

19:3:

When a baby boy is born the mother is in an unclean state for seven days then on the 8<sup>th</sup> day the baby is brit.

She then counts a further 33 days of purification making a total of 40 days.

For a baby girl she is unclean for 14 days and keeps a further 66 days of purification making a total of 80 days.

In both cases, boy or girl, the mother then brings a burnt offering and a sin offering to the Temple.

The burnt offering is a 1 year old lamb and the sin offering is a pigeon or dove.

Why is the period for a baby girl twice as long as for a boy ?

One explanation is that the baby girl carries (potentially) the same impurity as the mother so we need twice the period.

Another explanation is that the mother while carrying the child and during the delivery, may be angry at her husband for putting her through this very painful process and swear never to have relations with him again.

After the birth, when she starts caring for the baby, enjoying its company, and the praise of relatives and friends, then she changes her mind and wants to break her oath. Breaking an oath requires a sin offering.

One receives more joy from boys than from girls because boys would help around the farm or with the business, therefore it takes longer until the mother is happy she had a girl baby, compared to a boy baby. For this reason the Torah allowed twice the time for the girl before she had to bring the offerings.

The offerings were only brought for a normal birth not a caesarian, and if she had twins, a boy and a girl, she would keep 14 plus 66 for the girl and the boy would be included in this.

In the Aruch Hashulchan they cover the case of a mother who gives birth but doesn't know whether it was a boy or a girl.

How can this be ?

They give the examples of a woman giving birth in a river or over a pit or if the baby was snatched immediately by wild animals.

This reminds us of how harsh life was in the old days.