

Did God know last week that you would be in this class today?

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1. Mishnah Avot, 3.15

הַכֹּל צָפוּי, וְהָרְשׁוּת נְתוּנָה, וּבְטוֹב הָעוֹלָם נִדוֹן. וְהַכֹּל לְפִי רֵב הַמַּעֲשֵׂה:

Everything is foreseen, and freewill is given, and with goodness the world is judged. And all is in accordance to the majority of the deed.

2. Saadia Gaon, *Book of Beliefs & Opinions*, IV.5 [tr. S. Rosenblatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948)].

Furthermore, one might perhaps also say: "Inasmuch as God knows what is to be before it happens, He must also know that man will rebel against Him. But in that case it would be impossible for man not to rebel, since otherwise what God foreknows would not be realized." The resolution of this doubt, however, is more obvious than even that of the first one. It need not be pointed out that the person who makes the above-mentioned assertion is really unable to prove that the Creator's foreknowledge of things is the cause of their coming into being. His assertion is, therefore, nothing else than an erroneous assumption or elaborate invention

3. Levi Gersonides (Ralbag), *The Wars of the Lord (Mibamot Hashem)*, III.4 [tr. S. Feldman, vol. II (Philadelphia PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1987)]

ונאמר שכבר התבאר במה שקדם שאלו העניינים האפשריים הם מוגבלים ומסודרים מצד, ואפשריים מצד אחר. ובהיות הענין כן, הוא מבואר כי הצד אשר ידעם בו הוא הצד אשר הם בו מסודרים ומוגבלים, כמו העניין בשכל הפועל, לפי מה שהתבאר, כי מזה הצד אפשר שתפול בהם הידיעה. והצד אשר לא ידעם בו הוא הצד אשר הם בו בלתי מסודרים, והוא הצד אשר הם בו אפשריים, כי מזה הצד אי אפשר שתפול ידיעה בהם. ואולם ידע מזה הענין שהם אפשריים שלא יגיעו מצד הבחירה אשר שם אותם באדם השם יתברך להשלים מה שחסר מן השמירה מפאת הגרמים השמימיים, כמו שהתבאר במאמר הקודם, ולא ידע איזה משני חלקי האפשר הוא אשר יגיע מצד שהם אפשריים, שאם היה הענין כן, לא היה בכאן דבר אפשרי כלל.

ואין העדר ידיעתו יתברך איזה משני חלקי האפשר יגיע במה שהוא אפשר חסרון בחוקו, כי הידיעה השלמה בדבר היא כשיודע הדבר לפי מה שהוא עליו, וכאשר הושג על זולת מה שהוא עליו הנה זה טעות, לא ידיעה. ובהיות הענין כן, הנה הוא יודע באופן היותר שלם שאפשר אלו הדברים כלם, וזה כי הוא ידעם מצד מה שהם מסודרים בדרך בירור והגבלה, וידע עם זה מה שהם בו מן האפשרות מצד הבחירה לפי מה שהם עליו מהאפשרות

It has been previously shown that these particulars are ordered and determined in one sense, yet contingent in another sense. Accordingly, it is evident that the sense in which God knows these particulars is the sense in which they are ordered and determined, as is the case with the Agent Intellect, according to the results previously established. For from this aspect it is possible to have knowledge of them. On the other hand, the sense in which God does not know particulars is the sense in which they are not ordered, i.e., the sense in which they are contingent. For in the latter sense knowledge of them is not possible. However, God does know from this aspect that these events may not occur because of the choice, which He has given man to compensate for the deficiencies in the supervision coming from the heavenly bodies, as has been explained in Book Two. But He does not know which of the contradictory outcomes will be realized insofar as they are [genuinely] contingent affairs; for if He did, there would not be any contingency at all. [Nevertheless,] the fact that God does not have the knowledge of which possible outcome will be realized does not imply any defect in God (may He be blessed). For perfect knowledge of something is the knowledge of what that thing is in reality; when the thing is not apprehended as it is, this is error, not knowledge. Hence, God knows these things in the best manner possible, for He knows them insofar as they are ordered in a determinate and certain way, and He knows in addition that these events are contingent, insofar as they fall within the domain of human choice, [as such knows them] truly as contingent.

4. Gersonides, *Supercommentary on Averroes Commentary on Aristotle's On Interpretation*, 9, as quoted in Seymour Feldman *Gersonides: Judaism Within the Limits of Reason* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 88-9

With respect to future contingencies, e.g., “Reuben will go tomorrow,” or “Reuben will not go tomorrow,” such statements do not divide the true and the false determinately . . . for in these propositions one or the other of them will be true, but it is not determinately known now which of them is true . . . But when the time arrives one of them is true and the other is false.