

Parsha Time!

TAZRIA METZORA

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI WERNICK

Dear Parents,

This week we read a double Parsha: Tazria & Metzora. The bulk of this double Parsha speaks about Tzaaras, a spiritual "disease" which has both physical and spiritual symptoms. Tzaaras only existed in the times of the Beis Hamikdash. It was primarily caused by anti-social behaviors; Loshon Hara, not sharing, etc.

Once someone "contracted" Tzaaras they had to leave town and live on their own until they recovered. The purpose of this was to have them be on their own with time to think: Why am I here? What did I do wrong? What do I need to change? etc. They were, so to speak, put in time out to self-reflect. Once they came to proper conclusions and made resolutions to treat others better in the future, they recovered, and were able to reenter society. Hashem did not punish these individuals; rather He created an opportunity for self-growth for them.

No human is perfect and children are not born with social skills and an understanding of empathy. They do have a natural desire to connect, but they need to learn social skills and social norms to be considerate of others' needs, or even to self-regulate their emotions. Some children are more naturally adept at this and can learn these skills easier and quicker than others. However, many children find this extremely difficult and need to be actively taught these skills.

I have written about "Conscious Discipline" in this column before. The purpose of Conscious Discipline is not just to help the adults in the children's life, it is also designed to teach children vital social and self-regulatory skills. The goal of Conscious Discipline is not to externally discipline children, rather to help them become self disciplined, finding power from within themselves.

At MMA, we don't "punish" children, meaning we don't administer punitive discipline. Instead, we provide an environment where students can reflect and learn from their mistakes, and we provide natural consequences designed to help students learn responsibility. Children are taught strategies of how to self-regulate and how to negotiate interpersonal issues with other students.

At this time, when we are counting the Sefirah in preparation for Shavuot, improving our character traits a little bit more each day, we must also remember to focus on our children, and to help them to do the same. This really is an MMA education, not only providing top level academics for our students, but also the skills and opportunities for personal growth.

Wishing you much Nachas and an amazing Shabbos,
Rabbi Yoseph Wernick

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Phoenix:

Candle Lighting: 6:42pm Shabbos Ends: 7:39pm

Scottsdale:

Candle Lighting: 6:42pm Shabbos Ends: 7:39pm

SCHOOL YARMULKAS

Our MMA Yarmulkas are becoming quite popular!!!

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



S.T.E.A.M. in the Parsha

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

Dear Parents,

There is a universal Jewish custom to study one chapter of Pirkei Avos, the "Ethics of our Fathers" each Shabbos afternoon between Pesach and Shavuos as a preparation for Shavuos. In chapter two, the chapter we study this week, we learn that "there is an eye that sees and an ear that hears and everything we do, say or think is being recorded in heaven". Obviously this is an allegory, Hashem is beyond physical limitations, and therefore, does not have an eye or an ear. However, the allegorical concept gave our students the opportunity to think about their own senses of sight and hearing, together with their other physical senses.

This week, our students studied the five physical human senses; sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Each class experienced different activities, depending on age, that awakened and tested their senses. Our students also studied the science behind the senses, as well as how our senses enable us to better understand the world around us.

Students saw how by combining an understanding of science and Mishnayos, we gain a clearer and deeper understanding of both.

Gut Shabbos from your MMA Family!

PARSHA SUMMARY

The Parshahs of Tazria and Metzora continue the discussion of the laws of tumah v'taharah, ritual impurity and purity.

After giving birth, a woman immerses in a mikvah and brings offerings to the Beis HaMikdash. All male infants are to be circumcised on the eighth day of life.

Tzaraas (often mistranslated as "leprosy") is a supra-natural plague, which can afflict people as well as garments or homes. If white or pink patches appear on a person's skin (dark pink or dark green in garments or homes), a kohen is summoned. Judging by various signs, such as an increase in size of the afflicted area after a seven-day quarantine, the kohen pronounces it tamei (impure) or tahor (pure).

A person afflicted with tzaraas must dwell alone outside of the camp (or city) until he is healed. The afflicted area in a garment or home must be removed; if the tzaraas recurs, the entire garment or home must be destroyed.

When the metzora (the person with tzaraas) heals, he or she is purified by the kohen via procedure.

SCHOOL TOUR

On Sunday, April 25 we will be hosting a guided school tour for the Community. It will begin at 2pm. All are welcome! Please call the school office to RSVP: 480-591-1770

