

At that time Hashem said to me: Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first...and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets...and I placed the tablets in the Aron which I had made. (10:1,2,5)

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl., makes note of the fact that when the *Torah* discusses the *Luchos*, tablets, it mentions the material, *avanim*, stone, of which they were composed. This teaches us that the words of the law are engraved in stone. They are unalterable and absolute as stone. This lesson is especially significant in contemporary times when there are those who would raise their quill against the *Torah*, attempting to "modify" its laws to suit their own purposes. In the past, this practice has been the exclusive domain of the non-practicing Jew. Today, however, this malady has spread even to those who count themselves among the observant.

Hashem does not alter the law in order to accommodate the lapses in man. Two alternatives are before us: defection from the *Torah*; or complete and total return to the *Torah*. We cannot reform the *Torah* to suit our needs. Hashem wrote the same text on the new *Luchos* that He had written on the original ones. Man changes; the *Torah* does not change.

The second *Luchos* were placed in the Aron together with the *Shivrei Luchos*, the broken pieces of the original *Luchos*. This serves to reinforce a dual memory. First, our iniquitous behavior broke the original *Luchos*. Every generation must remember to atone for that transgression. Second, atonement can be comprised only of a complete return to the old *Torah*.