

*Israel cleaved to **Ba'al Pe'or** and God was furious at Israel. God said to Moses, "Take all of the leaders of the people and impale them facing the sun, and God's fury will be rescinded from Israel." Moshe said to the judges of Israel, "Each man should kill his people who are cleaving to **Ba'al Pe'or**." And behold there was an Israelite man who came and he brought the Midianite woman before his brethren in the sight of Moshe and the congregation of the Israelites as they were crying at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aaron the **Kohen** saw this and he got up from within the congregation and he took a spear in his hand. He pursued the Israelite man to the tent and he stabbed both of them, the Israelite man and the woman through her stomach, and the plague upon the Israelites was stopped.*
--- Numb. 25:3-8

*God spoke to Moses saying: Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aaron the **Kohen** rescinded My fury from the Israelites by displaying among them his passion for Me, so that I did not finish off the Israelite people in My passion. Therefore, say that I am giving him My covenant of peace. And it will be a covenant of eternal priesthood for him and his progeny after him, because he took impassioned action for his God, thus making expiation for the Israelites. --- Numb. 25:10-13*

*Pinchas ben Elazar saw... And everyone else didn't see?! But it is written [that the offending Israelite acted] before his brethren in the sight of Moshe and the congregation of the Israelites! Rather he saw the incident and he was reminded of the **halakhah**: One who is intimate with an Aramean woman is attacked by zealous avengers. he got up from within the congregation: From where did he stand? Rather they were deliberating about the matter, if he was liable for death or not. [Pinchas] stood up from within the congregation and he volunteered and took a spear in his hand... --- **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah** 20:25*

*Pinchas ben Elazar saw... What did he see? Rav said: He saw the incident and he was reminded of the **halakhah**. He said to [Moses], "Great-uncle, didn't you teach us when you came down from Mt. Sinai, One who is intimate with an Aramean woman is attacked by zealous avengers?" [Moses] said to him, "The one who reads the letter should be the messenger." And Shmuel said: He saw that There is no wisdom or insight...contrary to God (Prov. 21:30); any place where there is a violation of God's name, one does not show honor to the teacher. --- **Yalkut Shimoni Parashat Balak #771***

*Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aaron the **Kohen** saw... What did he see? He saw the incident and was reminded of the halakhah: Those who are intimate with Aramean women are attacked by zealous avengers. It is taught—against the will of the Sages. And Pinchas also [behaved] against the will of the Sages. Rav Yehudah ben Pazi said: They wanted to excommunicate him and would have were it not for a holy spirit that jumped in on his behalf and said: *And it will be a covenant of eternal priesthood for him and his progeny after him* --- Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 9:7, 27b*

*Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aaron the **Kohen**... The Holy Blessed One said, By law he should take his reward. Therefore, *say that I am giving him My covenant of peace*. Great is the peace that was given to Pinchas, for the world only runs through peace and the Torah itself is entirely peace, as it says: *Its paths are paths of pleasantness and all its ways are peace* (Prov. 3:17). --- **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 21:1***

Those gravediggers, who buried a person on the first day of Shavuot: Rav Pappa excommunicated them and disqualified them as witnesses, but Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, deemed them qualified.

Rav Pappa said [to Rav Huna]: But they were found guilty!

[Rav Huna responded]: They thought they were doing a mitzvah.

[Rav Pappa responded]: But I excommunicated them!

[Rav Huna answered]: They thought, "The Sages are enabling us to atone." --- Talmud, **Sanhedrin 26b**

On the day of the first fruits, your (Feast of) Weeks (Shavuot), when you bring a new grain offering to the Lord, you shall observe a sacred occasion... --- Numb. 28:26

What does it mean to bring *a new grain offering*? (Surely we wouldn't bring some old grain!) It means that no other grain-offering should precede it, that on Shavuot this offering should be newer than all other such offerings. Shavuot is called "the first fruits of the wheat harvest", because of the two challahs for it, the first of the meal-offerings from the new crop. --- **Sifrei** and Rashi, based on Talmud, **Menachot**

“Feast” (chag) does not appear in the Hebrew. The verse is saying that you must do this (bring a new offering) for *your weeks*, that is, for what you have received during these seven weeks. --- Sforno, 16th c., Italy

What is "new" about this day? Shavuot is the day when the Torah was given, and the Israelites were reborn, as if without sin. It alludes also to the idea that there will be a time when the evil inclination will be completely nullified, so that we might always be "new" in this sense. --- Based on Rabbenu Bachya, 12th-13th c.

Until the day when the Torah was given, their lives were lived mostly by simple animal instincts alone. Now they are a people blessed with understanding. This is why it is called a “new” offering. They were a new people, acquired a new power of understanding, and they brought their offerings with these new attitudes in mind. --- Abarbanel, Spain/Italy, late 15th c.

What is "new" here? Shavuot represents the renewal of the bride; the moon also is new in that week, hence the bond of faith is strong and God rejoices; the Assembly of Israel is given gifts and is called the "complete bride," like a bride to whom all bring gifts, portions and finery. --- Zohar, III, 96b

"New" here means that the Torah, given on Mount Sinai, must be new for us each day like the day it was given. This is why Shavuot is not directly referred to in the Torah as the day of the receiving of the Torah, just as Rosh Hashanah is not referred to specifically as a day of judgment. We are supposed to look at every day as days appropriate for repentance, and days when we should look at the Torah with enthusiasm, just as if we had received it that day. --- **K'li Yakar**, Rabbi Shlomo Lunshitz, Poland/Prague, 16th-17th c.

*In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded. You shall present (**va'asitem**, literally "you shall make") a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the Lord... --- Lev. 29:1-2*

A rabbi said: In all other places it is said **v'hikravtem**, *you shall offer a burnt offering*, but here it says **va'asitem**, *you shall make an offering*. Why? God says: "Since you have come before Me this day for judgment and gone forth in peace, I regard you as if you were created as new creatures before Me." Another rabbi said: In all other places about burnt offerings the word sin is mentioned, but in the regulations about the burnt offerings for Shavuot (28:27) the word sin is not mentioned. God says: "Since you have assumed the yoke of the Torah, I regard you as if you had never sinned." --- Jerusalem Talmud, **Rosh Hashanah** 59c