

WHEN MET WITH A MIRACLE CLAIM WHAT ASSUMPTION SHOULD YOU MAKE?

TESTIMONY TO MIRACLES BY RELIABLE WITNESS STILL LEAVES US ASSUMING THEY HAPPEN

What if miracles are reported by honest and reliable witnesses? Should we believe?

Religion says we should at least in some cases. This position in reality urges us to be agnostic about what reports are genuine and what are not and what cannot be decided. You could get a dossier about miracles and the evidence for them but say that some of the miracles are authentic and from God but you don't know which. If that is the right approach, then religion is not justified in saying that miracles show its claims are true. For example, the Catholics say, "Look - this holy wafer bled miraculously and it proves that our priests can really turn bread into God's body without it seeming to be any different from ordinary bread." Saying that it makes religion biased and dishonest for it refuses to be agnostic about what miracles are real. If we cannot know if miracles really happen or what reported miracles really are miracles then the best we can do is assume that some miracles happen. We cannot believe. We cannot base a religion on miracles.

The vast majority of Catholics are guilty of self-deception even if they never seem to tell lies or steal or seem dishonest. Consider how rife the lie is that Jesus said we must never judge others and that means never tell others that they are wrong. Nobody could imagine a stance more inconsistent with Catholicism than that! We have the right to be considered to be reasonable people while being neither convinced or unconvinced by those Catholics of honest reputation who testify to miracles. Even when there is good testimony supporting revelation, it remains true that those who accept the revelation are STILL assuming that it is true. Testimony makes acceptance no more or no less reasonable.

It is said the public accept one's guilt if the court finds one guilty. They do this without knowing the evidence and the details. The Church says there is nothing unfair about that so many in the Church say we may or should believe in miracles without evidence. They are wrong. It is putting the word of a few before the evidence. It is letting others speak for the evidence instead of you examining the evidence and letting it speak for itself. It is better and fairer for you to seek and examine the evidence yourself than to depend on somebody else. And it does not really matter if you agree with the court not in the sense that you are not obligated to agree. It is up to the court to get it right. It is up to you to get it right too.

You wouldn't ask others to believe your alarm clock comes to life at midnight without offering evidence.

Religion does not really believe testimony is enough. It ignores or dismisses the testimony of people deemed reliable when they speak of miracles the religion does not like.

Belief in miracles is based on the testimony of witnesses. Or if you want to put it this way, it is really based on their seeming sincerity about their testimony. The more ridiculous the story the more sincere you can assume the teller of the story to be. This makes acceptance of miracles a recipe for insanity and chaos and rampant superstition. Only the hypocrisy of the believers keeps them in check.

We know that testimony whoever honest the testator is, is not necessarily right. Whether we believe in a testimony or not depends on what our beliefs are already. We believe because of our assumptions about the testimony not because of the testimony. Religion won't admit that for its tantamount to admitting to being superstition masquerading as religion.

Philosopher David Hume stated that miracles are so bizarre or unlikely that no evidence can be great enough for them. The problem Christians have with this is that he was allegedly assuming that miracles are too rare to be believed in when he should have said miracles can be believable if one considers the evidence for them. That is the only thing they can say. If you assume miracles happen then you have no choice but to say what they say. But Hume is not doing what they are accusing him of at all. He is not saying, "I know miracles are not believable without even looking at the evidence for them or against them." He is not saying that there is no evidence for miracles but that the evidence is not good enough to justify belief in miracles. It is they who are being the biased and narrow ones. Clearly it is better to listen to Hume than the believers. It is better both "morally" and rationally. Hume did say miracles can be believable if one considers the evidence. He said that if a testimony to a miracle being wrong would be a bigger miracle than the alleged miracle then you should believe in the miracle.

Even if Hume assumes miracles never can happen (he didn't) that is his right. Religion ties up faith in religion to morality meaning you are somehow bad if you assume what he assumed. God, according to the Bible, commands that we believe in him and the miracles he has done.

THE ARGUMENT THAT MIRACLES ARE NEITHER LIKELY OR UNLIKELY FORCES US TO MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THEM

Religion says: To say we don't know if a miracle is unlikely or not is to say we cannot believe in it but merely assume that it has happened. The unbelievers say that it is too unlikely for the evidence to be right that Jesus rose again for most people stay dead so they cannot be expected to believe. We say they don't know what is unlikely or not. The world could be turned by God into a blueberry in a moment's time or all the dead could be back with us tomorrow. It is as easy for God to do that as to turn a dead man like Jesus into a living one. They will answer that we cannot go through life believing we don't know what is likely. We say so what? Believe Jesus rose.

COMMENT: Miracles do nothing to save you from blind faith or faith that ignores facts. They are pointless. You can't need signs such as miracles for blind faith for it is "faith" that has no regard for evidence. And it is true that we cannot go through life denying that anything is likely or unlikely as far as we know. They know that and they believe that. They would wreck our lives to get us to believe in miracles. Miracle reports are a force for evil.

If you cannot say a miracle wasn't believable on the basis that it was unlikely then it follows that you should seriously consider any kind of miracle story to be true or say it might have been true. Credulity then would be the order of the day.

They are saying miracles may be assumed to be true for you don't know if they are unlikely or not. To say you don't know is telling you you may assume. Religion does not have the honesty to tell you that you may assume they are untrue! The Catholic for example is accused of sin if he assumes the resurrection of Jesus never happened. And he is praised and regarded as obeying God if he assumes it did. That is bigoted harassment.

Evidence does not help. Therefore if we should believe in miracles we should believe without evidence. We should give the fanatic the right to believe and act upon the notion that if he blows up 5000 people he is giving them a passport into Heaven.

It is reasonable to assume miracles don't happen.

SHOULD WE ASSUME MIRACLES ARE POSSIBLE?

A miracle is an event that is not naturally possible - only God could do it. In other words, a power greater than nature can do it.

A miracle is really an act of magic done by God. Religion bizarrely claims that magic is to be assumed to be nonsense except when we think that God does it. That is hardly fair!

We all know that an orange turning into an apple is impossible. If it is possible, then the word impossible means nothing. If a miracle such as water turning into wine is impossible then no evidence will ever be good enough for the miracle. If something is impossible then the evidence that it happened is wrong or misleading or misinterpreted. The impossible doesn't happen.

Proving that miracles are possible is more important than proving that any individual miracle happened. If the miracle is impossible then the evidence for it is wrong. But religion can't do anything to prove that miracle is possible or even that if it is possible in theory that it actually happens. It admits this.

If there is evidence for the impossible then the evidence is entirely wrong! To say there is evidence for a one-headed frog that does not have one head is to say the evidence is wholly wrong.

The evidence is not partly or mostly wrong. It is totally wrong for it speaks of what is totally wrong.

Until it is proved that miracle is possible, religion cannot use any evidence that miracle happened as a ground of belief.

Christianity says that if somebody says a fig tree withers up miraculously by itself you would need very strong proof for something so strange. And yet when Christianity says Jesus miraculously made a fig tree wither up it does not look for proof at all. So you only need proof when it suits the Church! If that is not assuming then what is?

Religion is just assuming that there is evidence for miracles. It assumes that the evidence really is evidence. It may as well do without assuming that there is evidence. It should just assume miracles happen and forget about evidence.

But it refuses to do that for otherwise it will be seen for the irrational curse that it is.

Some say that the existence of the universe is a miracle. Would it not be better to say that even if it seems to be, that it is not

and that we are misunderstanding something? Yes. Christian philosophers state that the notion of God creating all things out of nothing is a faith position and cannot be proven.

You never know if it was strange and unknown natural laws that did the miracles which means they are not miracles or if it was the supernatural. Miracles cannot be intended to convince you that the supernatural exists when you need to assume that miracles are supernatural. Assuming is no good for it's the same as guessing. You might as well assume the supernatural exists without seeing miracles or hearing of them and if that is allowable miracles should not be happening for they would need to happen for very serious reasons and God would only be doing them as a last resort. The miracle is not as important as its message so when you can assume you have to let others assume what they like even if it is that a brand new faith is true. You cannot use miracles as evidence for God or religion. You cannot believe their message just because you were given it but you have to use your head to see if the message is plausible. In that case, God should not have been doing the miracle but simply discreetly giving you the light that you need. Miracles would indicate that whatever is doing them is an incompetent stupid force. Miracles should not be found to be sources of comfort.

PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF MIRACLES AS REALITIES

Religion may claim that science cannot explain such and such an event so the event was a miracle. That should mean that in the past when less was known, that people should have believed in more miracles than we can now. It would mean that we should refute many of the miracles they accepted for we know better. If religion were honest it would say, "We accept X as a miracle unless further information comes to light". This is really provisional acceptance. But instead religion bursts with arrogance and says, "A miracle happened".

The more we learn the more we eliminate miracles. Suppose there was a god who seemed to be fulfilling a lot of ancient prophecies. We might think the prophecies were miraculous until another case comes up where it can be explained naturally.

THE MEANING OF MIRACLES IS ASSUMED

God is said to do miracles as signs that he exists and to point us to the true religion for without them no religion can say it has evidence for its claims and no religion can have any hope of coming across as credible. But the thing is you have to suppose that God exists before you can interpret them that way. If you believe in something different perhaps that the world was made by an apathetic intelligence and is run by deceiving spirits you will not take miracles as signs that there is a God but as signs that this apathetic intelligence exists. When you just assume there is a God there is no point in God doing signs because after the signs you are still just assuming. They are not signs when that is all the far they can take you. They are just silly freaks of nature or the paranormal for when they don't stop you assuming there is no point in them taking place. If God does them to fix his blunders then he should resign for he has no competence. So miracles both imply that the paranormal cannot be trusted at all and that God cannot exist for an incompetent God is not a God at all.

There is no need to believe that God does any miracles. All the Christians can say is that we should for he might have done the miracles that we have heard of. Maybe the Devil, who likes to look good, does them all and for some mysterious purpose known only to himself. The Devil could do loads of good healing miracles just so that freethinkers might attack religion more so you never know if the source of a miracle is good or bad. Maybe it's a good-hearted god but one who does not see much value in honesty. Why assume it is God? Assuming is no use and any miracle that asks you to do it is definitely of the Devil. If assuming is okay then you may assume that the feats of top magicians are really miracles.

ASSUMPTIONS FOR OR AGAINST MIRACLES

A miracle is something that is not naturally possible - only God can do it. The believers assume that its not naturally possible and so that only God could do it. In other words, only a power greater than nature can do it.

OPTION 1 - Miracle is naturally impossible but it does happen.

Its a mere assumption that its naturally impossible - there could be laws of nature we know nothing about that made the miracle seem to have happen. In that case it would not be a real miracle at all.

We must not merely assume that miracle happens - we need evidence to back up belief in miracles. We need to be reluctant to believe but compelled by the evidence. In the same way, you need to be reluctant to believe that the suspect is guilty and you need to be compelled by the evidence. This is a safeguard against the tyrannous notion that nature can be changed easily and often by magic or miracle.

OPTION 2 - Its naturally impossible and it does not happen.

Its a mere assumption that its naturally impossible - there could be laws of nature we know nothing about.

Its also an assumption that miracles do not happen.

The believers say OPTION 2 is unfair because it does not take account of the evidence for miracles.

Why evidence?

Evidence is only what shows that something seems more likely to be true than unlikely. We can reject what the evidence points to - under certain circumstances. If miracles are very unlikely then how can the evidence show that they are likely?

Evidence is to be understood as the assumption that no magic or miracle has taken place. For example, suppose a doctor diagnoses a person as dying from cancer and the cancer vanishes when the patient drinks holy water. The doctor declares this inexplicable. But if he assumes a miracle, maybe the miracle was the mistaken diagnosis? Maybe a miracle fooled the doctor into diagnosing cancer? To have evidence and to perceive evidence, he needs to keep the supernatural out of it.

OPTION 2 is not unfair. Its the best assumption to make. Therefore its the only assumption to make.

Do you have the right to share your faith in specific miracles? Should you hide this this faith? Yes because it is not faith but an assumption. It is telling others, "Believe in the event!" while you only assume and are unable to believe yourself.

Religion upon reading this may start to say that as science can do many of the things that are classed as miracles the miracles are not violations. Science can make "blood" that liquefies like that of St Januarius. That is really saying that miracles are not miracles.

Conclusion

A miracle does not need examination because of the (alleged) demands it makes of us spiritually but because it asks for examination. It would be insane to imagine that you need to test a miracle to see if it is true if it asks you to be more responsible with say money or sexuality. That would imply you don't want to be good unless you get magical evidence that you should be. What kind of goodness would that be? A miracle demands to be seen as evidence and thus asks for us to verify that it is at worst probably true and and best proven.

Since millions of people seem to believe in the authenticity of some miracles it may appear that you cannot say miracles are fraudulent beyond all possible doubt. But a miracle can be false and still believed in by millions. And if the miracles cannot be refuted beyond all possible doubt they could still be refuted beyond all doubt. The believers could be suffering from blind credulity.

People do not and cannot accept miracles because of the evidence for them. They assume they happen. Their acceptance is just an assumption. They are never motivated by the evidence no matter how good it is.

The religionist who wants us to believe in miracles without proper evidence is never well meaning. The less evidence offered the worse it is. This marks the majority of religion teachers and clergy as "immoral".

Religious believers are equal to those who assume that upon reading Cinderella then that the story is true. The evidence they present for miracles is not the reason they endorse belief in miracles. They are only fans of miracles because they assume they are true. The evidence serves only a cosmetic purpose.

The miracle followers accuse us of assuming miracles don't happen or are not believable even if they do across the board. They accuse us of making unfair assumptions while they make unfair assumptions against us. And besides if we are doing that, at least its ideas we are being unfair with. We are unfair to those who hold the ideas but in an indirect fashion. But they directly inflict unfairness on us. Who is the worst then?