

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 Sferno*

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NJPS 6 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2Command Aaron and his sons thus:

This is the ritual of the burnt offering: The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is

RASHI 2 Command Aaron and his sons. "Command" is used to give an instruction that must be followed with alacrity, both immediately and in succeeding generations. R. Simeon says, "The text must especially command us to act with alacrity in a matter that involves taking money out of one's pocket." **This is the ritual of the burnt offering.** Every time the Hebrew word *torah* is used (here, "ritual" in NJPS and "law" in OJPS), its purpose is to indicate that the rules are worded in such a way as to give us additional information that is not specifically recorded. In this case, we learn that the fats and other parts of a sacrifice may be burned on the altar at any time during the night, and also which invalid offerings must be taken down from the altar and which must remain and be offered anyway. **The burnt offering itself.** This apparently redundant expression tells us that animals that have been involved in bestiality and the like may not be used as a burnt offering even if they are accidentally put up on the altar, since their disqualification took place before they were brought into the courtyard and not in the holy place itself. [A]

[A] So they must be removed from the altar. By contrast, if an animal is qualified to be a burnt offering but some problem develops during the ritual, "it is [nonetheless] that which goeth up ... upon the altar" (OJPS).

NAHMANIDES 2 Command Aaron and his sons. The book of Leviticus begins with "Speak to the Israelite people" (1:2) because that section describes the *bringing* of the offerings, and the offerings are brought by all of the Israelites. Now, however, Moses is told to "command Aaron," because this section describes how the offerings are to be *made*, which is the job of the priests. The comment of R. Simeon mentioned by Rashi is therefore not pertinent, since the priests who are commanded here make no expenditure themselves; in fact, they profit by making the offerings. R. Simeon is actually arguing with the first comment provided by Rashi, which says that "command" refers specifically to commandments that go into effect immediately and also pertain to future generations, while other commandments are introduced simply by saying "Speak to the Israelite people" or "Say to them." R. Simeon's point is that "command" actually is sometimes used with commandments of limited applicability: when they involve expenditure—e.g., for oil for the lampstand (Exod. 27:20) or for towns for the Levites to settle in (Num. 35:2). It might be that R. Simeon's comment *is* understood to apply here, since v. 13 *does* speak of an offering to be brought by "Aaron and his sons." But in the Sifra, where both comments originate, R. Simeon is (as I said) arguing with the first comment, not supplementing it as Rashi makes him seem to do. **This is the ritual of the burnt offering.** The rule specified by Rashi does not apply to all "offerings" (as he says) but to all *burnt* offerings—not to libations and not to offerings of blood. With regard to the nighttime aspect, this expression teaches us that we are not to bring a burnt offering at night. But if it is slaughtered and its blood is dashed on the altar while it is still day, then the sacrificial pieces may be burnt at any time during the night. The same is true of the sacrificial fats from a sacrifice of well-being. **The burnt offering itself.** This is the phrase that expresses the limitation we have mentioned: that the offering itself may not be taken down from the altar if it is found to be invalid, while its accompanying libations or blood offerings are removed. But this verse has nothing to do with burnt offerings that are not put up on the altar until nighttime. That situation is covered by Exod. 23:18. **While the fire on the altar is kept going on it.** That is, it is a commandment to the priests to add enough wood during the day so that it is not used up at night, letting the fire go out. In my opinion, v. 6 is a separate commandment: that the fire should not be permitted to go out *at all*. (In fact, the Sages decreed a second, separate fire on the altar to be kept continuously burning in fulfillment of this commandment.) V. 5, which says something similar, would appear to be superfluous, permitting the Sages to interpret it as extending this commandment beyond the priests to everyone, such that not even a coal from the fire may be taken off the altar and extinguished. But I don't think one who does so violates *two* commandments, as Rashi says in his comment to v. 6.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 2 **This is the ritual of the burnt offering.** The burnt offering is mentioned first, as it was in ch. 1, because it is the most preferred, as if God had said, "If only all your offerings were burnt offerings and none of them sin or guilt offerings" (Abarbanel). Not "the ritual" but "the Torah," that is, the teaching. Having described all the different offerings, the text now returns to allude to the theoretical aspects of each (Sforno). **The burnt offering itself.** "The ritual of the burnt offering" in general is described in the weekly portion of Vayikra, but now the specific rules pertaining to the regular evening offering are given (Abarbanel). **Where it is burned.** The מ of the Hebrew word מוקדה is to be written noticeably smaller than the other letters (Masorah). The offering that must

OJPS 6 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: 2Command Aaron and his sons, saying:

This is the law of the burnt-offering: it is that which goeth up on its firewood upon the altar all night unto the morning; and the fire of the altar shall be kept

וּדְבַר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 2 צו
אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר
זֹאת תֹּרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־
מוֹקְדָה * עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־
2. מ' זעירא לפי נוסחים מקובלים

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + How can each burnt offering "remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning" (v. 2) when so many different offerings are brought and burned every day? + What exactly is "the" burnt offering to which this refers? + If this refers to the daily afternoon offering (as the commentators say), why is that not specified directly? In fact, the daily offerings are not described anywhere in Leviticus! + If this *does* refer to the afternoon offering, why does the text not specify that the morning offering may be brought any time during the day? + Once the verse says "all night," why must it add "until morning"?

RASHBAM 2 This is the ritual of the burnt offering. All of the offerings in the weekly portion of Vayikra are repeated here, and the rules concerning them are completed. **The burnt offering itself.** The burnt offering must be brought during the day: "on the day that he offers his sacrifice" (7:16); "on the day you sacrifice it" (19:6). **All night.** It may be turned into smoke at any time throughout the night. **The fire on the altar is kept going on it.** By night just as it is by day.

IBN EZRA 2 **The burnt offering itself.** Rather, as OJPS translates, the burnt offering "is that which goeth up" entirely on the altar. That is why it is called by the Hebrew word *olah*, which has this meaning. Correctly read, the verse implies that the burnt offering may not be put on the altar during the night but that it *remains* on the fire during the night. **Where it is burned.** OJPS "on its firewood." It is not clear whether this word *mokdah* (found only here in the Bible) is a variant of the word *mokéd* (literally "hearth") or a different noun from the same root. **While the fire on the altar is kept going on it.** This fire is kept going on the altar but may not be transferred elsewhere.

NJPS kept going on it. ³The priest shall dress in linen raiment, with linen breeches next to his body; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. ⁴He shall then take off his vestments and put on other vestments, and carry the ashes

RASHI 3 Linen raiment. This refers to the priestly tunic. NJPS omits a critical part of the word *middo*, "his linen garment" (OJPS), indicating that it must be made to the priest's measure (*middato*). **Next to his body.** Literally, "upon his flesh" (OJPS). Nothing must intervene between the breeches and his flesh. **He shall take up the ashes.** He must take a fire pan full of ashes from the center of the fire, where the offering has been totally reduced to ashes; lift it up as an offering, and deposit the ashes east of the altar ramp. This was the first ritual performed every morning. **The burnt offering on the altar.** If he finds parts of the offerings that have not yet been consumed, he must put them back on the altar after having raked the coals back and forth and taken some ashes from the center of the fire. As long as it is still a "burnt offering" (and not yet completely ash), it must remain "on the altar."

4 He shall then take off his vestments. This is not a ritual obligation, but simply sensible behavior so that he does not dirty his vestments when he carries the ashes away. One does not pour wine for one's master in the same garments in which one cooked the dinner. That is why he must **put on other, less fancy, vestments. Carry the ashes outside.** The ashes were gathered into a pile. Once the pile became so large that there was

NAHMANIDES 3 The priest shall dress in linen raiment. Assuming this is the tunic, as Rashi explains, then the addition of the breeches means that the verse refers explicitly only to two of the priestly garments. But taking up the ashes, like any other priestly task, requires that the priest be dressed in all four of the garments. [A] The tunic and breeches are specifically mentioned here because of the new points that the verse adds in connection with them: that the tunic must be long enough to reach his feet—if it is not, any priestly service he performs is invalid—and that the breeches must be **next to his body**, with nothing between them and his skin. But once the verse requires priestly raiment, we know automatically that a priest who performs the task must wear all the appropriate garments (four for an ordinary priest, eight for the High Priest). [B] This is explained on B. Yoma 23b. The Sifra derives this same ruling from the double use of the verb "put on" (see OJPS), while Onkelos appears to understand "raiment" as an inclusive term denoting the entire priestly uniform. The same Hebrew word is used in 1 Sam. 4:12, Ps. 133:2, and 2 Sam. 20:8 simply for a person's "clothes." Since linen is specified, Onkelos would seem to be following the opinion that the sash of an ordinary priest is *not* the same as that of the High Priest, which (according to Exod. 39:29) is made of a combination of linen and wool. [C]

4 He shall then take off his vestments. See Rashi's comment. But the Sages clearly understood the **other vestments** mentioned here as priestly vestments, not simply ordinary clothes. Rashi is certainly correct that this is "good behavior," but I do not understand why he thinks it is not actually a commandment, which it clearly appears to be. Admittedly, there is one rabbinic opinion in the passage on

[A] The others are the headdress and the sash. [B] See Exodus 28. [C] See Nahmanides' comment to Exod. 39:29.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS remain where it is burned all night is obviously the regular daily twilight offering; the reason it must remain is so that, to honor God, the altar is never empty day or night (Bekhor Shor). It should rather be translated "on its hearth" (compare OJPS). There should be a fire that is specifically dedicated to it alone (Gersonides). **All night.** There was no need to add that the morning offering could be burned at any time during the day, since this is obvious. But we also learn that the evening prayer may be recited at any time during the night, for there is an allegorical interpretation of this whole section relating it to the three daily prayers of evening, morning, and afternoon. As we learn from Song 8:6, the love of God that impels one to pray burns like a flame (Abarbanel). **While the fire on the altar is kept going on it.** Rather, "the fire of the [inner] altar is to be lit from it," that is, from the fire on the outer altar (Hizkuni).

3 Raiment. The *vav* at the end of the word is indeed superfluous, but the *dagesh* in the *dalet* does show that the word is derived from מִדָּה, meaning "measure" (Kimhi). "Raiment" here refers to three of the garments—the tunic, the headdress, and the sash—as a unit, since they cannot be worn separately, but only as a single outfit (Hizkuni). It remains to be explained why the rules Rashi mentions are added only here. Perhaps the priests would otherwise have worn extra-short tunics to avoid dirtying them with the ash, or additional undergarments to avoid dirtying themselves with it (Abarbanel). **He shall take up the ashes.** It is the "taking up" of these ashes that is the essence of the commandment, not the later disposal of them (Kimhi). **Beside the altar.** These ashes are deposited on the eastern side of the altar to demonstrate deliberate disrespect toward the east, where some people mistakenly bow in worship of the sun (Abarbanel).

4 He shall ... carry the ashes. Since the text does not specifically say "the priest shall carry the ashes," we learn that this may be performed by a blemished priest, who could not perform the other priestly tasks (Hizkuni). The crops of birds, which seem to have been disposed of here according to 1:16, are not mentioned. But since they would have been covered with the ash, perhaps they are simply

OJPS burning thereby. ³And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes whereto the fire hath consumed the burnt-offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. ⁴And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without

הַבְּקָר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תִּקַּד בּוֹ: ³וְלִבֵּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בָד וּמְכַסְיָבַד וְלִבֵּשׁ עַל-בְּשָׂרוֹ וְהָרִים אֶת-הַדָּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאֵשׁ אֶת-הָעֵלֶה עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׂמוּ אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ⁴וּפָשַׁט אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְלִבֵּשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-הַדָּשָׁן אֶל-מִחוּץ

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + Why does v. 3 specify the "linen breeches" without mentioning the tunics, sashes, and turbans that Exod. 28:40 makes clear are an essential part of the priestly uniform? + Why is the priest instructed to carry off "the ashes" (v. 4), but not the crops of birds (and so forth), which he must also obviously do? + What exactly is the "clean place" to which the verse refers?

RASHBAM 3 Linen raiment. The -o suffix of the word *middo* ("raiment") is grammatically superfluous, as occurs, e.g., in the names "son of Zippor" (Num. 23:18) and "Balaam son of Beor" (Num. 24:3). The word itself simply means "clothes" (see, e.g., 1 Sam. 4:12). **He shall take up the ashes.** This is a specific ritual attached to the burnt offering of the morning. Carrying the ashes outside (v. 4) is done less often, for it is simply a matter of making space on the altar by clearing away the ashes.

IBN EZRA 3 Raiment. This is in fact the straightforward translation of *middo*. The Sages indicate that the suffix implies a garment suited to the priest's measure, *middato*. **Next to his body.** Literally, "upon his flesh" (OJPS), a euphemism for the genitals, as is clear from 15:2. **To which the fire has reduced the burnt offering.** OJPS "whereto the fire hath consumed the burnt offering"—what remains after the fire "eats" the offering (as the text literally says). **Beside the altar.** On its eastern side.

NJPS breast shall go to Aaron and his sons. ³²And the right thigh from your sacrifices of well-being you shall present to the priest as a gift; ³³he from among Aaron's sons who offers the blood and the fat of the offering of well-being shall get the right thigh as his portion. ³⁴For I have taken the breast of elevation offering and the thigh of gift offering from the Israelites, from their sacrifices of well-being, and given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due from the Israelites for all time.

³⁵Those shall be the perquisites of Aaron and the perquisites of his sons from the LORD's offerings by fire, once they have been inducted to serve the LORD as priests; ³⁶these the LORD commanded to be given them, once they had been anointed, as a due from the Israelites for all time throughout the ages.

³⁷Such are the rituals of the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the offering of ordination, and the sacrifice of well-being, ³⁸with which the LORD charged Moses on Mount Sinai, when He commanded that

RASHI 32 The right thigh. The "thigh" is the tibia and its flesh, extending from the calcaneus to the patella—the middle of the three sections of the animal's leg. (The calcaneus and below is that part which butchers sell along with the head.)

33 He from among Aaron's sons who offers the blood and the fat. That is, any priest who is eligible to offer them. So anyone who is impure when the blood is dashed or when the fat is turned into smoke is excluded from sharing in this meat.

34 Elevation offering ... gift offering. Actually, what NJPS calls the "elevation" offering is "waved" back and forth horizontally (see OJPS); it is the "gift" offering of NJPS that is "heaved" up and down (that is, elevated and lowered; see OJPS).

37 The offering of ordination. Not of ordination in general, but specifically for the day when the priesthood was inaugurated.

NAHMANIDES 36 To be given them, once they had been anointed. NJPS is not quite precise here; OJPS, "which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that they were anointed," is more literal. The sense of the text is that, at the time the priests were anointed, the Lord commanded that these things be given to them ever afterward. The same applies to "once they have been inducted" of v. 35. The NJPS translation follows the explanation of Ibn Ezra, that the Hebrew preposition which OJPS translates here as "in" can indeed mean "from"; see 8:32, "what is left over of [not *in*] the flesh and the bread."

38 With which the LORD charged Moses on Mount Sinai ... in the wilderness of Sinai. According to the Sages, all of the commandments—from the broadest generalities down to the most precise regulations—were given to Moses on Mount Sinai; some of them, and specifically the laws of Leviticus, were then repeated to him in the Tent of Meeting. According to the straightforward sense, however, the burnt offerings, the sin offerings, and the offering of ordination were commanded to Moses on Mount Sinai, while the meal offerings, the guilt offerings, and the offerings of well-being were commanded in the wilderness, in the Tent of Meeting. But perhaps the Hebrew phrase here does not mean "on Mount Sinai" but "at Mount Sinai," in the Tent of Meeting. This is certainly true of "the continual burnt offering that was offered at Mount Sinai" (Num. 28:6), which was not

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 38 He commanded that the Israelites present their offerings to the LORD. Specifically to the Lord, and not to idols (Gersonides).

OJPS be Aaron's and his sons'. ³²And the right thigh shall ye give unto the priest for a heave-offering out of your sacrifices of peace-offerings. ³³He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right thigh for a portion. ³⁴For the breast of waving and the thigh of heaving have I taken of the children of Israel out of their sacrifices

of peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons as a due for ever from the children of Israel.

³⁵This is the consecrated portion of Aaron, and the consecrated portion of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day when they were presented to minister unto the LORD in the priest's office; ³⁶which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that they were anointed. It is a due for ever throughout their generations.

³⁷This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meal-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the guilt-offering, and of the consecration-offering, and of the sacrifice of peace-offerings; ³⁸which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children

RASHBAM 35 Perquisites. NJPS has understood this word—elsewhere translated as "anointing"—correctly. What the priests receive from the sacrifices constitutes their pay: "the skin of the burnt offering" (v. 8), the meat of the sin offering (6:19) and the guilt offering (v. 7), one each of the breads from the thanksgiving offering (v. 14), the breast and thigh of the sacrifice of well-being (vv. 31–34), and "what is left" of the meal offering (6:9).

IBN EZRA 33 The right thigh. This goes to the specific priest who dashes the blood against the altar.

34 The breast. This goes to all the priests.

35 The perquisites. Literally, "the anointing"; but NJPS has the sense. These are the rewards given to Aaron and his sons, for anointing confers princely status.

36 Once they had been anointed. Again NJPS has the sense; contrast the more literal "in the day that they were anointed" (OJPS). These are their perquisites from that day on. The same is true of "what is left over of the flesh and the bread" (8:32), where even OJPS agrees that the Hebrew preposition must mean "of" or "from."

37 The offering of ordination. This offering is described in Exodus 29.

38 Offerings to the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai. They made no offerings until they reached Mount Sinai. As I have explained in my comment to

וְהָיָה הַחֵזֶה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו: ³² וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַיְמִינִי תִתְּנוּ תְרוּמָה לְכֹהֵן מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלָמִימִם: ³³ הַמִּקְרִיב אֶת־דָּמֵם הַשְּׁלָמִים וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב מִבְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן לֹו תִהְיֶה שׁוֹק הַיְמִינִי לְמִנְחָה: ³⁴ כִּי אֶת־חֵזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה לְקַחְתִּי מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיהֶם וְאֵתֵן אֹתָם לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וּלְבָנָיו לְחֶק־עוֹלָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

³⁵ וְאֵת מִשְׁחַת אַהֲרֹן וּמִשְׁחַת בָּנָיו מֵאֲשֵׁי יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַקָּרִיב אֹתָם לְכֹהֵן לַיהוָה: ³⁶ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לִתֵּן לָהֶם בַּיּוֹם מִשְׁחֹו אֹתָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֶקֶת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתָם:

³⁷ וְאֵת הַתּוֹרָה לַעֲלֹה לְמִנְחָה וּלְחַטָּאת וּלְאֲשָׁם וּלְמִלּוּאִים וּלְזִבְחֵי הַשְּׁלָמִים: ³⁸ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + Why are the breast and the thigh specifically given to the priests (v. 34) rather than any other part of the animal? + Doesn't this contradict Deut. 18:3, which specifies that "everyone who offers a sacrifice ... must give the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach to the priest"? + Why is the breast an "offering of elevation" and the thigh a "gift offering"?

NJPS the Israelites present their offerings to the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai. **OJPS** of Israel to present their offerings unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.

8 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²Take Aaron along with his sons, and the vestments, the anointing oil, the bull of sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread; ³and assemble the whole

בַּיּוֹם צִוִּיתוֹ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִקְרִיב אֶת־קֶרְבָּנֵיהֶם לַיהוָה בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי: פ רביעי

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: **ח** אֶת־אֹהֶרֶן וְאֶת־בְּנָיו אֹתוֹ וְאֵת הַבְּגָדִים וְאֵת שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֵת פֶּר הַחֻטָּאת וְאֵת שְׁנֵי הָאִילִים וְאֵת כֶּל הַמִּצֻוֹת: ³ וְאֵת כָּל־הָעֵדָה הַקְהָל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל

RASHI 8:1 The LORD spoke to Moses. This instruction was given seven days before the Tabernacle was erected. Remember that the text of the Torah is not written in chronological order.

2 Take Aaron. "Take" him with words, draw him in, and persuade him. **The bull of sin offering** (and so forth)—God told Moses all of these things in the instructions for ordination given in Exodus 29. Now, on the

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + Why must all of these commands be given again, when they have already been given in the weekly portion of Tetzaveh in the book of Exodus?

day that the ordination actually began, He repeated them to spur Moses into action.

3 Assemble the whole community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. This is

NAHMANIDES offered "on" the mountain. Similarly, when the Israelites "marched from the mountain of the LORD a distance of three days" (Num. 10:33), they marched from the wilderness in front of the mountain, not from on top of it. And in Deut. 1:6 God tells the Israelites, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain." My point is that the Israelites camped at, that is, "in front of," the mountain (as Exod. 19:2 says explicitly) and stayed there until they departed for the wilderness of Paran. They made the Tent of Meeting and set it up in front of Mount Sinai, on its eastern side, and there began to sacrifice the regular daily offering. Our verse, therefore, is careful to make clear that they were in the wilderness of Sinai, at the mountain, but not atop it in the place of glory where God spoke the Ten Commandments. Nor were the sacrifices commanded elsewhere in the wilderness of Sinai, after they had left the mountain, but right there in the vicinity of the mountain and quite close to it. The book begins by telling us that "The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting" (1:1), and here in our verse it informs us where the Tent was located.

8:2 Take Aaron. Rashi remarks, "This instruction was given seven days before the Tabernacle was erected. Remember that the text of the Torah is not written in chronological order." But why should we upend the living words of God? [K] Moreover, Exodus 40 tells us that God gave Moses all the commandments pertaining to setting up the Tabernacle and dressing and anointing the priests, and it goes on to describe Moses actually setting up the Tabernacle. But the text says nothing about Aaron and his sons up until this point, in Leviticus 8. How could the text separate a single incident into two, and tell the earlier part of it later? In fact, Moses was commanded on the 23rd of Adar to set up the Tabernacle, and he did so. Once the Tabernacle was standing, the Holy One Enthroned on the Cherubim commanded him about the sacrifices—everything in the first seven chapters of Leviticus. For He wanted to teach Moses all the rules pertaining to them before any of them was offered. The ordination ceremony involved a sin offering, a burnt offering, and sacrifices of well-being, and they had no way to know the rules for them other than from chs. 1–7 here, which necessarily had to precede the description of the ceremony itself. Now God tells Moses to "Take Aaron along with his sons" and do what He had previously explained to him, for now was the moment for him to carry out "what you shall do to them in consecrating them to serve Me as priests" (Exod. 29:1). The correct perspective is that Moses was commanded about setting up the Tabernacle before the Golden Calf incident, and when the Holy One reconciled with him and promised him that the Shekhinah would indeed settle upon them, Moses understood on his own that the commandment to set up the Tabernacle was still in force. At which point he commanded Israel about it, as I have explained in my comment to Exod. 35:1. After the work was finished, God spoke to him as is recorded in Exodus 40, where he was told, "You shall bring Aaron and his sons forward to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting" and so forth (Exod. 40:12). He therefore understood that Aaron, and his sons too, retained the high rank that the Omnipresent had lovingly given them. At this point, in Leviticus 8, on the first day of the ordination, He gives the go-ahead. Now all the texts have been explained as taking place in just the order they are written—except for Exod. 40:34, "the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle," which did not take place until the eighth day of the ordination process, according to our Sages, but was written where it was to keep all of the material about the Tabernacle together in one place. For it is the way of the Scripture in all cases to complete the description of any subject once it is begun.

3 Assemble the whole community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. This was added to the instructions given in Exodus 29 so that everyone would know that the Holy One had chosen Aaron and his descendants.

[K] Nahmanides may have taken this expression from Ibn Ezra's comment to Exod. 19:12.

8 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: ²"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and the bullock of the sin-offering, and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread; ³and assemble thou all the

IBN EZRA Exod. 17:15, [F] the altar that Moses built after the defeat of Amalek was at Horeb, which is Mount Sinai. Israel remained there for a year (less 10 days), as the text informs us. [G] The prophet tells us explicitly that they brought no offerings in the wilderness: "Did you offer sacrifice and oblation to Me those forty years in the wilderness, O House of Israel?" (Amos 5:25). Nor did they bring the passover offering except once on the night of the exodus from Egypt and a second time at Mount Sinai. They had no livestock in the wilderness! Once they left Mount Sinai, they did not even go on circumcising their sons. By the time of Joshua most of them were uncircumcised; he had to have them circumcised so that they could eat the passover offering. [H]

8:2 The bull of sin offering. "The" bull of sin offering that has already been mentioned in Exod. 29:1. Similarly **the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread.**

3 The whole community. The elders and the heads of the tribes.

[F] In the long commentary. In the short commentary, Ibn Ezra says this altar was built at Rephidim. [G] "On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they entered the wilderness of Sinai" (Exod. 19:1); "In the second year, on the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle of the Pact and the Israelites set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai" (Num. 10:11–12). [H] See Joshua 5.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 8:3 Assemble the whole community. So that they should all treat the priesthood as a sacred institution (Hizkuni).

NJPS foot. ²⁴Moses then brought forward the sons of Aaron, and put some of the blood on the ridges of their right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet; and the rest of the blood Moses dashed against every side of the altar. ²⁵He took the fat—the broad tail, all the fat about the entrails, the protuberance of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat—and the right thigh. ²⁶From the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD, he took one cake of unleavened bread, one cake of oil bread, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat parts and on the right thigh. ²⁷He placed all these on the palms of Aaron and on the palms of his sons, and elevated them as an elevation offering before the LORD. ²⁸Then Moses took them from their hands and turned them into smoke on the altar with the burnt offering. This was an ordination offering for a pleasing odor; it was an offering by fire to the LORD. ²⁹Moses took the breast and elevated it as an elevation offering before the LORD; it was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³⁰And Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his vestments, and also upon his sons and upon their vestments. Thus he consecrated Aaron and his vestments, and also his sons and their vestments.

³¹Moses said to Aaron and his sons: Boil the flesh at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and eat it there with the bread

RASHI 26 One cake of oil bread. These are the cakes (7:12) made with boiling water and soaked with as much oil as the cakes of unleavened bread and the wafers combined. That is how B. Men. 78a explains it.

28 Turned them into smoke on the altar. Moses served as priest for all seven days of the ordination. **With the burnt offering.** Rather, "upon" the burnt offering (OJPS), that is, along with it—but after it. Notice that this is the only place where we find the thigh of a peace offering burned on the altar.

NAHMANIDES 30 Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood. I don't know whether Moses mixed the two of them for these sprinklings (as in 16:18, where he mixes the bull's blood and the goat's blood) or not. (The word "it" of the translations is not found in the Hebrew.) Moreover, it is not clear to me why these sprinklings were delayed until after the ordination offering was turned into smoke. As originally commanded (Exod. 29:21–25), the sprinklings are supposed to come first. Perhaps because Exod. 29:21 says "Thus shall he and his vestments be holy, as well as his sons and his sons' vestments," Moses understood this to be the culminating act of sanctification.

For no mention of holiness is found there in connection with anointing or with putting the blood on the thumbs and so forth. Here in our passage, although v. 12 does say "He poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him," it is clear that the consecration is not fully completed until the sprinklings of our verse have taken place: **Thus he consecrated Aaron and his vestments, and also his sons and their vestments.** With this final act the consecration of both father and sons was simultaneously completed. The Sifra plainly says exactly this.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 25 And the right thigh. Ordinarily the officiating priest would receive both the thigh and the breast. But there were no priests as yet, and Moses could not have eaten this much meat within the required time. So the thigh was burnt on the altar (Abarbanel).

OJPS of his right foot. ²⁴And Aaron's sons were brought, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot; and Moses dashed the blood against the altar round about. ²⁵And he took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that

was upon the inwards, and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right thigh. ²⁶And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat, and upon the right thigh. ²⁷And he put the whole upon the hands of Aaron, and upon the hands of his sons, and waved them for a wave-offering before the LORD. ²⁸And Moses took them from off their hands, and made them smoke on the altar upon the burnt-offering; they were a consecration-offering for a sweet savor; it was an offering made by fire unto the LORD. ²⁹And Moses took the breast, and waved it for a wave-offering before the LORD; it was Moses' portion of the ram of consecration; as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

³¹And Moses said unto Aaron and to his sons: "Boil the flesh at the door of the tent of meeting; and there eat it and the bread

IBN EZRA 26 One cake of unleavened bread. This is the "one flat loaf of bread" mentioned in Exod. 29:23. With respect to gold or silver, a "cake" equals one talent. So perhaps with respect to bread also it is a measure of weight (though of course it would be a different actual weight than a "cake" of gold). **Placed them on the fat parts.** The kidneys and the protuberance of the liver are not mentioned—the protuberance because it is small (the word itself implies "a bit of something extra") and the kidneys because they are inseparable from their "fat parts." But the kidneys themselves are not included in the term "fat parts"; only the sheep's broad tail can be so called. [K]

[K] See Ibn Ezra's comment to 3:9.

הַיְמִינִית וְעַל-בֵּהֶן וְגִלוּ הַיְמִינִית: 24 וַיִּקְרָב אֶת-בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן וַיִּתֵּן מִשֶּׁה מִן-הַדָּם עַל-תְּנֹדֶה הַיְמִינִית וְעַל-בֵּהֶן וְיָדָם הַיְמִינִית וְעַל-בֵּהֶן וְרַגְלָם הַיְמִינִית וַיִּזְרַק מִשֶּׁה אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: 25 וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הַחֵלֶב וְאֶת-הָאֵלֶּיָה וְאֶת-כָּל-הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקֶּרֶב וְאֵת יִתְרַת הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת-שְׁתֵּי הַכְּפָלִית וְאֶת-חֻלְבָּהּ וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַיְמִין: 26 וּמִסֵּל הַמִּצֹּת אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לָקַח חֵלֶת מִצֶּה אַחַת וְחֵלֶת לֶחֶם שֶׁמֶן אַחַת וְרִקִּיק אֶחָד וַיִּשֶׂם עַל-הַחֲלָבִים וְעַל שׁוֹק הַיְמִין: 27 וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַכָּל עַל כַּפֵּי אַהֲרֹן וְעַל כַּפֵּי בָנָיו וַיִּנָּף אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: 28 וַיִּקַּח מִשֶּׁה אֹתָם מֵעַל כַּפֵּיהֶם וַיִּקְטֹר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל-הָעֹלָה מִלְּאִים הֵם לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה הוּא לַיהוָה: 29 וַיִּקַּח מִשֶּׁה אֶת-הַחֹזֶה וַיִּנְיֶפְהוּ תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מֵאֵיל הַמִּלְּאִים לְמִשֶּׁה הַיָּהּ לְמִנְהָ בְּאֶשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: שְׂבִיעִי 30 וַיִּקַּח מִשֶּׁה מִשֶּׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וּמִן-הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּז עַל-אַהֲרֹן עַל-בְּגָדָיו וְעַל-בְּנָיו וְעַל-בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו וְעַל-בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו וַיִּקְדַּשׁ אֶת-אַהֲרֹן אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְאֶת-בְּנָיו וְאֶת-בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו אִתָּם: 31 וַיִּיאַמֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בְּנָיו בְּשִׁלּוֹ אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַשֶּׂם תְּנַאֲכְלוּ