**Some Questions to Ponder:**

1. From all the readings for this week, which particular verse or passage caught your attention and fired your heart and imagination?

I was fired by the Targum to the Ashlamata for 15:23:

23. ***For like the guilt of men who inquire of the diviner,* so is *the guilt of every man who rebels against the words of the Law; and like the sins of the people who* go *astray after idols,* so is *the sin of every man who cuts out or adds to the words of the prophets****. Because you rejected the service of the LORD, he has removed you from being the king."*

This passage really show how important it is to practice the mitzvot and not to slack off.

1. Deut. 24:19, an open paragraph (setumah) by itself opens our Torah Seder, and Deut. 25:17-19, a closed paragraph (Petucha) concludes our Torah Seder for this week. Based on the principle that the beginning is contained in the end and the end in the beginning, what is the relationship between Deut 24:19 and Deut. 25:17-19?

In our concern to fulfill the mitzva of leaving produce for the field, when we are at peace, we should be carefull not to become so satisfied and so involved in the other mitzvot that we forget Amalek and fail to remember what he did to us.

Hakham Haggai: If we fail to provide for the poor, then the government will step in and provide for the needy and take twice as much money and force us to do it the government way.

1. According to the statements of the Torah: “you will not go back to take …” (Deut. 24:19), and “you will not deglorify it … after you” (Deut. 24:20) what important ethical principles are herein contained?

Keep looking forward, don’t look back.

Don’t regret what we may have lost.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 24:20?

**you shall not deglorify it [by picking all its fruit] after you** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: לֹא־תְפַאֵר

**after you** – What does this pasuk refer to?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:1? And what important principle does Rashi learns as to when a Bet Din can mandate lashes and when it cannot?

**If there is a quarrel** – What do we learn from this?

**and condemn the guilty one** – How do we condemn the guilty one?

The Bet Din must inquire to determine whether the violation of a negative command is mitigated by the performance of a positive command. A violation that is mitigated does not require lashes.

Hakham Haggai: There are very, very few commandments that are not mitigated by a positive commandment. Meam Loez tells us that 168 commands have such mitigation. Further, not all of the remaining commands apply to everyone. Some are for women. Priests, etc.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:3, and how do our Sages learn from this verse that one may not strike his fellow-man?

**He... shall not exceed** – What do we derive from this pasuk?

**and your brother will be degraded** – How long is he degraded, and when does he become our brother?

The forty lashes are mandated by HaShem. Any further lashes are “personal” strikes. Thus we understand that “personal” strikes are always forbidden.

To strike one’s brother brings a separation because of degradation. Only when the punishment has been carried out does the once guilty party become restored to brotherly fellowship within the community.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:9 and what important principle is contained in the words: “Thus will be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s household”?

**and your brother will be degraded** – Where are we to spit?

**[Thus shall be done to the man] who will not build up [his brother’s household]** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

From here, [we learn] that one who has undergone the rite of chalitzah [described in these verses], cannot change his mind and marry her, for it does not say, “[Thus will be done to that man] who did not build up [his brother’s household],” but,"who will not build up [his brother’s household]." Since he did not build it up [when he was obliged to do so], he will never again build it up.-[Yev. 10b]

Hakham Haggai: The end is enwedgen in the beginning. If my brother dies childless, then I am at risk that it will happen to me. If we fail to care for the needy, then I will suffer the same – midda kneged midda – measure for measure.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:12?

**You shall cut off her hand** – Is this verse to be understood literally?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:17?

**You shall remember what [Amalek] did to you** – What do we learn from the juxtaposition of the pasuk on “just weights” and “remember what Amalek did to you”?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:18?

**how he happened upon you on the way** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: קָרְךָ?

**and cut off** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**all the stragglers at your rear** – Who are the stragglers?

**you were faint and weary** – What made us faint?

**and weary** – What made us weary?

**He did not fear [God]** – Who did not fear G-d and how was this manifested?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 25:19?

**you shall obliterate the remembrance of Amalek** – How is his memory to be obliterated?

1. What in the Torah Seder this week fired the imagination of the Psalmist as he penned Psalm 2:1-12?

The Psalmist was inspired by the verbal tally “inheritance – **נַחֲלָה**”.

Hakham Haggai: We do not have individual inheritance, we have communal inheritance. Amalek was all about the individual, not the community.

1. What in the Torah Seder this week fired the imagination of the prophet in the Ashlamatah of I Sam 15:1-34?

I believe that the Prophet was fired by “G-d – **אֱלֹהִים**” because both the Torah portion and the Ashlamata concern judgment and Elohim is the name G-d uses when He judges.

1. What in the Torah Seder, Psalm and Prophetic Lesson for this week fired the imagination of Hakham Yochanan as he penned ‎Apocalypse (Revelation) 13:11 – 14:12, 15:1-4‎?

The word “ways - **ὁδός**”. Gentiles have their ways which are usually wrong when it comes to the Torah.

That all Gentiles from birth have been made partakers by force of the will and commandments of this last beast. No Gentile has escaped from this. This Gentile attitude will destroy a Jewish communit ala Amalek. Gentiles have their own ‘ways’. Yochanan tells us that the Gentiles bring their ways. When the ‘king’ (government) gets involved, then the Jewish way of life will disappear.

1. According to R. Levi how is the dictum in Deut. 25:13-14 related to the statement of Deut 25:17?

Proverbs 11:1-2 states, “A false balance is repulsive to G-d… When defiance comes, it will be followed by shame”. A person who defies G-d’s desire and uses false measures will suffer the shame of conflict with Amalek (Midrash Tanhuma).

1. According to R. Levi how is the dictum in Deut. 25:11-12 related to the statement in Deut. 25:17?

They both concern the rodef, the pursuer?

1. In your opinion what key message/s did Hakham Yochanan try to convey this week?

It is important to have HaShem’s sign (tefillin) rather than to get the beasts sign.

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1. Exodus 17:16 reads: “And he said: 'The hand upon the throne of the LORD: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'” That is, this war against Amalek is still with us to this very day. Who is Amalek today, and how can we fight him and contribute to the eradication of his name (i.e. authority)?

We see Amalek in the Palestinians who blow themselves up and in the Iranians who want to obliterate Israel. Any and all nation(s) that fight against the performance of the mitzvot and against those who pwerform the mitzvot. We also see Amalek in all those who would disparage the Bne Israel for their observance of the mitzvot, particularly circumcision.

To fight him we need to maintain our focus on Torah and Mitzvot.

1. The Sages of the Talmud Babli (Sanhedrin 20b) state: “R. Jose taught, ‘Three commandments were given to Israel when they entered the land: (1) to appoint a King Messiah; (2) to cut off the seed of Amalek; and (3) to build themselves the Chosen House (i.e. the Temple), and I do not know which of them had priority.’” Is it possible that these three commandments coalesce into one commandment? If so, which would be this commandment that includes all of the above three obligations amongst other similar obligations?

Mashiach is the embodiment of the Torah. The Temple was built to house the Torah, and Amalek was sent to punish those who fail to study Torah. So, studying Torah embodies all three. Sovereignty belongs to HaShem, not to Amalek. His House, His King, and not Amalek – constitute His sovereignty.

1. In your opinion, and taking into consideration all of the above readings for this Sabbath, what is the prophetic message (the idea that encapsulates all the Scripture passages read) for this week?

Look for ways in our own lives that need to be strengthened in their observance and study of Torah, lest we make a way for Amalek.

Dr. Elisheva Oakley: We are to remember what Amelek did and look for the signs of Amelek and his characteristics in our society today. We should use our wisdom and influence to destroy Amelek in our sphere of influence on a daily basis.

Adon Ezra: Continue to hold the arms up of our Torah Scholars/Hakhamim, due their bidding, reach out to spread the Torah and Oral Torah to the nations/goyim, and keep an eye on our enemy (remember).

Hakham Haggai: We need to plan for making a community and making it work. This is my personal responsibility.