

SICHA POEM

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 33

Pinchas, Sicha 1

— By Mrs. Chanie Gourarie, Chabad Toms River

The Torah says that Moshe “took hold” of the Luchos with all his might,
Then smashed them there before their sight.
But why did Moshe have to take hold of the Luchos and make them steady,
If he was holding them already?

The Sifri says that the Luchos belonged to the community,
So how could Moshe destroy or steal public property?
You can't say that the stone had no value,
Because it was made by Hakadosh Baruch Hu!

Destroying is not allowed because it causes loss or pain,
But in this case we can claim that the Yidden had what to gain.
To a marriage contract between Hashem and the Yidden, the Luchos did compare,
By breaking the Luchos, punishment it would spare.

By breaking the Luchos, the Yidden wouldn't really lose,
Because the Luchos the Yidden couldn't use.
It wasn't like a Torah that could be read or sold,
It was kept in the Holy of Holies in an Ark made of gold.

These answers are great,
But the prohibition of stealing they don't negate.
Because stealing means taking from another's domain,
Even when the owner has something to gain.

And although from the Luchos the Yidden had no physical benefit,
That doesn't give Moshe the right to steal it.
Just like on Pesach no one can steal your Chametz and say it's mine,
Although you're not allowed to benefit from it at that time.

There is a more fundamental point to take into consideration,
"To teach them," the Luchos were given.
This constitutes the greatest possible benefit to the Yidden,
So why would Moshe break them on his way down from Heaven?

Seemingly, this can be explained based on the Passuk of Anochi.
"I am the L-rd your G-d" was spoken to each individual Jew personally.
In the ownership of the Luchos every Jew did join,
Their share was less than the value of a coin.

Stealing is only considered robbery,
When one steals something that is worth a coin of money.
But in this case, as stealing, breaking the Luchos doesn't count,
Because from each individual he'd be taking the tiniest amount.

However, even if something doesn't have legal value,
To steal is never the right thing to do.
So we are back to our original question,
How could Moshe break the Luchos of the Jewish nation.

The concept that all Jews owned the Luchos does fall,
For Rashi says such a tiny share is not "yours" at all.
Instead of proving Moshe could take them from every Jew,
Rashi points us toward an entirely different view.

The Luchos were not public property,
Hashem gave them to Moshe initially.
Moshe then chose out of his generosity,
To give them to the entire community.

Since Moshe intended to give them to the Yidden originally,
He had to take hold of the Luchos to take them back entirely,
So that, without violating the prohibition of robbery,
For the shattering of the Luchos he could take full responsibility!

Our Sages say,
That when a Tzaddik passes away,
It is as difficult for the Holy One, blessed be He,
As the shattering of the Luchos for all Jewry.

At the height of a Tzaddik's elevation,
His flock he doesn't abandon.
His passing atones for sins with intention,
And for the entire earth he brings salvation.

In the shattering of the Luchos the same theme we see,
Although to stop the sin of the golden calf, Moshe didn't have an opportunity.
Not only did he have self-sacrifice to ensure that the Yidden would be forgiven,
But to take full responsibility for shattering the Luchos, he was driven.

To Chof Av, the connection is clear,
The Rebbe's dear father is remembered for his Mesiras Nefesh every year.
From the midst of the earth, salvations he does bring,
Hastening Moshiach's coming.
