

Explaining the Inexplicable

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I have come across atheists that fall into 2 categories –

- Those that dismiss miracles as fictitious fairy tales because they believe they go against the laws of nature.
- Those that are aware that the miracles referred to in religious scriptures can be proved through science and mathematics and can therefore not be classed as miracles at all.

I remember at the end of one of my lectures whilst studying Biomedical Sciences, the professor raving on about Richard Dawkins and how amazing his work is. How he proves that in a world of science – God is not only unnecessary but a delusion of the believers.

Am I the only one who is totally amazed by people who come to the conclusion that, because science can explain everything, it proves that there is no God? I wonder if my professor was aware that Dawkins himself stated “One can’t prove that God doesn’t exist.”

Naturally one must look at the definition of miracles – there are so many variations and interpretations. The Oxford Living Dictionaries defines a miracle as:

1. An extraordinary and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine agency.
 - 1.1 A remarkable event or development that

brings very welcome consequences.

Ahmadi Muslims do not believe in the 1st definition. As His Holiness Mirza Tahir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him), the fourth Khalifa/Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community explains:

“Miracles are not seen in Islam as unnatural occurrences, but as natural phenomena that are concealed from human knowledge at that period of time. Otherwise, there would be many questions raised against the wisdom of God. If God created the laws of nature Himself, He should have made some provisions whereby without breaking them, He could bring about desired solutions to a problem.”

We can all agree that the human knowledge of the laws of nature is incomplete, if it was complete we would not be making new scientific discoveries all the time. It is due to this lack of knowledge that miracles such as those that occurred in the lifetime of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) as believed by not only Muslims but also Jews and Christians were ruled out by many as fictitious stories (some even go to the extreme that they deny Israelites ever lived in Egypt.) But both scientific and archaeological evidence is continuously emerging that give testament to the reality of the stories found in the scriptures.

“Then We sent upon them the storm and the locusts, and the lice, and the frogs,

and the blood — clear Signs; but they behaved proudly and were a sinful people.”

[Holy Qur’an 7:134]

This verse refers to the 10 plagues mentioned in the Bible (Exod. Chaps. 7-11) All of these can be explained scientifically. If we look at the sign of the blood which is referring to the water turning red when Moses (peace be on him) struck the river Nile with his staff, this can be explained by a phenomenon known as “red tide” in oceans which is when it suddenly appears red in colour due to a sudden red algae bloom. Red algae can be found in freshwater ecosystems and can be harmful to wildlife.

“Then We revealed to Moses, saying, ‘Strike the sea with thy rod.’ Thereupon it parted, and every part looked like a huge mountain. And We let others approach that place.

And We saved Moses and those who were with him. Then We drowned the others.”

[Holy Qur’an 26: 64-67]

The splitting of the sea is another example of a miracle that has scientific explanations to it. Russian researchers have calculated that if there were strong winds of 67 miles per hour overnight, in the time of Moses when the Red Sea would have been much shallower, it could have exposed the seabed. A Russian mathematician admits that there was still some miraculous intervention occurring adding “I am convinced that God rules the

Earth through the laws of physics.”

It is evident from both the Biblical account of the event as well as the Quranic account that when Moses and his followers reached the sea, it was time for the ebb-tide and the sea was receding, leaving a dry bed. Following the command of God, Moses and his people crossed it quickly. There is evidence that the part of the sea they crossed was only 2/3-mile-wide so the Israelites would have made it across during the low tide. When Pharaoh’s people reached they did not notice that it was almost time for high tide again. It appeared that Pharaoh’s people were heavily equipped with big chariots and heavy weapons, slowing them down so that they were still in the middle of the sea when high tide returned and drowned them all.

What is important to notice in these incidents is timing. Is it nothing short of a miracle that at the exact time when Pharaoh demanded a Divine sign from God, the river turned red? When the escaping Israelites were blocked by the sea and nearly overtaken by Pharaoh and his men and facing death started to lose hope – God instructed Moses to strike the sea with his rod. Is it nothing short of a Miracle or Divine intervention that it was the exact time when the water started to recede?

“In this, verily, there is a Sign; but most of these would not believe. And surely thy Lord — He is the Mighty, the Merciful.”
(Holy Qur’an 26:68-69)

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