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The Wave Offering and Priestly Portion

7: 28-38

The wave offering and priestly portion DIG: In ancient Isra'el, all the tribes were given land, except the Levites (the priestly tribe) who were to live off the offerings of others (Numbers 18:8; Deuteronomy 18:1-5). Being without land and dependent - would that help or hinder their ministry? What does that teach you about God's desire for his people?

REFLECT: Some take passages like this as a reason to refrain from eating meat or eating only "kosher" meat? What do you think? How else might you show respect for the symbol of life, which is the blood. How is your Messianic rabbi or pastor like or unlike the priests in the TaNaKh? How can you help your Messianic rabbi or pastor by your weekly offerings?

When a worshiper brought his peace offering to ADONAI, the fat and the breast were presented, the priest burned the fat on the bronze altar, and the worshiper waved the breast as a wave offering before the LORD, which, along with the contribution of the right thigh, became the priestly portion.

In this concluding section of the sacrificial offerings (**to see link click [Ag](#) - The Mitzvot of Offerings**), the portion designated for **the priests** is explained. They were the better portions of the meat offerings, pointing out that **God** made good provision for those who labored in **His** presence. Because **the priestly** portions are excellent provisions and because **they** come directly from **the LORD**, the biblical writers frequently use **them** as images of the wonderful provisions that **ADONAI** gives to **His people** who dwell in **His** presence forever. **You prepare a table before me, in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely Your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life; and I will live in the house of ADONAI forever (Psalm 23:5-6).**⁸⁶

God's people have an obligation to give publically and directly to ADONAI:

ADONAI said to Moshe, “Say to the people of Isra’el, ‘A person who offers his fellowship offering to God is to bring part of his sacrifice as his offering for **ADONAI**. Once again, the emphasis is on **the worshiper’s** participation. **He is to bring with his own hands the offerings for ADONAI made by fire - he is to bring the breast with its fat. The breast is to be waved as a wave offering before God. The priest is to make the fat, kidneys, and covering of the liver to go up in smoke on the bronze altar, but the breast will belong to Aaron and his descendants’ (7:28-31).**” The order of the procedure is significant here: **The priest** was entitled to take **the breast** and **the right thigh** (see below) of the sacrificial animal only after **God’s portion** of the offering, that is, **the fatty** portions, had been **burned on the bronze altar**. As related to **First Samuel 2:15-17**, the sons of Eli, the high priest at Shiloh, failed to observe this **mitzvah**. They seized their portions of **the offerings** from the cooking pots, even before **the fatty portions** were **burned on the bronze altar**, thereby provoking **Ha’Shem’s** wrath.⁸⁷



Anyone who brought a fellowship offering (to see link click [AI - The Peace Offerings](#)) was to bring part of it as his sacrifice to ADONAI. He was to bring the fat, together with the breast and the right thigh, and wave them before God as a wave offering. The Hebrew word for **wave offering comes from a root that means *to swing or to move back and forth*. It was a ceremony that was unique to **the fellowship offering** and **the priestly offerings (Leviticus 14:12 and 24, 23:11-12, 23:20; Numbers 5:25, 6:20, 8:11-13)**. **The rabbis teach that the priest would lay the offering upon the hands of the worshiper, then he placed his own hands underneath the worshiper’s hands and moved both their hands forward toward the bronze altar in a horizontal direction, symbolizing giving it to God, and backward toward the priest, symbolizing receiving it back from God as a contribution. The priest then burned the fat on the bronze altar, but the breast belonged to the****

priesthood (Numbers 18:11-12).

God's people have an obligation to make part of their offering for a priestly portion: You are to give the right thigh from your sacrifices of peace offerings to the priest as a contribution. The descendant of Aaron who offers the blood of the fellowship offering is to have **the right thigh** as his portion. For the breast that has been waved and the thigh that has been given, I have taken from the people of Isra'el out of their sacrifices of peace offerings and given them to Aaron the priest and to his descendants as their portion forever. On the day when Aaron and his sons were presented to serve God in the office of priest, this portion was set aside for him and his descendants from the offerings to YHVH (7:32-35). Over the centuries **the priests'** portion increased. **The priest** eventually received **the shoulder, two cheeks, and the stomach (Deuteronomy 18:3).**

The breast was a **wave offering** and went to **the priesthood**; however, **the right thigh** was a **contribution offering** and went to **the officiating priest**. He was to receive **the right thigh of the fellowship offering** as a *trumah*, meaning a **contribution**. **The rabbis teach that in contrast to the breast, the right thigh was waved up and down. Waving it up symbolized giving it to God, and down symbolized God giving it back to the priest.** The officiating priest who offered **the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering** received **the right thigh as his portion**. That was **the portion allotted to the priests on the day they were anointed**. On that day, **God commanded that the Israelites give the breast and the right thigh of the meat portion of the fellowship offering to them as their regular portion** as long as the Torah was in effect (7:36). The remainder of **the fellowship offering** was eaten by **the worshiper and his family**.

The priests had no inheritance or income other than the tithes and offerings of **the people**. This mode of providing their needs was ideal, for it gave **the people** the opportunity to share in the work of **God** by supporting the ministry. Of course, if **the Israelites** did not sacrifice or tithe, then **the priests** would not receive enough income. This is the same today; if the people fail to give, then the income of the shepherds will suffer.⁸⁸

Back to the story: In the last chapter of **Exodus**, **Moshe** and **Isra'el** encountered the problem of **holiness**. It was **the first day of the first month of the year**, two weeks short of a full year since **Isra'el** left **Egypt**. **The Tabernacle** had been

completed according to all **its** specifications. **Moses** lit the menorah. **He** put out the twelve loaves of the bread of the presence. **He** lit the incense and even made the first **sacrifice (Exodus 40:34-35)**. It seemed that **the Tabernacle** had been a success. The Sh'khinah glory had taken up residence within it. Yet, there was a fundamental problem with the entire **Tabernacle** concept. Even if **God** could dwell among **the Israelites** in a **holy** place, that didn't mean that **the Israelites** could have any communion or fellowship with **Him**. **YHVH** was still **holy**; mankind was still unholy. How could unholy mankind come near to **the holy God**? This was the problem **Moshe** faced at the end of the book of **Exodus**. **The Holy One** had taken up residence in **the Tabernacle**, but **He** was unapproachable. Even **Moses** couldn't come near to **Him** there.⁸⁹

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that when there was no way possible for mankind to come near to **You**, no matter how good we are, **You** made the way. **Your** plan, from even before **the creation of the world**, was to redeem those who **love You** by adopting **us** as sons and daughters, placing **us in You**. **He chose us in Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4)**.*

*Praise **You** that since **Yeshua's** victory over sin and death, **He** is always living as our **High Priest** to intercede for **His** children. **Therefore He is also able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, always living to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25)**. We do not take this wonderful privilege lightly, but with great joy we consider what an awesome privilege it is to be able to come near to **God**, and in humble worship we praise and adore **You Glorious Lord, Holy Ruach and Father!** In **Messiah's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

As a result, for the last **seven chapters** the Torah has digressed from the narrative to relate **the mitzvot** of **the five offerings**. Here, we finish that digression with a summary statement. **These, then, were the mitzvot for the purification offering, the guilt offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering, which ADONAI gave Moses on Mount Sinai on the day He commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to ADONAI in the Desert of Sinai (7:37-38)**. Having completed **the mitzvot** of **the five offerings**, **ADONAI** went on to instruct **Moses** in the confirmation of **the priesthood**.⁹⁰