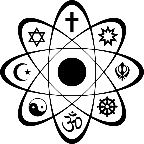
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**Religion & Science – Miracles**

Miracles.

*‘An extraordinary and usually welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine or supernatural being’.*

Hume’s four arguments against miracles:

* There are insufficient witnesses of ‘good sense’, education and learning. Witnesses tend to be uneducated, ignorant peasants.
* The witnesses tend to be sympathetic to the idea of miracles and therefore more likely to describe an event as miraculous.
* Miracles tend to be observed by ‘ignorant and barbarous nations’.
* Religions base their truth claims on the miraculous - all religions claim miracles, they can’t all be right.

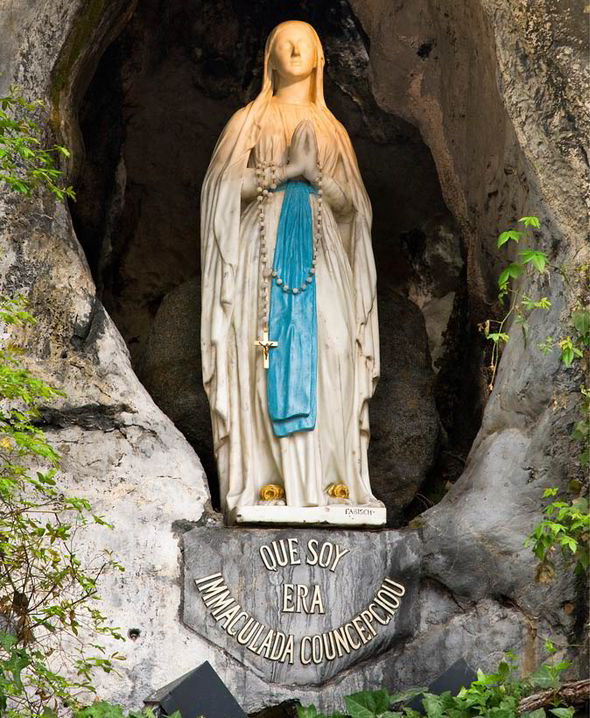
**Sister Marie of the Presentation**

A Franciscan nun, Sr Marie of the Presentation, from Lille, France, developed what the doctors called "chronic gastro-enteritis". For twelve years this disease steadily became worse, to such an extent that those who cared for her could not prevent "a state of absolute starvation, which would undoubtedly end in death".  
Sr Marie wanted to go to Lourdes. Her doctor, and the others looking after her, thought it useless to try to dissuade her.   
The journey lasted more than two days. However the first sign of improvement was seen in the train. This enabled her to eat a little.   
While she was praying in the Rosary Basilica, she experienced for the last time "stomach pains far worse than she had ever felt before" and then, the unexpected, sudden and total cure happened.   
In 1908, for the 50th . Anniversary of the Apparitions, her cure was declared as miraculous, since for 16 years there had not been any relapse.

Why scientists do not accept religious ideas like miracles?

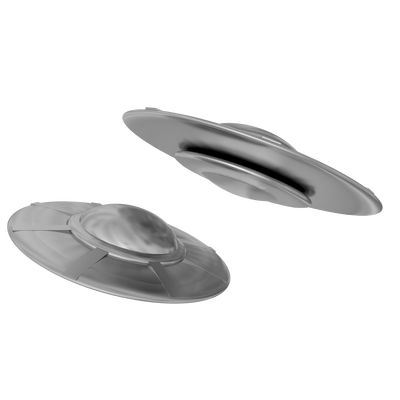
Miracles can be a lazy way of dealing with any problem or explaining away an inconvenient fact – can’t understand how someone was cured of a disease – it must be a miracle. Even if miracles do occur, they could only be accepted as such after the most rigorous testing and scrutiny.

A principal reason science rejects miracles is the vast majority of miracles claims have proven untrustworthy and the rest are indeterminate.

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Explain… reasons why some people would doubt the miraculous cure of Sister Marie of the Presentation.

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A comparison;

UFO enthusiasts agree that fakes and mistaken observations are commonplace but there is always a small ‘residue’ of cases that cannot be dismissed suggesting UFOs exist. However it can also be said that if most sighting are fakes, we could assume that, as yet unexplained sightings are also fakes and we simply haven’t found those responsible. The burden of proof is on the believer to show their case is genuine. The same reasoning applies to miracles. Even if an unquestionably anomalous event occurred, inexplicable in terms of any known laws of nature. No amount of evidence for a miracle can rule out the possibility of some hidden flaw in the evidence or unknown natural explanation. Therefore, another important reason for scientists rejecting miracles is that writing something off as a miracle forecloses any possibility of explaining it in other terms.

Just because something is possible doesn’t mean we have to regard it as likely. There is a possibility that I could get hit by a meteorite, but it is highly unlikely, so I won’t spend time concerning myself with it. A miracle may influence the course of a disease but most religious believers will still go to the doctor.

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Explain…

1. Why Hume believed miracles do not exist.
2. Two reasons, in detail, why scientists do not accept miracles.



An example;

A "mysterious voice" led rescuers to find child who survived for 14 hours in submerged car.

In March 2015, Lynn Jennifer Groesbeck, 25, lost control of her car and landed in the icy Spanish Fork River in Utah.

Fourteen hours later, first responders found her 18-month-old daughter, Lily, in her car seat hanging upside down just above frigid river water.

Prior to finding Lily, both police officers and firefighters report that they heard an adult voice yell "Help me!" from inside the car.

They discovered that the voice could not have come from the young mother, who likely died from the impact.

The rescuers still can’t explain the voice or how the girl survived hanging upside-down for 14 hours in freezing temperatures without being dressed for the cold.

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Explain…

1. Why would some people say the case of Lily Groesbeck was a miracle? Include at least three reasons in your explanation.
2. Are there any reasons why Lily’s family might be predisposed to believe her survival was a miracle?
3. Why would other people and scientists say this was not a miracle? Explain in some depth.

Religion and science debates and their significance for philosophy of religion a) Methodologies with emphasis on observation, hypothesis and experiment, identifying connections and differences vis a vis religious belief and processes; miracles. b) Creation themes and scientific cosmologies: Big Bang, steady state theories, intelligent design and irreducible complexity, creationism, cosmological constant, evolution, Gaia hypothesis. With reference to the ideas of C Darwin and R Dawkins.