

Sin Offering

After giving birth, and having a period of recuperation, the mother brings a sin offering. Many commentators wonder why? What did she do wrong? And some suggest she may have cursed in her pain or sworn never to go through it again.

But there is another way of looking at this. Giving birth is so important and so significant for humanity, it is a sort of miracle that we should wonder at and appreciate with all our powers recognition. Yet we take it for granted. Men more than women of course.

A Sin Offering is not necessarily for an act that one has performed, not necessarily for a sin. Rather it can be to record our failure of appreciation of something, of the Divine Order of life as much as for a personal limitation.

The woman brings a Sin Offering for all of us who fail to value the miracle of life.

Some like to argue that metaphorically it is an atonement for the sin in the Garden of Eden for which Eve was punished by having to endure the pains of childbirth. But then Adam sinned just as much. Why shouldn't he have to bring an atonement? Besides narratives are not used for halachic purposes. They are for educational ones, to teach moral lessons. Similarly, the idea that the sexual act has a negative side, in the sense that sex can be abused and misused, may also be a reason for Sin Offering. But here too men are just as likely if not more so of abusing it.

I prefer to see it as an example of a *Chok*, a spiritual law of no rational function or explanation, but rather one that brings about the recognition of our own limitations, even in being part of something so Divine.