

LEVITICUS 5:14-6:7

Dealing with Guilt

The Guilt (Resitution)Offering

A man wrote to the State Department of Revenue, “I have been feeling guilty because I have been cheating on my taxes for the past ten years. It has gotten so bad that I can’t get a good nights sleep. Enclosed find a check for \$1,000. If I still can’t sleep, I will pay the rest later.”

One of the hardest things anyone lives with is *guilt!* It can wreck relationships among people, break up business partnerships, even marriages. Parents and children are often separated by not merely the emotion, for guilt is an emotion, but also by the reality of guilt for things done and for things not done. How can we overcome guilt?

What is the difference between SIN and GUILT? Why two different offerings?

The SIN offering deals with sin or impurity for which no amount of restitution can pay. The GUILT offering is in recognition that restitution has been made in some matter where a quantifiable amount can be ascertained. The blood of the sin offering is placed on the horns, but not in the guilt offering.

What are examples of things one can do to become ‘guilty’?

1. Sacrilege, *defiling what belongs to the Lord*, (see Ananias & Saphira)
2. Violating the Lord’s commandments, *love your neighbor as yourself*
3. Misusing the Lord’s name in order to cheat someone and get away with it.
 - a. Suppose you cheat in a deal involving a security deposit,
 - b. or you steal
 - c. or commit fraud,
 - d. ³or you find lost property and lie about it,
 - e. or you lie while swearing to tell the truth,

	Sacrilege 5:14-16	Violating Commands 5:17-19	Sin against an Associate 6:1-7
<i>Preamble</i>	¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses,		¹ Then the LORD said to Moses,
<i>Sin Specified</i>	¹⁵ If one of you commits a sin by unintentionally defiling the LORD's sacred property,	¹⁷ “Suppose you sin by violating one of the LORD's commands. Even if you are unaware of what you have done, you are guilty and will be punished for your sin.	² “Suppose one of you sins against your associate and is unfaithful to the LORD. 1. Suppose you cheat in a deal involving a security deposit, 2. or you steal or commit fraud, 3. ³ or you find lost property and lie about it, 4. or you lie 5. <u>while swearing to tell the truth</u> , or you commit any other such sin. ⁴ If you have sinned in any of these ways, you are guilty.
<i>Guilt Offering</i>	you must bring a guilt offering to the LORD.	¹⁸ For a guilt offering,	On the same day you must present a guilt offering.
<i>Specifics of the Offering</i>	The offering must be your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value with silver, as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel.	You must bring to the priest your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value.	⁶ As a guilt offering to the LORD, you must bring to the priest your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value.
<i>Purification</i>	he will purify you with the ram sacrificed as a guilt offering,	Through this process the priest will purify you from your unintentional sin,	⁷ Through this process, the priest will purify you before the LORD, making you right with him,

	making you right with the LORD, and you will be forgiven.	making you right with the LORD, and you will be forgiven.	and you will be forgiven for any of these sins you have committed."
<i>Restitution</i>	¹⁶ You must make restitution for the sacred property you have harmed by paying for the loss,		You must give back whatever you stole, or the money you took by extortion, or the security deposit, or the lost property you found, ⁵ or anything obtained by swearing falsely. You must make restitution by paying the full price
<i>20%</i>	plus an additional 20 percent. When you give the payment to the priest,		plus an additional 20 percent to the person you have harmed.
<i>Summary</i>		¹⁹ This is a guilt offering, for you have been guilty of an offense against the LORD."	
<i>Guilt Offering</i>			On the same day you must present a guilt offering.
<i>Specifics of the Offering</i>			⁶ As a guilt offering to the LORD, you must bring to the priest your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value.
<i>Purification</i>	he will purify you with the ram sacrificed as a guilt offering, making you right with the LORD, and you will be forgiven.		⁷ Through this process, the priest will purify you before the LORD, making you right with him, and you will be forgiven for any of these sins you have committed."

The word "Guilt" or "Guilt Offering

180 אָשָׁם ('*āšam*) **be desolate, be guilty, to offend, to acknowledge offense, to trespass.** (ASV and RSV prefer the terms "guilt" and "guilty" more than "trespass," and NEB does not hesitate to use words like reparation, compensation, penalty and punishment.)

180a אָשֵׁם ('*āšēm*) **faulty.**

180b אָשֵׁנִים ('*āšenim*) **guiltiness.**

180c אֲשָׁמָה ('*ašmâ*) **sin.**

The primary meaning of the word '*āšam* seems to center on guilt, but moves from the act which brings guilt to the condition of guilt to the act of punishment. In any particular passage it is often difficult to determine which thrust the word has. The word is used with its derivatives 103 times. Synonyms such as '*āwôn* and '*rāša'* often are translated with the word. "guilty," but normally their meanings are "iniquity" and "wicked," respectively. The word is used in Ugaritic in the cognate '*ṭm* (UT 19: no. 422; AisWUS no. 474).

The verb '*āšam* occurs in the Pentateuch in Leviticus, chapters four, five and six, and in Numbers 5:6–7. The setting is cultic but also ethical. Any individual who had sinned was a guilty person. A procedure of obliterating guilt is outlined. Normally, restitution must be made according to cash values, plus a twenty percent cash penalty. An animal of specified value was brought to the priest, sin was confessed and the animal sacrificed in a specific manner. The goal was atonement and forgiveness.

In Jud 21:22 the verb seems to represent the consequences of breaking a vow. In II Chr 19:10, the first use of '*āšam* stresses guilt as a result of breaking the law of God; whereas, the second applies to the judges who must warn people that sin has consequences.

A contrast between punishment and redemption is apparent in Ps 34:21–22 [H 22–23]. In this instance, '*āšam* is the punishment itself. The sting of an inner guilt feeling is absent in Prov 30:10 also, for it points to the possible falseness of an accusation made against a slave.

An exhortation (Hos 4:15) not to offend (RSV "be guilty," NEB "guilt offering") is directed to Judah. Was Judah not to play the harlot like Israel, or not to incur guilt? Compare with 5:15 where Ephraim is depicted as being punished by God but they need to realize their offence (RSV "guilt"), that they were sinners. The next verse, 6:1, indicates possible salvation.

Hosea 10:2 says Israel is found faulty (RSV "bear their guilt," note NEB "they are mad"). Guilt is understood as the consequence of idol worship and of a divided heart (NEB "crazy"), but punishment was yet to come. In

Hos 13:1, “offended” (RSV “guilty”) points to acts of sin, but the next verse shows Israel still sinning and punishment is not mentioned until 13:3. Isaiah 24:6 and Joel 1:18 depict *’āšām* as the end result of sinning, even affecting animals.

Jeremiah (2:3) declared that those who devour Israel shall offend (RSV “became guilty,” NEB no one ... went unpunished”). Is the meaning of *’āšām* the act of sin, the condition of guilt, or the end result of punishment? Since the last phrase in verse three speaks of a future evil, RSV would seem to be correct. The same is true of Jer 50:7.

In Ezk 6:6 guilt is the condition after punishment has happened. On the other hand, in 22:4, guilt is the consequence of idol worship but before punishment (cf. v. 15). So also 25:12, and Hab 1:11. In response to Zechariah’s preaching, the rulers claimed they are not guilty (11:5), even while killing people. But lack of a guilt feeling will not forestall judgment.

Throughout these passages, *’āšām* varies in stress. It may denote acts of sin, responsibility for sin, punishment, and even the aftermath of punishment. Perhaps, one may hold that the *’āšām* connotes the totality of alienation from God, including its consequences.

אֲשָׁמָה (*’āšāmā*). **Guiltiness, offering for sin, sin, trespass, trespass offering.** With a few exceptions this masculine noun denotes the trespass offering (RSV, NEB “guilt offering”). In Gen 26:10 Abimelek refers to a possible sin and its resulting guiltiness (RSV “brought guilt,” NEB “make us liable to retribution”). The NEB probably has caught the basic meaning here. KJV has “trespass,” in Lev 5:7,15 but more correctly ASV “trespass offering,” RSV “guilt offering.” All other twenty-two times in Lev the meaning is “trespass offering.” The same is true of Numbers 5:7–8; 6:12; 18:9, of I Sam 6:3–4, 8, 17; of II Kgs 12:16, and of Ezk 40:39; 42:13; 44:29; 46:20 and of Isa 53:10. But in Ps 68:21 [H 22] *’āšām* is sin (RSV “wrongs,” ASV “guiltiness”), and punishment is threatened. What of *’āšām* in Prov 14:9? KJV has “mocks at sin,” RSV has “wicked,” NEB has “too arrogant to make amends.” None denote guilt, *per se*.

אֲשָׁמָה (*’āšāmā*). **Sin, cause of trespass, trespass offering.** The KJV translates mostly “trespass” or “sin,” i.e. the acts of sin, but marginal readings sometimes have “guiltiness” (ASV, RSV prefer “guilt” or “guilty”) in Lev 4:3; 22:16. Joab argued that numbering of Israel was cause for trespass (ASV, “cause of guilt,” RSV “bring guilt”) in I Chr 21:3. In II Chr 24:18; 28:10,13; 33:23, KJV regards *’āšāmā* as “sin or trespass,” but ASV and RSV sometimes prefer “guilt.” Does the noun designate the acts of sin or liability to penalty before God? The same observation holds true of Ezr 9:6–7,13,15; 10:10,19, but all three versions agree that sins RSV “wrongs”) are intended in Ps 69:5 [H 6] and Amos 8:14, though RSV and NEB simply transliterate the Hebrew as though it were the name of a goddess.

אֲשָׁמָה (*’āšēm*). **Faulty, that which is faulty.** The KJV translates this adjective in Gen 42:21 as “guilty” (ASV, RSV, same) and is the rare instance where a feeling of guilt is associated with the word. II Samuel 14:13 is more legalistic. David is faulty (ASV, “guilty,” RSV “convicts himself”). And probably in Ezr 10:19 being “guilty” (KJV, ASV) is better than “guilt-offering” (RSV).

In summary, the root *’āšām* includes acts of sin, responsibility for them, punishment and its aftermath or, as an alternative, atonement. The word denotes any breach of God’s covenant with Israel and any divine act of dealing with it, whether punishment or atonement.

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Scriptures on the word GUILT:

¹ G. Herbert Livingston, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1999, 78–80.

1. Genesis 26:1-11 (10) refers to the potential for guilt that Isaac brought upon Abimelech by saying that Rebekah was his sister. Any of the people could have had sex with her and unknowingly committed adultery.
2. Joseph's brother believed they were being punished by being imprisoned for three days as spies. This they thought was for their guilt in selling their brother and saying he was dead (42:21).
3. The word guilt has already been used in Leviticus to address things covered by the SIN (Purification) Offering (4:3,13,22,27; 5:2,3,4,5 for 'realizing one's guilt', and for compensation because of guilt 5:6,7).
4. Leviticus 5:14 points to something different from the Sin Offering by using the words, "Then the Lord said to Moses,"
5. The Guilt Offering is defined in 5:15-19.
6. Examples of sins requiring a guilt offering are listed in 6:1-3 and what must be done is covered in 6:4-7.
7. We discover that the sin and guilt offering are 'most holy' (6:17). This means they are given to the priests (2 Kings 12:16; Ezekiel 44:29; 46:20).
8. Further details regarding the guilt offering and the priests are given in 7:1-7. There is a summary statement in 7:37 to conclude this section.
9. Both sin and guilt offerings were necessary to purify from a skin disease (14:1-32).
10. It was used to purify a man who had sex with a slave girl who was to marry another (19:20-22).
11. Someone might eat the sacred offerings without realizing it (22:14-16) and thus bring guilt. Two words for guilt are used here. Our word is translated "require them to pay compensation."
12. Numbers 5:5-10 discuss what is done if the person wronged has died and there are no near relatives to receive payment.
13. Nazirites can become guilty if someone falls dead beside them breaking their separation to God (6:1-9). The process of becoming clean again involves sin, burnt, and guilt offerings (6:10-12). While at the end of their time of dedication they were required to offer sin, burnt and then peace offerings, they did not have to bring a guilt offering (6:13-21). This action was not right (22:25), but shows how important staying guilt free was to them, even when they 'did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.'
14. Guilt for breaking a vow was a serious matter in Israel (Judges 21:1,18). When they regretted this vow, they concocted a plan whereby the men of Benjamin could steal young women to be their wives so that the vow would not be violated and they be guilty (21:19-22).
15. This concept of guilt was shared with other peoples. The Philistines sent a pagan guilt offering when they returned the ark (1 Samuel 6:1-18).
16. King David is rebuked by the 'widow' for his guilt in not fully forgiving his son Absalom (2 Samuel 14:13). She points out a truth that God 'devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.'

17. King David brought guilt upon the nation by seeking to count them even though warned this was not necessary (1 Chronicles 21:3).
18. King Jehoshaphat charged some of the Levites and priests to judge the people carefully so they would not themselves become guilty of judging in haste (2 Chronicles 19:8-10) – word occurs 2x).
19. Idolatry brought guilt upon the nation with its punishment (2 Chronicles 24:17-18). This was further compounded by the murder of Zechariah, a priest-prophet (24:19-22). It was carried out (24:23-26).
20. This word is used as a synonym for sin (2 Chronicles 28:10) in the passage about the war between Judah and Israel in which Judeans were taken as slaves, but released in response to the reminder of Obed that the Israelites already had enough guilt before the Lord without adding enslaving their brothers (28:1-15). The word for ‘sin’ and this word ‘guilt’ are used in the same verse (28:13).
21. In the spiritual decline of Judah, King Amon added more and more guilt (33:23). The reason he did these things to make himself and the nation guiltier was because he would not humble himself before the Lord (33:23).
22. The Jews who had returned from Babylonian exile had incurred guilt by intermarrying with the pagan people of the land and thus becoming involved in idolatrous practices (Ezra 9:1-2). These things were acknowledged in Ezra’s prayer (9:6-15). Guilt makes it impossible for one to “stand in your presence.” (9:15). He later calls upon them to deal with this sin by putting their pagan wives away (10:9-11). Their sins required acknowledgement of their guilt and a guilt offering (10:19).
23. King David spoke on ‘guilt’ in his Psalms. He wanted God to declare his enemies who could not “speak a truthful word guilty (5:10). The wicked who hate the righteous were to be condemned, but the Lord’s servants were not condemned (34:21-22). The guilt of the Lord’s enemies was to be brought upon their crushed skulls (68:21). He points to the plea of those of God’s servants who have become guilty. No one’s guilt can be hidden from God (69:5).
24. King Solomon wrote of mockery of ‘the guilt offering’ as the mark of a fool (Proverbs 14:9). On the other hand, he taught that telling on a servant to his master made the tattle-tale guilty, at least in the eye of the servant (30:10). There seems to be some indication that the curse will be carried out by God.
25. Isaiah speaks of defeat and anarchy as the penalty for Israel’s guilt (24:6).
26. Isaiah also points to the suffering servant (52:13; 53:2) giving his life as the successful offering for sin (53:10). Jesus made the guilt offering on our behalf.
27. Jeremiah the prophet declared that once Israel was ‘holy to the Lord’ and that all who harmed them were guilty (2:3), a situation which was no longer true in the opinion of their enemies (50:7), but which was still true in God’s grace (51:5). The guilt was the Babylonian’s.
28. Ezekiel spoke of pagan altars being smashed for the guilt of Israel (6:6) and Jerusalem (22:4). Edom was guilty for taking revenge on the fleeing people of Judah (25:12).

29. Ezekiel points out that in the coming 'Millennial' temple, people would offering guilt offerings (40:39; 42:13). In that day, the priests will be more careful about holiness.
30. Hosea warned Judah not to follow the idolatry of Israel and thus incur guilt before the Lord (4:15). If they did, they would not have the Lord's blessings until they admitted their guilt and returned to the Lord (5:15). Guilt brings punishment (10:2; 13:1,16).
31. Punishment seems to be the meaning of the word 'guilt' in Joel 1:18. It even extends to the innocent animals because of man's sin.
32. Amos declares that idols bring guilt (8:14).
33. God sometimes uses guilty people to punish his people when they are guilty (Habakkuk 1:11). The Babylonians, with their trust in their own strength, is able to defeat Judah, who should have trusted in God!
34. Guilt is not always felt by the guilt (Zechariah 11:5).
35. It is likely that the following passages in the New Testament, derived from a Greek word *enochos* is a rough equivalent of the idea of guilt, but there is no reference to a 'guilt offering.' The idea of this kind of guilt occurs in the following passages:
 - a. Jesus spoke of this type of guilt for murderers and those who are angry with their brother (Matthew 5:21-22).
 - b. He also pronounced this guilty upon those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit's testimony to himself (Mark 3:29).
 - c. The Sanhedrin wrongly declared Jesus deserving (guilty) of death (Matthew 26:66; Mark 14:64). In this manner, He became the guilt offering of Isaiah 53.
 - d. James spoke of those who fail in one point as being guilty of all (2:10).
 - e. Paul pointed out the guilt which comes on those who eat the bread and drink the cup in an unworthy manner as being guilty of the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:27).
 - f. The only passage which does not speak of 'guilt' is Hebrews 2:15, which talks about being subject to lifelong slavery through the fear of death.

How might one unintentionally defile sacred property?

- misuse of the "most holy" portions of the grain, sin, or guilt offerings which were reserved for the priests alone (2:3, 10; cf. **22:14-16**);
- failure to present to God due gifts of sacrifices, tithes, firstfruit offerings, or things dedicated to God (cf. chap. 27);
- failure to fulfill dedicatory vows (Num. 6:11-12); or
- deprivation of service due to the Lord (cf. Lev. 14:24).²

² F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1985, 1, 183.

What differences do you notice between this offering and the sin offering do you detect (5:15,18; 6:6)?

The sin offering requires a ewe, but the guilt offering requires a ram with no defects, but does allow the purchase of one, plus the fine.

Why restitution + 20%?

The offense is quantifiable in real (or monetary) terms.

How is this offense different from sinning unintentionally (5:17 with 4:2 and 5:1-4)?

It is likely that the offender does not know exactly what commandment he violated, but suspects that is the reason for the misfortune which has befallen him. He is being punished, but doesn't know why. Paying the maximum penalty covers all wrong, rather than paying the minimum to get God "off your back."

Why are 'sins against' an associate (neighbor) so bad?

It was also being 'unfaithful to the Lord' who expects the fear of the Lord to prevail (25:17). One commentator contends this is because an oath to the Lord is sworn that one did not do these things, thus involving the Lord in this as well as showing disrespect to the Lord. Consider Achan's sin and what was declared when found out ... give glory to God (Joshua 7:19-20).

What examples do you know of each of these wrongdoings?

1. Cheating regarding a security deposit (not giving it back)
2. Stealing (open robbery by force)
3. Committing fraud (using power to defraud)
4. Lying about lost property (*Exodus 22:10—13*)
5. Lying under oath

How did the offender involve the Lord in this wrongdoing?

Likely by taking an oath that he had not done these things (6:5; see Exodus 22:11).

What does sinning against a neighbor do to one's relationship with the Lord?

In general, cheating another is an offense against the Lord in whose image our neighbors were made. But if we bring God's name in disrepute by swearing on that name that we have not done anything, we are betraying the Lord who bought us.

ADDITIONAL HELP ON THE PASSAGE

5:14 Then the Lord said to Moses – is an introductory phrase that sets 5:14-19 apart from the next section 6:1-7.

5:15 sacred property – anything belonging to the Lord or dedicated to Him became immediately "holy" (set apart for His exclusive use). This was true of the offerings given, the produce in the 4th year (19:24), people, firstborn animals and *any* property devoted to the Lord (*see chapter 27*).

Guilt offering – the word offering is added to make clear that this is being done because of our *guilt*.

Ram – refers specifically to a male sheep.

Buy one – one could purchase a sacrifice, but the priest determined the price.

5:16 restitution – is the requirement for *peace* between people. One might well translate *make peace*, but the meaning is clear: *restore* as best you can.

20% - is literally *the fifth part* which is twenty percent - of the value of the property misappropriated. This is a fine in addition to restoring the original value.

5:17 unaware – is the same situation as with the sin offering, the person *does not know*. This is the heart of the problem.

Guilty – is the verb showing the problem, the person feels guilty, perhaps has really incurred guilt because of some violation of the Law, even if he doesn't know what command was violated.

Punished – this was Cain's fear (*Genesis 4:13*). In this case, he probably is already suffering some punishment because of what was done, even if he doesn't know what. It can also be applied where it has not yet arrived in its fullness (*Isaiah 30:13; Ezekiel 18:30*).

6:1 associate – views one's *neighbor* as vital to one's success (*Zechariah 13:7* – '*the man who stands next to me*').

Unfaithful to the Lord – is the word *ma'al* is a conscious act of treachery against the Lord. It is again to adultery (*Numbers 5:27*). It was a sin that Moses himself would commit (*Deuteronomy 32:51, refers to Numbers 20:11-13*). In this case, it is using the Lord's name to swear to a falsehood (*6:5*).

Security deposit – something is given to an associate for safekeeping. It is the guardian's responsibility to keep safe whatever has been entrusted to him. Moses has already given several examples (*Exodus 22:7-9, 10-13, and perhaps 14-15*).

Steal or commit fraud – whether outright *robbery* or *oppression* of those who don't know any better, i.e., *fraud*.

6:3 Swearing to Tell the Truth – It was common practice to put someone under suspicion under solemn oath using the Lord's name (*Numbers 5:19-22*). By taking an oath, '*I swear by the Lord, I am innocent*,' the liar has trespassed on the holy name.

Reparation [Guilt] Offering (7:1-6)

¹“These are the instructions for the guilt offering.

It is most holy.

²The animal sacrificed as a guilt offering must be slaughtered at the place where the burnt offerings are slaughtered, and its blood must be splattered against all sides of the altar.

³The priest will then offer all its fat on the altar, including the fat of the broad tail, the fat around the internal organs, ⁴the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These are to be removed with the kidneys, ⁵and the priests will burn them on the altar as a special gift presented to the LORD.

This is the guilt offering.

⁶Any male from a priest's family may eat the meat. It must be eaten in a sacred place, for it is most holy.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY QUOTES

The *distinctive feature* of the guilt offering was the restitution payment and fine to the wronged party, either man or God. The **ram** of the **guilt offering** was not part of the restitution but was an expiation for the sin before God.

The *typology* of the guilt offering stresses that aspect of Christ's death which atones for the damage or injury done by sin. Isaiah foresaw the death of Christ as “a guilt offering” (Isa. 53:10).³

³ F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1985, 1, 183–184.