on science for it calls on experts for verification and a lot lot of work! The standard for investigators would need to be immense. But like I said, science cannot do that. Miracles need science and they dismiss it at the one time. Miracles are absurd.

People should get their science right and forget about miracles. Do not waste time with the supernatural. It is far more important to check out suspect scientific claims than miracles. If somebody gets treatment for a sore back that is based on pseudo-science, that person could be actually suffering from lung cancer. Because she has been told and convinced she has a sore back and the treatment will help she may delay visiting the real professionals and end up dying over her cancer being found when it is too late. Pseudo-science is made harder to eliminate if practitioners can use miracles as evidence that science does not know it all. Practitioners may claim that the miraculous aids their treatments! Pseudo-science is made harder to eliminate if time and thought is taken up considering miracle claims. Nobody dies if people refuse to examine and test the apparitions of Medjugorje. People die over pseudo-science. Miracles and religion demand that we waste time with them and people die in the process. They are indirectly murderous at worst and irresponsible at best.

Some physicists state that it is naturally possible for a dead person to return from the dead after three days. They regard this as very improbable. There are molecular explanations as to why that might happen. That would mean you never should call anything supernatural or attribute it to the supernatural. If nature can do it, then supernatural explanations are redundant.

Imagine in a possible world that science has verified that miracles happen. Science if it recognises miracles cannot test what is doing them. It could be a case that if x rises from the dead today, somebody else could rise next week or maybe millions will rise in a months time. Nobody knows. Science cannot function with such a presumption. Even if there is a God, that God who lets babies suffer terribly may have to do it - according to religion. So then he could give his power to do miracles to some witch or something. All agree that believing some power can do random mad miracles ruins science. Religion agrees. But that does not change the fact that it cannot give evidence that miracles happen sensibly. Science and philosophy and religion cannot show that or make it likely.

If you request a birthday cake in prayer, will God minutely tamper with the universe to make sure you will get one? That would be against the laws of physics. Believers might say it is not for rather than tamper he sets up the universe in preparation for your cake. But that would be against physics as well. Why? Would it be as bad as or worse than tampering? It is worse for it is still tampering and it won't admit it. Prayer is more important to religion than miracles and miracles are supposed to be about getting people to pray and have a relationship with God. Thus if prayer is anti-science then it follows that miracles are necessarily anti-science too.

Science shows that antibiotics work. Or does it? What if they are useless and it is a perpetual miracle at work? That would explain why people get better. Researchers all agree that to view God as constantly or perpetually suspending natural law

makes science useless and futile and blasphemous. Even the suggestion that God could be perpetually suspending natural law or alternatively that what looks like a natural cause in fact is not (eg if antibiotics do not affect the immune system and the response of the immune system is not down to them but a miracle) ruins science. Science does not make room for any doubt when something is verified. And there is enough to bring doubt in if anywhere without miracles and the supernatural adding to it.

Religion tells you that if you think all miracles are suspect or if you debunk them all that there could be a real miracle out there that you have not come across. It warns you against concluding that miracles do not happen or probably do not happen. But do not forget how science works. It will test human beings by taking a suitable number and performing a study. It will find human nature is too unreliable with such tales. Science regards a study as enough to show human nature is always too unreliable. Religion is anti-science for it rejects the method of science. Science has shown that eyewitness testimony needs such caution that you cannot lay too much importance on it. It is not enough to justify jailing somebody for life or basing magical doctrines on.

Christians may say there is no conflict between religion and science. Surely they know that there are forms of Christianity that differ hugely from one another and are we to think that there is no conflict between any of these and science? The following has to be shouted for it is so important. CHRISTIANS SAY THERE IS NO CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY. THEY SAY THEY FIT TOGETHER AND COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER. BUT IT IS NOT UP TO CHRISTIANS TO SAY THAT BUT SCIENTISTS WHO ARE CHRISTIANS. THAT YOU HAVE POPES AND THEOLOGIANs SAYING IT PROVES THAT THEY ARE ARROGANT AND UNTRUTHFUL. ALSO CHRISTIANITY IS BASED ON BELIEF IN MIRACLES OR THE SUPERNATURAL. BUT SCIENCE IS ABOUT EXPERIENCING WHAT SEEMS TO BE TRUE THROUGH TESTS. SCIENCE ASSUMES MIRACLES DO NOT HAPPEN FOR A MIRACLE IS NECESSARILY CONTRARY TO EXPERIENCE. OUR EXPERIENCE IS THAT DEAD PEOPLE STAY DEAD AND DO NOT RISE AGAIN. SO SCIENCE HAS TO ASSUME THAT NATURE WILL WORK IN A REGULAR WAY AND WILL NOT EXPERIENCE ANY SUPERNATURAL SUSPENSION OR INTERRUPTION. WHEN A MIRACLE CLAIM IS MADE CAN YOU BE NEUTRAL AS YOU CHECK THE EVIDENCE FOR IT? NO. AND IF YOU TRY TO BE, YOU WILL BE FORCED TO BE NEUTRAL IF THE POPE SAYS THAT CHEMOTHERAPY WILL MIRACULOUSLY STOP WORKING. IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN THEN? THE TRULY GOOD PERSON DOES NOT BELIEVE IN MIRACLES. THE TRULY GOOD PERSON IS GROUNDED IN SCIENCE.

For science, miracles even if possible are no use in practice or investigation. Just like for Kant, they are of no importance to life. Reason does not need them or have any use for them.