

Singer-Jordan Edition

Chukas

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The wink gives it away. Maybe you were supposed to see it, maybe you weren't. But if it was at someone else while they were telling you something, you have to wonder if they're pulling your leg. A *chok*—statute—is like that, winking at us, so-to-speak, as if to say, things are not exactly the way they appear, or at least the way you *think* they appear.

Reality is a dichotomy. On one hand, we live as if history is unfolding as we make it, *because* we make it. If we decide to go right, history goes one way. If we decide to go left, it goes the other way, and the decision is completely ours. Okay, maybe not *completely* ours. It is true that things happen around us that influence our decisions, or actually force us to make one over another. And it is also true that even when we make the decision we planned to make, for some reason, reality doesn't comply, as if someone hit manual override.

Or should we say, GODual override. After all, and this is the heart of the dichotomy: God is above time, and being above time He's already there at the end of the story before we get there, or even had a chance to write it. How can history be unfolding when it has already been wrapped up?

Then there is the issue of some Divine master plan, supposedly in motion since before Creation and which will continue for, well, eternity. Even the most chaotic historic sequences have happened precisely *as* intended, precisely *when* intended. It's a little freaky to think that how we get out of bed each morning, the way we get out of bed each morning, and everything else we do until we go back to bed, was already scripted since the beginning. But it has been.

When we say "everything else," we mean *everything else*, from what seems to logically follow historically, and what doesn't. Humans can think they have everything covered and be terribly wrong. But God doesn't miss a thing if only because He *is* every thing. Nothing exists outside of Him, and He exists inside of and all around all of it. His knowledge and level of awareness is unfathomable.

You see what I mean? A real dichotomy, and God Himself created it. First He tells us that we have free will and are capable of directing reality. Then He tells us that reality was a done deal ever since Creation, if not earlier. Is it just that He sees the future that we will eventually make, or has He made it already and we're just living it out?

One thing is for certain, we definitely have free will. How do I know? Because God say so. But maybe He just tells us that so we *think* we do, but we really we don't. Maybe, but unlikely. Even if it were true would it make any difference? If God is prepared to reward us for free will decisions we didn't actually make on our own, do we care?

Some do, perhaps. They don't like the idea of being anyone's puppet, even for their own good. It's an ego thing. Others may not care but just want to understand how both realities are possible. They want God's world to fit into human logic. They want to know about those people who seem to have a propensity to make bad choices, and if they are they truly guilty? What about victims of circumstance? What about people not so intellectually endowed? It's like finding a world in which two plus two does *not* equal four.

Wink. Wink wink. This *parsba* is winking at you . . . at all of us. Hey, listen, you don't need *bitachon*—trust in God—when everything makes sense. No loose ends, no *emunab* dividends and, believe it or not, that's everything we're here for. We're not here to raise families, which often doesn't even work well for many. We're not here to earn *parnassahs*, because so much of that is out of our hands. We're not even here to learn Torah or perform *mitzvos*, because people can do both for their own self-serving reasons.

No, all of these just mentioned have only just been the means to something more honest and sincere: faith in God. When the *Gemora* says that "All is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven" (*Brochos* 33b), it is really talking about *emunab*. It's just that one's fear of God, which is really the *seeing* of God, is what leads to true *emunab*. Without fear of God, our bodies have too much sway over our souls and that blocks *emunab*.

This is why if you find someone with true fear of God, not just fear of Divine retribution, you will find true *emunab*. And if you find someone with true *emunab*, you will also find some who has true fear of God. They go hand-in-hand, and it takes a *chok*—statute—to remind us of this, of the need for both.

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