

THE TORAH IS THE MOST  
REVERED TREASURE IN JUDAISM.

THE PROJECT TO RESTORE  
THE TORAHS IS A GREAT

TRIBUTE TO THE IDEALS  
AND DEDICATION OF  
THE CONGREGATION.

THIS IS A WONDERFUL  
OPPORTUNITY TO GROW  
AS A TEMPLE FAMILY AND  
CELEBRATE OUR HERITAGE.



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For more information on how  
you and your family can participate  
in our sacred Torah Restoration  
Project, call the Temple Office  
at (410) 654-9393 or visit our  
website, [www.harsinai-md.org](http://www.harsinai-md.org).

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Har Sinai Congregation  
2905 Walnut Avenue  
Owings Mills, MD 21117  
(410) 654-9393

[www.harsinai-md.org](http://www.harsinai-md.org)



ONE  
HISTORIC  
CONGREGATION.  
SEVEN HISTORIC  
TORAHS.

RESTORING  
*Our Torahs*  
WRITE HERE. RIGHT NOW.  
P H A S E II



# WHAT IS OUR TORAH RESTORATION PROJECT?

At Har Sinai Congregation, we are blessed with seven sacred Torahs, one dating back over 300 years and the youngest ones being 80 years old. It is very unusual for a congregation to have Torahs that all date from before the Second World War, and we are indeed blessed to have these historic scrolls. One is even believed to be Har Sinai Congregation's original Torah.

Our Torahs are regularly used on Shabbat, the High Holy Days, festivals and on other joyous occasions. It is always special to see a Torah when the ark is opened and inspiring to hear our B'nai Mitzvahs read their Torah portions. However, even with the best of care, repeated use over the years causes wear and tear on Torah scrolls. We have a sacred obligation and privilege to preserve these texts not only for today, but for the generations who follow...for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. When the leadership and clergy at Har Sinai Congregation realized that these historic Torah scrolls were in need of restoration, it was a project we all enthusiastically embraced.

The Torah is the most revered treasure in Judaism. The project to restore our Torahs is a great tribute to the ideals and dedication of our Congregation. This has been and continues to be a wonderful opportunity to grow as a synagogue family and celebrate our heritage.

## PHASE ONE

As we embarked upon this Torah Restoration Project, one of the most exciting discoveries was the fact that Har Sinai Congregation had a 100-year-old Torah that was never completed and, therefore, never dedicated. It is a mystery as to why. There were 164 letters to complete, and in Phase One of our Torah Restoration Project, Congregants, young and old, had the opportunity to complete these letters, as well as letters that needed to be restored. On June 13, 2010, a Siyyum (Dedication Ceremony) was held to celebrate the completion after 100 years of our never completed Torah.

## PHASE TWO

We are now focusing on the restoration of our 300-year-old Torah, originally scribed in the former Czechoslovakia. This treasure is on permanent loan from the Westminster Memorial Scrolls Trust in London. Written in a beautiful Arizal script in traditional Kabbalistic style, it needs a lot of work. There is a large number of creases and, in some places, actual tears. There are also many light, faded letters that need to be filled in.



While the Torah Restoration Project is designed to restore all seven of our sacred scrolls, the Czech Torah holds a particular significance. Not only does it require far more repair than the others, it survived the Holocaust. As Jewish culture and synagogues throughout Europe were being destroyed, some 1,500 Torahs were spirited away and eventually arrived in Prague. They came to symbolize the hope and sorrow of the Jewish people. We at Har Sinai Congregation were the recipients of one of these Torahs, and it is our sacred obligation to ensure that it is continuously restored to honor the many who have studied and celebrated with it over the centuries. If you missed the opportunity to fill in a letter and participate in the Siyyum in June, you can still take part in a wonderful mitzvah by helping to restore this Torah saved from World War II.

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Of the 613 mitzvot described in the Torah, writing a Torah is the 613th. Participating in the restoration or completion of a Torah is equivalent to writing one. There are a variety of dedication levels and recognition opportunities, making it possible for everyone to experience this mitzvah. You may choose to dedicate a line, verse, paragraph, parasha, book or Torah in memory or honor of a loved one or special event or just in support of our beloved Congregation. In addition to religious events and educational programs currently being planned, there will be a final celebratory dedication to be held on Sunday, December 5, 2010, coinciding with the Festival of Chanukah.

# ABOUT OUR HISTORIC TORAHS

- Har Sinai Congregation's oldest Torah is over 300 years old, comes from the area that is now the Czech Republic and is written in a very unique script. It is extremely rare and unusual to see a Torah like this today.
- Three of Har Sinai Congregation's Torahs are close to 100 years old: two come from Germany and one from Russia.
- Two of Har Sinai Congregation's Torahs are more than 80 years old and come from Lithuania and Poland.
- One of our Torahs is believed to be Har Sinai Congregation's original Torah from 1842.
- Our Torah with 164 letters to complete is being called the "old-new" Torah, because it has not been completed and dedicated, it is "new" even though it is 100 years old.



- The Torah has 304,805 letters and 245 columns with 42 lines in each column.
- The Torah is handwritten on approximately 62 pieces of parchment called "Klaf."
- Each Torah is handwritten in special deep black ink made from powdered gall nuts, copper sulfate crystals, gum arabic, and water by the very few families that know the guarded recipe.
- The Torah contains no vowels or punctuation.
- The Torah must be exact and have no errors.