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Miracles

"There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle."

- Albert Einstein -

The word miracle comes from the Latin word miraculum meaning "something wonderful." Of course "wonderful" like "beauty" is in the eye of the beholder and few people agree on what constitutes a miracle. So, as Albert Einstein inferred above, there are those who will tend to see miracles everywhere and those who see no miracles anywhere.

It may be said that the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) is one of those who tended to not see miracles anywhere. In regard to miracles, David Hume said, "A miracle is

a violation of the laws of nature..." He elaborated on this by explaining that a healthy man just dropping dead wouldn't be a miracle simply because it is known to happen. On the other hand a dead man coming to life would be a miracle because it is not known to happen.

However, trying to convince Mr. Hume that such a miracle had happened would be no small feat because, "When anyone tells me, that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact, which he relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous, than the event which he relates; then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion."

So, basically, it is easier to believe that any testimony about a miracle should be dismissed as some sort of deception rather than believe that the laws of nature have been broken. If Mr. Hume were alive today this would probably extend to photographs, video and audio recordings. With the technology presently available, just because we see or hear something just simply doesn't make it automatically true.

For reasons unknown, many believe miraculous events are strictly the purview of God. Of course people tend to not believe that there is any God other than the one represented by their particular religion. So there is also much disagreement on which miracles are really miracles caused by the "real" God. It boils down to a little circular reasoning where if a miracle is attributed to a God that is not acknowledged as God then the miracle cannot be a miracle no matter the degree to which it violates the natural laws. Essentially, the evidence of the miracle simply must be wrong because that God isn't God and therefore the miracle cannot be a miracle.

So, are there any miracles for which it would be more miraculous for the testimony to be wrong than it is for the miracle to be true?

In spite of the difficulties associated with acknowledging the existence of any miracle, there are a number of matters that could possibly be considered miracles that have had some degree of testimony or evidence in their favor. Among these are:

Spontaneous healing

Alien visitation (interstellar or angels)

Unusual mental powers

Reincarnation

Time Travel

Each of these has evidence that can be very compelling.

There are numerous cases of documented spontaneous healing of a variety of illnesses where the healing is counter to the laws of nature. Particularly in cases of stage four cancer, where all available remedies have failed, there are documented cases of advanced cancer simply disappearing. Were the X-rays, MRIs and blood tests simply wrong? Was there some deception, or was there a real miracle?

Is alien visitation a miracle? Perhaps it depends upon whether or not the alien visitors are considered angels (i.e., messengers from God). But if there are alien visitors and they are not messengers from God is it any less miraculous that out of billions and billions of stars in this galaxy that a visitor from another star system happened to wind up here?

Among the roughly six billion people on earth there are a hand-full of people whose minds can do amazing things. There is a man who can recite the value of pi with perfect accuracy out to over 20,000 digits in roughly five hours. This same man, Daniel Tammet, can perform calculations in his head that exceed the capacity of many calculators and again does so with complete accuracy. He does this without consciously calculating anything. He just sees the numbers in his head. Of course then there is the real Rainman, Kim Peek, who can tell you what day of the week any day in history falls on, but can't shave himself or tie his own shoes. He can also tell you the zip code or area

code of any town you might care to name. Of course there are those that will say there is nothing miraculous about what these men do, but it certainly seems to defy the laws of nature.

In the area of reincarnation there are many examples that have been researched extensively by Dr. Ian Stevenson of the Department of Psychiatric Medicine at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, Charlottesville, Virginia. An interesting article was published by Dr. Stevenson regarding the relationship between certain birthmarks on children that seem to relate to previous lives that they remember

(<http://www.sinor.ru/~che/birthmarks.htm>). Dr. Stevenson can be seen interviewing a subject in a village in Myanmar at the following

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/personalitystudies/> .

In Regard to reincarnation, there are few stories any more compelling than the one surrounding young James Leininger who has accurately described a previous life as World War II pilot, James Huston Jr. Time after time, specific items he has related about an earlier life aboard the aircraft carrier Natoma, the plane he flew, another flyer he identified by name (Jack Larsen) and specific details surrounding his own death have been proven true (an eye witness to the final moments of James Huston Jr. being shot down over Chichi Jima was located). Further details

can be found at http://www.ntcsites.com/acadianhouse/nss-folder/publicfolder/AP/cover_feature_24_3.htm . But is this a miracle? It certainly runs contrary to what we consider "the laws of nature." At what point is a young boy able to relate enough details about a previous life before we can say that it would be more miraculous for him to "make up" such a convincing story as opposed to actually having lived the previous life that he talks about?

In regard to time travel, there are countless reports of missing time and even a few cases of time repeats where people seem to experience a replay of events. In one such case in 1991 a Nova Scotia university student was making a bus trip home to visit his parents. At one point he noted that the bus had passed a Michelin tire factory only to notice once again a few minutes later that the bus was once again passing the same factory. Was this a miracle, déjà vu, time travel, or just a lost bus driver?

There are also many reports of skipped time. One case of skipped or missing time involves two women who were driving from northern California to a conference in Las Vegas a few years ago. During the trip they were in contact by amateur radio with a well known radio talk show host with whom they were acquainted. As they talked, the radio show host had to excuse himself from their conversation for a few minutes; letting them

know he would be right back and would give them a call on the same frequency. The women drove on for a few minutes and soon heard their friend calling over the radio. Answering him, they were questioned about where they had been for the last hour or so. At first this made no sense to them because they believed they had only talked to their friend just a few minutes earlier. Finally, they realized they were no longer on the same road they had been on when they had last talked to him. In fact, they had apparently already gone through a town that they believed was still ahead of them. They were where they should be, but had no idea how they had gotten there or where the time had gone.

By some miracle did these two women somehow skip ahead in time, were they both in some kind of hypnotic state even while one of them was driving, were they just deceived or were they being deceptive as David Hume might suppose?

Perhaps if we recognize one simple fact everything will come into focus. Life itself is the ultimate miracle. To this day we simply don't know the cause of life as opposed to non-life. We don't know what animates us, makes us who we are, or gives us the inspirations that expand knowledge beyond that which is already known. So, as Einstein speculated, perhaps we might choose to "live as if everything is a miracle."