

Tzav

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“Give an order”

Leviticus 6:8 – 8:36

Torah Together



At first glance, this *Torah* portion looks like a copy of the previous one, repeating instructions for the different types of offerings. On closer examination, however, one notices that these instructions are directed specifically to the priests, giving them details concerning their responsibilities for the activities of the Tabernacle.

1. The Burnt Offering - 6:8-13

a) What responsibility did the priest have for the fire on the altar of burnt offering? What are the implications of continuous burning? What does this teach us?

b) Why do you think it was necessary for the priest to change clothes to clean the ashes from the altar?

2. The Grain Offering - 6:14-23

a) What part of the grain offering was to be the ‘memorial portion’? What was to be done with it? What was to be done with the remainder?

Scripture Link:

Fire is a good metaphor for God. **Deuteronomy 4:24** reads, “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” Thus the continuous fire on the altar was a constant reminder of the presence of God in the midst of the Israelite camp.

Why Share the Grain Offering?

There are several possible explanations for this. Since the priests were not allowed to work for their livelihood, this was a way of recognizing and thanking God for their daily bread. It can also be seen as a **covenantal meal** between God and the Levites, reaffirming the relationship between God and His priesthood.

Grain Offering at the Ordination Ceremony
Leviticus 6:19-23 gives instructions specifically for the *Korban Mincha* during the ordination ceremony of the priest, something that occurred only once in his life. Given that this offering represents the necessities in one's life, what lesson might God want to teach the priest with this offering?

Holiness by Touching Holy things?
From God's perspective, the world exists in two states: the clean and pure versus the contaminated and impure. Many of the rules that God has ordained for our worship of Him seem to be aimed at reinforcing this concept. When an offering is made or consecrated to God, it belongs to Him and is therefore considered Holy. In most cases, the offering is burned on the altar. However in some cases, not all of the offering is burned or destroyed. Since the remaining part belongs to God, it is holy: things that come into contact with it are holy as well. The goal is to learn to keep the clean and the unclean separate

b) What specific instructions were given for the grain offering that was to be part of the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests? Who was to prepare this offering?

c) Can you see any spiritual significance in the total consumption by fire of the priest's grain offering at the time of his ordination? ("Every grain offering of a priest shall be burned completely; it must not be eaten." -- Leviticus 6:23)

3. The Sin Offering - 6:24-30

a) What happened to the parts of the sin offering that were not burned on the altar? How was it to be treated? To whom did the sin offering really 'belong'?

b) What was to be done with the vessels in which the remaining sin offering was cooked? Why do you think this was necessary?

c) What happened to the sin offering if its blood was used inside the Tent of Meeting?

4. The Guilt Offering - 7:1-10

Were the regulations for the sin offering and the guilt offering different? What parts of which offerings did the priests receive as their share?

5. The Fellowship Offering - 7:11-21

a) What two types of fellowship offerings are described in these verses? What are the differences between them? How were the “leftovers” to be treated in both cases?

b) Why do you think God is so concerned that the meat of this offering, as well as the persons eating it, be “ceremonially clean”?

6. Eating Fat and Blood Forbidden - 7:22-27

Is it clear what parts of the animal are specifically forbidden to be eaten? What is the punishment for the violation of this command? What do you think this means?

7. The Priests' Share - 7:28-38

a) When a worshipper brings a fellowship offering, what is he to do with it according to verse 30? What significance do you think this might have?

b) Who gets which parts of the fellowship offering?

Scripture Link:

Ezekiel 44:23 reads, “They [the priests] are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.” Although we may not clearly understand why, it seems that God is quite serious about the concepts of “clean” and “unclean.” Today, as New Testament believers, we are members of a “Royal Priesthood” (**1 Peter 2:9**) and therefore responsible for carrying out the priestly duties. How do you think the instruction to teach the people “to distinguish between the unclean and the clean” applies to us today?

Ordination Ceremony

This very public ceremony, conducted before the entire Israelite community, had one purpose: to consecrate (set apart for use by God) the high priest and his sons. The rite, performed by Moses, involved the washing of Aaron and his sons, anointing them with oil, and making offerings to YHWH. The entire process lasted seven days and at its conclusion the priests were ready to begin their ministry.

Scripture Link:

Exodus 29 details the process for “consecrating” or “ordaining” Aaron and his sons as priests. This passage (**Leviticus 8**) relates the ceremony from the standpoint of the priests. There is yet another description of the same ceremony in **Numbers 7 and 8** which describes the scene from the point of view of the general population. By reading all three passages, one can form a better mental picture of what the ceremony might have been like.

Scripture Link:

In **Leviticus 8:8**, Moses puts the Urim & Thummim in the breastpiece worn by Aaron. These items are first described in **Exodus 28:28-30**.

8. The Ordination of Aaron and his Sons - 8:1-36

a) Who was invited to the ordination ceremony? What offerings were made as a part of the ordination ceremony?

b) What was done to Aaron and his sons before the consecration process began? How was the consecration process begun? What was the symbolic purpose for this?

c) What animal was the first to be sacrificed? For what purpose was this sacrifice? What was the second animal to be sacrificed and what was its purpose?

d) What was the third animal to be sacrificed and what was its purpose? Describe the process that was followed. What was done with the blood from this sacrifice? Do you see any significance in this act?

e) How long did the entire ordination process last? According to verse 34, what was the purpose for this ordination process?

“So Aaron and his sons did everything YHWH commanded. . .”
Leviticus 8:36

Digging deeper

1. **Hebrews** chapters **7 – 9** describe the New Covenant priesthood, with *Yeshua* as our High Priest. **1 Peter 2:4-10** says that we, as believers in *Yeshua*, are members of this “holy priesthood.” The chart below compares the New Covenant priesthood with that of the Levitical priesthood described in this *Torah* portion. What insight does this give you into our roles? Can you see how the ordination ceremony conducted for Aaron and his sons might foreshadow our own “ordination” ceremony?

| Comparison of Priesthood | |
|---|---|
| Old Covenant | New Covenant |
| ☆ Levitical Order | ☆ Order of Melchizedek |
| ☆ Tribe of Levi, descendants of Aaron | ☆ Believers in <i>Yeshua</i> , adopted sons |
| ☆ Sacrifice bulls and goats | ☆ Our bodies, a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1) |
| ☆ Mediator of the Old Covenant (Torah written on stones by God) | ☆ Mediator of the New Covenant (Torah written on our hearts by God) |
| ☆ High Priest: - Passed through descendants of Aaron - Made sacrifices for his own sin - Continually made atonement for the sins of the people | ☆ High Priest: - One, <i>Yeshua</i> , descendant of Judah - Sinless - Made atonement once for all (Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10; 8:1 - 10:18) |

Thumbs, Toes and Ear Lobes

As part of the ordination ceremony, Moses took some of the blood from the ram killed for the ordination offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot of Aaron and his sons. This symbolizes that the priests were set apart to hear God, to do God’s work, and to walk in God’s leading.

Functions of the Priesthood

The priests were called to be holy, set apart for use by God. They had the following tasks:

1. Represent the people before God and God to the people
2. Present offerings on behalf of the people for cleansing and forgiveness of sin, to restore fellowship with God
3. Teach the people the difference between clean and unclean, between the holy and the common
4. Serve in the operation of the Tabernacle

Digging deeper

2. Read **Mark 7:1-13**. The word used in verse 11, *korban*, is exactly that word defined in **Leviticus**. Does knowing this help clarify what *Yeshua* means in this passage? Can you paraphrase the idea that *Yeshua* is expressing?

For further study, see

Haftarah : Jeremiah 46:13-28

Brit Hadashah : Luke 2:22-24; John 19:31-37; Acts 13:16-17;
Revelation 8:6 – 9:12; 16:1-21