



להביא לימות המשיח

Sefer Torah shel Moshiach

לזכות דוד בן שיינא וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא בת לאה,
ומשפחתם לוי, שניאור זלמן, מינא עטל, מאיר, וגבריאל נח
שיקויים בהם ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר להצלחה רבה ומופלגה במילוי שליחותם בשמפיין, איל.



LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Simchas Torah in Lubavitch is renowned for its *lebedikeit* and the amazing energy the Rabbeim poured into the Chassidim. It is also a time when the Rabbeim would often talk more openly to the Chassidim about projects or ideas that were very dear to them.

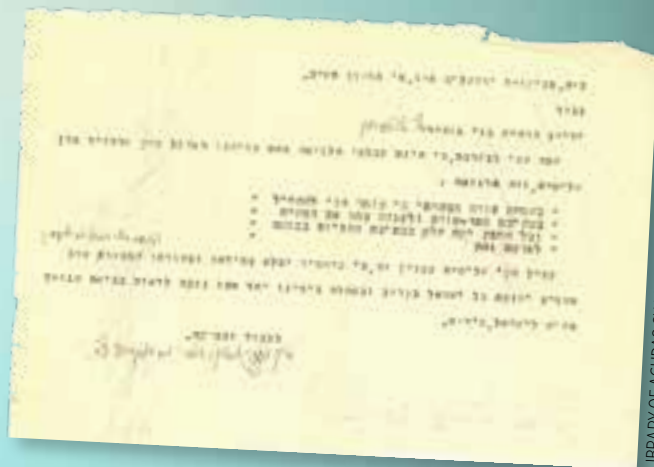
On the night of Simchas Torah 5702, during the *farbrengen* before *hakafos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke to the Chassidim of writing a special *Sefer Torah* with which to greet Moshiach.

“With the help of Hashem and in merit of my holy ancestors, I merited to have the thought to become, *bli neder*, a messenger of *klal Yisrael* to write a special Torah—‘The Welcoming of Moshiach Sefer Torah’—with which to (go out and) welcome Moshiach speedily in our days.”¹

This was at the height of the Holocaust. As was later discovered, millions of Yidden were suffering in concentration

camps across Europe, although the extent of the unbelievable destruction was not apparent yet. It was during this dark time that the Frierdiker Rebbe worked to uplift the spirits of the Yidden and to inspire them to return to Hashem with complete *teshuva*. These are the birth pangs of Moshiach, he would say, and now an opportune time to bring him and the complete *geulah*.

With those few words the project to write a ‘Welcoming of Moshiach Sefer Torah’ began. At first the Frierdiker Rebbe was going to sponsor the writing himself, as a private and personal secret, but then he reconsidered.² “During the Simchas Torah meal, while speaking about the



A LETTER FROM RABBI SHLOMO YEHUDA LEIB ELIEZROV, A CHABAD ACTIVIST IN CHEVRON, TO RABBI SHLOMO YOSEF ZEVIN, NOTIFYING HIM ABOUT MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH.

importance of *ahavas Yisrael*, I had second thoughts as to whether I was correct in my decision to hide the truth and withhold the public from participating in this great and holy opportunity. I have therefore chosen to proclaim openly that, with Hashem's help, I do plan on writing a *sefer Torah* exclusively to greet Moshiach speedily."

Years later, on Yud Shevat 5711, the Rebbe compared this to Moshe building the *Mishkan* with the donations brought by all the Yidden, even though he could have done the entire construction alone.

The original plan was to start writing the Torah in a large public event, with much fanfare, on the 20th of Cheshvan, the Rebbe Rashab's birthday. This was announced in the official Lubavitcher periodical, *Hakriah Vehakedushah*, along with an invitation to all who wished to take part in the project to send funds, and to include their names for the purchase of a letter.

The Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to procure *klaf* from Eretz Yisroel that was *shlil* (the hide of a calf still in its mother's womb) from an animal that was kosher and properly *shechted*³. The parchment was to be prepared specifically for the sake of a *sefer Torah* and be at least six *tefachim* wide. To this end, he sent a telegram to Reb Shlomo Yehudah Leib Eliazarov of Yerushalayim, making him his agent to find and deliver these *klafim*.

It soon became clear that it would be very expensive to purchase the parchments in Eretz Yisroel and send them to America, so the search for kosher, *shechted*, *klaf* moved to America.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

For this and other reasons, the commencement of the Torah did not take place on the 20th of Cheshvan as was originally planned, but was instead postponed to Beis Iyar of that year. The actual writing of the *sefer* began in a private event, without any fanfare, in the Frierdiker Rebbe's room; only the *sofer* Reb Shmaryahu Faktor, and the *mazkir* Reb Eliyahu Simpson, were present. The *sofer* drew the outline of the letters of the first word and the Frierdiker Rebbe filled them in, setting this unique endeavor in motion. The writing was in the Alter Rebbe's *ksav*.

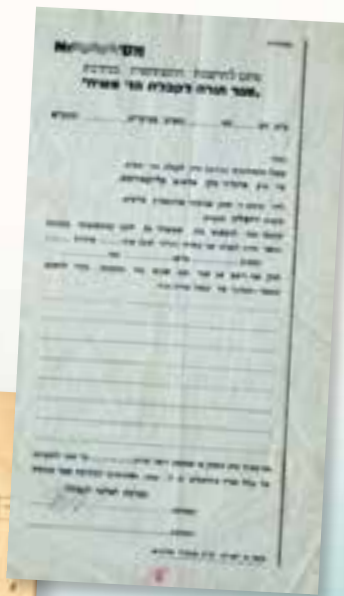
Following the completion of the first letters, Chassidim gathered for a special meal and *l'chaim* in the *zal* (at the time it was known as the 'downstairs shul,' being downstairs from the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment). *Mincha* followed in the Frierdiker Rebbe's mother's room, as this was during the year following her passing, during which he regularly davened there.

After davening, the Frierdiker Rebbe said a *sicha*. He recounted the story of the miraculous *sefer Torah* of

ONE CAN BE STANDING BEFORE A PRECIOUS TREASURE, IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AND WITH OPEN EYES, YET HE DOES NOT SEE A THING!

the Baal Shem Tov, which saved his town from a devastating plague⁴. Now too, continued the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Jewish nation is in dire need of immediate salvation; "May Hashem help that writing this *sefer Torah* will indeed bring it about!"

Later that day, the Frierdiker Rebbe selected three elder Chassidim—Reb Shmuel Levitin, Reb Eliyahu Simpson and Reb Dovid Shifrin—to form a committee to supervise the project. They were charged with obtaining the proper *klaf* and supervising the writing, and instructed to publicly campaign that everyone should purchase a letter in this historic *sefer Torah*.



▲ REGISTRATION FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOSHIACH SEFER TORAH, DATED 5702.

◀ LEDGER RECORDING THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MOSHIACH SEFER TORAH FROM ISRAEL.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

The Frierdiker Rebbe personally paid for all the actual costs of the *sefer Torah* and the *sofer's* salary. All contributions received towards the writing went to Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and Machne Israel.

As soon as this momentous project was launched, the Rebbe (as chairman of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and Machne Israel) immediately began promoting the new campaign on a very large scale, enlisting many Jews—including community leaders—to sign on as participants in the writing.

The Torah was written in 770, in Reb Shmuel Levitin's room at the end of the hallway (now used as the *yichud* room for weddings). *Bochurim* who learned in the yeshiva in those years recall that every Thursday night they helped review columns of the *sefer Torah*, checking for accuracy.

By the end of the next year, Sivan of 5703, everything until Parshas Haazinu was written. For reasons unknown to us it was not completed at that time. Five years later in 5708, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Bentzion Shemtov that the Torah would likely be completed in the near future. But again, nothing actually happened. During this period, Reb Eliyahu Simpson composed a detailed program for a *siyum sefer Torah* ceremony, scheduled for the 20th of Cheshvan 5708. According to this plan, they would bring the *sefer Torah* to the Frierdiker Rebbe's room and request permission to proceed with writing the final *pesukim*. From there they planned to continue to the Rebbe's room downstairs, where the writing would take place, and then return to the Frierdiker Rebbe to fill in the last three words—“*Leinei kol Yisrael*”—to be followed by a great and joyous celebration.

However, this plan did not materialize. The reasons remain unknown, but the Chassidim always presumed that the Frierdiker Rebbe

had simply not given any instructions regarding a *siyum*. And so the Sefer Torah remained waiting, unfinished for over twenty years.



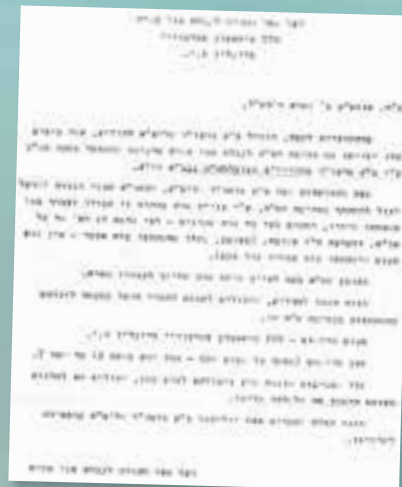
REBIRTH OF A TREASURE

In 5730, with the approaching Yud Shevat marking twenty years of the Rebbe's leadership, Chassidim from all over the world prepared themselves for the momentous day. A special committee, Vaad L'chagigos Ha'esrim (“Committee for the Twentieth [year] Commemorations”), was formed in Eretz Yisrael. This *vaad* fielded many suggestions and proposals for projects to mark this anniversary and broaden the reach of the Rebbe's activities, and achieve the ultimate goal—the arrival of Moshiach.

A Lubavitcher woman from Kfar Chabad suggested that the time had arrived to complete the Sefer Torah to Greet Moshiach, which was started more than twenty-five years earlier. This proposal was greeted with great excitement by all Chassidim—what better occasion could there be than the twenty year anniversary of the Rebbe's *nesius*?—and a letter was dispatched to the Rebbe. To everyone's dismay, the response was negative.

On Wednesday night, Erev Rosh Chodesh Shevat, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel with a surprise. The Rebbe announced that “all obstacles have been removed” and the time has come to complete the *sefer Torah*. Imagine the outbreak of joy at this extraordinary news. At last the Sefer Torah to greet Moshiach would finally be finished! That Shabbos the Rebbe announced the exciting news publicly, saying that the *siyum* for Moshiach's *sefer Torah* would soon take place. During the *sicha*, the Rebbe expressed surprise and disappointment that no one in 770 had made this suggestion.

The idea and request to complete the sefer Torah came from Eretz



A PUBLIC NOTICE DATED “MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'EIRA 5730” FROM THE VAAD OF THE SEFER TORAH, NOTIFYING ANASH OF THE LAST CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE SIYUM.

Yisrael, when it should have come from right here in New York, from 770—b'gematriya “poratzta”—where the sefer Torah is kept! It remains a mystery to me (as do many other questions I have) why this is so. One can be standing before a precious treasure, in broad daylight and with open eyes, yet he does not see a thing! What greater and more precious treasure is there—anticipated and hoped for by all previous generations—than the coming of Moshiach? Yet people turn their faces this way or that; everyone is busy with their own affairs.

Just as when the *sefer* was started, the Rebbe announced that anyone who wanted to participate in the writing of the *sefer Torah* may do so by donating one dollar. Although the participants would no longer be able to purchase specific letters in the *sefer*—for only a few lines remained unfinished—they would nevertheless be able to contribute, “and the *malachim* will divide the letters among them all!”

The Rebbe then said that the members of the committee appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to supervise the writing of the *sefer Torah* would oversee the completion of the project now. And then the Rebbe concluded,

“Let the entire Jewish nation know about this endeavor so that they may all be granted the opportunity to participate in it. And may we indeed merit to bring the *sefer Torah* to greet Moshiach!”

Immediately after Shabbos, Chassidim around the world leaped into action. As soon as the news reached Eretz Yisrael, hundreds of *bochurim* and *anash* went from one end of the country to the other, enlisting tens of thousands of their Jewish brethren in this remarkable project. Newspaper advertisements brought the information to many cities, resulting in nearly one hundred thousand participants from Eretz Yisrael alone! A Jew from Kobe, Japan, saw the ads and bought letters for his entire family. The Steipler, from Bnei Brak, also asked to be included. The whole world was being affected!

Among the Chassidim the atmosphere was electric. Every Chossid had complete confidence and absolute certainty that with the completion of the *sefer Torah*, *golus* would end instantly, and the long-awaited *geulah* would finally arrive. Everyone prepared in his own way for the much anticipated future that was now so near! As Yud Shevat approached, the excitement peaked, as hundreds of Chassidim, from all corners of the globe, began to stream to 770 to take part in this historic moment. More than a hundred Chassidim arrived from Eretz Yisroel alone, bringing with them lists of the names of participants in the writing of the *sefer Torah*. Chassidim flew in from France, England, Holland, South Africa, and many other locations.

At that time, the *sefer Torah* was held in Reb Shmuel Levitin's room. Throughout the entire week, Rabbi Zirkind, the *sofer*, was seen entering the room, often not leaving until late at night.





When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel on Thursday, the night of the 9th of Shevat, he called the members of the committee into his room. When Reb Eliyahu Simpson emerged from the meeting, he announced in the Rebbe's name that the *siyum* would take place the next day at 2:30 p.m. The Va'ad Lchagigos Ho'esrim, which had overseen the project's promotion in Eretz Yisroel, were summoned to bring their lengthy lists of participants to the Rebbe's room. They had so many bags, that they began to place them on the floor; but the Rebbe instructed that they be spread out, not piled, on the table. Before they left, the Rebbe *bentched* them to utilize their time in New York wisely, and that the new period after the 20th *yahrtzeit* should be with an entirely new light, with all the *brachos*.

All that night, a constant flow of Chassidim arrived in 770. As buses full of Chassidim and their families pulled up from all across the United States and Canada, the building became more and more crowded; upstairs and downstairs, even outside. Inside 770, the night shone like day, as Chassidim sat together in *farbrengen* all through the night, in an unprecedented atmosphere of delight and anticipation of the rare events about to transpire.

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THE SIYUM

Friday, the day of 9th of Shevat finally arrived. Downstairs 770 was packed wall to wall. In addition to the many Chassidim who had come from around the world, Jews from all across the New York City area arrived to witness this historic moment. At exactly 2:30 p.m., Reb Eliyahu Simpson made his way down the stairs and through the crowd, cradling the special *sefer Torah*. Close behind him walked the Rebbe, with a mysterious closed box in his holy hands, as the *bochurim* sang Napoleon's March.



The *sefer Torah* was set on the table near the Rebbe's farbrengen place. The Rebbe began with a short *sicha*, in which he explained that they were making the *siyum* after *chatzos* on Friday, so that it could take place as close as possible to the actual completion of the twenty years from the Friediker Rebbe's *histalkus*, on Yud Shevat. The Rebbe compared this to Shimshon, who is credited with leading the Jewish people for forty years although he was only a *shofet* for twenty years. Because his influence endured for twenty years after his passing, he was still mortally feared by the Pelishtim.

Additionally, Erev Shabbos is a most auspicious time to finish a *sefer Torah*, written on instruction of a *nossi hador*—just as the first leader of the Jewish people, Moshe Rabbeinu,

completed writing his *sefer Torah* for the Jewish people on Erev Shabbos.

In a unique turn of events, the Rebbe invited all the Jewish people worldwide—from the Diaspora, from Eretz Yisroel, and especially those in Russia, to join in the *siyum*. This invitation would be extended through the communal recitation of *kapitel Chof* of Tehillim. Normally, the Rebbe said, one does not say this *perek* after midday on Erev Shabbos; but now, he explained, we stand in unusual times, with all signs pointing towards Moshiach's imminent arrival. Unusual times warrant unusual practices.

The Rebbe then suggested that the eldest member of the *sefer Torah* committee, Reb Shmuel Levitin, say the *kapitel*. The Rebbe rose and pointed along in the *siddur* as Reb Shmuel recited verse by verse out loud, with the entire crowd repeating after

him. The Rebbe then instructed Reb Yoel Kahan to begin the Alter Rebbe's *nigun*, followed by the *nigunim* of each of the rabbeim and *Hoshiya Es Amecha*.

Finally, the most anticipated moment had arrived and the last few letters of the *sefer Torah* were finished by the elderly *sofer*, Reb Shmaryahu Faktor. The Rebbe stood up again; fixing a powerful gaze on the *sefer Torah*, he did not remove his eyes from its letters until the *sefer* was completed. Then the Rebbe asked Reb Eliyahu Simpson to distribute the honors of reciting the *pesukim* of *Atoh Horeisa*. Overwhelmed by the moment, Reb Eliyahu stuttered and seemed confused in distributing the verses, and the Rebbe repeatedly corrected him. The first and last *pesukim* were given to the Rebbe to recite; distinguished Chassidim representing communities around the world recited the others.

Rabbi Hodakov and the members of the *sefer Torah* committee were also honored with *pesukim*. They then sang *Prazos Teishev Yerushalayim*. After *hagbah* and *gelilah*, the Rebbe opened the box he had carried with him into

WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN LACKING. NOW IT IS ONLY UP TO EACH OF US TO FINISH THE LAST FEW THINGS THAT NEED TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO BREAK THROUGH THE GOLUS AND BRING MOSHIACH.



shul. The entire crowd looked on in awe as the Rebbe removed a majestic crown from the box and placed it atop the *sefer Torah*. As the Rebbe set the crown in its place, Chassidim sang, *Ani Maamin*. Accompanied by burning candles, the Rebbe carried the *sefer Torah* to the *aron kodesh* under a *chupah*.

Returning to his place, the Rebbe recited a *Shehechiyanu* on a new fruit, and included the new Torah. Chassidim sang the *Nigun Hachanah* and listened intently as the Rebbe delivered a *maamar*, *Lehavin Inyan K'sivas Sefer Torah*.

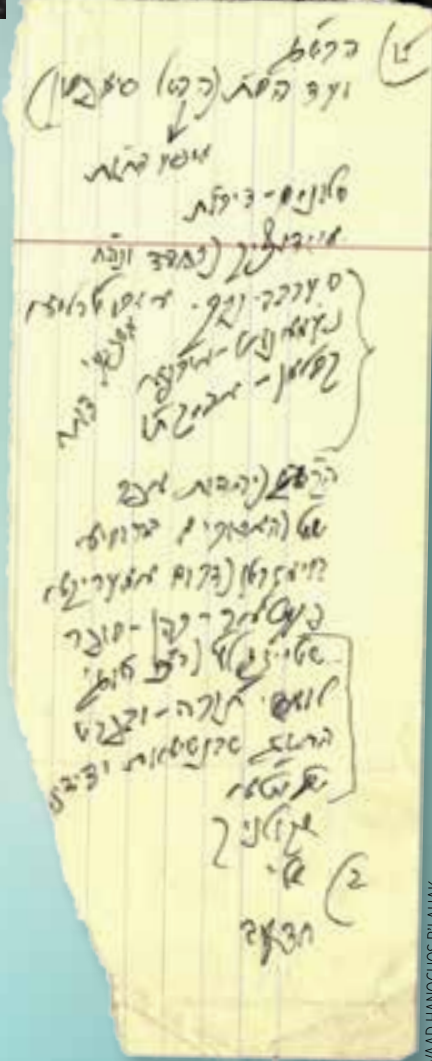
The Rebbe concluded the gathering with a short *sicha*:

We have just completed something that had been lacking. Now it is only up to each of us to finish the last few things that need to be done in order to break through the golus and bring Moshiach. It is Erev Shabbos, the day before the [Friediker] Rebbe's yom hillula. Let it be clear that we do not intend to make a dinner or banquet, or anything of that sort. A yom hillula is a day for Torah and yiras Shamayim; for inspirational words that will have positive effect on all those that hear them."

Then the Rebbe sang *Tzama L'cha Nafshi*—substituting *טובך וחוסדך* in the second stanza. Finally, after reciting a *bracha acharonah*, the Rebbe left the shul as everyone sang *Ufaratzta!*

Even after the Torah was finished, it stayed in the closet in Reb Shmuel Levitin's room. Only on rare occasions would it be transferred to the regular *aron kodesh* to be used. A short time before a special Shabbos or Yom Tov, the *sofer* Reb Yesahya Matlin would ask the Rebbe if they were going to use the *sefer Torah* of Moshiach. If given the go ahead, he would roll the Torah to the appropriate spot, and check that section to ensure that it had no mistakes. After being used, the Torah would be returned to its safe accommodations in Reb Shmuel's room. ❶

1. Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat Kislev-Shev'at page 260
2. Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz, vol. 6 p. 278
3. A *klaf* can be made from an animal that was kosher but died naturally, or that was *treif* internally. It is a *hiddur* to use a shechted b. non-treif animals.
4. Ibid p. 280, translated in Derher Issues 79-80.



A NOTE WRITTEN IN THE REBBE'S HOLY HANDWRITING LISTING THE NAMES OF PEOPLE SAYING A POSSUK OF ATA HOREISA DURING THE SIYUM.

Sefer Torah Agreement

Presented here are two never-before seen documents, bringing to light some remarkable new details on the story of Moshiach's sefer Torah, highlighting the unpublicized role the Rebbe played in the arrangements for the sefer Torah.

The following are two written agreements, one with the original sofer who was hired for the job, Rabbi Yisroel Chaim Samet, and the second with Mr. Pinchas Stern, the manufacturer of the klaf for the sefer Torah. (It should be noted that ultimately, the sefer Torah was actually written by a different sofer, Rabbi Shmaryahu Faktor). They are signed by the Rebbe and the mazkir Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson—who took a leading role in organizing the sefer Torah—as well as by the above mentioned parties. (The agreement with Mr. Stern was also signed by Rabbi Hodakov.)

These documents were made available to A Chassidisher Derher Magazine by **Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine**, chief librarian of the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. On behalf of our readership, we extend our thanks to him.



Basic details of the contract between us and the *sofer* R' Yisroel Chaim Samet, regarding the *sefer Torah* for *kabbolas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, which he has undertaken to write with all the *hiddurim* known to him that were passed down from the Arizal, and according to our request.

1. As soon as the first *klaf*—meaning the first ream of parchment—is complete, he must begin the holy work of writing.
2. For the duration of the writing of the *sefer Torah*, which was agreed to extend no later than the coming 18 Elul, he will not involve himself in any other work besides writing the abovementioned *sefer Torah*, unless he receives permission from us.
3. The writing must take place in a specific room in our neighborhood.
4. The price for the *sefer Torah* is \$1100.
5. The schedule of payment will be as follows: a down payment of \$100, and then \$200 after the completion of each *sefer*.
6. Rent for the abovementioned room, as well as room and board, are his expense and not our concern.
7. All necessary preparations for the *sefer Torah*, such as sewing the reams together, are included in the above agreement.
8. He undertakes to be present while the hides are tanned and scraped, and he will have in mind that it is all *lishmah* as the *halachah* requires. And in general he will endeavor to ensure that the tanning of the *klaf* is done correctly.

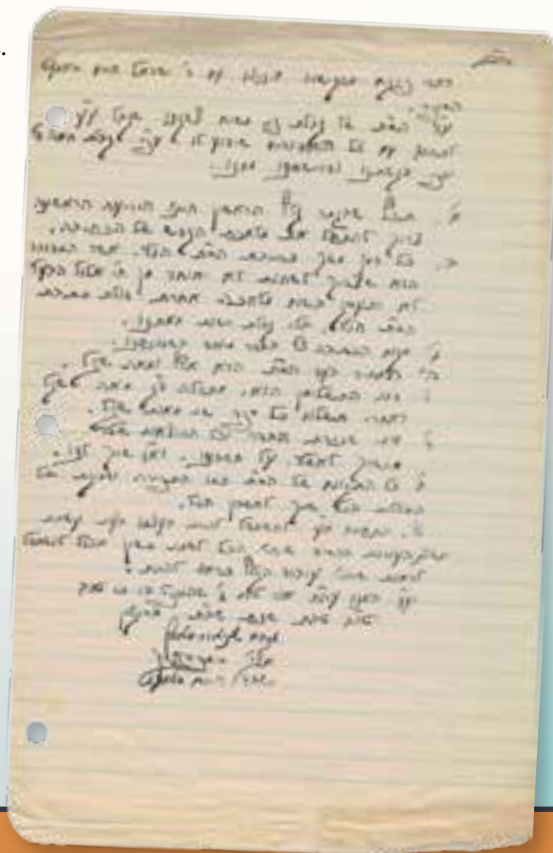
We hereby affix our signatures to this, on the night before the 3rd day [Tuesday] on which “*ki tov*” was doubled, 17 Teves 5702, Brooklyn.

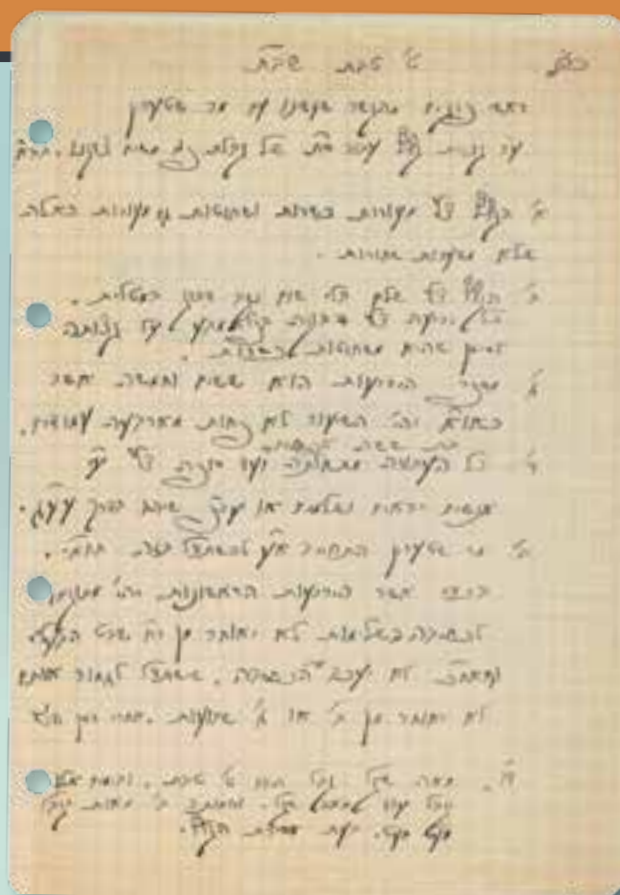
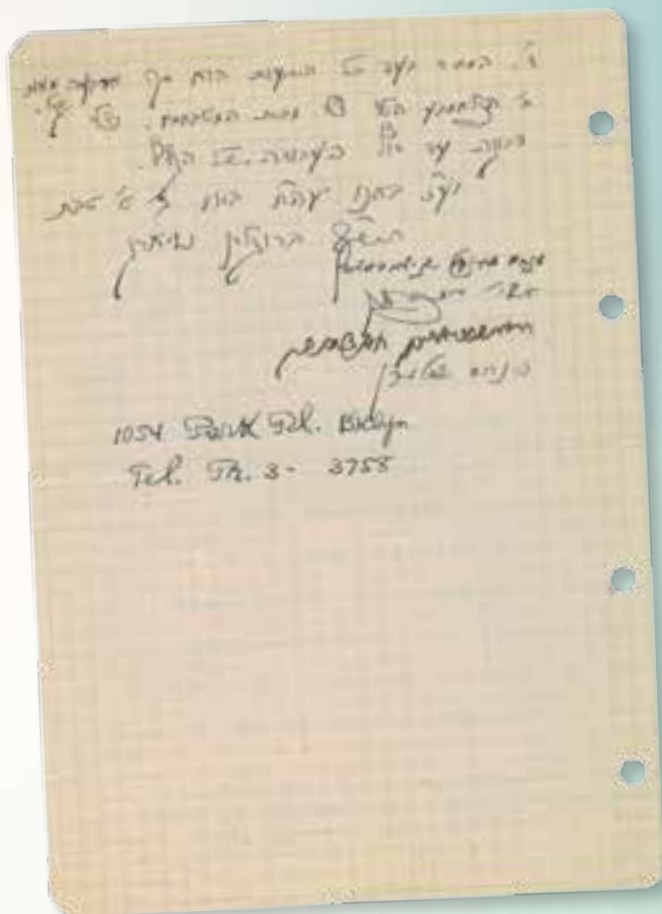
[Signed]

Menachem Schneerson

Eliyahu Simpson

Yisroel Chaim Samet





B"H 9 Teves 5702

Basic details of the agreement we have made with Mr. Stern regarding the purchase of *klaf* for the *sefer Torah* of *kabbolas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.

1. The *klaf* must be made from the hides of kosher, *shechted* animals, and from non black-haired animals.
2. The *klaf* must be whole, without any holes patched up. Each ream must have a seal attached to its side as a sign that it is from a kosher, *shechted* animal.
3. The amount of reams is 65, each of which must be wide enough to contain at least four columns that measure six *tefachim* high.
4. The work, from beginning to end, must all be done by G-d fearing individuals, or at least in a manner that [a G-d fearing individual] stands by to supervise.
5. Mr. Stern undertakes to begin work immediately, so that the first reams will be ready for writing no later than the upcoming Rosh Chodesh Shevat. After this time, as well, he will not delay the writing; and he will

endeavor to complete the rest of them not later than two or three weeks after the abovementioned date.

6. He has been paid \$100 today, 9 Teves, and will receive an additional \$100 in the coming days. The remaining balance of \$200 will be paid to him in small installments, upon receipt of the *klaf*.
7. The total price for all of the reams is \$400.
8. The abovementioned seal must be affixed at the slaughterhouse and should remain attached until the completion of the *klaf's* preparation.

We hereby affix our signatures on this Monday, 9 Teves 5702 Brooklyn, New York.

[Signed]

Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Eliyahu Simpson

Chaim Mordechai Aizik Chodakov

Pinchas Stern

1054 Park Pl. Brooklyn.

Telephone: Pr 3- 3758