

# Community Sefer Torah Awareness

To our esteemed Rabbis and fellow community members,

Due to the current situation with the Sifre Torah in our community, it has become of utmost importance to alert and inform our community of the shocking results that are being revealed by our Soferim and Rabbanim. Unfortunately, the percentage of Torahs that are found to have been non-kosher or Bediavad is over 75 percent. Some are Brand-new while others found Pasul only after reading from them for many years. Many of these Sifre Torah even after they are repaired will remain only kosher Bediavad<sup>1</sup>. Below are pictures of a few of our Sifre Torah that were found to be unkosher.

The reason this is happening is because many people are unaware what is needed to ensure they are getting a Kosher Torah. There many steps done by different people which make up a Kosher Sefer Torah. The Sofer does the writing, the Metayeg adds the Tagim (crowns) and the Magiah does the checking. These people must have a valid-non expired certificate of semicha (Teudah) licensing them to do their specific job. Additionally, the Klaf and Giddim need a reliable Hechsher.

Even when Gedolim and trustworthy people recommend a Sofer, he is not to be relied upon without first ensuring that the conditions outlined in the attached Guide are met. Many times, attention is only paid to the price, one's relationship with the Seller, handwriting and artistic beauty - which are not as important. Additionally, many people assume if it was computer checked it is Kosher, however experience has shown otherwise<sup>2</sup>.

Last but not least, countless times even otherwise Kosher Sifre torah are invalidated during the hachnassa itself. This is because the Rabbi\Sofer\People finishing off the letters make mistakes and it is not properly checked afterwards. It is of utmost importance to at the very least take a picture of the last page and send it to a Sofer, or to take the Sefer Torah itself to a Sofer to be checked by computer.

**We have created a Guide with a Form for the benefit of our community which includes all the necessary steps needed to ensure a Kosher Sefer Torah. After these steps are completed, the Torah will then be certified Kosher. It is available at the Bet Hastam in Brooklyn (917-597-0630), Laniado Safrut Center in Deal (347-383-9216) or Rabbi Sion Sankary in Lakewood (917-733-6242) and online at [www.LaniadoSafrutCenter.com/TorahGuide](http://www.LaniadoSafrutCenter.com/TorahGuide).**

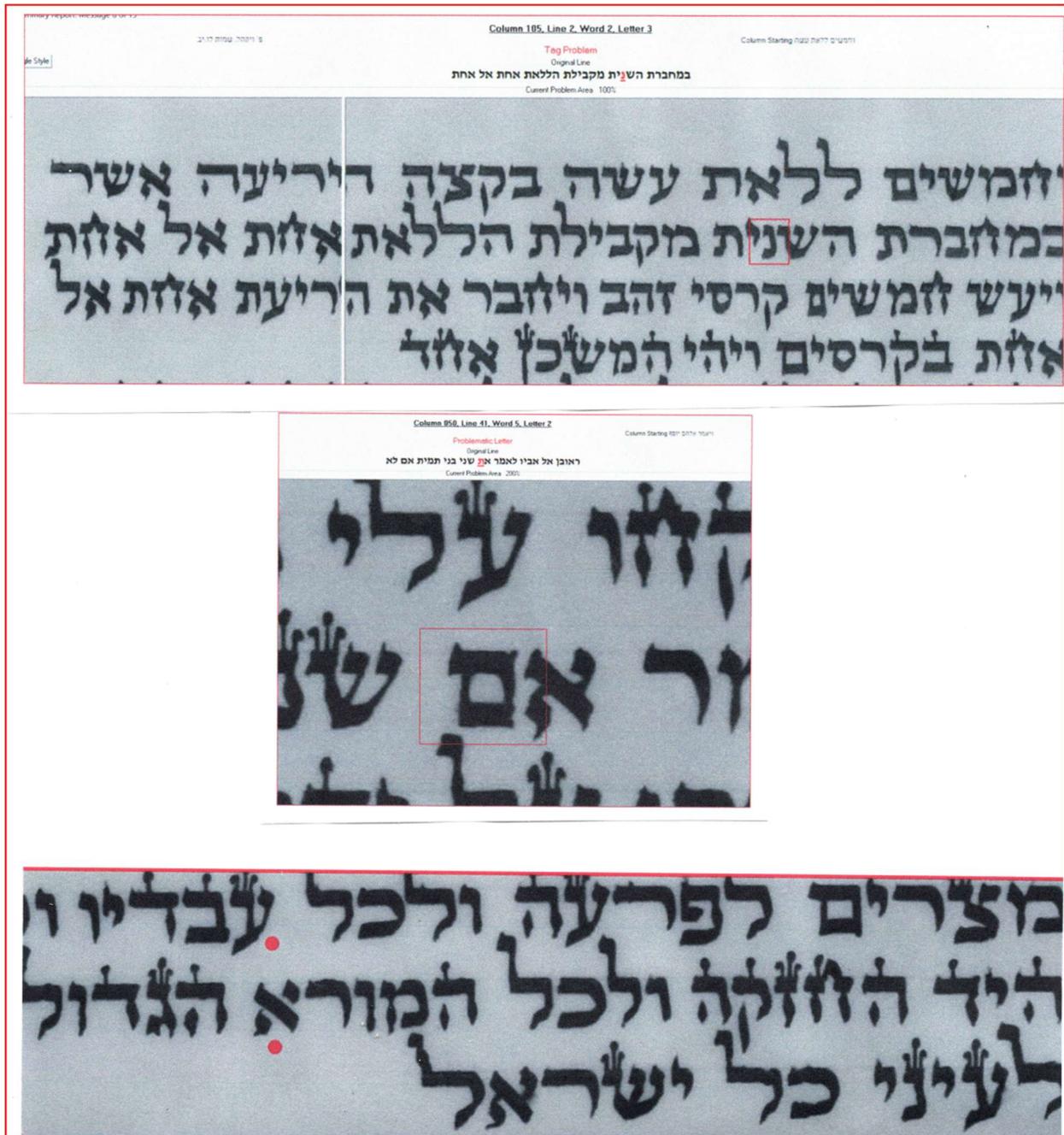
**Therefore, all Shuls should not accept any Torah without first investigating the Torah's Status, and certifying that it is Kosher.**

**1** One of the reasons is because the crowns are generally added by a different person called a Metayeg. This is almost always done with different ink and usually they are not well-trained in the laws of Safrut, if at all. Indeed, they can even make Pesulim themselves. There are around a quarter of a million Tagim in a torah and it is extremely difficult to fix their mistakes, often taking twice the amount of time it takes to put them on in the first place.

**2** This is because a camera only captures one angle of the Torah and its quality is affected by the resolution and the lighting in the room. Additionally, even the latest software can also only catch 75% of most issues. Only in regards to the spelling can a computer be relied upon and only if the one who is running the software has a teuda as a Magiah and knows the Halachot. Many times, this is unfortunately not the case, instead, anyone who knows the 'aleph bet' does the computer check, assuming the computer does most of the work, when in fact the computer just points out the questionable letters and a certified Magiah must decide if it is halachically acceptable.

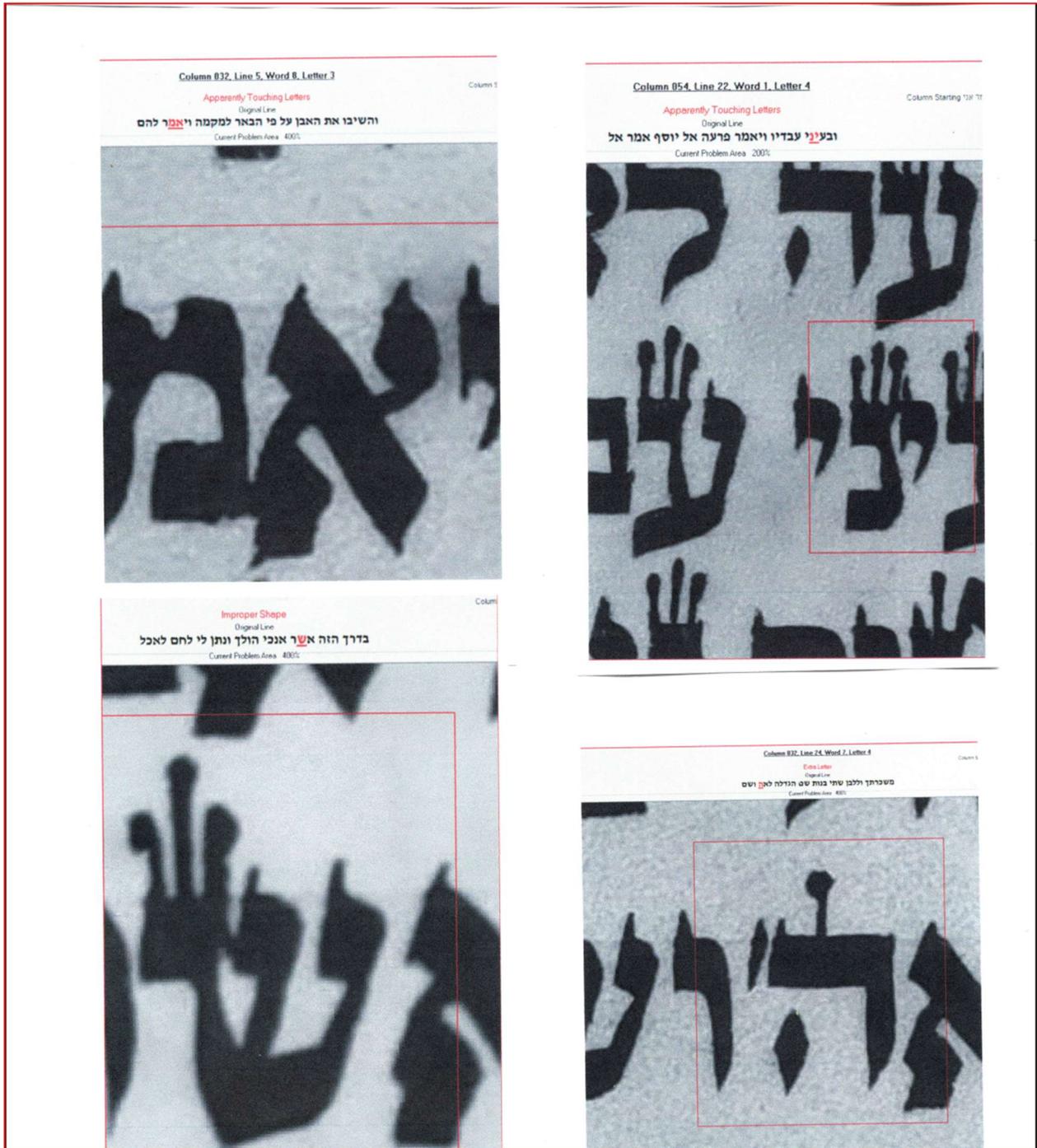
## Community Sefer Torah Awareness

This was a Torah donated around 1 year ago and used in our Shuls. There was a spelling mistake, an unfilled letter, and many letters and lines without Tagim.



# Community Sefer Torah Awareness

This was a Torah donated over 20 years ago in our Shuls and there are many touching letters and a few spacing issues.



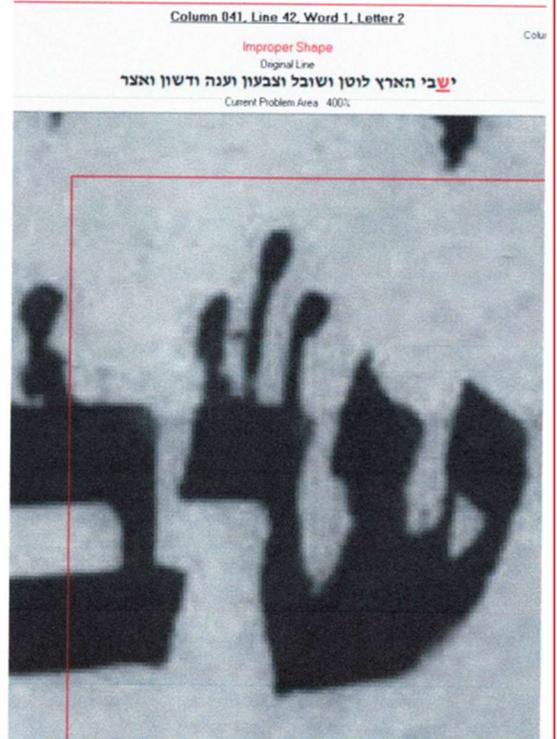
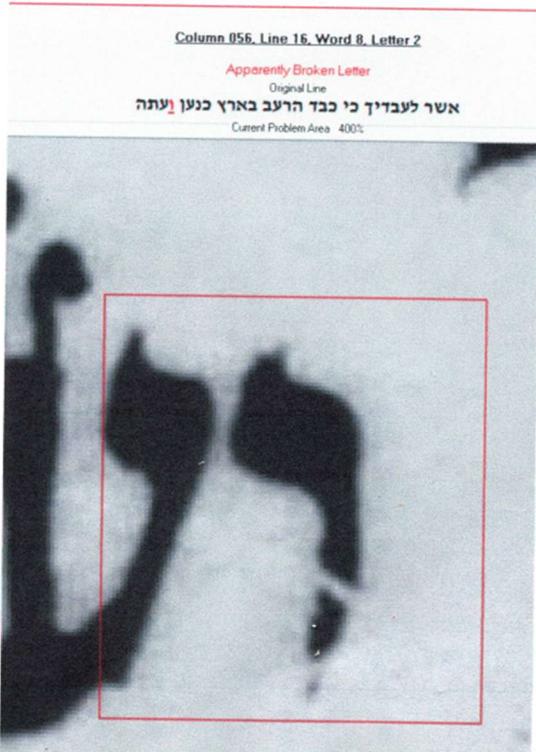
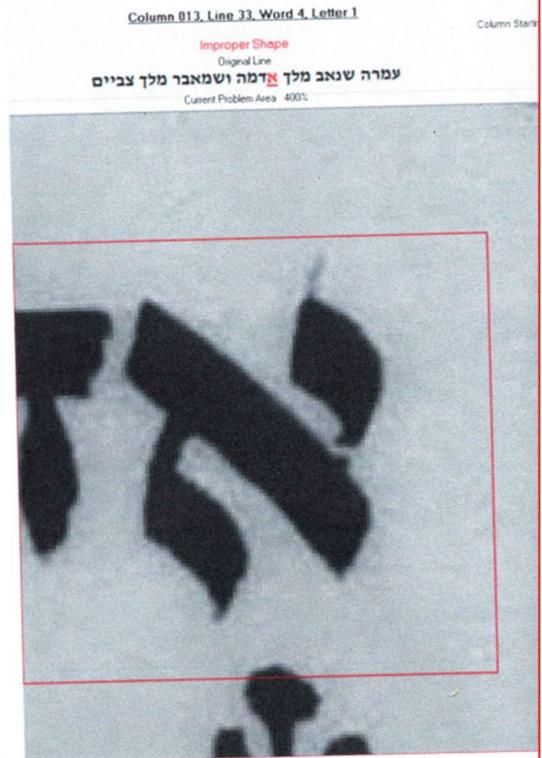
# Community Sefer Torah Awareness

This was a Torah read for about 10 years and there are many touching letters, and some are even marked!



# Community Sefer Torah Awareness

4 This was donated around 8 years ago and has many cracked and improperly shaped letters.



# Community Sefer Torah Awareness

This was another Torah that was read for many years and there are touching letters and words not spaced properly.

