**SUPREMACY OF MIRACULOUS MANIFESTATIONS OVER MAGICAL POWERS IN THE BIBLE**

**BY**

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**Abstracts**

*This paper examines the supremacy of miraculous manifestation over magical powers with emphasis on Old Testament in the Bible. Miracles and magic are both spiritual and both alter the events or situation of life generally. It looked at the Old and New Testaments confirmed variables. People have expressed different opinions as regards the relationship between miracles and magic in journals, books and other related publications. Hence, this paper now recommends that miracles and magic should complement each other and the two concepts should be entrenched in school curriculum so that students would have proper knowledge of them, in other that their values and heritage can be preserved for prosperity.*

***Keywords: Supremacy, Miraculous manifestation, Magical powers and Bible***

**Introduction**

The role of magic in the Yoruba society can never be overemphasized, especially before the advent of Christianity and Islam. Magic is part of Yoruba religious apparatus without which we can say religion is not complete in our society. Magic plays prominent roles in our daily activities and it is one of the fundamental bedrocks upon which our forefathers built their faith. Despite the advent of both Christianity and Islam, magic still occupies an important position in our society up till today and whosoever disregard magic nowadays in the Yoruba setting, such a person is said to be dead but yet to be buried. However, miracles on the other hand could be traced to the Old and New Testament of the Holy Bible although it is associated majorly with Christ and his followership. In simple term, Lewis (1992) defined miracle thus:

 A miracle is more than something beyond man’s intellectual or scientific ability to accomplish. It is not natural, even though it may be unusual, a miracle is supernatural. It is more than a highly improbable event; it injects a new element unto the natural order of things.

It should be emphasized further that miracle is an act of evoking wonders or alter event which does not follow the normal and natural events, Jesus activities are centered round miracles and parables, but what majorly attracted crowd around him centered round the fact that he has a greater power to perform miracles more than any preceding leaders. In view of the fact that both miracle and magic centered round the ability to alter event or situation, then, both become subject of controversy and therefore the need for their comparison becomes imperative for a scholar. Based on this, the researcher in intends to investigate the similarities and differences between the two concepts which are the focus of this research. The major aim of the study is to educate the present and future readers on the two concepts and their implications on the present day’s believers, especially the so-called miracle workers in our society. The material for this research was majorly drawn from past writers on the related concepts. Also, the researcher made use of different journals, published and unpublished materials, as well as oral interview with some selected people among Christian Leaders, African religious Believers (Afrelists) with the intention of getting relevant information from them.

People have expressed different opinions as regards the relationship between magic and miracles. Based on this, this research intends to look at the concept of miracles and that of magic looking at the supremacy of miracles over magic with specific reference to the Old Testament. The materials for this research were majorly drawn from past writers on the related concepts. Also, the researcher made use of different journals, books, published materials and related publications.

**An Overview of Magic and Miracle**

Miracles and Magic are generally meant to have impact on men whether positively or negatively. Thus, they are all necessary in the daily affairs of men. Different scholars have taken time to give different definitions of the word “magic”. The definitions are based on different perspective upon the word is viewed. Dopamu (2003) defines magic as

The art of using the available resources of nature to procure non-therapeutic needs of man, either for good or for bad.

However, he went further to say that magic is

The art of influencing course of event by means of supernatural, communications and manifestations of power, or by means of occult control of nature and invocation of particular spirit aids.

Zakovitch (2006) in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* states that “Magic is performed by people namely by professional practitioner of the art who are capable of forcing their will upon creation and creatures alike”. In other vein, Wasserzug defines magic as any art that invokes supernatural powers. While Hornsby (1988) *Dictionary* gives the definition of “magic as pretended use of supernatural forces and the arts of obtaining mysterious result by tricks”. In view of the above definitions of magic, magic may be summarized as an act of influencing nature positively or negatively; with or through the use of supernatural power and this could be done by the professionals. However, it could be used to change events, situations, circumstances and other related things. The effects of such changes that took place could be either positive or negative depending on the outcome or the intention one desires to achieve. Alana also defines miracle as “an event in the visible or physical world, performed as a manifestation of the power of God”. However, miracles in the Bible were performed by God sometimes through His spokesmen such as the prophets in the Old Testament, for instance, Moses, Elijah and Elisha. Examples of such miracles in the Old Testament are the burning bush and grass not consuming the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot’s wife turned to pillar of salt, even the creation of the universe.

In the New Testament, Jesus performed many miracles and such miracles fall into four main groups – healing various diseases; driving out demons (exorcism); controlling the forces of nature and raising people from the dead. Jesus performed acts of healing on people who were suffering from various diseases and illness – the deaf and dumb, the blind, the lame, as well as those with fever, leprosy, epilepsy and paralysis. The greatest miracle of all was His resurrection from the dead. In another dimension, B. B. C Dictionary defines miracle as “event in the external world brought about by the immediate agency on volition of God”. It goes on to that a miracle occurs to show that behind it, is not limited to:

 *The laws of matter or mind as it interrupts*

 *the laws. So the term supernatural applies*

*quite accurately.*

Broadly speaking, miracle is anything amazing or a wonderful occurrence or a marvelous event manifesting a supernatural act of God. Looking at the above analysis of miracles by different authors or researchers and writers, it is certain that one particular thing that comes to revelation is the fact that it is an action or event that is beyond intellectual analysis or explanation of human understanding. However, it cannot be scientifically proved. It is a way of altering natural event i. e. something that tends to prove the law of nature wrong, that is miracle.

**Miracles versus Magic in the Old Testament (Exodus 7-11)**

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| --- | --- |
| **Miracles (Moses and Aaron)** | **Magic (Egyptian Magicians)** |
| * Aaron’s staff becomes a snake
 | Egyptian magicians also did the same by their secret arts |
| * The plague of blood
 | They too did the same by their secret arts |
| * The plague of frogs
 | The Egyptians magicians did the same |
| * The plague of Gnats
 | They tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, but they could not. |
| * The plague of Flies
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague on Livestock
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague of boils
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague of Hail
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague of Locusts
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague of Darkness
 | They could not do it |
| * The plague on the First Born
 | They could not do it |

The table above shows the supremacy of miracles over magic.

**Conclusion**

Miracles and magic can never be ruled out in the day-to-day affairs of men. Men do expect miracles in daily activities depending on their socio-cultural background and so also magic is also inevitable in the life of men. The two as revealed from Yoruba cultural background, may be considered related without much distinction between the two. The two intend to influence natural phenomena. There are forces upon which the two operate and sometimes beyond human understanding. In view of all these, miracles are generally believed to be from God, while men perform magic.

**Recommendations**

Miracles and magic should complement each other. That is, they should have a common goal for the society in general. Magic should be used positively to drive out evil spirits and to cure diseases and some other ailments. I other words, magic should not be used negatively to harm one another. The two concepts, (magic and miracle) should be entrenched in school curriculum so that students would have proper knowledge of them. In that way, their values and heritage can be preserved for prosperity. Further, church ministers, evangelists and pastors should take more seriously their mandate to heal and exorcise (Mark 16:17-17), so that their members will be helped in times of troubles. This means that prayer and ministries should be encouraged.

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