

Israeli Doctors Day Symbol of Health

In this craft, we will look at the international symbol of health and medicine.



The Snake and the Dagger- Symbol of medicine around the globe

The international symbol of medicine is a snake wrapped around a dagger.

This well-known symbol appears in many different cultures including the Tanach and Greek mythology.

In Greek mythology, the symbol is called the Staff of Aesculapius. It is known to be the Greek God of Medicine's staff. The snake symbolized health because of its ability to shed its' skin.

In the Bible, the snake represents medicine and health. During the leadership of Moshe over the Israelites, they had to escape Egypt and walk for 40 years to the Holy Land – Israel. On the way, the Israelites sinned and G-d punished them by sending many snakes to the earth. Moses needed to find a way to cure the people who had been bitten and he prayed to G-d who gave him a copper snake. The people who looked at this snake sculpture were instantly cured.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שֵׁרָף וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ
עַל-יָגוֹס וְהָיָה כָּל-הַנִּשּׁוּךְ וּרְאָה אֹתוֹ וְחָיָה

And then G-d said to Moshe, ' Make a seraph figure and mount it on a pole. And if whoever is bitten looks at it, he shall recover.' Bemidbar 21:8

Since then, the snake has become a symbol of and medicine.

Today, people who are bitten by snakes are cured by extracting the poison of the snake, and taking it as medicine.

In Israel, the symbol is used in the Israeli Medical forces and can be seen on IDF medical staff's uniform. It is also used in the Israeli Medical Association organization. There, the symbol combines the snake with elements of Judaism and Israel - the snake is wrapped around the Menorah as well as an Israeli Palm tree which serves as the dagger in the original symbol. These images are available for you to show the class, but we would recommend doing the craft activity first and then comparing the participants work against the actual symbols used in Israel.



The Craft

The students will create their own healthcare symbol using what they have learnt.

Recommended- add a discussion before the craft about what medical staff do? How do they help? What do they go through in their work? How can we use this information to create a new symbol for health staff? How can we combine symbols of medicine, Israel, and Judaism into one new logo?

