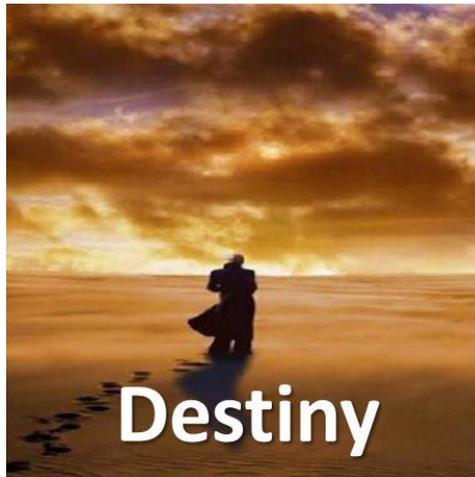


The Traveler Within



Exploring The Destination of “Destiny”

“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson strikes a chord of truth for the wise life traveler by pointing to a sequence of interconnections that lead to a destiny commensurate with the choices we make in our daily lives. Conventional wisdom says that our destiny is guided by divine providence and that no matter what we do or do not do, our fate is sealed. While a higher power may very well be involved in shaping our destiny, in this week’s post we’re going to explore Emerson’s assertion of taking personal responsibility for our destiny by focusing on what we think, the choices we make and the character we develop along the way.

Emerson asserts that our destiny is shaped by the *thoughts we sow*. While this notion makes sense at one level one might ask the question, isn’t it possible to engage in our thought processes without worrying about them casting our fate? I suggest to you that it depends on the type of thinking we do or said another way, the “forms of thought” we engage in.

Just as choosing different forms of transportation can impact our final travel destination, (e.g., traveling by plane rather than by train) so to do the forms of thought we choose to act upon in our daily lives shape our destiny. For example, sowing a reactive form of thought like “revenge” produces a completely different life trajectory than does say, “forgiveness” which is a responsive form of thought.

To respond rather than react to life’s challenges requires vigilant discipline and practice, and it requires a deeper understanding of personal responsibility than many people have taken the time to explore. Most of us view “being responsible” as a moral obligation, following through with promises and commitments and carrying our own weight in life. The old adage “*the buck*

stops here” and *“as we sow, so shall we reap”* point to this line of reasoning. While there certainly is wisdom in this definition, there is more to the meaning of responsibility than this.

Let’s explore the word “responsible.” *Re* means “again” or to “repeat or create anew.” *Sponse* from the Latin word *spontaneus*, means “of one’s free will, voluntarily.” And, *bility*, means “capacity or ability.” So in this light, responsibility is the ability to access our free will and make choices from it repeatedly throughout our lives. (This is a far cry from the morally charged obligatory form of responsibility most of us grew up with.) When we sow into our mind and heart this more expansive and positive thought form of responsibility over its obligatory version, we infuse its energy of freedom and spaciousness into our actions, which fosters positive habits, deepens and enriches our character and as Emerson suggests, shapes our destiny for the better.

This journey we call life can be extremely challenging at times and it’s easy to slip into reactive thought forms charged with fear, negation and blame. But if we remind ourselves that we have within us the ability and free will to respond to life with a more positive approach it gives us an advantage we otherwise deny ourselves.

As a fellow traveler along the path of life I want to encourage you to seek out the positive thought forms within you and sow them into your daily actions, for doing so will lead you to a fulfilling destiny. For some travelers this is an easy task because they know life is only as fulfilling as they make it. For others it may be more challenging because they’ve lost touch with the reality that they possess the free will to shape their own destiny. But regardless of the degree of challenge, it’s a valid practice as no one is living our life but us, and that fact points to the reality that we do indeed reap the destiny we sow.



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