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THE CEREMONY OF LAYING - ON
OF HANDS.

GRADUATION THESIS
PRESENTED BY
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THE LAYING-ON OF HANDS IS PRESCRIBED
IN THE FOLLOWING CASES IN THE BIBLE.

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A. In the sacrificial system-

1. At the consecration of Aaron and sons who lay hands on bullock and rams. (Exodus 29:10; Lev. 8:14)
2. At private offerings of animals on all occasions. (Lev. 1:4-3:2 etc.)
3. At the sin-offering made on behalf of whole congregation (IIChron.29:23)
4. At the scapegoat 'Let go for Azazel' (Lev16:21)

B. In Judicial matters-

5. Witnesses lay hands on head of a person charged with a capital crime. (Lev. 24:14 - Susanah 5:34)
6. When slain man found in fields, elders of nearest town wash their hands over red heifer. (Deut. 21:6)

C. In consecration to office-

7. Tribe of Levi at their dedication received imposition of hands from representatives. (Num. 8:10)
8. Moses appointing Joshua as successor. (Num. 27:18 & Deut. 34:8)

D. Symbol of benediction-

9. Jacob blessing grandsons (Gen. 48:14)
10. Aaron giving priestly benediction. (Lev. 9:22)

THE CEREMONY OF LAYING-ON OF HANDS.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the many ceremonies in the Bible the significance and purpose of which have engaged the attention of numerous students, the ceremony of the laying-on of hands occupies a position of high interest. Since the Bible itself nowhere states explicitly the meaning of this rite, particularly when used in connection with the ritual of sacrifice, expositors of biblical literature have devoted much time in trying to understand the original signification of this ceremony. The subject has been treated already very disjointedly by the Rabbis, the Church Fathers, Philo, and of late by several archaeologists and biblical critics. Naturally, different views and interpretations have resulted. The references being so scattered and the circumstances under which it appears so different that an agreement is hardly to be expected.

With but few exceptions the writers on this subject were Christians who wrote as a rule from a Christian point of view. They have, therefore, because of a Christian bias, often erred in their interpretation. Being ignorant and unfamiliar with the Jewish traditions and Rabbinical Literature they had to do without the evidences furnished by these

2.

sources which help us materially to a better comprehension of this ancient ceremony. Besides, the recent ⁶⁰researches in the field of comparative studies of the ceremonies and rites among early and primitive people, by such men as Fraser, S. W. Curtis and H. Clay Trumbal have done much in shedding a flood of light on the real significance of the ceremony of laying-on of hands. The numerous illustrations which they cite will help to bear out my contention, and disprove the many curious and poetic fancies of modern scholars who, with their apologetic bias obscure its true meaning and attempt to spiritualize their theories.

To understand the ceremony as well as other rites we must go back to primitive and savage conditions. The value of what we actually know on this subject is proportionate to the amount of evidence which may be gathered from early people. A proper view ~~XXXXXXXX~~ and a more sympathetic consideration of evil, sin and impurity as understood by primitive people, is requisite for a complete knowledge of this ceremony, as is also the more correct understanding of the development of sacrifices among early peoples as well as among ancient Israel.

I also need acknowledge, in conclusion, my indebtedness to the members of the Hebrew Union College Faculty whose helpful suggestions greatly aided my task. These suggestions have taken form of actual co-operation in my conferences on the subject with Dr. J. Lauterbach and Dr. J. Morganstern, my esteemed professors.

The subject proper has been proposed by Dr. Lauterbach; though the topic seemingly indicates a realm dry and pure-

ly scholastic, the procedure of the work grew more interesting and developed in an astonishing wealth of scope as it advanced. The sundry theological details and ^{the} comparative religious study which has to be touched upon in merely skimming the interesting ceremony of Semicha, is most marvelous.

To Dr. Morganstern am I in particular indebted for the flood of light he has shed on the subject. He has rendered invaluable help in shaping my personal viewpoint as regards clarifying the many confusing and different theories advanced on the subject.

SIGNIFICANCE IN GENERAL.

CHAPTER 1.

The Biblical significance of the imposition of hands rests, in general, on the consideration that the hand is the organ of transmission. Transfer of power or of some personal quality by bodily contact so naturally suggests itself to us that we ought not be surprised to find this method in use among various peoples. Imposition of hands may be said to be almost universal as a means of conveying a benediction, of transmitting power, of consecration and induction into office, and of healing the sick(1)As the hand is the principal organ of touch, contact with it is often regarded as an important means of transmitting the qualities or powers inherent in the person who touches another. The hand is laid upon the head because it is the noblest part of the body, the center of brain activities, and considered by a primitive people as the seat of the soul. It was laid upon the head too, because as a possible spirit entry, power of a spiritual or magical kind would pass into it from the hand.

(1) The laying-on of hands is not the only means of transferring spiritual powers, of inducting into office, of conveying a benediction, as I shall point out later. The instance of the seventy Elders whom Moses fills with the spirit of wisdom occurs without the laying-on of hands. Therefore the Jewish Enc. is wrong in its statement (Vol. 1X p. 428) that "the transfer of spirit can take place only by the laying-on of hands"

5.
 a. Meaning of Word. - The Hebrew word is נָדַח and the standing expression applied to the ceremony is נָדַח בְּיָדָיו which led the rabbis to call the act itself $\text{נָדַח$. It conveys according to them more than a mere laying-on of hands; it denotes rather a resting, a pressing of the hand. The choice of this expression therefore, shows that it had reference to a most important act, for which reason, the rabbis expressly required that the laying-on of hands should be performed with all the powers of the body (1) As Maimonides says, "The offerer must lay both hands with great force between the horns of the animal just before it is killed."

b. Where imposition of hands occur. - The laying-on of hands takes place in Jacob's blessing of his two grandsons, (2) consecration of Levites, (3) induction of Joshua into office as successor to Moses, (4) the incident of the blasphemer where witnesses press hands upon head of criminal, (5) the Elders who accused Susanah, similarly lay hands on her head when testifying against her; (6) and it is finally enjoined at the sacrificial ritual, for the burnt offering, (7) peace-offering, (8) and sin offering, (9) but not for trespass offering. (10) That is to say, all private offerings require the laying-on of hands except $\text{זֶבַח עֹלָה, זֶבַח שְׂלָמִים, זֶבַח חַטָּאת}$. (11)

(1) $\text{נָדַח בְּכָל כֹּחַ הַגִּבּוֹרִים}$ Talmud מ'נדר 33a נדר 16b

cf. also Maimonides Yad הקדמות 3:13

(2) Gen. 48:14

(3) Num. 8:10.

(4) Num. 27:18 & 23.
Deut 34:9

(5) Lev. 24:14 (6) Sus. 5:34. (7) Lev. 1:4. - 8;18- Ex.29:15

(8) Lev.3:2 -8, Ex. 29:10-19. (9) Lev. 4:4; 4:15-24-29-33; 8:14
II Chron.29:33.

(10) Lev. 5:6-5:15 - 18-25. (11) Mish. נדר 9:7 - Maim. 3:6

Public offerings require no laying-on of hands, except *וְעַל הַזֶּה* (1)
the sacrifice on Atonement Day. (2) Rabbi Simon holds that also
וְעַל הַזֶּה requires the laying-on of hands. (3) Jewish Tradition
further holds that the ceremony cannot be performed by deaf and
blind, by idiots and minors, by women and heathens. (4) The kil-
ling of the animal must be performed at the same place where the
imposition of hands occur. The Mishna states that before the sac-
rificer laid his hands upon the head of the victim, it was bound
by a cord to one of the rings fixed for the purpose on the north
side of the altar; and that at the moment when the words of the
prayer or confession were ended, the fatal stroke was given. (5)
The act of laying-on of hands was observed only when the sacrifices
were offered by Jews and not by Gentiles. (6) The ceremony was
not observed when the sacrifice was a fowl, that is, a pidgeon
or a turtle-dove. (7) Only the owner of the sacrificial animal
might observe the ceremony, and it could not be performed by
proxy. (8) In case, therefore, several persons made an offering
together, due to the expense, it was necessary that they should
lay their hands on the head of the victim each in succession.

(1) Lev. 4:15 (2) Lev. 16:21 (3) *וְעַל הַזֶּה* 92a

(4) Mish. *וְעַל הַזֶּה* 9:8 (5) Tal. *וְעַל הַזֶּה* 42a. (6) Menach. 93a.
Maim. Yad 3:5.

93^a וְעַל הַזֶּה
36 וְעַל הַזֶּה

(7) *וְעַל הַזֶּה* 3:6.

(8) Menach. 93b. - Maim. Yad 3:8

In case of a thank-offering or a meal-offering, at which sins are not confessed, the sacrificer recites a prayer and a hymn of thanksgiving during the act.⁽¹⁾

(c) Oral Confession or not. - Thus we see that the Rabbinical writers held that the imposition of hands was accompanied by verbal utterances, in harmony with the nature of ~~the~~ sacrifice; namely, by ~~this~~ confession of sins at expiatory sacrifices and by a recital of the praises of God at thank-offerings. There seems to be almost unanimous assent among later Biblical writers in their belief that some prayer or confession was uttered, when the act of laying-on of hands occurred. Keil,⁽²⁾ for instance, says "Although the Law does not prescribe any prayer for public worship, except confession of sin on the Day of Atonement, and the thanksgiving on the occasion when the firstlings were offered and the tithes paid, (Deut 26:3-13) still it is certain that in Israel there was no act of worship that was not accompanied at the same time with prayer. The reason that it not only happened to be a regular accompaniment of the act of the laying-on of hands on the victim in sacrifice, but also because it was usual for the congregation, or the Levites, as representing it (I Chron. 23:30) to offer up prayer at the place of worship every morning and every evening while the incense was in the act of being burnt" (Luke 1:10).

(1) Maim. Yad מוסף ופסח 3:8-9-14-15.

(2) Keil "Biblical Archaeology" page 454, Vol. I.

Cremer holds that the laying-on of hands is the symbolic expression of the words which are being simultaneously spoken in order that the one upon whom the hand is laid shall be and do what the words express. A silent laying-on of hands has never taken place.

Wherever there is a laying-on of hands, there must be words accompanying it. ⁽¹⁾ This seems to be the attitude of almost all of the scholars. Bähr, however, while he holds that the sacrificial ceremony can hardly have been performed in perfect silence, yet just as among the primitive people, he adds, formularies may have been repeated during the sacrifice. ⁽²⁾

The mistake of the rabbinical students and biblical writers lies in their failure to look upon this ceremony as an ancient one, one that already existed at a time when formulated prayer or confession was undeveloped. In fact, this thought practically goes to the root of the matter. For early and primitive people had not reached the stage of a consciousness of ethical sin, which would necessitate a verbal confession. But as Bähr hinted, originally probably, the laying-on of hands was followed simultaneously by the performing of some magic art or formula. There was indeed, no need for him to say anything. It was only much later when man had already reached a higher conception of sin and felt the need of expiatory sacrifices was there perhaps a verbal utterance as we find it in Yoma, which is based on the ceremony of the Day of Atónement. But the Yom Kippur is already a late institution,

(1) Real Encyclopedia- "Handauflegung"

(2) Bähr "Symbolic Mosaishen Cultus" Vol. II, S. 340 ff.

Hence, even if the priest here is asked to confess his sins and those of the people, and the command in Lev. 5:5 and Num. 5:7 speak of a confession of sins, these scattered references cannot be adduced as any proof of the custom, since they are first of all late institutions, and second, since they are not connected with the imposition of hands, but precede the whole sacrificial ceremony

d. Singular or Plural?

There is considerable speculation as to whether one or both hands were placed upon the person or animal, since the Bible is not consistent in its use of the term. Even the Rabbis differ in their opinion on this point. ⁽¹⁾ Taking for granted that the one hand was employed, Kalisch ⁽²⁾ holds with Targum Jonathan ⁽³⁾ that it was the right hand, since the right hand was considered stronger, more privileged, and more auspicious. ⁽⁴⁾ To begin at the right hand, was looked upon by the Greeks as a happy presage, and means lucky or happy. ⁽⁵⁾ Even Benziger ⁽⁶⁾ holds that it was the right hand that was imposed. The instance of the scapegoat in Lev. 16:21 requires both hands, which was necessary, some hold, because of the importance of the day and of the victim.

(1) Menachoth 93a. 2

Ibn Ezra holds that one hand is used.

(2) Kalisch "Commentary on Leviticus" part 1, page 176.

(3) ה' י' ב' ד' ז' ח' ט' י"א י"ב י"ג י"ד י"ה י"ו י"ז י"ח י"ט On Lev. 1:4-3:2 etc.

(4) Gen. 48:14-17; Ex. 15:6-12; Lev. 8:23-24. Lev. 13:14-17-25-27

Is. 62:8; Zach. 11:17. Ps. 45:10- 90;1; 118:15; Job. 40:14.

(5) Homer II-VII-184. Od. Chap. 17:365- Chap. 21:141.

(6) Hebraic Arch. p. 380. (1) "Hebraic Arch."

In the case of the idolator in Deut. 17:7, or the enticer in Deut. 13:10, or in Lev. 24:14 where a man blasphemes, it is held⁽¹⁾ that one hand is to cleanse the witnesses of the infection in hearing the curse, and the other hand is to bring about punishment proper on the one who has sinned. In Num. 27:18, the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts of unvocalized texts use the singular, while the Septuagint uses the plural, but in Num. 27:23 and Deut. 34:9 the plural is used in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and the Samaritan uses the singular. With this conflict of evidence the question of the use of one or both hands in the rite as applied to persons must remain an open one, unless it be assumed that it must have been the same as in the sacrificial rite. In the allusion to the sacrificial rite the plural 'hands' is naturally used where the subject is plural.⁽²⁾ Mathes⁽³⁾ refutes Merx in regard to the use of the singular in Num. 27:18, and plural in Deut. 34:9 which contains the same story of Joshua succeeding Moses. He holds that Merx offers no grammatical argument in support of this view, namely, that transmission of power requires the plural. I agree with Mathes; that after all, it makes no difference whether one or both hands were placed on the head of the victim.

(1) Cremer- Real Enc.

(2) Cf. Ex. 29:10 - 15-19; Lev. 4:15; 8:14- 22; Num. 8:10-12 but where the subject is singular, Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 8:13; 4:4; 24-29-33 16:23, the singular 'hand' is always used except in Lev. 16:21 where the Krê 'ח' יד and the Greek omits 'יד' and even there the K'tib has the singular, 'יד'. The evidence thus points strongly to the use of the singular hand in this rite.

(3) Mathes in Z. A. T. W. Vol. XXIII, 1903.

CHAPTER II.DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF 'SEMICHA'.

What is the underlying meaning of the laying-on of hands, whether it be to lay one's hands on the head of a person in the act of blessing or consecrating him to a new position in life, whether it be to lay one's hand on the head of a culprit by the witnesses or people, or finally whether it be to press one's hand on the head of an animal when presenting one's sacrifice?

In all the theories presented by the different writers on this subject, two stand out prominently, the one entirely at variance with the other. The one view has uppermost in its mind the question, was there or was there not transference of anything by the imposition of hands? There is a great preponderance of doubt in the minds of those who formulate the question; and if it is admitted that there may have been some substitution effected, it can only be understood in a symbolical sense. The other view, which by the way is the traditional view, already takes for granted that there was transference of something - something concrete, real, tangible - by the lay-ing-on of hands, and the question simply is to determine what was it that was transferred. This is called the substitutionary theory. 2

The full statement of some of these scholars will bring out more clearly what I have just now briefly touched upon. In the exposition of their views they nearly all start from the most obvious explanation of their theory and work upward. And so it is by beginning with the sacrificial laying-on of hands, and which after all presents the largest variety

of offerings which require the act of imposition, that the various other instances of the laying-on of hands are offered for consideration. As a rule that which holds true for the sacrificial laying-on of hands applies with equal force and truth to the other references of the imposition of hands. But even this point is seriously questioned. It is maintained by some that the act of laying-on of hands denotes in each and every case where it is found something else, and that no common basis for all of them is to be found.

Let us first of all quote the oldest of these expositors whose view yet differs from either one of the above-mentioned theories. Philo in speaking of the sacrifices, says:—"The imposition of hands is a plain indication of innocence on the part of the offerer, and of a life free from reproach and in concord with the laws of nature; for the Law requires that the soul of the offerer be filled with piety by constant meditation on good and useful subjects, and also that the life be made up of good and useful deeds so that the offerer may say with a clear conscience:—These hands have neither taken bribes nor shared in unlawful gain, nor have they been stained with innocent blood." (1) The views of the rabbis and of tradition is the exact opposite of this, for it makes the offerer confess his guilt over the head of the animal. Hoffmann believes that Philo had in mind the formula, which the elders of the community recited in the instance of *the* *1910* *1754* (Deut. 21:7) when the body of an unknown person is found slain in the fields. These men then say "Our hands have not shed innocent blood, etc," and Philo took this confession as applying to all sacrifices. (2)

Bähr holds that the meaning of the imposition of hands is that it is the giving up unto death of the offerer's own self to God, and therefore his dedication to ^{the} divine spirit. (3) Kalisch rightly holds

(1) Philo-Judaicus - "De Victimis" P. 203 Chap. 5.

(2) D. Hoffmann - Leviticus, page 121, Vol. I.

(3) Bähr - "Symbolic" Vol. II, page 341-5.

that this opinion is too wide, for it would almost coincide with the idea of sacrifice itself, and render the minor and subordinate ceremony superfluous or powerless. He maintains instead that "The offerer, after having sacrificed by the imposition of hands his intimate relation to the victim and his readiness to surrender it to God in his stead, forthwith proved and sealed this readiness by at once killing the animal at the altar."⁽¹⁾ The next view is the Manu Missu theory which is held by Nowack, Marti, Knobel, Rosenmüller. The laying-on of hands was a sign that the offerer was letting the animal pass out of his power and out of his possession. It was a sign of the removal of something from the possession and power of the offerer and dedicated to God. It is taken from the old Roman custom - when the master laid his hand upon the servant's head or any other part of his body, he said - "Hunc hominem liberum esse volo," and dismissed him from his service. Cremer in the Real Encyclopedia observes that the laying-on of hands is the symbolical expression of the participation of the subject and the object in order to bring about a connection between both.

There are various modifications or combinations of these views. Mathes thinks that there are two kinds of laying-on of hands. In the judicial sense the laying-on of hands means merely the affirmation that this man deserves punishment upon whom the hands are laid. In the ritual sense, the laying-on of hands means that the offerer thereby declares that the animal is his property.⁽²⁾ H. P. Smith rightly contends in regard to this view that this would seem to be evident without any such formal declaration. Herman Schultz holds that by the laying-on of hands, the offerer thereby dedicates the animal or gift to God.⁽³⁾

(1) Kalisch - Commentary to O.T. "Leviticus." Page 75.

(2) Mathes - In Z.A.T.W. Vol. XXIII.

(3) Schultz - Theology of O.T. Page 391, Vol. I.

Oehler says that the offerer thus delegates the animal as the medium and vehicle of atonement, thanks, or prayer. More definitely at the sin offering the rite expresses the intention of the offerer to give the pure soul of the animal to cover his impure and sinful one.⁽¹⁾ Duschak affirms that all the feelings, emotions and soul activities with which man is endowed, flow over into the animal by the symbolical laying-on of hands. The animal then possesses the same feelings and emotions as the offerer, and is thus selected as the representative for him. This also applies in the instances of Moses and Joshua, and also with the Levites (Num. 8:10)⁽²⁾ Keil says that in the case of the sacrifice "It was a symbolical transference of the disposition and intention that were at the time animating him who offered the victim to the victim itself, which, in virtue of this act of dedication was supposed to assume the place of a worshipper and to embody the feelings and intentions in question."⁽³⁾

The traditional and orthodox view which was adopted by the Rabbis and the Church Fathers is that the laying-on of hands was the expression of the transfer of sin and guilt from the person sacrificing to the animal sacrificed. They looked upon the act as an actual substitution and transference of power. To a lesser degree does Ewald uphold this theory. He saw in it the transference of a sort of electrical spark or magnet; although he reads into the act a higher and more spiritual significance than it probably contained originally. More specifically he states that by the laying-on of hands "that the spark of life was conveyed through the hands and fingers, full of vital warmth into the recipient, as if magnetically to communicate the spirit and the will of the Israelite who offered the victim." The laying-on of hands thus indicated the sacred moment when the offerer, about to begin the sacred ceremony, laid all the feelings which must flood his being unto the creature whose blood must now be shed for him, and which must, as it were, appear for him before God.⁴ Delitsch says "By the laying-on of

(1) Theologie des A.T. page 429 & 481. (2) Duschak "Ges. Jud. Cultus" P.196

(3) Keil "Biblical Arch." Vol.I, p. 269. (4) Ewald "Alterthümer" p.47 ff.

hands the individual not only set apart the sacrificial animal for the purpose for which he had come to the Sanctuary, but transferred the feeling of his heart which impelled him to offer the sacrifice or the intention with which he brought a gift, to the sacrificial animal, so that his hand passed, as it were to the head of the animal and the latter became his substitute.¹

The theory of substitution has been also defended by Volz,² although it has proved a stumbling block to Mathes and H.P. Smith, the latter of whom, while he regards the substitutionary theory as the most plausible, still he cannot reconcile the instance of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement as a true sacrifice; hence according to him the transference of sin upon the sacrificial animal will not hold. Volz realizes this difficulty, too. His statement is as follows:- He holds that the laying-on of hands is the manner and custom, as when a holy substance is transferred from one body to another just as in the case of Michael Angelo's "Creation of Adam" who represents the electrical living spark as coming from the finger-tips of God upon man. The power of transmission is not conveyed by virtue of the spoken formula (as D. Hoffmann and others hold in the case of the scapegoat,³) but through actual physical contact. That which is transferred is not always a pure and holy substance or power, but sin, impurity, evil, curse. Here he is on safe ground. He realizes that originally impurities, sin, curse, evil spirits, were considered in the sense of material substances, which can, just as purity and holiness, be transferred from one to another. Just as soon as the sinner puts his hand upon the head of the animal he thereby puts his sins on the animal and becomes clean himself. The animal is either sent out of the camp or removed or buried.

(1) Commentary on Lev., Keil & Delitsch, Vol. III, P. 379-82.

(2) P. Volz - In Z.A.T.W. 1901.

(3) Hoffmann-"Lev." It is the 2/7/ which is the important act of the ceremony and not the 'Semicha'.

To substantiate this view he quotes from other religious customs where the practice of driving the evil spirits or sin or calamity from a community was accomplished by the laying-on of hands on the head of a man or animal who are then sent and driven out into the wilderness.

In phokaischen Colony Massilia they used to lead a person adorned and jewelled through the city in times of an epidemic, with the wish that all the evil of the people should be heaped upon him and then thrown down a cliff. The ceremony described in Deut. 21:6 he holds, is similar to it. Here the guilt or impurity is put on the red heifer and the elders washed their hands over the heifer and its neck broken in the valley. Following this thought lies the Paulinian idea of the Death of Christ¹ in which all the sins and curses which reside in man are placed upon Jesus who bears the punishment. When Volz approaches the solution of the sin-offering animal he presents a most peculiar theory. Under the delusion that an animal laden with sins and hence impure cannot be offered to God, he proposes instead that originally the sin offering was not in fact offered to God, but to the demons. We find traces of this idea, he holds, in the old Testament. Not only was the Azazel sent into the realm of the demons but in Lev. 4:7 we read that the blood was poured 710' 5A upon the foundation of the altar., that is upon the ground. This means that that which equals life or soul is destined for the underworld black demons.

I have expatiated somewhat upon his view because there is some truth in his statement; namely, that unholy meat cannot be offered to God as a sacrifice, hence it must have been meant for the demons or evil spirits. With this modification, however, we must clearly point out. Originally there were in fact two kinds of substitutionary sacrifices. One was offered to God, the other to the evil spirits or demons. In later times, after the sacrifice became a more fixed and higher developed institution in Israel the latter kind was done away with as far as possible. But that

(1) 2 Corinthians 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Romans 8:3.

it was not successful altogether is seen from the confusion which exists in Lev. 16. The priestly writer realized that the sacrifice to evil spirits was too deep-seated in the hearts of the people. Try as hard as he might, because this belief in demons and evil spirits was so deep-rooted in their hearts, the only practical thing to be done was to effect a compromise. Volz possibly saw traces of this dual idea in the substitutionary sacrifice. At any rate, he looked upon the sin offering or Azazel as a sacrifice. Herein he differed from most of the scholars to whom the scapegoat was not a sacrifice at all, and could not be offered as a solution of the problem.

Let us examine the contention of H. P. Smith and others who claim that a sharp line must be drawn between the scapegoat and the regular sacrifices. Smith says, "The scapegoat is not a sacrifice to Yahweh; the confession of sins over it makes it unfit for that purpose, and it is sent away to Azazel." He errs in this point absolutely. In the first place, he makes the mistake which nearly all the critics lay themselves open to, namely, to fail to understand that sin, impurity, evil originally are not ethical sin, impurity, evil. Their confusion is due because they persist in holding to this notion. The sin offerings had reference to the sacrifices that are brought to God because of ritual transgression. A person disobeyed some of the ritual laws, or became contaminated with something unholy or a taboo and he brought a sacrifice to God, whereby he adjusted himself once more to his former state of innocence. And even if he were not conscious of having transgressed wittingly and knowingly during the year, the thought came upon him that surely at some time or another unbeknown to him, and in spite of the care taken he might break an "unwitting" taboo and touch something holy and become impure and sinful, and carry some uncleanness about him; hence he would bring a yearly sacrifice of atonement. Evidences from other religions I shall furnish later.¹ At any rate

(1) see page 376b.

it is to be assumed, that originally the sin-offering was brought once a year, most likely on the New Years, and which curiously enough, according to the "Book of Ezekial" falls on the 10th of Tishri. Perhaps in the course of years when Yom Kippur came to be held on the 10th of the month, this sacrifice was still retained.

In the second place, a plain reading of the text of Lev. 16:5 shows that both animals were to be sacrificed. The text reads "And from the children of Israel shall Aaron take two goats for a sin-offering; and he shall bring near the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself and make an atonement for himself and for his house. And he shall take two goats and place them before the Lord; and Aaron should put lots upon the two goats, one lot "for the Lord" and the other "for Azazel".¹ The goat upon which fell the lot 'for the Lord' shall Aaron offer for a sin-offering, and the goat on which fell the lot 'for Azazel' shall be placed ~~the alive~~ before the Lord, to make an atonement to Him by sending him away to Azazel into the wilderness.

(1) Azazel - there has been much controversy over the function and character of Azazel. Different interpretations have been given. Brown-Briggs-Driver in their dictionary explain the word as "Entire removal, seeing in the form a reduplicate intens. abstr., from אָזַל arabic _ remove-'entire removal' of sin and guilt from the sacred places into the desert on the back of the goat, the symbol of entire forgiveness. This view has been adopted by many modern scholars, although it is far-fetched. Another view finds in it a proper name, of a rough and rocky mountain near Mt. Sinai (*Yama 676* *הר הזעיר*) but if one reads Lev. 16 with an open mind without trying to weave strange ideas into its meaning, it is clear that the Azazel is an evil spirit, demon, just as the Seirim, whose particular habitation is in the desert. This belief in evil spirits was common among early and Semitic peoples.

.They were therefore to serve as a sacrifice, (*לד' עולה*).

Both were devoted therefore to one and the same purpose, as was pointed out by the Talmud which laid down the law on that very account, that they were to be exactly alike in color, stature, age etc. The living goat, therefore is not merely to be regarded merely as the bearer of the sins to be taken away, but as quite as truly a sin-offering as the one that was slaughtered in the sanctuary. It was appointed to *ל' יום כיפור*, to make expiation with it. To this end, the sins of the nation were confessed upon it with the laying-on of hands, and thus the sins were laid upon its head that it might bear them, and when sent out into the desert carry them away thither. In fact, the scapegoat brought into the wilderness is merely another form and kind of sacrifice. This is proved from the very fact that it was thrown down a cliff and its neck broken. This is stated in Mishna Yoma. ¹ There it also adds, which rounds out the evidence and which fact seems to be unknown to the critics, that as soon as the animal was pushed off the precipice the scarlet tufts that were seen suspended in the sanctuary, turned white, showing that the animal was an acceptable offer and that the sins of the people were thereby forgiven.²

It became ingrained in the hearts of the people and it was difficult for the various reformers and prophets to eradicate it from their minds. Legislation against a belief in evil spirits occur in the Bible (Lev. 17:11) The Priestly writer evidently tried hard to do away with these notions and did not succeed altogether. In fact, he only confused the matter more, so that Lev. 16, which contains the ritual for the Day of Atonement makes use of the Azazel. It seems to be here as a compromise.

(1) Yoma 6:6.

(2) The common people in hastening the departure of the scapegoat used to pull pieces of its hair to ~~accelerate its pace~~. (Yoma 6:4) *? ?*

The scarlet thread was a symbolical reference to Isaiah 1:18, and the Talmud (Yoma 39a) tells us that during the 40 years that Simon, the Just was High Priest, the thread actually turned white as soon as the

The case of the red heifer in Deut. 21:6 also bears out this idea, that not every animal had to be sacrificed and slaughtered at the sanctuary as an offering to God. It is sufficient to break the neck of the heifer. And so the moment the scapegoat whose neck was broken by being pushed down the cliff occurred, it acted as a sacrifice to God.

Washing the hands of the Elders over the heifer is merely another means of transference. Just as the laying-on of hands transfers something on the animal, so ~~that~~^{does} washing, which is after all, rubbing the hands over the animal, act as a means of transference. As a matter of fact washing the hands is worse than laying-on of hands. Primitive people thought more realistically than we do today; for to them it was something tangible that was being washed off and transferred to the animal.¹

I trust consequently, that I have shown that the Azazel goat is a real sacrifice, and that it need not necessarily be sacrificed at an altar or sanctuary. By the laying-on of hands on it, the sins of the people are transferred to the animal and the animal falling down the cliff caused the sins of the people to be forgiven.

goat was thrown over the precipice; a sign that the sins of the people were forgiven.

(1) Pilate washes his hands before the multitude, saying "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man." Mathew 27:24- In Lev. 17:15 the taboo of eating that which dies of itself can be removed by washing. The following Assyrian text throws further light on this belief "All evil which exists in the body of N., may it be carried off with the water of his body, the washings from his hands, and may the river carry it away down stream, Ban! By heaven be thou~~s~~^e exorcised, by earth! be thou exorcised," (quoted from Thompson "Semitic Magic" page 130, foot-note)

Chapter III.

An Orientation -

I wish to orientate ~~to~~ myself from the subject-matter proper to a brief consideration of two very important topics, a thorough and sympathetic understanding of which alone, will greatly help to substantiate my theory of the ceremony of laying-on of hands. What was the early primitive conception of sin, evil, impurity? And what is the probable correct development of the sacrificial cult among early people?

a. Early conception of sin -

In order to understand the substitutionary theory of sacrifice or of the transference of either evil or good from one person to another, whether it be a person or an animal, it is necessary to get a clear notion of the primitive conception of sin. We must rid ourselves of the thought that sin originally was looked upon as an ethical breach, a committing of an immoral act in the higher spiritual sense. They had not as yet reached such a stage. To them, sin meant merely ritual uncleanness and its removal was by means of ritualistic ceremonies. Sin, like holiness, has this peculiar property, that it can be communicated by contact. The morality of early people did not always rise above the confusion between the physical and the mental. Evil qualities such as uncleanness can be transferred from persons to things, just as from things to persons. Pains and diseases can be extracted from the sufferer and magically sent into animals or objects which can be driven away or destroyed. Breaches of social order are recognized as offenses against the holiness of the Deity. Sickness or evil resulted from offending in some way the Deity. Or, sickness was the result of an "unwitting" breach of taboo which demanded an atonement to free the sick man from the demon he had attracted. In Dr. Morganstern's interesting article, he says, "In the Babylonian religious literature, the expressions sin, uncleanness, sickness, posses-

sion by evil spirits, are pure synonyms. They denote an evil state of the body, the result of divine anger.....Sin must originally have been purely ritual. Either the man had neglected to offer his sacrifice, or else had not offered it properly.....Before the layman could bring sacrifice, he had to be ritually clean. Sin was thus originally merely the transgression of ritual laws, and as such appears throughout the Babylonian religious literature.*¹

From prehistoric times down to the present day, people have been firmly convinced that evil spirits, demons or any kind of a supernatural being, are capable of inflicting grievous hurts upon man, and that the maladies and bodily ills to which they are subject are directly due to this baneful power. They believed that evil spirits or demons can take possession of the body. The person was then sick and could be restored to health again by the expelling of this spirit by the priest into the body of an animal or anything else. Evil spirits could also be expelled by means of a sacrifice or sin-offering. One reason was to give pleasure to the gods in order to secure their help against the evil spirits. The second reason was that a man possessed by evil spirits was considered sick unto death; his life was no more his own. It was really forfeited to the gods whose anger he had caused. The sacrifice he brings therefore is in the nature of a gift of redemption. Dr. Morganstern has shown that these various matters of expelling evil spirits are quite common among primitive peoples. The removal of the evil spirits was accompanied by fire and water. The priest sprinkled the sick man and the evil spirit was expelled. Another means of expelling the spirit was by touching the priest. (Mašmašu) The priest laid his hand upon the sick man, and straightway he became well. The underlying idea being that contact with an unclean body made one unclean, and also that the mere touch of one endowed with power to expel evil spirits could restore cleanliness. Another means of removing evil spirits was by substitution. An animal was slaughtered and it took the place of the sick man, and thereupon the evil spirits

(1) Dr. J. Morganstern - "Conception of Sin in Babylonian Religion"

pass from him into the animal. This was a common Semitic practice,¹ one which we find described in the book of Leviticus, in the treatment of the sin-offering in general, and of the scapegoat in particular.

I wish to call attention to another important thing in our consideration of sin and evil. Sin was always conceived as red, the color of blood. The Bible mentions many articles the color of which was red, as a symbol of blood or sin. The cedar-wood, the hyssop, the string of scarlet yarn which were employed by the priest in effecting the cure of leprosy (Lev. 14:7,) are all red in color. These articles together with the living bird are dipped into the blood of the bird that was killed. The leper is sprinkled with this seven times, and then the living bird flies forth into the open field which is supposed to carry off the contagion with it.

Fraser cites numerous cases similar to this one. "In the Greek island of Karpathos, the priest ties a red thread around the neck of a sick person. Next morning, the friends of the patient remove the thread and go out to the hillside where they tie the thread to a tree, thinking that they thus transfer the sickness to the tree."² The Iroquois sacrifice white dogs as their scapegoat. On the last day of their festival, two white dogs, decorated with red paint, wampum feathers, and ribbons are led out. They are strangled and hung on a ladder. Half an hour later the animals were taken into a house where the peoples' sins were transferred to them.³

(1) Robertson Smith "Religion of Semites" p. 364.

(2) Fraser "Golden Bough- Scapegoat" P. 55.

(3) " " " " " 210.

With these few, brief remarks on the kinds and functions of sacrifices, we can now go a step further. The significance for us of the sin-offering, especially, is that it had expiatory force per se, while the other sacrifices which I have just enumerated, had only a certain expiatory force. The principle of the *חטאת* was that it could not be eaten by the one who offered it. Consequently, when the layman offered up his sacrifice, he could not eat of it but it was eaten by the one higher in station than he. Naturally, this was the Priest. And when the Priest offered his sacrifice, since there was no one higher than he, it had to be burnt entirely.

What has all this to do with the ceremony of laying-on of hands, and where does it come in? It must be borne in mind that all the evidences of sacrifice of laying-on of hands are late. Originally, the ceremony of the imposition of hands was probably not a part of the 'covenant' sacrifice. It took place in all likelihood with only the 'taboo' sacrifice. Later this original distinction was gradually lost sight of, and it was applied to both. The natural expansion of the expiatory idea came later to be connected with all the sacrifices, and with it, the rite of laying-on of hands was applied not only to the taboo sacrifices but to all of them, even to the "Peace-Offering", "Thank-offering", "Free-Will Offerings," all later developments of the Covenant sacrifice.

It is because scholars have failed to understand this distinction between the various sacrifices and the gradual development from the taboo and covenant sacrifices, that they have been led to draw many conclusions which are far from the correct statement of the original facts. Some of them can readily see that in the sin-offering, sin was transferred from the offerer to the animal; but since they do not grasp the developments which the original sacrifices went through, they are at a loss to understand what was transferred in the instances of peace-offerings and thank-offerings.

My point, which I want to emphasize, is that originally the sin-offering, a part of the taboo sacrifice, had expiatory force, while the other sac-

rifices only had a certain expiatory meaning, and in the course of time, when the origin of the covenant sacrifice was forgotten all the sacrifices came to have expiatory meaning., and as such a concomitant development, *out* the ceremony of laying-on of hands would occasionally be extended to all the sacrifices, even to the peace and thank-offerings. And when the offerer laid his hands upon these sacrifices, he had in mind that something was being transmitted from him to the victim. It may have been that his soul was filled with the desire for expiation before anything else, and he felt it most keenly at the moment of the imposition of hands on the head of his offering,

In II Chronicles 29:23, we learn that the king and the representatives of the people laid their hands upon the animals to be sacrificed according to the ritual of the sin-offering. And in Verse 34, we read that, in view of the law prescribed in Lev. 1:4, where the killing of the animal is a duty of the offerer, that is, of one of the laity; here the writer, however, regards the flaying as a duty of the priests, in which the Levites might assist, either because they were public offerings presented in the name of the Community, or because this marks an intermediate stage in the development of the Cultus. It appears as if a certain reproach is placed upon the priests for their idolatrous practices and therefore the Levites help in this service.

From this account in Chronicles, the question has arisen does the laying-on of hands atone *לכפר* or is it through the sprinkling of blood, which from V. 23 f. it appears as if the expiatory force lies in the use of the blood. If this be true, it has been declared, (that) the laying-on of hands does not transfer anything, but it is the blood that is the chief element that transmits. All that the imposition of hands implies here, is that the offerer thereby shows that these are his sacrifices. Benziger¹ and Baentsch² hold that if the Law-Giver meant that the expiation depends

(1) *Archaeology* s. 455.

(2) *Commentary - Exodus-Leviticus* s.311.

upon the laying-on of hands, and, that it and not the sprinkling of blood is the essential thing, then he is in contradiction with Lev. 17:11, where the blood is regarded as the important element.

As a matter of fact, however, it is to be remarked that both the sprinkling of the blood and the laying-on of hands have expiatory force, and both are necessary and important parts of the same ceremony. One is just as important and essential as the other in performing the complete rite. Therefore it is not entirely correct to state that in any one particular ceremony does the expiatory force lie. Rather it is more correct to affirm that both the laying-on of hands and the sprinkling of blood are necessary parts of the same ceremony. The sprinkling of blood on the altar is merely a sign that life had been given to the Deity. Life was thought to be in the blood. This is one of the oldest ideas current among primitive people. Blood was the symbol that life had been given for the life redeemed. The sprinkling of the blood, however, is not to be interpreted as a symbolical act, but blood to early man was life, and the sprinkling of blood is proof that real life is brought to the Deity.

It may be noted, too, that originally undoubtedly, the offeror's own blood was to be given up to his deity, but later, as man developed in the state of civilization, a pious deceit and fraud were practiced in

which the animal's blood, since it is also red, was substituted for that of the sacrificer. We find many such examples common among primitive and early peoples.

Kalisch who holds that the whole idea of laying-on of the hands in general, indicated the personal and intimate relation between the worshipper and the victim, thinks that its nicer and more exact purport was qualified by the special nature of the sacrifice at which it was performed. In the burnt-offerings and thank-offerings, it implied a confession of reverential submission and gratitude. In the expiatory offerings, that

is, in the sin-offerings, it conveyed besides, the ideas of penitence and atonement. Dillmann¹ affirms that by the laying-on of hands, not only a personal and inner relation between offerer and animal is brought about, but the one transmits to the other, to be more exact, marks, appoints and declares him as the one upon which he transfers or transmits something and devotes it to him. In the burnt and peace-offerings, it is clear that he transmits upon the animal his feelings and particular desires; but in the sin-offering, the animal could not expiate your sins; hence it was not actual sin that was transmitted but the desire and intention of the offerer. The laying-on of hands, is therefore merely the physical way of showing to God one's readiness to expiate one's sins, in the case of the sin-offering.

Robertson Smith's view is also interesting. He says that in the "Piacular sacrifice, there is a variety of expression, a struggle between the feeling that the victim is too holy to be eaten or even touched, and the principle that its atoning efficacy depends upon the participation of the worshippers in its life, flesh, blood. In one rite, the flesh may be eaten, or the blood drunk, but only by consecrated priests; in another, the flesh is burnt, but the blood is poured on the hands or body of the sinner; in another, the lustration effected with the ashes of the victim (Red Heifer;) or, finally, it is enough that the worshipper should lay his hands on the head of the victim before its slaughter, and that then its life-blood should be presented at the altar." He therefore, does not see in the ceremony of laying-on of the hands an actual transmission, but merely a stage in the growth of dealing with the sacrificial cult. He states in another passage that "Even in the Levitical Law, the imposition of hands on the head of the victim is not formally interpreted as a laying of the sins of the people on its head, except in the case of the scapegoat. And here the carrying away of the peoples' guilt to an isolated desert region (אֶרֶץ חָדָשׁ)

(1) Dillmann - Commentary "Ex. & Lev."

(2) R. Smith - "Religion of Semites" page 354.

has its nearest analogies, not in ordinary atoning sacrifices, but in those physical methods of getting rid of an infectious taboo which characterize the lowest forms of superstition..... In ordinary burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, the imposition of hands is not officially interpreted by the Law as a transference of sin to the victim, but rather has the same sense as in acts of blessing and consecration, - where the idea no doubt is that the physical contact between the parties serves to identify them, but not specially to transfer guilt from the one to the other."¹

THE TRESPASS-OFFERING.

The Biblical text nowhere states that the trespass-offering requires a laying-on of hands. We have seen that it is enjoined for the burnt-offering, the peace-offering and the sin-offering.(Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 4:4) In the law for the trespass-offering, we read that the offender in bringing his sacrifice shall confess his fault;(Lev. 5:5) but it does not expressly state that his hand shall be placed on the head of the victim. Because of this omission, many critics have declared that the trespass-offering requires no laying-on of hands. Others have endeavored to explain the omission on the ground of the peculiar nature of this kind of a sacrifice. One writer holds that the idea of a sacrifice of compensation or restoration precluded it; another, that as the payment of a debt it was not subjected to the imposition of hands which was the expression of a free gift.² Knobel maintains that the $\text{לִשְׂכַּח$ does not require laying-on of hands because God requires a sacrifice as an expiatory means. The sacrificer has nothing to expect in return, he simply gives it to God.³ But Merx rightly contends that

(1)Robertson Smith "Religion of Semites" ² p. 422.

(2)View of Knobel-cited in Kurtz - "Sacrificial Worship of O.T."p.246.

(3)Cited from Merx- in Z.W.T. Vol. VI,1863.

the same would hold true with the sin-offering, which requires the laying-on of hands, since both are expiatory. The Priestly Law reads *וּבְיָדָיו וּבְיָדָיו* *וּבְיָדָיו וּבְיָדָיו*. And Benziger² and Marti³ hold that the reason no laying-on of hands is mentioned is accidental. The writers simply felt no necessity for mentioning it; they took it for granted that the rite would be performed. Or as Kurtz more explicitly expresses it "If the laying-on of hands is not specifically mentioned it is simply because the Law assumed that the necessity for it was self-evident in the case of the trespass-offering as well as in that of every other sacrifice.⁴ Another probable solution offered is that the reason there is no laying-on of hands enjoined is due to the fact that the ceremony only takes place in those cases in which the details of the rite are minutely described. It is not mentioned because we have here no complete ritual ceremony (Lev. 7:1 cf; also Lev. 6:18.) Whenever the description is condensed, we find no allusion to the ceremony of laying-on of hands and this is just the case with the trespass-offering. (Lev. 5:15)

A great deal of the confusion about the trespass-offering exists because of the lack of a clear notion as to the kind of a sacrifice it was. The *זָבַח* arose from those cases in which it was possible to make a restitution for misappropriated property, human or divine, as in Lev. 5:6-24. We thus learn that the trespass-offering is to be understood in the sense of an ethical sin, and is the latest of the sacrificial institutions. It is the outgrowth of and development from the *זָבַח*, the sin-offering, which contained the idea originally of ritual sin.

(1) Lev. 7:7

(2) Benziger - Hebraische Archäologie, p. 380,

(3) Marti - Geschichte des Is. Religion, 1903, p 229.

(4) Kurtz - Sacrificial Worship in the O.T. p. 246.

Now, there may be two reasons why there is no explicit record in the Law of the ceremony of laying-on of hands in the trespass-offering. In the first place, since it is after all a development from the sin-offering, and hence a part of this sacrifice, the author or priestly writer did not find it necessary to mention it outright. He took it for granted that whatever applies to the one holds true with the other. Or, it maybe that since the trespass is a late institution and a later development, the people outgrew this idea of the laying-on of hands as a necessary part of the rite. They may not have felt its importance as it was considered in earlier times. Those scholars who do not hold to the substitutionary theory offer in addition to their arguments that the Bible and hence the Hebrews know nothing of imputation of sins,¹ (Since, as they argue, the animal to be sacrificed, has no personality or moral qualities; therefore you can impute to it neither sin nor guilt nor punishment.) the fact that there is no laying-on of hands in the case of birds. If there were transmission, it ought to apply to the case of birds, which are generally offered by the poor, who certainly ought not to be excluded from the performance and efficacy of the ceremony. The obvious reason why there is no laying-on of hands in the case of fowl is because it is impracticable. Anyway, they were held in the hand of the offerer, and possibly, this was sufficient to transmit his sin or whatever he may have wished to have transmitted.

(1) Herx - In Z.W.T. VI, 1863

Smend- Hebrews never had the idea of transmission of sins. The sin-offering cannot be substitution because it very often consists of a meal-offering. - "Religion's Geschichte" S. 320.

CHAPTER IV.LAYING-ON OF HANDS AMONG OTHER PEOPLE.

Investigation and study into the origin and customs of primitive and Semitic people have led us into the conclusive belief that many of the Old Testament rites of the Jews stand in the closest possible connection with those practiced by surrounding nations. The ceremony which I have essayed to treat is no exception. The research of the modern scholars in this particular field will furnish us with additional proof as to the real meaning of the ceremony of laying-on of hands. It is, as I have already stated, because the scholars were unfamiliar with this method of procedure, or were not furnished with the evidences since then brought to light, that they have gone astray and grossly erred in their manifold interpretation of this rite. Only by carefully considering the same custom which was performed by primitive people can we understand the meaning it had for ancient Israel.

First of all, let us see what non-semitic people had to give us on this point. Let me cite a few examples from the lower culture. In his most recent volume "The Scapegoat," Fraser furnishes us with many illustrations of the laying-on of hands as practiced among primitive nations. It usually took place by their laying -on of hands on the head of an animal which became the vehicle for carrying away and of transferring their evil. The notion that we can transfer guilt and even good to some other being is familiar to the primitive mind. It arose from a very obvious confusion between the physical and the mental, between the material and the immaterial. They felt and saw things more realistic than we.

In Melanesia, where men are believed to possess more or less mana, one who possesses much of it will sometimes lay his hand on a boy's head to transmit some of it to him.¹ In Samoa, the priest laid his hand on and stroked the painful part of a patient's body, and recovery was supposed to follow.² Touching for the cure of sickness is also used by the Dayaks³

(1) R.H. Codrington- J.A.I. quoted from Hasting's Enc. of Ethics "Hand"

(2) G. Turner- "Samoa"

(3) H. Ling Roth

"	"	"	"	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	"	"

At the election of a king in Uganda, the prince who is touched by the hand of the "Keeper of the Princess" at once becomes king. Teutonic legends and myth speak of the gods Hallowing and Blessing by laying-on of hands. In Tibet, ^{the} Grand Lama, at the ceremony of reception imparts his powers to people of high rank by the laying-on of hands on their heads; inferior laymen have a cloth interposed between his hands and their hands; the lower classes are touched by a tassel which he holds in his hand. In Southern India, when death has occurred, the sins of a deceased are laid upon a buffalo calf. The people then gather around the corpse and carry it outside of the village. There an elder of the tribe recites or chants a long list of sins, and the people repeat the last words of each line after him. The confession is thrice repeated. As the people chant aloud, the performer lays his hand upon the calf. The sin is transferred to the calf. Like the scapegoat mentioned in Lev. 16:21, it may never be used for secular work. At a Badago funeral, the buffalo calf was led thrice around the bier, and the dead man's hand was laid upon his head. By this act, the calf was supposed to receive all the sins of the deceased. It was then driven away to a great distance, that it might contaminate no one, and it was said that it would never be sold but looked upon as a dedicated sacred animal. ¹

In Africa, among the Caffres, the natives sometimes adopt the custom of taking a goat into the presence of a sick man, and confess the sins of the kraal over the animal. Sometimes, a few drops of blood from the sick man are allowed to fall on the head of the goat, which is turned out into an uninhabited part of the veldt. The sickness is supposed to be transferred to the animal and to become lost in the desert.

(1) Cited from Hasting's Enc. "Religion & Ethics." Hands cf-also Fraser

Vol. "Scapegoat" p. 36-31.

We thus see that periodic expulsions of evils and demons was an old idea among many nations. As Fraser says "The expulsion of evils, far from being occasional, tends to become periodic. It comes to be thought desirable to have a general riddance of evil spirits at fixed times, usually once a year, in order that the people may make a fresh start in life, freed from the malignant influences which had been long accumulating about them."¹ There is a class of evils that are invisible and the manner of deliverance consists for the most part in beating the empty air and raising a hubbub as may scare the mischievous spirits and put them to flight. But there is another class of expulsions, in which the evil influences are embodied in a visible form or are at least supposed to be loaded upon an animal or even a human being.

"In the Central Provinces of India, when cholera breaks out in a village, everyone retires after sunset to his house. The priests then parade the streets, taking from the roof of each house a straw, which is burnt with an offering of rice, ghee, and tumeric. Chickens daubed with vermilion are driven away in the direction of the smoke, and are believed to carry the disease with them. If they fail, goats are tried and last of all pigs."²

Occasionally, the scapegoat is a man. "some of the aboriginal tribes of China, as a protection against pestilence, select a man of great muscular strength to act the part of the scapegoat. Having besmeared his face with paint, he performs many antics with a view of enticing all pestilential and noxious influences to attach themselves to him only. He is assisted by a priest. Finally, the scapegoat, hotly pursued by men and women, beating gongs or tom-toms, is driven with great haste out of the town or village."³

(1) Fraser's "Scapegoat" page 123.

(2) " " " 190.

(3) " " " 196.

One very interesting example of a human scapegoat is that of the negroes of West Africa. The human victim who is chosen for sacrifice and is marked out for the purpose, is called Olamos. When the moment arrives for him to be offered up, he is led about and paraded through the streets of the town of the Sovereign, who would sacrifice him for the well-being of his Government and of every family and individual under it, in order that he might carry off the sin, guilt, misfortune and death of all without exception. Ashes and chalk would be employed to hide his identity by the one being freely thrown over his head., and his face painted with the latter, whilst people would often run out of their houses to lay their hands upon him, that they might thus transfer to him their sin, guilt, trouble, death. He is then taken to a sacred place by a priest, his head is taken off and his blood offered to the gods. The pronouncement of his last word or groan would be a signal for joy and thanksgiving to the people, as an expression of their gratification, because their sacrifice had been accepted, the divine wrath appeased, and the prospect of prosperity is assured. ¹

The purpose of producing the evidences with which Fraser has so amply furnished us, is to connect these ceremonies of the scapegoat among ancient people with the scapegoat mentioned in Lev. 16. Could it not have been originally that this was the significance of the annual celebration of driving the scapegoat laden with the evils of the people into the desert? For we learn that the expulsions of evils and of burdening the scapegoat with sin came to be repeated at the beginning of a new year. The time of the year when the ceremony takes place usually coincides with some well-marked change of season, such as the beginning or ending of winter, or the beginning or end of the rainy season. Before entering upon ^a new year, people are anxious to rid themselves of the troubles that have harassed them in the past; hence it comes about that in so many communities, the be-

(1) Fraser- page 211.

ginning of the new year is inaugurated with a solemn and public banishments of evil spirits.¹ The same must have been true in Israel. The history of the scapegoat in Lev. 16 points in that direction. Here, however, a higher and more ethical conception of sin had arisen. It came to have a deep religious significance; and instead of observing this ceremony on the New Year as was the ancient custom, it was shifted somehow or other to the Yom Kippur. In fact, Ezekial tells us that the New Year was kept on the 10th of the seventh month. Let me cite a few more examples among other nations where the laying-on of hands had the power of transmitting certain characteristic qualities of their own. It need not however be an evil that is transmitted, but very often it is a salient good. From Grecian antiquity, we cite the case of Asklepios, who frequently heals by touch. He appears in the Temple to a woman and touches her with his hand which results in her giving birth to a child.² In the same manner he cures blind people and cripples by the mere touch of the hands. Artemis passes her hand over the woman in travail and gives her easy delivery. Zeus cures Io's madness by a touch. The Greeks prayed to Asklepios "with mild hands have you put in and wiped away sickness."

Among Egyptians³ we learn that just as once Isis lays hands upon Horus to heal, so she lays it now upon a child. Later the priests would put their hands upon the head of the sick and use the formula which Isis used. The Divinity lays his hand on a mother and thereby shapes the destiny of the child. The hand not only does good but also evil; thus sickness is brought about by the laying-on of hands of an irate Deity.

(1) Fraser -page 225

(2) Otto Weinreich -"Antike Heilungswunder" page 28.

(3) Wiedeman - "In Egyptian Religion" page 22.

Also the true magician must be able to punish as well as to heal by the laying-on of hands. Hera brings about the hideousness of Venus' child by the laying-on of hands. The healing of the blind by the laying-on of hands is well-known in Egyptian religion. Teiresias looked at Chariklo while taking a bath and Althena made him blind. In Egypt, the blessing of the gods was supposed to ^{be} conveyed to a newly crowned king by their laying their hands on him, thus conferring the gift of a long life and a glorious reign. ¹ The power imparted to an Egyptian king by the touch of the uplifted hand of the Deity is shown in the representations on the monuments of Egypt. It was known as "The imposition of the Sa," or the increased vitality. We have illustrated a tablet of the king after his coronation, receiving the imposition of the Sa. This Sa was a mysterious fluid, circulated throughout their members and it carried with it health, vigor and life. The king, or any ordinary man who wished to be thus impregnated presented himself before the statue of the god and squatted at its feet with his back towards it. The deity then placed his right hand upon the nape of his neck and by making passes, caused the fluid to flow through it, and to accumulate in him as in a receiver. This tablet, in particular shows the God Amon, after having placed the pachtent upon the head of the pharaoh Amenothes third, who kneels before him, and then proceeds to impose the Sa.

From Babylonian sources we have the case of Utnapishtim, who was made immortal by the hand of Ea laid upon its forehead.²

(1) Maspero-"Dawn of Civilization" page 111.

(2) Numerous examples are cited by Weinreich "Antike Heilungswunder," and rehearsed by Behm "Die Handauflegung in Urchristenthum." (1911)

We also know that at the Babylonian Festival of the New Year, which occupied at least the first eleven days of Nissan, and which was held in honor of Marduk or Merodoch, the chief God of Babylonia, the king of Babylonia was bound annually to renew his regal power by grasping the hands of the image of Marduk in his Temple. It was "to signify that he received the kingdom directly from the Deity and was unable without the Divine assistance and authority to retain it for more than a year. Unless he thus formally reinstated himself on the throne once a year, the king ceased to reign legitimately."¹

(1) Fraser "Scapegoat" page 356

CHAPTER V.

OTHER PASSAGES IN BIBLE OF LAYING-ON OF HANDS.

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From the numerous examples that I have quoted, I trust that I have made it clear that the imposition of the hands served primarily as a means of transference, whether it be a transference of something good or something evil, it is obvious that there is real tangible substitution that takes place. It is the same kind of a transference that occurred in the instances of the sacrificial laying-on of the hands that were enumerated in the Bible and which cases I have tried to present demonstrating this idea. I have purposely expatiated upon the imposition of hands in the sacrificial ritual and more particularly in the case of the sin-offering, because their purport was most obvious. It was comparatively easy for us to see how transmission of sin or guilt took place by the laying-on of the hands upon an animal. And we shall now direct our attention to the other instances of laying-on of hands mentioned in the Bible. We will start with Gen. 48:14 the latest mention of the ceremony of hands (J)

Here we have described the blessing of Jacob over his grandchildren. What is the significance of this blessing? Let us recall the scene. Jacob on his death-bed summons his children in order to convey his last message to them. He calls for the two sons of Joseph to bless them. The hour is a most solemn one. It is but natural for the dying, old man to wish to convey his powers and gifts to his descendants. Ancient people believed that a dying man could impart life-powers or gifts to the younger which had been committed to himself. They believed that something actual, and tangible could be given over by the dying person upon whomever he laid his hands,.

Upon the summons, Ephraim and Menassah, approached Jacob, who crosses his hands which have a weird effect; the dying man seems to be guided by a supernatural impulse, which moves unerringly in the line of destiny.

The three-fold blessing which follows reminds one of the Aaronic benediction.¹ Those commentators who hold to the symbolical meaning see in this act of Jacob nothing but a means of signifying by the touch of the hand that these are the men I wish to bless, an affirmation,² or that the imposition of hands upon them is merely an act of dedication.³ Berthelet sees no connection between the laying-on of hands in regard to the offerings with the blessing of Jacob because the root is different. (נ'ψ) But he fails to read on further, where נ'ψ is immediately employed.

The word שֶׁבַע equals 'be prudent' (whose piel does not occur) Most modern interpreters appeal to the Arabic "Sakala" a secondary meaning of which is "To plait" two locks of hair together, and bind them to the other locks. Gesenius and most modern interpreters say "Guiding his hands wittingly" but the Septuagint and the Vulgate say "Putting his hands crosswise."

(1) Num. 6:22-7 is closely related to Lev. 9:22 which contains a blessing of Aaron. It has been held that possibly Num. 6:22-27 once stood after Lev. 9:22 in connection with the first occasion in which Aaron solemnly blessed the people. While Num. 6:22 formed part of "P," it was not composed by "P" but is of earlier origin. The linguistic affinities and general tenor, related to the psalms. It is possibly pre-exilic in origin.

(2) Mathes-

(3) Schultz - Kurtz.

Keil and Delitsch hold that the laying-on of hands of Jacob, which is mentioned for the first time in Scriptures and which probably is the oldest (belongs to J.) was "A symbolical sign by which the person acting transferred to another a spiritual good, a supersensual power or gift. By the imposition of hands, Jacob transferred to Joseph in his sons the blessing which he ~~explored~~ for them, from his own and his father's God."

The power of blessing or cursing as transmitting and imparting something is a widespread view among all peoples. Among primitive and early people ^{examples} can be cited to this effect. In Melanesia, the act of blessing involves the bestowal of mana by physical contact. A man would give a boy a start in the world by placing his hands on the boy's head, thus imparting to him a portion of his own mysterious power.¹

Just as sin is looked upon as a 'substance charged with injurious energy' so the curse is a baneful substance. Good and evil in all but the higher stage of thought are constantly embodied, either by analogy or personification. Arabs when being cursed will lie on the ground that the curse may fly over them. Berbers strip before taking an oath to prevent it from clinging to their clothes. Plato speaks of being tainted by a curse, in his "Laws IX". The water of jealousy mentioned in Num. 5 : 11 f. , was believed as causing a curse to go into the bowels, to make the belly to swell and the thigh to rot.

Among the Jews, the belief in the efficacy of a father's blessing or curse was remarkable. The blessing was regarded as an individual heritage. Witness the blessing of Isaac over his two sons "In deed and word honor thy father, that a blessing may come upon thee from him. For the blessing of the father establisheth the house of the children; but the curse of a mother rooteth out the foundations." (Sirach 3:8 f.)

(1) R.H.Codrington cited from Hasting's enc. of "Religion and Ethics" - article "Cursing & Blessing" page 367, vol. II.

Consult article for further illustrations.

But the curse or blessing of the dying is particularly strong. The Ova-Herbio chief, when about to die, gives them his benediction., a wish for an abundance of the good things of this world. And according to the Talmud, the curse of a scholar never fails.¹

We thus see that in the case of the blessing of Jacob over his grandsons, his desire was to convey by the laying-on of his hands some of his powers or gifts. He actually felt that by this act, he would transmit something good and vital and cause his grandsons to be filled with his former powers and capacity.

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Aaronic Blessing Lev. 9:22.

The understanding of the Aaronic Blessing which is uttered by Aaron in virtue of his dignity and office, is to be explained simply that originally it was the custom to actually lay the hands upon the individual in blessing him; but later when the benediction was pronounced over a multitude it became a physical impossibility to lay the hands upon each one in order to transmit power and grace; it was sufficient to merely raise the hands over the entire congregation at once. Ewald writes as follows upon this point: "This ancient custom of laying on of hands which was done so as to let the whole spirit stream over through the glowing nerves of his hands onto him whom he honored with his blessing, gave rise to the sacred practice that the priest in solemnly greeting and blessing the assembled multitudes, since he could not lay his hands on them, at least raised them up, and stretched them out over the crowd." ¹ The instance of Solomon is another example in point (1 Kings 8:22).

In connection with this rite let me refer in passing to the use of the hand in the emphasis of an oath. Gen. 24:2. speaks of Abraham commanding his servant to place his hand under his thigh, while taking an oath; and again in Gen. 47:29. The old father Jacob requests Joseph to place his hands under his thigh as a promise that he will not bury him in Egypt. We must infer that both instances refer to death-bed scenes. It is in fact only the imminence of death that can account for the action here. Had Abraham expected to live, a simple command would have sufficed. The reference is to an oath by the Genital organs, as emblems of life-giving power of the deity, - a survival of primitive religion-whose significance had probably been forgotten in the time of the narrator.

(1) Ewald "Antiquities of Israel" page 42

THE LAYING-ON OF HANDS OF MOSES UPON JOSHUA.

The classic basis for the significance of the laying-on of hands is according to Dushak¹ the instance of Moses ordaining his successor to office. In Num. 27:18-23, Joshua receives the explicit charge; while in Deut. 34:9, we are told that "Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him." The significance of laying-on of hands here has been variously understood. Ibn Ezra for instance, thinks that it showed to the people that Joshua was worthy of Moses' confidence, deserving, therefore, to become his successor. He ² basis his argument on the verb *7 5 0* which he interprets "To rely upon."² Another commentator, Leon Bannolas says that while the sacrificer laid his hands upon the victim, he thereby transmits his sins upon the animal, so Moses transmits his office and dignity upon Joshua. He is inclined to understand this in the figurative sense, as if Moses wished thereby to impart deep secrets out of the realm of natural science which is a necessary preparation for the attaining of prophecy.³ Schultz says "The fundamental meaning of the symbol was identification by contact, with the subsidiary idea of transference, whether from man to man or from man to God. By laying-on of hands upon his disciple, the prophet signified that he desired to impart to the younger life-powers or gifts which had committed to himself."⁴

(1) Dushak-"Geschichte des Jud. Cultus." page 19 ff.

(2) Low says "If Ibn Ezra in the words - *7 5 0 1 5 9* was making a play on the words in the text in Deut. it falls flat, for in Biblical Hebrew "To rely upon someone" is not *1 5 9 7 5 0* but *5 9 7 5 0 5* cf. Judges 16:29, II Kings 18:29, and Isaiah 36:6.

(3) Quoted from Leopold Low.

(4) Schultz - Old Test. Theology. Vol. I, page 391.

Again, the imposition of hands in the case of Joshua did not of itself give divine power; for Joshua "had the spirit" before he received the imposition of hands, (Num. 27:18) but it was merely an instrumental sign for marking him out individually and setting him apart in the sight of the congregation to his arduous work.¹ Berthelet adds that Moses had no intention to symbolize by the laying-on of hands on Joshua a transmitting of his office, but what it did do was to symbolize a certain understanding between subject and object. Holzinger says that Joshua had the spirit already, is seen from Deut. 34:9; but it means the presentation of Joshua before Eleazer, the High-Priest and the congregation.²

What characterizes the views of Keil and Dalitsch is their smooth and ornate phraseology. They mean the same as the others, who take the view that it is merely symbolical. They deny Knobel's statement that *717* has the idea of "Insight and Wisdom," but what it does mean is that "The higher power inspired by God into the soul, which quickens the moral and religious life, and determines its development; in this case, therefore, it was the spiritual endowment requisite for the office he was called to fill. Moses was thereby to transfer a portion of his own dignity and majesty to him by the imposition of hands, that the whole congregation might harken to him, or trust to his guidance."³

Mathes in his article goes into a lengthy argument with Merx in regard to the meaning of laying-on of hands.⁴ Merx sees the seeming

(1) Merx- In Z.W. T. Vol. VI, 1863.

(2) Holzinger in Marti "Handkommentar" on Numbers.

(3) Keil and Dalitsch "Com. on Pent." Vol III, page 215.

(4) Mathes in Z.A.T.W. Vol. XXIII, 1903.

discrepancy between the accounts ⁱⁿ and Numbers 27:18 and Deut. 34:9. According to the former, it appears that Joshua "had the spirit" before the laying-on of hands. Therefore the imposition of hands did not impart the spirit. Mathes refutes this by arguing that לִיט without the article (לִיט) is certainly not the Holy Spirit of God; but what was imparted to Joshua by the laying-on of hands is according to Verse 20 not לִיט but לִיט . Merx tries to weaken this substitution of לִיט for לִיט , by saying that לִיט can only mean the authority of Moses. Mathes, however, states that לִיט is very often a synonym for לִיט , which means divine magnificence and majesty with which Moses exercises his power. Aside from this, Deut. 34:9a, the ^{לִיט} לִיט of which Joshua is full, affirms the power of the laying-on of hands very clearly; for it says "Because Moses laid his hands upon him". Merx at any rate seems to think that the Deuteronomist meant something else in Num. 27:18 than in Deut. 34:9. In Deut. 34:9, the symbolical act was changed into a transfusion which is quite alien to the original story in Num. 27:18. Here Mathes shows that this idea is incompatible with the results of Hexateuchal criticism, according to which both numbers 27:18 and Deut. 34:9 belong to P, and even granted that Merx is right, he says, that Deuteronomic account would still prove that the explanation of the laying-on of hands as transmission was familiar in Israel, otherwise the Deuteronomist could never have understood it so. Still again, Merx is wrong in his assertion that the use of the singular number לִיט and לִיט in Num. 27:18 could not have implied transference of gifts, for this the plural is necessary. But this does not prove anything. It merely shows that either number was used promiscuously. Cf Lev. 1:4- Lev. 16:21.

Setting aside all the theories and views of these men, let us look at the plain reading of the text once more. In Num. 27:18 it says "Take thou a man in whom there is spirit, and thou shalt lay thy hand upon him." Now, the word *(לָקַח)* means simply practical wisdom and knowledge, that is to say, Moses is commanded to take Joshua the man of understanding and knowledge and he is to ordain him as his successor by imparting his power by means of laying-on of hands. This is clear from V. 20 which reads, "And thou shalt put thy glory upon him." Here we see that Moses was to transfer something tangible, real and actual. As Volz correctly observes, the laying-on of hands is the manner and custom as when a holy substance is transferred from one body to another, just like Michael Angelo's "Creation of Adam" which he represents as showing the electrical living sparks coming from the finger-tips of God upon Adam.

THE LAYING-ON OF HANDS ON THE LEVITES.

In the consecration of the Levites to their priestly office, (Num. 8:10) the expression laying-on of hands is also found. Here we read that Moses was to bring the Levites into the sanctuary, and thereupon the "Children of Israel" were to lay their hands upon them, and Aaron was to make with the Levites a waving before the Lord from the children of Israel, that they may be ready to execute the service of God. How to understand the meaning of the Children of Israel as laying their hands upon the Levites has occasioned a wide difference of opinion. Keil and Delitzsch, to quote them again, hold that it merely means the "representatives" or the elders of the community lay their hands upon the Levites not merely "as a sign that they released them from the possession of the nation, and assigned them and handed them over to Jehovah" as Knobel maintains, but in order that by this symbolical act they might transfer to the Levites the obligation resting upon the whole nation., to serve the Lord in the persons of its first-born sons, and might present them to the Lord as representatives of the first-born of Israel, to serve Him as living sacrifices. By the imposition of hands, the Levites made the sacrificial animals their representatives, in which they presented their own bodies to God as a living sacrifice well-pleasing to him.

Much in the same way do many of the critics affirm, namely that the elders as the representatives laid their hands upon their heads, to set them apart for the service of the sanctuary, as representatives of the whole congregation, in the place of the first-born out of the tribes, upon whom the obligation originally devolved. Whereupon the Priests waved them before the Lord, that is to say, in all probability, led them to the door of the Tabernacles and back again to the Altar of Burnt-Offering, to exhibit them as offered to the Lord by the congregation for the service of the Sanctuary, and handed over by him to the Priests.

Gray, however, in the International Critical Commentary Series, adds that "To explain this as meaning the representatives of the people or heads of the tribes is quite gratuitous, as Keil and Dillmann do. Had the writer clearly thought out the ceremony, and intended the one or the other, he would no doubt have expressed it intelligibly. The same remark may hold good with regard to the next rite, the "Waving of the Levites." Either the practical difficulty that a large body of over 20,000 men could not like loaves of bread (Lev. 23:17,) or a sheaf of corn, (Lev. 23:15) or a piece of sacrificial animal (Lev. 7:32) (Num. 6:20) be moved or waved to and fro before the altar, never occurred to the writer, and he has introduced the act of waving *וַיִּזְנוּ* without thinking how it could have been actually performed, because it suitably symbolizes a gift to Yahweh, or else the words *וַיִּזְנוּ, וַיִּזְנוּ* have lost their original meaning and signify nothing more than "To make a sacred gift."¹

In Ex. 13:2-12; Num. 18:15 ff, we read "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; it is mine." To primitive mind, all that is new, is sacred, taboo, and hence not to be touched by man until certain ceremonies are performed by which the taboo is taken off and the whole is set free. This holds true also when one enters upon a new state of life. The first-born of animals is often sacrificed or set free because it is invested with a peculiar sanctity. The offering of the first-born children was a recognition of the fact that the God was the giver of children as of crops. The sacrifice of the dearest object, it was supposed, would soften the heart of a Deity. In the more advanced stage of life, the actual sacrifice of the first-born became obnoxious and offensive; and so instead a method of substitution or a redemption by means of money was brought about.

(1) Gray - On Num. 8:10 - Cf also Nowack Vol. II, page 239 f.

Among the Jews of today, the first-born son is redeemed as of old. In Palestine, the Priest takes from his parents the price of this redemption, the sum being about eighteen shillings, after receiving which, the Priests hold the money over the head of the child and says "This instead of that, this in exchange for that, this in ransom of that, may this child enter into life, into the law, and into the fear of heaven! May it be God's will that whereas he has been admitted to redemption, so may he enter into the law, the nuptial canopy, and into good deeds! Amen." He then places his hands on the child's head and gives the priestly blessing.¹

According to Robertson Smith,² among the Arabs in the time of Mohammed, it was common to sacrifice a sheep on the birth of a child, and then to shave the head of the infant and daub the scalp with the blood of the victim. This ceremony was designed to avert evil from the child, and was evidently an act of dedication by which the infant was brought under the protection of the God of the Community.

In my opinion, we have to understand the ceremony of laying-on of hands in this case, in the following way:- the representatives of the tribe or family, are the first-born.; they are the head of the family. it is the first-born, consequently, as the representatives of the entire people and as the eldest of the family who impose their hands on the Levites. In early times, the Priest was the head of the family and when the Levites who later on became Priests and performed the service in the Sanctuary of God and ministered to the ritual needs of the people, the elders or representatives in order to transfer their power to these Levites impose their hands upon them. They were now by this touch of the hand, supposed to take their place and be the Priest of the family or tribe. The imposition of hands consequently, served the purpose of transmitting power, gifts, obligations upon those upon whom the hands were laid. By the laying-on of hands, the first-born transferred their former state of holiness and obligation upon the Levites.

(L) Quoted from Thompson's Semitic Magic. P. 226, (2) R. Smith Rel. Semites. page 328.

WASHING THE HANDS OVER THE HEIFER. (DEUT. 21:8)

Of all the misunderstood ceremonies pertaining to my subject, the one mentioned in Deut. 21:8 stands out in bold relief. Here we have the well-known incident narrated of an unknown slain body found in the field where the elders of the nearest city assemble and declare their innocence by washing their hands over the head of an animal. It has been declared that while this at first blush looks like a sacrifice, it in truth is not one. It has been stated that it is no sacrifice at all, but a symbolic Judicial action. That the animal was not a sacrifice is argued from the fact that its neck was broken; a thing actually forbidden in sacrifice, where the blood must always be separated from the flesh. Proofs for these statements, I have failed to find. They hold that by the murder, guilt was brought into the land, which of right could be removed only by the death of the murderer. In this case, he could not be found and a symbolic execution was performed; which, illustrating the principle of justice, was held sufficient. H. P. Smith goes so far as to maintain that the instance of the heifer strangled in the case of the undiscovered murderer belongs in the same class as the scapegoat of Lev. 16. "The transfer to this heifer made it unfit for sacrifice, and it was strangled at a place away from the sanctuary. So it was with the scapegoat. It is not a sacrifice to God; the confession of sins over it made it unfit for that purpose and it was sent away to Azazel."¹

I hope I have sufficiently disproved this theory. I have, I hope, plainly demonstrated that the scapegoat is just as much a sacrifice as any other of the sacrifices. It is merely a different kind of a sacrifice. Not every animal need be slaughtered at the altar in the sanctuary. Sometimes it was merely sufficient to break its neck, and wash one's hands over it,

(1) H.P. Smith - In American Journal of Theology. Jan. 1913, Vol. 17 #1

as in this instance. Why was it unfit for sacrifice? Because of the impurities laid upon it? In that case, by the laying-on of hands, the evil and the impurities were transferred from the people to the animal. At this point, Mathes differs from Volz's theory, the latter of whom believes that the elders of the community actually transferred impurity upon the animal. Volz holds that the person offering the sacrifice and who lays his hand upon the animal laden with impurities, must wash himself. Even the person who departed with the Azazel goat, must bathe himself. Washing is merely one of the means of purification, which occurred after the sacrificial offering.

Mathes objects to Volz's theory because as he says there was no act of laying-on of hands in this case. Washing of hands means not the washing off of sin but merely their affirmation of innocence (cf Psalm 73-1) and the only reason why washing was necessary at all was because water is considered a holy element. Water was consecration by itself. The waters of the Jordan do not only remove sin and impurity but of itself lends purity and cleanliness. Otherwise the baptism of Christ would have no sense. And he continues to argue that even if the holy water had the purifying effect which Volz attributes to it, even then he would be wrong because no laying-on of hands took place, simultaneously with the washing of hands. Hence Mathes maintains that the heifer slain is simply a gift to God; for what sort of a substitutionary heifer is this that cannot effect the least thing?

Steurenagel¹ believes that the meaning of this ceremony is that the elders symbolized in their act, that they would be prepared to kill the murderer in the same manner if he were caught. He also adds that atonement is not brought about through this ceremony.

(1) Steurenagel - Commentary on Num. & Deut.

Robertson Smith in speaking of this ceremony says "In the oldest state of society, in the case of a murder, the idea of the people was to rid the kin of an impious person who has violated the sanctity of the tribal blood, and the thing to be done is to discover and punish the criminal himself. If he cannot be found, some other means must be taken to blot out the impiety and restore the harmony between the community and its God, and for this purpose a sacramental sacrifice is obviously indicated, such as Deut. 21:6 provides for the purging of the community from the guilt of an untraced murder. In such a case it was inevitable that the sacrifice performed as it was with circumstances closely akin to those of an execution, should come to be regarded as a substitute for the death of the true culprit." ¹

Mathes seems to be unaware of this probable development in early society, where in the course of time an animal was regarded as the proper substitution for the death of the true murderer. The washing of the hands was therefore not to signify the innocence of the elders or even to thereby present the animal as a gift to God ; but by the washing or rather to be more correct, by the rubbing of the hands with water, it was to act in a realistic sense as the actual transference of the sin of the culprit upon the animal. Murder had been committed. The nearest community was responsible, and the only way they could purge or remove their sin which was laid at their door, was by making this sacrifice of breaking the heifer's neck and by washing their hands over it, thereby actually transferring the evil and the sin upon the head of the animal which became their substitute.

(1) R. Smith -Religion of Semites²- page 420.

A FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF WASHING OF HANDS.

Laying-on of hands is not the only means of transferring sin or conveying anything from one to another. Deut 21:6 shows us the effect of washing one's hands. The obvious result of water in removing dirt or evil from the body, as well as the universal notion regarding the sacredness of water or its being the seat of a spirit or divinity, suggested that other kinds of uncleanness - that of a taboo state, of guilt, and the like - might also be removed by washing. As the hands were the main parts of the body by which uncleanness through contact arose, or were a possible entry into the body for demons, their ceremonial washing has everywhere had great importance.

Among the Greeks, the danger of unwashed hands is illustrated by the story of Asterius, who, having approached the altar of Zeus with unclean hands was struck dead.¹ The Romans had a similar belief, and no one with hands stained with crime would touch sacred things. They must be washed first in a living stream.² The Jewish belief that to touch eye, nose, ear, etc., with unwashed hands was highly dangerous (these being the openings by which a demon might enter) also illustrates this.

As a means of carrying away evil of all kinds, washing of hands is necessary. In Assyria, a spell runs: "May evil be carried off with the washings of his hands".³

(1) Quoted from Hasting's Enc. Religion and Ethics. Art. "Washing of Hands"

(2) Virgil "Aenid" Vol. II, p. 717 ff- Ovid Fasti- Vol. II page 45.

(3) Thompson "Semitic Magic" page III

Among the Hebrews and modern Jews, the same idea is also found, and the hands must be washed after all unclean bodily functions, or after touching anyone who is unclean or to remove contagion of death or murder. (Lev. 15. 11) Not only impure but sacred objects, that is, objects that must be approached carefully cause uncleanness. A Jewish belief is that the hands must be washed after touching the Bible- the sacredness or danger cleaving to the hands being thus removed.¹ The technical terms used by the rabbis when we say that a book "is canonical" is that it "Defiles the Hands" *מ'ג'ל'l'.* That is only another way of saying that it is sacred. The person using it must be ceremonially purified before he can come in contact with other things.

In Babylonia, washing the hands in pure spring water is specially mentioned as a symbolic ceremony for ridding one of the power of evil spirits.² Washing of the hands before sacrifice is also a widespread custom. In Egypt, the ritual washing of the priests, before offering sacrifice included the whole body, though stress was laid upon the hands. Hence the name of the Priests - *Uibū* - "The Washed" In Babylonia, the *Barū* must wash and be ritually pure before approaching the gods; The Pentateuch is also quite explicit regarding this custom of washing the hands before sacrificing. (Ex. 30:19; 40:31)

(1) R. Smith "Religion of Semites"² page 426.

(2) M. Jastrow - Aspects of Religious Beliefs and Practice in Bab. & Assyria page 306.

LAYING-ON OF HANDS ON HEAD OF BLASPHEMER.

We need but turn to the incident recorded in Lev. 24:14, where the witnesses who heard a man blaspheme lay their hands upon him, whereupon the congregation, or perhaps the elders as the representatives, stone him, in order to have confirmed the real significance of the ceremony of laying-on of hands. Many curious explanations have been offered. Some see in it the similarity with the sacrificial laying-on of hands, but more particularly with the instance of the story of Susannah (5:34) where too, the witnesses in testifying against her, lay their hands upon her head. Ewald holds that the "Older sacrificial rite evidently furnished the model" for this judicial custom. Others hold that this ceremony has been with no good reason connected with the sacrificial imposition of hands.¹ They take the simplest view namely, that the witnesses by this act were to protest against the impiety of the criminal, symbolically laying the guilt upon his head. The two elders in the story of Susannah, are said to do the same, not after a condemnation, but in bringing their charge against the accused before the people.

This view, as are all the theories which understand it symbolically, is certainly far from the truth. They fail to go to the deeper underlying significance of this rite. For instance, it is held that by the act of laying-on of the hands the witnesses solemnly declare that they are responsible for the fate they bring upon the accused. The moment they lay their hands upon him they acknowledge themselves as the cause of the blasphemer's death.²

(1) Herzog Schaff Enc. Art. "Laying-on of hands."

(2) Berthelet Martha's "Handkommentar." of Lev. 1:4

Much in the same way does Marx say, that the witnesses by the laying-on of hands, mean to imply that it is a sign of condemnation, and of their belief that the blasphemer ought to be punished. Somewhat differently does Kalisch hold, when he affirms " Those who heard a man blaspheme the name of God impose their hands upon his head and testify that both as Israelites and witnesses they were closely concerned in his fate. He quotes an instance taken from Grecian Laws where it was customary at the sacrifices connected with the oath, that he who swore laid his hand upon the victim, or dipped it in its blood, to express that he was prepared for the same fate if he were guilty of perjury.¹ More curious is the conception of D. Hoffmann, who holds that all those present when the offense was committed, and who appeared indifferent to it or indolent, and those who did not act zealously or eager enough, were all considered accomplices. The blasphemer, therefore, received the punishment and is marked out as the substitute of the people. As a result, the others are forgiven, as we learn from the story of Zimri (Num. 25:6 f.) Upon his death, the plague ceased raging in the midst of Israel.² Herman Schultz states that by the laying-on of hands, the community testifies that it hands over to God one of its members to be banned, or as in the case of the Levites (Num. 8:10) to be dedicated.³ Kurtz says that in both cases, that is, in the case of the sacrifice and of the blasphemer, it was a dedication to death, which was expressed by the imposition of hands. It was the assignment of an obligation to submit to death on account of the sin that had been committed. The witnesses

(1) Kalisch -Commentary on Pent. "Lev." p. 177

(2) D. Hoffmann, "Leviticus" p. 122.

(3) H. Schultz O. T. Theology, page 391.

of the crime dedicated the criminal himself to death, for they were the only persons aware of his crime.¹ What he means by 'dedication' or 'dedicating to death' is hard to understand. He, like so many others of the modern expositors of this view, have substituted vague and meaningless phrases for the real interpretation of this custom. Their chief error lies in the fact that they look upon the laying-on of hands as a symbolical act.

The laying-on of hands, I have tried consistently throughout this paper to prove ~~(that it)~~ was not a symbolical act, but it was an actual transference of something, either good or bad. Mathes in his Polemic against Volz's theory, holds that while there are numerous instances of spiritual and material bliss transmitted (as in the case of Numbers 8:10 and the acts of Jesus healing the sick- Mark 5:27,) there are no cases of bad things being imparted, as for instance a curse. Volz and the new Netherland translators of the old Testament on Leviticus, think quite correctly that there are such instances. They, thereupon, cite ^{an} instance of Lev. 24:14, the story of the Blasphemer, where the witnesses by laying-on the hands, thereby "transmitted guilt upon the accursed." Mathes is unwilling to concede this view. He wishes to establish the point as I have stated before, that there are two kinds of laying-on of the hands. The one is a judicial, as in this instance, which is to be interpreted symbolically and means merely the affirmation that this man, this blasphemer, deserves punishment. The other is the ritual, as in the cases of the sacrifices, which only means that the offerer declares thereby that the animal is his

(1) Kurtz "Sacrificial Worship in the Old Testament."

property. He is certainly wrong in his contention. He holds that in the story with which we are now concerned, the witnesses could not transfer anything since they do not possess any guilt. On the contrary, the witnesses testify to the guilt of another. How is it possible, he asks, for non-culpable persons to transmit guilt? And here he brings in the story of Susannah for additional proof., that certainly in this case no blasphemy was heard and there was nothing to contaminate the witnesses. What therefore could be transmitted? Her immodesty and immorality? Volz would argue that the blasphemer begins to contaminate himself and those around him and as a result of this epidemic, the witnesses, too, became defiled; and after this happens, these witnesses with the impure hands put their hands upon the blasphemer and become pure and clean again. This strikes Mathes as singular; and it is this idea that he cannot grasp. And yet, this is just what happens. We know that in early times the idea of individual responsibility was not yet clearly developed but instead the conception of communal responsibility and guilt prevailed. And so when any capital crime had been committed within a community, it was supposed to reflect a kind of complicity in the guilt, a stain or curse upon the whole community, or at all events, upon the witnesses of the act and this was to be rolled back upon the actual criminal. In the case of the blasphemer, the witnesses who heard the profanation of God's name became contaminated, defiled, and could only become pure and whole again by transferring it back upon the guilty one. This was done by the imposition of hands.

Finally as to its application to the incident of Susannah, we must remember that here we have reflected already a higher and later stage of civilization, and that in all probability the old idea had been forgotten or went unheeded. At this time, the act of laying-on of hands may have had a different significance altogether. Here the false witnesses in testifying against Susannah lay their hands on her in the presence of the judges, probably to identify her in the presence of the court.

LAYING-ON OF HANDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

After having enumerated and expatiated upon the passages found in the Bible, that is to say, in the so-called Old Testament, pertaining to my subject I shall now consider briefly the ceremony of laying-on of hands as¹ occurs in the New Testament. This ceremony has been continued in the Christian Church, though the hands are often merely uplifted as in the blessing of a number of persons. However, for two important rites the imposition of hands are used - for Confirmation and Ordination. According to both eastern and western churches, baptism is not complete without it.

It has generally been stated that the reason it was discontinued in practice by Judaism was because it was taken up by the Christians. This ceremony, it is almost entirely agreed is derived by the Church directly from the Jews. "More exactly it is held, that it continued Old Testament usage, and that its meaning is the same under the new Covenant as under the old." Scholars who agree that it was derived from Judaism are not however, at one in interpreting its meaning. Bossuet, for example says that ordination (in Judaism and therefore in early Christianity) was regarded as impartation of Spirit;¹ while Schürer, who agrees that the rite was derived from Jewish practice, remarks that it did not impart a charisma.² H. P. Smith in his article, which I have already quoted and who is entirely wrong both in his premises and in his conclusions, draws up a few negative results from his inquiry into the ceremony. He says that the imposition of hands in baptism and confirmation is not derived from the Old Testament; in ordaining to office, it has nothing corresponding to it in the ordination of the Hebrew Priesthood; that the single text which speaks of Moses conferring the spirit on Joshua can hardly have given rise to the apostolic rite in all its varieties; and that the laying-on of hands in the healing of disease practiced by

(1) Bossuet "Religion des Juifs" page 195.

(2) Schürer "Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes" 3 Vol. II, page 199.

Jesus and the apostles, is without parallel in the Old Testament. That he is absolutely wrong in his contentions, I hope that my treatment of the subject has conclusively proved. He seems to forget that the early Christians were nothing other than Jews, as was Jesus, himself. And when we find the characters in the New Testament who are all Jews making use of the rites practiced by the Jews of that time, we are safe to assert that the men in the New Testament made no new innovations but merely carried out a ceremony that was long familiar to all.

When Jesus makes use of the laying-on of hands, in the act of healing the sick, he is not doing therefore something new and unheard-of either in Israel or among Semitic peoples. Because there are only a few instances recorded in the Old Testament where the imposition of hands effects a cure and healing, that is no argument that it was in all probability never practiced in Israel. In I Kings, 17:19-22, we see that in restoring the dead boy to life, Elijah was not content simply to lay his hands upon him, but he brought his whole body in contact with him. And in II Kings, 4:34, Elisha, we see, does it more dramatically. This practice of restoring an afflicted one by the means of laying-on of hands, is a common practice among all early peoples, as I have by copious illustrations shown; and it was very familiar among the Semites. Jesus simply made use of this folk-rite, as did Elijah; only more instances are recorded in the New Testament. And the probable reason why there are not many more instances quoted in the Old Testament to this effect may be due to the circumstance that the recorder or chronicler forgot to state them. It was too common a practice to mention every case where healing was effected by the imposition of hands.

Passages in the New Testament where Jesus or his Disciples
heal the sick by the imposition of hands.

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Mathew 9:18

Mark 5:23; 6:5-7:32; 8:23-25.

Luke 4:40; 13:13

Acts 9:12-17; 28:3.

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In the following passages the hand was laid on the part affected and
not on the head. The communication of healing power by contact (Mark 5:30 f)
is probably the thing signified.

Mathew 8:13-15; 9:29; 20:34.

Mark 7:33; 1:41.

Luke 5:13- 22:51;

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The laying-on of hands was also used by Christ in the act of benediction.

Mathew 19:13-15;

Mark 10:13-16

Luke 18:15

The blessing of Jesus was given to the eleven disciples possibly in the man-
ner prescribed to Aaron- Luke 24:50.

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The apostles use this rite with prayer in the act of imparting the Holy
Spirit to the baptised.

Acts 8:17; 19:16.

I Timothy 5:22.

Hebrews 6:2.

The special grace of ordination was also conferred by the laying-on of hands

Acts 6:6.

I Timothy 4:14.

II Timothy 1:6.

Similarly St. Paul and Barnabas are "separated" to their office by this Act.

Acts 13:3.

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ORDINATION OF LATER TIMES.

- CHAPTER VI.- The laying-on of hands has been used by the rabbis to ordain their disciples and later in the granting of rabbinical diplomas. The Talmud explains the method of ordination in this way: Joshua sat at the footstool, like all the students do, and an interpreter under his guidance, and in his name held forth lectures¹

Leopold Low in his *Schriften* writes that it was during the Hasmonean period, when the Senate was instituted after the pattern of the Seventy men in the days of Moses, did the question arise whether the laying-on of hands should be performed. In favor of this custom was the example set by Moses and Joshua; against it was the fact that the Seventy members during the Mosaic period failed to utilize it. Finally it was introduced and it continued indisputably for five generations. Yes, it was even forgotten that the introduction of the laying-on of hands was once a mooted topic and which created such bitter debates.² The term 'Semicha' thus became a technical term. But when early Christianity and the Church adopted this custom, it is held by nearly all scholars that the Jews gave it up. It is assumed generally that this rite of laying-on of hands to ordain one to office was derived by the Church directly by Judaism.

This practice of ordaining one to office has acted as a prototype for the rabbis in later times in ordaining their pupils. Maimonides says that Moses ordained the Seventy elders in the same way as he ordained Joshua.³

(1) Sifre I 40 II 305

(2) L. Low *Gesammelte Schriften*. Vol.V.

(3) Yad - Sanhedrin 4:1

From Numbers 11:16-17 (E) we learn that Moses ordained the Seventy Elders who assisted him in governing the people. But it is not expressly stated that they were ordained by the laying-on of hands. It merely says that some of Moses' spirit was imparted to the elders. Moses possessed the spirit in a large measure so that he could spare enough to enable Seventy others to prophesy. In accordance with this statement, the Jewish encyclopedia holds that the "Transference of the Spirit can only take

place by the laying-on of hands." As I have already pointed out, such is not the case. The transferring of spirit can occur by washing of the hands or by anointing with oil. At any rate, according to tradition, the elders ordained by Moses ordained their successors, who in turn ordained others so that there existed an unbroken series of ordainers and ordained from Moses down to the second Temple.¹ During the period of the second Temple, the custom of ordination grew into a regular institution. It was the Sanhedrin who ordained the various candidates. Originally, it was customary for each teacher to ordain his own pupils.² The relation between Moses and Joshua was regarded as the prototype of this relation between teacher and pupil. As Joshua was ordained by the hand of Moses resting upon him, so probable every pupil was ordained by the hand of his own teacher. We learn, consequently, from the Talmud that the

(1) Maimonides "Yad" Sanhedrin- cf. also Jewish Enc. "Semicha"

(2) Sanhedrin 19a.

Sanhedrin originated from the most Mosaic period; the Seventy elders who were associated with Moses in the governing of Israel at his request formed with him the first Sanhedrin.¹ This institution is said to have existed without interruption from that time onward (cf Jer. San. 118b, where commenting on Jer. 52:26 f. and II Kings 25:18 f., it is said Nebuzeradan brought the Great Sanhedrin to Riblah before Nebuchadnezer.) But the fact that no passage whatever in the pre-exilic Books of the Bible refers to this institution seems to indicate that it was not introduced before the time of the second Temple. The first assembly held under Ezra and Nehemiah is called the Great Synagogue.²

One further concluding remark. As the laying-on of hands is usually a distinctive feature of the ceremony of ordination, many persons have very inadequately treated the subject of ordination as identical with 'Semicha;' whereas the imposition of hands had various other uses, as I hope I have shown, and only belongs to the ceremony of ordination as an act indicative of the bestowment of spiritual gifts of power.

(1) Sanhedrin 1:6

(2) Nehemiah 8-10.

APPENDIX.

Passages in the Bible where the phrase 'Laying-on of Hands' occur:-

24:2 77' XJ Q'U
Genesis:- 47:29 " " "
48:14 UxJ JX J'U'
48:18 UxJ JX Q'U

Exodus:- 29:10 - 15 - 19.

Leviticus:- 1:4; 3:2; 3:8; 3:13;

4:4; 4:24; 4:15; 4:29;

8:14; 8:18; 8:22;

9:22; 16:21: 24:14.

Numbers:- 3:10 - 27:18.

Deuteronomy:- 34:2- 9

21:6 - (Washing Hands)

II Chronicles- 29:23 - 34; 30:17.

Susannah- (Apocrapha) 5:34