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## CAN ATHEISTS BELIEVE IN THE SUPERNATURAL?

A Question of Moral Atheism

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Something paranormal is apparently inexplicable by our current knowledge of science, but it's still part of the natural universe. If such a thing is investigated scientifically, it will eventually be understood and no longer classified as paranormal.

For example, there was a time when a hot rock falling out of the sky might have been considered a paranormal occurrence. But today, we understand that rocks in space may occasionally enter Earth's atmosphere, and we consider that part of science.

Similarly, if it was found that a certain group of people could predict coin flips with statistically significant accuracy, we would consider these people to have a paranormal ability. With further study, we would likely discover the mechanism for this ability and it would no longer be considered paranormal — simply rare but explainable.

There is nothing wrong with a moral atheist believing in something paranormal, so long as the atheist is being consistent in terms of how much evidence is required for something to be considered likely.

MORAL ATHEIST uses reason to conclude that it is likely that no deities exist. But does this imply that nothing supernatural exists? Can a moral atheist believe in things that are not deities but are also not part of nature?

The big question here is how one would have any knowledge of a supernatural thing — reincarnation, fate, the soul, etc. — if it was not part of nature. Is it a gut feeling? A philosophical deduction? Something else? Whatever the evidence is, why does it act as proof that the supernatural exists without also possibly acting as proof that a deity exists?

But odds are that if a moral atheist believes in something seemingly supernatural, it's not because of mere feeling or philosophy, but because there is some kind of more tangible evidence — an inexplicable psychic feat, ghost sighting, etc., The problem is that as soon as you start talking about evidence, you're talking about something that can be scientifically tested, and when you talk about scientific testing of strange things, you're not talking about the supernatural, you're talking about the paranormal.

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# QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

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We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on [blog.iamanatheist.org](http://blog.iamanatheist.org). Thanks!

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