

MIRACLE BELIEFS UNDERMINE OUR CONFIDENCE IN NATURE

Nature is made of complicated behaviours that act in a repetitive way. For example, cats never get pregnant by dogs. Atheists sometimes feel that nature is not really uniform it is only sufficiently uniform. Believers say the same thing and look for an excuse to believe in miracles in it. The atheist thinks more of nature having blips - maybe a virgin has a baby. Blips will look very random and be very rare. But believers deny that a true miracle will be purposeless and mad. The miracle needs to show you God so it has to be full of purpose. The notion then that nature is not always uniform though it nearly always or mostly is does not really make room for miracles. It only makes room for blips that people could misrepresent and lie about to make them look like miracles. They will hide how it is a blip and try to make out it was an intended action by God.

A blip will certainly make us worry about nature at least a little bit.

A miracle makes you worry more for it is about not a blip within nature but about a power bigger than nature and which can totally revise natural law if it wants to.

The miracle sceptics supposedly think nature's regularity cannot change or that it alters so rarely that you may as well assume it does not change. They assume that an alteration is so odd that you need incredible proof that it really did happen. You need evidence to preserve your confidence in nature and science. If nature's regularity seems to change, we must not assume it has changed even for a brief time. Why? Because nature does many countless and infinitely complicated things and thus the way that the laws come together can produce some startling or unpredicted effect. Everything does something unexpected sometime. If nature cannot raise the dead to life, perhaps some day it will through science. sometimes one way of working is stronger than another. we are not saying nature needs to work a certain way on that it can only work a certain way

Miracles are events that seem to be against nature or the way natural law usually runs. In other words, they cannot be explained by nature. Examples are the Blessed Virgin Mary appearing to children, the unexplained cure of incurable illness, blood coming out of nowhere on Catholic communion wafers, the sun spinning at Fatima in Portugal in 1917 and most importantly Jesus Christ coming back to life after being dead nearly three days. It is thought that only God can do these things.

We say it is a natural law to think that you will not get the power to walk through a wall. Laws imply law-makers but we use the word law in the sense of something that is not going to change. We do not imply that God made this law and thus it is called a law.

Science sees natural law as merely a way of saying regularity. It is not real law but is as rigid as law. Religion sees natural law as real law as in decreed by God or enforced by him. That point alone shows that the alleged harmony between God/Religion and Science is a lie.

If we are convinced that miracles do not happen then our faith in natural law is safe. Some would say that we can believe in miracles and in natural law for miracles can't take place unless there is a natural law to break. So we cannot say a miracle happened unless we know what natural law is. But what if natural law is suspended all or a lot of the time by miracles leaving us not knowing what natural law and therefore miracle is? There would be no belief.

And even if miracles happen seldomly, the result is that we have less faith in natural law and in science and in the evidences of the senses than we should have. It is better to be sure that fire burns than to be a bit less sure. Miracles are the enemy for they call on us to be less sure. Goodness is being grounded in reality for evil is irrationality and insanity.

Even if natural law is not suspended very much we don't know that and so we cannot believe in anything. We would be proving ourselves arrogant by saying we know that an egg put into boiling water becomes a hard boiled egg in minutes.

We cannot believe in anything until we get evidence – there is no belief without evidence - that the suspensions are rare or infrequent but that evidence is beyond our reach. Miracles have to go. They make us less sure of things and make us less attached to reality and sanity so they are always and invariably EVIL!

Belief in miracles does not presuppose that we know what natural law is for one or more natural laws that compose the law could be suspended by miracle all the time. For example, maybe the natural law is that egg cells can grow into babies by themselves but this law has been suspended so the only law we have experience of is that sperm is needed.

If we believe in miracles we have reason to believe that this is happening or could be meaning we can believe in nothing and be just as unsure about natural law as we are sure – neither believing in it or denying it. We cannot even prove that miracles are infrequent to say that natural law is probably intact most of the time because we can't know about every miracle that takes place.

The believers argue that nature is left intact even if miracles happen. So they are saying that there is no harm in believing in a miracle that is badly verified for your faith in nature is still as strong as ever. Nobody accepts this argument for it implies that you should or can believe any miracle claim no matter how preposterous it is if you want to. If a miracle like the resurrection of Jesus, which the Church says is a sensible miracle to believe in, can be considered to be true, then what harm could it do to believe in a daft one? Not all miracle believers can be expected to agree with the Church about what miracles are daft or sensible for people see things differently. Yet the users of the argument do not want to have all miracle beliefs made acceptable. They want to reject daft miracles like leprechauns and their pots of gold appearing on Irish bogs. They cannot have their blessed cake and eat it. Their argument is really a denial that miracles are signs for it implies they can happen just for the sake of happening. After all, anybody doing a miracle and making no effort to ensure that it can be authenticated or verified is only doing the miracle for the sake of doing a miracle – that is, for nothing.

Religion says it makes sense to believe in miracles that have been fairly well verified. But what about the unverified miracles? They could be evidence that we should be gullible about miracles. Perhaps some of them are absurd but really happened. Perhaps because we know we can be wrong about the authenticity of the miracles we believe in and wrong about the inauthenticity of the ones we reject this tells us we need to be more gullible to be on the safe side. Gullibility and miracles make a bad combination and shows they hate normality. They hate you believing that if you throw a stone up at the sky that it will come down.

And religion says miracles need us to firmly believe in the laws of nature for if we do not then we will never be able to tell if something is a miracle or appreciate and respect it. A miracle confirms the natural and the supernatural. Three questions are unavoidable.

Does it confirm the natural more than the supernatural?

Does it confirm the supernatural more than the natural?

Does it confirm both equally?

As the natural happens anyway it would appear to be confirming the supernatural first and foremost. If it confirms the natural that would be merely collateral.

So when miracles are supportive of the natural way you must seek a natural explanation first and foremost. When the miracles don't encourage extreme professionalism it is clear there is something amiss and nothing supernatural is happening for God and Satan would not go to the trouble of doing them when nobody can be sure enough they happened.

What if a miracle is not obviously supernatural but is more like a startling coincidence - eg an eclipse happening that breaks up a war after people have prayed for peace.

Christians define miracles as acts of love by God who does something supernatural. This pressures people to believe that reported miracles are real. Even if a miracle report is a mistake it seems safer to believe in it as long as it makes God look infinitely wonderful. Thus defining miracles as demonstrations of perfect divine love leads to grave problems and they pose a threat to science. If the miracles are true, they are from God and therefore investigating them through the sceptical but open methods of science is wrong. Yet the Church claims to use science to "verify" miracles! Miracles are anti-science.

Augustine of Hippo stated that a miracle does not contradict nature but what we know of nature. So a miracle can be obvious to you or it can be a remarkable coincidence. An example of the first might be wine turning into blood. And an example of the second can be when you pray for a doctor to come in the middle of nowhere and one walks in ready to treat you. But what if some remarkable coincidence made you make a mistake that caused you to swear that wine turned into blood when in fact it did not? The doctrine avoids the notion of the natural and supernatural being two separate realms. They are different but two sides of the same coin.

If you can detach miracles from God and say, "They are supernatural but we have no reason to think a God is doing them but prefer not to think about what the cause is for we cannot determine that anyway" what then?

Miracles wreck faith and confidence in nature in principle and in practice. Some go to an extreme with this lack of confidence and see gods and demons and magic everywhere and that is to the detriment of the innocent people who get

tangled up with them.

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