

Use these words to fill in the blanks:

* משה * grasped * him * holding *

IN THE PARSHAH:

In his talk to the Yidden before his passing, משה רבינו recalls coming down from הר סיני, and seeing that they had made a golden calf.

He says: וְאֶתְפַּשׁ בְּשֵׁנֵי הַלְּחָת – I _____ the two לוחות and broke them.

QUESTION:

When משה came down from הר סיני, he was already _____ the לוחות in his hands. Why does he say that before breaking them – “וְאֶתְפַּשׁ” – he grasped them?

ANSWER:

When Hashem gave משה the לוחות, He gave the physical לוחות as a gift to _____ himself, and משה decided that he would share this gift with all the Yidden.

Then, when he saw that the Yidden had sinned, he took upon himself to break the לוחות, to help protect the Yidden from more severe punishment¹.

But he would only have a right to break the לוחות if they belonged entirely to _____. And since he had originally intended to share the לוחות with all the Yidden, he now changed his mind and decided to take complete ownership of it himself.

So, וְאֶתְפַּשׁ doesn't mean that he *physically* took hold of the לוחות; it means that at that moment, משה had a *mindfulness* to acquire them as exclusively his, which gave him the right to break them.

Further discussion:

By making the לוחות his own, משה רבינו not only lessened the sin of the Yidden, but also absolved them from any responsibility whatsoever in the breaking of the לוחות. How does this help us understand the גמרא's comparing the passing of a צדיק to the breaking of the לוחות?
(See שיחה א אות ח)

¹ See פרשת כי תשא, פרק לד, פסוק א רש"י

