

מקראות גדולות

The

COMMENTATORS'
BIBLE

THE JPS MIQRA'OT GEDOLOT

LEVITICUS ויקרא

*With the 1917 and 1985 English translations of
The Jewish Publication Society TANAKH, the questions of Abarbanel,
the commentaries of Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and Nahmanides,
and selections from the Masorah and from the commentaries of
Bekhor Shor, Kimhi, Hizkuni, Gersonides, Abarbanel, and Sforno*

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NJPS libations, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the LORD. ¹⁹You shall also offer one he-goat as a sin offering and two yearling lambs as a sacrifice of well-being. ²⁰The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits as an elevation offering before the LORD; they shall be holy to the LORD, for the priest. ²¹On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages.

²²And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the LORD am your God.

²³The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

RASHI measure of choice flour" (Num. 15:9) for a bull, two for a ram (Num. 15:6), and one for a sheep (Num. 15:4). So much for the meal offerings; the libations are half a hin for a bull, a third of a hin for a ram, and a quarter of a hin for a sheep.

19 You shall also offer one he-goat. One might think the "seven yearling lambs" of v. 18 and the he-goat of this verse are the same as those listed in Num. 28:27-30. But when you get to the bulls and the rams, they are clearly not the same. The two sacrifices are therefore completely different. These sacrifices accompany the two loaves, whereas those in Numbers 28 are the additional festival offerings.

20 The priest shall elevate these. The verse teaches us that they must be "waved" (see OJPS) while still alive. But this applies not to all of the offerings, but only to the **two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits**. He puts the two loaves atop the two lambs. **They shall be holy to the LORD.** Since an individual's peace offerings are of a lesser degree of sanctity, the text must specifically tell us here that those of the community are of the highest degree.

22 When you reap the harvest of your land. The repetition here adds a second prohibition to that of 19:9. Said R. Avdimi b. Joseph: Why does the text teach this in between the festivals, with Passover and Shavuot on one side and Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot on the other? To teach you that everyone who leaves gleanings for the poor is rewarded as if he had built the Temple and offered sacrifices there. **You shall leave them.** Simply leave them there for them to pick up. You should not help one of them at the expense of others. **I the LORD am your God.** I can be relied on to give you your reward.

separate divine utterance, being dependent on the elevation of the first sheaf (introduced by a divine utterance in v. 9).

[Q] There he explains that these are two different sets of offerings. [R] The Karaites.

NAHMANIDES **22 When you reap the harvest of your land.** Despite what Rashi and Ibn Ezra say about this verse, I think it refers to the harvesting of v. 10, to emphasize that, even though the purpose of that harvest is to bring the first sheaf to the priest, it does not override the following two prohibitions: **You shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest.**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS **20 The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits.** The lambs are together with the bread, not vice versa; it is the bread that is most important. If the bread cannot be offered, the lambs are not offered either. But physically the bread is atop the lambs (Gersonides). The Torah did not explain this festival as a day of remembrance of the giving of the Torah, for the Torah and the prophecy that we have in our hands testify to their own truth and require no special day to remember them. There is no doubt that this is when the Torah was given, but it is not mentioned—any more than v. 24 mentions the creation of the world, which took place on that day. The same is true wherever this festival is mentioned in the Torah: Exod. 23:16, Exod. 34:22, Num. 28:26, and Deut. 16:9—it is always about the first fruits, not about the Torah (Abarbanel).

22 You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. Everything comes to us from God, who commanded that we use it to do good for the poor before any of it comes into our own hands (Gersonides). **I the LORD am your God.** God of the harvesters and God of the gleaners (Sforno).

OJPS even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD. ¹⁹And ye shall offer one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. ²⁰And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs; they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹And ye shall make

proclamation on the selfsame day; there shall be a holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no manner of servile work; it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²²And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them for the poor, and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

²³And the LORD spoke unto Moses,

RASHBAM **22 When you reap the harvest of your land.** On the day after the passover offering, after bringing "the sheaf of elevation offering" (v. 15).

IBN EZRA be one bull and two rams or two bulls and one ram, at the priest's discretion. But we have certainly seen no other commandment where that holds true. I will explain the true answer in my comment to Num. 28:26. [Q]

19 A sacrifice of well-being. If sacrifices of well-being can be slaughtered on the Feast of Weeks, animals can certainly be slaughtered on the other festivals as well—contrary to what the "Sadducees" [R] claim.

22 When you reap the harvest of your land. The Feast of Weeks is the festival of the first fruits of the wheat harvest. "So make sure that you do not forget what I commanded you about the harvest in 19:9!"

23 The LORD spoke to Moses. The day of "loud blasts" (v. 24) is introduced this way because it is a separate holiday, as are the day of the Great Fast (introduced in v. 26) and the Feast of Booths (v. 33). But the Feast of Weeks is *not* introduced by a

עֲלֶה לַיהוָה וּמִנְחָתָם וּנְסִיבֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁה
 רִיחַ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: ¹⁹ וְעֲשִׂיתֶם שְׁעִיר-
 עִזִּים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת וּשְׁנֵי כִבְשִׂים בְּנֵי
 שָׁנָה לְזִבְחַ שְׁלָמִים: ²⁰ וְהִנִּיף הַכֹּהֵן |
 אֹתָם עַל-לֶחֶם הַבִּפּוּרִים תִּנְגַּף לִפְנֵי
 יְהוָה עַל-שְׁנֵי כִבְשִׂים קֹדֶשׁ יְהִיו לַיהוָה
 לַכֹּהֵן: ²¹ וּקְרַאתֶם בְּעֶצֶם | הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 מִקְרַא-קֹדֶשׁ יְהִי לָכֶם כָּל-מִלְאכַת
 עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֶקֶת עוֹלָם בְּכָל-
 מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם:

²² וּבְקַצְרְכֶם אֶת-קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא-
 תִכְלֶה פֶּאת שְׂדֶךְ בְּקַצְרְךָ וּלְקַט קְצִירְךָ
 לֹא תִלְקַט לְעַנִּי וְלְגֵר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ט

²³ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ²⁴ דְּבַר
 חַמִּישִׁי

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + What does "when you reap the harvest of your land" (v. 22) have to do with the Lord's appointed times?

NJPS ¹²When you have set aside in full the tenth part of your yield—in the third year, the year of the tithe—and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your settlements, ¹³you shall declare before the LORD your God: “I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house; and I have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, just as You commanded me; I have neither transgressed nor neglected any of Your commandments: ¹⁴I have not eaten of it while in mourning,

RASHI 12 When you have set aside in full the tenth part of your yield—in the third year. Rather, “... of your yield in the third year” (compare OJPS). For the declaration about having “cleared out the consecrated portion” (v. 13) occurs on the eve of Passover in the fourth year of the seven-year sabbatical cycle. [B] We know from 14:28 that this tithe is to be brought “at the end” of every three years, and 31:10 tells us that “the end” of every seventh year occurs “at the Feast of Booths.” We therefore learn that “at the end” signals a reference to one of the pilgrimage festivals. — But perhaps it specifically signals the Feast of Booths? — No, for setting aside the tenth part “in full” cannot occur until Passover, since there are many trees that cannot be harvested until after the Feast of Booths. The tithes of the third year, therefore, cannot be “set aside in full” until Passover of the fourth year. At this stage, anyone who has held onto the tithes is obligated by the text to clear them out of his house.

The year of the tithe. That is, the year of “the” (one) tithe (out of the two tithes that must be brought in years 1 and 2 of the cycle) that is brought in year 3 as well. In year 1, there is the “first tithe” mentioned in Num. 18:26, where the Levites are told, “When you receive from the Israelites their tithes,” and the “second tithe” of 14:23, “You shall consume the tithes of your new grain and wine and oil, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks, in the presence of the LORD your God.” The same applies to year 2. But in year 3, only the first of these applies. **And have given it to the Levite.** This is the “first tithe” of years 1 and 2. **The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.** This is the “poor tithe,” which replaces the “second tithe” of other years. **That they may eat their fill in your settlements.** You must give them enough for them to eat their fill. The Sages determined precise amounts: no less than half a kav of wheat or a kav of barley.

13 You shall declare before the LORD your God. You must acknowledge that you have given the tithes. **I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house.** This is the “second tithe” and the fourth-year fruit of a new tree. [C] Our verse is teaching that if any of the tithes of years 1 and 2 still remain with you, not having been brought up to Jerusalem, you must bring them now. **I have given it to the Levite.** This is the “first tithe.” The Hebrew literally says “I have also given it” (see OJPS), which adds in a reference to the priestly gifts and the first fruits. **The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.** This is the “poor tithe.” **Just as You commanded me.** I have given them in the correct order. I did not separate the priestly gifts before I offered the first fruits, or tithe before separating the priestly gifts, or take the second tithe before the first one. “You shall not put off the skimming of the first yield of your vats” (Exod. 22:28)—you must not change the order of these offerings. **I have neither transgressed nor neglected any of Your commandments.** I have not transgressed by separating a tithe from one crop for some other crop, or from the new crop for the old crop; and I have not neglected to bless You for commanding me to separate these tithes.

14 I have not eaten of it while in mourning. From the particular word used for “mourning” here we learn that it is forbidden for a

[B] See Special Topics, “Tithes.” [C] See Lev. 19:23–25.

NAHMANIDES 14 I have not eaten of it while in mourning. Though the declaration as a whole includes everything that is implied (according to the midrash) by the list in v. 13, [D] this particular phrase applies only to the consecrated offerings, the “second

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 13 I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house. “I have put away the hallowed things out of my house” (OJPS), for on account of our sins and those of our ancestors the sacred service has been removed from the firstborn (Sforno). **I have given it to the Levite.** Rather, “even though I have given it to the Levite” as You commanded, I admit that my sin was great and pray that You will look kindly upon me—and not as I deserve (Sforno).

14 I have not eaten of it while in mourning. Rather, “I have not eaten of it in poverty” even though it is the poor tithe and I myself

OJPS ¹²When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithe of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be satisfied, ¹³then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God: “I have put away

12 כִּי תִכְלֶה לְעֹשֶׂר אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ תָּבוֹאֲתָךְ בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁלִישִׁת שָׁנַת הַמַּעֲשֶׂיךָ וְנִתְּתָה לְלוֹי לְגֵר לִיתוּם וְלְאַלְמָנָה וְאֶבְלָו בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְשָׂבְעוּ: 13 וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעֵרְתִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּיִת וְגַם נִתְּתִיו לְלוֹי וְלִגֵּר לִיתוּם וְלְאַלְמָנָה בְּכָל־מִצְוֹתָךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי לֹא־עָבַרְתִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי: 14 לֹא־אָכַלְתִּי

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS ♦ Why does v. 12 not include the commandment to “go to the place where the LORD your God will choose” as commandments that must be performed at the Temple usually do? ♦ Why does v. 12 say (as it literally does), “You must give it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,” when this has already been commanded in 14:29? ♦ What need is there for the person to “declare” (v. 13) what he has done? ♦ Why is this declaration not commanded in Deuteronomy 12 or 14, where the commandments to bring tithes to Jerusalem are given?

the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Thy commandment which Thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. ¹⁴I have not eaten thereof in my

RASHBAM 12 The year of the tithe. The poor tithe. [A]

13 You shall declare before the LORD your God. The Holy One commanded that this declaration be made explicitly to prevent people from deciding to withhold their tithes; now, they would have to lie to the Holy One in order to do so.

14 I have not eaten of it while in mourning. Rather, “I have not eaten of it [A] See Special Topics, “Tithes.”

IBN EZRA 12 When you have set aside... the tenth part. The verb is a Hiphil, but this unusual form of it is unique in the Bible. **The year of the tithe.** The poor tithe. [B] **To the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.** To whichever of them you like.

13 I have cleared out the consecrated portion. That is, the tithe. The verse goes on to say: I have not deposited it anywhere for safekeeping but have given it to those I was supposed to. **I have neither transgressed.** Deliberately. **Nor neglected.** Literally, “forgotten” (OJPS). I did not even accidentally, absentmindedly, fail to clear out the tithe from my house. Or perhaps each of the two verbs applies to one of the two tithes.

14 In mourning. “As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named him [B] See Special Topics, “Tithes.”