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Take the Other Ram, and Aaron and His Sons Will Lay Their Hands on Its Head

Exodus 29:19-28 and Leviticus 8:22-30

Take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons will lay their hands on its head **DIG**: Why apply blood to the right ear lobes, the right thumbs and their right big toes? Do you think the dedication process could have taken place without any of that? Why? Why was the second ram sacrificed differently than the first one?

REFLECT: How do you know when you are at peace with God? Who has to surrender? How is that done? What offering have you made to God to have peace with Him?



The third sacrifice was **the other ram**, or **the ram** for **a peace offering**. Once again **Aaron and his sons** laid **their hands on its head**, symbolically transferring the sins of **the priests** to the sacrifice. After **Moses** then slaughtered **it**, **he** took **some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons** (their hearing), **on the thumbs of their right hands** (their service), **and on the big toes of their right feet** (their walk), signifying that **they** were cleansed and purified. Later, **priests** would follow the same ritual as part of a cleansing ceremony for leprosy (**Leviticus 14:14**). So this seems to be an act of cleansing

and purification. **Aaron** went first, and only after **he** was finished were **his sons** brought to go through the same ritual. That separation underscores the supreme importance of **the high priest** within the priesthood of **Isra'el**.⁶⁴² **Then Moses** sprinkled the **blood against the altar on all sides (Exodus 29:19-20; Leviticus 8:22-24)**.

Moses would later write: **The life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life (Leviticus 17:11)**. **The blood** that secures atonement symbolizes both propitiation (appeasing **God's** wrath) and expiation (forgiving and removing the sins of **God's** people). **The blood** applied to **the altar** represented **God's** acceptance of the priestly sacrifice. Willingness to hear and obey was symbolized by the application of **blood** to **the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons**. Putting **the blood on the thumbs of their right hands** and **on the big toes of their right feet** symbolized readiness and ability to serve (just as cutting off those **thumbs** and **big toes** symbolized the effective removal of those qualities as in **Judges 1:6-7**).⁶⁴³

First, from **the ram for the fat, the fat tail, and the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys with the fat round them, and the right thigh (Exodus 29:22; Leviticus 8:25)**. These were to be sacrificed on top of **the first ram** that had already been **burnt on the bronze altar**.

Anyone who brought **a peace offering** was to bring **the breast** and **the right thigh** of the sacrifice, and **wave** them before **ADONAI**. Therefore, **from the basket of bread made without yeast, Moses** took **a loaf, a cake made with oil, and a wafer, and he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh**. **The rabbis teach that Moses then put the right thigh in the hands of Aaron, and then his sons individually, then placed their own hands underneath Aaron's hands and moved both up and down. Waving it up symbolized giving it to God, and waving it back down symbolized God giving it back to the priest**. So both **God** and **Moses** were both involved in dedicating the priesthood. **Then** the sacrifice was all burned **on the bronze altar along with the burnt offering** of the first ram (**Exodus 29:23-25; Lev 8:26-29**). Normally, **the priests** would eat **the wave offering**, but because of the special dedication ceremony, it was offered back to **God on the bronze altar**.

Afterwards, **Moses** took **the breast of the second ram** waved it before **ADONAI** to conclude **the wave offering**. In contrast to **the right thigh, the rabbis teach**

that Moses placed his hands under the breast and moved it forwards toward the bronze altar in a horizontal direction, symbolizing giving it to God, and then backwards symbolizing receiving it back from God as a gift. The breast was his **share**, because he was the officiating priest. However, **God** explained to **Moses** that this would be a unique event. Later, after the dedication ceremony and assuming the full duties of the priesthood, **the breast** would belong to **Aaron, his sons** and **their** families to eat. It would be the contribution **the Israelites** were to make to **ADONAI** from their **peace offering** (Exodus 29:26-28; Leviticus 7:31-34, 10:14; Numbers 18:11-12).

Then completing the ceremony, **Moses took some of the oil** of dedication and **some of the blood from the bronze altar and sprinkled the oil and the blood on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he dedicated Aaron and His garments and his sons and their garments** (Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30). The sprinkling of **blood**, and **the oil** of dedication **on Aaron, his sons** and their clothes, was the consummate sign of the priesthood. **Blood** then covered all aspects of the scene; **the horns, the sides and base of the bronze altar**, the priests' **right ear lobes, thumbs and big toes**; and the priests themselves along with their **garments**. All had been purified and set apart for service to **God**.

The dedication of the clothing of the priesthood played an interesting role in the later story of the sin of **Nadab and Abihu**. These two **priests, sons of Aaron**, came before **ADONAI** and **offered unauthorized fire. They themselves** were **consumed** by **fire** that **came** directly from **God**. Afterward, **Moses** called **Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, to remove the rebels' bodies outside the camp. So they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp** (Leviticus 10:1-5). Although **Nadab and Abihu** had been destroyed by **fire, their priestly tunics** had not been consumed. Although **the men** were profane, **their** clothing was not.⁶⁴⁴

It is hard to believe that **Isra'el** would not have been extremely impressed with the truth that the element of **blood** was absolutely essential to dedication, purification and atonement. Here the priests were having **blood put on their right ear lobes, right thumbs and right big toes**, and having it sprinkled on **their** clothing, and then splattered on the rest **of their** bodies. In front of **them** was **the bronze altar** that was covered with **blood** – on the top where **the horns** were, **on the sides** and all around **the base**. The entire sacrificial system of **Isra'el** was **bloody**. Flavius Josephus, a former Jewish general, turned Jewish writer and Roman citizen of the



first century AD, told of one specific Passover during the reign of Nero where the Hebrews offered 256,500 lambs as sacrifices. The **blood** must have been flowing just about everywhere, and must have been on everything and everyone.

The writer to the **Hebrews** gets to the heart of the issue when he says: **In fact, the Torah requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22)**. But in **His** mercy, **ADONAI** graciously sent **His Son Jesus Christ** to shed **His blood** for **His** people. As the writer says: **The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (Hebrews 9:13-14)**. Thus, we no longer need the bloody priesthood and the bloody sacrifices of the Tabernacle, for **the Messiah** has come, once for all, to shed **His blood** for eternal purification and eternal atonement.⁶⁴⁵