



# They rededicated the Temple, so what?

Shira Batya Lewin Solomons

Jewish Community of Berkshire [Shira@jcob.org](mailto:Shira@jcob.org)

## Ma'oz tzur

Refuge, Rock of my salvation,  
to You it is a delight to give praise.  
Restore the house of my prayer,  
so that there I may offer You thanksgiving.  
When you silence the loud-mouthed foe,  
Then will I complete, with song and psalm,  
the altar's dedication. (J Sacks)

מָעוֹז צוֹר יְשׁוּעָתִי  
לְךָ נָאֵה לְשַׁבַּח,  
תִּכּוֹן בַּיִת תְּפִלָּתִי  
וְשֵׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח,  
לַעֲת תִּכְיֶן מִטְּבַח,  
מִצָּר הַמְּנַבֵּחַ,  
אֲז אֶגְמַר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר  
חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

# קֶרְבָּנוֹת Qorbanot

animal sacrifice: zevach זֶבַח

worship of God: avodah עֲבוּדָה – literally divine service.

qorbanot קֶרְבָּנוֹת : from the root קרב "to draw near"

Rituals performed by kohanim (priests)

Sacrificial worship ended completely after the expulsion of Jews from the Temple Mount, around the year 135CE.

# Concepts underlying Qorbanot

- Giving
- substitution
- coming closer.

The essence of sacrifice is to bring a person closer to God.

## Purposes of Qorbanot

- to praise God
- to become closer to Him,
- to express thanks to God, love or gratitude
- to celebrate holidays and festivals
- to cleanse a person of ritual impurity
- for purposes of atonement.

# Types of Qorbanot

## עֹלָה Olah: Burnt Offering

- Offering was totally burnt
- Includes Shacharit. Musaph.

## זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים Zevach Sh'lamim: Peace Offering

- Expression of thanks of gratitude
- Part is burnt. Part is given to the priest. Remainder is eaten in a celebratory meal.
- Talmud states that in the age of the messiah (when there is no more sin), this will be the only class of offering that is brought to the Temple.

# Types of Qorbanot

## חַטָּאת Chatat: Sin Offering

- To atone for careless sins
- Can be individual or communal
- Normally eaten by kohanim.

## אֲשָׁמָה Asham: Guilt Offering

- to atone for sins of stealing things from the altar,
- or for when you are not sure whether you have committed a sin or what sin you have committed,
- or for breach of trust.
- eaten by the kohanim.

## מִנְחָה Minchah: Food and Drink Offerings

- the devotion of the fruits of man's work to God
- not a natural product, but something created through man's effort.
- A piece was burnt. Remainder was eaten by the kohanim.
- Typically offered in the afternoon
- offerings of undiluted wine: nesech נֶסֶךְ.

## Other offerings

לֶחֶם פָּנִים The show bread and הַשֻּׁלְחָן The table

- twelve special loaves of bread
- displayed on a special table
- next to the menorah, outside the holy of holies
- miraculously stayed fresh for a week
- eaten by the priests
- oily matzah.
- No chametz was ever allowed in the sanctuary.

## חֻלָּה Challah

- a portion of dough was taken off and given to the kohanim
- eaten by the kohanim

## שֶׁמֶן Shemen: Oil and the Menorah מְנֹרָה

- part of the minchah, or meal offering
- burned in the menorah, lit daily
- pure olive oil (white oil from unripe berries)

## קִטְרֶת K'toret: Incense / Spice offering

- two altars in the mishkan / mikdash
- large altar מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה mizbach ha'olah
- small altar מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְטֹרֶת mizbach hak'toret
- specifically for spices
- just outside the entrance to the holy of holies
- special mix of spices
- forbidden for any profane purpose.
- Yom Kippur: counting and sprinkling

**כִּיּוֹר Kiyor: The basin – washing hands**

For washing hands and feet of priests

Related laws of purity and immersion in a mikveh



From <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-tabernacle/>



from Wikipedia

# Transformation 1: The bimah as altar

- Rabbis instituted prayers to replace the sacrifices.
- Service of the heart (avodat haleiv) עבודת הלב
- Replaced physical service (avodah) עבודה
- Amidah: formulated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE by the Men of the Great Assembly
- purpose was to help people to find the words to pray, to unify prayers
- Ma'ariv amidah is optional and has no kedushah
- because it does not come from sacrificial worship

From the preliminary morning service:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יי א-להינו ואלהי  
אבותינו, שתהא אמירה זו חשובה  
ומקבלת ומרצה לפניך, כאלו הקרבנו קרבן  
התמיד במועדו ובמקומו וכהלכתו.

May it be your will, Lord our God and God of  
our ancestors, that this speech be correct and  
received and accepted before You, as if we had  
brought the daily burnt offering at its correct time  
and in its correct place according to its correct  
practice.

From the Avodah section of the Amidah:

רְצֵה, יי א-להינו, בעמך ישראל ובתפלתם,  
והשב את העבודה לדביר ביתך,  
ואשי ישראל, ותפלתם באהבה תקבל בְּרָצוֹן,  
ותהי לְרָצוֹן תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך.

Be pleased, Lord our God, with your people Israel and with their prayers.

Return the Service to the holiest place of your House and receive with love and delight the burnt offerings and prayers of Israel.

May the service of your people Israel always please you.

<b>Beit Hamikdash / Mishkan</b>	<b>Synagogue</b>
Mizbach ha'olah / mizbach hak'toret	bimah, almemar
Menorah	Neir tamid, menorah-like light
Kiyor / washing basin	Hand-washing basin for kohanim. Wash hands before praying.
Aron	Aron hakodesh
Regular olah (daily, Shabbat and festivals)	Amidah with kedushah
High priest's clothing	Decorations on sefer Torah

# Transformation 2: The table as altar

## Talmud Chagigah 27a

(repeated in Menachot 97a and Talmud B'rachot 55a)

For it is written [Ezekiel 41:2]: The altar, three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits, was of wood, and so the corners; the length thereof and the walls thereof, were also of wood; and he said unto me: 'This is the table that is before the Lord'. —

[The verse] begins with the altar and ends with the table!

R. Johanan and Resh Lakish both explain:

At the time when the Temple stood, the altar used to make atonement for a person;

now a person's table makes atonement for him.

## Mishnah Avot. Chapter 3, Mishnah 3

Rabbi Shimon said:

If three have eaten at one table and have not spoken their words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten sacrifices [offered] to the dead, as it is said,

“for all tables are full of filthy vomit, when the All-Present is absent” (Isaiah 28:8).

But, if three have eaten at one table, and have spoken their words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten at the table of the All-Present, blessed be He,

as it is said, “And He said unto me,

‘This is the table before the Lord’” (Ezekiel 41:2).

## Sarah's Tent (Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LX:16)

16. AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT (XXIV, 67).

You find that, as long as Sarah lived, a cloud hung over her tent; when she died, that cloud disappeared; but when Rebekah came, it returned.

As long as Sarah lived, her doors were wide open; at her death that liberality ceased; but when Rebekah came, that open-handedness returned.

As long as Sarah lived, there was a blessing on her dough, and the lamp used to burn from the evening of the Sabbath until the evening of the following Sabbath; when she died, these ceased, but when Rebekah came, they returned.

And so, when he saw her following in his mother's footsteps, separating her hallah in cleanness and handling her dough in cleanness, straightway, AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO THE TENT.

<b>Beit Hamikdash / Mishkan</b>	<b>Home</b>
Mizbach ha'olah / mizbach hak'toret	The table especially on Shabbat and yom tov
Menorah	Shabbat and yom tov and <b>Chanukah</b> candles.
Kiyor / washing basin	Hand-washing before eating bread
The show bread	“Challah” on shabbat and yom tov
Challah	Taking challah when making bread
Nesech (wine poured on the altar)	Kiddush wine
Salt on the sacrifices	Salt on the challah
Shelamim / celebratory offerings	Festive “simchah” meals / kiddushim
k'toret	Besamim / spices at havdallah

## Sarah's Tent



**S**arah had a tent of her own. Every time that the family made camp, Sarah's tent was set up first. Abraham taught men about the One God. Sarah was the women's teacher. Abraham's tent had doors on all four sides so that everyone who was looking for hospitality could easily find their way in. Sarah's tent was where Shabbat was created. Every week Sarah baked *hallah*. Every week Sarah lit Shabbat candles. The smell of the *hallah* lasted from week to week. It was always in the tent. The Shabbat lights burned from one Shabbat until the next set were kindled. The tent always smelled of *hallah*. It was always a place of light.

The *Shekhinah* is the part of God that gets close to people. It is the part that can be our neighbor. God was comfortable with Sarah and her tent. God liked the smell and the light and the peace of Shabbat. The *Shekhinah* would come down in a cloud and rest on Sarah's tent.

When Sarah died, her tent grew dark; the smell of *hallah* began to fade. Isaac was sad. He refused to see anyone. Abraham sent his servant back to “Padam Aram,” the old country, to find a wife for Isaac. The servant picked Rebekkah. When Rebekkah rode into camp, she and Isaac saw each other and fell immediately in love. He took her into his mother’s tent. She baked *hallah* and then lit Shabbat candles. The tent smelled of *hallah* again. The tent was filled with light again. The *Shekhinah* came back. Isaac finally found comfort after his mother’s death.

Years passed. God was hiding in the seventh heaven and crying. Israel had rejected the commandments. They had made a golden calf. All God’s dreams were shattered like the tablets. God needed a way to start over. God needed a new beginning. Then God remembered Sarah’s tent. God told Moses to have Israel built a tent and to place within it twelve loaves of braided bread and a light that never went out. The tent would always smell like *hallah*. It would always be a place of light (this was the Mishkan—Tabernacle). God promised that God would come down and be a neighbor just as God had at Sarah’s tent (*Gen. R. 60.16*).



### Questions

1. What does this story teach us about Sarah?
2. When have you been like her?
3. How can knowing this story help you to know where to point your heart when you say the **אבות ואמהות?**

From S'fatai Tiftah, Volume 2. Joel Lurie Grishaver and Jane Golub.  
Torah Aura Publications 2000

