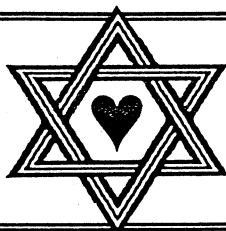


The Aquarian Minyan...

Menakhem Av-Elul-Tishrei 5748-9

July-August-September 1988



נולד
NOLAD

נולד - 'Nolad' - That which is being born, similar to 'Vlad'. While 'Vlad' refers to a newborn, 'Nolad' refers to one who is being birthed in present time. Both are related to the familiar 'Yeled' or 'Yaldah' - child. 'Laydah', refers to the act of birth and 'Holadah', to the event of birthing. 'Yom Holedet Samayakh' is the Hebrew equivalent for 'Happy Birthday'.

The word, 'Nolad', occurs in *Pirkei Avot*, 'Chapters of our Fathers', commonly studied in the summertime. In Chapter two, teaching ten, Rabban Yokhanan ben Zakkai says to his disciples, 'Go and see which is the finest way for a person to develop'. Rabbi Shimon came back with the teaching: '*Haroeh et Hanolad*' - Seeing what will be born is the best way for a person to work on themselves i.e., consider the consequences of your actions. A Hassidic reading of '*Haroeh et Hanolad*' is Watch what is being born right now. "That is to say... see how everything originates and comes into being from nothing by means of the word of G-d" [*Tanya* chapter 43]. The world is being born now, every instant, yet we are unaware. We are caught up in the time-clutch of planning for 'later' and we miss the birth of creation. This teaching suggests that we cultivate the meditative quality of watching and witnessing as we are born out of nothingness, moment to moment. It is the Hassidic equivalent to 'be here now', with a dynamic, pregnant twist.

The *Talmud* [*Tamid* page 32b] says, "Who is wise? The one who sees '*hanolad*'- what is being born." The more we become able to watch the emerging moment, the closer we are to the perspective of *Khokhmah* (wisdom). *Khokhmah* is the first perceived of the ten *Sefirot* (tools of the *Ayn Sof*, filters for the Infinite Light, stages of the creative process,) with which all things were fashioned. As such, the atmosphere of every beginning contains some of the flavour of the *Sefirah* of *Khokhmah*.

The *Ayn Sof* (Infinite One) makes its first appearance in our world of limitation as the *Sefirah* of *Khokhmah*. It is from the vantage place of this divine filter that God manifests like light and emits the creative words, "Let there be light". Our folklore says that at the birth of the child Moses, a beatific glow filled the house. Every birth has more or less of this 'glow' which reflects the first light that ever shone in the world.

On *Rosh Hashanah* [after each Musaf Shofar sounding], we say, '*Hayom Harat Olom*', today the world emerged from pregnancy. The word *rosh* (head) is related to the word *rishon*, first, and refers to *Rosh Hashanah*, the first day or 'head' of the year. The head, besides being the top of the body, is also where the brains are contained. *Rosh Hashanah* is seen metaphorically as being the head and brains of the coming year, as if every hour of *Rosh Hashanah* has a major neural pathway to the days of the year that follow.

Why do we stop and use this holyday to aim our hearts, to reconsider where we have been heading as a result of the past year? We believe that the hours and moments of *Rosh Hashanah* are magical and able to affect the coming year in a timeless way. Any slight change we can make in our direction at this time will have a major effect on the whole of the following year. This special relationship between *Rosh Hashanah* and the rest of the year is suggested by the prayer *Unetaneh Tokef*, where we read that we are being 'judged' on the High Holydays and that today's 'judgement' will manifest during the months to come. Both the metaphor of 'brains of the year' and the metaphor of 'judgement time of the year' contain the common idea of the later unfolding of a seed, as if this time is a seed-time and contains what will become unfolded later.

We can, of course, get so involved in trying to rethink our direction that we become stressed. Trying to 'do *Teshuvah*' (return to our initiating principle), we may become anxious and worried whether we are doing this soul work 'right' or 'deeply' enough. These are the 'Days of Awe' and we can become uptight. This is where the third metaphor, *Rosh Hashanah* as the 'birth of the year' comes in.

Our High Holiday experiences, like childbirth, come in a variety of ways. Preparing ourselves during the pregnant time of the summer to be grateful for whatever way our High Holyday passage experience turns out is good practice for the time of unfolding that follows. The meditation of '*roeh hanolad*', just watching what is being born, guides us to let go of the burden of feeling overly responsible on the High Holydays for the year that follows. As in a birth, events take their own course, beyond our control. It is then part of wisdom to let them do so.

May we be able to appreciate the birthing waves of the new year; may the peak experience of birth be remembered from time to time in choice moments in the year that follows. *Amayn*.

D. B.