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Abraham's Dice: Chance and Providence in the Monotheistic Traditions

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Most of us believe everything happens for a reason. Whether it is "God's will","karma", or "fate," we want to believe that nothing in the world, especially disasters and tragedies, is a random, meaningless event. But now, as never before, confident scientific assertions that the world embodies a profound contingency are challenging theological claims that God acts providentially in the world. The random and meandering path of evolution is widely used as an argument that God did not create life.

Abraham's Dice explores the interplay between chance and providence in the monotheistic religious traditions, looking at how their interaction has been conceptualized as our understanding of the workings of nature has changed. This lively historical conversation has generated intense ongoing theological debates, and provocative responses from science: what are we to make of the history of our universe, where chance and law have played out in complex ways? Or the evolution of life, where random mutations have challenged attempts to find purpose within evolution and convinced many that human beings are but a "glorious accident"?

The enduring belief that everything happens for a reason is examined through a conversation with major scholars, among them holders of prestigious chairs at Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the University of Basel, as well as several Gifford lecturers, and two Templeton prize winners. Organized historically, Abraham's Dice provides a wide-ranging scientific, theological, and biblical foundation to address the question of providence and divine action in a world shot through with contingency.

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