**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. Evan’s comments about Yeshua’s answer was very insightful. I was also touched by the Hakham’s explanation of the proper way to exert authority.

1. How is B’Midbar 17:17-18 related to B’Midbar 18:32?

Aharon is HaShem’s anointed and His rod was the symbol of His authority, in v. 17-18. In v.31-32 we see that this anointing was to sanctify him to stand in the place of the Bne Israel. Thus they would take the death penalty for mistakes rather than the Bne Israel.

B’Midbar 17:16 imitates a selection by HaShem through the testing by rod. The conclusion is stated in B’Midbar 18:32 where the Priesthood is to select it part from the offerings. This chicest part is because the Priesthood would not have an inheritance in the land.

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 17:23?

**It gave forth blossoms** – How is this to be understood?

**Buds** – What are buds?

**and produced ripe almonds** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: וַיִּגְמֽל?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 17:25?

**Then their complaints will end** – What is the distinction between the words תְּלוּנָּתָם and תְּלוּנּוֹתָם?

**as a keepsake and a sign** – What is the purpose of a keepsake and a sign?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 17:28?

**Whoever comes the closest** – How do we take care to avoid this?

**Have we been consigned to die** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

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

**The Lord said to Aaron** – What did HaShem say to Aharon?

**You, your sons and your father’s house** – Whose sons?

**Shall bear the iniquity associated with the Sanctuary** – How did they bear the iniquity aand how did they avoid bearing the iniquity?

**and you and your sons** – What is the office of these men?

**shall bear the sin associated with your kehunah** – Why would they bear the sin and how could they avoid bearing the sin?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 18:8?

**Behold I have given you** – What does ‘behold’ signify?

**the charge of My gift [offerings]** – What was their responsibility?

**for distinction** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: לְמָשְׁחָה?

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

**from the fire** – When did this take place?

**All their offerings** – What were these offerings?

**Their meal-offerings, their sin-offerings, their guilt-offerings** – What is the meaning of these offerings?

**what they return to Me** – What does this refer to?

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

**like the breast of the waving and the right thigh** – What offering is this and when may it be eaten?

**it shall be yours** – Why is the phrase repeated?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 18:19?

**All the gifts of the holy [offerings]** – Why is this generalized repeatedly?

**An eternal covenant of salt** – why was salt used for this covenant woth Aharon?

**covenant of salt** – What does this say about this covenant?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 18:27?

**Your gift shall be considered for you, as grain from the threshing-floor** – What are the restrictions of this gift?

**and the produce of the vat** – What do we learn from this phrasing?

**produce** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: מְלֵאָה?

**vat** – What is the meaning of this Hebrew word: יֶקֶב?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 18:30?

**When you separate its choicest part** When is this done?

**it shall be considered** – Who receives this and what is its sanctity?

**As produce from the threshing-floor** – Who is this for and why was it said?

1. Why in your opinion did the chief priests choose not to confront the Master when he was overturning the tables of the money-changers in the court of the Gentiles on Shabbat but chose another occasion to confront him?

It seems to me that they wanted to pick a time when Yeshua, and the people, had cooled down.

Vivian Kuala: I believe the chief priests chose not to confront the Master when he was overturning the tables of the money-changers in the court of the Gentiles on Shabbat because of both fear and cowardice. They were fearful of the opinion and the power of the people who followed His Majesty. Further, they showed themselves to be cowards, because they knew they were wrong in their service. As noted in last week’s pericope in the Nazarean Codicil, a change to the proper fulfillment of the commandments as they related to the Temple service, or “faithful obedience”, would have been the catalyst to overthrow the government of anarchy, and their positions of appointment by the Romans would have been in jeopardy. They therefore chose another occasion to confront him to shield themselves from the people and to hide their sin.

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 how to deal with evil men who question authority.

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

The Psalmist picks up on the Kohanim taking the place, and risk, of the Bne Israel when ministering in the sanctuary. He sees this as HaShem’s compassion for His people and His forbearance of their sins. He also sees this as a blessing for the Kohanim as they too get to praise HaShem in nearness to Him.

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

The Prophet is looking at the judgments the people have absorbed and sees that HaShem has been righteous in His judgments. He also sees the Messiah as the Priest who will minister for the people as The High Priest. The Messiah’s ministry will result in a time of shalom for the righteous and a time of extinction for the wicked, just as we saw in the wilderness.

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

The Lord appointed the priests who were to keep charge of the Sanctuary, B’Midbar 18:5 The Hebrew word “Shamar” meaning guard or protect. The Priests were to guard the Sanctuary, the altar and thereby protect the Bne Yisrael from wrath. In Mordechai we see that the pseudo-priests will not protect the Temple. They are more concerned with their livelihood and reputation than protecting the Temple.

Tehillim

Mordechai and Tehillim are verbally connected through the word “Heavens” Mordechai 11:30, 31 and Tehillim 103 11, 19. There seems to be a thematic connection based on verse 22 of Tehillim, which speaks of the L-rd’s place of dominion. This was the Temple and its courts while the Temple stood.

Ashlamatah

While the “Holy Mount” could be other places it is connected with the pericope of Mordechai through the Temple. Yeshayahu 11:9 and Mordechai 11:27 Mordechai represents the antithesis of what is seen in the Ashlamatah. In other words the priests were not doing their job and Messiah would eventually come and solve the problem.

1. When the chief priests answer to the Master: “we do not know,” – i.e. they could not say, whether one of their own priests was a prophet or not, what did they exactly convey to the Master and all the audience around them?

That they were cowards whose authority was worthless when compared to Yeshua’s authority.

It conveyed that they had no rightful place to be there. Their ministry was illegitimate. They had not authority to protect the Temple and their lack of dedication to God.

1. Why did the chief priests asked “By (in) what authority do you do these things?‎" rather than just simply "Why do you do these things"?

They intended to knock Yeshua off the pedastal that HaShem, and the people, had put Him on by showing He lacked the authority of the men in charge.

Because the things that Jesus did were not things anyone would do. Only one who has the right and authority can approach the things and orders of Hashem. If Jesus would have acted out of His own right, Hashem would have had to punish Him according to this weeks Torah Seder reading. Only Levites are allowed to approach, so in order for Jesus to do what He did, he had to have had permission sort of speak. THe priest were very well aware of that.

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?

Do not question the authorty of HaShem’s anointed because they stand in our place before HaShem!

Dr. Conny Williams: Know who you are in God's Kingdom, and the authority that God gives us to act on His behalf will be recognized as God's authority and not that of our own. Stay within your borders and God will bless you because you cannot touch God's anointed and get away with it. On the other hand, if we get outside of our borders we will not see the results that we envisioned because God does not bless mess.

Lloyd Nelson: Fear not what man can do to us, but Fear G-d, who alone is able to destroy both the body and the soul.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: A genuine leader must be a dedicated servant of God. We see the theme of faithfulness once again in this week’s readings. Someone who is faithfully obedient will one day become a great leader.

Mat 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Vivian Kuala: a. Don’t be entrapped by arguments of words.

b. Follow the examples of Aharon and Mashiach who fulfilled their leadership roles with faithful obedience and integrity, thereby protecting the people they served.

c. Learn the ways of Ha-Shem, walk in faithful obedience, and help bring about the days of Mashiach, days of peace and the knowledge of the L-rd.

Adon Luqas: Recognition of proper authority and understanding the weaknesses of improper authority and rebellion are paramount to the growth and healing of His servants and Creation.

Walter Oakley: Use and submit to the appropriate authority in the appropriate situation.