

# Session 4

# The Sacrificial and Judicial System of Torah

*Series: Living The Torah / Dr. Randy White*

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

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—Psalm 19:7

## 4.1 The Logic of the Sacrificial System

- Sacrifices were for restoration, not repayment—maintaining fellowship within the covenant.
- Blood was not currency but a symbol of cleansing and reconciliation.
- Sacrifices dealt with holiness and purity, not commerce or appeasement.

### Purpose of the Sacrifices

- Acknowledged inevitable human failure and provided a path to renewal.
- The worshiper’s act confessed that sin had broken fellowship with God.
- Pagan sacrifices sought to manipulate deities; Torah sacrifices followed divine instruction.

### The Principle of Blood and Life

- Leviticus 17:11 — “the life of the flesh is in the blood.”
- Blood represented life given in substitution; the altar was the place of transfer.
- The act was merciful—acknowledging sin and restoring communion through ordained means.

## 4.2 The Five Primary Offerings (Leviticus 1–7)

- Each offering met a different covenantal need: devotion, gratitude, purification, or restitution.

- Sacrifices maintained covenant order and communal fellowship.

## **The Burnt Offering (*olah*) — Leviticus 1**

- Entirely consumed on the altar—symbol of total consecration.
- Root *lh* (“to go up”) reflects ascent toward God.
- Voluntary, expressive of devotion, gratitude, or renewed commitment.
- Served as the emblem of wholehearted loyalty within the covenant.

## **The Grain Offering (*minḥah*) — Leviticus 2**

- Non-bloody offering of fine flour, oil, and frankincense—thanksgiving and purity.
- Salt symbolized covenant loyalty; no leaven or honey permitted.
- Reflected consecration of ordinary labor and provision to the Lord.

### **Circumstances of Presentation**

- Often accompanied burnt or peace offerings.
- Marked moments of gratitude, harvest, or fulfillment of vows.
- Most frequent form of lay offering—daily sanctification of work and food.

### **Forms of the Grain Offering**

- Raw flour mixed with oil and incense (Lev. 2:1–3).
- Oven-baked cakes or wafers, mingled or anointed with oil (Lev. 2:4).
- Griddle cakes, thin and broken with oil (Lev. 2:5–6).
- Deep-pan (fried) cakes in oil (Lev. 2:7–10).
- Common rules: no leaven or honey; every offering seasoned with salt (Lev. 2:11–13).

## **The Peace Offering (*šĕlāmîm*) — Leviticus 3**

- Expression of fellowship and gratitude; shared meal between God, priest, and worshiper.
- Forms: thanksgiving, vow, and freewill (Lev. 7:11–16).
- Most joyful and communal offering; symbol of restored peace with God and man.

## **The Sin Offering (*ḥaṭṭāt*) — Leviticus 4**

- Addressed unintentional sin or impurity.
- Blood applied according to gravity—veil, horns of altar, or outer altar.
- Carcass sometimes burned outside the camp—sin removed from community.
- Provided forgiveness when fault was realized; restored legal and covenantal standing.

## The Guilt or Trespass Offering (*āšām*) — Leviticus 5–6

- Required for measurable wrongs—fraud, perjury, misuse of holy things.
- Combined confession, restitution, and sacrifice.
- Restitution required principal + one-fifth (Lev. 5:16; 6:5).
- Restored fellowship both vertically with God and horizontally with others.

## 4.3 The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

- Annual national cleansing; pinnacle of sacrificial mercy.
- Purpose: “to cleanse you. . . from all your sins before the Lord” (Lev. 16:30).

### The Two Goats

- One slain—blood brought into the Most Holy Place for expiation.
- One for *azāzēl*—sent into the wilderness bearing confessed sins.
- Together portray satisfaction of justice and removal of guilt.

### The Role of the High Priest

- Entered the inner sanctuary once yearly with incense and blood.
- Atoned for himself, his house, and all Israel.
- Mediated between God and nation—sign of restored covenant fellowship.

## 4.4 Judicial Mercy in Torah Society (Deuteronomy 16:18–20)

- Local justice reflected the same mercy as priestly service.
- Judges and officers applied revealed law, not human policy.

### Local Courts

- Courts “in all thy gates” administered proportional justice.
- Based decisions on testimony and evidence—no arbitrary rulings.
- Decentralized, community-based, and accountable system.

### Elders of the Gate

- Served as respected arbiters ensuring repentance before judgment.
- Examples: rebellious son (Deut. 21:18–21); redemption in Ruth 4.
- Justice was relational and restorative, not impersonal.

## Priests and Levites

- Served as appellate judges in complex cases (Deut. 17:8–13).
- Preserved interpretive unity and prevented corruption.
- Combined sacred and civil discernment—justice remained holy.

## 4.5 When Sacrifice Was Unavailable

- Without temple or priesthood, the system entered temporary suspension.
- Faith shifted from ritual to repentance and longing for restoration.

## The Exilic Periods

- Daniel and Ezekiel illustrate faith without sacrifice—prayer and confession replace ritual.
- Daniel 9:5 shows appeal to covenant mercy in absence of altar.

## The Prophetic Witness

- Prophets emphasized temple centrality—no atonement without altar.
- Contrition could not replace sacrifice; it prepared the heart for it.

## Post–Temple Judaism

- After A.D. 70, rabbinic Judaism replaced sacrifice with study, prayer, and charity.
- These were stopgaps, not covenant replacements.
- True Torah obedience requires land, temple, and priesthood.

## 4.6 The System’s Built–In Mercy

- The Torah presupposed human weakness and built restoration into its structure.
- Forgiveness was real within the covenant (“it shall be forgiven him”).
- Sacrifices purified legally and outwardly—*kipper* (“cover”) and *sālah* (“forgive”).
- Judges, priests, and sacrifices together revealed structured mercy.
- The Law’s grace was procedural, not theoretical—embedded in daily life.

# Case Study: A Man Who Lied

*Series: Living The Torah / Dr. Randy White*

- Illustrates Leviticus 6:1–7 — moral and ritual guilt resolved through confession, restitution, and sacrifice.

## 1. Discovery and Conviction

- Deception discovered by conscience or accusation (Lev. 6:2).
- Guilt before both God and neighbor—“a trespass against the Lord.”
- If disputed, elders at the gate could adjudicate (Deut. 19:15–18).
- Normally, voluntary confession initiates restoration.

## 2. Confession

- Requirement: acknowledgment of sin (Num. 5:7).
- Confession verbal, specific, and indispensable to forgiveness.

## 3. Restitution (Making It Right)

- Return full amount plus 20% (Lev. 6:5).
- Restitution and sacrifice occur the same day.
- Purpose: restore justice and remove grievance.
- If victim deceased, payment goes to kin or priest (Num. 5:8).

## 4. Selection of the Offering

- Offering: *Āšām* (Guilt/Trespass Offering).
- Animal: “a ram without blemish” (Lev. 6:6).
- Symbolism: costliness and purity reflect full accountability.

## 5. Presentation at the Sanctuary

- Location: entrance of the Tabernacle court.
- Process:

1. Offender brings ram to priest.
2. Lays hands on head (Lev. 1:4) — transference of guilt.
3. Priest slaughters and applies blood (Lev. 7:2).
4. Fat burned; remainder eaten by priest (Lev. 7:5–6).

## **6. Atonement and Forgiveness**

- “The priest shall make an atonement... and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 6:7).
- *Kipper* — priestly atonement; *Sālah* — divine forgiveness.
- Result: full restoration to covenant fellowship.

## **7. Communal and Personal Aftermath**

- Neighbor: justice satisfied and Torah integrity upheld.
- Offender: conscience cleared and fellowship restored.
- Priest: mediator of the covenant, administering—not granting—God’s forgiveness.
- The process shows Torah mercy uniting morality, justice, and priestly grace.