**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

Rashi’s comments on Vayikra 23:19 regarding the sacrifices for the bread as being separate and distinct from the sacrifices brought for the festival in Bamidbar 28:19-22.

1. How is Vayiqra 23:15 related to Vayiqra 23:44?

We go from the timing of the omer offering to Moshe’s declaration of HaShem’s feasts to Israel. The implication seems to be that we are to count not only the omer but the festivals as well. Using this thought, we see that there are seven festivals and seven festival Shabbats. Additionally, there is the implication that all of the feasts are summed up in the counting of the omer.

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:15?

**from the morrow of the rest day** – What day is this?

**[seven weeks;] they shall be complete** – What does this verse teach?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:20?

**And the kohen shall wave them...as a waving** - What does this verse teach? How many things were waved?

**They shall be holy** – Why was this phrase given?

1. What question was asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:22?

**When you reap** – Why is this phrase repeated from v.10?

**you shall leave** – What are the implications of this phrase?

**I am the Lord, your God** – What is meant by this phrase?

1. What question was asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:24?

**a remembrance of [Israel through] the shofar blast** – How is this accomplished; how do we know what to remember?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:30?

**I will destroy** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word כָּרֵת?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:35?

**a holy occasion** – What connection is the expression (a holy occasion) making?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:36?

**It is a [day of] detention** – What is the meaning of this phrase?

**[you shall not perform] any work of labor** – Does this include labor to avoid monetary loss?

**you shall not perform** – Is this labor like the labor of chol hamoed?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:40

**the fruit of the hadar tree** – What do we learn from this superfluous phrase?

**Hadar** – What fruit is this?

**date-palm fronds –** What is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase כַּפּֽת תְּמָרִים?

**a branch of a braided tree** – What tree is this?

1. According to R. Yitzchaq Magrisso what is so special of the word “first” in Vayiqra 23:40?

It alludes to HaShem (Isaiah 44:6). Because of this command HaShem will take vengeance on Esau. The Temple (Jeremiah 17:12) and Mashiach (Isaiah 41:27) are also called “first”.

The word “first” shows preeminence and authority. (The merit of one shall stand up for the others.) Unified Israel holds the preeminence and authority over all the other peoples of the earth.

1. According to R. Yitzchaq Magrisso what do the four species allude to?

They allude to the spine (lulav), the eyes (myrtle), the heart (etrog), and the mouth (willow). They also allude to four types of Jews: Those who have Torah and mitzvot (Etrog), Those who study without mitzvot (lulav), those who have mitzvot w/o study (myrtle), and those who have neither study nor mitzvot (willow).

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Leviticus 23:42?

**resident** – What does the Hebrew word: הָאֶזְרָח mean?

**among the Israelites** – What is included in this phrase?

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of the he sons of Korah‎?

The Psalmist speaks of the Torah academies in: 2. The LORD loves the entrances *to the academies established in* Zion more than all the *synagogues* of *the house of* Jacob.

The Torah portion also speaks of the proper keeping of the festivals which require much study to understand and to perform the mitzvot. Vayikra 23:44 specifically speaks of Moshe *teaching* the Bne Israel.

Further v.6 of the Psalm alludes to Rosh HaShana and the crowning of the Mesianic king.

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of the Joshua 5:11ff?

The Torah portion begins with the omer count in the same way our portion in Joshua begins with the day after Pesach when the manna stopped and they ate the first grain of the land. The first day of the omer is the first day that new grain is permitted.

1. How is the reading of Hakham Tsefet (2 Peter 2:10-22) related to the readings for this Shabbat?

Not following the Rabbinical mandated way of counting the Omer. If we apply a bit of logic, I believe that we can come to the conclusion that the False prophets and quack teachers disagreed over the point of counting the Omer. This is derived by placing the opening verses of the two materials side by side so to speak. The opening of the Torah Seder is about counting the Omer. Hakham Tsefet opens with the false prophets and quack teachers (implied from previous pericope) contending with the Torah Sages, those greater in strength and power (authority and knowledge).

Ashlamatah

Verbally Joshua connects to Hakham Tsefet almost as strongly as the Torah Seder. I will not try to connect them all here I refer to the verbal tallies.

One unmentioned tally is found in verse 27 of Joshua 6 where the synonymous name Yehoshua and Yeshua is mentioned. Avot 1:1. Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua (Yeshua); Joshua (Yeshua) to the elders. I find it fascinating that Yehoshua was the Ashlamatah for this pericope. The Pericope of Hakham Tsefet deals with false prophets and quack teachers leading talmidim astray. Yehoshua is the antithesis of a talmid being lead astray. In fact, Yehoshua is the model – proto-typical talmid that we should all strive to emulate.

Tehillim

The Psalms plays on the birth of the King and the place where he was brought up (Targum). I also find it interesting that we have a flute and the flute player mentioned here in this Psalm. The flute is a picture of Messiah the “pierced one.” However it is also indicative of the Mishnah’s detailed explanation of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Festivals.

Bikkurim 3:2-4 MISH2 How do they take up the Bikkurim? All the cities of the ma'amad gather in the city of the ma'amad and spend the night in the open place of the city, and they did not enter the houses. And to the early rising the officer said: "Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the (House of the) Lord our God".

3 Those near brought figs and grapes, and those far brought dried figs and raisins. And the ox went before them, with its horns gold-plated and an olive crown on its head. The flute played before them until they arrived close to Jerusalem. When they arrived close to Jerusalem they sent before them and bedecked their Bikkurim. The supervisors, the deputies and the treasurers went out to meet them. They went out according to the rank of those entering. And all the craftsmen in Jerusalem stood before them and greeted them: "Our brethren, men of such-and-such a place, come in peace."

4 The flute played before them until they reached the Temple Mount. When they reached the Temple Mount even King Agrippa would take the basket on his shoulder and enter, until he reached the Temple Court. When he reached the Temple Court the Levites intoned the song, "I will extol You, 0 Lord, for You have raised me up, and have not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me" (Ps.0:2).

1. What is the chief purpose that Hakham Tsefet wants to address in 2 Peter 2:10-22?

To warn us against false teacher who speak lashon hara.

He wants to keep the Epicureanism out of the Community and to ensure that an unbroken transmission of the truth of the Torah (oral and written) will continue.

Once again, it is in keeping with the last couple of weeks parsha’s, in that there is a warning against those who would either intentionally, or in ignorance, destroy that which was given at Sinai and handed down orally to this very day. In attacking the very traditions of our Torah Sages they are trying to destroy the very thing which brings Life to the world, which is, the understanding/explanation of the Written Torah. From such (Epicureans) stay far away.

That not even angels would dare do the things that some people do. There are people who are savage by nature and these people will return to what they are no matter what is taught to them. They are slaves of their own natures although they might think they are free. After a person has knowledge of what is evil and choses to return to it, it is worse for that person than if he had never known the difference, because it is a conscious decision that is made.

That the path to destruction was/is lawlessness that the false teachers were/are bringing in. He was reaffirming Torah, as Yeshua had. He was instructing us how to see decipher the true Torah teachers from the false Torah teachers, and remain on the true path.

1. Explain how Hakham Tsefet derived all of his material in 2 Peter 2:10-22 from the Torah Seder for this Shabbat, Psalm 87, and Joshua 5:11ff.?

Verses 9b, 10, and 11 are drawn from Vayikra 23:29-30 which speaks of the punishment of the wicked.

Verse 12, 13, 14, and 15 were clearly drawn from the festivals in Vayikra 23.

Verses 16-22 seem to be drawn from Joshua and they allude to those inside Jerico.

2 Tsefet 2:13connect to the Torah Seder through the word “day” v27-230, 35-36, 39-40

2 Tsefet 2:14 connects to the Torah Seder through the words of “soul” and “sin” v19, 27, and 32

2 Tsefet 2:20 connects to the Torah Seder through the words “Lord” v20, 28, 38, and 40

Likewise Hakham Tsefet uses the word “first” matching v40 of the Torah Seder. However, thematically this verse connects also with the Festival of Sukkot.

2 Tsefet 2:21 connects to the Torah Seder through the word “holy” v37

Tehillim:

The Psalm is directly connected to Hakham Tsefet through the word “Lord” Psalm 87:2 and 2 Tsefet 2:11 The Psalm is also connected through the word love Psalm 87:2 2 Tsefet 2:15. Here Hakham Tsefet’s word must be traced to it root to make this connection because it is used with a prefix. The Psalm is also connected through the idea of Holiness. 2 Tsefet 2:21 and Psalm 87:1 The Hebrew vocabulary for Psalms 87: 1 is Holy Mountain translated “Sanctuary.” Furthermore, the Psalmist seems to play on the same vocabulary that Balaam used when he could not cures Jacob, and Yisrael (Num 24:5ff) Tehillim is also connected through “knowing” and “man.”

Ashlamatah:

Hakham Tsefet connects immediately with the Ashlamatah through the words “day” and “eyes.” The sword is reminiscent of Hakham Tsefet’s relation to the story of Balaam. While the word messenger is not used in the Ashlamatah the “man”, (also a verbal connection) is an angel (messenger) of the Lord. The Ashlamatah is also connected through the words “holy,” “mighty” and Yehoshua (Yeshua) are verbal connections.

1. How are the readings for this Shabbat communicating that the people of G-d (particularly Nazarean Jews) must be a separate people not imitating any of the traditions, laws and customs of the Gentiles?

The Torah portion describes HaShem’s festivals which none of the Gentiles celebrate. In fact, they purposely do not celebrate them. When a Jew celebrates these festivals he is separated from the customs of the world.

When the yetzer hara is in control, there is lawlessness. Only those who hold fast to the Torah can overcome and gain victory over the soul. Habitually flirting with paganism will hamper and finally totally diminish the effects that the yetzer hatov has on the soul.

I believe that Hakham Tsefet might have been making a word play on the names Balak (void of sense) and Balaam (unstable) teaching use that good common sense (Severvah Chazakah) and stability (having a Hakham and being founded in the Torah) will keep us from falling into the snare of these false prophets and teachers.

In following the traditions, laws, and customs of the Gentiles, we are throwing off the Torah of HaShem and trading it for a visage which might look good in the eyes of the world, but this act, also requires us to put off our very Messiah, who himself will continual this string of Oral Tradition by the fact that he will even define the very spaces in between the letters. So by denying the oral traditions we by default deny the very Messiah we long to see and be with.

The readings point out to us the proper keeping of festivals, we can see that others are not following them properly. It is important to see this difference and know to avoid the erroneous procedures.

We see there is a choice we must all make, and we make it daily. Daily we choose between true doctrine and false doctrine, true teachers of torah and falsde teachers....and the only way to do this correctly is to use torah in it'e entirety as the filter/guideline for every descion we make in our lives.

G-d's ways are not the ways of the world and we must learn to discern the difference, choose the difference, embrace the difference and delight in the difference between G-d's ways and the ways of the world. When we find true teachers of torah we must follow them closely, cleave to them and lean on their teachings as we learn to become teachers ourselves of the truth of torah, because we all teach others everyday with our actions and words, whether we realize it or not. This will make us a peculiar people, a people set apart.

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

Focus on doing HaShem’s feasts by carefully studying and following the commands of our Hakhamim. This seems to be the proper preparation for Chanukah, which has many allusiions in this week’s parasha.

We should count the cost of adhering to anyone that does not teach the truth of Torah. We must hold to the teaching of the sages and cleave to the Hakham that is assigned by God to watch over and protect our souls.

Avot 1:6 Provide yourself a teacher (Hakham) and get a companion (study partner); judge all men charitably

Avot 1:3 Be not like servants who minister to their master upon condition of a reward; but be like servants who minister without the condition of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

Cleave to that which we have received from our Torah Teachers /Sages, and shun that which is contrary.

Keep an eye out for incorrect doctrines and don’t participate.

We have not many fathers/teachers/masters. We must know/learn how to separate the false Torah teachers and their doctrine from the True Torah teachers and their doctrine. You can't blend both...it is not natural and it totally unacceptable to HaShem. Once you know the difference between true and false teachers and are able to discern which is which, you have to decide: will you follow the false teacher, or will you follow the true teacher.