



Shavuot: Covenants





Broken and Together

Bava Batra 14a

...the broken pieces of the first set of tablets were placed side by side with the full set in the Ark

שברי לוחות שמונחים בארון

Ruth 1:14

They broke into weeping again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell. But Ruth clung to her.

ותשנה קולן ותבכינה עוד ותשק ערפה לחמותה ורות דבקה בה

Leonard Cohen, Anthem

You can add up the parts / But you won't have the sum/ You can strike up the march / There is no drum /
Every heart, every heart / To love will come / But like a refugee

Questions for Discussion

- Why did we keep the broken tablets in the Holy Ark alongside the whole tablets?
 - Is each set holy individually?
 - How does each shed light on the other?
 - Is there something holy about the relationship between the broken and the whole?
- Ruth and Orpah wept—not once, but twice.
 - Beyond narrative drama, what's the significance of this emphasis?
 - Have you made a life change toward greater wholeness that demanded loss?
 - Was there a "big picture" that drove you forward?
 - How has that loss informed your journey forward?
- The longing, paradox, and truth in the Leonard Cohen Lyric captures something deeply human: the gap between *counting* and *wholeness*, between *movement* and *music*, between *belonging* and *displacement*. What does it mean that the "sum" — the whole — is more than just the parts?
 - How might this line speak to a person or family that's been through loss?
 - When has something in your life looked "complete" on paper but didn't *feel* whole inside?
 - What does it take — beyond the parts — to create wholeness after something has been broken?
- What does it feel like to be moving forward without rhythm or grounding?
 - How might this line speak to the experience of going through the motions after loss or change?
- What helps you find your own "drumbeat" again — your sense of purpose or direction?
- What do you think it means that love comes "like a refugee"?
- How might kids in foster care experience the imagery of "every heart to love will come, but like a refugee"?
- How might a community give rhythm to those who've had to keep moving without stability?
 - Why might love feel like something seeking shelter, not something already safe?
- In what ways does love itself arrive imperfectly — fragile, late, or carrying its own history?
 - What does it mean to let love in when love has also been a source of pain?



Like Moses and Esther

RUTH REDEEMED THE JEWISH PEOPLE



What else do these three heroes have in common?

Answer:
They were all adopted!

