

# A CONCISE GUIDE TO KORBANOT (SACRIFICES)

Name of Sacrifice	Why it was brought	What was brought	Was it eaten?	This category of korban includes <sup>1</sup> :	Kodshei kodashim or kodshim kalim <sup>2</sup> ?	Sources
<b>Korban Olah</b> Burnt Offering	A variety of reasons, including as atonement for sins whose reparations are not specified	Male cattle, sheep or goats; pigeons or doves	No. The olah was burned in its entirety	Korban tamid (twice-daily offering)	Kodshei kodashim	Leviticus 1:3 Hilchot Maaseh HaKorbanot 6
<b>Korban Chatat</b> Sin Offering	To atone for the unintentional commission of sins that carry the penalty of kareit (excision) when committed intentionally	Cattle, sheep or goats – female for individual offerings and male for communal offerings; pigeons or doves	Eaten by the kohanim	Korban oleh v'yoreid (variable offering) <sup>3</sup> , par he'elam davar (brought for an erroneous court ruling)	Kodshei kodashim	Leviticus 4:27 Leviticus 5:7 Leviticus 6:18 Hilchot Maaseh HaKorbanot 7
<b>Korban Asham</b> Guilt Offering	To atone for “stealing” from the altar; when one is unsure whether he has committed a sin; swearing falsely	Rams of a variety of ages	Eaten by the kohanim	Asham vadai (definite guilt offering), asham talui (conditional guilt offering)	Kodshei kodashim	Leviticus 5:25 Leviticus 5:17 Leviticus 7:1 Hilchot Maaseh HaKorbanot 9:1-2
<b>Korban Shelamim</b> Peace Offering	Brought voluntarily to thank God, celebrate holidays, fulfill vows	Cattle, sheep or goats of either gender and most ages but not birds	Part was offered on the altar, the breast and thigh were given to the kohanim and the rest was eaten by the ones who brought it and others	Korban todah (thanksgiving offering), korban nedava (freewill offering), korban chagigah (festival offering)	Communal peace offerings (shalmei tzibbur) <sup>4</sup> were kodshei kodashim; individual shelamim (shalmei yachid) were kodshim kalim	Leviticus 7:11 Hilchot Maaseh HaKorbanot 9:3-24
<b>Korban Mincha</b> Flour Offering	Generally accompanied animal sacrifices. Additionally, some flour offerings were brought independently	Fine wheat flour with oil and frankincense (the omer and the sotah's offering were of barley)	A portion was burned on the altar and the rest was eaten by the kohanim	The lechem hapanim (showbread), the omer, the two loaves on Shavuot, the Kohein Gadol's twice-daily offering of loaves, the offering of the sotah	Kodshei kodashim	Leviticus 2:1 Hilchot Maaseh HaKorbanot 12

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> But is not limited to

<sup>2</sup> For the differences between kodshei kodashim and kodshim kalim, see section to the right.

<sup>3</sup> A korban oleh v'yoreid was brought for withholding testimony, unintentionally defiling the Temple with ritual impurity or eating sanctified meat, and for swearing to do something but failing to fulfill one's word.

<sup>4</sup> The two sheep that were offered on Shavuot were the only communal peace offering.

*For informational purposes only. Please be advised that within each category of korban there may be specific korbanot that are exceptions to that category's general rules.*

## The Details of the Korbanot

We understand the general reasons God has commanded us to bring sacrifices: to get closer to Him, to motivate us to repent, etc. But one might wonder why one type of sacrifice is a lamb and another is a ram, why one is male and another female, or why God commanded to bring seven of an animal rather than six or eight. To this, the Rambam says (Guide III, 26) that while all the mitzvot have reasons, their details need not. If one tries to find an underlying rationale for every detail of the korbanot, he will accomplish nothing and will only end up more confused than he was when he started.

## Kodshei Kodashim vs. Kodshim Kalim

*Kodshei kodashim* were slaughtered on the north side of the Temple courtyard, could be eaten for one day and one night, had to be eaten in the courtyard by male *kohanim*, and the *kohanim* received the animal's hide. *Kodshim kalim* (sacrifices of lesser sanctity) could be slaughtered anywhere in the courtyard, could be eaten for two days and one night, anywhere in Jerusalem, by any Jew; the ones who brought the korban received the hide. Examples of *kodshim kalim* include *bechorot* (firstborn animals), *maaser beheima* (animal tithes) and the *korban Pesach* (Passover offering).

## Things That People Think Are Korbanot But Aren't

The *parah adumah* (red heifer) and the *se'ir l'azazel* (scapegoat).

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