

# SHABBOS FOREVER

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

The Children of Israel shall keep the Shabbos, to make the Shabbos **an eternal covenant for their generations**. Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in a six day period HASHEM made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. (Shemos 31:16-17)

**An eternal covenant for their generations:** Rebbe says, "Anyone who keeps one Shabbos accordingly is considered by the verse as if he has kept every Shabbos from the day that The Holy One Blessed Be He created His world until the 'revival of the dead'..." (Mechilta)

Wow! That a one huge and hyperbolic promise for keeping a single Shabbos. How do we tap into that and how can we understand simply how it works? Let us consider two approaches.

1-Not unexpectedly, the Mona Lisa is delivered to your door one Friday afternoon. For approximately twenty-four hours you have been selected to host this priceless work of art. Imagine the tumult in the neighborhood in anticipation, the security (to protect "her") concerns, the guest lists and food issues and crowd control. It would be a really big deal to house such a rare and treasured painting even for one day's length. You would likely talk about it forever after whenever the opportunity would arrive. You would have that much more in common with others who were given the same unique opportunity to bask in the sublime beauty of her half smiling countenance. Discussions would abound about whether or not that is a grimace or a grin and what her true identity might be. It would certainly be a bigger than life conversation piece for art lovers and others to have been chosen and entrusted with the chance and for having even once lived the dream.

Sure the Mona Lisa is a priceless work of art but and she carries a high price tag but after all it is a two dimensional representation of the imagination of an individual DeVinci that lived so many hundreds of years ago. He is no longer alive and she is quiet and somewhat lifeless too. Certainly a human face of a living person- childlike or elder is millions of times more dynamic and interesting than any painting.

How much more so when we consider that Shabbos, referred to as the Queen, arrives at our home also for twenty-four plus hours and we are her designated host. Everyone is keeping the same Shabbos, though it resides in each of our unique abodes. It is the very same Shabbos that visited Avraham and Sarah's tent and the same that will we hope will be welcomed into the homes of our children and grandchildren till the end of human history. It is the same ancient, timeless, and

priceless work of art with its own peculiar requirements for keeping and protecting that has been looking for residence from the beginning of time till today.

2- The Ben Ish Chai told a parable about a young Jewish man that became enamored with the practices of a certain foreign culture and began to express strongly his desire to convert. The rabbi of the community came to visit and spoke to him for hours about the events of Mount Sinai and how we are G-d's witnesses through history. He spoke about the spiritual delights of Paradise and the horrors of Hell. Nothing seemed to penetrate his armor. His mind was made up. The rabbi left frustrated and with a heavy heart.

Soon afterwards an old friend entered, and sizing up the situation, he began to speak about the old days. They spoke of childhood memories including tasty Shabbos foods like cholent, kugel, and chicken soup. The Pavlovian juices began to flow. The young man was reliving those delicious memories with relish. A gigantic smile spread across his face. They broke out into singing mode and strung one tune with another for hours. His friend reminded him that he was readying himself, by converting out, to depart from and leave go of all those culinary and familial delights. A door opened up in his heart and eventually he changed his mind.

As absurd as it may sound, it's also very true. When one sits to enjoy a delicious Shabbos meal with family on a Friday night or a Shabbos day with luscious Challah prepared for the sake of Shabbos surrounded by the aromas and sounds of Shabbos he is not just keeping that one singular Shabbos. Rather he is anchoring himself and his family to a wondrous experience of **Shabbos forever**.  
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