

The Year 2020 – the Time to Fulfill Our Destiny

♪ *You are my destiny; you are what you are to me. You are my happiness, that's what you are. You have my sweet caress, you share my loneliness. You are my dream come true, that's what you are. Heaven and heaven alone can take your love from me. 'Cause I'd be a fool to ever leave you dear, and a fool I'd never be. You are my destiny, you share my reverie. You're more than life to me, that's what you are. You are my destiny, you share my reverie. You are my happiness, that's what you are* ♪ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irBTFdVZxgs>, Paul Anka, 1957)

Destiny Fulfilled

This week's *Parashah* is *Vayechi* (²⁸Now Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for 17 years...” Gen. 47:28) and it concludes the book of Genesis (*Bereshit*, which means literally, ‘*In the Beginning*’) Genesis has 50 chapters – 4 major events and 4 major people – 12 *Parashiot* in all. Do you remember the 4 events? (These are: *creation, fall, flood, and nations*). And who are the 4 people? (They are: *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph*).

In last week's *Parashat*, Joseph is almost 40 years old, and Jacob is 130, and Isaac is dead. We are told that our father Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 more years. At the age of 147 then ²⁹“As the time of Israel's death drew near ...” (See Gen. 47:29) That is, the conclusion of the time of our fathers, the patriarchs, is at hand. As we read, when the time came ‘*when it is all said and done*,’ the text states: *Jacob lived...* This was not in his father's house, nor in his father-in-law's land, nor in the Promised Land – instead it was in *Goshen*, in Egypt. Our father Jacob fulfilled his destiny (Hebrew, *goral*, which means lot, destiny). King Solomon said at the end of *Ecclesiastes* (*Kohelet*): ¹³“A final word, when all has been heard: Fear God and keep His mitzvot! For this applies to all mankind. ¹⁴God will bring every deed into judgment, including everything that is hidden, whether it is good or evil” (Eccl. 12:13-14). At the end of the *Book of Beginnings*, when times are tough, in the company of family, in a strange land, after experiencing God's promises, when he is tired, when he is old, after so many have died, in sickness and in health, Jacob *lived* (and fulfilled his destiny). So should we live and also fulfill our destiny in awe of God.

But we can also glean that the record of the life of Joseph also concludes in Genesis. We see that although Joseph spent a lot of time crying (Gen. 43:30; 45:1-2, 14-15; 46:29; 50:1, 17) he persevered to the end. This is Joseph's blessing from his father Jacob on his deathbed in Gen. 49: ²²“A fruitful son is Joseph, a fruitful son beside a spring—daughters walk along a wall. ²³The archers were bitter and shot arrows and were hostile towards him. ²⁴Yet his bow was always filled, and his arms quick-moving—by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob. From there a Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, ²⁵from the God of your father who helps you, and Shaddai who blesses you, with blessings of heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of breasts and womb. ²⁶The blessings of your father surpassed the blessings of the ancient mountains, the desire of the everlasting hills. May they be upon Joseph's head, upon the crown of the one set apart from his brothers.”

Joseph's (יוסף) name means: “*and He added*.” Rachel eagerly anticipated a second son; hence she named her first son with a word that indicated: “*May the Lord add to me another son*.” Thus, the name Joseph refers to *double fruitfulness*. As we read in this week's *Parashat*, our father Jacob adopted the two sons of Joseph (Thus, the entrance song today entitled *HaMalach HaGo'el Oti*, which is from Gen. 48:16) and gave Joseph an additional portion above his brothers: ²¹“Then Israel said to Joseph, “*Look, I am about to die. But God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers.*” ²²Now I myself give you one portion more than your brothers, that which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and my bow” (Gen. 48:21-22). By accepting suffering, disgrace and enduring afflictions Joseph's destiny is fulfilled with and through his sons – though born from a Gentile mother and raised in Egypt as Egyptians, the sons will become two tribes that inherit property in the Promised Land. At the end of Genesis Joseph is indeed doubly fruitful through his seed. Joseph also fulfilled his destiny!

What an amazing testimony before his brothers (and our most significant testimony *is* before our family) who did him much wrong and who are responsible for years in prison and untold hardship! I want us to get this phrase into our spirit: “*you yourselves planned evil against me. God planned it for good*” (Gen. 50:20). Let us repeat this phrase until we can quote it the same way we quote Rev. 12:11 in our congregation: “*you yourselves planned evil against me. God planned it for good.*” Joseph cried again in Gen. 50:17 when the brothers brought back the

memories of the past: "...Then Joseph wept when they spoke to him..." In our congregation, many can say this same statement from their heart, having themselves experienced extenuating and trying circumstances. You see, what Satan meant for evil, God will turn unto good for us. Consider: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of realities not seen" (Heb. 11:1); "⁴Behold, the puffed up one—his soul is not right within him, but the righteous will live by his trust (faith)" (Hab. 2:4); "²⁸Now we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Ro. 8:28); and finally "²focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). Life is tough. Many people, not just believers, experience hardship, difficulties, suffering. But we have *Messiah Yeshua*. We should be able to live as our father Jacob and Joseph lived, even in the not so perfect circumstances. Let us endeavor to fulfill our destiny.

Endurance

Scripture uses the word *endured* in Heb. 12:2. I know that the character quality of endurance is important to our own walk. *Yeshua* said: "¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved"(Matt 24:13). Scripture uses the same Greek word in both references (Strong's' 5278) *hupomeno* (hoop-om-en'-o); to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere: in the KJV-- abide, endure, (take) patient (-ly), suffer, tarry behind. Do you think *Yeshua* meant it? Maybe you feel that He was just speaking to His disciples and that it only applies to them. Really? What does this have to do with *Parashat Vayechi*? Everything! What does this have to do with our lives? Everything! What is endurance? A good operational definition for endurance is: *the inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish the best.*

The Greek word used in 2 Tim. 2:1-3 ("*Therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Messiah Yeshua.*" ²*And what you have heard from me among many witnesses, entrust to faithful people who will be capable to teach others also.*" ³*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Messiah Yeshua*") is Strong's 2553 *kakopatheo* (kak-op-ath-eh'-o), literally to undergo hardship. In the KJV to be afflicted, endure afflictions (hardness), and to suffer trouble. Is it possible that *Messiah Yeshua* wants us to *endure afflictions* and suffer trouble so that *Adonai* may bring forth His ultimate purposes in our lives for good like it was in Joseph's life?

As we *endure until the end* in order to fulfill our own destiny, let me share additional Scriptures that speak to this end. The first mention of "destiny" (krud, goral, Hebrew, Strong's 1486) in Scripture is in Leviticus 16 in conjunction with *Yom Kippur's* *azazel*, the *scapegoat*: "⁸*Aaron will then cast lots for the two goats—one lot for Adonai, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*" ⁹*Aaron is to present the goat on which the lot for Adonai fell and make it a sin offering.*" ¹⁰*But the goat upon which the lot for the scapegoat fell is to be presented alive before Adonai, to make atonement upon it, by sending it away as the scapegoat into the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:8-10).* Also "⁵*Adonai is my portion and my cup. You cast my lot (goral, destiny) (Psalms 16:5).*" In the song "Those Who Trust in the Lord" which we sing often in *Kol Simcha* from Palm 125 we sing the phrase *al goral hatzadikim*: "³*For a scepter of wickedness will not rest over the land of the righteous—lest the righteous set their hands to evil.*" The only mention of "lot" or "destiny" in the New(er) Testament is in Luke 1:9: "⁹*According to the custom of the priestly office, it became his lot (2975 lagchano, his destiny) to enter the Holy Place of Adonai to burn incense.*" Because Zechariah fulfilled his destiny, we have the story of John and *Yeshua*. We can fulfill our destiny!

Another secular new year has begun. Do you know that God has a special purpose for your life – you have a purpose in God! We must endure until the end and we will accomplish our destiny. Set out, against all odds, to fulfill His calling upon your life. Let us build up fathers (parents) and their children and eliminate the potential curse (Mal. 4:7) upon *our corner of the world*. Let us strive to obey first and understand later whatsoever the Lord has asked us to do. Let us resolve to seek Him and meditate in His Torah daily so whatever we do shall prosper. Let us finish our course and not become weary in well doing. Let us "*press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.*" Genesis is over so let us *chazak, chazak, venitchasek—be strong, be strong and be strengthened.* Let us purpose to be all He wants us to be, individually, and as His congregation. May He be pleased with us this year – the year of 2020 Vision.