

Write for Yourself This Song and Teach It to the Children of Israel (Deut. 31:19)

The Torah is our most precious gift from God, and the *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll) is the means by which we preserve and learn from this gift. The Torah (Deut. 31:19) states: "So now, write for yourselves this song, and teach it to the children of Israel..." Our great teacher, Maimonides says that if one cannot write one's own *Sefer Torah*, a specially designated *sofer* (scribe) can be commissioned to do this on a person's behalf.

LEARNING

Learning Torah is one of the greatest of Jewish endeavors/mitzvot. During the duration of the writing, each of us (in the community) will have numerous opportunities in classes, study sessions and community programs to learn more about what is contained in our most beloved and holy text, the Torah. All will have the chance to meet our *sofer* face-to-face and to learn from him about his sacred work as he writes our congregation's Torah scroll.

LIVING

We learn Torah in order to learn/know how to live. The Torah is called a Tree of Life, because it offers us values and guidelines by which to live. The Torah is a living document which expands and deepens as we make it a part of us, as it helps us to expand and deepen the meaning of our lives. As we write our new scroll, we will have the privilege to support and witness a Torah scroll coming to life and becoming a part of the life of our community.

LOVING

The central prayer of Judaism, *Shema Yisrael*, asks us to love the Lord with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our might. Writing a new *Sefer Torah* allows our congregation to show our love for God and God's most precious gift to the Jewish people.

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE!

The celebration of our hundredth anniversary as a *Kehillah Kedoshah* (holy community) is the perfect time for us to enter our new century with a new *Sefer Torah* that will grow with us. As a congregation, we can fulfill this "mitzvah-of-a-lifetime" by participating in the writing of a new *Sefer Torah* for our community's use. Each of us can support our congregation in the holy work of composing it.

וְעַתָּה, כְּתֹבוּ לָכֶם אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת, וְלַמָּדָה אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל.