

Sermon and thoughts on Miracles, by Rev. Mumtaz Kammerer, Siraj – Universal Worship, Baltimore PA, August 2025

The theme today was “Miracle.”

Here's some thoughts about this topic:

"Inspiring the Jungle Animals" is from "Back to Godhead," the magazine of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness. In the 1980s, on my lunch break I'd sometimes go to Boston Common and sit and listen to the Hare Krisna chanting. They were always handing out the Bhagavad Gita and other materials. This story from the magazine touched me and I pasted it on the inside back cover of "In the Garden," a book about Murshid Sam and his teachings.

Once Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu decided to travel to Vindavana, the place of Lord Krsna's appearance. A brahmana named Balabhadra Bhattacharya was chosen to assist the Lord, and before sunrise one morning they started their journey.

On the way, they passed through Jhärikhanda forest. At this time the Lord was in great ecstasy due to love of Krsna, Packs of tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses and boars approached Him, but the Lord passed right through them unharmed.

Balabhadra Bhattacharya was very afraid, but by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's influence all the animals stood to one side.

Then the Lord splashed water on the bodies of some of the elephants, and they began to chant, "Krsna! Krsna!" and dance. Some of the elephants fell to the ground, and some roared in ecstasy. Seeing this, Balabhadra Battacarya was completely astonished.

While passing through the jungle, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu chanted very loudly. Hearing His sweet voice, all the does came near Him. A group of tigers then joined the deer and began following the Lord. When He shouted,

"Chant Krsna! Krsna!" the tigers and deer began to chant

"Krsna!" and dance in ecstasy. Indeed, the tigers and deer embraced each other and kissed! Balabhadra Bhattacharya was struck with wonder at the sight, but Sri Caitanya simply smiled to see all the fun.

In this way the Lord was able to deliver even the animals from the bonds of material existence.

Miracles – Universal Worship 8/10/25 – Notes for sermon

So many miracles in the various religions.

Hinduism: When he was a toddler, Krsna's mother thought he had been eating dirt. He denied it. She said, “Let me look in your mouth.” When he opened his mouth, she saw universe upon universe contained in his being.

To make all the Gopis, milkmaids, happy, Krsna multiplies himself so he can dance with each one.

Lord Chaitanya inspires the animals with Krsna's name.

Today's scripture: Krsna reveals himself to Arjuna.

Buddhism: Today's scripture: A seeker walks on water to be in the Buddha's presence.

Zoroastrianism: Zarathustra's mother glowed with light as he was born and he laughed at birth rather than crying.

Judaism: Enoch ascended to heaven in his physical body. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace for not bowing to an idol, but were protected by an angel and not burned. Daniel in the lion's den was not harmed. Moses parts the Red Sea for the Hebrews to cross.

Christianity: Jesus heals the sick, makes the blind to see, raises the dead, changes water into wine, feeds the multitude with a few loaves and fishes, walks on water.

Today's scripture: The virgin birth. This miracle is also recounted in the Quran.

Islam: Today's scripture: Mohammed's Night Journey begins in Mecca where Gabriel opens his chest and washes his heart; he then mounts the steed buraq; 2. Medina where he prays; 3. Mount Sinai where he prays; 4. Bethlehem where he prays; 5. The grave of Moses where he prays; 6. He then goes to Jerusalem and prays with all the prophets. From Jerusalem Mohammed ascended the 7 Heavens to come into the Divine presence.

These miracles can inspire us and make us consider, indeed, with God all things are possible. Miracles can't be explained with the laws science or physics. They're beyond such laws and expectations, just as God is more than human beings can ever conceptualize. If we believe such miracles happen, that can lead to faith's growing and strengthening. And the power of faith can bring about its own miracles. When Inayat Khan's teacher Abu Hashim Madani gave him his blessing he said, "May your faith be strengthened." At the time, Inayat Khan thought, "I would have preferred it if he had said, may you become illuminated, or may your powers be great, or may your influence spread, or may you rise higher and higher, or become perfect." But Inayat Khan eventually realized the strengthening of faith was central to his and everyone's spiritual progress. Believing in these amazing miracles can help us grow in the spirit.

But we really have miracles happening around us all the time everywhere if we're attentive to them. One of my favorite viewings is time-lapse photography of plant life. A plant's germination, growth, flowering, and fruiting is a very slow and subtle process. But by time-lapse photography's compressing time, one can see all the movement that happens as a seed sprouts sending roots downward and a stem upward. Leaves develop, again with great movement as they respond to sunlight and rain. Then a flower bud eventually opens unfurling to call pollinators to assist its reproduction, forming fruit and seed. That whole process when we see it speeded-up is a miracle.

I'm sure women who have given birth or those who have attended a birth feel they have been present at a miracle.

We can also feel when we are given such divine qualities as mercy, compassion, and love in our human relationships, those are miracles overcoming our small selfish nature.

Everyday miracles are all around us if we are open to them. We can recognize them, appreciate them, learn from them, and let them strengthen our faith. As Inayat Khan says, "The more keenly we watch life, the more wonderful it is. All the miracles and phenomena are before us. Our everyday life is a miracle."

When we truly believe *with God all things are possible*, we don't need miracles, though they do reassure and inspire us. With the Divine Presence in our life, every moment is a miracle.