Jewish Guilt? What is the big idea behind the Korban Asham? Zevahim 54b

The korban chatat is clearly for accidental transgressions that would be worthy of the punishment of karet (excision) if one committed them purposely. But what is the korban asham for?

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1. משנה זבחים ה:ה

זְבְחֵי שַׁלְמֵי צִבּוּר וַאֲשָׁמוֹת. אֵלּוּ הֵן אֲשָׁמוֹת, אֲשַׁם גְּזֵלוֹת, אֲשַׁם מְעִילוֹת, אֲשַׁם שִׁפְחָה חֲרוּפָה, אֲשַׁם נָזִיר, אֲשַׁם מְצֹרָע, אָשָׁם תָּלוּי, שְׁחִיטָתָן בַּצָּפּוֹן, וְקִבּוּל דָּמָן בִּלְיִי שָׁרֵת בַּצָּפּוֹן, וְדָמָן טָעוּן שְׁתִּי מַתָּנוֹת שֶׁהֵן אַרְבַּע, וְגֵאֵכַלִין לְפִנִים מִן הַקְּלַעִים לִזְכָרֵי כָהַנַּה בִּכַל מַאֵכַל לִיוֹם וַלֵיִלָה עַד חֲצוֹת:

These are the *halakhot* of communal peace offerings and guilt offerings. These are guilt offerings: The guilt offering for robbery, brought by one from whom another demanded payment of a debt and he denied it and took a false oath (see Leviticus 5:20–26); the guilt offering for unwitting misuse of consecrated property (see Leviticus 5:14–16); the guilt offering of an espoused maidservant, brought by one who engaged in sexual intercourse with a Canaanite maidservant betrothed to a Hebrew slave (see Leviticus 19:20–22); the guilt offering of a nazirite who became impure via contact with a corpse (see Numbers 6:12); the guilt offering of a leper, brought for his purification (see Leviticus 14:12); and the provisional guilt offering, brought by one who is uncertain as to whether he committed a sin that requires a sin offering (see Leviticus 5:17–18). Concerning all of these, their slaughter is in the north of the Temple courtyard and collection of their blood in a service vessel is in the north, and their blood requires two placements that are four. And the meat portions of the offering are eaten within the curtains, i.e., in the Temple courtyard, by male priests. And they are eaten prepared in any manner of food preparation, on the day the offering was sacrificed and during the night that follows, until midnight.

2. ויקרא ה:טו-טז - אשם מעילות

ָנֶפֶשׁ כִּי תִמְעֹל מַעַל וְחָטְאָה בִּשְׁגָגָה מִקֶּדְשֵׁי ה' וְהֵבִיא אֶת אֲשָׁמוֹ לַה' אַיִל תָּמִים מִן הַצֹּאן **בְּעָרְכְּרְ** כֶּסֶף שְׁקָלִים בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאָשָׁם. וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר חָטָא מִן הַקֹּדֶשׁ יְשַׁלֵּם וְאֶת חֲמִישִׁתוֹ יוֹסֵף עָלָיו וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ לַכֹּהֵן וְהַכֹּהֵן יְכַפֵּר עָלָיו בְּאֵיל הָאָשָׁם וְנִסְלַח לוֹ

When a person commits a trespass, being unwittingly remiss about any of God's sacred things: One shall bring as a penalty to God a ram without blemish from the flock, **convertible into payment** in silver by the sanctuary weight, as a guilt offering.

That person shall make restitution for the remission regarding the sacred things, adding a fifth part to it and giving it to the priest. The priest shall make expiation with the ram of the guilt offering on behalf of that person, who shall be forgiven.

3. ויקרא ה:יז-יט אשם תלוי

וְאָם נָפֶשׁ כִּי תָחֱטָא וְעָשְׂתָה אַחַת מִכָּל מִצְוֹת ה' אֲשֶׁר לֹא תֵעָשֶׂינָה וְלֹא יָדַע וְאָשֵׁם וְנָשָׂא עֲוֹנוֹ. וְהֵבִּיא אַיִּל תָּמִים מִן הַצֹּאן **בְּעֶרְכָּךְ** לְאָשָׁם אֶל הַכֹּהֵן וְכָפֶּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן עַל שִׁגְגָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר שָׁגָג וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע וְנִסְלַח לוֹ. אָשָׁם הוּא אַשֹּׁם אָשׁם לה

And a person who, without knowing it, sins in regard to any of God's commandments about things not to be done, and then realizes guilt: Such a person shall be subject to punishment. That person shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, **or the equivalent**, as a guilt offering. For the error committed unwittingly, the priest shall make expiation on behalf of that person, who shall be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; guilt has been incurred before God.

4. ויקרא ה:כא-כו - אשם גזילות

נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תֶחֱטָא וּמָעֲלָה מַעַל בַּה' וְכָחֵשׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ בְּפָקֶדוֹן אוֹ בִתְשׂוּמֶת יָד אוֹ בְגָזֵל אוֹ עָשַׁק אֶת עֲמִיתוֹ. אוֹ מָצָא אֲבֵדָה וְכָחֶשׁ בָּהּ וְנִשְׁבַּע עַל שָׁקֶר עַל אַחַת מִכּּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם לַחֲטֹא בָהַנָּה. וְהָיָה כִּי יֶחֶטָא וְאָשֵׁם וְהֵשִׁיב אֶת הַגְּזֵלָה אֲשֶׁר גָּזָל אוֹ אֶת הָעשֶׁק אֲשֶׁר עָשָׁק אוֹ אֶת הַפִּקָּדוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָפְּקַד אִתּוֹ אוֹ אֶת הָאֲבֵדָה אֲשֶׁר מָצָא. אוֹ מִכּל אֲשֶׁר יִשָּבֶע עָלָיו לַשֶּׁקֶר וְשִׁלַּם אֹתוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וַחֲמִשְׁתִיו יֹסֵף עָלָיו לַאֲשֶׁר הוּא לוֹ יִתְּנֶנוּ בִּיוֹם אַשְׁמָתוֹ. וְאֶת אֲשָׁמוֹ יָבִיא לַה' אַיִּל תָּמִים מִן הַצֹּאן **בְּעֶרְכְּךְ** לְאָשֶׁם אֶל הַכֹּהֵן. וְכָפֶּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי ה' וְנְסְלַח לוֹ עַל אַחַת מִכּּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה לְאַשְׁמָה בָהּ

When a person sins and commits a trespass against God—by dealing deceitfully with another in the matter of a deposit or a pledge, or through robbery, or by defrauding another, or by finding something lost and lying about it; if one swears falsely regarding any one of the various things that someone may do and sin thereby— when one has thus sinned and, realizing guilt, would restore either that which was gotten through robbery or fraud, or the entrusted deposit, or the lost thing that was found, or anything else about which one swore falsely, that person shall repay the principal amount and add a fifth part to it. One shall pay it to its owner upon realizing guilt. Then that person shall bring to the priest, as a penalty to God, a ram without blemish from the flock, **or the equivalent,** as a guilt offering.

The priest shall make expiation before God on behalf of that person, who shall be forgiven for whatever was done to draw blame thereby.

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִקַּח שְׁנֵי כְבָשִׁים תְּמִימִם וְכַבְשָׂה אַחַת בַּת שְׁנָתָהּ תְּמִימָה וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן וְלֹג אֶחָד שָׁמֶן. וְהֶעֱמִיד הַכֹּהֵן הַמְטַהֵר אֵת הָאִישׁ הַמִּטַהֵר וְאֹתָם לִפְנֵי ה' וַלַקֵּח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַכֵּבָשׁ הַאֶחֵד וָהַקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לָאשָׁם וְאֵת לֹג הַשִּׁמֵן וְהַנִיף אֹתָם תִּנוּפָּה לִפָּנִי ה'

On the eighth day that person shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish, three-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in for a meal offering, and one *log* of oil.

These shall be presented before God, with the party to be purified, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, by the priest who performs the purification.

The priest shall take one of the male lambs and offer it with the *log* of oil as a guilt offering, and he shall elevate them as an elevation offering before God.

6. ויקרא יט:כ-כב - אשם שפחה חרופה

וְאִישׁ כִּי יִשְׁכַּב אֶת אִשָּׁה שִׁרְבַת זֶרַע וְהִוּא שִׁפְחָה נֶחֶרֶפֶת לְאִישׁ וְהָפְדֵּה לֹא נִפְדָּתָה אוֹ חֻפְּשָׁה לֹא נִתַּן לָהּ בִּקֹרֶת תִּהְיֶה לֹא יוּמְתוּ כִּי לֹא חֻפָּשָׁה. וְהֵבִיא אֶת אֲשָׁמוֹ לַה' אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֵיל אָשָׁם. וְכִפֶּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן בְּאֵיל הָאָשָׁם לִפְנֵי ה' עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ מֵחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא

If a man has carnal relations with a woman who is a slave and has been designated for another man, but has not been redeemed or given her freedom, there shall be a a searching out; they shall not, however, be put to death, since she has not been freed. But he must bring to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, as his guilt offering to God, a ram of guilt offering.

7. במדבר ו:ט-יב - אשם נזיר

ּוְכִי יָמוּת מֵת עָלָיו בְּפֶתַע פִּתְאֹם וְטִמֵּא רֹאשׁ נִזְרוֹ וְגִלַּח רֹאשׁוֹ בְּיוֹם טָהֶרָתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יְגַלְּחָנּוּ. וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יָבִא שְׁתֵּי תֹרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי יוֹנָה אֶל הַכֹּהֵן אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. וְעָשָׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכִפֶּר עָלָיו מֵאֲשֶׁר חָטָא עַל הַנָּפֶשׁ וְקְדַּשׁ אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. וְהִזִּיר לַה' אֶת יְמִי נִזְרוֹ וְהֵבִיא כֶּבֶשׁ בֶּן שְׁנָתוֹ לְאָשָׁם וְהַיָּמִים הָרִאשׁׁנִִּים יִפְּלוּ כִּי טָמֵא נִזְרוֹ

If someone dies suddenly nearby, defiling the consecrated hair, the [nazirite] shall shave the head at the time of becoming pure, shaving it on the seventh day.

On the eighth day that person shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

The priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make expiation on the person's behalf for the guilt incurred through the corpse. That same day the head shall be reconsecrated;

and that person shall rededicate to God the term as nazirite, bringing a lamb in its first year as a penalty offering. The previous period shall be void, since the consecrated hair was defiled.

8. רמב"ן ויקרא ה:ה

וְהֵבִּיא אֶת אֲשָׁמוֹ לַה'... וְלֹא נִתְבָּרֵר מָה טַעַם יִהְיֶה שֵׁם הַקְּרְבָּן הָאֶחָד "חַטָּאת" וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד "אָשָׁם" וְכֵלָּן יָבֹאוּ עַל חֵטְא. וְלֹא נוּכַל לוֹמֵר בַּעֲבוּר שֶׁהַחַטָּאת נְקֵבָה, כִּי יֵשׁ חַטָּאת זָכָר, שְׂעִירִים וּפָּרִים, וְאֵין לוֹמֵר שֶׁיְּהֵא מִפָּנֵי חֹמֵר הַחֵטָא, כִּי הָנֵּה הַמִּצֹרַע מֵבִיא שְׁנֵי קָרְבָּנוֹת, שֶׁם הָאֶחָד חַטָּאת וְהַשֵּׁנִי אַשָׁם.

AND HE SHALL BRING 'ASHAMO' (HIS GUILT-OFFERING) UNTO THE ETERNAL... Now it has not been explained why the name of one offering is "a sin-offering," and that of the other, "a guilt-offering," since they both come to effect atonement for sin! We cannot say that the reason is since the sin-offering is a female [unlike the guilt-offering which is male, and therefore the word *asham* which is masculine cannot be applied to the female sin-offering], for there are sin-offerings which are male — namely the goats [brought as sin-offerings in case of the public worshipping idols, or the usual sin-offering of the prince], and the bullocks [brought by the anointed priest as a sin-offering, as well as his bullock on the Day of Atonement]. Again, it cannot be said that [the guilt-offering is so called] on account of the severity of the sin [for which it is brought], for behold, the leper brings two offerings — the name of one being "the sin-offering" and the name of the other, the "guilt-offering!"

וְהַנִּרְאֶה בְּעֵינַי כִּי שֵׁם "אָשָׁם" מוֹרֶה עַל דָּבָר גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר הָעוֹשׁוֹ יִתְחַיֵּב לְהְיוֹת שָׁמֵם וְאָבֵד בּוֹ, מִלְשׁוֹן "הַאֲשִׁימֵם אֱ-לֹהִים" (תהלים ה יא), "וְיָאֶשְׁמוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר", וְכֵן "תָּאְשַׁם שֹׁמְרוֹן כִּי מָרְתָה בֵּא-לֹהֶיהָ" (הושע יד א) וְכֵן "אֲשֵׁמִים אֲנַחְנוּ" (בראשית מב כא), נֶעֲנָשִׁים. וְחַטָּאת מוֹרָה עַל דָּבָר נָטָה בּוֹ מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ, מִלְּשׁוֹן "אֶל הַשַּעֲרָה וְלֹא יַחֲטָא" (שופטים כ טז).

It appears to me that the term *asham* denotes some serious deeds for which the person who did it deserves to be *shameim* (ruined) and destroyed because of it, similar to the expressions: 'ha'ashimeim' (destroy them), O G-d; the pastures of the wilderness waste away. So also: 'Te'sham Shomron' (Samaria shall be laid waste), for she hath rebelled against her G-d, and we are 'asheimim — means "we are being punished." The word chatath (sin) denotes something which has turned aside off the way, this being of the expression, every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth and not 'yachti' (miss).

וְהָנֵּה אֲשַׁם גְּזֵלוֹת וַאֲשַׁם שִׁפְּחָה חֲרוּפָה בַּ**עֲבוּר שֶׁהֵם בָּאִים אַף עַל הַמֵּזִיד** יִקְּרֵא קְרְבָּנָם "אָשָׁם", וְכֵן אֲשַׁם הַנָּזִיר, אֲבָל אֲשַׁם מְעִילוֹת אע"פ שֶׁהוּא בְּשׁוֹגֵג בַּ**עֲבוּר שֶׁהוּא בְּקְדְשֵׁי ה'** יִקְּרֵא הַקְּרְבָּן "אָשָׁם", כִּי הַחֵטְא הַגָּדוֹל יִתְחַיֵּב לְהְיוֹתוֹ אָשֵׁם בּוֹ, כַּאֲשֶׁר יִקְּרֵא מְעִילָה. וְעִנְיֵן הַמְּצֹּרֶע בַּעֲבוּר שֶׁהַמְּצוֹרֶע חָשׁוּב כְּמֵת, וְהִנֵּה הוּא כְּבָּר שָׁמֵם וְאָבֵד, וְיִקְּרֵא קָרְבָּנוֹ הָרְאשׁוֹן "אָשָׁם", שֶׁינָון עָלָיו מְן הָאַשְׁמָה אֲשֶׁר הוּא שָׁמֵם בָּהּ, וְהַשֵּׁנִי "חַשָּאת", שֶׁהוּא מְּכַפֵּר שִׁגְּגוֹתָיוּ. וְטַעַם אָשָׁם תָּלוּי, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבְּעָלָיו סָבוּר שָׁאֵין עָלָיו עֹנֶשׁ, כִּי לֹא נוֹדַע "חַשָּאת", שֶׁהוּא מְכַפֵּר שִׁגְּגוֹתָיוּ. וְטַעַם אָשָׁם תָּלוּי, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבְּעָלָיו סָבוּר שָׁאֵין עָלָיו עֹנֶשׁ, כִּי לֹא נוֹדַע שְּחָטָא, מִפְּנֵי זֶה הֶּחְמִיר עֻלָּיו הַבָּתוּב בִּסְפַקּוֹ יוֹתֵר מִוּדָּאוֹ וְהִצְרִיכוֹ אֵיִל בְּכֶסף שְׁקְלִים, וְאִלּוּ נוֹדַע חֶטְאוֹּ הָּיָה הָבְיא חַשָּאת בַּת דַּנְקָא, וּקְרָאוֹ "אָשָׁם", לֵאמֹר שֶׁהוּא בִּשְׁנֵי סְלָעִים כַּאֲשָׁמוֹת הַחֲמוּרִים, לְּרְמֹז לוֹ שֶׁאִם יִהְיֶה נָקֵל בְּעֵינִיו וְלֹא יָבִיא כַּפָּרְתוֹ שָׁמֵם יִהְיֶה בַּעֲוֹנוֹ. וְזָה טַעַם "אָשָׁם הוּא אָשׁם אָשִׁם לָה" (וּיקרא הּ"ִי"ט), יִהְיֶה נָקֵל בְּעִינִיו וְלֹא יָבִיא כַּפָּרְתוֹ שָׁמֵם יִהְיֶה בַּעְוֹנוֹ. וְזָא הְעִבּי בְּוֹבְיֹי וֹלְא יִבִיא כַּבָּיל הַיֹי בְּת יִבִּיא בַילְיִים בְּיִבּיי וּלְא יָבִיא כַּבָּרתוֹ שָׁמֵם יִהְיֶה בַּעְוֹנוֹ. וְלָא יָבִיא כַּיְרִיוֹ שְׁמָב יִהְיָה בָּוֹל בְּעִינִיוּן וֹבְּע

יֹאמַר כִּי הַקֶּרְבָּן הַזֶּה אעפ"י שֶׁהוּא בָּא עַל הַסָּפֵק אָשָׁם הוּא, כִּי אָשֹׁם אָשַׁם לַה' הַיּוֹדֵע כָּל תַּעְלוּמוֹת, וְאִם אוּלַי חָטָא לוֹ יַעֲנִישֶׁנּוּ. וְכֵן מַה שֶׁאָמַר לְמַעְלָה (ויקרא ה':ו') "וְהֵבִיא אֶת אֲשָׁמוֹ", בַּעֲבוּר כִּי מִן הַנִּזְכָּרִים מְזִידִין, כְּגוֹן שְׁבוּעַת הָעֵדוּת, יַזְכִּיר בּוֹ אָשָׁם, וְהוּא חַטָּאת...

Now the guilt-offering for robberies, and the guilt-offering for carnally knowing a handmaid already promised in marriage would then be called asham [indicating a serious sin] because they have to be brought even for wilful commission of the sin. So also the asham (quilt-offering) of the Nazirite [which he brings for becoming defiled by a dead body, even if his defilement was caused wilfully, and is therefore deserving to be shameim — destroyed]. The guilt-offering for misusing sanctified objects, however, even though it is brought only when the sin was committed in error, yet because it concerns the holy things of the Eternal, it is called asham, because the great sin that he did makes him deserve to be shameim (destroyed) because of it, even as it is called me'ilah (treachery). The reason for the name [asham] of the leper's offering is because a leper is regarded as dead, and thus he is *shameim* (ruined) and destroyed. The leper's first offering, then, is called asham in order to protect him from the guilt for which he is "ruined," and the second is the sin-offering which effects atonement for his errors. The reason for the suspensive guilt-offering is because the owner thinks that he is not liable to be punished [since his sin has not been confirmed]; therefore Scripture was more severe with him in the case of his doubt than in that of certainty [of sin], requiring him to bring a ram of the value of shekels of silver, whilst if the sin is confirmed, he brings a sin-offering which could be worth only a danka [a small Persian coin — the sixth of a denar]. Scripture calls it asham in order to say that it must be worth two s'laim just like the graver guilt-offerings [i.e., like the guilt-offering brought for appropriating sanctified objects, and that brought for carnally knowing a handmaid already promised in marriage, which must be worth at least two s'laim, thus indicating to the sinner [since he is in doubt as to whether he has sinned], that if he treats it lightly and will not bring his [offering for] atonement, he will be destroyed by his sin. This is the sense of the verse, 'Asham hu, ashom asham lashem' (It is a guilt-offering — he hath surely incurred guilt before the Eternal). That is to say, although this offering is brought only on a doubtful sin, it is a guilt-offering, for he has surely incurred guilt before the Eternal Who knows all hidden things, and if indeed he did sin before Him, He will requite him. Similarly, that which He said above, and he shall bring his guilt-offering, is because among those sins mentioned above are also those which require the bringing of an offering even when they are committed wilfully, such as for the "oath of testimony;" therefore He mentions the term asham with reference to them although the offering is called a sin-offering...

9. שמואל א' ו: א-ג

אַ וַיְהָי אֲרוֹן־יְ-הֹוֶה בִּשְׂדֵה פְּלִשְׁתָּים שִׁבְעָה חֲדָשִׁים:

The Ark of GOD remained in the territory of the Philistines seven months.

[אַרְּוֹן יִ-הֹוָה הוֹדְעֵנוּ בַּמֶּה נְשַׁלְּחָנוּ לִמְקוֹמוֹ: {o} יַּיִּקְרְאוּ פְלִשְׁתִּים לַכֹּהֲנִים וְלַקֹּסְמִים לֵאמֹר מַה־נַּצֲשֶׂה לַאֲרוֹן יִ-הֹוָה הוֹדְעֵנוּ בַּמֶּה נְשַׁלְּחָנוּ לִמְקוֹמוֹ: {o} Then the Philistines summoned the priests and the diviners and asked, "What shall we do about the Ark of GOD? Tell us with what we shall send it off to its own place."

ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִם־מְשַׁלְחִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן אֱ-לֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַל־תְּשַׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ רֵיקָם כִּי־הָשֵׁב תָּשִׁיבוּ לוֹ אָשָׁם אָז תֵּרָפְאוּ וְנוֹדֵע לַכֶם לַמֵּה לֹא־תַסוּר יַדוֹ מִכֶּם:

They answered, "If you are going to send the Ark of the God of Israel away, do not send it away without anything; you must also pay an indemnity. Then you will be healed, and he will be made known to you; otherwise his hand will not turn away from you."

10. ר' ד"ר יונתן גרוסמן, תורת הקרבנות

https://www.etzion.org.il/he/tanakh/torah/sefer-vayikra/parashat-vayikra/%D7%90%D7%A9%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%92%D7%96%D7%9C-%D7%92%D7%91%D7%95%D7%94-1

יסוד הערך הכספי של הבהמה מלמד הרבה על אופיו של קורבן האשם, הקשור מהותית לחטא המעילה והגזלה, ולהחזרת דבר שניטל ללא רשות. מאחר שגם במקרה גזלת החבר התורה פותחת ומגדירה זאת (משום מה) כמעילה בה': "נֶּפֶשׁ כִּי תֶחֱטָא וּמְעֲלָה מַעַל בַּה'" (ה', כא), ניתן להיות מדויקים יותר – והדבר יוכח בהמשך – האשם מכפר על גזלת גבוה, על מעילה בה'. דווקא בהמת האשם צריכה להיות בערך כספי מסוים כי קורבן זה קשור בתהליך של 'השבה', של 'פיצוי ערך'. דומה שעיקרון זה מבאר את כל מקרי האשם, ויש בכוחו גם לבאר מדוע בשני מקרים יש להביא כבש ולא איל. לפני שנבחן זאת, ברצוני להעיר שדבר זה קשור אולי גם בלשון 'אשם'. כבר הערתי שזו מילה רב-משמעית במקרא, ואחת ההוראות שלה היא 'השבת פיצוי כספי' (במיוחד בשמ"א ו'). מאחר שבחלק ממקרי האשם, לצד הקורבן, יש השבה של דבר מה שנלקח ללא היתר, סביר לגזור לאור כך גם את שם הקורבן – הקורבן אשם קורבן השבת גזל (במקרי מסוימים). אכן, עדיין אפשר לטעון שמבחינה סמנטית יש לראות בקורבן אשם קורבן שבה על 'אשמה'; לא על החטא הוא בא אלא על האשמה.

The monetary value of the animal teaches us a lot about the nature of the guilt offering, which is fundamentally related to the sin of embezzlement and theft, and to the return of something taken without permission. Since even in the case of theft by a fellow believer, the Torah begins and defines it (for some reason) as a theft from God: "A soul, for you have sinned and transgressed against God" (5:21), we can be more precise - and this will be proven later - that the guilt offering atones for a high theft, for a theft from God. The guilt offering must have a certain monetary value because this offering is related to the process of 'restitution', of 'compensation of value.' It seems that this principle

explains all cases of guilt, and it can also explain why in two cases a lamb must be brought and not a ram. Before we examine this, I would like to note that this may also be related to the word 'guilty'. I have already noted that this is an ambiguous word in the Bible, and one of its instructions is 'return of monetary compensation' (especially in Shema 6). Since in some cases of guilt, alongside the sacrifice, there is the return of something that was taken without permission, it is reasonable to derive the name of the sacrifice from this light – the sacrifice that is brought with the return of theft (in certain cases). Indeed, it is still possible to argue that semantically, a guilt sacrifice should be seen as a sacrifice that is returned for 'guilt'; it does not come for the sin but for the guilt.