

**Genesis 4:3-8**

One day in the course of time, Cain brought some of his harvest as an offering to God, and Abel, too, brought an offering from among the choice lambs of his flock and their fattest parts. God approved Abel and his offering, but did not approve Cain and his offering. Cain was filled with rage; his face fell. God then said to Cain, “Why are you so angry?/ Why your fallen face?/ Would you not do well to lift it? / 7 For if you do not do well--/ **sin (חַטָּאת *chatat*) couches (רִבִּיץ, *rovaitz*) at the door; / you are the one it craves (תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ *t’shukato*) / and yet you can govern it (תִּמְשֹׁל *timshol*).**” Cain now thought about his brother Abel.... Then, when they were in the field, Cain turned on his brother Abel and killed him.

7 ...לָפֶתַח חַטָּאת רִבִּיץ; וְאֵלֶיךָ, תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ, וְאַתָּה, תִּמְשֹׁל-בּוֹ.

חַטָּאת *chatat*

-sin; to miss; to err from the mark, (speaking of an archer, the opposite idea to that of reaching the goal, to hit the mark), to make a false step, to stumble.

רִבִּיץ *rovaitz*

-couch; lie down (i.e. of animals, w. chest to the ground).

תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ *t’shukato*

-craves, desires, longing

תִּמְשֹׁל *timshol*

-govern, to rule, to have dominion over

**Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism***

Man is at core a free agent, the master in essentials of his own decisions...To the rule that men are susceptible to sin the Tradition recognizes no exception. Perfection is not a human trait. To be totally free from error and evil is simply not possible to men... Nor, according to the Tradition, has perfection ever been attained by anyone, not even by the saint or prophet. All transgressed and suffered moral defeat... What is more, Judaism does not expect perfection from man... It is too sensible to ask that man walk but never slip. To the contrary it predicts that he will not only slip but fall also. Its guidance is directed to the end that he shall so walk as to fall as little as possible, and, having fallen, will pick himself up, brush off the dust and go on, wiser, surer of himself and of the good he seeks.

**Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Kol Dodi Dofek, Listen- My Beloved Knocks***

Judaism has always distinguished between an Existence of Fate and an Existence of Destiny...

Rabbi Josh Beraha  
Temple Micah  
Yom Kippur 5777

What is the nature of the Existence of Fate? It is an existence of duress, in the nature of “against your will do you live” (M. Avot 4:29). It is a factual existence, simply one line in a long chain of mechanical causality, devoid of significance, direction, and purpose, and subordinate to the forces of the environment into whose midst the individual is pushed... The “I” of fate emerges as an object. As an object, man appears as acted upon and not as actor. He is acted upon through his passive collision with the objective outside, as one object confronting another.

...What is the nature of the Existence of Destiny? It is an active existence, when man confronts the environment into which he has been cast with an understanding of his uniqueness and value, freedom and capacity... The slogan of the “I” of destiny is: “Against your will you are born, and against your will you die” (M. Avot 4:29), but by your free will do you live. Man is born as an object, dies as an object, but it is within his capability to live as a “subject”--as a creator and innovator who impresses his individual imprimatur on his life and breaks out of a life of instinctive, automatic behavior into one of creative activity. According to Judaism, man’s mission in this world is to turn fate into destiny--an existence that is passive and influenced into an existence full of will, vision, and initiative. The blessing of the Holy One to his creation fully defines man’s role: “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). Conquer the environment and subjugate it. If you do not rule over it, it will enslave you. Destiny bestows on man a new status in God’s world. It bestows upon man a royal crown, and thus he becomes God’s partner in the work of creation.