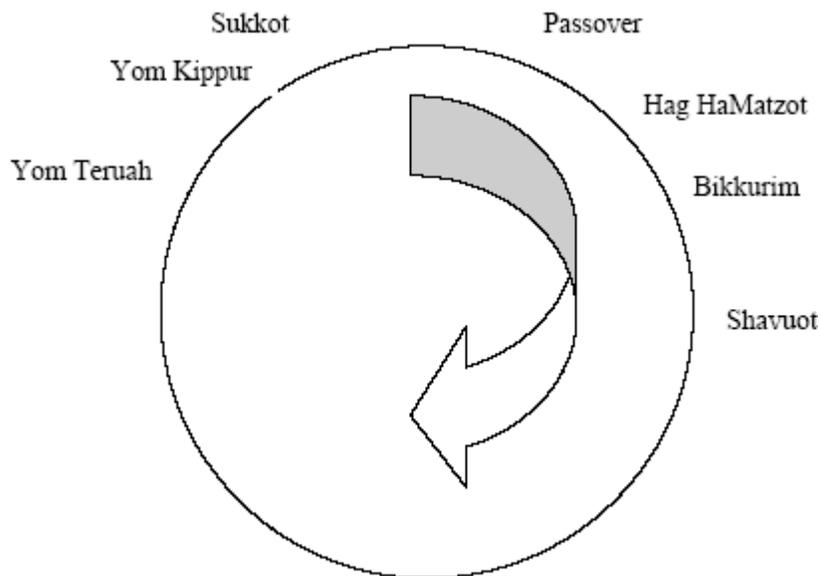


Machol Mo'adim

Machol Mo'adim — the Mo'adim Dance

In Leviticus 23, **יְהוָה** instructed Israel to set aside certain days and years that would serve as special times of worship, celebration, and rest – I call them festivals of dancing with the Lord. In verse 2 **יְהוָה** said to Moshe: “*Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: ‘these are יְהוָה’s appointed festivals that you are to designate as holy convocations... these are My appointed festivals.’*” These belong to Him; they are His invention, His and His only.

♪ I danced in the morning when the world was begun and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun. I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth, at Bethlehem I had my birth. Dance then wherever you may be, I am the Lord of the Dance said He, and I’ll lead you all wherever you may be, I will lead you all in the dance said He. ♪



The *mo'adim* are a cycle, a circle. Every year they come and they go. One leads to the other, is built upon the previous one, and prepares us for the next. If we were to look at the *mo'adim* from a “bird's eye view,” so to speak, it would look like a circle of dancing. Some of the dancing is happy, some is fast, some is slow, and some is more somber. But no matter what the people are dancing, there is purpose, rhythm, design, and meaning. We would see that the more the participants dance, the better they become at dancing. They grow in their understanding of the “dances.”

There is also something else we can see when the people dance the cycle of the *mo'adim*. Right in the center of the circle is the L-rd of the Dance – *Yeshua* the Messiah! They are dancing around Him – and He is dancing with them! Everyone is having so much fun. When the dances become slower, more reflective, everyone begins to weep. When they are brighter and happier, they all begin to laugh. The One in the center also feels with them. Moreover, whatever they do not understand about the “dance” they look to Him and He teaches them. When He is not teaching them, He is merely delighting in them because of their dancing, because of their delight in Him.

Since it is a circle, anyone can join the dance any wherever and whenever he wants. Eventually, the circle will come back to whatever dances he happened to miss in his absence.

What about you? Are you ready to dance with us? If not, come and join the circle, the cycle of *mo'adim*! You can come in at any point. It does not matter where you are coming from or what you had just been doing. Just come! Join the circle of *mo'adim* and see how much you will learn. See how much you will enjoy looking at the Person in the middle of the circle. For, it is He Himself who is bidding you to join the dance!

Messianic Mo'adim

Leviticus 23 is the complete revelation of **יהוה's** festival calendar for His people. **יהוה** instructed Israel to set aside certain days and years that would serve as special times of worship, celebration, and rest. The Hebrew word translated 'appointed festivals' is from the word *moed*, **מוֹעֵד** (which is translated seasons in Gen. 1:14 "...Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years"). This word particularly means 'appointed times.' It can be likened to **יהוה** telling Israel to get out their personal and national planning calendars and write in certain appointments to meet with **יהוה**. He already has them in His calendar and He, therefore, instructed Israel to give time to Him accordingly. On those days **יהוה** wants to meet with His people in very special ways. Also note that these lights are also for covenant signs – *Ot*.

[יד] וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרַקִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם:

It is also important to note that in order for *Yeshua* to be the appointed Messiah of Israel, He had to fulfill in every detail the Spring Festivals, which are rehearsals, of the work and impact **יהוה** has ordained.

In the *Torah*, *mo'adim* are associated with times of harvest in the land. The farmers of Israel would begin their spring harvest with the barley crop at *Pesach* (Passover), the first grain crop beginning in the month of the "Aviv". The harvest continued for seven weeks as the other crops and fruits began to ripen. As each crop ripened, the first of each type would not be eaten but instead the farmer would tie a ribbon around the branch. This ribbon signified that these fruits were *Bikkurim*, or the first fruits. At *Shavuot* the farmers would gather the *Bikkurim* into baskets and bring them to the city of Jerusalem where they would be eaten in the Holy City. The farmers living close to Jerusalem would bring fresh fruits, while those who had to travel a long distance carried dried raisins and figs. This joyful occasion was celebrated with the music of fifes, timbres, and drums. As the pilgrims approached the city walls the inhabitants of the city greeted them. Sometimes the king himself would join the procession to the Temple Mount. The *Bikkurim* ritual is no longer practiced in present day Israel.

On *Shavuot* the People of Israel concluded the barley harvest and commenced the wheat harvest, since in *Eretz Yisrael* the third month (*Sivan*) signals the end of spring and the beginning of summer. Three times yearly, our forefathers went up to the Temple in Jerusalem to bring the fruit of their soil as a thanksgiving offering to **יהוה**. These so-called "Pilgrim festivals" are:

The Festival	The Season	The Biblical Source
<i>Pesach</i> [The Spring Festival]	Start of Spring	Beginning of the Barley Harvest Deut. 16:9
<i>Shavuot</i> [Festival of Reaping/Harvest]	End of Spring/Start of Summer	First fruits of Wheat Ex. 34:22
<i>Sukkot</i> [Fest of Ingathering]	End of Summer/start of Fall	After gathering the produce of your threshing-floor and winepress, Deut. 16:13

We note that *Yeshua* died on the Day of *Pesach* (Passover) *Aviv* 14, was entombed just before the eve of *Chag HaMatzot* (Unleavened Bread) *Aviv* 15, and after three days and three nights, resurrected on the evening of *Yom HaBikkurim* (the Day of Firstfruits) on *Aviv* 18, on a *Yom Rishon* (Sunday):

Shavuot is the Conclusion of the Spring Festival Season

There is another special significance to the timing of *Shavuot*, between the firstfruits of barley (the Omer) and the wheat harvest. The festival was fixed at the end of a season lasting seven weeks, namely the period of the "Counting of the Omer", which commences on the day of *Yom Ha-Bikkurim*. During this period, the fierce struggle between the easterly and the westerly winds intensifies in *Eretz Israel*. The dry easterly winds on the one hand, and the westerly winds on the other, bearing clouds and the danger of sudden rains, can lead to sudden weather changes, affecting the field crops and plantations. The 49 days of the Omer are counted with some degree of trepidation. However, when *Shavuot* arrives, the weather stabilizes. The farmer already knows the fate of the grain crops, but he has no guarantee of the success of the fruit that grows in the summer.

Weeks

In Hebrew, *Shavuot* means literally “weeks.” In the *Torah* the festival is called “*Chag Ha-Shavuot*”, the Feast of Weeks; after the seven complete Shabbats (49 days) are counted from *Bikkurim* to *Shavuot*. In Post-Biblical times *Shavuot* is believed to be the anniversary of the Revelation at Sinai, but this is not Biblical.

“You are to count seven weeks; you are to begin counting seven weeks from the time you first put your sickle to the standing grain. You are to observe the festival of Shavuot for יהוה your Elohim with a voluntary offering, which you are to give in accordance with the degree to which יהוה your Elohim has prospered you.” (Deut. 16: 9-10)

The seven weeks of the counting of the Omer must be complete. The *Torah* does not indicate the date of *Shavuot*, since it is fixed as the fiftieth day of the Omer, *Shavuot* being the 50th day (Leviticus 23:16). The details of the timing of this feast are best described by Nehemia Gordon and reproduced here for convenience.¹

In late Second Temple times a debate arose between the Boethusians and the Pharisees about whether the “*morrow after the Sabbath*” [Heb. *Mimohorat Ha-Shabbat*] refers to the Sunday during *Hag HaMatzot* [Feast of Unleavened Bread] or the second day of *Hag HaMatzot* (i.e. the 16th of Aviv/Nissan). Like the Boethusians and Ancient Israelites before them, the Karaites count the 50 days of the Omer from the Sunday during *Hag HaMatzot* and consequentially always celebrate *Shavuot* on a Sunday.

The Rabbanites claim that in the phrase “*the morrow after the Sabbath*” the “*Sabbath*” referred to is the first day of *Hag HaMatzot*. They argue that this day is referred to as a Sabbath because work is forbidden on it. However, the fact is that the *Tanach* never calls this day a Sabbath. And if we look at the actual commandment in the *Torah*, this Rabbanite interpretation is untenable. We are commanded in Lev 23:16 “*Until the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you count fifty days*”. While the first day of *Hag HaMatzot* could theoretically be called a Sabbath there is no way the **49th day of the Omer** could be called a Sabbath, since (according to the Rabbanite theory) this day is neither a holiday nor a Sabbath. This being so, in the Rabbanite reckoning the 50th day of the Omer (=Shavuot) would **NOT** be on “*the morrow after the seventh Sabbath*” as commanded in Lev 23:16. Instead it would be on the morrow after the 7th Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday or whatever day it happened to fall out after (see chart). The only way for the 49th day of the Omer to be a Sabbath, thereby making the 50th day “*the morrow after the Sabbath*” as commanded in Lev 23:16, is if the 1st day of the Omer is on a Sunday.

It is important when we read Nehemia Gordon’s explanation to see the actual Hebrew text for Leviticus 23:11, 16 and, if you will, decide for yourself.

the cohen shall turn the Shabbat morning to accept YHVH before the omer wave [11]

[יא] וְהִנִּיף אֶת־הָעֹמֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם מִמּוֹצֵיט הַשַּׁבָּת יִנִּיפֵנּוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים:

He shall wave the sheaf before יהוה for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it

YHVH to new afternoon sacrifice days fifty count 7th shabbat the shabbat morning until [16]

[טז] עַד מִמּוֹצֵיט הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ זִמְשִׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְזֶה זֹדֶשֶׁה לַיהוָה:

You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Shabbat; then you shall present a new grain offering to יהוה

You will notice the words *Mimohorat Ha-Shabbat* is translated “*morrow after the Shabbat*” in the NASB and KJV. The word “*Shabbat*” refers in the *Torah* to a specific day, the 7th day, the only day that is named in Scripture. This name is never used for weeks or 7-day periods. Hebrew has a different word, *shavua* (plural, *Shavuot*), for weeks. The morning after *Shabbat* is always a Sunday. Also in Nehemia’s Karaite Korner website there is a footnote (Note 3) to explain that it is erroneous to refer to Aviv 15 as a “*Shabbat*.”

¹ See <http://www.karaite-korner.org/shavuot.shtml>

It is worth noting that Yom Kippur is the only other day besides the weekly Sabbath, which is also referred to as a Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath is referred to as YHWH's Sabbath ["Today is a Sabbath of YHWH" (Ex 16,25); "Keep My Sabbaths" (Lev 19,3)] while Yom Kippur is referred to as Israel's Sabbath ["It shall be a Sabbath of restfulness for you" (Lev 16,31; 23,32)]. The Sabbatical Year (Shemittah) is also called the Sabbath of YHWH (Lev 24:4-5). It is also worth noting the term Shabbaton, which is used to describe some of the Holy Days. It should be emphasized that the term Shabbaton is not the exact equivalent of Sabbath [Shabbat] nor is it ever used interchangeably with it. Indeed, the term Shabbaton is derived from the same root as Sabbath although its exact connotation is unclear. Shabbaton seems to be the adjective form of the word Sabbath and means something like "Restfulness" or "rest-period". Thus the weekly Sabbath is described as a Shabbat Shabbaton, meaning a "Sabbath of Restfulness". Similarly, the 7th year is called a Shenat Shabbaton, meaning a "Year of Restfulness" (usually translated "Sabbatical Year"). The term Shabbaton is also applied to Yom Teruah (Lev 23,24), the first day of Sukkot (Lev 23,39), and Shemini Atzeret (8th Day of Sukkot) (Lev 23,39). The terms Sabbath and Shabbaton are never used to describe any of the days of Hag HaMatzot nor are ANY of the Holy Days ever called a Sabbath other than the weekly Sabbath itself. The only exception is Yom Kippur which is the holiest day of the year on which even eating is forbidden. In contrast, on the Holy Days of Hag HaMatzot (1st and 7th days) it is permissible to cook and have fire (Exodus 12, 16).

Hag Hakatzir

Hag Hakatzir means literally "the Festival of Reaping." The barley harvest that commences on *Pesach* ends on *Shavuot*, when the wheat harvest begins (wheat ripens later than barley):

"And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field." (Exodus, 23:16)

"And you shall observe the feast of weeks, of the first fruits of wheat harvest." (Exodus, 34:22)

The Immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh

By imparting the greatest gift mankind could receive (THE gift spoken of by *Yeshua* in Luke 11:13 "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?") On *Shavuot* *Yeshua* empowered us to keep *Torah*!

What do we bring in Shavuot?

We bring two loaves of wheat bread baked with leaven! Why two loaves? The wheat is the harvest of souls. These loaves, thus, represent people, *Yehudi & Goyim*, folks knitted together, baked into one loaf. People that are not yet so spiritual that they have "no leaven" Instead we are asked to bring real flesh and blood, people with their problems (leavening). These are to be the firstfruits of this wheat harvest. Who are your firstfruits people? Is it not our family who is supposed to be matured by us? *Chag Shavuot Sameach!*

The Fall Festivals

The fall festivals of *Yom Teruah*, *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot* are yet to be fully fulfilled but both the prophetic clock and the *Mo'adim* clock are pointing to a time in the not-so-distant future, perhaps even in our lifetime! Like the Israeli farmers, we already know the fate of the grain crops, but we have no guarantee for the success of the fruit that grows in the summer, that is us. We are all to be *ingathered* at *Sukkot*, the festival of "Living Together with the Messiah" hopefully for more than a thousand years. As our time unfolds, let us be *firstfruits* of the later day harvest and grow to maturity so we can be gathered as an offering to the Lord. This is our time, and this is our season. Get all you can on this *Shavuot* so you can be ready for the Fall Festivals. Shabbat Shalom!