**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 in regards to His Eminence’s explanation of the fig tree.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:11?

**How long** – How is this to be understood?

**provoke Me** - What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: יְנַאֲצֻנִי?

**after all the signs** – What was HaShem saying with this clause?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:12?

**and annihilate them** - What is the meaning of the Hebrew word:. וְאוֹרִשֶׁנּוּ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:13?

**But the Egyptians will hear** – What would the Egyptians hear?

**that You have brought up** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: כִּי?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:15?

**and if You kill this nation like one man** – What are the implications of this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:17?

**Now, please, let the strength of the Lord be increased** – How was this accomplished?

**as You spoke, saying** - What was the statement?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:18?

**The Lord is slow to anger** – Is this towards the righteous only?

**Cleanses** – Who are cleansed?

**does not cleanse** – Who are not cleansed?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:21?

**However** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: אוּלָם?

**as surely as I live** – What is being expressed by this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:22?

**have tested Me** – Is this to be understood literally?

**these ten times** – What were the ten times?

***Arachin 15a*** *It was taught: R. Judah said, With ten trials did our forefathers try the Holy One, blessed be He: two at the sea, two because of water, two because of manna, two because of the quails, one in connection with the golden calf, and one in the wilderness of Paran…*

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:24?

**another spirit** – How many spirits were involved?

**and followed Me** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: וַיְמַּלֵא אַחֲרָי?

**to which he came** – What place was this?

**will drive it[s inhabitants] out** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: יוֹרִשֶׁנָּה?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:33?

**forty years** – What are the implications of this pasuk?

**who had been twenty years old** – When did they die?

**and bear your defection** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:40?

**to the mountain top** – Where does this take us?

**We are ready to go up to the place** – Where were they ready to go up?

**of which the Lord spoke to give to us;** - Where were they wanting to go?

**for we have sinned** – What sin were they acknowledging?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in Bamidbar 14:44?

**They defiantly ascended** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: וַיַעְפִּלוּ?

1. How is Bamidbar 14:11 related to Bamidbar 14:45?

The provocation of HaShem in v.11 led to the slaughter of those who provoked in v.45.

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 teach us that even great leaders who fail to produce even the beginnings of fruit, will be cursed.

Lloyd Nelson: No matter what stage of your Spiritual growth, even if you are not bearing fruit yet, when the Master comes with a need their should at least be something we could offer that would suffice until the fruit is mature and worthy to be consumed. If Israel was not spared the 40 years in the wilderness for their lack of faithful obedience, why should Israel at the time of second Temple be spared for their lack of faithful obedience?

Hakham Tsefet uses the analogy of a fig tree to demonstrate that G-d does not tolerate slanderous reports and fruitless behavior and that an evil generation would have to pass before G-d plan could be fulfilled.

**Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**: Yeshua was HaShem’s active agent in the creation of the world. Therefore the fig tree should have recognized who was standing in front of it. The fig tree failed to recognize its creator. In the same way, the Sanhedrin, the Priests, and the Roman leadership failed to recognize Him as Mashiach. Each of these institutions has disappeared because they failed to recognize their Messiah.

1. How is Hakham Tsefet pointing us to the fact that this is the month of Nisan or Iyar?

By speaking of the beginnings of fig fruit which become manifest at this time of the year.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: The phrase “on the morrow” is alluding to the counting of the omer, which takes places place from the month of Nisan to the month of Iyar.

Dr. Walter Oakley: Firstly I believe he is telling us that we are in the month of Nisan of Iyar by use of the fig tree which should be nearing the blooming stage of its cycle. Secondly, his mention of the fig is directly related to Lag B’Omer. The fig is one of the seven species of the Eretz Yisrael. The number seven is an analogy of the seven men of the congregation. During the month of Iyar the seven men are to work at building the congregation.

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

The Psalmist contrasted David’s heart with the heart of the ten slanderous spies and those who rebelled against HaShem. He also comments of the two righteous spies and those who believed them. He calls these the ‘*faithful ones*’. Finally, he speaks of the wicked being cut off, just as those who ‘went up’ were cut off in their rebellion.

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

The Prophet speaks of HaShem’s mercy as He works to save His people despite their rebellion. He also commends Moshe and Caleb as watchmen who attempted to lead the people in the way they should go. Finally, he speaks of the contrast between those who rebelled and fled before their enemies, with those who fight HaShem’s battles.

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**

Mordechi is directly connected through the verbal thought of “on the morrow” or tomorrow found in B’Midbar 14:25. Other verbal connection are found in hearing (B’Midbar14:13) and seeing (14:23).

Thematically the Pericope of Mordechai notices the nuances of the plague, which destroyed the slanderous spies teaching us that the evil generation of Yeshua would have to pass before the Governance of G-d could be achieved through the Mesorah.

**Tehillim**

The Psalmist uses the phrase “I will cut down” (cf. 101:5,8) those who are slanderous and those who cannot be tolerated. The fig tree of Mordechai’s Pericope will be cut down because its fruitlessness is intolerable.

**Ashlamatah**

The Prophet sees the leaders of Yisrael as blasphemers in his prophecy (52:5). This is attested to by the thematic representation of the fig tree. The fig tree was representative of the age, which the leaders of Yeshua’s day would reject G-d’s plan and will for their lives.

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?

Trust HaShem by listening to the righteous leaders.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: We should see God as the Faithful one. We should picture ourselves as a wise fig tree. We should take the words of Timothy and make them our own daily…..

2Ti 4:2 preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

Listen carefully to the word of G-d. Follow the commands without hesitation G-d knows best. Get ready for the Hakham’s birthday (Lag B Omer)

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai: Leaders should produce fruit in-season and out of season. We cannot give what we have not put in. People are watching and we should be careful not to speak evil of the work in front of us just as the spies were not to speak evil of the land.