

Re-Interpreting Supernaturalism: Belief, Reason, and Reality

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ABSTRACT:-

In a world increasingly driven by scientific rationalism and secular ethics, the idea of grounding morality in something beyond the natural realm often seems outdated or irrelevant. Yet, as people immersed in both philosophical inquiry and contemporary social realities, we find that many of today's ethical dilemmas—be it moral nihilism, the crisis of meaning, or the weakening of inner conscience—demand a return to deeper metaphysical roots. This is where the concept of Supernaturalism, often overlooked or misrepresented, becomes crucial. Far from being a relic of medieval thought, it offers a profound moral structure that doesn't just prescribe right action but also nurtures the soul behind that action.

We chose to write this article not merely as an academic exercise but as a philosophical intervention—one that invites readers to reconsider the moral significance of the divine or transcendent in our lives. In doing so, we have focused particularly on Zoroastrian and Abrahamic doctrines—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—because of their historical depth, ethical clarity, and enduring influence across civilizations. These traditions have long articulated a moral order anchored in the will of a supreme being, offering not only ethical codes but also spiritual resilience. Hence, this exploration is not only timely but necessary—for philosophy, and for life itself.

KEYWORDS:- Supernaturalism | Divine Revelation | Cosmic Dualism | Ahura Mazda | Monotheism | Miracles | Moral Order | Faith and Reason | Eschatology | Comparative Theology | Abrahamism | Zoroastrianism | Religion

1. Introduction

Supernaturalism, in religious traditions, refers to the belief in forces and realms that exist beyond the physical world. It encompasses divine beings, miracles, and events that defy natural law and human comprehension. As Karen Armstrong explains in *A History of God*, supernaturalism lies at the heart of major world religions, offering a framework for understanding humanity's search for purpose, moral guidance, and connection with the divine¹.

In Zoroastrianism, supernaturalism is evident through its dualistic theology, wherein Ahura Mazda, the supreme god, is in constant opposition to Angra Mainyu, the spirit of destruction². Abrahamic religions—including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—share a monotheistic worldview centered on an omnipotent, transcendent God, whose will is revealed through miracles, scripture, and prophecy³.

Zoroastrianism

Emerging in ancient Persia, Zoroastrianism is among the earliest monotheistic religions. Founded by the prophet Zoroaster, it presents a supernatural cosmic battle between Ahura Mazda, the god of light and order, and Angra Mainyu, the embodiment of evil and chaos. This dualistic opposition influences every aspect of Zoroastrian ethics, cosmology, and eschatology.

As Mary Boyce observes in *A History of Zoroastrianism*, the struggle between good and evil forms the core of the faith, inspiring personal and cosmic responsibility. The *Zend-Avesta*, Zoroastrianism's sacred text, details a pantheon of divine beings—Amesha Spentas (immortal aspects of Ahura Mazda) and Yazatas (guardian spirits)—who aid in sustaining cosmic order⁴. These supernatural forces are key to understanding how the religion addresses moral choices and metaphysical truths.

Abrahamic Religions

The Abrahamic traditions also emphasize divine transcendence and supernatural intervention. In Judaism, Yahweh is both creator and lawgiver, engaging directly with humanity through covenants, miracles, and moral commandments. Events like the Exodus and the giving of the Torah reflect Yahweh's active role in guiding history⁵. Louis Jacobs notes that Jewish supernaturalism is closely linked with its legal and ethical systems.

In Christianity, supernaturalism is centered on the divine nature of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God. The miracles of Christ, especially the Resurrection, affirm his divine authority and underpin Christian theology⁶. Armstrong points out Christianity's incorporation of Greco-Roman thought in framing its supernatural worldview.

Islam emphasizes Allah's absolute oneness (Tawhid) and omnipotence. The Quran is considered a miraculous revelation, transmitted through the Prophet Muhammad as divine guidance⁷. Belief in al-ghayb—the unseen, which includes angels, jinn, and the afterlife—highlights the comprehensive role of the supernatural in Islamic belief.

2. Zoroastrianism: Divine Order and Cosmic Dualism

Vision of the Divine

Zoroaster (Zarathustra), the prophet of ancient Persia, introduced a monotheistic vision centered on Ahura Mazda, the supreme and eternal deity. Ahura Mazda embodies Asha (truth) and moral order, and is the uncreated creator and final judge of human deeds. His teachings, preserved in the Gathas, emphasize the ethical responsibility of humanity to align with truth and resist Druj (falsehood). This moral alignment forms the foundation of Zoroastrian supernaturalism⁸.

A central feature of Zoroastrian theology is dualism—a cosmic battle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), the destructive spirit who represents evil and deceit. As explained in the Zend-Avesta, these two supernatural forces are in constant conflict. However, this struggle is not eternal; Zoroastrian eschatology envisions the ultimate victory of good, when Ahura Mazda overcomes Angra Mainyu, ending evil forever. Mary Boyce notes that this moral and cosmic dualism profoundly influenced later religious systems, especially in their portrayal of good and evil⁹.

Cosmic Order

Zoroastrian cosmology presents a structured supernatural system that maintains cosmic harmony. At its center are Amesha Spentas, or “Holy Immortals,” divine emanations of Ahura Mazda. Each represents a key spiritual principle:

Asha Vahishta (Truth) governs cosmic order and fire.

Vohu Manah (Good Mind) inspires moral reasoning.

Khshathra Vairya (Dominion) symbolizes divine rulership.

Others include Spenta Armaiti (Devotion), Haurvatat (Wholeness), and Ameretat (Immortality).

Supporting them are the Yazatas, lesser divine spirits created by Ahura Mazda to oversee aspects of nature and morality. Notable Yazatas include Anahita (water and fertility), Verethragna (victory), and Mithra (light and covenants).

These supernatural agents play a key role in the ongoing battle between good and evil. They defend creation from Angra Mainyu and his Daevas—evil spirits that embody destruction, deception, and sin. Zoroastrianism teaches that human beings are moral participants in this cosmic struggle, empowered to choose Asha over Druj through righteous action¹⁰.

Boyce emphasizes that this view of moral and supernatural warfare inspired similar eschatological themes in later religions, particularly the notion of an apocalyptic victory of good over evil¹¹.

Divine Hierarchy

Zoroastrian theology establishes a divine hierarchy:

1. Ahura Mazda – Supreme, uncreated deity, source of truth
2. Amesha Spentas – Manifestations of divine qualities
3. Yazatas – Guardians of specific domains
4. Daevas – Evil spirits led by Angra Mainyu
5. Humans – Moral agents tasked with preserving cosmic order

This structured cosmology reflects a universe governed by divine law, where every being has a role in maintaining balance. The ultimate aim is the triumph of good, the purification of creation, and the restoration of harmony through divine and human effort.

Ahura Mazda (Supreme God)

Amesha Spentas ("Holy Immortals")	Yazatas (Lesser Divinities)	Human Beings (Moral Agents)
Asha Vahishta (Truth)	Vohu Manah (Good Mind)	Khshathra Vairya (Dominion)

Others include: Spenta Armaiti (Devotion), Haurvatat (Wholeness), Ameretat (Immortality)

Cosmic Battle

Good Forces (Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, Yazatas, Humans)
vs.

Evil Forces (Angra Mainyu and Daevas)
Daevas = Destruction, Deception, Sin

Outcome: Victory of Asha (Truth) over Druj (Falsehood) ; Moral and Cosmic Harmony
Restored

3. Supernaturalism in Abrahamic Religions

Judaism

In Judaism, supernaturalism centers on Yahweh, the omnipotent and transcendent creator who actively governs the universe and human history. Yahweh interacts with the Israelites through covenants, laws, and miracles, shaping the moral and religious framework of Jewish life.

The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) presents Yahweh as the ultimate supernatural authority, performing acts beyond natural explanation. For instance, He creates the world ex nihilo, appears to Moses through the burning bush (Exodus 3), and miraculously parts the Red Sea during the Exodus (Exodus 14). The covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), fulfilled through the miraculous birth of Isaac, further illustrates Yahweh's interventionist nature¹².

These supernatural events reveal Yahweh's role as lawgiver and protector, guiding His people with divine authority. His miracles signify both His power and moral expectations, reinforcing His centrality in Jewish faith and law.

Christianity

Christianity's supernatural foundation lies in the divinity of Jesus Christ, considered both fully human and fully divine. Jesus is viewed as the incarnate Logos (Word of God), sent to fulfill God's redemptive plan. Christian theology emphasizes the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—highlighting the supernatural mystery of God's nature.

Supernaturalism is evident in Christ's virgin birth, His many miracles, and above all, His resurrection. Miracles such as healing the sick, feeding the 5,000 (John 6), raising Lazarus (John 11), and calming storms are seen as signs of divine authority and compassion. The resurrection of Jesus is considered the cornerstone of Christian faith, symbolizing His victory over death and sin and affirming His divine status¹³.

These miraculous acts are not only demonstrations of power but carry deep theological meaning, signifying the inbreaking of God's Kingdom and His desire to restore creation. Jesus's miracles affirm His role as Messiah and fulfill Old Testament prophecies, revealing God's plan for salvation.

Islam

In Islam, supernaturalism is grounded in Tawhid—the absolute oneness of Allah, who is the sole creator, sustainer, and ruler of all. Allah's will governs every aspect of existence, and His power manifests through revelations and miracles.

The Quran is viewed as a miraculous and inimitable divine text, revealed to Prophet Muhammad by the angel Jibreel (Gabriel). Its unmatched literary quality and preserved message serve as enduring signs of divine origin (Quran 17:88).

Prophet Muhammad performed miracles that affirmed his prophethood, including the Night Journey (Isra and Mi'raj)—his ascent through the heavens—and the Splitting of the Moon (Quran 54:1-2). Other miracles include acts of healing, multiplying food, and providing water. These acts, though fewer in Islamic tradition than in Christianity, serve to confirm Muhammad's divine mission¹⁴.

Islam also emphasizes prophecy and the unseen (al-ghayb), involving angels, jinn, and knowledge of the afterlife. Prophets, including Adam, Moses, and Jesus, were granted divine insight and guidance. Muhammad, as the Seal of the Prophets, delivered the final revelation, containing supernatural truths about existence, morality, and destiny.

4. Contemporary Relevance

Supernaturalism remains a vital force in shaping religious thought, ethics, and identity across

Aspect	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
Divine Entity	Yahweh- omnipotent, transcendent, covenantal God	Trinity- God as father, Son(Jesus) and Holy Spirit	Allah – one indivisible, all-powerful creator
Core Supernatural Belief	Covenant and intervention by Yahweh through miracles	Jesus Christ as divine incarnate logos; resurrection as core event	Tawhid (oneness of God); revelation of Quran; belief in al-ghayb (unseen)
Foundational Texts	Tanakh (Hebrew Bible)	Bible (Old and New Testaments)	Quran (revealed to Muhammad via angel Jibreel)
Miraculous Events	Creation ex nihilo, burning bush (Ex.3), Red Sea parting (Ex.14), Isaac's birth (Gen.17)	Virgin birth, miracles (healing, feeding 5,000, raising Lazarus), resurrection	Quranic revelation, Night Journey (Isra and Mi'raj)' Splitting of the Moon (Quran54:1-2)
Role of prophets	Moses, Abraham, others as receivers of law and divine guidance	Jesus as divine Son and Messiah; fulfills OT prophecies	Muhammad as the final prophet;preceded by other prophets like Adam, Moses, and Jesus
Supernatural Beings	Yahweh as sole deity; no intermediary divine beings emphasized	Holy Spirit; angels; demonic forces (Satan)	Angels. Jinn and belief in the unseen (al-ghayb)
Purpose of Miracles	To guide, protect, and covenant with Israel	To reveal divine compassion, affirm messiahship, and initiate salvation	To confirm prophethood, convey divine message, and demonstrate divine will
Final Revelation	Torah and prophetic texts	Life, death, and resurrection of Christ	Quran as final, complete, and preserved message

Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Despite theological distinctions, each tradition upholds the belief in a divine, transcendent power that governs both the moral and metaphysical realms.

Ethical Frameworks and Divine Authority

All four religions derive their moral systems from supernatural sources. In Zoroastrianism, the dualistic struggle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu forms the ethical foundation, urging followers to align with truth through good thoughts, words, and deeds. Judaism, grounded in

Yahweh's covenant and laws, emphasizes justice, charity, and obedience to divine commandments. Christianity builds upon this framework, centering morality on the teachings of Jesus Christ and virtues like love, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice. Islam locates its ethics in the Quran and Hadith, structured around the Five Pillars and Allah's comprehensive guidance.

These traditions share a common vision: morality as alignment with divine will. The supernatural is not abstract but embedded in lived ethical practice, influencing law, society, and personal conduct.

Philosophical and Eschatological Influence

Supernaturalism also profoundly impacts contemporary religious philosophy. Zoroastrian dualism, especially the battle between good and evil, has influenced Abrahamic eschatologies. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic visions of final judgment, resurrection, and the triumph of good reflect Zoroastrian themes¹⁵. For example, the Christian concept of heaven and hell, and Islamic beliefs about the Day of Judgment, parallel Zoroastrian ideas of cosmic resolution and the purification of creation.

Philosophers of religion continue to explore themes such as divine justice, the problem of evil, and the nature of revelation. Sacred texts like the Zend-Avesta, Tanakh, Bible, and Quran are regarded as supernatural revelations that guide not only belief but reasoned ethical discourse¹⁶. Supernaturalism, then, provides a metaphysical framework for debates on morality, existence, and salvation.

Supernaturalism in Modern Identity and Dialogue

In an era shaped by scientific rationalism and secular thought, supernaturalism continues to shape religious identity and interfaith relations. It offers meaning, comfort, and a moral compass to millions. Moreover, comparative theological reflection has shown how these faiths—despite differences—share overlapping visions of divine action, eschatological hope, and moral purpose. Contemporary interfaith dialogue increasingly engages with these shared supernatural themes, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing global ethical challenges. As such, supernaturalism remains a unifying thread in religious and cultural life.

5. Conclusion

Zoroastrianism and the Abrahamic religions present distinct yet converging views of supernaturalism. Whether through Zoroaster's cosmic dualism or the Abrahamic monotheistic emphasis on a single, all-powerful God, these traditions affirm the existence of a reality beyond nature—one that governs destiny, inspires virtue, and defines salvation¹⁷.

Their doctrines, shaped by divine revelation and sustained by faith, continue to inform philosophical thought and moral reasoning. Supernaturalism, far from being a relic of the past, remains a vital lens through which humanity seeks to understand the mysteries of existence, the call of conscience, and the promise of the divine.

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