

## The Wheat Harvest for Him

### **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 morning after the Shabbat (*reshit*) during the Passover week. *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 6-30) 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 Reshit* during *Pesach* to *Shavuot*. The seven weeks of the counting of the Omer must be complete: “<sup>9</sup> Seven weeks you are to count for yourself—from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain you will begin to count seven weeks. <sup>10</sup> Then you will keep the Feast of Shavuot to Adonai your God....” (Deut. 16: 9-10) The Torah does not indicate the date of Shavuot, but 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): “<sup>16</sup> Also you are to observe the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors that you sow in the field... <sup>22</sup> “You are to observe the Feast of Shavuot, which is the firstfruits of the 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*: “<sup>13</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* to those who ask Him!”) *Yeshua* empowered us to fulfill *Torah*! See Acts 2:1-4, 16-18, Heb. 8:10-12 and 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*, two peoples 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 first fruits of this wheat harvest. Who are your first fruit people? Is it not our family who is supposed to be matured by us? See (John 16:7-16).

- Was the Holy Spirit exactly what the disciples had in mind in Acts 1?
- The ways of *God*: 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) must first die then if it does a great harvest!
- *God*'s Goal: To Develop Inner Qualities He can exploit if allowed
- Satan's Goal: Fulfill *God*'s Will with human effort
- *God* made known His Ways to Moses but His acts to the children of Israel!
- Wait for *God*'s Spirit to give the marching orders (as in Jericho)