



## JEWISH SCRIBAL ARTS

The writing of the Torah itself is not simply a product of a machine-like obligation by a sofer, a calligrapher of the Torah. It is more than that. It is a work of love with great intention. It is a sacred scribal art.

Every letter has a particular shape that is filled in with natural ink and a quill. The sofer pays careful attention to the size of each letter and the spaces that can be found between each letter, word, line, and section. There is a Hasidic teaching that claims we learn as much from the spaces between the letters and words as we do from the letters and words themselves. Like a great pianist playing a beautiful symphony, we know that there is timing and syncopation whereby the results of the piece are heard and felt by the expression of the notes and the spaces between the notes.

The art of Hebrew calligraphy has an ancient history. We are taught that it is as old as the written Torah itself. It's been said that the sofers make every word a prayer. The Hassidim say with regard to

prayer that each letter is a complete living being. And when one does not put his whole strength into it, it is like a creature with a missing limb. If one reads a prayer and sees the lights within the letters, even if he does not understand the meaning of the words, God approves.

The scribe is the spiritual ancestor of the sage. The act of writing down, of accounting and recounting became the basis of religious knowledge.

Before beginning the writing of the Torah, and then over and again, before the writing of the name of God, the sofer goes to the mikvah for ritual purification. Only then can the purified mind of the scribal artist be directed to the page, the parchment, and to God. It is a holy task!

We hope you will join us as we write our L'Chaim Torah here at B'nai Torah Congregation. Please email us at [lchaimtorahproject@bnai-torah.org](mailto:lchaimtorahproject@bnai-torah.org) for more information.