**Some Questions to Ponder:**

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat, what verse or verses touched your heart and fired your imagination?

I was intrigued with the Hakham’s commentary on Mordechai. I was touched by the fact that fire and salt are related in that all of the sacrifices that were burned, with fire, on the altar – required salt.

1. How is B’Midbar 2:2 related to B’Midbar 2:34?

Verse two is the initial command, from HaShem, that the Bne Israel were to march the way that the tribes carried Yaaqov’s bier. Verse 34 is the acknowledgement that the Bne Israel followed that command.

1. What questions were asked of the Masters of Peshat regarding Numbers 2:2?

**Rashi v. 2 with the flag staffs** – What did these flags look like?

**Rashi v. 2 With the signs of his fathers’ house** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**Rashi v.2 some distance** – How far was this distance?

**Ibn Ezra v.2 – According their ensigns** – What was the nature of these ensigns?

**Ibn Ezra v.2 – A good way off** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word “Mi-Neged”?

**Rash’bam v.2 – בְאֹתֹת** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word?

**Rash’bam v.2 – מִנֶּגֶד** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi and Ibn Ezra regarding Numbers 2:3?

**Rashi v.3 in front**- Which side is this?

**Ibn Ezra v.3 – On the eastside toward the sunrising –** What is the meaning of this pasuk?

1. What question was asked of Ibn Ezra regarding Numbers 2:4?

**Ibn Ezra v.4 – And his host (Uf’qudehem)** – Why is the plural used here?

1. What question was asked of the Matsers of Peshat regarding Numbers 2:17?

**Rashi v.17 Then the Tent of Meeting shall set out** – When does it set out?

**Rashi v.17 just as they camp, so shall they travel** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**Rashi v. 17 in his place** Heb. עַל־יָדוֹ – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word?

**Ibn Ezra v.17 – Then the tent of meeting, with the camp of the Levites, will set forward in the midst of the camps –** Which camps are meant?

**Ibn Ezra v.17 – As they encamp, so will they set forward –** To what does this pasuk refer?

**Ibn Ezra v.17 – Every man in his place -**  What is the meaning of “Al Yado”?

**Rash’bam v.17 - בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֹת** – Where were the flags?

**Rashbam v.17 -** **כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲנוּ כֵּן יִסָּעוּ** – What is the meaning of this phrase?

**Seforno v.17** - **וְנָסַע אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד מַחֲנֵה הַלְוִיִּם, בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֹת –** What is the meaning of this phrase?

**Seforno v.17** - **כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲנוּ** – What is the meaning of this phrase?

1. What questions were asked of Ibn Ezra regarding Numbers 2:32?

**Ibn Ezra v.32 – These are they that were numbered of the children of Israel –** What is the meaning of this phrase?

1. What questions were asked of the Masters of Peshat regarding Numbers 2:33?

**Ibn Ezra v.33 – But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel –** Why are we told this again?

**Rash’bam v.33 - וְהַלְוִיִּם--לֹא הָתְפָּקְדוּ** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase?

**Rash’bam v.33 - כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה, אֶת-מֹשֶׁה**. – What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase?

The Levites were not counted because a King when He counts His kingdom, does not count His own servants. Further, Levites were not to fight in the army, even though they guarded the Temple.

1. What questions were asked of Ibn Ezra regarding Numbers 2:34?

**Ibn Ezra v.34 – Thus did the children of Israel –** What period of time did this cover?

**The answer is:** This was their whole time in the wilderness, in the pshat, and until now at the remez level.

1. According to Rabbi Yitschaq Magriso how did the Israelites became arranged in a precise formation under flags? And what “key” principle can be derived from this?

The Bne Israel were to march the way that the tribes carried Yaaqov’s bier. This order was followed by the angels as they surrounded the throne of G-d. We can derive that each person, no matter how minute, has his place and that place is vital to the rest of the camp (nation of Israel). From this we learn the key principle of ‘precedent’ as well.

When one falls, the others must pick him up, else the whole congregation will be disrupted and the fallen man will be trampled.

1. According to Song of Songs 7:1 the word “return” is mentioned four times. What is the significance of this? And how is this related to “salt’?

The word “return” is mentioned four times in reference to the four nations that said to the Jewish people unite with us, accept our faith and we will make you great. The four nations were Babylon, Medea, Greece and Edom. If the Jewish people had joined the four nations and accept the faith of the four nations, after having received the Torah at Mount Sinai and having the real “salt” “infused” in them, their salt would become “insipid” and loose its taste, and become “saltless salt”, with a mixture of impurities and was worse than useless, a substance without the salty taste is not salt but something else.

1. The Israelites marched an encamped in the form of a cross, from where did they get this formation?

They learned this from the way the tribes carried Yaaqov’s bier, this is the precedent. The angels at Sinai also had this order.

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of the Psalmist‎ in Psalm 91:1-16?

The Psalmist visualized the tribes and their banners under the Clouds of Glory as they marched in the wilderness, under HaShem’s protection.

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of the Prophet Yeshayahu (Isaiah)?

The Prophet also saw the ‘sign’, the banners of the tribes, and saw this as HaShem’s sign. He looked at the banners and saw HaShem’s protection and the faithfulness of the tribes.

1. How is the reading of Mordechai (Mark) 9:49-50 related to the readings for this Shabbat?

Torah Seder

Mordechai 9:49 is derived from B’midbar 2:2 The previous pericope (Mordechai 9:43-48) left the impression of Gehenna as a place of decay and decomposition. The Jewish mind natural would have turned to fire and salt. Fire and salt in turn, would have caused the mind to remember the sacral system of the Mishkan and subsequent Temples. Looking at the structure and design of the Temple would have cause the Jewish mind to remember the Torah Seder of Numbers where the Tribes surrounded the Tent of Meeting and Mishkan. This in turn would have caused the Jewish mind to remember the burial of Yaakov.

Ashlamatah

The Ashlamatah makes a wonderful connection to the Torah Seder by opening with the idea of the everlasting sign. It goes further to discuss those who will be joined to Yisrael and possess the ability to partake in the events of the House of G-d. Hakham Tsefet made a natural connection between the House of G-d, the offering that were offered there and salt. Consequently Mordechai 9:49 discusses fire and salt, two key elements in Temple structure and order. Yeshayahu 56:7

Yeshayahu 56: makes a connection through the idea of harmony, shalom (completeness and wholeness) and the slat of the Shabbat table alluded to in Mordechai 9:50.

Tehillim

Targum to Tehillim 91:15. He will pray in My presence and I will answer him; I am with him in distress, I will save him and glorify him.

Prayer in the “presence” of G-d would be understood as one who prayed at the Temple. Hakham Tsefet would have made a connection with this verse knowing that the salt of the korbanot had brought the offerer near to G-d so that his prayers would be heard. He would have understood verse 1 (Tehillim 91:1) to be the banners of the collected tribes under the shadow of the Almighty making a connection between the second chapter of Numbers and the Temple. This would have been the relationship between fire, salt and peace.

1. In your opinion, what is the chief purpose that Hakham Tsefet wants to address in Mordechai (Mark) 9:49-50)?

Hakham Mordechai wants to address the righteous and cause them to understand the meaning of the salt with a sacrifice.

Peace and harmony in this world comes by the sacrifices/examples, made by the children of G\_d. However, the sacrifice must be salted with the truth of the Torah, both Written and Oral. Without such flavor what good can come, because only through this savor can the Holy Spirit not be hindered, thereby advancing the return of Messiah.

To live in fellowship and peace together.

That all believers and observers of His Word, whether Jew or Gentile, have their place in His Word and Plan, and we are to dwell in peace and harmony together.

His chief purpose is to tell his listeners that we should live at peace and make peace among the believers by living a purified life. He is illustrating with his salt example that as a living sacrifice (salt necessary to offer sacrifices) we are pleasing and useful to the Lord.

Hakham Tsefet is speaking again of salt. Salt can be seen as harmful but it can also be seen as good. Those who are salted live in purity with all impurities melted away from the action of the salt. This causes us to live in peace and harmony with those around us.

1. Explain how Hakham Tsefet derived all of his material in Mordechai (Mark) 9:49-50 from the Torah Seder for this Shabbat, Psalm 91, and ‎ Isaiah 55:6 – 56:9?

See question 15.

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

Remember the precedents set by the Patriarchs and follow them carefully, in your assigned place.

If you are found in Hashem, in His order, in his presence, you will be protected and you will live in peace amongst the brethren. We need to be actively involved in this process by checking our sacrifice that we are offering to God, making sure it is salted and not bland.

We should be at peace with our neighbors, loving G-d and allowing him to organize our lives so that we find the place of our importance in kingdom work………. becoming the salt of the earth.

Each piece is worth the sum of the whole. This lesson teaches us that everyone has his particular place and space. No one can fill that place or do your job. The person (Tom Brady) that I work with has a saying that I believe is apropos here. When things look tough or we think we are not up to the task, he says, “it’s our job we have to do it!”

The strength and peace of the community is to continue to learn Torah as taught at Mount Sinai to Moses and passed down and not exchange the faith of the four nations in any way, for it is not in the power of the four nations to convey greatness to the Jewish people, as greatness has already been conveyed to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. And there is nothing to compare to it, if the Jewish people hold fast to the Torah and principles as passed down from Moses and become (the true salt) it.

Do not listen to the enticement of the nations and thereby become drawn away from our calling, (that of being ambassadors). With such a withdraw, how can our sacrifice be of value? Like flavorless salt we might as well be thrown out under the foot of man.

The words of Isaiah: 1. So says the Lord, "Keep justice and practice righteousness, for My salvation is near to come, and My benevolence to be revealed." (Be salty).

To know my place in relation to Hashem and His Word and Will for me, and also to be at peace with the world around me...my co-workers, my neighbors, my family, regardless of their faith and positions. We ought not to mix in order to remain unique.