



# Likkutei Sichos

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## Don't Call it Desecration

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Great care has been taken to ensure the translation's accuracy without compromising readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of errors exists.

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## 1.

### THE OFFERING OF EPHRAIM

Regarding the sacrifices of the *Nesiim*<sup>1</sup> for the inauguration of the Altar, specifically that of the *Nasi* of the tribe of Ephraim — whose sacrifice was offered on Shabbos<sup>2</sup> — *Midrash Rabbah* on our *sedrah*<sup>3</sup> (*parshah* 13)<sup>4</sup> states:

The *Nesiim* did three things improperly and {yet} Hashem accepted them... an individual's sacrifice never overrides Shabbos. Yet, here, an individual's sacrifice {the sacrifice of the *Nasi* of Ephraim} overrode Shabbos. From here, we can infer how precious the sacrifices of the *Nesiim* were for Hashem.

However, further (in *parshah* 14),<sup>5</sup> the midrash says:

If you will ask, “How were they permitted to desecrate Shabbos? Is it not so that an individual's sacrifice does not override Shabbos, yet this one {the *Nasi* of Ephraim} offered his sacrifice on Shabbos?!” — Hashem says, “They did not do this on their own accord, **for I told** Moshe....”

On a simple level, according to the first midrash, the sacrifice on Shabbos was originally improper (“{the *Nesiim* did three things} improperly”). It was only after the fact, due to “how precious the sacrifices of the *Nesiim* were for Hashem” that “Hashem **accepted them**”;

In contrast, according to the second midrash, offering the sacrifice on Shabbos was desirable from the outset (“proper”), since “**I told** Moshe....”

However, upon closer examination, even according to the first midrash, we cannot say the *Nasi*'s offering was forbidden. For Heaven forbid to say that a *Nasi* would do something **against the law**. Moreover, and of major

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<sup>1</sup> {Tribal leaders; pl. of “*Nasi*.”}

<sup>2</sup> As the verse (*Bamidbar* 7:48) states, “On the seventh day, the *Nasi* for the tribe of Ephraim,” and that day was Shabbos. See *Moed Katan* 9a; midrashim that will be quoted below; *Baalei HaTosafos* on *Bamidbar*, loc. cit.; and see *Ibn Ezra*, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> {The weekly Torah portion.}

<sup>4</sup> Par. 2 (end); see also *Tanchuma*, “*Naso*,” sec. 20; *Pesikta Rabbasi*, s.v., “*vayehi bayom calos*.”

<sup>5</sup> Par. 1 (end).

importance, was that Moshe was present; the Kohanim were performing their service; and the Leviim were on their platform.<sup>6</sup> Did they all go against the law?!

We must say that even according to **that** midrash, offering the sacrifice on Shabbos was (from the outset) according to Hashem's command. However, since it was only a temporary instruction (for aside from this one unique instance, such an act was **forbidden**), it was deemed "improper."

Accordingly, we must clarify: What is the **reasoning** of these two midrashim? According to the first midrash the offering was "improper," whereas according to the second, the offering did **not** desecrate the Shabbos. Furthermore, the offering was the fulfillment of Hashem's command, "**for I told** {Moshe}...."

## 2.

### A TEMPORARY EXCEPTION?

The Talmud<sup>7</sup> says that "the Jewish people did not observe Yom Kippur" during the inauguration of the first Temple based on "on a *kal vachomer*":<sup>8</sup>

Since {when dedicating} the *Mishkan*, whose sanctity was not a permanent sanctity, an individual's offering overrode Shabbos {despite involving} a transgression punishable by stoning; {then regarding the dedication of} the Temple, whose sanctity was permanent, and {the offerings brought there were} communal offerings, is it not even more so {clear that the dedication of the Temple overrides the prohibition of} Yom Kippur, {a violation that is} punishable by {the less severe punishment of} *koress*?<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, it is understood<sup>10</sup> that according to the Talmud, offering the sacrifice on Shabbos at the *Mishkan*'s inauguration was **not** just a temporary

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<sup>6</sup> {The Leviim offered musical accompaniment when the sacrifices were offered.}

<sup>7</sup> *Moed Katan* 9a.

<sup>8</sup> {Lit., "light and heavy." *Kal vachomer* is a talmudic argument, whereby a strict ruling in a lenient case demands a similarly strict ruling in a more stringent case; alternatively, a lenient ruling in a stringent case demands a similarly lenient ruling in a lenient case.}

<sup>9</sup> {Lit., "cut off," a consequence of certain severe sins, whereby the sinner's soul is cut off, so to speak, from its source.}

<sup>10</sup> See *Responsa of Chasam Sofer*, "Orach Chaim," sec. 208, s.v. "BeDaf Zayin Amud Daled."

exception<sup>11</sup> (“improper”) — unlike the first midrash mentioned above. For if this were the case, then it would be impossible to apply this (through a *kal vachomer*) to the sacrifices offered at the dedication of the Temple.

The reasoning for the dispute between the first midrash, and the Talmud and second midrash (whether the allowance to offer the sacrifice on Shabbos was only a temporary exception or not) can be explained in a number of ways. Among them:<sup>12</sup>

- a) The Talmud, etc., follows the opinion that a tribe is defined as a congregation.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, since the sacrifice that the *Nasi* brought was a **tribal** sacrifice, it was not a temporary exception, for it was classified as a congregational sacrifice, and was offered {on Shabbos} as all communal sacrifices which override Shabbos. (True, the Talmud calls it an “individual’s sacrifice.” But this was only when compared with the *Tamid*<sup>14</sup> sacrifice, and the offerings brought before and after it. These were sacrifices of the entire Jewish nation, of all tribes.)

In contrast, the first midrash agrees with the opinion that a tribe is not defined as a congregation.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the *Nasi*’s offering had the law of a regular personal sacrifice, which does not override Shabbos. And that it could be offered was a temporary exception.

- b) Everyone agrees a tribe is defined as a congregation.<sup>15</sup> However, the *Nasi*’s sacrifice was brought from each *Nasi*’s **personal** funds — not from funds that the tribe (as a whole) contributed, as clearly stated in the midrash<sup>16</sup> (and cited by Rashi in his commentary on the Torah)<sup>17</sup> that “he brought it from his own resources, and not that he collected funds from his tribe”;

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<sup>11</sup> {In the original, “*horaas shaah*”; lit., “a directive for the hour (that was divinely sanctioned).”}

<sup>12</sup> See *Responsa of Chasam Sofer*, *ibid*, regarding the first way below.

<sup>13</sup> *Horayos* 4b.

<sup>14</sup> {This refers to the twice-daily communal sacrifice.}

<sup>15</sup> See *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shegagos*,” beg. of ch. 12; *Magen Avraham*, sec. 218, sub-par. 3; *Responsa of Chasam Sofer*, *ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:13 (at the end); also, there above 13:7; *Sifri Naso* 7:12, 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Bamidbar* 7:12.

And the dispute between the first midrash and the Talmud, etc., is: According to the midrash, since the *Nasi* did **not** collect funds from his tribe for this sacrifice, it remains within the category of a personal sacrifice which does **not** override Shabbos (and consequently we must say that the fact that it could be offered was a temporary exception);

In contrast, according to the Talmud, etc., although “he brought from his own resources,” the offering was “for the tribe of Yehudah” (etc.); “the verse stated his ancestry in terms of his tribe.”<sup>18</sup> As such, it was an offering for the entire tribe. Therefore, his sacrifice was a communal sacrifice which overrides Shabbos.

[It can be added that accordingly, the precise wording of the midrash<sup>19</sup> becomes clear: {The midrash states that} from the words {of the verse}, “this is the offering of Nachshon the son of Aminadav,” we learn that “he brought **from his own resources**, and not that he collected funds from his tribe and brought it” — and it concludes, “this offering overrides Shabbos, but a personal offering does not” —

The exclusionary clause, “but **a personal offering** does not” (rather than “but other<sup>20</sup> personal offerings do not,” or the like), implies that the offering of the *Nasi* is not classified as a personal offering. On the other hand, the wording at the beginning of the exposition, “**this** offering overrides Shabbos” (and also the fact that we require scriptural grounds that it overrides Shabbos) implies that the offering of the *Nasi* has a connection to a personal offering. Therefore, distinct scriptural grounds are needed regarding this type of offering ({the inference made from the word} “this”) that it overrides Shabbos —

According to the above, this makes sense. Since the *Nasi* did not collect funds from his tribe for this offering, the offering was a personal one;

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<sup>18</sup> *Sifri* and Rashi, *ibid*; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:7.

<sup>19</sup> 13:13 (at the end).

<sup>20</sup> like the wording of the commentators on the midrash.

Nevertheless, since the person offering the sacrifice was “a *Nasi* of his tribe,” his offering had the **legal status** of a communal offering].

### 3.

WHAT IS THE REASONING?

On this basis, according to the second midrash (quoted above in Section 1), which maintains that offering the sacrifice of the *Nasi* on Shabbos was proper from the outset — and the Talmud holds the same view — the *Nasi* offered his sacrifice on Shabbos since it was a communal offering, and there was no need for a temporary exception {to allow it}.

However, it is difficult to interpret the words of the midrash in this way: {The wording of the midrash,} “They did not do this on their own accord, **for I told** Moshe, ‘one *Nasi* per day,’” implies that it was a **unique** instruction regarding this offering (a temporary exception).

[And it is self-understood that it would be an extremely forced interpretation to say that {the clause} “for I told Moshe, ‘**one *Nasi*...**” does not refer to the Torah’s statement “one *Nasi*...,” and in general, there was no specific instruction then, but that it refers to the general instruction and law for all generations — that a tribe is defined as a congregation, or that the offering of the *Nasi* has the law of a tribal offering.]

Accordingly, the question resurfaces: What is the reasoning behind the dispute between the two above midrashim?

## 4.

### OVERRIDDEN VS. PERMITTED

We can posit the following explanation:

According to both midrashim, the dedication offerings to inaugurate the Altar (offerings that “were not brought in future generations”)<sup>21</sup> were only transient and constituted a temporary exception. (These dedication offerings were just like the other aspects of the *Nesiim*’s offerings that were temporary and considered a temporary exception. And many of the sacrifices offered during the inauguration days had this status.) It was only because of this temporary exception that offering the sacrifice of the *Nasi* on Shabbos was permitted.

However, this allowance can be understood in two ways: The (prohibition of) Shabbos is “overridden”<sup>22</sup> — the prohibition to perform labor remains in its place, but {offering the sacrifices for} the dedication of the Altar **overrides** it. Or, the Shabbos prohibitions become “permitted.” At the outset, this labor is (not something prohibited, but) something permissible on Shabbos.

[This is like the dispute regarding saving a life on Shabbos<sup>23</sup> (and in the context of many other laws),<sup>24</sup> whether saving a life {only} “overrides” {these laws}, or renders them completely “permitted.”]

And this is the reasoning behind the difference between the two midrashim:

According to the first midrash that “the *Nesiim* acted improperly,” the allowance to offer the sacrifice was only because it “overrode”; the sacrifices pushed away the prohibition of Shabbos “to the side” — for even after it was overridden, the prohibition was not nullified but only superseded, since “the sacrifices of the *Nesiim* were precious before Hashem.”

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<sup>21</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Maaseh Hakorbanos*,” end of ch. 2.

<sup>22</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*dechuya*”; lit., “pushed aside.”}

<sup>23</sup> See *Mishneh Torah* “*Hilchos Shabbos*,” beg. of ch. 2, and the commentary of the *Kesef Mishneh* there; *Beis Yosef*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 328, the par. entitled, “*Haya ha’choleh*”; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 328, par. 4, 13; *Responsa of Tzemach Tzedek*, “*Orach Chaim*,” ch. 38; **et al.**

<sup>24</sup> See *Pesachim* 77a.

However, the second midrash maintains {that the prohibitions of Shabbos were completely} “permitted.” Meaning, it (offering the sacrifices for the inauguration of the Altar on Shabbos) was defined as something **permitted**. Here, the labor-related prohibitions on Shabbos never applied to begin with.

Therefore, the midrash emphasizes that — not only can we not say that “they desecrated Shabbos” (or {that they acted} “improperly”) but on the contrary — they were fulfilling a command, as it says, “they did not do this on their own accord, for I told Moshe....”

## 5.

PERSONAL OR PUBLIC?

On this basis, we might also seemingly explain why in the above midrash (quoted at the end of Section 2) on the verse, “this is the offering of Nachshon...,” the midrash says, “this offering overrides Shabbos, but a personal offering does not” (first stating the law **here**, regarding the offering of the *Nasi* — “this offering overrides,” and subsequently, the general law regarding a personal offering — “but a personal offering does not...”). This follows the **opposite** order of the midrash mentioned above (in Section 1): “A personal offering never overrides Shabbos, yet here a personal offering did” —

For we can posit that this difference in order depends on the two above approaches:

According to the first midrash, Shabbos was only “overridden” (as explained above). Therefore, the midrash prefaces that “a personal offering **never** overrides Shabbos,” which emphasizes that fundamentally and generally, this is a forbidden act (“improper”) and only “here” it is **overridden** — in this **case**.



In contrast, according to the midrash on the verse, “this is the offering of Nachshon...,” it {offering a sacrifice on Shabbos} became “permitted.” Therefore, it begins, “this offering suspends Shabbos” – the priority and emphasis is on the law and unique allowance of the *Nasi’s* offering (therefore, “this” – may be offered on Shabbos), and only then it relates that “a personal offering does not override Shabbos.”

And according to what was explained above (in Section 2), that according to the midrash on the verse, “this is the offering...,” the offering of the *Nasi* was **like** a tribal (public) offering, we can explain that this is the reason for the dispute between **these** two midrashim:

According to the first midrash, that it {offering the sacrifice} was done “improperly” ({Shabbos was only} “overridden”), the *Nasi’s* offering was considered a personal offering [as understood from the words, “a personal offering never... **yet here, a personal offering...**”]. Therefore, the temporary exception only allowed the offering to “override” Shabbos.

In contrast, according to the midrash {beginning with} “this offering overrides...,” that it was like a tribal sacrifice – it was **permitted** on Shabbos to offer this sacrifice.

However, according to this, it would turn out that also in our context, there are contrasting midrashim regarding the definition of “permitted”:

According to the midrash that “this offering suspends Shabbos...,” Shabbos prohibitions were “permitted” because the *Nasi’s* offering resembled a communal offering.

However, according to the above-mentioned midrash (quoted in Section 1) – “If you will ask “how were they permitted to desecrate... is it not so that an individual’s sacrifice does not override... for I told Moshe...” – which maintains that {the prohibition of Shabbos was} “permitted” (as explained in Section 4), it is implied that the *Nasi’s* offering had the legal status of a **personal offering**.

(And it was only because “I told {Moshe}” that — “this one brought his offering on Shabbos.”)

## 6.

### YOSEF’S REWARD

In order to understand this, we need to preface with an explanation of another (a fourth) midrash (*parshah* 14)<sup>25</sup> on our *sedrah* regarding this:

“Whoever anticipated Me, I can reward him.”<sup>26</sup> This verse refers to Yosef, who anticipated the {the mitzvah of} Shabbos and safeguarded it before it was given.... Hashem declares: Yosef! You safeguarded the Shabbos before the Torah was given. By your life, I will reward your progeny.<sup>27</sup> Although a private individual may not do so, he will offer sacrifices on Shabbos. I will take upon Myself to accept his offering with goodwill.

This is perplexing: How is it appropriate to state that the reward for **safeguarding** Shabbos is — “although a private individual may not do so, he will offer sacrifices on Shabbos”? Ordinarily, this act would be the **opposite** of safeguarding Shabbos?!

Needless to say that the above midrash is problematic if the offering of the *Nasi* only *overrode* Shabbos. [Because then, the offering on Shabbos is still considered improper, resembling a smattering of Shabbos desecration. Only because of a temporary exception, the prohibition was, in fact, pushed aside for the offering]. But even if the Shabbos {prohibition} actually became “permitted,” that only means that there was no desecration. This is not, however, an act of **safeguarding** Shabbos (that it should be a **reward** for keeping Shabbos)!

It is, therefore, clear that according to **this** midrash, the offering of the sacrifices of a *Nasi* on Shabbos brought an **addition** to Shabbos observance.

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<sup>25</sup> Par. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Iyov* 41:3.

<sup>27</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*ben bincha*”; lit., “the son of your son.”}

## SHABBOS OR THE ALTAR'S INAUGURATION?

The explanation:

The four statements of the above midrashim can be divided into two (general) categories:

The expositions that the sacrifices were offered “improperly” and that “this offering overrides Shabbos, but a personal offering does not” (both are found in *parshah* 13) discuss the **general** subject of the *Nesiim*’s offerings. **One** novelty of these offerings (among others)<sup>28</sup> was the fact that these offerings overrode Shabbos prohibitions.

However, the other two midrashim (both found in *parshah* 14) — “for I told...” and, “Whoever anticipated Me, I can reward him...” — discuss (the verse, “on the **seventh** day, the *Nasi* for the tribe of **Ephraim**,”<sup>29</sup> and are specifically addressing) the advantage of the offering that the *Nasi* of Ephraim brought on Shabbos.

On this basis, we can say that the general difference between these two categories is as follows:

The first two midrashim (discussing the sacrifices of the *Nesiim* in general) point out that the temporary overriding of Shabbos was a law related to the *Nesiim*’s sacrifices for the inauguration of the Altar, in general. Meaning, due to the general importance of the inauguration of the Altar through the sacrifices of the *Nesiim*, their offering overrode the prohibition of Shabbos.

However, in the other two midrashim, discussing the special offering of the *Nasi* of Ephraim {offered} **on Shabbos**, it is explained that this overriding {of the Shabbos laws} is (not on account of the *Nesiim*’s offerings in general — not a

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<sup>28</sup> Brought in the two above midrashim.

<sup>29</sup> The midrash begins with this verse and discusses it extensively from the beginning of *parshah* 14.

law pertaining to the Altar's inauguration, but as) a **law in (the laws of) Shabbos**. On account of Shabbos, the *Nasi* had to bring his offering then.

## 8.

PERMITTED OR A MITZVAH?

This point, that this {offering of the *Nasi's* sacrifice on Shabbos} is a law of Shabbos, can be understood in two ways:<sup>30</sup>

- a) According to (the laws of) Shabbos, this offering was **permitted**. Meaning, it was permitted not because of the importance of the *Nesiim's* offerings for the inauguration of the Altar. [In other words, the Torah says that their offerings were so important that they overrode the prohibition of performing labor on Shabbos.] Rather, it was a stipulation in (the prohibition to perform labor on) **Shabbos**. In relation to **these offerings**, the prohibition to perform labor on Shabbos never took effect.

[This is analogous to what is found in numerous sources regarding the principle that “a positive mitzvah overrides a negative”: The absence of any conflicting positive mitzvah is a precondition for observing the negative mitzvah.<sup>31</sup> Meaning, the negative mitzvah was never in effect when it clashes with a positive mitzvah.]

- b) Offering the sacrifices on Shabbos is a part of **Shabbos mitzvos**: Just as labor is forbidden due to the sanctity of Shabbos, so, too, the sanctity of Shabbos **requires** that we offer the *musaf* sacrifice. Likewise, Shabbos requires that the offering (of the *Nasi* of Ephraim) should be offered} on Shabbos — the “one *Nasi* per **day**” on Shabbos, which “I told {Moshe}.” Specifically, by doing so, Shabbos is observed properly.

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<sup>30</sup> See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 236 ff.

<sup>31</sup> See Rabbi Nissim Gaon, *Shabbos* 133a and onwards, and in many other sources; and see *Likkutei Sichos*, *ibid*.

[This **resembles** the reasoning (and opinion)<sup>32</sup> about saving lives on Shabbos. It does not just mean that saving a life overrides the prohibitions of Shabbos, or even that saving a life renders these prohibitions permitted. Rather, saving a life {on Shabbos when doing so entails performing an action that is normally forbidden} is a part of **safeguarding** Shabbos. Accordingly, we can better appreciate what it says in the laws of Shabbos. Namely, this {act of saving a life} augments the observance of Shabbos, since the scriptural source {that saving lives overrides Shabbos} is derived from the verse,<sup>33</sup> “The Jewish people should **safeguard** the Shabbos.” In the words of the *Or HaChaim*:<sup>34</sup> “Why do I say to *desecrate* Shabbos for the sick? This is not called *desecration*; oo the contrary, this is called **safeguarding Shabbos!**”]

## 9.

### AN ENHANCEMENT TO SHABBOS

In light of the above, we can explain the novelty of the last two midrashim (in *parshah* 14) over the first two (in *parshah* 13):

As mentioned earlier, according to the midrashim in *parshah* 13, the offering of sacrifices by the *Nesiim* was allowed based on the general laws that govern sacrifices. The difference between them is only whether it was through “overriding” or “permitting” (as explained in Section 5).

In contrast, the midrashim in *parshah* 14, which specifically discuss the offering of the seventh day (Shabbos), both maintain that this is a law governing **Shabbos**. Therefore, neither of the midrashim emphasize these sacrifices were unique in that they resembled public offerings, and thus, offering them would be classified as something permitted {on Shabbos} (as in the above midrash (*parshah* 13), “This offering overrides Shabbos”). On the contrary, they

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<sup>32</sup> See *Yoma* 85b; Rabbi Nasan in *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 31:13 and 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Shemos* 31:16.

<sup>34</sup> *Shemos* 31:13.

emphasize that the *Nasi*'s offering was classified as a personal offering. (“Isn’t it true that an individual’s sacrifice does not override Shabbos? Yet this one {the *Nasi* of Ephraim} offered his sacrifice on Shabbos! — Hashem says... for I told Moshe...”; “he should offer his sacrifice on Shabbos, although a personal sacrifice may not be offered...”). —

For according to these midrashim, the allowance to offer the sacrifice was not because **these** offerings possessed a unique element and force; and, therefore, they suspended Shabbos to the extent that it became “permitted.” Rather, it was because **Shabbos** “says” that “this one should offer his sacrifices on Shabbos,” even though they are personal offerings.

But these two midrashim differ in the two aforementioned approaches as to **how** this {permitting the *Nasi*'s sacrifice to be offered on Shabbos} is a Shabbos law:<sup>35</sup>

According to the midrash, “**for I told...**” it is like a stipulation of Shabbos,” that Shabbos “says” that the prohibitions of Shabbos never applied to this sacrifice. Therefore, the midrash clarifies that “if you will ask ‘how were they permitted to desecrate the Shabbos?’... Hashem says... ‘for I told Moshe....’” Meaning, this was never defined as a desecration of Shabbos, for it was according to Hashem’s instruction. [We find similar wording in the writings of the halachic authorities.<sup>36</sup> (They explain the words of the *Mechilta*<sup>37</sup> that “{the two verses} ‘those who desecrate it shall be put to death,’<sup>38</sup> and ‘on Shabbos offer two sheep’<sup>39</sup> were uttered in the same breath.”): “To inform us that at the time

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<sup>35</sup> Note that these two expositions appear in the midrash following the beginning of the exposition in *Bamidbar Rabbah*, the beginning of *parshah* 14, where many instances of temporary exemptions are discussed. One such temporary exemption: “One should not suspect Eliyahu of a misdeed... who offered a sacrifice on a *Bama* when they were prohibited... and the Torah prohibits this. Hashem declared, ‘I told him to do this,’ as it is stated, ‘By Your word I have done (*Melachim I* 18:36).” (This is the first analogous incident brought by the *Baalei HaTosafos* to *Nasi* of Ephraim offering his sacrifices on Shabbos.)

<sup>36</sup> *Responsa of Maharam Alashkar*, ch. 102 (from Rav Sherira and Rav Hai Gaon).

<sup>37</sup> *Yisro* 20:8.

<sup>38</sup> *Shemos* 31:14.

<sup>39</sup> *Bamidbar* 28:9.

that this was permitted,<sup>40</sup> this was forbidden,<sup>41</sup> teaching us that this {offering those sacrifices} was not a desecration of Shabbos”].<sup>42</sup>

And according to the midrash that says this was considered a “reward” for Yosef observing Shabbos “before it was given,” it follows that this was not just a condition of Shabbos — that the inauguration offering of the *Nasi* of Ephraim was **permitted** on Shabbos. Rather, by offering his sacrifices, the *Nasi* of Ephraim **observed** the mitzvah of Shabbos in a positive sense. The offering augmented the sanctity of Shabbos.

[This is **like** what was discussed elsewhere,<sup>43</sup> explaining the words of the above *Mechilta* on a deeper level. “They were said in the same breath” does not (just) mean that they do not contradict each other. Rather, they both express **the same content** — the sanctity of Shabbos: This is a) by offering the sheep, b) by the prohibition to perform labor].

Therefore, this was a fitting reward for Yosef’s observance of Shabbos. Since he furthered the observance of Shabbos “**before** it was given,” his Shabbos observance was **supplemented** (relative to the Shabbos observance of other Jews). Namely, specifically “your progeny” would augment the sanctity of Shabbos by offering a unique sacrifice on Shabbos.

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<sup>40</sup> {offering those sacrifices}

<sup>41</sup> {labor}

<sup>42</sup> See the sources cited in fn. 28 above.

<sup>43</sup> *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 236 ff; see there in detail.

(Additional points for further clarification)

10.

SHABBOS BEFORE IT WAS GIVEN

Further clarification is needed:

True, it was **possible** for the *Nasi* of Ephraim to offer their sacrifice on the Shabbos as a reward for Yosef's observance of Shabbos, since this sacrifice enhanced the sanctity of Shabbos, as discussed above. However, why was the reward **specifically** expressed through an act that is (of its own accord) the **opposite** of observing Shabbos?

The explanation:

Since Yosef had observed the mitzvah of Shabbos "**before** it was given," this shows that his Shabbos observance was from a **higher** plane than the plane from which "it was given."

As the phrase, "it was given," suggests, the thing given existed previously and was then given to the recipient.

It is understood that on each plane where the mitzvah of Shabbos is "given," its sanctity and observance aligns with that plane on which it is given.

This **resembles** somewhat the difference found in halachah<sup>44</sup> between Torah scholars, and workers and businessmen: "On Shabbos, workers and businessmen must occupy themselves more **with Torah** ... By contrast, Torah scholars may indulge {slightly} more **in the pleasure of eating and drinking.**"

This is also true of the general difference as to how the rest and observance of Shabbos is observed by Hashem ("For on it He rests from all of

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<sup>44</sup> Rama on "Orach Chaim," sec. 290, par. 2; Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 290, par. 5.



His work”),<sup>45</sup> a rest from speaking and saying<sup>46</sup> (“with Ten Sayings<sup>47</sup> the world was created”),<sup>48</sup> while below {in this world}, rest is (primarily<sup>49</sup>) accomplished through {cessation of} labor.<sup>50</sup>

It is therefore understood that in the “world” Above, which is **higher** than the world of speech — in the world where “mundane matters are not spoken”<sup>51</sup> (referring to the Ten Sayings<sup>52</sup>) — the sanctity of Shabbos (and its delight) is not rest from speech, but rest from the descent and *tzimtzumim*<sup>53</sup> of the world, and its harshness (similar to Gehinnom<sup>54</sup> which on Shabbos “all powers of wrath and all adversaries flee from her and are removed”),<sup>55</sup> a loftier delight is revealed then in *Gan Eden*, etc.

This is also the advantage of Yosef’s Shabbos observance “before it was given.” Shabbos shone for Yosef, as Shabbos exists in the world that is **higher** than this world where it was “given.” His resting was expressed in a loftier way than the rest from labor that derives from the “for on it, He rested,” from the world of speech (the Ten Sayings). And the delight of Shabbos on **that** level (“before it was given”) is a far loftier revelation of delight, as mentioned above.

Therefore, the reward for the resting and observance of the level of Shabbos “before it was given,” was through something antithetical to the elevation and spirituality of Shabbos as it is on the earth where it was given — similar to the fact that a **loftier** pleasure is revealed (at times) — specifically through something that is **extremely low**,

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<sup>45</sup> *Bereishis* 2:3.

<sup>46</sup> See *Tanya*, “*Kuntres Acharon*,” at the end; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shabbos Shuvah*,” 66c; et al.

<sup>47</sup> Meaning, Hashem contracted Himself, so to speak, in order to descend and be revealed through sayings, etc. (See *Tanya*, ch. 21, and numerous other sources.)

<sup>48</sup> *Avos*, beg. of ch. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Resting from weekday speech, for Hashem rested from the Ten Sayings, is only a Rabbinical law (see *Kuntres Acharon* and *Likkutei Torah*, *ibid.*; and see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 80 ff., at length).

<sup>50</sup> See *Tanya*, ch. 20; and numerous other sources.

<sup>51</sup> *Zohar* vol 3, 149b.

<sup>52</sup> *Likkutei Torah*, “*Acharei*,” 25d; and numerous other sources.

<sup>53</sup> {The contraction and withdrawal of Divine light to enable Creation.}

<sup>54</sup> {Purgatory.} *Bereishis Rabbah* 11:5; *Pesikta Rabbasi* ch. 23; *Zohar* vol. 2, 31b; Rashi, *Sanhedrin* 65b; **et al.**

<sup>55</sup> *Zohar* vol. 2, 135b.

As we see, {for example,} regarding a father and his son.<sup>56</sup> A father derives greater pleasure specifically from the silly behavior of his infant child than from an intellectual feat by his grown son.

## 11.

HASHEM HAS MADE ME FRUITFUL IN THE LAND OF MY AFFLICTION

According to the above, we can understand the connection of all of this to Yosef and Ephraim specifically:

Yosef personified the *avodah* alluded by the verse, “May Hashem add (יוסף) for me yet another son.”<sup>57</sup> Meaning, he transformed something that is an “other” {foreign or estranged} into a “son.”<sup>58</sup> This *avodah* was embodied particularly in his son Ephraim. As Yosef had explained, Ephraim was given this name to recall that “Hashem has **made me fruitful** (הפריני אלוקים) in the land of my **affliction**.”<sup>59</sup> Yosef’s *avodah* was focused on transforming “the land of my **affliction**” into a place where “Hashem has **made me fruitful** (הפריני אלוקים).” This exemplified turning darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness.<sup>60</sup> His experience in the land of affliction served as a catalyst for growth and spiritual elevation, leading to a profound transformation.

And, therefore, the offering on Shabbos was specifically associated with him. The offering of a sacrifice, which on Shabbos is seemingly analogous to an “affliction,” becomes the opposite. It “**made me fruitful**,” augmenting the (observance and) sanctity of Shabbos.

— From a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Metzora*, the 7th of Nissan, 5741 (1981)

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<sup>56</sup> See *Or Torah* of the Maggid of Mezeritch, end of *parshas Bo*.

<sup>57</sup> *Bereishis* 30:24.

<sup>58</sup> *Or HaTorah*, “*Bereishis*,” 30:24; *Bereishis* 86a-b, and numerous other sources.

<sup>59</sup> *Bereishis* 41:52.

<sup>60</sup> See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 433ff.