1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

This week's 1st Seder Weekly has been dedicated in honor of our dear friend Sam Samuels for his work putting together the 1st Seder Weekly week after week, and all that he does behind the scenes!

PARSHAS SHELACH – CHAYEI SHA'AH
Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"And My servant Calev, because a different spirit was with him, and he followed Me wholeheartedly, I shall bring him to the land to which he came, and his offspring will possess it" (Bamidbar 14:24). Calev is singled out for special recognition (even more than Yehoshua) and granted an extra share in Eretz Yisrael – the city of Chevron. Rav Moshe Feinstein asks what Calev did to deserve this reward. Although the Torah tells us, "Calev silenced the people toward Moshe and said, 'We shall surely ascend and conquer it; we can surely do it!'" (ibid. 13:30), the people did not accept his reassurances. They continued to be influenced by the negative report of the ten other spies. If Calev did not accomplish anything, why should he be rewarded? Rav Moshe rejects the answer that he was given such a remarkable reward merely for his good intentions.

Rav Moshe asserts that Calev's words did have an effect, albeit only a temporary one. He notes that after Calev finished, the spies had to repeat their opinion and it was their second attempt which secured the dire response of Bnai Yisrael. Calev was rewarded for that momentary Teshuva of Bnai Yisrael.

As a source for the significance of a merely temporary benefit, Rav Moshe cites the principle of chayei sha'ah – the brief preservation of life. One minute of life is so valuable that we are permitted to desecrate Shabbos to save someone who surely will not live for more than a brief time. Rav Moshe asserts that the chayei sha'ah of one's spiritual life is certainly no less significant than the chayei sha'ah of one's physical existence. Thus, Calev was rewarded handsomely for the spiritual chayei sha'ah that he provided to Bnai Yisrael.

Rav Moshe concludes that any spiritual endeavor, even if it produces only temporary results, is very worthwhile. Rav Yisrael Salanter had the same idea and he put it this way: "It is worthwhile to give a drasha, even if only one person will daven a better Maariv afterwards, and even if that person is the one who gave the drasha." Albeit that the drasha may have discussed major life changes and did not accomplish its goal, it was worth it for the chayei sha'ah – that one Maariv.

There are times when we attempt to achieve major accomplishments on behalf of the tzibbur or for ourselves personally, yet fail to achieve any lasting results. Sometimes we even fail to undertake a worthwhile endeavor for fear that it will fizzle out in no time. Rav Moshe reminds us of the value of chayei sha'ah. Every moment of Torah and Mitzvos is priceless.

During the Yomim Noraim we attempt to turn over a new leaf, to rid ourselves of many aveiros and strengthen many Mitzvos. Very often, this inspiration barely lasts past Hoshana Rabba. Nevertheless, it was still worth it. For three to four weeks we lived on a higher plane. We did Mitzvos more carefully and more fervently and were repulsed by any temptation to do aveiros. That was chayei sha'ah – life itself. Of course, we all wish that the Teshuva of the Yomim Noraim would last a lifetime and ideally it should. However, even if we get no further than Calev, we have accomplished quite a lot.

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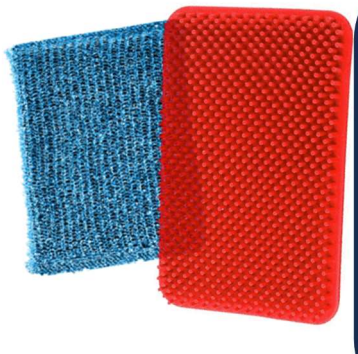
HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR
Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments



QUESTION: : I was in the store the other day and I noticed some sponges that state on the label that it is okay to use on שבת. Is it not סחיטה to use a sponge? Are they מותר to use?

ANSWER: You are correct that squeezing a regular sponge is סחיטה. However, there is a new type of sponge that is allowed to be used on שבת. If a sponge has the following two qualities, then it may be used on שבת. If it is made from a material that doesn't absorb, like silicone or plastic, and it is constructed in a way that it also doesn't trap water, then it will be מותר to use on שבת. If water is absorbed in a material it is סחיטה to squeeze it out. If water is trapped, even if it is not absorbed it is also סחיטה if it is squeezed out. Human hair does not absorb and yet one is not allowed to squeeze out wet hair, because the water is trapped inside. One reason using a regular toothbrush with water is not allowed is because there will be סחיטה on the trapped water within the bristles. Hence, the invention of the שבת toothbrush, which is silicone bristles that are spread apart in a way that it doesn't trap. A baby bottle brush also presents problems of סחיטה unless there is no sponge material added and the bristles are non-absorbent and spread apart.

עי' או"ח סי' ש"א סעי' ג' וסי' ש"ב סעי' ט' ברמ"א וסי' ש"כ סעי' י"ח. ועי' שש"כ החדש פרק ט"ו סעי' ז' והערה כ"ח.
ועי' אג"מ אוח"א סימן קי"ב לענין ה"טוטבראש."

***Question*: On the Shabbos of Parshas Shelach, we read about Meraglim. How many, 13 or 14?**

MOTORCYCLE TO NETANYA

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

I am currently writing this from Eretz Yisrael, which, as all of you know, is under attack every night (and day) by our enemies. Please continue to daven for the safety of all our brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael. I am so grateful to Hashem for being able to witness with my own eyes the nightly miracles, akin to the clouds of glory that intercepted the Egyptians' projectiles. In fact, last Shabbos morning, a huge piece of metal shrapnel fell in the Ezras Torah neighborhood, right where my
family and I had been standing a few hours earlier, walking home from Shabbos Sheva Brachos.

This week's Parsha is all about Eretz Yisrael. Let me share a story that is particular to Eretz Yisrael. There was once a young teenage boy named Yoel who lived in a small town near the city of Netanya. He was slowly becoming more religious and was attending a religious high school in Netanya. To get there, he had to take a bus, which involved several
challenges. One issue was that he often had to leave his learning seders early to catch the last bus home. Additionally, as he became more observant, he realized that the buses to Netanya were often filled with inappropriate sights. He begged his parents to move from their town outside of Netanya to live in Netanya proper, so he could be closer to school. His parents considered it, but for various reasons, the move fell through.

One day, Yoel's father, David, came to him and said, "Yoel, I know you are growing in your religious studies and commitments. I also know that you want to live closer to Netanya, and that the bus is causing problems. I have an idea: I'm going to buy you a motorcycle. This will solve all your problems. You'll be able to travel on your own schedule, leave whenever
you want, and avoid seeing forbidden things. Also," he added, "I know you keep Shabbos and wont use the motorcycle on Shabbos, but your
brother Yoav would like to go to the beach on Shabbos in Netanya. This way, we'll kill two birds with one stone: I'll give you the motorcycle, and your brother can use it on Shabbos when you're not. Everyone will be happy."

Yoel was very grateful for his father's generous suggestion. However, this raised a serious dilemma for him. Is he allowed to accept the motorcycle to avoid seeing improper things and improve his learning (not having to leave seder early), if his brother will now use the motorcycle on Shabbos? On one hand, it will help him spiritually and improve his learning. On the other hand, he would, in a sense, be facilitating his brother's chillul Shabbos. His brother might be violating Shabbos anyway, but now that his father explicitly said the motorcycle is for his brother's use on Shabbos, is Yoel condoning and facilitating his brother's breaking of Shabbos?

What do you think? Is Yoel allowed to accept the motorcycle for the purpose of improving his learning and avoiding improper sights, even if it means facilitating his brother's Shabbos violation? This question was brought to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. See Shabbos Besimcha Page 255

Regarding last week's question about the minyan on the army base, Rav Zilberstein (Shabbos B'simcha, p. 248) answered that if the guard insisted on opening the gate on Shabbos, it would not be permissible to continue holding the minyan there on Shabbos.).

SHE SAW THE BULLET VEER OFF IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

Rabbi Zevy Galombeck shared the following beautiful story. Rav Chaim Volozhin, in Nefesh HaChaim, writes that if a person would constantly review and truly believe the concept of Ein Od Milvado, that there is only one source and force of energy, and that is the Ribono Shel Olam, they would be able to nullify any opposing force that comes their way.

When Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky was a young girl, she lived near the border of Yerushalayim, close to where the Arabs were. She once went to her Zaideh, Rav Aryeh Levin, and said, "I live so close to where the Arabs are, and there are so many snipers." Tragically, she had even lost a sibling, rachmana litzlan, to one of those snipers. She asked, "Zaideh, how can I live here? It's so dangerous."

Her Zaideh told her, "Whenever you see a sniper, say Ein Od Milvado."

One day, she walked out of her house and saw a sniper aiming directly at her. A shot was fired. She said the words Ein Od Milvado, and she saw the bullet veer off in a different direction. This didn't happen just once, it happened again, and then a third time. Each time, bullets came straight toward her, and each time she said Ein Od Milvado, they changed direction. Reprinted with permission from Table Talk.

In Parshas Shelach we find 10 bad Meraglim plus Yehoshua and Kaleiv for a total of 12. In the haftarah, Yehoshua sends 2 meraglim (which would bring us to 14), but Chazal say that they were Pinchas and Kaleiv, and we already counted Kaleiv (leaving us at 13) -- from Pischai Parsha

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HAVE A GOOD SHABBOS!