**PARASHAT HASHAVUA**

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**PARASHAT TZAV**

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Dedicated by Mr. and Mrs. Leon Brum for the Refua Sheleima of

Dana Petrover (Batsheva bat Gittel Aidel Leba)

and Marvin Rosenberg (Meir Chaim ben Tzipporah Miriam)

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**The First Great *Bama***

**By Rav Gad Eldad**

In *Parashat Tzav*, as in *Parashat Vayikra,* the Torah lists the sacrifices, giving us the details about how they are to be offered and consumed, from the point of view of the priest (*kohen*) as well as the point of view of the person brining the sacrifice.[[1]](#footnote-1) The completion of the picture allows us to consider the sacrificial service from above, and it is precisely this bird's eye view that provides us with new insights.

The sacrificial service and the atonement that it achieves is connected to the proper functioning of the priests (*kohanim*), the seed of Aharon — who is the founder of the priestly dynasty. Accordingly, the priests are mentioned with great frequency over the course of these *parashiyot.* However, they are not always referred to with the same terminology (emphasis mine in all citations):

And the Lord called to Moshe, and spoke to him out of the tent of meeting, saying: Speak to the Israelites, and say to them: When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord…

If his offering be a burnt-offering of the herd, he shall offer it a male without blemish; he shall bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering… And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and **Aharon's sons, the priests (*bnei Aharon ha-kohanim)***, shall present the blood, and dash the blood all around against the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting…

And **Aharon the priest’s sons** ***(bnei Aharon ha-kohen)*** shall put fire upon the altar, and lay wood in order upon the fire. And **Aharon's sons, the priests**, shall lay the pieces, and the head, and the suet, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar; but its inwards and its legs shall he wash with water; and **the priest** (***ha-kohen****)* shall make the whole smoke on the altar, for a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord. (*Vayikra* 1:1-9)

In the opening section of the book the most common designation is "Aharon's sons" with the addition "the priests/ the priest," but at the end of this section the term "Aharon's sons" is omitted, and the Torah contents itself with "the priest." If we continue to read the *parashiyot* dealing with the offerings, we will see that it is precisely the designation "Aharon's sons" with which the book opens that in the end is less common.

It is possible that the Torah is merely seeking variety, but we will try to come up with a rule to account for the appearances of the expression *bnei Aharon.*

**“Aharon’s Sons”**

In addition to this designation being used in connection with the burnt-offering, it is also used in connection with the meal-offering:

And when any one brings a meal-offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. And he shall bring it to **Aharon's sons, the priests**; and he shall take from it his handful of the fine flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, together with all the frankincense thereof; **and the priest shall make** the memorial-part thereof **smoke** upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord. But that which is left of the meal-offering shall be **Aharon’s and his sons’;** it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire…

And if your offering be a meal-offering of the stewing-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And you shall bring the meal-offering that is made of these things to the Lord; and it shall be presented to **the priest**, and he shall bring it to the altar. And **the priest** shall take off from the meal-offering the memorial-part thereof, and shall make it smoke upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord. But that which is left of the meal-offering shall be **Aharon’s and his sons’;** it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire…

And if you bring a meal-offering of first-fruits to the Lord, you shall bring for the meal-offering of your first-fruits grain in the ear parched with fire, even groats of the fresh ear. And you shall put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon; it is a meal-offering. **And the priest shall make the memorial-part of it smoke,** even of the groats thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; it is an offering made by fire to the Lord. (2:1-16)

The designation "Aharon's sons" appears in this passage, but appearing alongside it is the term "the priest," and that term appears more frequently.

The designation "Aharon's sons" appears also in the description of the peace-offering:

And if his offering be a sacrifice of peace-offerings… And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tent of meeting; and **Aharon's sons, the priests,** **shall dash** the blood against the altar all around… **And Aharon's sons shall make it smoke** on the altar upon the burnt-offering…, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord.

And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offerings to the Lord be of the flock… And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tent of meeting; and **Aharon's sons shall dash the blood** thereof against the altar all around… **And the priest shall make it smoke upon the altar**; it is the food of the offering made by fire to the Lord. 

And if his offering be a goat, then he shall present it before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tent of meeting; and **Aharon’s sons shall dash the blood** thereof against the altar all around. And he shall present thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire to the Lord: the fat that cover the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards… **And the priest shall make them smoke** upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savor; all the fat is the Lord's. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that you shall eat neither fat nor blood. (3:1-17)

Here, too, we find the designation *bnei Aharon* alongside appearances of *ha-kohen* by itself; but the surprising thing is that from this point onwards, over the entire course of the sin-offerings and guilt-offerings, the designation "Aharon's sons" does not appear, and the Torah uses the term "the priest" exclusively.

**“Command Aharon and His Sons, Saying”**

This phenomenon is repeated in the second list of sacrifices, which is found in our *parasha.* We find the phrase "Aharon's sons" in the sections dealing with a meal-offering and a peace-offering.[[2]](#footnote-2) Here too it is not found in the sections dealing with a sin-offering or a guilt-offering.

Regarding a meal-offering, we read:

And this is the law of the meal-offering: **Aharon’s sons shall offer it** before the Lord, in front of the altar. And he shall take up therefrom his handful, of the fine flour of the meal-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meal-offering, and shall make the memorial-part thereof smoke upon the altar of a sweet savor to the Lord. And that which is left thereof **shall Aharon and his sons eat**; it shall be eaten without leaven in a holy place; in the courtyard of the tent of meeting they shall eat it. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of My offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as the sin-offering, and as the guilt-offering. **Every male among Aharon’s sons** may eat of it, as a due forever throughout your generations, from the offerings of the Lord made by fire; whatsoever touches them shall be holy. (6:7-11)

Once again, in the continuation (7: 9-10), we find:

And every meal-offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is dressed in the stewing-pan, and on the griddle, shall be **the priest's that offers it**. And every meal-offering, mingled with oil, or dry, shall **all Aharon’s sons** have, one as well as another. (7:9-10)

And with respect to the peace-offering, we read:

And the Lord spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Israelites, saying: He that offers his sacrifice of peace-offerings to the Lord shall bring his offering to the Lord out of his sacrifice of peace-offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire: the fat with the breast shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. **And the priest shall make** the fat **smoke** upon the altar; but **the breast shall be Aharon’s and his sons’**. And the right thigh shall you give **to the priest for a heave-offering** out of your sacrifices of peace-offerings. He among **Aharon’s sons**, that offers the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right thigh for a portion. For the breast of waving and the thigh of heaving have I taken of the Israelites out of their sacrifices of peace-offerings, and have given them **to Aharon the priest and to his sons** as a due forever from the Israelites. 

This is the consecrated portion of Aharon, and the consecrated portion of his sons, out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, on the day they were presented to minister to the Lord in the priest's office (*le-khahen*); which the Lord commanded to be given them of the Israelites, on the day they were anointed. It is a due forever throughout their generations. (7:28-36)

It is true that the designation *bnei Aharon* is found alongside the non-specific term *ha-kohen* but this combination is found only with respect to the burnt-offerings, meal-offerings, and peace-offerings, which are usually volitional, while with respect to the obligatory offerings we find only "the priest."[[3]](#footnote-3)

To explain this phenomenon, let us first examine another aspect of the sacrificial service.

### “You Shall Not Do After All That We Do Here This Day, Every Man Whatsoever is Right in his Own Eyes”

Already when they are in the wilderness, the people of Israel are told about the *Mikdash* (Temple) that is planned for them after they settle in the Land of Israel. The Torah warns about the consequences of this fact, as opposed to the reality to which the Israelites have become accustomed in the wilderness:

You shall not do after all that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; for you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God gives you. But when you go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causes you to inherit… then it shall come to pass that the place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, there shall you bring all that I command you: your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which you vow to the Lord…

Take heed to yourself that you offer not your burnt-offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt-offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you… You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain, or of your wine, or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock, nor any of your vows which you vow, nor your freewill-offerings, nor the offering of your hand; but you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God shall choose… (*Devarim* 12:8-18)

The initial and immediate meaning of building the *Mikdash* is the centralization of the sacrificial service and the permanent banning of *bamot*. A *bama*, literally a high place, is a sacrificial site outside the designated sanctuary of God. The fact that the Torah repeatedly emphasizes this point testifies to the magnitude of the change, as opposed to the conventional practice until that time. This change relates to the freewill-offerings that had been brought until then on *bamot*, as the obligatory offerings do not exist before the erection of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) at Mount Sinai.

Once the *Mishkan* is erected, the Israelites have to bring all their offerings to it; nevertheless, they are allowed to consume these offerings anywhere in the Israelite camp. Moshe is warning the people that when the *Mikdash* is finally built, even this option will disappear, as the only place to consume holy things (offerings or tithes) will be within God’s chosen city, which turns out, centuries later, to be Jerusalem.

However, not all *bamot* are equal. A great *bama* serves much the same role as the Altar in the *Mishkan* or *Mikdash*, as obligatory offerings, for the individual and for the community, may be brought there. A small *bama*, on the other hand, is only appropriate for freewill-offerings.

This distinction is brought in the Mishna:

There is no difference between a great *bama* and a small *bama* except for the paschal-offering.

This is the general principle: Any animal which is the object of a vow or a freewill-offering may be brought on a [small] *bama*; any animal which is not the subject of a vow or a freewill-offering may not be brought on a [small] *bama*. (*Megilla* 1:10)

If so, the erection of the *Mishkan* concludes two processes: the concentration of the freewill-offerings that already existed at one altar; and the establishment of the obligatory offerings, which from the outset could only be brought in the *Mishkan* and later the *Mikdash* (and during intermediate periods, on a great *bama*).

However, the difference between a centralized altar and the local *bama* is not limited to the types of offerings that could be brought, but relates even to the details of the service:

Wherein did the individual *bama* and the communal *bama* differ? [In respect of] laying [of hands], slaughtering in the north, sprinkling all around, waving and presenting.

Rabbi Yehuda said: There were no meal-offerings at the *bama*.

[They also differ as regards] priesthood, service garments, service vessels, a sweet savor, a line of demarcation for [the sprinkling of] the blood, and the washing of hands and feet.

However, when it comes to time, leftovers and impurity, they are equal.

(Mishna, *Zevachim* 14:10)

The Mishna knows that before the building of the *Mishkan* there is no need even for a priest for the sacrificial service performed at a *bama*. This detail, like others, changes with the sacrificial service as described in the Torah. Before a specific House to serve God is constructed, the freewill sacrificial service exists but does not require a priest, whereas the obligatory sacrificial service does not exist at all. Following the building of the *Mishkan,* both the freewill service and the obligatory service moved into the hands of the priests; but is the standing of the priests in the two services identical?

**“On the Day They Were Presented to Minister to the Lord in the Priest’s Office”**

I wish to suggest that even after the building of the *Mikdash*, a gap remains between the nature of the priests' standing regarding freewill-offerings and that regarding obligatory offerings. For this, we must first understand the difference between the designations "Aharon's sons/ the priests" and the non-specific term "the priest."

Whereas the term *bnei Aharon* relates to the factual biological reality, which describes the family lineage of those serving in the *Mishkan*, the term "the priests" is a title bestowed upon them by virtue of the role that they fulfill. The verse at the end of Chapter 7, cited in the heading to this section, expresses this well, as do other verses in *Parashat Tetzaveh*:

And bring you near to you Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, **that he may minister to Me in the priest's office (*le-khahano li)***, even Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar, Aharon's sons.

**And you shall make holy garments** for Aharon your brother, for splendor and for beauty. And you shall speak to all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aharon's garments **to sanctify him, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office.** (*Shemot* 28:1-3)

When a son of Aharon fulfills his role as a priest, he is *mekhahen*, ministering in the priest's office. Accordingly, the term *mekhahen* is used even today to describe a serving officeholder.

I wish to argue that as far as the freewill-offerings are concerned, regarding which the change from *bama* to *Mishkan* is limited to the concentration of the sacrificial service in one place, those who serve in the *Mishkan* are "Aharon's sons/ the priests." This title preserves the ancient popular nature of this sacrificial service. In place of the firstborns who had served in the past, Aharon’s sons are chosen, as a concentrated family. However, as for the offerings that come into being only with the *Mishkan*, e.g., the obligatory offerings, what is needed are professional "*Mishkan* workers," namely, "the priests," with their professional, non-specific title.

**“And the Priest Shall Make the Whole Smoke on the Altar”**

This, however, does not exhaust the discussion, for the two titles are used together, even in the description of the freewill-offerings. Let us follow this phenomenon over the course of Chapter 1, with respect to the burnt-offering:

And the Lord called to Moshe… When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord… And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; **and Aharon's sons, the priests, shall present the blood,** and dash the blood all around against the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting. And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into its pieces. **And Aharon the priest’s sons shall put** fire upon the altar, and lay wood in order upon the fire. **And Aharon's sons, the priests, shall lay** the pieces… **and the priest shall make** the whole **smoke** on the altar, for a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord.

And if his offering be of the flock, whether of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-offering, he shall offer it a male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord; **and Aharon's sons, the priests, shall dash its blood** against the altar all around. And he shall cut it into its pieces; **and the priest shall lay** them, with its head and its suet, in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar. But the inwards and the legs shall he wash with water; **and the priest shall offer** the whole, and make it smoke upon the altar; it is a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord.

And if his offering to the Lord be a burnt-offering of fowls… **And the priest shall bring it to the altar**, and pinch off its head, and make it smoke on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be drained out on the side of the altar… And he shall rend it by the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder; **and the priest shall make it smoke upon the altar,** upon the wood that is upon the fire; it is a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord.

I wish to find a system in the variety of designations. A closer examination suggests that with respect to the service involving the blood, those serving in God’s House are referred to as "Aharon's sons," whereas the smoking of the flesh on the altar is assigned to "the priest."[[4]](#footnote-4)

**“And If His Offering be a Sacrifice of Peace-Offerings”**

Similarly with regard to the peace-offering that is described in Chapter 3, the service involving the blood is performed by "Aharon's sons," whereas the smoking of the flesh on the altar is attributed to "the priest." We find a single exception with regard to a peace-offering coming from the herd, regarding which the smoking of the flesh is performed, to our surprise, by "Aharon's sons, the priests":

And if his offering be a sacrifice of peace-offerings: if he offers of the herd… And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tent of meeting; **and Aharon's sons, the priests, shall dash the blood** against the altar all around. And he shall present of the sacrifice of peace-offerings an offering made by fire to the Lord: the fat that covers the inwards… **And Aharon's sons shall make it smoke on the altar** upon the burnt-offering, which is upon the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord.

And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offerings to the Lord be of the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he brings a lamb for his offering, then shall he present it before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tent of meeting; **and Aharon's sons shall dash the blood** thereof against the altar all around. And he shall present of the sacrifice of peace-offerings an offering made by fire to the Lord: the fat thereof… **And the priest shall make it smoke upon the altar;** it is the food of the offering made by fire to the Lord.

And if his offering be a goat, then he shall present it before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tent of meeting; **and Aharon’s sons shall dash the blood** thereof against the altar all around. And he shall present thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire to the Lord… **And the priest shall make them smoke upon the altar**; it is the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savor; all the fat is the Lord's. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that you shall eat neither fat nor blood.

I will try to explain these internal changes.

**Wherein Do the Small *Bama* and the Great *Bama* Differ?**

The *mishna* (*Zevachim* 14:10) cited earlier lists a series of concepts introduced with the establishment of a centralized altar:

Wherein did the individual *bama* and the communal *bama* differ? [In respect of] laying [of hands], slaughtering in the north, sprinkling all around, waving and presenting.

Rabbi Yehuda said: There were no meal-offerings at the *bama*.

[They also differ as regards] priesthood, service garments, service vessels, a sweet savor, a line of demarcation for [the sprinkling of] the blood, and the washing of hands and feet.

However, when it comes to time, leftovers and impurity, they are equal.

The Mishna teaches that "sprinkling all around" does not exist at a small *bama.* The commentators explain that the reference is to the "two sprinklings on the four corners of the altar," but from this we learn that "sprinklings of blood" in itself exist already at the stage of the local *bama*, and it is possible that for this reason with regard to the service involving the blood, the priests are still called "Aharon's sons," in accordance with the approach that we developed above.

On the other hand, "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord" is a concept introduced at the great *bama,* and therefore it is possible that this is the reason that everything relating to the smoking of the flesh, which is intended in the Torah for "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor for the Lord," is attributed to "the priest."

**“And When Any One Brings a Meal-Offering to the Lord”**

Let us test these findings with respect to the service of the meal-offering. The Torah's account opens with an offering of fine-flour that is brought to "Aharon's sons" but is made to smoke by "the priest":

And when any one brings a meal-offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. And he shall bring it to **Aharon's sons, the priests**; and he shall take from it his handful of the fine flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, together with all the frankincense thereof; **and the priest shall make** the memorial-part thereof **smoke** upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord. But that which is left of the meal-offering shall be **Aharon’s and his sons’;** it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire. (2:1-3)

The title "priest" with respect to smoking on the altar appears with respect to all types of meal-offerings (vv. 9, 16), but regarding the service that precedes the smoking, we find a difference between the meal-offering of fine flour and the other meal-offerings.

As opposed to the meal-offering of fine flour which is brought to "Aharon's sons, the priests," the service of the processed meal-offerings, which is spelled out with respect to the meal offering of a stewing pan, is assigned to "the priest" from the time it is brought to the Altar and onwards:

And when you bring a meal-offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil.

And if your offering be a meal-offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. You shall break it in pieces, and pour oil thereon; it is a meal-offering.

And if your offering be a meal-offering of the stewing-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And you shall bring the meal-offering that is made of these things to the Lord; **and it shall be presented to the priest**, and he shall bring it to the altar. **And the priest shall take off** from the meal-offering the memorial-part thereof, and shall make it smoke upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to the Lord. **But that which is left of the meal-offering shall be Aharon's and his sons'**; it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.(2:4-10)

Notwithstanding this difference, the Torah makes a point of concluding the description of the service with the same words, designating that which is left of the meal-offering for Aharon and his sons. The identical conclusion goads the reader to search for the meaning of the differences that precede it.

The difference in the priest's designations in the services that precede the smoking of the meal-offering can be explained in light of the words of the *mishna* in *Zevachim* cited earlier. The act of "presenting" the meal-offering appears in the list of the novelties of the great *bama*, and thus we understand the reason that the Torah assigns it to "the priest," and not to "Aharon's sons," in accordance with the approach adopted above. What is more, it is possible that the very offering of a "processed" meal-offering, one that is not simple fine flour, is introduced only in the *Mishkan*.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**And Aharon’s Sons, Your Holy People**

If what we have said is true, we may ask why is it that the Torah creates two systems of designations, rather than contenting itself with the professional title of *ha-kohanim*.

There is always a danger, which over the course of the history of Israel has often been realized, that the selection of the priests may be interpreted, especially by the priests themselves, as a selection on the part of God of a more chosen race, at the expense of the rest of the people who came out of Egypt. After all, until the erection of the *Mishkan,* all the people could offer sacrifices on their own *bamot*, standing in the front row before God.[[6]](#footnote-6) Now the common man in Israel would seem to need a mediator between himself and God.

Thus, it seems that the perpetuation of the standing of the priests as "Aharon's sons" comes to create continuity between the service at *bamot* and service in the *Mishkan* and *Mikdash.* Those who serve in the *Mishkan* and *Mikdash* are not "priests" who stand apart from the rest of the people, but rather they remain "Aharon's sons” — that is to say, one family among the families of Israel, who are designated as part of the people to serve in the *Mishkan* and all future iterations of God’s House. Only on this basis are they defined as priests.

(Translated by David Strauss)

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1. Several authors writing for the Virtual Beit Midrash have noted the difference between the list in *Parashat Vayikra* and the one in our *parasha*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For the purposes of our discussion, we will not consider the opening of each of the commands in *Parashat Tzav*, "Speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying," because it is not part of the sacrificial service itself, but merely the address of the command. As opposed to in *Parashat Vayikra*, in *Parashat Tzav* the expression "Aharon's sons" does not appear in the section opening with the words "This is the law of the burnt-offering." However, the truth of the matter is that the section does not deal with the service of the burnt-offering per se, but rather with the picking up and removal of the ashes. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This conclusion fits in with the difference between the section dealing with the peace-offering which we cite in the body of this *shiur* and the section dealing with "his thanksgiving peace-offering” (*zevach todat shelamav,* a term new to *Parashat Tzav*), in which there is no mention of "Aharon's sons," but only "the priest": "And of it he shall present one out of each offering for a gift to the Lord; it shall be **the priest's** that dashes the blood of the peace-offerings against the altar" (7:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. An exception to this is found in the burnt-offering brought from fowl, though it is possible that owing to the fact that the phenomenon of pinching off the head is introduced only in the *Mishkan*, the person performing the service is called only "the priest." What is left unexplained is the laying of the wood, regarding which we sometimes find "Aharon's sons," and sometimes "the priest." [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. So too, regarding the distribution of the portions that are eaten of the meal-offerings and of the peace-offerings, we find the two designations, "Aharon's sons/ Aharon and his sons" as opposed to "the priest." If our suggestion is correct, that processed meal-offerings were not brought on small *bamot*, we can understand why the Torah uses the term "the priest" in their regard, whereas regarding a meal-offering of fine flour, it uses the term "Aharon's sons." See the *shiurim* of Prof. Grossman in the series *Torat Ha-korbanot* on the Virtual Beit Midrash site, regarding meal-offerings. This point with respect to peace-offerings, and the difference between the breast and the thigh, is addressed by Rav Kahn on the Virtual Beit Midrash site, and there is much still to be added. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Netziv in his commentary to *Shir Ha-shirim* (6:5) writes at length about the elevated spiritual level of every member of Israel made possible by individual *bamot,* and he explains thereby the people's difficulty to adapt to the concentration of the service in the *Mishkan* and eventually the *Mikdash*:

   Offering before God brings to love and devotion, as we wrote above. When [individual] *bamot* were permitted, it was easy for one who wished to devote himself with love to God to offer a sacrifice at a *bama* wherever he wanted, which was not the case after the building of the *Mikdash,* when this was only possible when a festival arrived and he would go up to Jerusalem…

   Even in Yehuda, the desire to offer sacrifices to God at *bamot* was strong, and therefore they found room to explain the Torah in a manner different from the explanation of *Chazal.* This was all because of the love and devotion to God, to the point that even the righteous kings Asa and Yehoshafat could not separate the people from the *bamot*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)