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## QH 6.4

### QAHAL: “ASSEMBLY” OR “FELLOWSHIP” IN CONTEXT

The Hebrew word *Qahal* is the root word from which comes the noun *Qehilath*, that is so common in the names of many Jewish synagogues. *Qahal* is most often translated *assembly*, but can also be translated *fellowship*, as in *Qehilath Haderek – The Fellowship of The Way*.

Which one of these words should be used in translation depends upon Scriptural context. The word *assembly* is often used in a somewhat general, dry and impersonal way. It can easily be used of persons, things, or ideas. The word *fellowship*, by contrast, is more specific and narrow in concept. It is used almost exclusively to describe human beings who are voluntarily bound together in a positive way and for a common purpose. While we are not dogmatic on this subject, it is our opinion that the word *fellowship* is a superior translation of the word *Qahal* and most of its variants in Scripture, according to context.

The word *Qahal* is defined in the Strong’s Lexicon as: #6951 – *assemblage – assembly, company, congregation, multitude*.

It is also defined in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, as: Assembly, company, or congregation. The *Qahal* is especially an assembly for religious purposes, but it may also designate the congregation as an organized body for any purpose.

*Qahal* is roughly cognate to the word *Eklessia* in the Greek Scriptures of the *Ketuvym Hatalmidym*. Two other Hebrew and Greek words, *Adath* and *Sunagoge*, are also used in a very similar fashion to *Qahal* and *Eklessia* in Scripture, and they are often confused with one another. However, *Adath* and *Sunagoge*, usually translated into English as *congregation* or *Synagogue*, just as often refer to a building or place as they do a temporary grouping of people. It is our understanding that *Qahal* and *Eklessia* are the only words that are almost exclusively devoted to meaning a permanent and discreet grouping of people.

For your instruction and convenience, we have assembled here a broad cross-section of example verses containing the word *Qahal* for you to compare; and you be the judge. Wherever you see the word *Qahal* written, try inserting instead the English words *assembly* and *fellowship*, to see which best fits the context.

#### **THE QAHAL CAN BE A FELLOWSHIP OF PEOPLES.**

*B’reishyth 28:3 – “And El Shadday bless you, and make you fruitful and increase you, and you shall become a Qahal of peoples, and give you the blessing of Avraham, to you and your seed with you, so that you inherit the land of your sojourning, which Elohyim gave to Avraham.”*

#### **THE QAHAL CAN BE A FELLOWSHIP OF NATIONS.**

*B’reishyth 35:11 – “And Elohyim said to [Ya’aqov], “I am El Shadday. Be fruitful and increase, a nation and a Qahal of nations shall be from you, and kings come from your body.”*

#### **THE QAHAL CAN SLAY THE LAMB TOGETHER.**

*Sh’moth 12:6 – “And you shall keep [the Pesach lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same new moon. Then all the Qahal of the congregation of Yisrael shall slay it between the evenings.”*

#### **THE QAHAL CAN BE KILLED WITH HUNGER.**

*Sh’moth 16:3 – “And the children of Yisrael said to [Moshe and Aharon], ‘If only we died by the hand of יהוה in the land of Mitzrayim, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to satisfaction! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to put all this Qahal to death with hunger.’”*

#### **THE QAHAL CAN COMMIT SIN.**

*Vayyiqra 4:13 – “And if the entire congregation of Yisrael strays by mistake, and the matter has been hidden from the eyes of the Qahal, and they have done against any of the commands of יהוה, which are not to be done, and shall be guilty, when the sin which they have sinned becomes known, then the Qahal shall bring a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the Tent of Meeting.”*

#### **THE QAHAL CAN BRING A SACRIFICE.**

*Vayyiqra 4:21 – “And [the priest] shall bring the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is a sin offering for the Qahal.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE ATONED FOR.**

Vayyiqra 16:17 – “And no man should be in the Tent of Meeting when [the kohen hagadol] goes in to make atonement in the Miqdash, until he comes out. And he shall make atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the Qahal of Yisrael.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE SUBJECT TO LAWS.**

B'midbar 15:15 – “One law is for you of the Qahal and for the geir who sojourns with you – a law forever throughout your generations. As you are, so is the geir before יהוה.”

### **THE QAHAL'S MEMBERS CAN BE CUT OFF FROM IT.**

B'midbar 19:20 – “But the man who is unclean [by corpse] and does not cleanse himself, that being shall be cut off from among the Qahal, because he has defiled the Set-apart place of יהוה – water for uncleanness has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean.”

### **THE QAHAL HAS ITS OWN PRESENCE.**

B'midbar 20:6 – “Then Mosheh and Aharon went from the presence of the Qahal to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the esteem of יהוה appeared to them.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE SPOKEN TO.**

D'varym 5:22 – “These words יהוה spoke to all your Qahal, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a loud voice, and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE A FELLOWSHIP OF יְהוּדָה.**

D'varym 23:7 – “Do not loathe an Edomy, for he is your brother. Do not loathe a Mitzry, because you were a geir in his land. The children of the third generation born to them do enter the Qahal of יהוה.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN HEAR.**

D'varym 31:3 – “So Mosheh spoke in the hearing of all the Qahal of Yisrael the words of this song till their completion...”

### **THE QAHAL INCLUDES ALSO WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SOJOURNERS.**

8:35 יהושע – “There was not a word of all that Mosheh had commanded which יהושע did not read before all the Qahal of Yisrael, with the women, and the little ones, and the geiryim who accompanied them.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN DRAW THE SWORD.**

Shoph'tym 20:2 – “And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Yisrael, presented themselves in the Qahal of the people of Elohyim, four hundred-thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN TRAVEL TOGETHER.**

Shoph'tym 21:8 – “And they said, ‘Which one of the tribes of Yisrael did not come up to Mitzpah to יהוה?’ And see, no one had come to the camp from Yabesh Gilad to the Qahal.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN KNOW THINGS.**

Sh'muel Aleph 17:47 – “...this day יהוה shall deliver you [Golyath] into my [Dawid's] hand, and I shall strike you and take your head from you, and give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines today to the birds of the heavens and the wild beasts of the earth, so that all the earth know that Elohyim is for Yisrael, and all this Qahal know that יהוה does not save with sword and spear, for the battle belongs to יהוה, and He shall give you into our hands.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE BLESSED.**

Melekym Aleph 8:14 – “And the king [Sh'lomoh] turned around and blessed all the Qahal of Yisrael, while all the Qahal of Yisrael was standing.”

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE GIVEN REST.**

Melekym Aleph 8:55 – “And [Sh'lomoh] stood and blessed all the Qahal of Yisrael with a loud voice, saying, ‘Blessed be יהוה, who has given rest to His people Yisrael, according to all that He promised.’”

### **THE QAHAL CAN PERFORM A FESTIVAL TO יְהוּדָה.**

Melekym Aleph 8:65 – “And Sh'lomoh, at that time performed the Festival, and all Yisrael with him, a great Qahal from the entrance of Chamath to the wadi of Mitzrayim, before יהוה our Elohyim, seven days and seven days – fourteen days.”

### **THE QAHAL WILL RETURN TO THE LAND.**

Yirmeyahu 31:8 – “For יהוה says, ‘See, I am bringing them from the land of the north and shall gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together – a great Qahal returning here.’”

### **THE QAHAL CAN FALL IN DESTRUCTION.**

*Yechezqel 27:34 – “In the time you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, your merchandise and all your Qahal shall fall in your midst.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN RIDE HORSES.**

*Yechezqel 38:15 – “And you shall come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great Qahal and a mighty army.”*

### **THE QAHAL WILL BE SET APART.**

*Yoel 2:16 – “Gather the people, set the Qahal apart, assemble the Elders, and gather the children and nursing babes.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN KNOW THE NAME OF יהוה.**

*Tehillym 22:22 – “I make known Your Name to my brothers; in the midst of the Qahal I praise You.”*

### **THE QAHAL INCLUDES THE Q'DOSHYM.**

*Tehillym 89:5 – “And the heavens praise Your wonders, יהוה, Your trustworthiness, too, in the Qahal of the Q'doshym.”*

### **THE QAHAL INCLUDES THE ELDERS.**

*Tehillym 107:32 – “And let them exalt Him in the Qahal of the people, and praise Him in the seat of the Elders.”*

### **THE QAHAL INCLUDES THE CHASIDYM.**

*Tehillym 149:1 – “Praise Yah! Sing to יהוה a new song, His praise in a Qahal of chasidym.”*

### **THERE IS A QAHAL OF THE DEAD.**

*Mishle 21:16 – “A man who strays from the way of understanding, rests in the Qahal of the dead.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN DISCERN EVIL.**

*Mishle 26:26 – “Hatred is covered by deceit. His evil is disclosed in the Qahal.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE PETITIONED FOR HELP.**

*Jov 30:28 – “I went about blackened, but not by the sun; I stood up in the Qahal, I cried for help.”*

### **THE NATIONS WHO DO NOT BELONG MAY NOT ENTER THE QAHAL OF יהוה.**

*Ekah 1:10 – “The adversary has spread his hand over all her precious things; indeed, she has seen: The nations have entered her set-apart place, those whom You commanded not to enter Your Qahal.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN BE NUMBERED.**

*Ezra 2:64 – “The entire Qahal was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN WEEP.**

*Ezra 10:1 – “And while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the House of Elohyim, a very large Qahal – men and women and children – gathered unto him from Yisrael, for the people wept very bitterly.”*

### **THE QAHAL HAS LEADERS.**

*Ezra 10:14 – “Please, let the leaders of all the Qahal stand. And let all those in our cities who have taken foreign women come at appointed times, together with the Elders and judges of their cities, until the burning wrath of our Elohyim is turned away from us in this matter.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN CONFIRM AN OATH.**

*Nechemyah 5:13 – “I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, ‘Let Elohyim in this way shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not do this word, even to be thus shaken out and emptied.’ And all the Qahal said, ‘Amein!’ and praised יהוה. And the people did according to this word.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN HEAR AND UNDERSTAND THE TORAH.**

*Nechemyah 8:2 – “And Ezra, the kohen, brought the Torah before the Qahal of both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh new moon.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN SIT AND REJOICE IN BOOTHS.**

*Nechemyah 8:17 – “And the entire Qahal of those who had come back from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths, for since the days of Yeshua, son of Nun, until that day the children of Yisrael had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN INCLUDE LEWIYM AND KOHANYM.**

*Dibre HaYamim Aleph 13:2 – “And Dawid said to all the Qahal of Yisrael, ‘If it seems excellent to you, and if it is of יהוה our Elohyim, let us send out to our brothers everywhere who are left in all the land of Yisrael, and with them to the kohanyim and Lewiym who are in their cities of their open lands, and let them be gathered to us.’”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN AGREE TOGETHER.**

*Dibre HaYamim Aleph 13:4 – “And all the Qahal agreed to do so, for the matter was right in the eyes of all the people.”*

### **THE QAHAL OF יהוה IS YISRAEL.**

*Dibre HaYamim Aleph 28:8 – “And now, before the eyes of all Yisrael, the Qahal of יהוה, and in the hearing of our Elohyim, guard and seek all the commands of יהוה your Elohyim, so that you possess this excellent land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN BLESS AND WORSHIP יהוה.**

*Dibre HaYamim Aleph 29:20 – “And Dawid said to all the Qahal, ‘Now bless יהוה your Elohyim.’ And all the Qahal blessed יהוה Elohyim of their fathers and bowed their heads and did obeisance to יהוה and the king.”*

### **THE QAHAL GOES TO THE MEETING PLACE OF יהוה.**

*Dibre HaYamim Beth 1:3 – “And Sh'lomoh, and all the Qahal with him went to the high place that was at Gib'on, for Elohyim's Tent of Meeting was there, which Mosheh the servant of יהוה had made in the wilderness.”*

### **THE QAHAL OF יהוה CAN BE BLESSED BY THE KING.**

*Dibre HaYamim Beth 6:3 – “And the king turned around and blessed all the Qahal of Yisrael, while all the Qahal of Yisrael stood.”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN MAKE A COVENANT.**

*Dibre HaYamim Beth 23:3 – “And all the Qahal made a covenant with the king in the House of Elohyim. And he said to them, ‘See, the son of the king is to reign, as יהוה has said of the sons of Dawid.’”*

### **THE QAHAL CAN TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER**

*Dibre HaYamim Beth 30:23 – And all the Qahal took counsel to perform another seven days, and they performed it another seven days with joy.*

So, what do you think? We believe that you also will have found that, in most cases, *Qahal* is best translated as *fellowship*. Yes, it is just a little word-study, and perhaps not so terribly important, but did you learn anything? It is our belief that to teach someone a single chapter, rule, verse, expression, or even a single letter of Scripture is a blessing. If you have learned here, then you and we are both blessed.

This study of the word *Qahal* should also have provoked you to notice how pervasive it is throughout Scripture. It has to do with nearly every conceivable subject. In other words – and here is our true point in bringing you this study – nearly every conceivable subject in Scripture is in some way involved with and dependent upon the *Qehilah* – the Assembly, the Fellowship of יהוה that is named – the people of Yisrael.

The kingdom of יהוה is not about solo individuals. It is about ALL of His people, living and loving in an eternal fellowship together. The road that leads there, according to the Torah, Prophets and the writings of the apostles of יהושע, is called *The Way – Haderek*. You cannot walk it alone but must share it with all of your brothers and sisters in Messiah. It is our fervent prayer and hope that all of you will soon learn to do so. We love you, brethren. Find your place, and join the *Qehilah*!

*Halleluyah!* Sing to יהוה a new song, His praise in the *Qehilah* of His Merciful ones. Let Yisrael rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of *Tzyon* exult in their King!

B'shalom,  
Ovadyah & Yochanan