

# Parsha Ponders

Tazria/Metzora | May 1, 2025 | 4 Iyar 5785

## *Famous fowl fidelity*<sup>1</sup>

ובמלאת ימי טהרה לבן או לבת תביא כבש בן-שנתו לעלה ובן-יונה או תר לחטאת אל-פתח אהל מועד אל-  
הכהן

At the completion of her days of purity for a boy or a girl, she shall bring to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the Kohen, a year-old sheep for an *Olah*, and a dove or a turtledove for a *Chatas*<sup>2</sup>

A *mitzvah* unique to women is the offerings brought after giving birth. A woman must bring a year-old sheep for an *Olah* offering, and a bird for a *Chatas* offering. The Torah only allows two types of birds for offerings: turtledoves or doves. In the entire Torah, turtledoves are always mentioned before doves, except in this one instance. The Torah says she can bring a dove or a turtledove. Why here is the usual order switched?

There's a difference between these two birds. Turtledoves are kosher for an offering when they've matured, and yet doves are only kosher for an offering when they're young. Why? Our Sages tell us<sup>3</sup> an interesting fact regarding the turtledoves. Turtledoves are unique amongst creations in that they only have one mate. They remain loyal to their mate so much that once their mate dies, they don't accept another mate ever again. This fidelity is so special that they are valid as offerings as adults. Doves don't have this quality<sup>4</sup>, so they're only valid while they're young, before they are capable of mating.

Usually, when the Torah discusses bird offerings, it's referring to two birds. Here is special, because the woman only has to bring one bird. Since this is the case, the Torah mentioned doves first. Since by definition this bird is going to be slaughtered, if it's a turtledove, its mate will be all alone. Not only will it lose its mate, it will never seek another again. This is unlike a dove, who is too young to have a mate. The Torah therefore mentions doves first, to tell us that in this specific instance, if possible, a dove would be preferable<sup>5</sup>. If we can avoid needlessly making a turtledove single forever, we should.

We see just how sensitive the Torah is. It's teaching us to always consider the consequences of our actions, and to be careful with how we impact those around us.

Good Shabbos

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on Ba'al HaTurim to Leviticus 12:6

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Midrash Lekach Tov to Leviticus 1:14

<sup>4</sup> The problem is Eruvin 100b teaches that if the Torah hadn't been given, we would learn to avoid inappropriate relations from doves. Rashi *ad. loc.* explains that this refers to the fidelity of doves, that once they find a mate they do not seek another. This contradicts the Midrash Lekach Tov. However, there might be a resolution. Ramban to Leviticus 1:14 writes like the Midrash Lekach Tov, and sounds like the dove changes mates, unlike the turtledove. Moshav Zekeinim *ad. loc.* quotes from the Rokeach that the intent is that even after death turtledoves don't seek a new mate, unlike doves who although they are faithful, once their mate dies, they seek another one. Chizkuni *ad. loc.* writes similarly about the dove. This could be the intent of Eruvin, that doves have fidelity to their mates while they are alive. If so, it could have also mentioned turtledoves.

<sup>5</sup> How can the Ba'al HaTurim give this reason when Kerisos 6:9 says the reason it mentions doves first in this instance is to teach us that they're of equal quality to turtledoves, which are usually mentioned first (Ataros Adar *ad. loc.*)? Someone asked this to Rav Chaim Kanievsky, as brought in Da'as Noteh to 12:6, and he answered that there are seventy ways to the Torah. However, Ittur Bikkurim *ad. loc.* answers that both can be derived, for why else did the Torah pick this specific instance to switch the order? See also Ta'amah D'Kra *ad. loc.*