

“And Hashem gave me the two tablets of stone.” (9:10)

The word “luchos,” tablets, is usually written with a “vav” to designate the plural. Rashi explains that the word luchos is written here without a “vav,” in the singular. Yet, it is vocalized in the plural, by design. This indicates that while there were two luchos, they had equal significance as if they had been one. Horav David Feinstein, Shlita, adds that the word “shnei,” two, also indicates that the two luchos were really one, reflected by the apparent redundancy of the word. Obviously, the word luchos, which is the plural form, implies two luchos, since, as Chazal teach us, a plural noun written by itself, without a modifying number, means two, which is the minimum possible. Thus, the added “shnei,” also teaches us about the Luchos.

In the Yerushalmi Sheklaim, 6:1, Chazal cite an opinion that all Ten Commandments were written on each of the two luchos. Horav Feinstein suggests an important lesson to be derived from here. One cannot fulfill the first five commandments, which address man’s relationship with Hashem, unless he also fulfills the second set of five commandments, which concern human relationships. Hence, one tablet focuses upon the first five commandments and lists the others as an explanation for them, while the reverse is true on the other side. There is an unbreakable relationship between the two tablets. One must fulfill all Ten Commandments or forfeit the possibility of fulfilling any of them.