

THE AQUARIAN MINYAN

Summer-Fall, 1993

Gal Aynai

Kayitz-Stav, 5753

June
July
August
September

גל עיני

Tammuz
Av
Elul
Tishray

Open my Eyes

גל *gal* "reveal" or "open" is the imperative form of גלוי *galuy* "uncovered" or "revealed." "Open my eyes that I may gaze upon the wondrous qualities of the Torah." Psalms 119:18. The composer of the Psalms¹ asks that we might perceive the wonderful things which are, at present, hidden from us.

The term גלוי *galuy* is used as a noun in Hassidic teachings referring to a revelation from God, a *giluy*. While admiring and appreciating גלויים *giluyim*, revelations, Hassidim caution about not overvaluing them; one is not to base one's practice on ecstatic moments. High times are seen as developments of the good work we are doing to bring the Moshiakh closer. We enjoy them when they come but they don't come on demand.

In Hebrew, someone sincere may be known as a לב גלוי *galuy lev* "revealed heart" – someone whose heart is "uncovered." The discovery or "uncovering" of America to Europeans is referred to as

giluy America. Divine revelation is גלוי שכינה *giluy Shekhina*.

Gal גל also refers to a heap, pile or a mound as in גל אגוזים *gal egozim*, literally a "heap of nuts," a phrase used to refer to a person of wide-ranging knowledge. A mound draws attention to itself, reveals and points out a spot. Jacob and Laban set up a גל *gal* – a pile of stones that served as the border between their territories. The pile was a marker and a witness, called גלעד *Gal-ayd* the Witness Mound. Indeed all our

holidays mark off boundaries in time. Each of our holidays is both a *gal* and a *giluy*.

Gal also means wave, as in גלי ים *galay yam*, waves of the sea, or גלי קול *galay kol*, sound waves, or גל רום *gal khom*, a heat wave.

It is curious that this same word, גל *gal*, that refers to a pile of stones also refers to a wave of water. Stones and rocks are symbolic of matter at its most concrete, a pile made up of many particles of mass and volume. Particles and waves are unified together in the concept *gal*.

A lever is known as a גל *gal*, a device which causes other things to move. Perhaps the ultimate *gal* is that which moves particle into wave and vice versa.

There is a repetition in the word *gal*: the numerical equivalent of the ג *gimmel* is three and that of the ל *lamed*, thirty; thus there is an inner echo within the word *gal* whose numerical equivalent is 33.

This internal echoing is also represented in the *Sefirah* or Divine quality represented by the number

33. In the counting of the *Omer*, the 33rd day (לג *Lag* B'omer, 33rd day of the count) corresponds to the *Sefira* *Hod* of *Hod*, Glory of Glory. As *Hod* is a very internally oriented *Sefirah*, *Hod* of *Hod* is the ultimate in internal referencing, in basing oneself on one's own experience. This is why Rabbi Shimeon bar Yochai, the author of the *Zohar*, the work which signals Judaism's formal search within, celebrated his passage from this world as if it were his wedding day on the 33rd day, entering the inner worlds on the day of most interiority. To Reb Shimeon, dying was really unification with subjective depths. Counting upwards from *Malkhut*, the 33rd *Sefira* is *Tiferet* of *Tiferet*, beauty of beauty. These are the window-gateways, the critical juncture places in the *Sefirot*.

¹David known as king to Israel, companion to Jonathan, lover to Bath-sheba, musician to Saul and seeker of God in the Psalms.

Consonant with the repetitive echo within *gal*, we find that *gal* is the Hebrew word for "revolving door."

גולל *gollel* means to roll, as we say in the evening service, *gollel or mipnay khoshekh*—rolling light from before the face of darkness. We describe God as the Great Roller of light and darkness before each other. This image suggests the gradual turning of the planet in its orbit which brings about a slow chase as darkness and light follow and retreat from each other across the face of the earth. When a thing is rolled, parts of it hitherto concealed become revealed. We come across the idea of rolling in our services in the familiar **גלילה** *g'lilah*, Torah closing. After the Torah is read, the **גולל** *gollel* (m.) or **גוללת** *gollelet* (f.), the person designated as roller, rolls the Torah scroll together and ties the Torah, binding it into its new position. Psychically, the *gollel/gollelet* is changing the orientation of divine consciousness and fixing it in a new attitude.

The repetition inherent in the cycle of rolling shows up in **גלגל** *galgal*, wheel, as in **גלגל ההגה** *galgal hahegeh*—steering wheel or **גולל החוזר** *galgal hakhozzer*—a revolving wheel: this term is used to refer to history repeating itself; the revolving dome of the sky is referred to as **גלגל השמים** *galgal hashamayim*, the wheel of heaven. Indeed, the word **גלגל** *galgal*, also means orbit. Jewish mysticism speaks of the **גלגל הירח** *galgal haya-ray-akh*, the orbit of the moon around the earth, reputed to be the source of fire. This is suggested to be the reason that a candle flame seems to want to tear away from its wick, drawn upwards to its home, even though its life here on earth will be quenched.

גלגול *Gilgul*, refers to reincarnation, or the rolling of the soul into a new body. The book **ספר גלגולים** *Sefer Ha-gilgulim* describes how souls are incarnated (or rolled) into different bodies to fix and balance them. Sarah, our mother, who drove out Hagar the Egyptian princess and her son Ishmael, became reincarnated as Batya, the Egyptian princess who saved Moses from the Nile and treated him as her own son.

How are we to understand *gilgul*? We don't believe in ghosts, do we? What is the soul without a body?

We may as well ask, "What is Wednesday? or where is music? Where is Yiddish? What is thought? We don't have to believe in ghosts to believe in selves that have an identity that transcends a particular living body. While it is true that such nonmaterial beings such as the soul cannot be measured, and Science used to teach us that reality is only that which can be measured, nowadays,

Science teaches that when you look at really small thingies like electrons, measuring it affects it and so nothing that basic can be accurately measured. And so we are all made up of zillions of things which are each unmeasurable and unlocatable.

One way to try to understand what

happens to our soul when it is between bodies is through the concept of transfer of media. For example, a novel is composed of words printed with ink on paper but the words of the novel could just as well be stored vocally on magnetic tape, coded on punch cards or represented digitally on the computer. Similarly, in principle, the mind could survive the death of the brain through transfer to a different vehicle or channel. It would just be rolled over to some other format. This idea is in line with Reb Zalman's interesting commentary on the fundamentalists' question, "Are you saved?" He understands being "saved" in the computer sense of saving data to a disk. In order to be "saved" we have to roll over our spirit to other dimensions and to other people, to be saved in the hearts of those we love and whom we encourage to carry on.

One of the first appearances in the Torah of the word **גל** *gal* in the meaning of "rolling" is the wonderful story of Jacob's meeting with Rachel by a well which is covered with a huge rock. The rock is so large that it required ten people to gather together to roll it off. This probably was a way to prevent any one shepherd from stealing or misusing the precious water. But when Jacob first sees Rachel, his vital spirit is so magnified that he rolls the rock off of the well all by himself. Hassidic interpretations suggest that we each have a rock covering the deep well of our hearts. We have placed it there to protect ourselves from having our hearts become ripped off. Yet this rock armoring also prevents us from being in touch with our own depths. At certain moments, like upon meeting our inner femininity symbolized by Rachel, the rock is easily rotated off, exposing our hearts' depths. One of our prayers towards that time may be, "*Gal aynay v'gal libi*. Open my heart to feel the love; open my eyes to see the wonder. Let the stony closedness be rolled from my profoundly rich heart."

Great master of **גולה** *Golah* (exile) and **געולה** *Ge'ulah* (redemption), open the hearts of the peace negotiators around the world, including those in the Balkans, the peace processes of Israelis, Palestinians, and

Syrians concerning the future of the **גליל** *Galilee* and other international, national, local & personal trouble spots, that they may secure a violence-free environment for everyone. *Amayn*.

