

The Decalogue: More Than a List

Unlocking the Woven Code of the Ten Commandments

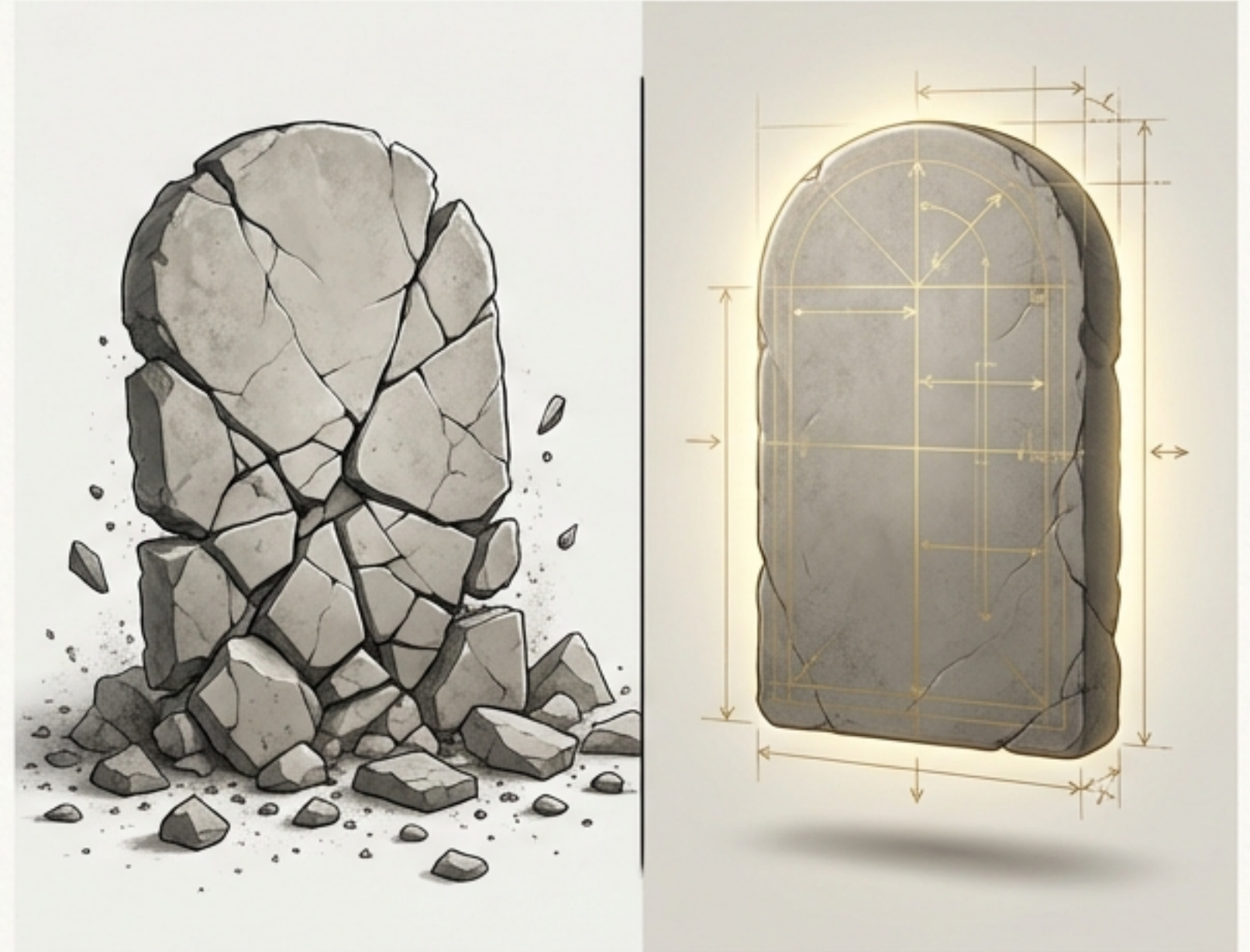


Based on the literary analysis in Moshe Kline's *Before Chapter and Verse*

A Divine Text, A Hidden Structure

The Ten Commandments are foundational to Western thought, yet the Torah itself presents a puzzle. The text states there are "Ten Words," but their division isn't explicitly numbered. The tablets were famously shattered and remade, a narrative detail that hints at two distinct ways of seeing the text:

- **Piecemeal (Shattered):** The common view of the Decalogue as a simple list of laws, sufficient for transmitting individual rules.
- **Gestalt (Whole):** An integrated, coherent whole, a 'vision' transcending the sum of its parts, which was grasped by Moses.



How do we reconstruct the 'whole' tablets to see the intended structure?

The First Key: The Division into Ten Words

To unlock the structure, we must first define its components. The Torah text creates ambiguity by stating there are ten parts without numbering them.

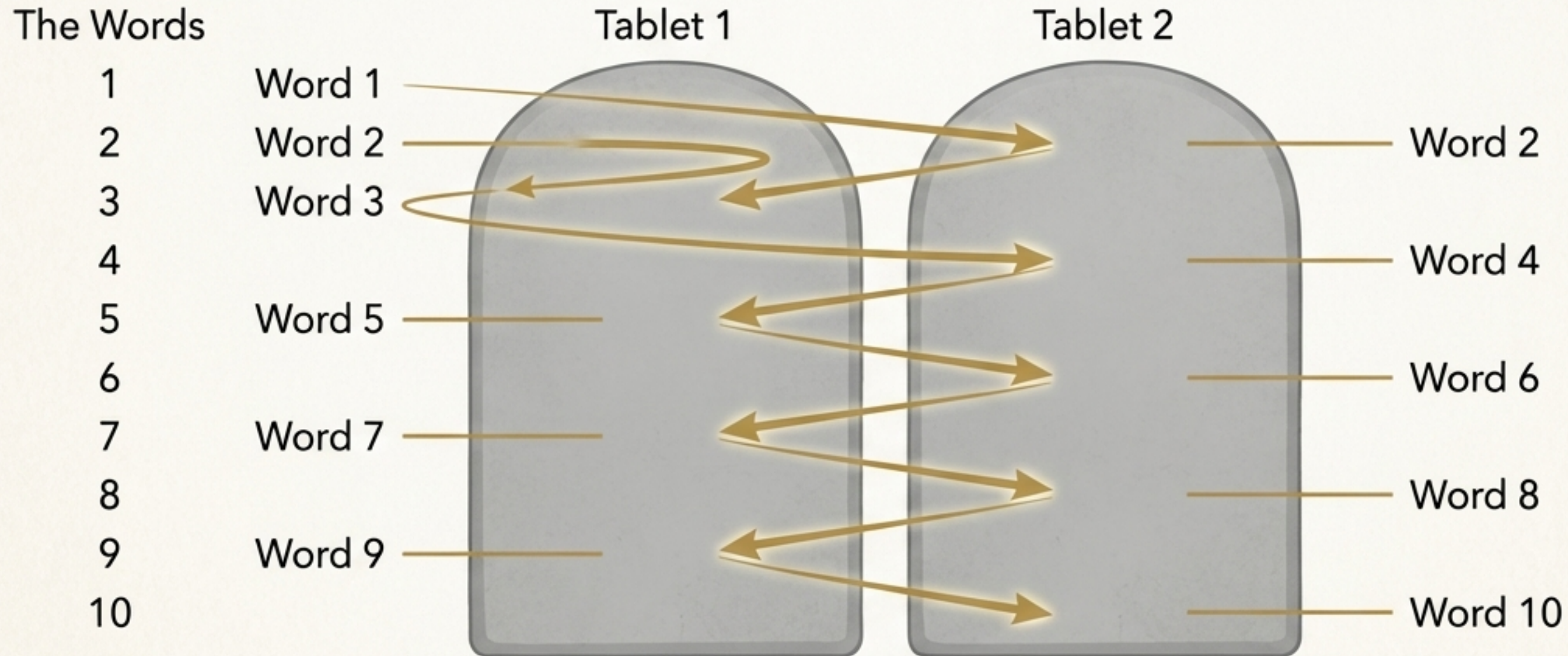
Following the divisions found in ancient Torah scrolls provides the definitive ten 'Words.'

'Words.' This specific division, where the second Word is 'You shall not take the name...' and the two prohibitions on coveting are separate, is the essential first key to the entire pattern.

1. I am YHWH thy Elohim...
2. Thou shalt not take the name...
3. Remember the sabbath day...
4. Honour thy father and thy mother...
5. Thou shalt not murder.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness...
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife...

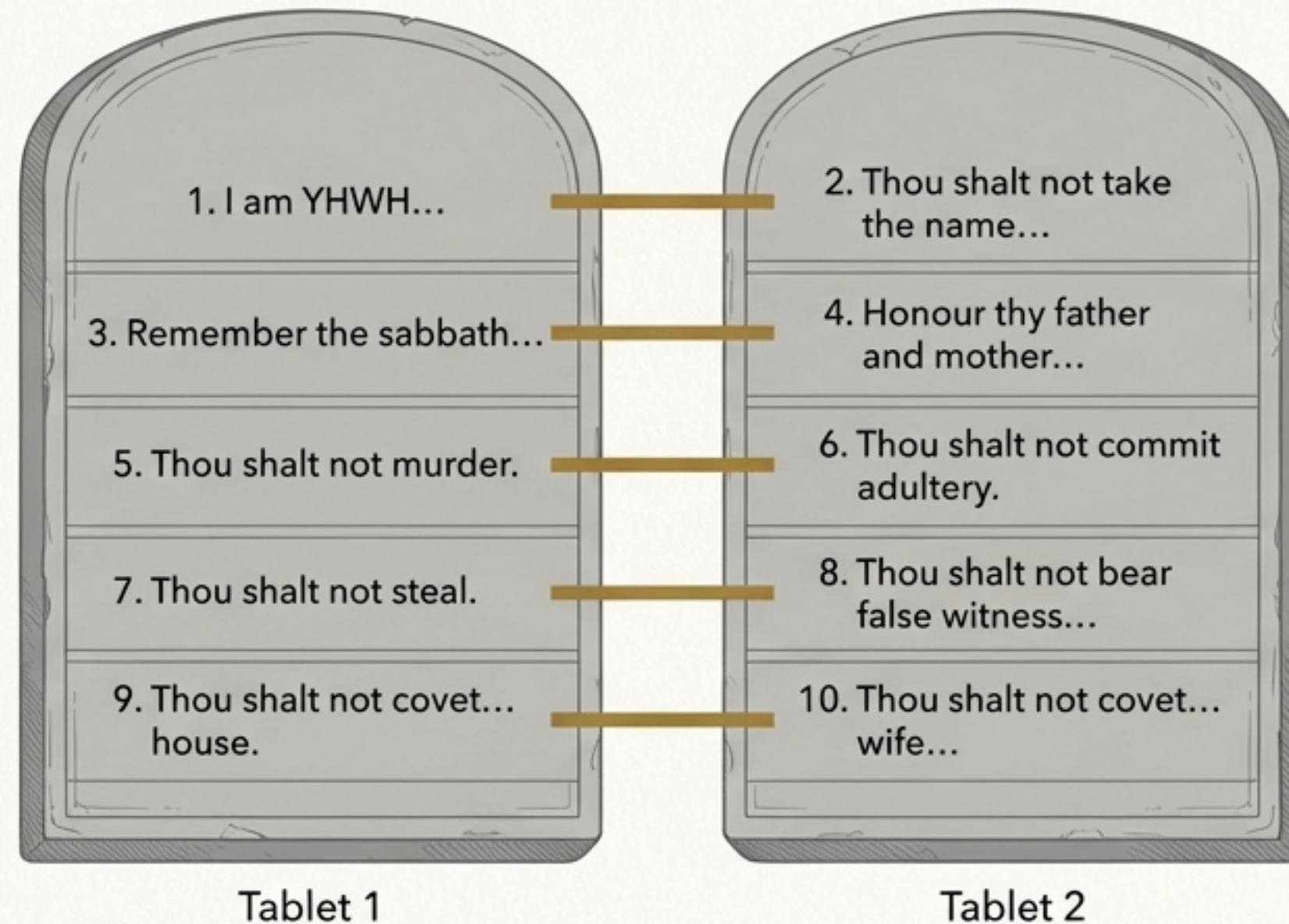
The Second Key: “Written on Both Their Sides”

Exodus 32:15 describes the tablets as written “on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.” The Hebrew (עבר) suggests “two sides of the street” on a single plane, not the front and back of a coin. This implies an *alternating* inscription. The first Word was inscribed on one tablet, the second on the other, the third back on the first, and so on.



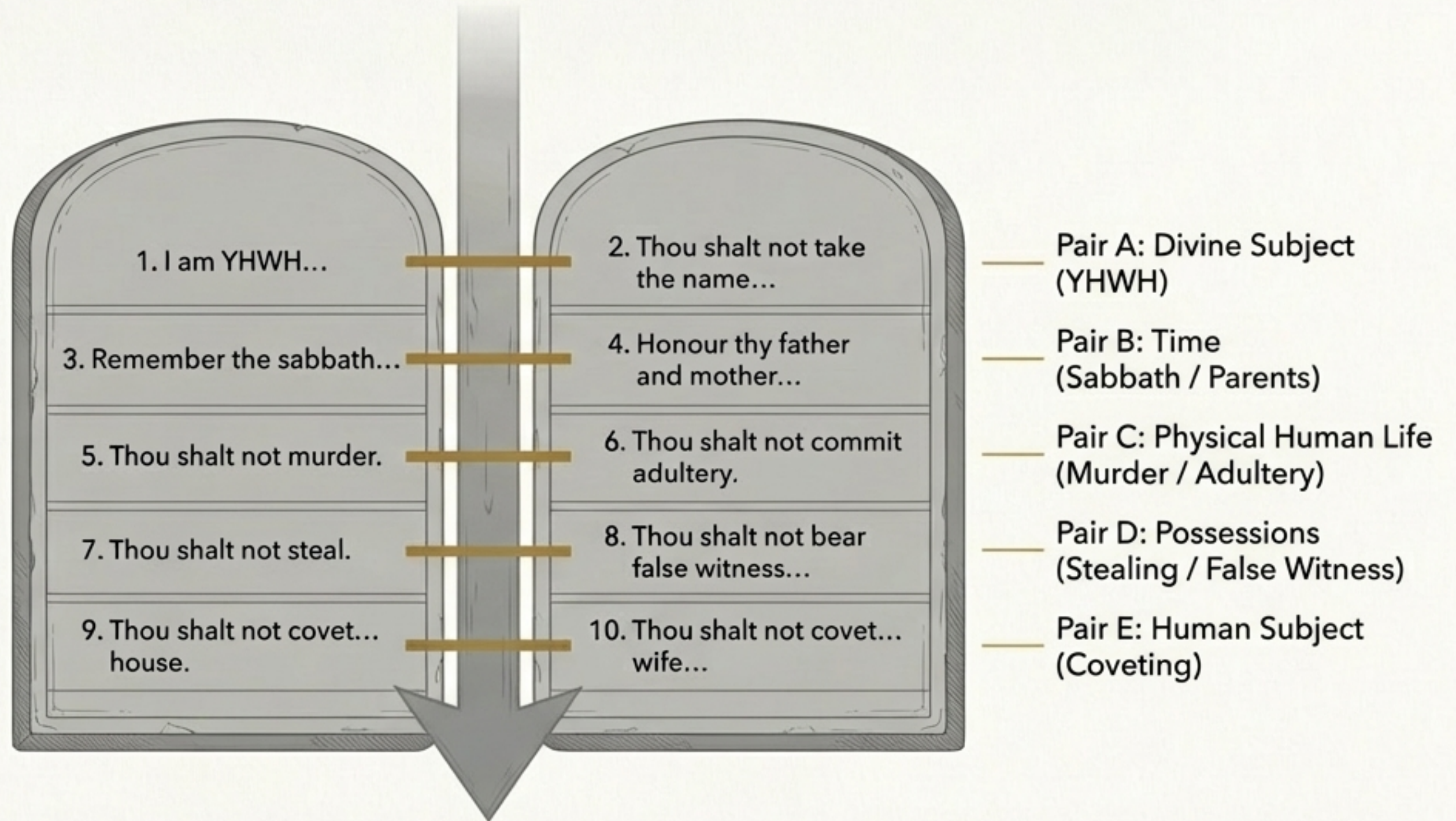
The Woven Paradigm Revealed

The alternating arrangement fundamentally changes how we read the Decalogue. It is no longer a linear list of ten, but a woven text of five consecutive pairs. This two-dimensional structure is the paradigm for understanding its deeper meanings. The odd-numbered Words appear on the first tablet, and the even-numbered on the second.



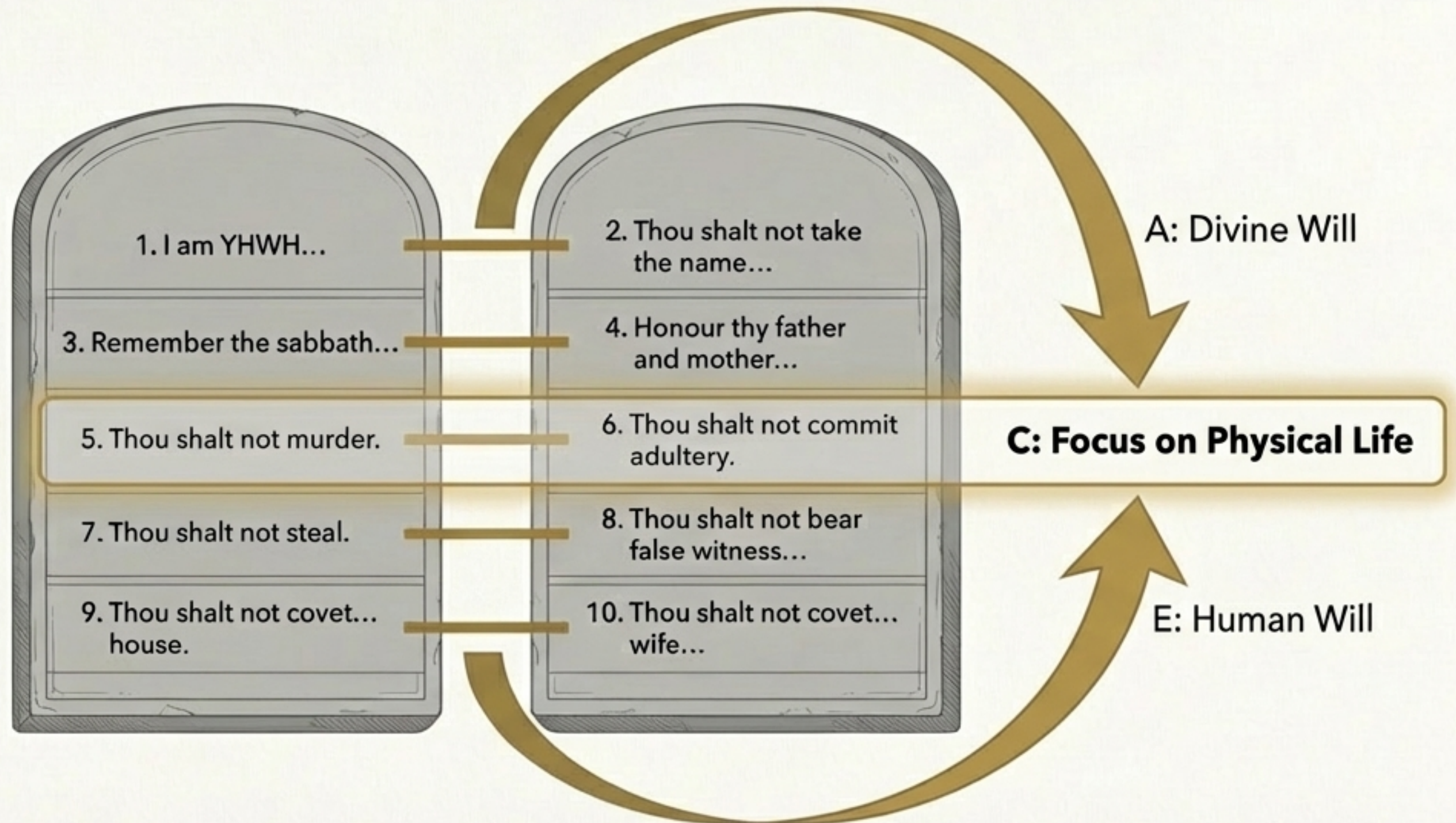
Reading the Weave: A Hierarchical Flow

Reading the five pairs sequentially from top to bottom reveals a hierarchical descent. The structure flows from the divine subject down through through mediating concepts of time, life, and property, finally arriving at the human subject.



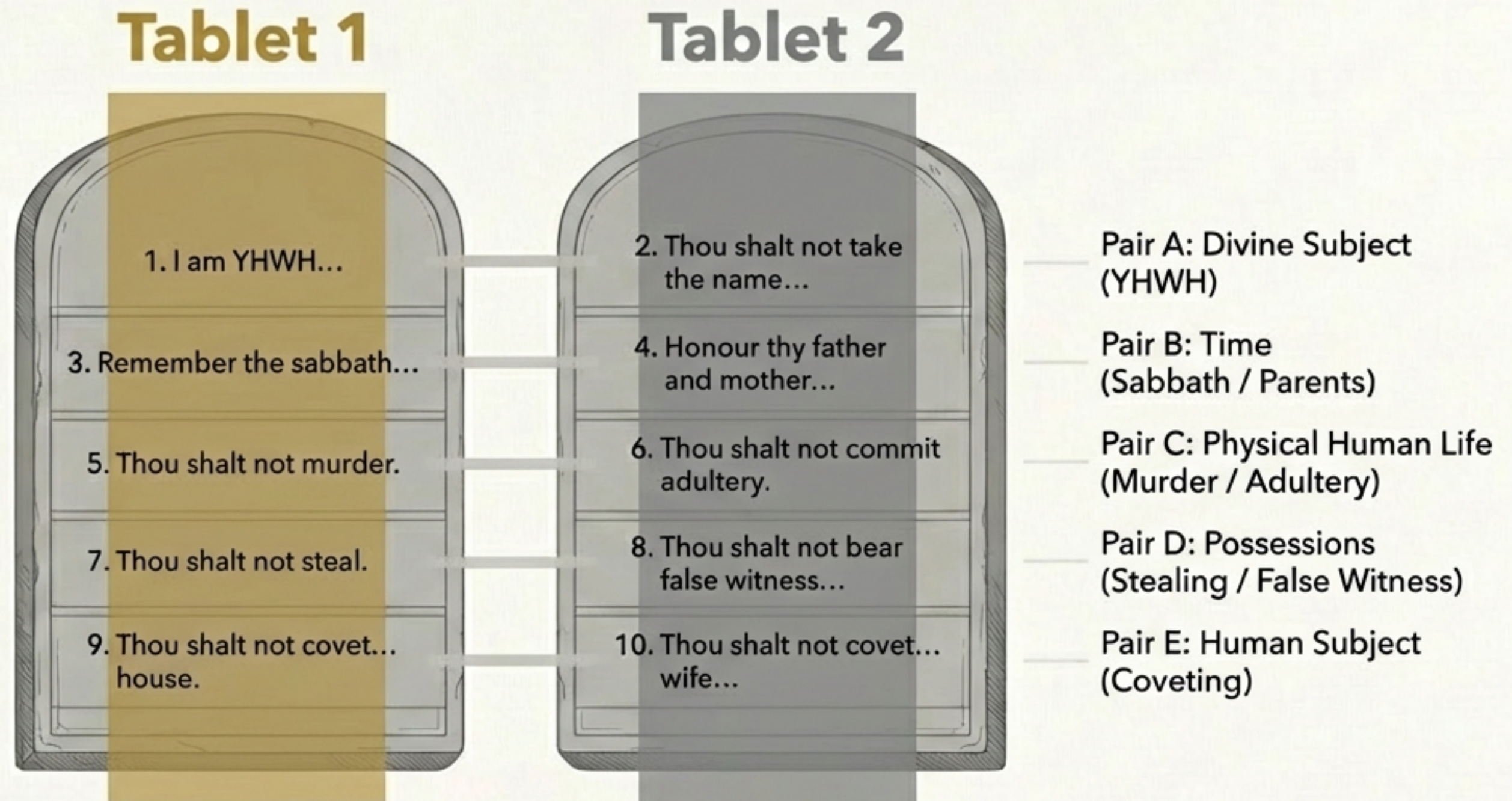
Reading the Weave: A Concentric Vision

The same structure can also be read concentrically. The poles of the divine will (Pair A, where YHWH describes himself as an impassioned 'jealous Elohim') and human will (Pair E, where people are commanded to restrain their passion to covet) find their meeting point and focus in the center: the physical existence of the person (Pair C).



A New Dimension: Thematic Coherence of Each Tablet

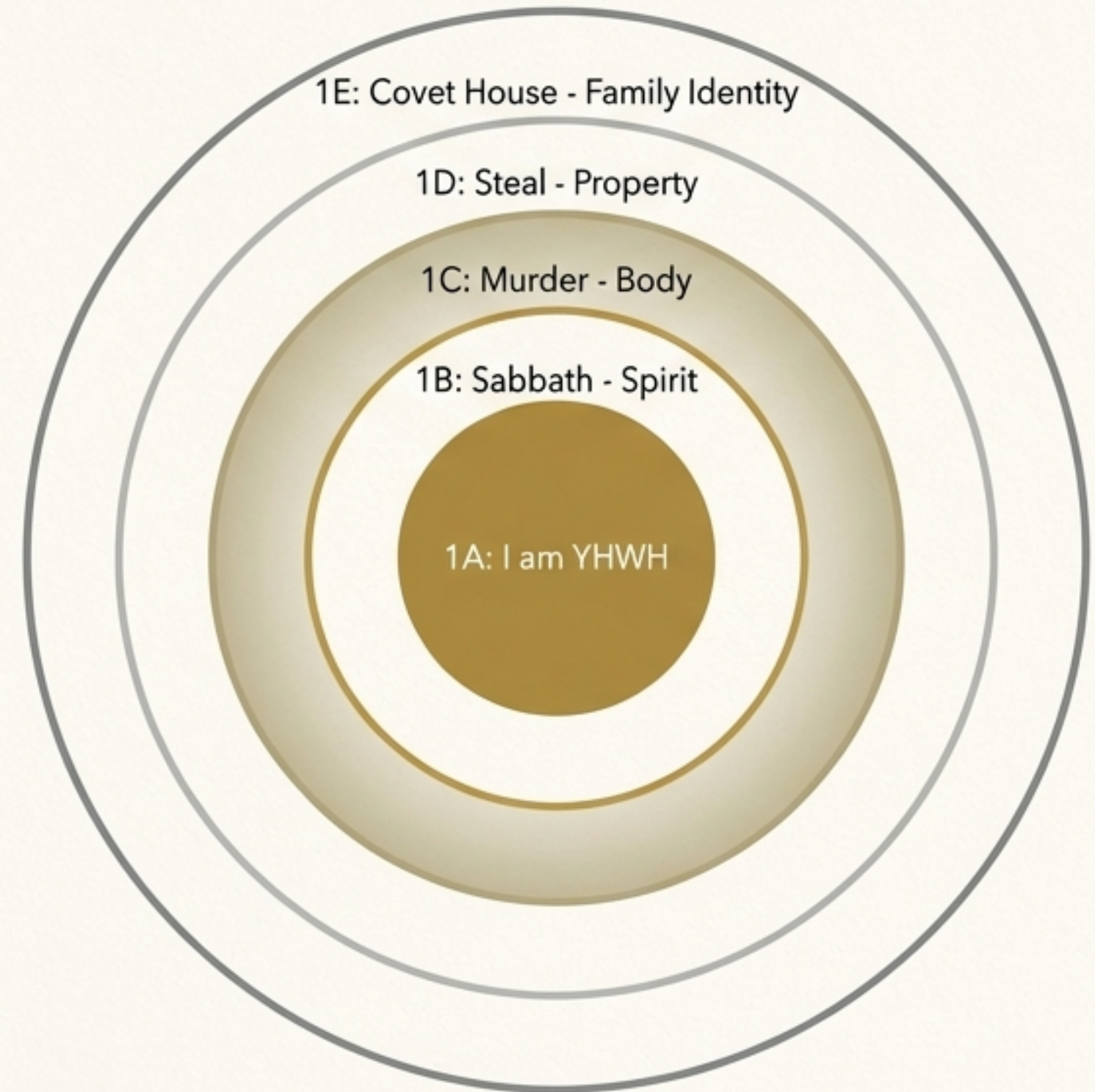
The alternating arrangement does more than create horizontal pairs. It also creates two distinct, thematically unified columns. When the five Words on each tablet are read together vertically, they reveal a profound dyad exploring the core realms of human existence: the Individual and Relationships.



Tablet 1: A Blueprint for the Self

The first tablet (odd-numbered Words) outlines the integrated aspects of an individual. It forms a nested structure, like Russian dolls, moving from the divine source to the inner spirit, the physical body, material possessions, and finally the family identity. The sequence is: the holy deity is the source (1A); the deity's holiness nests in the human spirit (1B), which nests in a body (1C), which nests in property (1D), which nests within the clan or "house" (1E).

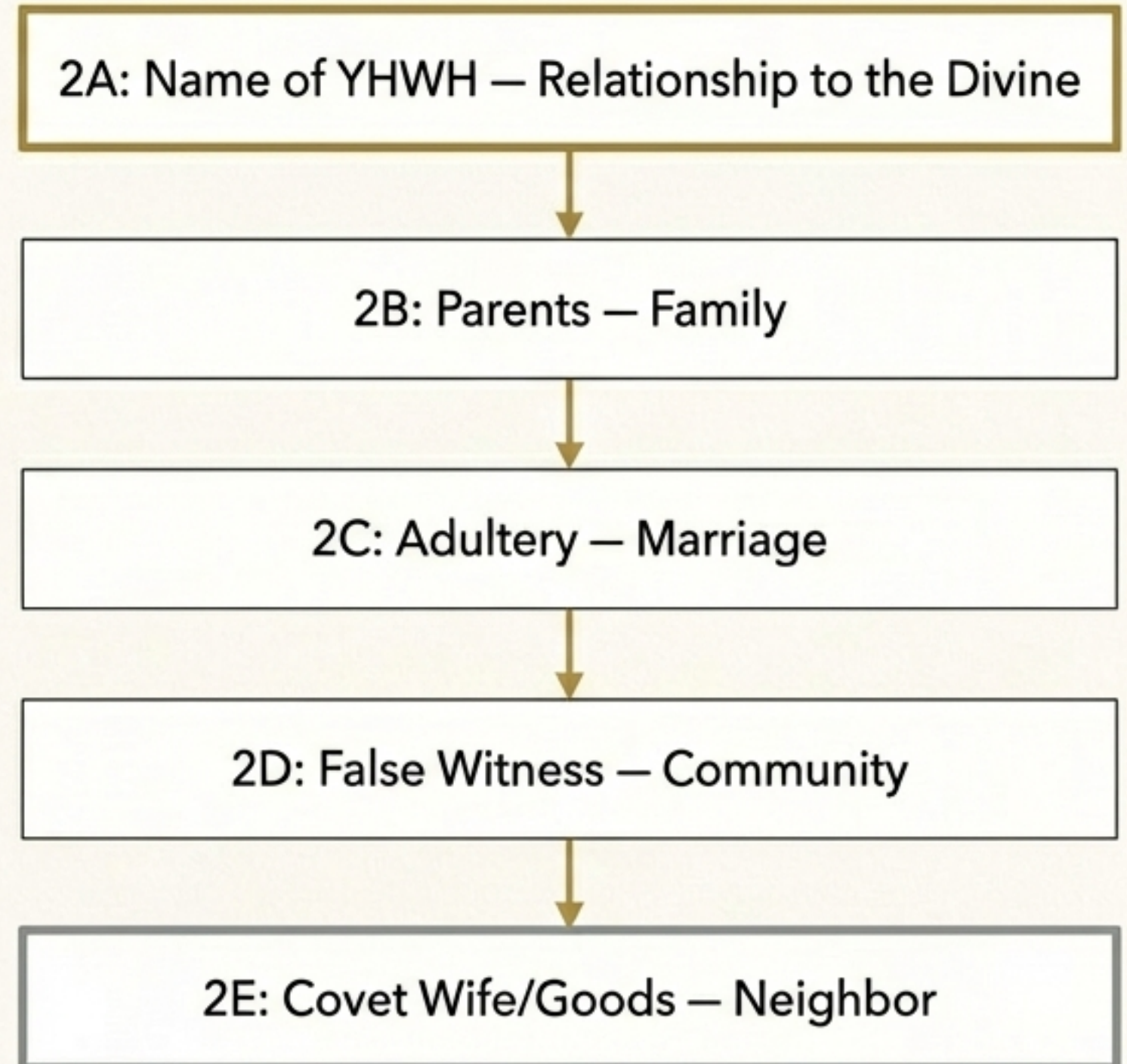
- 1A. I am YHWH...
- 1B. Remember the sabbath...
- 1C. Thou shalt not murder.
- 1D. Thou shalt not steal.
- 1E. Thou shalt not covet... house.



Tablet 2: A Foundation for Society

The second tablet (even-numbered Words) establishes the foundations of social organization. Held together by a literary glue of “relationships,” the commands create an ordered flow from our primary relationship with the divine name to foundational family ties, marriage, community trust, and interactions with our neighbor.

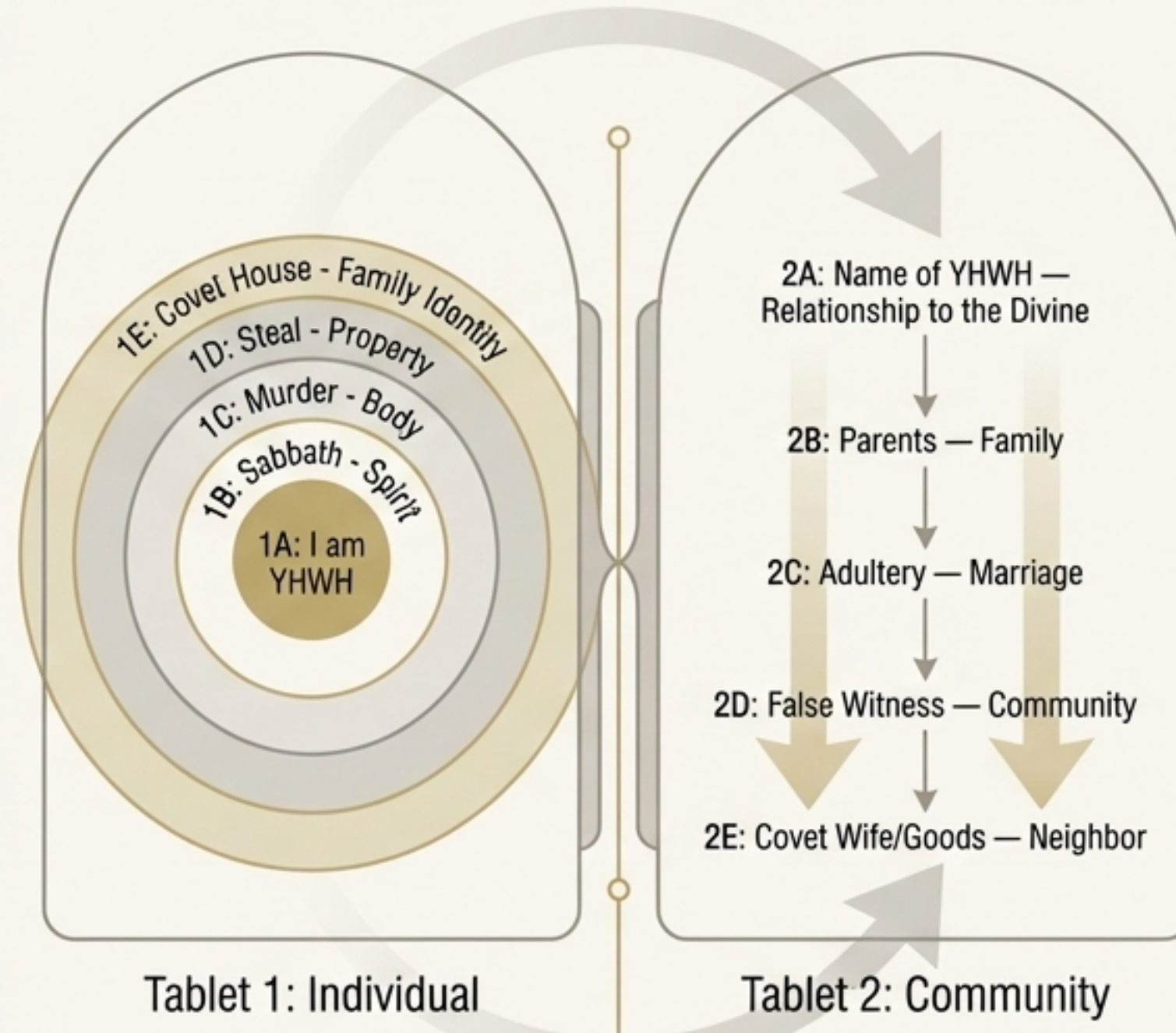
- 2A. Thou shalt not take the name...
- 2B. Honour thy father and mother...
- 2C. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 2D. Thou shalt not bear false witness...
- 2E. Thou shalt not covet... wife...



A Symphony of Meaning

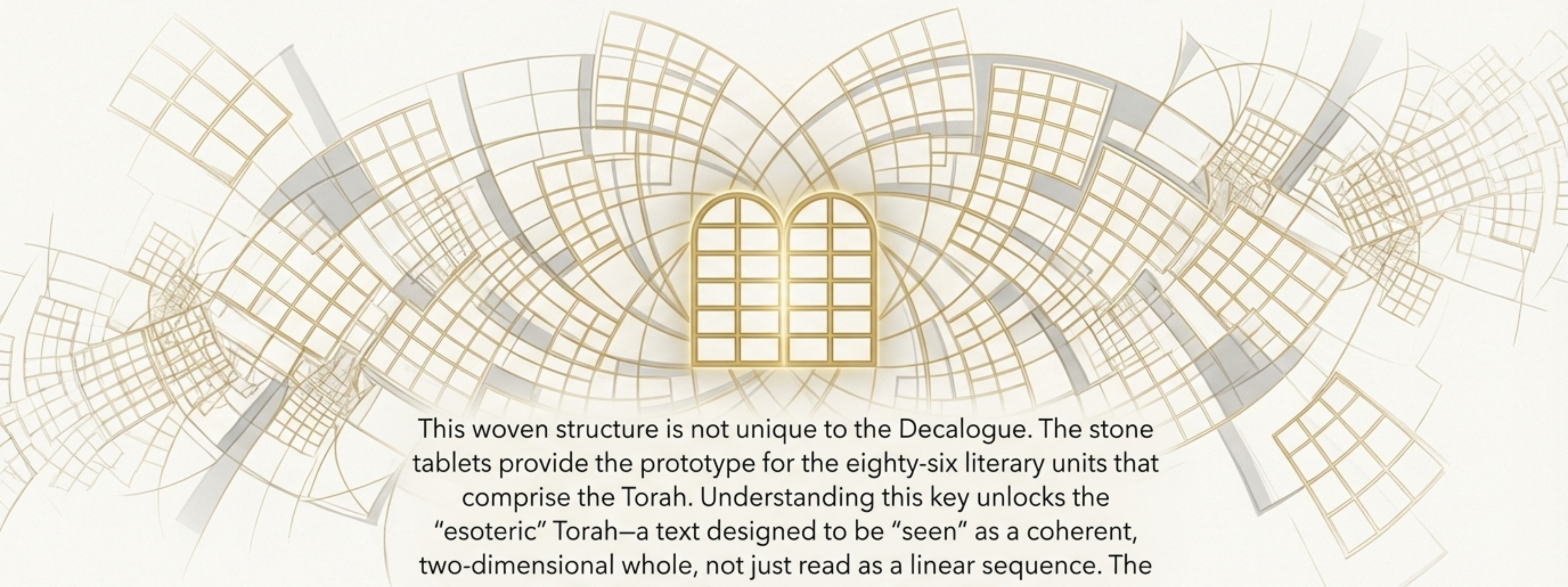
The Decalogue is a masterfully crafted literary composition. Its structure is not accidental but is designed to be read in multiple dimensions:

- As a linear list of laws.
- As a hierarchical process (from Divine to Human).



- As a concentric vision (focused on Life).
- As a foundational map of existence, balancing the Individual (Tablet 1) and the Community (Tablet 2).

The Key to the Entire Torah

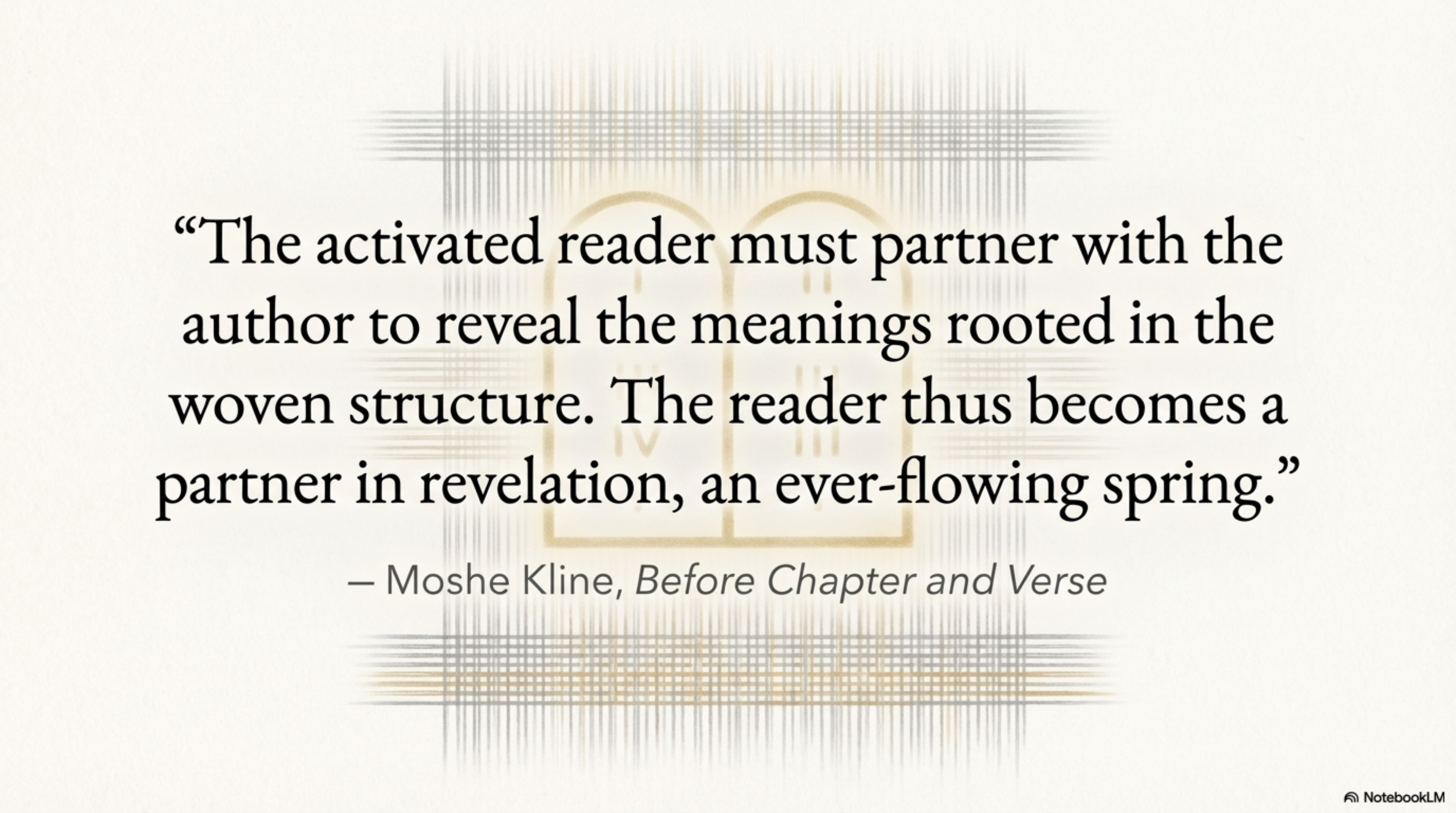


This woven structure is not unique to the Decalogue. The stone tablets provide the prototype for the eighty-six literary units that comprise the Torah. Understanding this key unlocks the “esoteric” Torah—a text designed to be “seen” as a coherent, two-dimensional whole, not just read as a linear sequence. The shattered tablets were for the many, who read it linearly; the whole tablets were for the few, who could see the pattern.

Unlocking the Decalogue

- The Decalogue's structure is revealed by its specific **10-part division** and an **alternating arrangement** across two tablets.
- This 'woven' format creates **five consecutive pairs**, revealing both a hierarchical flow and a concentric focus on human life.
- Read vertically, the two tablets form a coherent dyad exploring the core realms of the **Individual** and **Relationships**.
- This structure is the **master key** for understanding the Torah as a multi-dimensional, esoteric text designed to be seen, not just read.



The background features a faint, golden illustration of an open book with Hebrew text on its pages. The book is centered and surrounded by a grid of thin, light-colored lines that create a textured, woven effect. The overall aesthetic is clean and scholarly.

“The activated reader must partner with the author to reveal the meanings rooted in the woven structure. The reader thus becomes a partner in revelation, an ever-flowing spring.”

– Moshe Kline, *Before Chapter and Verse*

Source & Further Reading

This presentation is a distillation of the central arguments regarding the Decalogue from:

Before Chapter and Verse: Reading the Woven Torah by Moshe Kline

For the full analysis of all eighty-six literary units of the Torah, visit chaver.com.