

Shavuot Study

By

Yochanan Zaquantov

Every year we count the Omer and keep Chag Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) we are given clear instruction of when and how to count it. It is also known by another name Chag Bikhur (Feast of First Fruits). Today we will review the counting of the Omer, Look up the verses that refer to this day and gain an understanding of why we keep this day.

Lets look at the Omer Counting.

Omer 6016 (Ayin-Mem-Resh) masculine noun pg. 771 BDB, pg. 961 NEHC

Vayikra 23:10-21

10 Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall elevate the sheaf before YEHOVAH for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it **on the day after [On the Morrow (mimacharat מִמָּחָרָת) of]** the sabbath. 12 On the day that you elevate the sheaf, you shall offer as a burnt offering to YEHOVAH a lamb of the first year without blemish. 13 The meal offering with it shall be two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to YEHOVAH; and the libation with it shall be of wine, a quarter of a *hin*. 14 Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of Eloheykha, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages in all your settlements.

15 And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off **seven weeks (sheva shabbatot – seven shabbats שִׁבְעַת שַׁבָּתוֹת)**. They must be complete: 16 you must **count (safar 5608)** until the day after the **seventh** week (hashevi'it - seventh הַשְּׁבִיעִת)—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to YEHOVAH. 17 You shall bring from your settlements two loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to YEHOVAH. 18 With the bread you shall present, as burnt offerings to YEHOVAH, seven yearling lambs without blemish, one bull of the herd, and two rams, with their meal offerings and libations, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to YEHOVAH. 19 You shall also offer one he-goat as a sin offering and two yearling lambs as a sacrifice of well-being. 20 The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits as an elevation offering before YEHOVAH; they shall be holy to YEHOVAH, for the priest. 21 On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you;

you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages.

We see from this what is being detailed here is the Day after the Shabbat during the Chag haMatzot (Feast of Unleavened Bread). We are told to count (safar) 50 days and that the 7 Shabbats are to be perfect (complete). Thus for the last 50 days we have been counting the seven shabbats and the days until we have come to this day. The first time they kept this day was when. “After they entered the land.” (Verse 10) There was a harvest there in which they did not sow. They would have just arrived. Thus as manna was a gift of bread in the wilderness, this was the gift of bread in the land. Many have said that this day is linked to the giving of the Ten Commandments (mitzvot), which you will not find in the written torah. From these verses, and in my understanding, it was a commemoration of them entering the land of Canaan that appears to indicated here.

We see this in Yehoshuah (Joshua) 5:10-12

10 Encamped at Gilgal, in the steppes of Jericho, the Israelites offered the passover sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month, toward evening.

11 On the day after the passover offering, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the country, unleavened bread and parched grain. 12 On that same day, when they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. The Israelites got no more manna; that year they ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

The Manna ceased on the morrow after the Passover Offering. Which to be in line with what we know of the Pesach is that it falls on the evening of the First day of Unleavened Bread. Since the First and Last day of Unleavened bread are never referred to as Shabbats the only way these two accounts fit is if the First Day of Unleavened Bread/Peach started the evening after the Shabbat Day of the week. Thus they would have offered up the wave sheaf offering and then were able to eat of new grain (Barley) on Yom Rishon or Sunday. Thus the first harvest (First Fruits) would have been the Barley Harvest after they entered the land of Canaan. It is always the Sunday that falls in the Days of Unleavened Bread. It also shows us that the important day is the day after the weekly Shabbat that falls during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Since Shavuot is referred to as the first fruits what is first fruits in Hebrew. Bikhur, which is reference number 1061 and is a masculine noun. Found on pg. 114 BDB and pg. 228 NEHC. It is from the root of (Bet-Khaf-Resh). Which means the verb form is bachar.

We first see this word used as first fruits in Shemot 23:15-16

15 You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread—eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you—at the set time in the month of [the] Abib, for in it you went forth from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty-handed; 16 and the **Feast of the Harvest (Chag HaQatziyr חַג הַקְּצִיר)**, of the **first fruits (bikhurey**

בְּבוֹרֵי) of your work, of what you sow in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the results of your work from the field.

Shemot 34:22

22 You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the **first fruits** (**bikhurey בְּבוֹרֵי**) of the wheat harvest; and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

Vayikra 23:20

20 The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of **first fruits** (**Habikhuriym הַבְּבוֹרִים**) as an elevation offering before YEHOVAH; they shall be holy to YEHOVAH, for the priest.

Bamidbar 13:20

20 Is the soil rich or poor? Is it wooded or not? And take pains to bring back some of the fruit of the land.”—Now it happened to be the season of the **first ripe** (**bikhuriy בְּבוֹרֵי**) grapes.

Bamidbar 28:26

26 On the day of the **first fruits** (**Habikhuriym הַבְּבוֹרִים**), your Feast of Weeks, when you bring an offering of new grain to YEHOVAH, you shall observe a sacred occasion (**Mikra Qodesh מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ**): you shall not work at your occupations.

Thus the **Feast of Weeks** (**Chag HaShavuot**) is the bringing in the first fruits of the harvest of the wheat. We also see it called the Feast of Harvest.

The related word Bakhar, which is the verb form from the root Bet-Khaf-Resh. Reference number 1069 is found on page 114 of the BDB, and pg. 229 of the NEHC. It means firstling.

Devarim 21:16

16 when he wills his property to his sons, he may not treat as **first-born**(**labakher לְבִכֹּר**) the son of the loved one in disregard of the son of the unloved one who is older.

Vayikra 27:26

26 A **firstling** (**bakhor** בְּכוֹר) of animals, however, which—as a **firstling** (**yabukhar** יָבֻכָר)—is Yehovah’s, cannot be consecrated by anybody; whether ox or sheep, it is Yehovah’s.

Yehezqel 47:12

12 All kinds of trees for food will grow up on both banks of the stream. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail; they will **yield new fruit** (**yabakher** יָבִיכֵר) every month, because the water for them flows from the Temple. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

We see that firstlings and first fruit are and come from the same root and the same meanings and thus the day is a day of First Fruits. In reference to the bringing in of first fruits from the Wheat Harvest.

We also saw it called the Feast of Harvest. So what is the Hebrew word for Harvest and how does this related to Shavuot? Qatziyr (Kaf-tsadie-resh) is the word for Harvest and it is reference number 7105 a masculine noun. You can find it on page 894 in the BDB and on page 1115 in the NEHC. The meaning is referring to the Harvest of any crop.

Let look at some of the related verse to this day.

Shemot 23:15-16

15 You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread—eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you—at the set time in the month of [the] Abib, for in it you went forth from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty-handed; 16 and the **Feast of the Harvest** (**Chag HaQatziyr** חַג הַקְּצִיר), of the **first fruits** (**bikhurey** בִּכְרוֹרֵי) of your work, of what you sow in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the results of your work from the field.

Hear we see the reference to it being referred to as a Feast of Harvest.

Shemot 34:22

22 You shall observe the **Feast of Weeks** (**Chag Shavuot** חַג שְׁבֻעֹת), of the **first fruits** (**bikkurey** בִּכְרוֹרֵי) of the **wheat harvest** (**Qatziyr Hitiym** קְצִיר חִטִּים); and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

Shemuel Aleph 12:17

Is it not the **wheat harvest (Qatziyr Hitiym קָצִיר חֲטִימִים)** today? I will call to YEHOVAH and he will give you sounds and rain. And know and see that your evil is great that you have done in the eyes of YEHOVAH, to ask for a King for yourselves.

It is interesting. Saul is already King. Yet Shemuel speaks to them gathered that day about them asking for a King. Could this day be Shavuot?

Let see what is stated about this Chag.

Shavuot 7620 (shin-vet-ayin) found on pg. 998 in the BDB and 1224 of the NEHC. It is from the words Sheva and Shivah which mean seven. Thus the meaning of Shavuot is weeks.

Shemot 34:22

22 You shall observe the **Feast of Weeks (Chag Shavuot וַחַג שִׁבְעַת)**, of the first fruits of the wheat harvest; and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. 23 Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign YEHOVAH, Elohey of Israel.

It is a day we are to observe and do.

Bamidbar 28:26

26 On the day of the first fruits, your Feast of Weeks, when you bring an offering of new grain to YEHOVAH, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.

It is a **Mikra Qodesh** (Set-apart Reading or Proclamation) and we are not to do Service work (**Malakhah Avodah**). We are also to bring the offering of new grain.

Vayiqra 23:17-22

17 You shall bring from your settlements two loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to YEHOVAH. 18 With the bread you shall present, as burnt offerings to YEHOVAH, seven yearling lambs without blemish, one bull of the herd, and two rams, with their meal offerings and libations, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to YEHOVAH. 19 You shall also offer one he-goat as a sin offering and two yearling lambs as a sacrifice of well-being. 20 The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits as an elevation offering before YEHOVAH; they shall be holy to YEHOVAH, for the priest. 21 On that same day you shall **hold a celebration (Mikra Qodesh מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ)**; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; **you**

shall not work at your occupations (Malekhet Avodah מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה). This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages.

22 And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am Yehovah Eloheykha.

The leavened bread offering on this day was to be made prepared and brought to the meeting place. This is the way we bring that new grain offering. Along with this was brought the burnt offering, sin offering, and well being offering. These went to the Priests. We also see that they were reminded not to harvest the entire field but leave some behind.

Devarim 16:9-10

9 You shall count off **seven weeks (shivah Shavuot שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעוֹת)**; start to count the **seven weeks (shivah Shavuot שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעוֹת)** when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 Then you shall observe the **Feast of Weeks (Chag Shavuot חַג שִׁבְעָוֹת)** for Yehovah Eloheykha, offering your freewill contribution according as Yehovah Eloheykha has blessed you.

Devarim 16:16-17

16 Three times a year—on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the **Feast of Weeks (ubachag haShavuot וּבַחַג הַשְּׁבָעוֹת)**, and on the Feast of Booths—all your males shall appear before Yehovah Eloheykha in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before Yehovah empty-handed, 17 but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that Yehovah Eloheykha has bestowed upon you.

We know for the Feast of weeks this was the new grain of the wheat harvest. The three feasts are pilgrimages feasts, which means the people were to all gather for them.

Bamidbar 10:10

10 And on your joyous occasions—your fixed festivals (**ubamoadeykhem בְּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם**) and new moon days (**ubarashey chad' sheykhem וּבְרָאשֵׁי חֳדָשֵׁיכֶם**)—you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before Eloheykhem: I am, Yehovah Eloheykhem.

It is a day that trumpets were sounded over the offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices.

We have seen that this day is the one-day which is counted to determine its date. It is a chag that the heads of households were to bring offerings to the place Yehovah would choose the first fruits of their harvests. That place today would be Yerushalayim. (Melekhim Aleph 9:1-3)

1 When Solomon had finished building the House of Yehovah and the royal palace and everything that Solomon had set his heart on constructing, 2 Yehovah appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 Yehovah said to him, “I have heard the prayer and the supplication which you have offered to Me. **I consecrate this House which you have built and I set My name there forever. My eyes and My heart shall ever be there.**

There is no temple today to bring our offerings to, so what we do is reframe from working and observe this day by reading from his Mikra (readings/scriptures). When the day comes that the temple is rebuilt we will have to bring up our first fruits to be offered up to Yehovah once more.

Because of the Counting from the morrow after the Shabbat during the Chag haMatzot it links the two harvests together the first fruits of the Barley Harvest with the first fruits of the Wheat harvest.

Next Harvest is the Feast of Ingathering or Sukkot.