

SIDRA OF THE WEEK : וַי

1. This week's Sidra continues with the Laws of *Korbonos*, and also tells of the induction of Aharon and his sons as the Kohanim, commanded by HaShem to represent the Jewish People in the Mikdash.
2. Every morning and evening, a Korban Olah is to be brought on behalf of the entire Jewish Nation and is to be burned on the Great Copper Altar. It is called the "Korban Tommid" because it is to be brought every single day. (The word "Tommid" means "continual" or "constant.") No private Korbonos can be brought before the morning Korban Tommid (teaching us that the interests of the community come before the interests of the individual) nor can any Korban be brought after the evening Korban Tommid (no individual is to place himself outside of the community). Every day, before the morning Korban Tommid, the ashes are to be removed from the Altar and new wood is to be arranged on it. (Each new day's Divine Service is to be undertaken with freshness and eagerness.)
3. The fire on the Altar is to burn continually and is never to be allowed to go out. In fact, this fire burned on the Altar of the Mishkan (in its various sites) uninterruptedly until the Consecration of the great Beis HaMikdash built by King Solomon, when a wondrous fire from Heaven came down and thus inaugurated the new Altar there. This continual fire symbolizes for us that at all times our resolve to serve HaShem shall be enthusiastic and warm, and that we shall resolve never to let this warmth be extinguished.
4. In addition to the twice-daily Korban Tommid there is to be a twice-daily Korban Mincha, a Korban that includes a measure of fine flour, brought by the Kohen Ga'dol on behalf of the entire Nation. A similar Korban is to be brought by each Kohen Ordinary on the day that he first serves in the Mikdash (signifying that his duties, too, are carried out on behalf of the Nation). Whereas the animal Korban Tommid symbolizes the subjugation of our physical being to a life of obedience to HaShem, the Korban Mincha, consisting of flour, olive oil and frankincense (a sweet-smelling resin) symbolizes how we are to dedicate all our material substance to the service of HaShem.
5. The Sidra continues with further laws of the Korban Chattos, the Korban Oshom and the Korban Shelommim that were described in last week's Sidra. As its name implies, this last-named Korban is brought by someone who is "at peace" — it is not like a Korban Chattos or a Korban Oshom which are brought so as to help a person achieve atonement for any sin. The Korban Shelommim is brought by a person who, though lacking nothing materially, feels that he wishes to come even closer to HaShem, to be at peace

SIDRA OF THE WEEK : וַ

and in harmony with Him. This spiritual desire finds expression and fulfilment through the powerful emotions that are aroused in the process of bringing a Korban Shelommim.

6. The feelings of supreme happiness and genuine peace of mind that this Korban helps to express and achieve can be attained only by those who live their lives by the Torah of HaShem and who are loyal to His Mitzvos. Consequently, although everyone is eligible to bring a Korban Olah, only the people of HaShem's Chosen Nation, the People of the Torah, can bring the Korban Shelommim.
7. In addition to the Korban Shelommim, which is a free-willed Korban, there is another type of Shelommim which, on the contrary, we are in duty bound to bring. This "Korban Todah," the Korban of Thanksgiving, is brought by a person to express his gratitude to HaShem for being saved from danger. There are four categories of people who have to bring a Korban Todah. They are: a person who is released from prison where his life was threatened; a person who has journeyed across the desert; a person who has crossed the sea; and a person who has recovered from a serious or life-threatening illness. (Nowadays, if a person's life has been saved from any of these dangers, he recites a special Brochah, called the **בְּרַכַּת הַגּוֹמֵל** (in Shule) and thus publicly acknowledges HaShem's kindness to him. This is our way of expressing our gratitude to HaShem, unable as we are at present to bring a Korban Todah.)
8. Various other laws concerning Korbonos are given in this week's Sidra, including the prohibition against eating the meat of Korbonos when Tomay; the parts of the Korbonos that belong to the Kohen; the time limits within which different Korbonos have to be eaten; what is to be done with any meat that remains of a Korban beyond the set time-limits and to the meat of a spoiled or disqualified Korban.
9. All Korbonos have one thing in common: their blood is sprinkled on the Altar and certain parts are burned on the Altar. Although only a very minute proportion of all animals slaughtered for food can be Korbonos, the prohibition against eating these Korban-parts applied — and still does apply — to all sheep and cattle. (Because of the considerable amount of such forbidden meat that is contained in the hindquarters of Korban-animals, and because of the severity of the prohibition of our eating these Korban-parts, in many countries — England included — we do not eat at all any of the hindquarters of the sheep and cattle slaughtered for food.) Similarly, we are strictly forbidden to partake of the blood of any animal or bird and therefore all meat is soaked, well-salted to draw out any blood and then thoroughly rinsed before it is cooked. (We are not allowed to eat even a blood-spotted egg.) Although the prohibitions against eating the forbidden parts of an animal, or its blood, are connected with the Laws of Korbonos, they are nevertheless independent of these laws inasmuch as they apply to all animals and at all times, even when we do not have the Beis HaMikdash. At the same time, these laws are a reminder to us that one day the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt and the Divine Service will be restored.

SIDRA OF THE WEEK : וַ

10. The Sidra continues with the laws and procedures of the inauguration of Aharon and his sons as the Kohanim and describes how they were inducted into their high and holy office, exactly as HaShem commanded.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

*Some of the thoughts presented in the **SIDRA OF THE WEEK** of this week (and last week's, as well as some of the coming weeks, too) are taken from the book*

OUR HERITAGE — A SUMMARY OF THE WEEKLY SIDRA

by Rabbi Chaim S. Schmahl

Grateful thanks are here expressed to Rabbi Schmahl for his kind and generous permission — so readily given — to make use of his scholarly and eminently readable work.

For the explanation of the Haftorah of Sidra וַ please go to HAFTORAHS.