

Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai. (25:1)

Mah inyan Shemittah eitzel Har Sinai – “What is the connection between *Shemittah* and *Har Sinai* ?” has become the catch phrase when questioning why two disparate subjects are juxtaposed upon one another for no apparent reason. The Torah introduces the laws of *Shemittah* in detail immediately following the mention of the Revelation at *Har Sinai*. *Chazal* derive from here that not only the broad outlines, but also the details, the minutiae of Torah law and *mitzvah*, were transmitted at Sinai – as were those of *Shemittah*, whose laws are detailed extensively. All *mitzvos*, even those which were recorded years after the Giving of the Torah, are of sinaitic origin. To deny this verity, to repudiate the Divine Authorship/origin of the Torah, is to remove oneself from the ranks of Torah Judaism. While one’s Jewish status is determined biologically via his birth to a Jewish mother, his belief in *Torah M’Sinai* is what distinguishes him as a practicing Jew.

The idea that Judaism is divided into three branches undermines the core underpinnings of Torah Judaism. Without Torah, there is no Judaism. Without Torah, there is no religion, only a culture. Without religion, what are we? How do we distinguish ourselves from the rest of the world? Our love and compassion for all Jews rises above and beyond the scope of religious belief, regardless of their personal proclivities and behavioral conduct; it does not for one moment, however, mitigate the fact that there is only one true form of religious belief: that which adheres to the Torah, both written and oral. Compassion and sensitivity to the issues/challenges of the other does not justify defying Torah law and degrading those who uphold it.

Every Jew, his religious affiliation notwithstanding, is welcome within the Torah ranks. The obligation to live a Torah life grants him brotherhood among Torah Jews – despite his past behavior. When one insists on dismantling Torah law to suit his transient longing for that which is deemed unattainable – impugning the integrity of the Torah’s Divine origin or casting aspersion on the Torah’s disseminators – he has, by dint of his actions, removed himself from the Torah camp. He can no longer call himself a Torah Jew.

We live in a time in which our moral compass, our perception of right and wrong, is greatly influenced by societal bias. We feel that we must adhere to the societal definition of culture, lifestyle, fun and pleasure. The Torah was given to us at Sinai in a place and time that predated all of society. The Jewish society is defined and established by the Torah. To posit that the Torah is out of touch with the times is tantamount to heresy.

It all reverts back to affirming the Divine origin of the Torah. This is alluded to by the *mitzvah* of *Shemittah*. The **Chasam Sofer** posits that the *mitzvah* of *Shemittah* underscores and unequivocally supports the verity that Hashem is the Divine Author of the Torah. The *mitzvah* of *Shemittah* carries with it a guarantee that, during the sixth year preceding the *Shemittah*, the fields will produce a crop large enough to sustain people for three years, until the next available crop is harvested. A human being could never make such a claim. A statement such as this could only have come from the One Who is capable of supporting it – Hashem.