

Shavuot-The Harvest of Wheat (Souls)

SHAVUOT in Ancient Times

Shavuot, the Feast of the Weeks, is the Jewish holiday celebrating the harvest season in Israel. The name *Shavuot* in Hebrew means “weeks” and refers literally to the timing of the festival which is held exactly seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits during Passover. *Shavuot* is known also as *Yom Habikkurim*, or “the Day of the First Fruits”, because it is the time the farmers of Israel would bring the first of the wheat harvest to Jerusalem as a token of thanksgiving. In Judaism, *Shavuot* traditionally commemorates the anniversary of the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai (although the Torah does not indicate that it was on a specific day in the third month).

The farmers in ancient Israel began their spring harvest season with the barley crop at Passover. The grain harvest continued for seven weeks as other grain crops and some fruits began to ripen. As each species 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 designated as *Bikkurim* (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 as an act of thanksgiving acknowledging *Adonai*'s provision. The farmers living close to Jerusalem brought fresh fruits, while those who had to travel a long distance carried grain, 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.

SHAVUOT—NATURE AND NAMES OF THE FESTIVAL

The Festival of *Shavuot* is cited in the *Torah* as a festival of nature and of agriculture. On *Pesach* we celebrate the exodus of our forefathers from Egypt – from bondage to freedom; after months of wandering in the desert the Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, where they received the *Torah* through Moses. Because of the belief that the Israelites received the *Torah* on *Shavuot*, the festival is also called *Chag Natan Torah* (the Festival of the Giving of the *Torah*) in Jewish Literature. The rabbis assert that after receiving the Ten Words (Commandments) the Israelites indeed became a free people. Our forefathers received the *Torah* of their free will and with full agreement (Exodus 24:7). Also according to tradition the *Torah* was given to Israel in the year 2448 of the Creation of the world.

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 Jerusalem carrying the fruit of their soil as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord.

There is another special significance to the timing of *Shavuot*, between the Omer offering during Passover and the actual grain harvest. The festival was fixed at the end of a season lasting seven weeks, called the “Counting of the Omer”, which commences on the first day of *Chol Hamoed Pesach* in Israel [second night of the festival in the Diaspora] according to the Pharisaic tradition and the first day of the week after the weekly Shabbat of the *Pesach* week according to the Sadducean view. In 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. Thus the 49 days of the Omer were counted with some degree of trepidation. But 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 harvest of the fruit that grows during summer. This fate will be known only at the Harvest Festival, i.e., *Sukkot*. In addition to the name "Hag Matan Torah", the festival has four other names: mainly:

Shavuot

Literally, “weeks.” In the Torah the festival is called “*Chag Ha-Shavuot*”, the Festival of Weeks, after the seven weeks counted from *Yom HaBikkurim* during *Pesach* to *Shavuot*. The seven weeks of the counting of the Omer must be complete: “*You will count for yourselves seven weeks; begin to count the seven weeks from the time that you begin to put the sickle to the corn. And you shall keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord your G-d...*” (Deut. 16: 9-10) The Torah does not indicate the date of *Shavuot*, since it is fixed as the fiftieth day of the Omer (Lev. 23:16)

Chag Hakatzir

Means literally the Festival of Reaping. The barley harvest that commences on *Pesach* and 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...And you shall observe the feast of weeks, of the first fruits of wheat harvest*”. (Exodus 23:16, 34:22)

Chag Habikurim

The Festival of First fruits – just as the Omer offering of the new barley is brought on *Pesach*, during the festival of “your first harvest”, so on *Shavuot*, at the end of the barley harvest, the offering of the two show-breads (baked with leaven) is brought. These offerings are *mitzvot* [precepts] which were not binding on the individual but rather on the public, were brought to the Temple. In Israel is customary today to bring first fruits of the land (mainly fruit and vegetables) and to distribute them to the poor.

Atzeret

In the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*, *Shavuot* is known as “*Atzeret*”, which means: a festive assembly of all the people. The pilgrims who came to Jerusalem used to gather in the Holy City and celebrate the festival joyously. Today, this agricultural event is celebrated in the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* of Israel with dancing and singing. This is the “final day” of the *Pesach* period, just as *Shemini Atzeret* concludes *Sukkot*.

The Immersion in 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?*”) *Yeshua* empowered us to fulfill *Torah*!

The festival of Shavuot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. ² Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak... No, this is what was spoken about through the prophet Yo'el: ‘Adonai says: “In the Last Days, I will pour out from my Spirit upon everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my slaves, both men and women, will I pour out from my Spirit in those days; and they will prophesy.”’ (Acts 2:1-4, 16-18)

For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Adonai: I will put my Torah in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their G-d, and they will be my people; None of them will teach his fellow-citizen or his brother, saying, Know Adonai! For all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest, because I will be merciful toward their wickedness and remember their sins no more. (Heb 8:10-12)

*Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah *Yeshua*. ² Why? Because the Torah of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah *Yeshua*, has set me free from the “Torah” of sin and death. ³ For what the Torah could not do by itself, because it lacked the power to make the old nature cooperate, G-d did by sending his own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one. G-d did this in order to deal with sin, and in so doing he executed the punishment against sin in human nature ⁴ so that*

the just requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us who do not run our lives according to what our old nature wants but according to what the Spirit wants. (Rom 8:1-4)

What do we bring in Shavuot?

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 firstfruit people? Is it not our family who is supposed to be matured by us?

⁷But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I don't go away, the comforting Counselor will not come to you. However, if I do go, I will send him to you. ⁸“When he comes, he will show that the world is wrong about sin, about righteousness and about judgment— ⁹about sin, in that people don't put their trust in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, in that I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; ¹¹ about judgment, in that the ruler of this world has been judged. ¹²“I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. ¹³However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you. ¹⁵Everything the Father has is mine; this is why I said that he receives from what is mine and will announce it to you. ¹⁶“In a little while, you will see me no more; then, a little while later, you will see me.” (John 16:7-16)

- Was the Holy Spirit exactly what the disciples had in mind in Acts 1?
- The ways of *G-d*: Birth of a Vision, Death of a Vision; Resurrection of the Vision Supernaturally
- Other Examples: Abraham; Joseph; Moses; David; *Yeshua*
- Grain (the potential for a great harvest) it must first die; then if it does a great harvest!
- *G-d*'s Goal: To Develop Inner Qualities He can exploit if allowed
- Satan's Goal: Fulfill *G-d*'s Will with human effort
- *G-d* made known His Ways to Moses but His acts to the children of Israel!
- Wait for *G-d*'s Spirit to give the marching orders (as in Jericho)

If it important to the *L-rd* to come in Shavuot-what has happened in Shavuot?

The giving of the Torah?

*In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto *G-d*, and *YHVH* called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (Exod 19:1-3)*

Many other things were revealed to Moshe in Sinai. The Torah codifies the revealed pattern of Praise, Worship, Government and Service. Moshe was instructed to duplicate the heavenly pattern exactly as he saw it.

The outpouring of the Spirit (*Ruach*)-the “power” to fulfill Torah and to be witnesses of the Living Torah *Y'shua HaMashiach* (the *L-rd Yeshua HaMashiach*)

Read (Acts 1:1-9)

The time of the “Counting of the Omer”, between Pesach & *Shavuot* was a time of concentrated outpouring of divine revelation – the pattern, types, shadows and instructions which form the basis for B'rit Chadasha (NT). Also in *Yeshua*'s time, the time between his resurrection and ascension (40 days!) was spent expounding to the disciples the matters of the Kingdom.