

HAFTORAH OF SIDRA : אמור

*This week's Haftorah is taken from Sefer Yechezkel
from Chapter 44, verses 15 — 31.*

1. The connexion between the Sidra and its Haftorah is readily apparent. The first part of the Sidra teaches about the duties of a Kohen in the Mishkan (and the later part teaches about the Korbannos brought in the Mishkan on the various Yommim Tovim) and the Haftorah is the prophecy of Yechezkel about the Kohanim who will officiate in the future Beis HaMikdash.
2. At first glance, some of the laws that Yechezkel teaches about the duties of the Kohanim are either different from what the Torah teaches or, on the contrary, are explicitly taught in the Torah and therefore it is unnecessary for Yechezkel to teach them. As for the first difficulty, it would seem that Yechezkel incorporates in his teaching also the laws that were instituted by the Chachommim and that is why, as is usually the case, they seem to be at variance with the written Torah. As for the second difficulty, it is quite possible that Yechezkel, living as he did in the time of the Babylonian Exile, with the Beis HaMikdash in ruins, found that it was indeed necessary to teach the laws of the Divine service because they had fallen into disuse and were being forgotten. Being first and foremost a Torah teacher, he saw it as his duty to ensure that all branches of Torah law should be revised and learned — even that which at present has no practical application — for no part of Torah is redundant. Additionally, in the manner of a wide-ranging Shiur but written down as prophetic utterances, Yechezkel sees far into the future and includes also some of the more stringent laws that will apply in the Third Beis HaMikdash, when it is expected that things will be on a higher spiritual plane, too.
3. As one of the Nation's Torah leaders, Yechezkel saw it as his duty to comfort the people and reassure them that their present Exile will come to an end and they will be restored to their Land. The Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt and will function once again as the world's focal point of true Divine service. (The Beis HaMikdash was indeed rebuilt after the seventy years of the Babylonian Exile, exactly as foretold by the Nevi'im of the day.) In his vision of the future, Yechezkel passes on the message from HaShem that the family of Tsaddok, because of their steadfastness and loyalty to HaShem, would be the Kohanim Gedolim to serve in the new Beis HaMikdash. It must be remembered that the Kohanim were intended by HaShem to be the Torah teachers of the Jewish People. It was for this reason that they were not given any portion in the Land (in marked contrast to the priests and clergymen of other religions, with bishops' palaces of luxury and the huge estates of their abbeyes and monasteries — and the power which went with these). Instead, the Kohanim were dependent for their very sustenance upon the gifts of the people — who in turn were commanded to give these Torah teachers their dues and thus bring upon themselves the blessings of HaShem. When the kings of Israel made idolatry fashionable, the family of Tsaddok, unlike many other Kohanim, refused to act in any way as priests in the idolatrous temples throughout the country even though this meant that they were reduced to extreme poverty and even starvation. HaShem rewards their righteousness, says Yechezkel, for HaShem never forgets those who are loyal to Him.