

LET US NOT BREAK THOSE TOO!

by Rabbi Label Lam

The Children of Israel shall keep the Shabbos, to make the Shabbos **an eternal covenant for their generations. (Shemos 31:16)**

And the tablets **were G-d's work**, and the inscription was G-d's inscription, engraved on the tablets. (Shemos 32:16)

.... **"were G-d's work"**: This is to be interpreted according to its apparent meaning, that He personally made them. - *Rashi*

Why is it that in the middle of the narrative of the events about Moshe's reaction to the Golden Calf, we suddenly privy, almost parenthetically, to an appraisal and provenance of the Sacred Tablets? Why here and now?

Ron called me in the height of his frustration. I had a good rapport with him and he felt I would be able to understand his side also. It seemed to him like it was the worst thing that had ever happened. His wife, over time, had become Shomer Shabbos, and he was living with a virtual Rebbetzin. Short of checking his Mezuzos he was looking for a solution to his dilemma. So he called me and I heard about what had happened most recently to set him off.

It's not enough that all the light switches are covered and taped and the TV remote is disappeared, but Friday in the middle of the night, he hears a shriek. He told that he came running downstairs expecting to find a dead body. What had happened?

Their college age daughter was home with a friend and to explore deeper in the fridge they turned the bulb back on and left it that way. When Mom came down to get a drink, she was alarmed to see the light turn on and was now unable to close it lest she turn the light off. Her surprised reaction produced that shriek. "Is that normal!?" he complained. Of course I empathized and all that good stuff before trying to put his wife's reaction into some meaningful context that he too could appreciate. "Ron, how much is the Mona Lisa worth? Billions if not priceless, right!? Now imagine that this rare painting is being hosted in your house for a short period of time. How would you react if while you were sitting in your living room admiring its beauty your daughter would approach that delicate work of art and, not knowing its true value, suddenly reach to touch it with hands made greasy from fried chicken. What would your immediate reaction be? Shriek! Right!?" (He agreed!)

Now Shabbos is even more precious and priceless than the Mona Lisa. It was blessed by G-d from

the very beginning of creation. It comes to our house once a week, by invite, and we host it for slightly more than 24 hours. We are commanded to keep it and so we have successfully for many thousands of years. I explained to him, "Your wife has come to appreciate this over the years and even if you don't yet, it is important to her that you respect her value of this priceless entity."

Now the Tablets too were probably the most valuable object ever in human history. If I would draw a painting of a woman half smiling it might not be worth the paper it is scribbled on. If Van Gogh or De Vinci did the same it would be priceless. What if the greatest artist, G-d Himself, created it and signed it? The Torah authenticates here, that that's what Moshe broke in order to sober the people intoxicated with the Golden Calf. That would be worthy of a shriek. Measure the loss. We can never estimate the extent of that tragedy.

The consolation is that inscribed on those Holy Stones were words and ideals that live with us today like knowing HASHEM and keeping Shabbos holy. **Let us not break those too!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).