**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

I was touched by the Hakham’s commentary on Mordechai, especially the connection to Shavuot.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 19:2?

**This is the statute of the Torah** – Why is this a statute?

**and have them take for you** – Why is it taken for Moshe?

**perfectly red** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase: אֲדֻמָּה תְּמִימָה?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 19:9?

**and place them outside the camp** – Where were these placed?

**for sprinkling water** - What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase: לְמֵי נִדָּה?

**for purification** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: חַטָּאת?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 19:13?

**corpse of a human soul** - Which type of corpse?

**he has defiled the Mishkan of the Lord** – When does he defile the Mishkan?

**his uncleanness remains** –Why does the uncleanness remain?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 19:15?

**any open vessel** – What type of vessel is included?

**fastened** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: פָּתִיל?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 19:22?

**Whatever the unclean one touches** – Who is this unclean man?

**and anyone touching him** – Who is this unclean man?

**shall be unclean until evening** – What do we derive from this pasuk?

**and have them take for you** – Where do they take this from?

**a red cow** – To what can this be compared?

**Red** – What does this allude to?

**Perfectly** – What does this allude to?

**and upon which no yoke was laid** – Why is this?

**to Eleazar the kohen** – Why was this task assigned to Elazar and not Aharon?

**The cow shall then be burned** – Why is the cow burned?

**a piece of cedar wood, hyssop, and of crimson wool** – What do these three object correspond to?

**a keepsake** – Why is it a keepsake?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 20:1?

**The entire congregation** – Why does this Torah say the “entire” concregation?

**Miriam died there**  - Why is the passage relating Miriam’s death juxtaposed with the passage of the Red Cow?

**Miriam died there** She too died through a kiss [from God’s mouth rather than by the angel of death]. Why does it not say “by God’s mouth” [as it does with Moses]?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 20:3?

**If only we had died** – What is implied by this pasuk?

**with the death of our brothers** – What does this teach us?

**with the death** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase: בִּגְוַע אַחֵינוּ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 20:10?

**Assembled** – What do we learn from this word?

**Shall we draw water... from this rock?** – Why was a particular rock sought?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 20:12?

**Since you did not have faith in Me** – What is revealed by this pasuk?

**to sanctify Me** – How would HaShem have been sanctified?

**therefore, you shall not bring** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: לָכֵן?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 20:13?

**These are the waters of dispute** – Which waters are these?

**and He was sanctified through them** – How was He sanctified?

1. How is B’Midbar 19:1-2 related to B’Midbar 20:13?

They both allude to items where water is involved in sanctification.

The Chukkim or Chukkot are inexplicable laws. The ability to draw water from the rock is also an inexplicable phenomenon.

The Ashes of the Red Hefier mixed with water, atones for any uncleanness. The antithesis of this is the waters of contention in which the congregation of Israel came against Moshe and Aaron.

1. How are the subjects of the Ashes of the Red Heifer and water being drawn from a rock related to the festival of Shabuoth that we have celebrated this past week?

At Shavuot the Torah was given and we know that water is a synonym for Torah. In our portion we have two different incidents that involved waters: Miriam’s well and the water for the ashes of the red cow. The Torah and the red cow are both used for cleansing. Further, just as the cow was consumed by fire, so also was Sinai consumed by fire when the Torah was given. Additionally, when Torah was given, the Bne Israel died twice and were revived with dew (water) as an allusion to the well which revived the Bne Israel in the wilderness.

The water of the Red Heifer deals with spiritual livelihood. The water that was derived from the rock sustained physical life. The key to all life is in the living water of the Torah given at Shavout.

1. In your opinion what is the intent of Hakham Tsefet’s pericope by the hand of his scribe Mordechai (Mark) for this Shabbat?

His intent was to warn us against the Sadducees and the Temple leadership (any leader) who were defrauding HaShem of His portion.

I think he is continuing his message of the importance of correct leadership from the theme of last week’s Torah portion. His parable to the Sadducean authorities of that day demonstrates the knowledge that they are corrupt.

Hakham Tsefet uses a story to tell us how the redemption of the Priesthood of the first-born would be restored.

1. How is the Hebrew word “Mashal” to be correctly translated into English?

Its translation depends on the genre of literature:

If the word is found in **P’shat** literature (i.e. Mark, Jude, I & II Peter), translate as “Analogy” or “Similitude”

If the word is found in **Remez** literature (i.e. Luke, Acts, & Pauline Epistles), translate as “Allegory”

If the word is found in **Drash** literature (i.e. Matthew), translate as “Parable”, “Metaphor” or “Proverb”

If the word is found in **Sod** literature (i.e. John, I, II, III John, and Revelation), translate as a “Typological” or “Symbolical discourse”, or a “Vision” or “Dream.”

1. Why did the the chief priests of the Sadducees (Heb. Tz'dukim) and the scribes of the Sadducees and the elders ‎(Zekanim) of the Sadducees‎ though that the analogy referred to them?

Because they were in charge of the Temple and the analogy referred to a wall around the vineyard which was analogous to the wall around the Temple.

The words of wisdom bring immediate conviction.

The varied components of the analogy fit well the schemes of the Tz’dukim. They knew and understood that the vineyard represented the Bne Yisrael who they were supposed to guard. They furthermore, understood that they were delinquent in their duties as “Priests” of G-d.

1. What part of the Torah Seder fired the heart and imagination of the Psalmist for this week?

The Psalmist is speaking of the creation of the world and is going day-by-day. In our portion he is looking at the first two days. On the second day we know that the water above was divided from the water below – two types of water. This compares with our Torah portion which speaks of two types of water which involved splitting / dividing. The rock was split for the well and the water of the red cow was split into drops when it was sprinkled. In effect, the rock spoke of the lower waters and the cow waters spoke of the upper waters.

1. What part of the Torah Seder fired the heart and the imagination of the prophet Yeshayahu this week?

The Prophet is fired by the fact that the People were rejecting HaShem their savior in their clammoring for water. Then they are reconciled when they get the water they want. Additionally, the Prophet alludes to leaders which have a defect – Moshe when he hit the rock instead of speaking to it.

1. What part/s of the Torah Seder, Psalm, and the prophets fired the heart and the imagination of Hakham Tsefet for this week?

**Walter Oakley: TORAH SEDER**

Mordechai 12: 5 says they “beat some.” This phrase in Greek means they suffered by the violence of the sword. This related to the Torah Seder 19:16 an one who has been killed by a sword. The Torah Seder furthers that if a man touches a a man who is killed in an open field, (i.e. vineyard) he will be unclean.

The Torah Seder mentions the “entire congregation” who rebel against Moshe (20:1) in conjunction Hakham Tsefet mentions the congregation who are faithful to Yeshua, Mordechai 12:12.

The final passages of the Torah Seder depict a congregation who acts in rebellion against Moshe and Aaron. The analogous story of Mordechai clearly speaks of a rebellious group of vineyardists.

**TEHILLIM**

The final verse of the Psalm speaks of a boundary, (hedge) which limits the waters. In similar fashion Hakham Tsefet speaks of the hedge built by the Owner of the vineyard. Psa 104:9 and Mordechai 12:1.

**ASHLAMATAH**

The Story of Jephthah mimics the stone, which the builders rejected in the parody of King David. Judges 11:1-11 and Mordechai 12:10-11

1. After taking into consideration all the above texts and our Torah Seder, what would you say is the general prophetic message from the Scriptures for this coming week?

The prophetic message is that we need to learn to trust HaShem in the midst of adversity and not depend on our own wisdom.

Lukas A. Nelson: We must keep mindful to preparing the harvest, and reserve special decisiveness for the times shortly following times of growth and wonder.

Lloyd Nelson: As we come in contact with those who are dead (spiritually), let use not delay in seeking the remedy of the Ashes of the Red Heifer (Messiah) and the water (Torah) which will cleanse and allow us entrance to the place/abode of G-ds blessing.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: Be diligent in every way to honor godly leadership and don’t be afraid to get dirty. Do all things that God and your Hakham requires you to do so that you too may grow into a great leader to fulfill the work of the Kingdom of God.

Walter Oakley: Prepare to accept changes becoming a Priest of the firstborn. And be willing to get a little dirt on your hands so to speak.