

PARSHAT MISHPATIM-5769
“KEDUSHA UNITES”

In this parsha (24:12), HaShem tells Moshe, “GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN AND REMAIN THERE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE **LUCHOT HA’EVEN**, (The stone Tablets)”. The Gemara Brachot (5a) comments, the phrase “**LUCHOT HA’EVEN**”, refers to the Ten Commandments.

Rav Soloveitchik noted that throughout the Torah the Ten Commandments are referred to as Luchot “**Ha’even**”, in the singular form, one stone, except for Parshat Ki Tissa (34:1) where HaShem says to Moshe: “PSAL LECHA SHNEI LUCHOT **AVANIM**”, referring to the Two Tablets as Avanim, plural stones. Why the change from singular to plural?

The Rav suggested a very bold and creative answer. The Halacha is, if a Mezuzah were to be written by a Sofer (scribe) “k’igeret” like a letter on two separate pieces of parchment, it would be deemed Halachically Psula, unacceptable. Likewise, if the Sofer were to write the Parsha of Sh’ma for Tefillin on two separate pieces of parchment, it too would be Psula. Because **two** components can never be regarded as **one** even if they are sewn together or glued together. However, a **Sefer Torah is different**. A Sefer Torah must be written on individual Yeriot (sections). It must then be sewn together with Gidim (veins) of a kosher animal, and yet, when completed, it is considered as one Sefer Torah. The Kedusha (Holiness) of a Sefer Torah causes the fusion of two elements into one. Only Kedushat Sefer Torah, which is the highest level of Kedusha, has this capability. Not so for Mezuzah and not for Tefillin.

Now, the Luchot also had the Kedusha of Torah because of the Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments. But when did the Two Tablets acquire this Kedusha? Only after the words of the Dibrot appeared on the Tablets. That is why they are referred to as Luchot **Even**, one stone. However, in Parshat Ki Tissa, when HaShem says to Moshe: “PSAL LECHA SHNEI LUCHOT AVANIM KARISHONIM”, carve out two stone tablets like the first ones (the ones that you broke), we are referring to the Tablets before anything was written on them. Hence, the plural, two Avanim.

In life too, when two individuals, each with own unique personality, body and mind, merge together in marriage, Vehayu Lebasar Echad (Bereishit 2:24) they become one unit. The fusion of Kiddushin in marriage creates a new entity. This fusion brings out the best of each component. From two stones-comes Ten Commandments, from many sections of Torah- a Sefer Torah, from two individuals- a Bayit Ne’eman.

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