

# Parsha Time!

## SHEMINI

### A MESSAGE FROM RABBI WERNICK

Dear Parents,

We are thrilled to be back in school after a wonderful Pesach break! Our Parsha this week concludes with the definitions of which animals, birds and fish are Kosher, and which are not. Our sages teach us that the signs, such as split hooves and chewing their cud for animals, are not what actually makes the animals Kosher, rather they are just signs that tell us which animals Hashem decided are Kosher.

In life, much of what we see is just the sign, or symptom, of what is really happening beneath the surface. An example of this is behavior. A child's (or even an adult's for that matter) behavior is actually a form of communication. A baby cries when hungry or wet, an adult may yawn when bored. Humans communicate through their behavior every moment every single day, even if they are not aware of it. Often, a child's problematic or inappropriate behavior is a sign that they are upset and that something is not right.

There could be many reasons for a child's behavior, such as being hungry, scared, hurt, tired, bored, sad or angry. Some children may even engage in behavior that seems destructive, because they crave/enjoy the physical sensation. Sometimes children feel unsafe or out of control, so they take inappropriate action over the things they *can* control, like being able to kick someone. A child who has tried several times to communicate to adults about what he needs, but whose needs remain unmet, will often use problematic behavior as a way of sending a very loud message.

At MMA, our staff are trained in Conscious Discipline, which amongst many other things teaches adults to look beyond any specific behavior to see what the child's needs are and what they are trying to achieve from their behavior. Staff are also trained in how to create an emotionally safe environment for the students.

Obviously in a school, the academics are the primary focus and priority. However, unless a child feels safe, unless they feel their basic needs are being met, they are not able to learn optimally.

Additionally, as fellow Jews, we have a moral responsibility to our students to help them in all areas of life, not just in intellectual pursuits.

Unfortunately, children's emotional, spiritual, and psychological well being are often overlooked in general. Unfortunately, many misunderstand our school's commitment to our student's emotional, spiritual, and psychological well being, and think that it comes at the expense of our student's academic success. What these people fail to realize is that this commitment is actually what underpins and helps create each child's successes, specifically in academics.

Thank you for loving your child, and for caring about their success so much, that you have chosen MMA, a school that truly cares about your child and views them as an entire mini universe to be nurtured, educated, and developed in a safe, child friendly, and emotionally healthy environment.

Wishing you much Nachas and a most amazing Shabbos!

Rabbi Wernick

### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

#### Phoenix:

Candle Lighting: 6:37pm Shabbos Ends: 7:34pm

#### Scottsdale:

Candle Lighting: 6:36pm Shabbos Ends: 7:33pm

### SCHOOL YARMULKAS

We still have a few MMA Yarmulkas left!!!

They are available for purchase at the office for \$9. Please call Shira to order yours!



## OUR GARDEN

We are so excited to share pictures of our beautiful garden beds with you!

Gardening is a subject the school has always wanted to offer our students and now we finally have a facility to support it. Students have helped plant, water, and generally care for vegetables and herbs. So far, we've started with our older two classes, Keser and Daas, to build out the initial beds. However, as we plant out more garden beds, both in the boys' and girls' areas of the school, every student will have a chance to be part of the gardening program in the near future.

As part of this program, we have also planted several citrus trees along the fence of the school.

With Hashem's help, we look forward to feasting from our gardens in the future. So much incredible potential!



## PARSHA SUMMARY

On the eighth day, following the seven days of their inauguration, Aharon and his sons begin to officiate as kohanim (priests).

A miraculous fire from Hashem consumes the offerings on the altar, and people are able to perceive the divine presence in the Sanctuary.

Aharon's two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, pass away.

Hashem commands us to eat Kosher. Hashem then identifies the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption. Land animals may be eaten only if they have split hooves and also chew their cud; fish must have fins and scales; a list of non-kosher birds is given, and a list of kosher insects (four types of locusts).

Also in Shemini are some of the laws of ritual purity, including the purifying power of the mikvah.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Baruch HaShem, we have had a phenomenal first week back!

Welcome to our new teachers who have joined our MMA School Family: Morah Leah, Morah Shaina, and our new Preschool Director - Mrs Juli!

**IMPORTANT:** Report cards were sent home at the beginning of this week via email. Please review them and let us know if you did not receive them.

Also, it is starting to get quite warm. Friendly reminder that all children are required to bring their own water bottle to school every day.

## SCHOOL TOUR

On Sunday, April 25 we will be hosting a school tour for the Community.

Stay tuned for more details.