



# Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



## TIFERET UPDATES

### *This Week in Tiferet*

**Preparing for Rosh Hashana** – Tiferet spent this short week in long preparations for the Yamim Noraim. On Sunday, we held a Yom Iyun on Rachel Imeinu and her tefillot, culminating in midnight Selichot at Kever Rachel. It was an extremely uplifting event, and certainly got the students in the mood for our tefillot on Rosh Hashana. On Tuesday, we held a Yom Iyun on Rosh Hashana, with special shiurim on how to make the Yom Hadin more meaningful in our lives. As always, our students will be spending Rosh Hashana together in Tiferet and we are sure that these Yemei Iyun will enhance their experience.

### תורת תפארת

#### **Rosh HaShana - Finding Ourselves** **Rav Elie Mayer ([ravmayer@gmail.com](mailto:ravmayer@gmail.com))**

Teshuva is from the root שׁוּב - to return. The main goal of teshuva is to return to whom we really are. "Elokai neshama shenatata bi, tehora hi." We are brought into this world as a pure soul. We submerge ourselves in a culture with values that defy our Divine laws and principles. A recent study discovered that watching television or movies has a significant impact on our mood and thoughts. All the more so how media and culture can impact our behavior and decision-making. Teshuva is reconnecting to Torah priorities and values and rediscovering our primordial selves.

The shofar of Rosh HaShana emphasizes this concept. The order of shofar blast begin with tekiya - a single blast, followed by shevarim - from the word שֶׁבַר - broken and then conclude with tekiya once again. We are brought into this world like a tekiya - straight and confident. Then we become jaded and misguided and we lose touch with whom we really are and what is our destiny. The message of the shofar is that we need to return to the tekiya.

There is an accepted minhag to immerse in a mikveh on Erev Yom Kippur. How does the mikveh transform a tamei into a tahor? The Rambam ruled that a person is only tahor once they are completely immersed in the water without any barrier between them and the water. My teacher, HaRav Yitzchak Mirsky, shlita explained (based on the ideas of the Shem MiShmuel and the Sefer HaChinuch) that in the mikve we surround ourselves with water just as a fetus in the womb. Therefore, when we come out of the Mikveh we are, in effect, reborn.

A well-known aggadah on the power of teshuva is found in Avoda Zara daf 17. Elazar ben Durdaya was known for visiting every prostitute in the world. Once he heard of an exclusive prostitute that demanded an extraordinary sum. He took with him a bag of coins and crossed seven rivers to reach her. After his arrival, the prostitute rebuked him that even if he repented, his teshuva would never be accepted. Hearing this, he cried out to the mountains, the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars and the constellations. Finally, Elazar ben Durdaya recognized that his teshuva is only up to him. He placed his head between his knees and cried bitterly until his soul departed. A Bat Kol was heard proclaiming: 'Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya is destined for Olam Haba.'

The Ben Ish Chai asks what is the significance of him putting his head between his

*Continued on pg. 2*

# MAZAL TOV!

**Mazal Tov to Michael Gorelick (Tiferet 5768) on her engagement to Sruli Nemet! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'yisrael together!**



The Administration, Faculty and Staff of Tiferet wishes all of our Students, Alumnae, Parents and Friends  
**Ketiva Vachatima Tova!**

We want to remind all of our alumnae about our

## Alumnae Program

here in Tiferet from

**Thursday, January 12th  
- Sunday, January 15th**

This program will include shiurim, programming, vaads, and most importantly, a Shabbaton for alumnae only! (Our current Shana Alef students will be on a school Shabbaton away from RBS that Shabbat). We are putting tremendous work into this program so that it is an uplifting and enjoyable experience. The cost for the Alumnae Program is only \$40, so we hope that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity and put Tiferet into your schedule for Winter Vacation.

For more information, contact Mrs. Karen Hochhauser ([karen.hochhauser@gmail.com](mailto:karen.hochhauser@gmail.com)) or anyone on the Tiferet Administration.

## תורת תפארת (המשך)

knees? He answers that this was part of his teshuva process. The sun and the moon are metaphors for his parents. He blamed them for not raising him to be righteous. The mountains were his teachers whom he blamed for not educating him. Finally, he blamed the stars who represent his friends and community for influencing him to immorality. We too could blame all of our influences for our sins and we would not necessarily be incorrect. We are all influenced by our surroundings. Through these influences we become something we are not. We adopt aspects of other people's personalities and perspectives. When Elazar ben Durdaya assumed the fetal position, he demonstrated a powerful level of teshuva; he returned himself to the level of innocence of a newborn baby. The message of this gemara is that it is up to us to rid ourselves of all negative influences and return to our essence and the purity of soul that we had when we entered this world. That is what Elazar ben Durdaya did by metaphorically assuming the fetal position.

Many people fear that growing religiously involves changing who you are. However, G-d doesn't want us to be something we're not. Hashem wants us to be the best version of ourselves. Rosh Hashana is the anniversary of the creation of Man. It was a time before we were influenced by others (the snake) and became something we are not. The ultimate teshuva is returning to our essence. Be'ezrat Hashem, this coming year we will all be much more of our authentic selves.

Shana Tova!