

Qahal vs Edah what is the difference?

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We see Yisrael identified as both a qahal and edah. What do they mean and how do they apply when looking at Yisrael? Are they the same thing or a group with in another group.

The first Hebrew word we will look at is the word Qahal as the masculine noun. It is reference number 6951 and is (qof-hey-lamed). You can find it starting on page 874 in the BDB and page 1094 in the NEHC.

Bereshit/Genesis 28:3

1 So Isaac sent for Jacob and blessed him. He instructed him, saying, “You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women. 2 Up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take a wife there from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother, 3 May El Shaddai bless you, make you fertile and numerous, so that you become an **assembly of peoples** (liq’al amim לְקַהֵל עַמִּים). 4 May He grant the blessing of Abraham to you and your offspring, that you may possess the land where you are sojourning, which Elohim assigned to Abraham.”

We see that qahal is translated as an assembly but lets keep looking.

Bereshit/Genesis 35:11

10 Elohim said to him, “You whose name is Jacob/Ya’aqov, You shall be called Jacob/Ya’aqov no more, But Israel/Yisrael shall be your name.” Thus He named him Israel/Yisrael. 11 And Elohim said to him, “I am El Shaddai. Be fertile and increase; A nation, yea an **assembly of nations** (uq’hal goyim וְקַהֵל גּוֹיִם), Shall descend from you. Kings shall issue from your loins. 12 The land that I assigned to Abraham/Avraham and Isaac/Yitz’chaq I assign to you; And to your offspring to come Will I assign the land.”

Yisrael was to be an assembly of nations. As a people they were a nation. Individually they would be an assembly of nations. Many people try to link this with the Ephraim and Manasseh but these if this is only a reference to them then what happened to the rest of Ya’aqov’s/Yisrael’s sons.

Shemot/Exodus 12:6

6 You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month; and **all the assembled congregation of the Israelites** (kol qahal ‘adat-Yisrael כָּל־קְהָל עֵדַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל) shall slaughter it at twilight.

We see both words we are studying here in this verse. Yisrael was assembled here as a congregation shown here. It shows that in gathering together the ‘adat is also a qahal. So both are possible in this context for them to be the same.

Shemot/Exodus 16:3

3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of Yehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve **this whole congregation** (et-kol-haqahal אֶת־כָּל־הַקְּהָל) to death.”

Notice that qahal here is translated a congregation also. So based upon the previous translations it should also be translated assembly here too. So what they were referring to was not just the congregation of Yisrael but the greater assembly here meaning all the mixed multitude that was with them also.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 4:13, 14, 21

13 If it is the **whole community of Israel** (kol-‘adat Yisrael כָּל־עֵדַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל) that has erred and the matter escapes the notice of **the congregation** (haqahal הַקְּהָל), so that they do any of the things which by Yehovah’s commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt—14 when the sin through which they incurred guilt becomes known, **the congregation** (haqahal הַקְּהָל) shall offer a bull of the herd as a sin offering, and bring it before the Tent of **Meeting** (mo’ed).

21 He shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering of **the congregation** (haqahal הַקְּהָל).

Here we see congregation used for qahal and we have seen earlier that is used to describe an assembly so the word congregation they are using also deals with an assembly and ‘adat (edah) used for community. Lets keep looking.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 16:17

17 When he goes in to make expiation in the Shrine, nobody else shall be in the Tent of Meeting until he comes out. When he has made expiation for himself and his household, and for **the whole congregation of Israel** (kol-qahal Yisrael כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל),

Aharon and his sons after him make atonement for himself and the whole assembly of Yisrael. Now if this is only for a select few in the whole community then does that not say that even at atonement that only a select few would receive atonement not the whole of Yisrael. In fact the whole assembly/qahal of Yisrael is the same as the community of Yisrael here.

Bamidbar/Numbers 14:5 (1-5)

1 **The whole community** (kol-ha'edah כָּל־הָעֵדָה) broke into loud cries, and the people (ha'am) wept that night. 2 **All the Israelites** (kol benei Yisrael כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) railed against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in the land of Egypt," **the whole community** (kol-ha'edah כָּל־הָעֵדָה) shouted at them, "or if only we might die in this wilderness! 3 Why is Yehovah taking us to that land to fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be carried off! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!" 4 And they said to one another, "Let us head back for Egypt." 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before **all the assembled congregation of the Israelites** (kol-qahal 'adat benei Yisrael כָּל־קְהַל עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל).

We see here that the Kol-Benei Yisrael and Kol-Ha'edah are one and the same. Here we see qahal used as assembly again and in context with the whole of Yisrael.

Bamidbar/Numbers 15:14-15

14 And when, throughout the ages, a stranger (ger) who has taken up residence with you, or one who lives among you, would present an offering by fire of pleasing odor to Yehovah—as you do, so shall it be done by 15 the rest of the congregation (haqahal הַקְהָל). There shall be one law for you and for the resident stranger (ger); it shall be a law for all time throughout the ages. You and the stranger (ger) shall be alike before Yehovah;

The underlined part of the text is not reflected in the Hebrew and gives a different impression in the English than in the Hebrew. It appears that the congregation/assembly includes the Ger and those who live among the Israelites.

Bamidbar/Numbers 16:1-3

1 Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—descendants of Reuben—2 to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community (edah), chosen in the assembly (mo'ed), men of repute. 3 **They combined** (va yiqahalu וַיִּקְהָלוּ) against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For **all the community** (kol-ha'edah כָּל־הָעֵדָה) are holy, all of them, and Yehovah is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above Yehovah’s **congregation (qahal)?**”

We see qahal used for combined here. This shows that an assembly is just that those assembled. In this case it was some of the leaders in Yisrael, which rose against Moshe and Ha'aron. The second use of Qahal is not specific to the men who rose up but all of Yisrael as an assembly there.

Bamidbar/Numbers 19:20

20 If anyone who has become unclean fails to cleanse himself, that person shall be cut off from **the congregation** (haqahal הַקָּהָל), for he has defiled Yehovah’s sanctuary. The water of lustration (nidah) was not dashed on him: he is unclean.

Being unclean from a dead body meant that one would have to remove themselves from the assembly (in this case the encampment) until the water of nidah (impurity) was applied.

Bamidbar/Numbers 20:3-4

3 The people quarreled with Moses, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished at the instance of Yehovah! 4 Why have you brought Yehovah’s **congregation** (et-qahal אֶת־קָהָל) into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die there?

Again congregation used as another word for assembly.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:19

19 Yehovah spoke those words—those and no more—to **your whole congregation** (et-kol-qahal'khem אֶל־כָּל־קָהָלְכֶם) at the mountain, with a mighty voice out of the fire and the dense clouds. He inscribed them on two tablets of stone, which He gave to me.

The whole assembly was there to hear the words spoken not just a few.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 9:10

10 And Yehovah gave me the two tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of Elohim, with the exact words that Yehovah had addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of **the Assembly (haqahal הַקָּהָל)**.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:16

16 This is just what you asked of Yehovah Eloheykha at Horeb, on the day of **the Assembly (haqahal הַקָּהָל)**, saying, “Let me not hear the voice of Yehovah Elohey any longer or see this wondrous fire any more, lest I die.”

Here we see the day was for the assembly. Not a few but all those with the Israelites (Benei Yisrael).

Devarim/Deuteronomy 23:2-4, 8-9

2 No one whose testes are crushed or whose member is cut off shall be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)**.

3 No one misbegotten shall be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)**; none of his descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)**. 4

No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)**; none of their descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall ever be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)**),

Here we see those that are not to be in the assembly of Yehovah. So this assembly is also not all of Yisrael if one has a specific problem or of a specific people. They cannot be part of the assembly of Yehovah. In the sense of one who can come before Yehovah.

8 You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your kinsman. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land. 9 Children born to them may be admitted **into the congregation of Yehovah (biq’hal Yehovah בְּקִהַל יְהוָה)** in the third generation.

There may have been an assembly of Yehovah, which gathered at the temple/tent, and then any assembly/qahal not specific of Yehovah, which included all peoples, intermixed with Yisrael. We saw earlier that the Ger was also part of this assembly of Yehovah earlier. Otherwise, how would he or she bring their sacrifice to Yehovah.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 13:1-3

1 At that time they read to the people from the Book of Moses, and it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite might ever enter **the congregation of Elohim (biq'hal haElohim בְּקִהַל הָאֱלֹהִים)**, 2 since they did not meet Israel with bread and water, and hired Balaam against them to curse them; but Eloheynu turned the curse into a blessing. 3 When they heard the Teaching, they separated all the alien **admixture from Israel (kal-'erev miYisrael – all intermixed from Yisrael כָּל-עֵרֶב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל)**.

Clearly they understood the text as not intermingling (marrying) of the people of Ammonites and Moabites.

To determine whether this word is really referring to assembly let us look at the verb form. The next Hebrew word we will look at is the word Qahal as the verb. It is reference number 6950 and is (qof-hey-lamed). You can find it starting on page 874 in the BDB and page 1094 in the NEHC.

Bamidbar/Numbers 10:7-8

7 **while to convoke (uv'haq'hiyl – and when assembled וּבְהִקְהִיל) the congregation (et-haqahal אֶת-הַקְּהָל)** you shall blow long blasts, not short ones. 8 The trumpets shall be blown by Aaron's sons, the priests; they shall be for you an institution for all time throughout the ages.

They assembled the assembly.

Divrei Ha Yamim Bet/2 Chronicles 20:26

26 On the fourth day **they assembled (niq'halu נִקְהְלוּ)** in the Valley of Blessing—for there they blessed Yehovah; that is why that place is called the Valley of Blessing to this day.

They assembled.

Ester/Esther 9:2

2 Throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the Jews **mustered (niq'halu נִקְהְלוּ)** in their cities to attack those who sought their hurt; and no one could withstand them, for the fear of them had fallen upon all the peoples.

The same word is used in both verse “they assembled” should be what Ester says.

Bamidbar/Numbers 17:7

7 But as **the community**(ha'edah הַעֲדָה) **gathered** (bahiqahel בַּהִיָּקָהֶל) against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the Tent of Meeting; the cloud had covered it and the Presence of Yehovah appeared.

Here again the edah was bahiqahal (in assembled they).

Ester/Esther 8:11

11 to this effect: The king has permitted the Jews of every city **to assemble** (lahiqahael לַהִיָּקָהֶל) and fight for their lives; if any people or province attacks them, they may destroy, massacre, and exterminate its armed force together with women and children, and plunder their possessions

The king allowed them to assemble to defend themselves.

Shemot/Exodus 32:1

1 When the people (ha'am) saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, **the people gathered** (vayiqahel ha'am וַיִּקְהֵל הָעָם) against Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a elohim who shall go before us, for that man Moses, who brought us from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has happened to him.”

The people were gathered/assembled.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 8:4

4 Moses did as Yehovah commanded him. **And when the community was assembled** (vatiqahel ha'edah וַתִּקְהֵל הַעֲדָה) at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,

The community was assembled themselves..

Bamidbar/Numbers 20:2

2 The community was without water, and **they joined** (vayiqahalu וַיִּקְהֵלוּ) against Moses and Aaron.

They assembled themselves.

Bamidbar/Numbers 1:18

18 and on the first day of the second month **they convoked the whole community** (**kol-ha'edah hiq'hiylu** כָּל־הָעֵדָה הִקְהִילוּ), who were registered by the clans of their ancestral houses—the names of those aged twenty years and over being listed head by head.

They assembled the kol ha'edah.(whole/all of the Community)

Bamidbar/Numbers 8:9

9 You shall bring the Levites forward before the Tent of Meeting. **Assemble** (**vehiq'hil'ta** וְהִקְהַלְתָּ) the whole Israelite community (et-kol-adat benei Yisrael אֶת־כָּל־עַדַּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל),

This was an assembled group of the Sons/Children of Yisrael.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:10

10 The day you stood before Yehovah Eloheykha at Horeb, when Yehovah said to Me, “**Gather** (**haq'hel** הִקְהַל) the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.”

Yehovah had Moshe assemble the people to hear his words.

From these we see that Qahal in the verb form is the act of assembling or gathering. In Hebrew Grammar the noun is derives its meaning in most cases from the verbal stem. The exception is when a noun is derived from another noun. So Qahal as the Masculine Noun would reflect the meaning of it derivative verb. So this just states they are an assembled group. Depending on the context this could include all gathered people living in Yisrael, the assembly of Yehovah in which some were excluded. And even an assembly of just the children of Yisrael.

Now lets look at 'edah which is the feminine noun for which is translated community in the JPS. But is that the meaning of it. Let examine it. It is reference number 5712 and is from the root of (yod-ayin-dalet). In this work the, letters are Ayin-Dalet-Hey. The Hey make the noun feminine. It can be found on page 417 in the BDB and 903 in the NEHC. It is from masculine noun 5707.

Shemot/Exodus 12:3, 6, 19, 47 (3-6), (19), (43-48)

3 Speak to the **whole community** (**et-kal-'adat** אֶל־כָּל־עַדַּת) of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household. 4 But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a

neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month; and all the assembled (qahal) **congregation of the Israelites (adat-Yisrael עֲדַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל)** shall slaughter it at twilight.

The adat (edah plural) of Yisrael being those of the home born or including the ger paying to become part of that group and circumcising his males. This was not the whole assembly of people in Yisrael for this.

19 No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off **from the community of Israel (me'adat Yisrael מֵעֲדַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל)**, whether he is a stranger (ger) or a citizen of the country.

We see that the ger was considered a part of the adat Yisrael. Otherwise, why have them keep Days of Unleavened Bread.

43 Yehovah said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner (kol-ben-nekhar כָּל־בֶּן־נֶכְחָר) shall eat of it. 44 But any slave (eved עֶבֶד) a man has bought may eat of it once he has been circumcised. 45 No bound (toshav תּוֹשָׁב) or hired laborer (v'shakhir וְשָׂכִיר) shall eat of it. 46 It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you break a bone of it. 47 **The whole community of Israel (kol-'adat Yisrael כָּל־עֲדַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל)** shall offer it. 48 If a stranger (ger גֵּר) who dwells with you (yagur יָגוּר) would offer the passover to Yehovah, all his males must be circumcised (mul); then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen (ba'ez'rach) of the country (ha'aretz). But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.

We see that certain people were not allowed to do the Pesach but Yisrael Ez'rach and the Ger wanting to attach themselves to the community (adat) of Yisrael. One attaches themselves to the community.

Shemot/Exodus 16:1-2, 9-10, 22

1 Setting out from Elim, **the whole Israelite community (kol-adat benei Yisrael כָּל־עֲדַת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל)** came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. 2 In the wilderness, **the whole Israelite community (kol-adat benei Yisrael כָּל־עֲדַת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל)** grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

9 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to **the whole Israelite community (kol-adat benei Yisrael כָּל־עֵדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל)**: Advance toward Yehovah, for He has heard your grumbling.” 10 And as Aaron spoke to **the whole Israelite community (kal-adat Benei Yisrael כָּל־עֵדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל)**, they turned toward the wilderness, and there, in a cloud, appeared the Presence of Yehovah.

22 On the sixth day they gathered double the amount of food, two *omers* for each; and when **all the chieftains of the community (kol nasi’ey ha’edah כָּל־נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה)** came and told Moses,

Notice in the beginning it designated the adat as the adat benei Yisrael or the community of the children of Yisrael. Community as we have seen is being distinctly identified in order not to confuse who is in the community or who is the leaders. The leaders later come and tell Moshe and Aharon what was done. It identifies them of the community and not as a qahal

Vayiqra/Leviticus 4:13-15

13 If it is **the whole community of Israel (kol-adat Yisrael כָּל־עֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל)** that has erred and the matter escapes the notice of **the congregation (haqahal הַקָּהָל)**, so that they do any of the things which by Yehovah’s commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt—14 when the sin through which they incurred guilt becomes known, **the congregation (haqahal הַקָּהָל)** shall offer a bull of the herd as a sin offering, and bring it before the Tent of Meeting. 15 **The elders of the community (ziq’ney ha’edah זִקְנֵי הָעֵדָה)** shall lay their hands upon the head of the bull before Yehovah, and the bull shall be slaughtered before Yehovah.

Here we see adat identified as Yisrael and the assembly referred to here. So this would be that the whole assembly of people living in Yisrael as a community of Yisrael. And as we saw before the adat benei Yisrael is specific to the tribes of Yisrael Lets keep looking. Also. Ziq’ney is plural for Zaqan or Elder and thus these are the elders of Yisrael.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 8:3-5

3 and assemble (haq’hel הַקָּהֵל) **the whole community (kol ha’edah כָּל־הָעֵדָה)** at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. 4 Moses did as Yehovah commanded him. And when **the community was assembled (vatiqahel ha’edah וַתִּקְהַל הָעֵדָה)** at the

entrance of the Tent of Meeting, 5 Moses said to **the community (ha'edah הַעֵדָה)**,
"This is what Yehovah has commanded to be done."

Here we see that the community (ha'edah) is being spoken to here but not specifically identified as Yisrael. Was this the general community of all gathered there because they left with a mixed multitude of other peoples from Egypt. Those people lived in the camp of Yisrael.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 24:14-16

13 And Yehovah spoke to Moses, saying: 14 Take the blasphemer (et ham'qalel 7043 curser) outside the camp; and let all who were within hearing lay their hands upon his head, and let **the whole community (kol-ha'edah כָּל־הַעֵדָה)** stone him.

15 And to the **Israelite people (benei Yisrael)** speak thus: Anyone who blasphemes (yaqalel/curses) Elohayv shall bear his guilt; 16 if he also pronounces (vanoqev 5344 strikes) the name Yehovah, he shall be put to death. **The whole community (kol-ha'edah כָּל־הַעֵדָה)** shall stone him; **stranger (bager)** or **citizen (ba'ez'rach)**, if he has thus pronounced (banaq'vo 5344 strikes) the Name, he shall be put to death.

Here we see the whole community is the citizen (ez'rach) and the sojourner (ger) . So we see that even generically it refers to the people of the tribe of Yisrael and those who are attaching themselves to him.

Bamidbar/Numbers 1:2-3, 16, 18, 53

2 Take a census of **the whole Israelite community (kol adat benei Yisrael כָּל־עֵדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל)** by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head. 3 You and Aaron shall record them by their groups, from the age of twenty years up, all those in Israel who are able to bear arms.

Here we see that adat benei Yisrael is the Tribes of Yisrael. They were accounted by their tribes.

16 Those are the elected of **the assembly (ha'edah הַעֵדָה)**, the chieftains of their ancestral tribes: they are the heads of the contingents of Israel.

We see that here the edah used for community used for assembly.

17 So Moses and Aaron took those men, who were designated by name, 18 and on the first day of the second month **they convoked (haq'hiylu) the whole community (Kol-**

ha'edah כָּל־הַעֲדָה), who were registered by the clans of their ancestral houses—the names of those aged twenty years and over being listed head by head.

They assembled the community.

53 The Levites, however, shall camp around the Tabernacle of the Pact, that wrath may not strike **the Israelite community (adat Benei Yisrael בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)**; the Levites shall stand guard around the Tabernacle of the Pact.

The levites were made to keep the community of Benei Yisrael from the mish'khan or dwelling place of Yehovah.

Bamidbar/Numbers 3:6-7

6 Advance the tribe of Levi and place them in attendance upon Aaron the priest to serve him. 7 They shall perform duties for him and for **the whole community (kol ha'edah כָּל־הַעֲדָה)** before the Tent of Meeting (ohel mo'ed tent of appointments), doing the work of the Tabernacle (mish'kan with dwelling).

The levi'im attended to Aharon and his sons and performed the duties for the community in place of the community.

Bamidbar/Numbers 8:6-9

6 Take the Levites from among the **Israelites (Benei Yisrael)** and cleanse them. 7 This is what you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle on them water of purification, and let them go over their whole body with a razor, and wash their clothes; thus they shall be cleansed. 8 Let them take a bull of the herd, and with it a meal offering of choice flour with oil mixed in, and you take a second bull of the herd for a sin offering. 9 You shall bring the Levites forward before the Tent of Meeting. Assemble (**vahiq'hil'ta**) and you assemble) the whole Israelite community (**et-kol-adat Benei Yisrael**),

The whole community of Yisrael as assembled to witness the cleansing sacrifices for the Levi'im.

Bamidbar/Numbers 10:2-3

2 Have two silver trumpets made; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon (lamiq'ra) **the community (ha'edah)** and to set the divisions in motion. 3 When both are blown in long blasts, **the whole community (kol-ha'edah)** shall assemble before you at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

We see that the trumpets were used to proclaim/summon the ha'edah (the community).

Now lets look at another 'edah which is the feminine noun. It is reference number 5713 and is from the root of (yod-ayin-dalet). In this work the, letters are Ayin-Dalet-Hey. The Hey make the noun feminine. It can be found on page 729,730 in the BDB and 903 in the NEHC. It is from masculine noun 5707.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:44-45

44 This is the Teaching (hatorah) that Moses set before the Israelites (Benei Yisrael): 45 these are **the decrees (ha'edot – plural edah)**, laws (chuqqim), and rules va hamish'patim) that Moses addressed to the people of Israel (Benei Yisrael), after they had left Egypt,

Here we see edah other usage as a decree. But lets look further.

Yehoshuah/Joshua 24:27

27 and Joshua said to all the people, “See, this very stone shall be **a witness (la'edah to witness)** against us, for it heard all the words that Yehovah spoke to us; it shall be **a witness (la'edah to witness)** against you, lest you break faith with Eloheykha.”

The stones are to witness or be a reminder when they see them of the oath they took.

Bereshit/Genesis 21:27-31

27 Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a pact (covenant). 28 Abraham then set seven ewes of the flock by themselves, 29 and Abimelech said to Abraham, “What mean these seven ewes which you have set apart?” 30 He replied, “You are to accept these seven ewes from me **as proof (la'edah – lo witness)** that I dug this well.” 31 Hence that place was called Beer-sheba, for there the two of them swore an oath.

Here we see the seven ewes used to witness some agreement or covenant that was reached. They were to be a sign of the covenant.

Bereshit/Genesis 31:51-53

51 And Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this mound and here the pillar which I have set up between you and me: 52 this mound shall **be witness ('ed)** and this pillar shall **be witness (edah)** that I am not to cross to you past this mound, and that you are not to cross to me past this mound and this pillar, with hostile intent. 53 May Elohey of Abraham and the elohey of Nahor”—their ancestral deities—“judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.

Here we see both the feminine noun (edah) and the masculine noun (ed) used both as witness.

Here we see that 'edah is used to describe witnesses. In the first usage we saw it directly identifying Yisrael as the witnesses or community of witnesses if you will. We see in the other usage that objects were used as witnesses also.

So edah is from 'ed (Ayin-Dalet) which is a masculine noun. Reference number 5707. It is found on page 729 in the BDB and page 902 in the NEHC. It is from the verb 'ud which is 5749.

Bershit/Genesis 31:44, 48, 50, 52

44 Come, then, let us make a pact, you and I, that there may be **a witness (la'ed)** between you and me.” 45 Thereupon Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. 46 And Jacob said to his kinsmen, “Gather stones.” So they took stones and made a mound; and they partook of a meal there by the mound. 47 Laban named it Yegar-sahadutha, but Jacob named it Gal-ed. And Laban declared, “This mound is **a witness (ed)** between you and me this day.” That is why it was named Gal-ed; 49 And [it was called] Mizpah, because he said, “May Yehovah watch between you and me, when we are out of sight of each other. 50 If you ill-treat my daughters or take other wives besides my daughters—though no one else be about, remember, Elohim Himself will **be witness (ed)** between you and me.”

51 And Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this mound and here the pillar which I have set up between you and me: 52 this mound shall **be witness (ed)** and this pillar shall **be witness (edah)** that I am not to cross to you past this mound, and that you are not to cross to me past this mound and this pillar, with hostile intent.

Here we see that ('ed) is a witness as a noun it represents the oath, which was sworn.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 5:1

1 If a person incurs guilt—When he has heard a public imprecation and—although able **to testify (ed)** as one who has either seen or learned of the matter—he does not give information, so that he is subject to punishment;

One who testifies is a witness.

Bamidbar/Numbers 35:30

30 If anyone kills a person, the manslayer may be executed only on the evidence of **witnesses ('edim); the testimony (ya'neh)** of a single **witness (ed)** against a person shall not suffice for a sentence of death.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:17

17 You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false **witness (ed)** against your neighbor.

No false witnessing.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 17:6-7

6 A person shall be put to death only **on the testimony of two or more witnesses [al-piy shanim edim o shalshah edim at the mouth two witnesses or three witnesses]**; he must not be put to death on the testimony of a single **witness (ed)**.—7 Let the hands of **the witnesses (ha'edim)** be the first against him to put him to death, and the hands of the rest of the people (ha'am) thereafter. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst.

Edim is plural for ed witness. Here we see not only that their had to be two or three witnesses but that the witnesses started to stoning.

So 'ed is from 'ud (Ayin-Dalet) which is a verb. Reference number 5749. It is found on page 729, 728 in the BDB and page 905-906 in the NEHC.

Lamentations 2:13 – Qal

13 **What can I take as witness (mah a'ivdekh)** or liken To you, O Fair Jerusalem? What can I match with you to console you, O Fair Maiden Zion? For your ruin is vast as the sea: Who can heal you?

The sole Qal or Kal reference for this is used for witness.

Hiphil

Shemot/Exodus 19:21, 23 (21-23)

21 Yehovah said to Moses, “Go down, **warn (ha'ed)** the people not to break through to Yehovah to gaze, lest many of them perish. 22 The priests also, who come near Yehovah, must stay pure, lest Yehovah break out against them.” 23 But Moses said to Yehovah, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You **warned (ha'ed'tah)** us saying, ‘Set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it.’”

We see it used here as warning someone. A witness would speak or remind someone not to do something or do something.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:26

26 **I call** heaven and earth this day **to witness (ha'idotiy)** against you that you shall soon perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess; you shall not long endure in it, but shall be utterly wiped out.

Here Moshe uses the heavens and earth as witnesses that when they don't keep what they swore to keep they would perish from the land.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 8:19

19 If you do forget Yehovah Eloheykha and follow other elohims to serve them or bow down to them, **I warn (ha'idotiy)** you this day that you shall certainly perish;

Here we see the same Hebrew word used to issue a warning as a witness.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 30:19

19 **I call** heaven and earth **to witness (ha'idotiy)** against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live

Again a witness or warning.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 31:28

28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, that I may speak all these words to them and that **I may call** heaven and earth **to witness ('a'idah)** against them.

Here we see again calling to witness. Which is the action of making a witness. Like that of Lavan and Yisrael or Avraham and Avimelech we see the witnesses were objects that appeared to be permanent. Something someone could point to and say remember. The adat of Benei Yisrael or community/witnesses of the children of Yisrael were to be that example or witness not only to each other but also to those around them.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:

6 Observe (keep) them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, "Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people." 7 For what great nation is there that has an elohim so close at hand as is Yehovah Eloheynu whenever we call upon Him? 8 Or what great nation has laws (chuqqim) and rules (mish'patim) as perfect as all this Teaching (torah) that I set before you this day?

9 But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously, so that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes and so that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live. And make them known to your children and to your children's children:
10 The day you stood before Yehovah Eloheykha at Horeb, when Yehovah said to Me,

“**Gather (haqahel)** the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.” 11 You came forward and stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain was ablaze with flames to the very skies, dark with densest clouds. 12 Yehovah spoke to you out of the fire; you heard the sound of words but perceived no shape—nothing but a voice. 13 He declared to you the covenant that He commanded you to observe, the Ten Commandments; and He inscribed them on two tablets of stone. 14 At the same time Yehovah commanded me to impart to you laws (chuqqim) and rules (mish’patim) for you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy.

15 For your own sake, therefore, be most careful—since you saw no shape when Yehovah Eloheykha spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire—16 not to act wickedly and make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness whatever: the form of a man or a woman, 17 the form of any beast on earth, the form of any winged bird that flies in the sky, 18 the form of anything that creeps on the ground, the form of any fish that is in the waters below the earth. 19 And when you look up to the sky and behold the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole heavenly host, you must not be lured into bowing down to them or serving them. These Yehovah Eloheykha allotted to other peoples everywhere under heaven; 20 but you Yehovah took and brought out of Egypt, that iron blast furnace, to be His very own people, as is now the case.

So we see that while qahal as assembly is the gathering of people, which in reference to Yisrael could be all people in the land, or the tribes and those gathered to the tribes. Whereas, edah are the community or witnesses who are those who are the tribes themselves with the gers attached to them. As we build a karaite community we need to understand that the community are those who attached them selves to the Yisrael or the house of Yehudah today. The ones who take on the oath to keep the ways and path of Yehovah. Taking on the curses and blessings and living the whole torah and its mitvot, chuqqim, mish’patim (commandments, statues, judgements).