**Some Questions to Ponder:**

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat HaChodesh, which reading touched your heart and imagination?

I was touched by the fact that we are reading about the Pesach on the last regular Shabbat reading before Pesach. The Septennial cycle seems to have this season in mind.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 8:2?

**When you light** - Why is the portion dealing with the menorah juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the chieftains?

**When you light** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew words: בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ?

**toward the face of the menorah –** Where is the face of the menorah?

**shall cast their light** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 8:4?

**This was the form of the menorah** – Why does it say ‘this’?

**hammered work** – What is ‘hammered work’?

**from its base to its flower** – What part is the base?

**from its base to its flower** – What is included in this pasuk?

**from its base** – What is the size of this base?

**to its flower** – Why is this part mentioned?

**according to the form which the Lord had shown...** – When was Moshe shown this?

**so did he construct the menorah** – Who did the construction?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 8:7?

**Sprinkle them with cleansing water** – What is this cleansing water?

**and pass a razor over all their flesh** - Why were their bodies shaved?

The parts that were shaves were the parts normally covered by clothing. Not the head, but, including the arms.

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

**Then they shall take a young bull** – What is the nature of this offering?

**and a second young bull -** What does it mean by “a second”? (It was temporary.)

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 8:11?

**Then Aaron shall lift up the Levites as a waving** – How was this done?

**wholly given over** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: נְתֻנִים נְתֻנִים?

**that open** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: פִּטְרַת?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 8:24?

**This is the rule concerning the Levites** – What is the rule?

**From the age of twenty-five years** - Elsewhere (4:3) it says, “From the age of thirty.” How can this be reconciled?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 9:1?

**In the first month** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 9:14?

**If a proselyte dwells with you, and he makes a Passover sacrifice** – What does this pasuk mean?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 9:18?

**At the bidding of the Lord...traveled** – How was HaShem’s bidding known?

**and at the bidding of the Lord they encamped** – How was HaShem’s bidding known?

1. Hakham Yitschaq Magrisso in the Me’Am Lo’Ez deals with topic of Chanuka at the beginning of our Torah Seder since in the annual cycle of Torah readings this Torah Seder falls close to Chanuka. What is therefore the relationship of Chanuka to Pesach?

Chanukah is the second chance to celebrate Succoth, according to Maccabees, and Succoth is the bi-modal seven day festival that mirrors Pesach. Just as our Torah portion speaks of Pesach Sheni, the second chance to celebrate Pesach, so also is Chanukah the second chance to celebrate Succoth.

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

To inform us that we would partake of Mashiach’s suffering, but that the honorable places do not necessarily follow.

Hakham Tsefet demonstrated how the reconciliation of the firstborn took place through the activities of Yeshua.

1. How is Hakham Tsefet pointing us to the coming of Shabbat HaGadol which will be our special Shabbat for the coming week?

Shabbat Hagadole is a time of self-examination, it is a time of introspection of the internal. Just as HakHam Tsefet spoke of the mikveh, six times, so do we clean ourselves before the mikveh. This external cleaning should be accomplished by an internal introspection and cleansing by repentance.

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

The Psalmist picks up on the light of redemption, in multiple words, that will be manifested at Pesach when HaShem redeems His people. The lighting of the menorah and the halachot of Pesach are the primary themes of our Torah portion. The Psalmist depiction of the hidden light of creation is also manifested in the Torah’s depiction of the clouds of glory.

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

The Prophet picks up on the lighting of the menorah as he speaks of two menorot. As the Torah speaks of the waving of the Levites who will maintain the menorah in the Mishkan, the Prophet speaks of two men, as olive trees, who will maintain the two menorot in his prophecy.

The Hakham suggests that these two men are Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. They are the ones who will restore the light of creation.

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

This pericope of Mordechai is specifically connected to the Torah Seder through the idea of the Mikveh, and the firstborn. B’Midbar 8:21 and Mordechai 10:38-39. Mordechai is secondarily connected to the Torah Seder through the idea of Teaching (becoming a Hakham) and dedication to Torah service. It is the function of the Kohen to be a teacher/leader of Yisrael. Yeshua demonstrates the ideal leader and teacher (firstborn) of the Bne Yisrael.

By way of inference, the Sons of Zavdeyel want to sit near the Master as he sits on his seat of honor. The Psalmist tells us that righteousness/generosity and judgment are the foundations to the Throne of G-d. Mordechai 10:37 and Psalms 97:2

Ashlamatah

The Ashlamatah finds special attachments to Mordechai through its verbal connections and sublime thematic assertions. The right [hand] is a position of authority. The menorah of Zechariah 4:3 has two olive trees near it. On is on the right and one of the left. The idea of sitting, ruling and throne are also resident in Zec. 6:13

1. After taking into consideration all the above texts and our Torah Seder, what would you say is the general message from the Scriptures for this coming week?

Take the time to review the halachot for Pesach and prepare for Shabbat Hagadole and our coming redemption.

Live the 4 cups of Passover and accept your lot in life that Hashem has given you, do it with all your heart until He comes.

As we physically search for the leaven in our house this week, we should let the light of the torah help us search for the leaven within us spiritually.

Accept the responsibility and position you have been given willingly and with all your being.

Serve the Almighty, His Messiah or our fellow who is also in the image of G-d with all pleasure.

Let us continue to clear out those things (leaven/sin), that should have no place in our house (body/mind), else wise how can we give a clear, recognizable and desirable image of our Savior when we are reaching out to the world.

The same as we prepare in anticipation of Pesach, we should prepare in anticipation of the coming of Mashiach.

Don’t forget the fast of the firstborn. Take the time to understan: What are our responsibilities?

Gematria extends through all four levels, Pshat, Remez, Drash, and Sod.

Gen. 30:20‎: ְבָדַנִי אֱלֹהִים אֹתִי זֵבֶד טוֹב‎ – Z’vadani (has endowed) Elohim (G-d) Oti (me) Zeved ‎‎(endowment) Tob (good). ‎

Strong’s H2064 – ‎זבד‎ – zabad = to confer, to endow [7 + 2 + 4 = 13]‎

**Numbers 18:20** וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן, בְּאַרְצָם לֹא תִנְחָל, וְחֵלֶק‎, ‎לֹא-יִהְיֶה לְךָ בְּתוֹכָם: אֲנִי ‏חֶלְקְךָ וְנַחֲלָתְךָ, בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל‎.‎

Vayomer (And said) Adonai (the LORD) El-Aharon (to Aaron), B’Artsam (In their land) Lo ‎‎(not) Tinchal (have you inheritance), V’Cheleq (any portion), Lo-Yihyeh (nor will) L’kha (you ‎have) B’tokham (among them). Ani (I am) Chelq’kha (your portion) V’Nachlat’kha (and your ‎inheritance), B’Tokh (amongst) B’ne (the sons) Yisrael (of Israel).‎

Strong’s H5157 - ‎נחל‎ – nachal – inheritance/bequest [50 + 8 + 30 = 88 = 16 = 7] ‎

נַחֲלָתְךָ‎ [50 + 8 + 30 + 400 + 20 = 508 = 13]

Endowment = your inheritance

The four cups:

**The cup of Sanctification**: We are sanctified by HaShem’s commandments. My sanctification is a process that must include others.

**The cup of Deliverance**: This is where we are ‘saved’. After we start obeying the commands, then we are saved. My salvation is a process that must include others. ‘We’ are saved by grace.

**The cup of Redemption**: This is where the ‘rubber meets the road’. This is the redemption of the world, not the individual.

**The cup of Completion**: This is a cup for the future.

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When Yeshua found His diciples asleep, he was saying the shema. The first tractate of the Talmud speaks of a wedding feast with the question: which takes precedence, the shema or the wedding? From this we see an allusion to the wedding feast of the Lamb. The answer to the question is that the shema can be said any time before dawn, so that they could attend the wedding and bring joy to the bride and groom, and still say the shema.

The earliest reference to Pesach is the atonement found when HaShem made garments of atonement for Adam who was the firstborn of all creation. From this understanding, Cain and Abel learned to bring their offering for Pesach.

Pesach is all about the firstborn. This is the core of the festival!