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The Meal and Seven Days of Training Leviticus 8: 31-36

The seven days of training DIG: What parts of the ordination ceremony were seven days long and which were offered daily? Why was a bull sacrificed each day? Is the ordination to ministry a “once-for-all-time” event or is it a continual process? Why was the concept of holiness so important? Have you ever been set aside for special service to the LORD?

REFLECT: What parts of the ordination ceremony listed here would you want included for your ordination into ministry? Read Judges 17:5 and 12. Perhaps you have been ordained for service as a leader, elder, servant, children’s worker, musician, or usher. Has God “filled your hands” to serve Him? Explain the role of a wholehearted ministry to ADONAI.



There were seven main steps to the dedication of the Tabernacle and the priests. The sixth step was the meal (8:31-32): ADONAI instructed Aaron and his sons to cook and eat the rest of the peace offering ram of ordination within the courtyard of the Tabernacle. They were to eat it along with the remainder of the breads. Whatever was not eaten was to be burned. **Moshe said to Aaron and his sons, “Boil the meat at the door of the Sanctuary; and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket of dedication,**

as I ordered when I said that Aaron and his sons are to eat it. Whatever is left over of the meat and bread you are to burn up completely (8:31-32). This meal sealed the covenant with the priests and God.¹¹⁶

There were seven main steps to the ordination of the Tabernacle and the priests. The last step was seven days of training (8:33-36): Do not leave the entrance to the Tabernacle for seven days, until the days of your ordination are fulfilled; for He will ordain you through seven days (8:33). The phrases are fulfilled; for He will ordain in the Hebrew literally reads, *He will fill your hand*. It was an idiom that meant *investing with an office*. They were to be invested with the office of the priesthood. The parashah ends (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy**, to see link click [Af - Parashah](#)) with the **seven-day ordination** ceremony. An ordinary peace offering was not designated as “most holy” and could be eaten anywhere in the camp of Isra’el. However, Aaron and his sons were not to leave the Tabernacle courtyard at all for seven days. Being elevated for divine service requires a Shabbat with ADONAI.¹¹⁷

According to Jewish tradition, each day Moses would gather all of Isra’el to the Tabernacle, wash Aaron and His sons, robe them in their priestly clothing, and anoint them with oil. Moshe then anointed the Tabernacle, its contents, the bronze altar and the bronze basin. **This tradition says that the entire procedure was repeated for seven consecutive days. Each day Moses would reassemble priests and repeat the sacrifice of a bull for a purification offering to make atonement for them (Exodus 29:35), and it also purified the bronze altar (see the commentary on Exodus [Gh - Bring a Bull to the Front of the Tabernacle and Slaughter It There](#)), the first of two rams for a burnt offering (see [Ay - The Burnt Offering Ram](#)), and the ordination ram for a peace offering (see [Az - The Peace Offering Ram](#)). Afterwards Moshe taught the priests their various duties.**

What has been done today was commanded by ADONAI to make atonement for you. You are to remain at the entrance to the Tabernacle, day and night for seven days, indicating that the ordination was thorough and complete, thereby obeying what ADONAI ordered done, so that you may not die. For this is what I was commanded (8:34-35). If they left the holy place and went out to a non-holy place (anywhere outside the Tabernacle courtyard (see the commentary on **Exodus [Ex - The Courtyard and Gate of the Tabernacle](#)**), they were disregarding the holiness of the ordination process and also risking death.

Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being so Holy and loving! It is wonderful to feel **Your**

great love, but it is also important to remember that **You** are holy and you want me to be filled with **Your** joy as I live my life lovingly obeying **You**. Though **Your** love is so very great, love never overrides **Your** holiness. Please help me to always remember that our relationship is a two-way loving relationship. It is not just about receiving the gift of **Your** love and then walking away and doing what I please - no, that is not a covenant relationship of love. **Yeshua** said that the most important commandment was to love **God** with all your heart. **And He said to him: You shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38).** It is a joy to please **You** and to use my thoughts, time and money in ways that make **You** feel my love for you. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen

The priests underwent this weeklong rite of passage to move from one life, to an entirely new life of **the priesthood**. The drawn-out, yet complete process of one week, impressed on **them** the importance of entering and following the ministry as obedient servants of **ADONAI**. **Moshe** explained that the **ordination** rituals were performed to provide atonement for **the priests so they wouldn't die**. Since **they** would be serving in the presence of **Ha'Shem**, **they** would be in need of extra measures of atonement. The entire ritual was celebrated to show that **the Aaronic priesthood** was an institution of **YHVH**, existing by **His** will and meant to serve **His** purpose. Neither **Aaron** nor **his sons** were ready to be **priests** apart from what was done in **the ordination**: as **sinner**s they needed atonement, as common **men** they had to be ordained and set apart, and as ordinary **men** they had to be empowered.¹¹⁸

God's grace was particularly evident in **Aaron's** appointment as **the high priest**. For the very one who had been the chief **sinner** (see the commentary on **Exodus Gr - Aaron Made an Idol in the Shape of a Calf**) then became the chief mediator for the people of **God**. Servants of God in all ages are in desperate need of the cleansing provided by **ADONAI** to be available and useful in **His** service. Believer-**priests** can still serve **God** today provided they be cleansed by means of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** and **the Word (John 13:10; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; and Hebrews 10:22)**. The contrast between the **sinful** lives of **the future high priests** and the life and work of our **Great High Priest, Yeshua Messiah**, to which **the high priests** pointed, was not lost on the writer to the **Hebrews** (see the commentary on **Hebrews Be - Melchizedek Was a Type of Christ**).¹¹⁹

The concept of **holiness** jumps out at us as we read this passage. It is important to understand that **holiness** is not inherent in creation, but comes only from **God**. He alone is the source of **holiness**. There is nothing innately **holy** in the materials of **the Tabernacle**,

or in the cloth or the materials of **the priest**, or **the priesthood itself**. They were common things and common people. But what made them different was that they were set apart for the purposes of a **holy God**.

One of the primary names for the righteous of the TaNaKh is **the holy ones (Deut 33:2-3; Job 5:1; Psalms 16:3, 34:9; Zechariah 14:5)**. This is also true in the B'rit Chadashah, in which the word often translated **saint** literally means **holy one (Romans 1:7; First Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1)**. Now people in their natural state are common and, indeed, fallen (**Genesis 3:1-24**). For someone to be called *a holy one*, the work of **God** must have taken place in that person's heart. It is **God** who changes something, or someone, from common to **holy**. It is **His** work, and **His** glory that **He** does such things. Why should **God** allow you to enter **His** heaven? **God** is **holy, sees every heart and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12)**. A **holy** heart is what is needed to enter a **holy** heaven. **God** wants to give you that **holy** heart, if willing to love and follow **Him** as your **Lord** and **Savior**. If you merely respect **Yeshua** as a good person, that is not enough. A heart of love towards **God** is needed for **God** to make you **holy**. Make a wise choice to follow the **ADONAI** who loves you so very much! You will never be sorry when you choose to love and to follow **God** with all your **heart**!

It is fun to speculate what **Aaron and his sons** may have talked about while together in such an unusual setting for the **seven-day** period. Probably none of **them** ever dreamed **they** would ever find themselves in such a lofty position, nor would **they** have considered **themselves** unworthy of it. I can just hear one of **them** saying, "**Abba**, is there really forgiveness for **my sins**?" And **another**, "**Father**, why does there have to be so much blood?" Then I imagine **Aaron** trying to answer, saying, "I don't know exactly how to answer **you**. But we need to take **God** at **His Word**. If **He** says the blood atonement covers our **sins**, then we need to believe **Him**."

The question was then, would **they** listen to the words of **Ha'Shem** and act on them? This leads us to the next parashah, where we see that two of **Aaron's sons** should have listened to **their Abba's** advice and taken **God's Words** more seriously. But for now, at least, **Aaron and his sons** were obedient and **did everything ADONAI commanded through Moses (8:36)**.¹²⁰

Haftarah Tzav: Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 7:21-8:3; 9:23-24
(see the commentary on Deuteronomy [Af](#) - Parashah)

Let the boaster boast about this: that he understands and knows Me - that I am

ADONAI, practicing grace, justice and righteousness in the Land; for in these things I take pleasure, says ADONAI (Jeremiah 9:24). Sacrifices alone will not please Ha'Shem. But Isra'el thought, "The Temple, the Temple will protect us" (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Cc - False Religion is Worthless](#)). They did not believe God would let His holy Temple be destroyed. Jeremiah uttered the shocking command: **Eat the 'olah (Jeremiah 7:21)! The prophet denounced the people for burning their sons and daughters in fire - which I never commanded (Jeremiah 7:31).** YHVH concludes ever so softly that the wise, the strong, and the rich should not glory in wisdom, strength, or riches. For only in the intimacy that comes from knowing ADONAI may one boast (Jeremiah 9:22-23). How ironic that the LORD told Jeremiah in advance that the people would neither listen nor repent of their sins (Jeremiah 7:24). Yet when repentance is missing, the chatta't (purification) offering fails to purify even unintended sin. Devastating consequences would follow (Jeremiah 7:28 to 8:3).

The B'rit Chadashah reading: Hebrews 9:28

So also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to deliver those who are eagerly waiting for him (Hebrews 9:28). The blood of Messiah provides access to God, by purifying, dedicating, and sanctifying a New Covenant priesthood. Under the Old Covenant (see the commentary on [Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah](#)), the sacrificial **blood of animals** temporarily covered the sins of the faithful (Psalm 32:1). Intentional sins were not covered, however, and so conscience was not purged. The repetitive nature of the Yom Kippur ritual, to effect the removal of sins year-after-year only increased problems of conscience as the intentional sins of the nation piled up during the year. Furthermore, only the high priest, the formally clothed and anointed priesthood of the nation, had direct access to the living presence of God. In contrast, Messiah's once-and-for-all sacrifice decisively purges the conscience (Hebrews 9:13-14). His death, ascension, and appearance "before the face of God" forever changes the nature of worship. Now a royal priesthood has unlimited access to ADONAI.¹²¹