

TEXT 2: *Talmud, Pirkei Avot 1:1*

א:א משה קבל תורה מסני ומסרה
ליהושע לזקנים וזקנים לנביאים
ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת
הגדולה.

1.1 At Sinai Moshe received the Torah, and handed it over to Joshua, who handed it over to the elders, who handed it over to the prophets, who in turn handed it over to the men of the Great Assembly.

Pirkei Avot 1:1

TEXT 3: *Talmud, Menahot 29b*

Said Rav Judah in the name of Rav: At the time that Moshe ascended to Heaven, he found the Holy and Blessed One sitting and affixing crowns to the letters. He said to him: "Master of the Universe, who is forcing your hand [in that you must add crowns to what you have written]?" God said to him, "there is a certain man who will live after many generations, by the name of Akiva ben Joseph, who will one day extract piles and piles of halakhot from each and every jot." Moshe said to God, "Master of the Universe, show him to me." God said, "Turn around." Moshe then went and sat at the back of eight rows in Akiva's academy, and he could not grasp what they were saying. Akiva was explaining the Torah of Moshe in such creative ways that it was unrecognizable to Moshe. At this, Moshe began to feel powerless. But when they reached one particular matter, the disciples said to Akiva, "Master, where do you know this from?" He said to them, "it is a halakhah given to Moshe from Sinai." At that, Moshe felt better.

So he turned around, to the Presence of the Holy and Blessed One, and said to God, "Master of the Universe, you have such a person, and yet you give the Torah through me?" God said to him, "Silence! So I have decided."

TEXT 4: *Reb Hirsch Leib Berlin, HaEmek Davar*

In the first tablets there was no gift of *chiddush* at all, but Torah was whatever Moshe heard, with its basis in the Written Torah. Moshe did not know how to make his own *chiddush*. But in the second tablets, the power of *chiddush* was granted to innovate new *halachot* in every generation. That is the meaning of the Rabbinic phrase that "everything that a veteran student of Torah will in the future innovate is already given at Sinai." (on Deuteronomy 4:14)

The Netziv goes on to say that "The reason God ordered Moshe to carve the second tablets was not because they were not worthy of a Divine act, but to teach that the ever-renewing power of *halachah* given in the second tablets involves the active participation of the labour of human beings with Divine aid, as the second tablets were carved by Moshe and the writing was by God." (on Exodus 34:1)