**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

I was fired by the gezara sheva of Devarim 13:15, concerning the seven investigations / questions, and Rashi’s explanation of it.

I was also interested to learn that an ot is *always* a ‘sign in the heavens’ (13:2).

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 12:20?

**When [the Lord your God] expands [your boundary... and you say, "I will eat meat,"... you may eat meat]** – What is the Torah teaching with this comment?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 12:21?

**If the place the Lord, your God, chooses to put His Name there, will be distant from you** – What are implications of this pasuk?

**you may slaughter... as I have commanded you** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 12:25?

**You shall not eat it** – What is the Torah admonishing with this pasuk?

**in order that it be good for you...** – What good will come from this?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 12:28?

**Keep [and hearken to all these words that I command you]** – What does the Hebrew שְׁמֽר word refer to?

**[Keep...] all these words [that I command you]** – What does this mean?

**[That it may benefit you...when you do] what is good** – In whose eyes is this ‘good’?

**and proper** - In whose eyes is this ‘proper’?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 12:30?

**Lest you be attracted** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: פֶּן־תִּנָּקֵשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם?

**Beware, lest you be attracted after them, after they are exterminated from before you** – What will happen if we are attracted to them?

**How do [these nations] serve [their gods?]** – What is this pasuk teaching us?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 13:1?

**Everything [that I command you]** – What are the implications of this?

**that you shall be careful to do** – What does this pasuk teach us?

**You shall neither add to it** – What are some examples of adding to a mitzva?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 13:2?

**[If there will arise among you a prophet...] and he gives you a sign** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: אוֹת?

**or a wonder** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: מוֹפֵת?

**and he gives you a sign** – Where is this sign to be found?

**or a wonder –** Where is this wonder to be found?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 13:5?

**keep His commandments** – Which commandments are these?

**heed His voice** – Whose voice are we to heed?

**worship Him** – Where are we to worship Him?

**and cleave to Him** – How are we to cleave to Him?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Deut. 13:9?

**You shall not desire him** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: לֽא-תֽאבֶה?

**and do not hearken to him** – Why is it necessary to state this?

**neither shall you pity him** – Why is it necessary to state this?

**[neither shall you...] have mercy upon him** – How is this accomplished?

**nor shall you shield him** - How is this accomplished?

1. What are the requirements to be a Shochet (ritual slaughterer)?

He must slaughter in accordance with the laws of the Torah, follow the laws of the Oral Torah and become certified by a Halakhic authority.

1. How can we reconcile the blood libel for which Anti-Semites have and still accuse us and kill us with the promise in v. 25, “If you do not eat it (i.e., blood), you and your descendants will have a good life”?

The solution to this problem lies in the conclusion of verse 25 ". ..if you will do what is right in the sight of God:' The pledge of having a good life is contingent not only on the first half of the verse (i.e. abstaining from blood) but also on doing what is right in the eyes of God, which means adhering to *all* the Mitzvot. Thus, although Jews were always extremely scrupulous about the prohibition of ingesting blood, it was their occasional lapses with regard to other Mitzvot which led to the terrible pogroms and murderous blood-libels.

1. What is the principle of Lifnim Meshurat HaDin?

The principle of Lifnim Meshurat HaDin is to *do more than what is actually required in the body of Mitzvot*. (Ramban, Parshat Vaetchanan 6:18)

1. What in the Torah Seder this week fired the imagination of the Psalmist as he penned Psalm 119:73-104?

The Psalmist used the words ‘commandment’ and ‘do’ to connect the learning and the keeping of the commandments with what is taught by the body.

1. What in the Torah Seder this week fired the imagination of the prophet in the Ashlamatah of Isaiah 54:2ff?

The Prophet was fired by the word ‘enlarge’.

1. What in the Torah Seder, Psalm and Prophetic Lesson for this week fired the imagination of Hakham Tsefet as his scribe penned Mark 15:1-5?

**Torah Seder**

The Tz’dukim of our pericope are clearly pseudo-prophets and those who have lead the people of the City astray, Cf. D’barim 13:1-2

**Tehillim**

**Psa 119:85.** *“Willful sinners have dug pits for me, which is not according to Your Torah,”* could easily be seen as a reference to the Kohanim as pseudo-prophets of our present pericope in Mordechai.

**Ashlamatah**

Rashi comments that Is 54:1 is a reference to Jerusalem. It is the Kohanim who brought the wrath of G-d on the city by their deviant actions.

1. In your opinion what key message/s did Hakham Tsefet try to convey in Mark 15:1-5?

The proper behavior of a King when he is on trial before an improper authority.

1. Who is an Apikorus according to our Sages?

An Apikorus is one who insults a Torah Scholar as it is written…

***Sanhedrin 99b*** *AN EPIKOROS. Rab and R. Hanina both taught that this means one who insults a [Torah] Scholar (Hakham).*

1. Why did the Kohen Gadol bring Messiah King Yeshua to be judged by Pilate?

Because he lacked the authority to impose the death penalty. The Roman removed that authority from the Sanhedrin.

1. In your opinion, and taking into consideration all of the above readings for this Sabbath, what is the prophetic message for this week?

The promises of HaShem depend on proper behavior, therefore we should redouble our efforts to learn and observe proper behavior.

HH Adon Eliyahu: Study Torah 101 times, Do more than asked by the Torah and your Tents will be enlarged.

Lukas A. Nelson: Keep it simple. Torah, sleep, repeat. ;D

Adon Ezra: Enlarge our tents and strengthen it chords, as now is the time to reach out to those who are drowning. Throw a preserver and haul them to the safety of the boat / community.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakely: Cleave to God by cleaving to the one that God has placed in authority over you.

Hakham Haggai: The Torah is prophetic. The times are so turbulent that we can’t see. The Torah provides clarity: So the Torah says that now is the time to enlarge our tent and reach out to others to expand our community.