

## **Tazria - Order of Chatas and Olah for the Woman Who Gave Birth by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh**

In Vayikra 12:6-8, we are told about the *korbonos* a woman brings after giving birth. She brings a *chatas*, sin offering and an *olah*. What is striking about the case of a woman giving birth, though, is the order of the *korbonos*. The general rule is that when there is going to be a *chatas* and an *olah* brought, the *chatas* is brought first. However, the Torah states regarding a woman who gave birth that she brings an *olah* and a *chatas*. Rashi states that, in actuality, the *chatas* was brought first as always, as we are told in the Gemara Zevachim 90A. Only in the reading is the *Olah* mentioned first.

A number of sources bring the idea that the reason a *chatas* is required is because when a woman is experiencing the pain of childbirth, she may have sworn never to be intimate with her husband again, which is contrary to Hashem's entire plan of creation. However, since this oath was made under extreme pain, it is minimized by its penalty being written out of order after the *olah*. This shows her oath was a normal human reaction. The Kli Yakar states that this oath was never really binding because it was made under duress, However, a *chatas* is required since 'moving the lips' is an action and therefore requires its own atonement and the *olah* is brought as the atonement for wrongful thoughts as the case generally is regarding the *olah*.

My Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, stated an idea similar to that of the Kli Yakar. The *olah* was indeed brought for wrong thoughts. The Torah, in this case, writes about the *olah* first since it is thoughts that first motivate any actions or even words as is known. The Torah had to stress how far reaching the effects of thoughts can be and this is underscored by the Torah telling us about the atonement for thoughts first. Rav Moshe Feinstein explained that the reason for the *chatas* was that a potential thought could lead to a wrong action if not checked. Therefore one must always work on oneself to make sure his/her thoughts are shaped by the Torah and not by any ideologies that are contrary to our way of life.