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RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY BLOG



One of the fundamental beliefs of Judaism is that the text of the Torah and the laws and commandments contained therein are all of Divine origin. Rashi quotes this rabbinic tradition as being the reason why this week's Torah portion attaches the seemingly unrelated commandment of the land of Israel resting during the seventh sabbatical year with the statement that this occurred at Har Sinai. Har Sinai represents the Divine origin of the Torah, its laws and commandments and though the unique and special role that the Jewish people are to play in the story of human civilization. As such, Har Sinai is not so much a place somewhere in the Sinai desert as it is a symbol of the eternal nature of Torah and of its Heavenly origin. Over the many centuries of Jewish life the dissident groups that arose within the Jewish people - and after a period of time, sometimes even centuries, tend to disappear completely from the Jewish society - have always contested this basic principle of the Divine origin of Torah. To them Har Sinai was always just the location and carried no greater weight than to identify where the Jewish people had once been on their sojourn from Egypt to the land of Israel. But as history has shown time and again this

view is a pernicious one for it only leads to the abandonment of large sections of the Jewish people from their association with Jewish society and the mission of Judaism that the Lord has entrusted us with.

In the 19th century there arose a pseudoscientific movement that titled itself as being the school of Bible Criticism. This group was determined to prove that a "committee" of many people wrote the Torah over a long period of time. It certainly denied any supernatural or Divine influence or origin as to the text of the Bible. However the scholars fell to arguing about their own different theories as to who and when these ancient scholars were alive. They could make no cogent sense of the great bulk of the ages and therefore whittled it away into scholarly nonsense and vapid theories. In our time much if not most of this school of biblical criticism has disappeared from the scholastic scene and university curriculum offerings. However, here in Israel, the school of biblical criticism still is functioning in all of the schools of higher learning. It is ironic that it is clear to most Israelis that our right to live in this country and establish our nation state here is based upon the words and ideas of the Bible. Yet at the very same time many of the scholars amongst us are doing their best to discredit the Bible and thereby digging a pit under their own home. Thus Har Sinai still looms large in Jewish society for it provides the

main if not even the only bulwark for
the defense of our right - our
God-given right - to live and prosper
in our national homeland. 🇺🇸