**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

I was, again, facinated with the connection the Hakham made between the tefillin and Pesach. It seems that the calendar is very important! I was also touched by the Midrash’s connection, again, of the four exiles with the four kingsdoms (pg 16 of 50) at the covenant between the parts.

1. Why are the readings for Shabbat HaChodesh and Rosh Chodesh Tishri different from the rest of the readings for the Shabatot Rosh Chodesh?

The two are singled out because they are the beginning of the year for counting years and the beginning of the year for counting months. They are also special in that they are the beginning of the reign of HaShem and of His Mashiach.

1. According to Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Pisqa V:1, on what day of the week did the Israelites had their Passover in Egypt (i.e., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.), and on what day of the week did they left Egypt (i.e., Monday Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.)?

Their Passover was on Wednesday and they left on Thursday.

1. The emblem of Christianity is the sun, and the emblem of Islam is the crescent moon, what kind of emblem did G-d give to Israel?

Tefillin.

1. What authority was transferred to Israel by G-d, most blessed be He, in the statement of the Torah in Exodus 12:1-2? Please explain your answer.

The authority to sanctify the new moon and establish the calendar. This sanctification procedure was given in the Oral Torah. The whole point of showing Moshe what the new moon looked like, was to enable the Sanhedrin to properly question the witnesses. With this authority they set the calendar which determined the number of days in Cheshvan and Kislev (29 or 30) and when the festivals were to be celebrated.

1. Explain the Rabbinic notion: “Like the first redeemer, so will the final redeemer be.”

Like the first redeemer, so will the final redeemer be: Just as the first redeemer appeared to them and then went and disappeared from them, so the final redeemer will appear to them and then go and disappear from them. Micah 7:15 teaches us that the final redemption will be just like the redemption from Egypt.

1. What conditions on earth will be like when Messiah comes, according to the Rabbis? [Please, remember that Pesiqta deRab Kahana is a text of metaphors, and therefore it ought not to be interpreted literally!]

The conditions will be much like the conditions that the Bne Israel experienced in the wilderness with the first redeemer. The Jews will be in 'Egypt', a place of constriction. When we leave, we will leave with our Jewish clothes, language, and traditions.

The world will be in a state of anarchy. Theft, will be rampant. Mashiach will unite the name of HaShem which will result in the restoration of the earth.

1. Why is it said that “No one ever spent the night in Jerusalem while still bearing sin”? Why could it also be said, “No one ever spent the night at the local Jewish community while still bearing sin”? Please explain your answers.

The morning and the evening offering atoned for the sins of those in Jerusalem. In like manner, the shacharit and Arbit prayers contain the reading of the morning and evening offering, and other Torah studies, so they also atone for those in the Jewish community.

1. How do we know from Pisqa V:XVIII, that our Septennial Torah Cycle readings is correct?

The Pisqa speaks about the septenate and the events of each of its years. This prophecy can only be understood in light of the prophecy of the septennial readings. Mashiach *is* the septennial Torah cycle.

1. How does the text of 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 explains the meaning of the text of Colossians 2:16-17? Please explain your answer.

Collosians speaks of the judgment of the individual Jew by the body of Messiah. This is the same judgment that is to be applied to the Jew for Pesach. We must learn how to judge and how to be judged in order to be properly aware of HaShem’s judgments.

1 Corinthians 5:8 tells us: “let us keep the feast”. In Colossians 2:16-17 it says
(so the Christians teach) “we should not keep the feast”.

1. Why was it necessary for Hakham Shaul to write the pericopes of Col. 2:16-23, and 1 Corinthians 5:6-8? Please explain your answer.

The Jews were going to the Gentiles to be judged. They were settling Jewish disputes in Gentile courts. At the same time, they were failing to judge themselves and their community according to the Torah standards.

It is important that we reduce the inappropriate “boasting” which comes from being vainly puffed up by the mind of the Yetser HaRa by either extreme of lawlessness or unlawful asceticism, leading to malice and wickedness both in the boaster and spreading to the family and community, and cultivate humility, which leads to transparency and faithfulness in our service to Ha-Shem, Torah Study, and service to the community. And to clarify that we do celebrate the feasts.

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

Now is the time to begin the personal spiritual house cleaning, to get out the leaven, that is necessary to help us be what we are supposed to be.

To prepare our hearts and minds and houses for the upcoming feast. To observe them in a spirit of worship towards G-d, remembering what He has done for us.

The season of redemption is coming. The power for deliverance is prevalent in this time of year. All that HaShem does can be seen in cycles and seasons. If it happened once, it will happen again, there is nothing new under the sun. We should then expect personal deliverances from hindrances and trials that we struggle with. We should believe that this is the time of our “Exodus from Egypt.”

Prepare to keep the Festival Unleaved Bread! with the matzah of purity and faithfulness.

Prepare for redemption. Make oneself ready.

As we prepare for Pesach, along with the leaven get rid of inappropriate boasting, and cultivate humility which leads to transparency and faithfulness in our service to Ha-Shem, Torah Study, and service to the community. Learn the process of Tefillin, and take on its humility. This Rosh Chodesh, celebrate the opportunity to crown Ha-Shem, most blessed be He, and His Mashiach, Yeshua HaMelech.

You cannot pick and choose what you want to be obedient in and what you want to throw by the wayside...it is either all or nothing. If you are only gonna obey/observe part of the Torah, you might as well not do any of it, because by picking and choosing and not doing all you invalidate all of it. So too, should we strive to glean apply all we know to do...and search ourselves for 'leavening' as we search our homes for leavening. Get the leavening out of our homes and also out of our hearts, minds and spirits. (wrong thinking, practices, traditions)...internal inspection as well as inspections of our homes are a must!

To cultivate the trait of humility, and keep studying Torah, because no matter how much we think we know, there is still more to learn.