**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 Mark, especially his admonition at the end where He encouraged us to be about our duty while we watch.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 30:2?

**the heads of the tribes** – How did he honor the heads of the tribes?

**This is the thing** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

**he shall not violate his word** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 30:6?

**But if her father hinders her** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: הֵנִיא?

**and the Lord will forgive her** - To what case does the verse refer?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 31:3?

**Moses spoke** - What were his actions?

**arm** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: הֵחָלְצוּ?

**Men** – What kind of men were these?

**the revenge of the Lord** – Why was HaShem taking revenge?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 31:6?

**them along with Phineas** – What does this show?

**the sacred utensils** – What were these utensils?

**in his possession** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: בְּיָדוֹ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 31:8?

**the five kings of Midian** - Do I not see that the verse lists five [kings]? Why was it necessary [for Scripture] to say "five"?

**with the sword** – Why was a sword used?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 31:17?

**Every woman who can lie intimately with a man** – What does this pasuk mean?

**you shall kill** - Why is this repeated?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 31:19?

**outside the camp** – What does this mean?

**anyone who killed a person** – Who are involved in this statement?

**shall cleanse himself** – With what shall he cleanse himself?

**you and your captives** – Why are captives included?

1. Why were all married, divorced, widows and male children of the Midianites killed?

The males were killed because their king sought the destruction of the Bne Israel and the men did nothing to stop it. Their male children were killed because they were like their fathers. The females were actively involved in seducing the Jews and therefore deserved death. Any female may be pregnant could produce more Midianites.

It was to extinguish the lineage of the Midianites so that they would not be able to assimilate with the Jewish community and cause them to sin. Only the young girls, who were virgins, would be suitable to bring into the community. It was assured that they were not pregnant and that they were young enough to become converts to the community.

The goal was the complete elimination of the Midianites.

1. How is the principle “the end is contained in the beginning, and the beginning is contained in the end used by Hakham Tsefet in Mark 13:3-8?

The critical word “heads / chiefs” is used in v3 (the beginning verse) and also in v8 (the ending verse).

1. How does one nullify a “Neder”?

He goes before a Bet Din of three men knowledgeable in the laws of nederim. If his teacher is available he should be included or his permission, to use another judge, should be obtained. The Bet Din would annul the neder.

1. What important principle about killing/murder and uncleanness is revealed in Bamidbar 31:19?

Whether you touched a dead body OR killed a man without touching him, both convey uncleanness.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: Just as one who touches is [contaminated] through contact, so is the one who kills [contaminated] through contact.-[Sifrei Chukkath 48]

1. Why did G-d allow the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile of the Jewish people on 70 c.e.?

So that the buildings would take their punishment for them as the stones of the buildings represented the people. Their exile would serve as a substitute for their death because an exiled man, without his possessions, is like a dead man.

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

To warn the people to not be misled by false messianic figures or signs of the end, but rather to stay focussed on the mission HaShem sent him to do.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: He used this pericope to alert his talmidim to see what was eternally important and be busy doing those things. True faith is an act of doing, or actually being “faithful”. Being faithful to study of Torah, do righteous/generous acts of charity and kindness, by using all of our means to build a strong community is the backbone of our pericope this week. This passage spoken by the Master, came to mind as I meditated to answer this question.

Luke 18:8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith (FAITHFULNESS) on the earth?"

Lukas A. Nelson: The intent here is a glimpse into prophesy. Revealing the future through the past, The Master gives careful instruction and warnings as some of his parting gifts.

Walter Oakley: Those involved in the appropriate lifestyle (Torah Study and righteous deeds) have nothing to fear when the birth pangs arrive.

1. In what way does the Torah, Psalm, Prophetic reading of Malachi, and Mark 13:3-8 point to the fact that the 9th of Ab is at the door so to speak?

**Torah** – Speaks of the revenge on the Midianites who sought the destruction of the ‘Lively Stones’ which were represented by the Temple which was destroyed on Ab 9.

**Ashlamatah** – The Targum speaks of the scattering of the people which happened at the destruction of the Temple on Ab 9. It also speaks of HaShem’s love for His people – this love is never more apparent than when a loved one is being disciplined. Finally, the Prophet speaks openly, in the Targum, of the coming exile of Ab 9.

**Special Ashlamatah** – This Ashlamatah was chosen specifically to prepare us for Ab 9.

**Psalm** – Speaks of the happiness of those who observe judgment – we saw judgment many times of Ab 9.

**Mark** – Discusses the consequences of the destruction of the Temple which was destroyed on Ab 9.

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

The Psalmist, in the Targum, speaks of the happiness of those who observe judgment as he read of the judgment of the Midianites. He also speaks of the salvation of HaShem’s people as he observes there preservation when they warred against the Midianites. The goodness of HaShem can also be a reflection on the annulment of vows as found in our Torah portion.

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

The Prophet speaks of Moshe’s impending demise when he says that ‘HaShem’s counsel will stand’. He also speaks of the destruction of the Midianites when he speaks of the Memra, in the Targum, being stirred against the Gentiles. He also alludes to the annulment of vows when he speaks of HaShem NOT annulling His vow to justify and glorify His people.

1. What part of the Torah Seder fired the heart and the imagination of the prophet in the Special Ashlamatah?

The Prophet speaks of the priests praying for His people in much that same was the Phineas prayed for the people in battle. His admonition to ‘seek justice’ alludes to Moshe’s indignation that the Midianite women had been left alive. He speaks of HaShem’s retribution on the Gentiles, the Midianites, who are the enemies of His people.

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

**Torah Seder**

The Mesorah of Mark makes an immediate connection to the Torah Seder in v3 by listing the chief/heads of the Nazarean Community B’Midbar 30:2 Mark 13:3

**Tehillim**

The list of deeds found in Psalm 106:1-5 are the deeds of the righteous or, heads of the Tribes of the Bne Yisrael and the Nazarean Community Mark 13:3

**Ashlamatah**

Through the *Memra* (G-d’s word or, the living stones, incarnating the Mesorah of Yeshua, the Oral Torah) all of the seed of Yisrael will be justified and glorified 45:25. Likewise, Yeshua foretells the end of the age and Temple from the beginning 46:10

**Special Ashlamatah**

I believe that Hakham Tsefet’s strongest connection this week is through the “Vision.” Yeshua foretells of the Temple’s destruction and the Eschaton as does Yesha’yahu.

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?

Look for HaShem to use this week to judge His people first, then He will judge the Gentiles and bring retribution.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: It is our duty to develop our discernment and vision. We are to keep watch and do those things we know that are correct and profitable to the Community. Torah Study, both oral and written, righteous/generous acts of charity, tithing, and keeping the Sabbath will not only strengthen the Community but will also further the Kingdom of God.

Lloyd Nelson: Do not be distracted by the things we see and hear of, but continue the study of Torah and perform acts of loving kindness.

Lukas A. Nelson: Proceed with caution, consistently progress The Kingdom, and act in deliberate justice.

Vivian Kuala: Keep your head down during the Three Weeks, keep doing the mitzvot as best you can, and show mercy.

Walter Oakley: Be involved in the appropriate lifestyle (Torah Study and righteous deeds) and you will have nothing to fear when the birth pangs arrive. Live life according to the saying, "Non, je ne regrette rien"!

Hakham Haggai: Keep with the vision!