**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 amazed at how often the Torah repeated the words: “**From twenty years and upward, all who were fit to go out to the army”.** This suggests that something extremely important is going on. The Talmud says that the number "twenty" represents spiritual blindness. This suggests that they were more suited to physical fighting then to spiritual fighting.

1. How is B’Midbar 1:1 related to B’Midbar 1:53?

Verse one introduces the time frame and the location: The Tent of Meeting. Verse 53 describes the the people who surrounded the Tent of Meeting and were in charge of the things that represented time.

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:1?

**The Lord spoke... in the Sinai Desert...** – Why did HaShem count the Bne Israel?

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

**by families** – Why were they counted by families?

**following their fathers’ houses** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

**a head count** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: לְגֻלְגְּלֹתָם?

1. What question was asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:3?

**all who are fit to go out to the army** – What does this pasuk tell us?

1. What question was asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:17?

**these men** – Who are these men?

**who were indicated** – How were they indicated?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:18?

**and they declared their pedigrees according to their families** – How did they do this?

**Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number** – Why were the Levites not counted?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:50?

**But you shall appoint the Levites** - What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: הַפְקֵד?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:51?

**shall dismantle it** - What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: יוֹרִידוּ?

**any outsider who approaches** – What is this pasuk restricting?

**shall be put to death** – Who is to carry out the sentence?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Numbers 1:53?

**so that there be no wrath** – What will cause the wrath?

1. Why was the Tribe of Levi small in numbers when compared to the rest of the tribes?

Because their work was extremely hazardous and required extreme holiness for survival. If one failed, they would die from HaShem. Further they were not subjected to Paro’s labors, therefore they did not need high reproduction

1. The Israelites were counted twice in different years but the results were identical (compare Exodus 38:26 with Numbers 1:46). How is this possible?.

HaShem had blessed them and they were fruitful following the incident of the golden calf. So, many died at that incident, yet their repentance allowed recovery.

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of the Psalmist‎ in Psalm 90:1-17?

The Psalmist was captivated by HaShem’s mercy following the incident of the golden calf. The fact that the census of the people had returned to it’s pre-calf count was a sure sign of HaShem’s mercy.

1. On reading the Torah Seder for this week what touched the heart and fired the imagination of Hosea Chapter two?

The Prophet was writing about the greatness of the Jewish people that by HaShem’s mercy, following the incident of the golden calf, they were restored to HaShem. The fact that the census of the people had returned to it’s pre-calf count was a sure sign of HaShem’s mercy and their great repentance.

1. How is the reading of Mordechai (Mark) 9:42-48 related to the readings for this Shabbat?

**Torah Seder**

I believe the thoughts of Sanhedrin capture how Hakham Tsefet through his Scribe Mordechai connected with the Torah Seder.

Sanhedrin 4:5 …whoever destroys a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world.

But the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, minted all human beings with that seal of his with which he made the first person, yet not one of them is like anyone else. Therefore, everyone is obligated to maintain, “On my account the world was created.

The value of one “little ones” is tantamount to the whole. Rashi’s commentary to verse one explains that G-d counted them, the Bne Yisrael often because he loved them. I would also state that the comments of Rashi are not his own. His thoughts are the thoughts of the Sages from antiquity. Therefore, Rashi projects thoughts that very well may have been prevalent during the first century.

**Ashlamatah**

The sand of the Sea must have been very inspirational to Hakham Tsefet. Hosea 2:1 Mordechai 9:42

Hosea2: 1. And the number of the people of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor counted; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God.

And…

Hosea 2:8 “Behold therefore, I will hedge your way. ” In a manner of speaking, I believe that this “hedge” is what Hakham Tsefet has been speaking about all through this particular pericope.

**Tehillim**

I am certain that the thought of the flood played well into the idea of casting the scandalizers into the sea with a millstone about their neck Mordechai 9:42 It also seems evident that the thoughts of being taught to seek and acquire wisdom were prevalent in Hakham Tsefet’s mind as he wrote. (v12)

Tehillim 90:5. You carry them away as a flood; they are like a sleep; in the morning, like grass it passes away. 12. So teach the number of our days, so that we shall acquire a heart of wisdom.

1. In your opinion, what is the chief purpose that Hakham Tsefet wants to address in Mordechai (Mark) 9:42-48?

Those who are devoted to HaShem through Torah study, who have received HaShem’s mercy, and we should therefore be carefull not to cause any of the righteous to sin. If we do, there are horrendous consequences.

The lesson is noted when we realize that the hand, foot, and the eye are personal responsibilities. Regardless of the false teachers and prophets, we are responsible for a life of Torah obedience ourselves. We are NOT able to blame other for our lack of Torah obedience. The way to circumvent the fire of Gehenna is to listen to and adhere to the teachings of the Hakhamim!

1. Explain how Hakham Tsefet derived all of his material in Mordechai (Mark) 9:42-48 from the Torah Seder for this Shabbat, Psalm 90, and ‎ Hosea Chapter 2?

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?

We are precious to HaShem, therefore, be very carefull to obey His Torah.

If we stay within our calling and continue in the teachings of Hashem, we will see the promises of Hashem in our lives. If we choose to disobey and not correct our sin we will have the same consequences as we can see in all readings today for this Shabbat.

We must do everything in our power to be found worthy of status in the community of G-d. We must use the study of Torah, the wisdom of the Sages, and righteous/generous acts to enhance a g-dly status in the community in all humility.

Work towards being a Torah Scholar and an eventual Hakham.

Through righteousness/generosity and faithful obedience to Torah and its fences there is benefit/protection for the young, the immature, the inexperienced, and to all to distance themselves from the occasion to sin in relationships, halachah and inner emotions.

Our days are short, while we have the opportunity we should do our best to be responsible, devote ourselves to G-d, and do what is right, do not cause another to sin and stay away from sin ourselves.

Not only are we to strive to be good students of Torah and find true Torah teachers and be wary of false/deceptive teachers and teachings and man-made doctrines...we are to strive to teach, intact, the truths that we learn so that we don't dilute or twist the Torah out of context and become a stumbling block ourselves.

As the Levites surrounded the Tabernacle, protecting them from death, so the ten men of the congregation surround them and protect the congregation.

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| 1. The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying. | 1. AND the LORD spoke with Mosheh in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of ordinance, on the first of the month Iyar, which was the second month of the second year from the time of their coming forth from the land of Mizraim, saying: |

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| 53. The Levites shall encamp around the Mishkan of the Testimony, **so that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel** and the Levites shall keep the charge of the Mishkan of the Testimony. | 53. But the Levites shall encamp round about the tabernacle of the testimony, **that there may not be wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel;** and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of testimony. |
| 54. And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses thus did they do. | 54. And the sons of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Mosheh, so did they. |