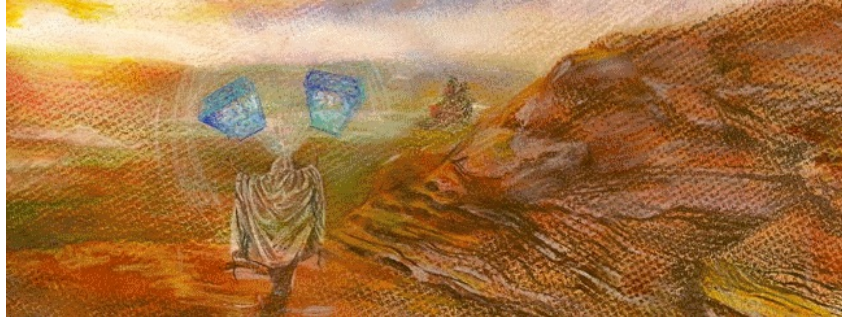


## Torah On One Foot

Rabbi Matthew Berger



### *The Broken and the Whole*

Whenever I attend a concert or performance I think to myself, “Should I keep the used ticket stubs or just recycle them?” Most of the time I just let them go, but I do have a number of special tickets that I’ve kept over the years. Whenever I come across them, I think of the memories associated with the concert. It reconnects me to my past and what these moments meant to me.

In this week’s Torah portion, *Vayakhel-P’kudei* meaning “[Moses] Assembled-Records”, we learn about what happened to the original tablets created on Mount Sinai. The Tabernacle or portable sanctuary was now complete. Moses then “took the tablets and placed it in the Ark” (Exodus 40:20). The rabbis, commenting on this verse, noted that the word for tablets, *Eidut*, was written in the plural. This is why the Talmud teaches us, “both the whole tablets and the fragments of the tablets were placed side by side in the Ark” (*B’ra-chot*).

This teaches us something very profound about our relationship to important objects, whether shattered or whole. Even though the broken tablets have no practical purpose, they represent a moment, a memory of lasting value. The sages learned from this that one should always respect an elderly scholar, even if they have forgotten their learning. Because the whole and the broken tablets were both carried in the Ark.

Some objects are simply irreplaceable. Not because of their physical value. But because of what they represent – the essential values, memories, and inspiration that kindle our heart.