**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. I was especially touched by his explanation of the word ‘near’. This was most excellent!

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 23:10?

**Who can count the dust of Jacob** – Why are the Bne Israel compared to dust?

**or the number of the seed of** – What is denoted by the word *seed*?

**May my soul die the death of the upright** – What is the death of the upright?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 23:20?

**I have received [instruction] to bless** – Why did Bilaam say this?

**and He has blessed, and I cannot retract it** – Who is being blessed?

**and He has blessed** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: וּבֵרֵךְ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 23:21?

**He does not look at evil in Jacob** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**perversity** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: עָמָל?

**the Lord, his God, is with him** – What do we learn from this pasuk?

**and he has the king’s friendship** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: וּתְרוּעַת?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:3?

**the son of Beor** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: בְּנוֹ בְעֽר?

**with an open eye** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: שְׁתֻם הָעָיִן?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:5?

**How goodly are your tents** – How did he know that the tents were *goodly*?

**your dwelling places** – What dwelling places does this speak of?

**your dwelling places** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: מִשְׁכְּנֽתֶיךָ?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:7?

**from his wells** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: מִדָּלְיָו?

**and his seed shall have abundant water** – What does this expression denote?

**His king shall be raised over Agag** - What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**and his kingship exalted** - What is the meaning of this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:14?

**I am going to my people** – What do we learn from this phrase?

**Come, I will advise you** **what action you should take**. - What is that counsel?

**what this people will do to your people** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:17?

**I see it** – What did he see?

**A star has gone forth** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**and a staff will arise** – What is this staff?

**which will crush the princes of Moab** – To whom does this refer?

**and uproot** – What is the meaning iof the Hebrew word: וְקַרְקַר?

**all the sons of Seth** – Who are the sons of Seth?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 24:19?

**A ruler shall come out of Jacob** – What is the meaning of this pasuk?

**and destroy the remnant of the city** – Which city is meant?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 25:3?

**Peor** – Why was it called this?

**and the anger of the Lord flared against Israel** – How did His anger flare?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 25:4?

**Take all the leaders of the people** – Why were the leaders taken?

**and hang them** – Who were hung?

**and hang them** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: הוֹקַע?

**facing the sun** – Why were they facing the sun?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 25:6?

**Then an Israelite man came** – Who was this man?

**the Midianite woman** – Who was this woman?

**before the eyes of Moses** – Why were they before Moshe’s eyes?

**while they were weeping** – Why were they weeping?

1. What question/s were asked of Rashi in B’Midbar 25:7?

**Phinehas...saw** – What did he see?

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

Yeshua’s main mission was to help the Jews understand the priority or precedence of the one law to another. In this portion He is clarifying the top priority so that lesser priorities will become obvious.

Lukas A. Nelson: This pericope is designed to establish a fundamental understanding for the totality of all law to be enveloped within its most basic parts. The design of understanding the brevity of these two parts is to give opportunity to develop for those who refuse to place more than a couple things in their view at a time. This establishment of thought, along with the interaction after the answer, also serves to state that any who can understand the fundamental parts of Jewish thought are warranted to be a part of His Governance.

Dr. Elizabeth Oakley: I think he is telling that is it imperative to develop spiritual perception and that can only be done by accepting God’s unity and treating all people with the same fairness and respect that they deserve being children of God. The centralized message is that these things can only happen through the study and observance of the commandments.

Lloyd Nelson: To clarify that the entire Torah is summed up in two statements made by His Majesty. It also reiterates the importance of the Shema in declaring the Oneness (uniqueness) of G-d and how our relation with Him should be through the day and night. And also included is that of the treatment of others. In this pericope we have an example of HM Yeshua encouraging one who apparently is a seeker of truth, and did leave him with words meant for his edification.

Walter Oakley: Hakham Tsefet wants us to learn two things…

 1. G-d is ONE and there is no second.

 2. The beauty and reward of Torah study under a Hakham.

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai: Judaism can exist without a Temple (building), thank you very much! The Sages who escaped Jerusalem realized this very quickly. Judaism was still very effective. The building is not important.

1. What was the sin of Zimri, the man that took the Midianite woman into his tent, that merited the death penalty?

He was defying HaShem and His king (Moshe), first and foremost. He was also commiting idolatry.

Walter Oakley: He blatantly defied Moshe, His sin was the sin of blatant defiance against Moshe’s authority telling Cozbi that he was greater than Moshe and thereby trying to usurp Moshe's authority. One a lesser level, blatant defiance against Cozbi and the Judges.

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

The Psalmist is commenting on the sanctification of the name of HaShem by Bilaam unto Balak and the Midianites. He is noting that the obedience of the Bne Israel to the Teaching’s of HaShem, especially their modesty, is what they did to deserve the blessing given by Bilaam. He notes the wonder of the miracles bestowed of the Jewish people that they should be blessed by the Gentiles who seek their downfall.

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

The Prophet picks up on the ‘dust’ mentioned in the Targum and notes that kings and queens will cater to them because they follow the commands of HaShem. He notes that the Jews were saved from Bilaam’s curse, by HaShem, because they were righteous/generous. He compares the tongue of the righteous prophets with the tongue of the prophet Bilaam, and notes that in both cases the goal is that the wicked should repent. Finally, he notes that the Bne Israel were delivered because they relied on HaShem.

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**

This week’s pericope of Mordechai connects to the Torah Seder in a special way. Both Hakham Tsefet and Balaam attribute Yisrael with being the chosen people of G-d. Balaam does this through his prophecy in which he “sees” Yisrael and the Messiah as G-d’s chosen people. Hakham Tsefet sees Yisrael as being the chosen people of G-d by his proclamation of the Shema as the “chief [Heb. Rosh] mitzvah of all.”

The Sofer “sees” prophetically as Balaam “sees” the Bne Yisrael prophetically.

**TEHILLIM**

The Psalm 105:4 says “seek the LORD” using Strong’s H1875 darash, (דרשׁו/‭ζητήσατε‬) which is a parallel to Mordechai 12:28 thereby bring a continuity with the opening thoughts of Mordechai.‬

The Targum connects in a solid way by saying…

Psalm 105:3. Sing praise in His holy name; may the heart of those who seek instruction from the presence of the LORD be glad. 4. Seek the teaching of the LORD, and His Torah; welcome His face continually.

Thus, the Targum strengthens the idea of positive teaching by a good Hakham.

**ASHLAMATAH**

Yeshayahu 50:4 The Lord God gave me a tongue for teaching, to know to establish times for the faint [for His] word; He awakens me every morning, He awakens My ear, to hear according to the teachings. 5. The Lord God opened my ear, and I did not rebel; I did not turn away backwards.

This passage connects to Mordechai through the idea of teachings (thematically) and hearing verbally. Mordechai 12:29

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?

Walk in the ways of HaShem and He will save you. Pay attention to the little things and to the important things.

Why was Bilaam’s prophecy concerning the Mashiach?

The Masiach was revealed to the Gentiles and then the Jewish people. Moshe was first revealed to Yitro. He was revealed first to the Gentiles, then to the Jewish women, and finaly to the Jewish men.

The Hakham also explained that when we are serious about seeking HaShem and performing His mitzvot, then HaShem turns even our mistakes into virtues. We see this in the lives of all of our patriarch’s and righteous kings.