**Questions for Reflection**

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat which statement touched your heart and fired your imagination?

I was intrigued to learn the Ramban’s perspective on the stops in the wilderness – 16:1, especially the order and definitions.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 15:27?

**twelve water fountains** – To what do these correspond and where did these come from?

**and seventy palms** - To what do these correspond?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:4?

**what is needed for the day** – To what need is the Torah referring?

**so that I can test them, whether...they will follow My teaching** – What was being tested?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:6?

**evening** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: עֶרֶב?

**you shall know that the Lord brought you out of the land of Egypt** – Did they not know that HaShem brought them out?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:7?

**And [in the] morning, you shall see** - To what is this statement referring?

**your complaints against the Lord** – How is this to be understood?

**but [of] what [significance] are we** – How is this to be understood?

**that you make [the people] complain** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: תַלִּינוּ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:13?

**the quails** – What is the nature of this bird?

**there was a layer of dew**- Where was the layer of dew?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:14

**The layer of dew went up, etc.** – How is this to be understood?

**Fine** – What is the nature of “fine”?

**bare** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: מְחֻסְפָּס?

**as fine as frost** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: כַּכְּפֽר?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi concerning Shemot 16:17

**both the one who gathered much and the one who gathered little** – How could they all gather exactly the right amount?

**and it bred worms** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew expressin: וַיָּרֻם תּוֹלָעִים?

**and became putrid** – How did it get worms before it became putrid?

1. In what way is Manna reminding us of Lag BaOmer by means of the Hebrew root ***matarah*** (target)?

Because at Lag B’Omer the children play with bows and arrows to remember that there were no rainbows during the days of Rabbi Shim ben Yochai.

1. In the expression in Shemot 16:4 – “***That I may try them, whether they will walk in My Law or not,***” what was the trial? And what does this expression set by way of precedent to any Gentile turning to G-d from idols and joining the Jewish people?

Rashi said: "I.e., whether they will observe the commandments associated with it, such as [the laws] that they should not leave [a remainder] of it until the morning[[1]](#footnote-1) and that they should not go out on the Sabbath to collect it."

Ramban said: He could have led them by way of ***the cities that were round about them***.[[2]](#footnote-2) Instead, He led them ***through the wilderness wherein were serpents, fiery serpents, and scorpions***,[[3]](#footnote-3) and each day's quantity of food would come to them only from heaven in order to try them and to do them good at the end so that they would believe in Him forever.

1. How was the Manna related to Gan Eden?

See Vol. I, p. 76, on the fruits of the Garden of Eden. **(“And it is possible that the fruits of the garden of Eden were absorbed in his limbs as the Manna, and they sustain those that eat them.”)**

1. What does the expression: “**the righteous/generous dominate and are in command of the heart”** means?

“Now Hannah spoke to her heart”;[[4]](#footnote-4) it says *ל*בהע*ל* (lit. over her heart), indicating that **the righteous/generous dominate and are in command of the heart**.

1. In Psalm 53:7 we read: “Oh that the **salvation** of Israel were come out of Zion! When God turns the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.” What things are required according to this verse in the Midrash genre for Israel to be “saved”?

The salvation of Israel involves the Messiah, but it also involves His people. When His people realize that the love of HaShem and His word is the key to their salvation, then we will all sing the praise of HaShem. Then we will become the third Temple! It is only the acceptance of the Torah and it’s mission that will allow them to become a fitting place for HaShem to dwell.

YbH: Israel (Jews with a Jewish soul and Gentiles with a Jewish soul) must accept the written and the oral Torah. We must understand who Israel is. They are those who have been forced from their Jewish roots (Maranos) and those who have been assimilated among the nations.

1. What is the significance of the city of “Luz” in our Ashlamatah for this week? [Please note that the Rambam teaches that the Prophets speak **as a minimum** in the Remes genre (i.e. through allegories).

It is a place of the House of HaShem. In this place the wicked will die and the righteous, and their family, will live.

YbH: In Spanish and in Arabic luz means ‘light’. If we use this definition then we understand that the city of light is Jerusalem. The Torah that comes out of Tzion is this light.

1. In general. What are the “customs” mandated by Mosheh Rabbenu (Moses our Teacher)?

According to the Ramban, “**A custom is called *chok*, this being associated with the expressions: *Feed me with 'chuki' (my customary) bread*;** (Proverbs 30:8.) ***'chukoth' (the customary ways or laws) of heaven and earth*.** (Jeremiah 33:25.) **Custom is also called *mishpat (judgment or ordinance)* because it is something measured out accurately. A similar usage [of the word *mishpat*] is found in these verses: *So did David, and so has been 'mishpato' (his manner) all the while*;** (I Samuel 27:11.) ***After the former 'mishpat' (manner) when you were his butler*;** (Genesis 40:13.) ***And the palace shall be inhabited upon 'mishpato'*** (Jeremiah 30:18.) **i.e., upon its ascertained dimension.” Ramban Commentary on the Torah,** Vol. II, pp. 209-210, Shilo Publishing House, Inc., New York, 1973.

1. Why is it that Acts 15 in toto deals with the Gentiles accepting Rabbinical authority rather than the issue of circumcision? And if so then, why is the issue of circumcision so prominent in Acts 15? [Again please remember that the book of Acts is of a Remes genre.]

Because the issue was the matter of salvation for the Gentiles with circumcision being just one aspect of salvation. All the aspects and the conversion itself were all dependent on Rabbinic authority.

Circumcision is so prominent because it is the most difficult to endure for a man as it involves not only the membrum but also the circumcision of the heart and our stubborn desire to do things our own way rather than what was commanded by our Hakhamim and halacha.

YbH: This section deals with circumcision as an allegory. We connect to HaShem through our Hakhamim and the Bate Dinae. The prophets of today are the Hakhamim. We cannot hear HaShem when we speak to Him, but if we address these questions to the Hakhamim, who represent HaShem, then we can hear the answer. A person can be saved if they are proselyte of the gate, but they cannot remain in this state. They must advance to a ger tzaddik.

1. According to Philo what is circumcision an analogy of?

Philo elaborates in the most eloquent terms the allegorical meaning of circumcision.[[5]](#footnote-5) Allegorically speaking circumcision is being **Shomer Shabbat**. (Observer/Keeper of Shabbat) This means that the Jewish Soul/Nefesh Yehudi understands that everything must be temperate.

1. What is the importance of “knowing one’s self”? And how can one achieve knowledge of one’s self?

The ability to “Know” one’s own “self”[[6]](#footnote-6) means that he has mastery of one’s self or self-mastery.

This state belongs to those who are Masters of the Torah’s four levels of Prds.

1. Name all the possible halakhic deficiencies implied in the combined Nazarean Codicil’s materials.

YbH: Circumcision is described as “walking in the customs mandated by Moses” Circumcison = the totality of Torah. If you do not murder, then you will not receive the nefesh Yehudi. However, if you obey the halacha of the Hakhamim and observe all of the commandments, they you will receive the nefesh Yehudi.

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

We need to ask HaShem for our needs and we need to focus on our Torah duties.

1. Further, Verse 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Genesis 35:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Deuteronomy 8:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shmuel א (1 Samuel) 1:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Philo. (1993). *The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged in one volume.* (N. U. Edition, Ed., & C. Yonge, Trans.) Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers. pp. 261-262 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Referring to the inner dimensions of the Neshamah. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)