

Gamliel Institute

Course 3 - Chevrah Kadisha: Education, Organizing, & Training (EOT)

Project: The Genizah: Past and Present

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Rabbi Joe Blair

Genizah
Or
Burying G-d
Burial Beyond Bodies
Name Recognition
What's In A Name?
Cleaning & Greening?
Rest Among the Holy & the Pure

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I. Introduction

Throughout history, Jewish institutions and organizations (as everyone) have found that entropy is real: things wear out, and items that were used in past are no longer wanted or needed. This applies equally to religious articles and objects.

A well-used Siddur (prayer book) may become too worn, or be damaged by being torn or accidental contact with water, and cannot be repaired or used any longer. A Sefer Torah (scroll of the five books of Moses) may be damaged by water or fire to the degree that it is unusable and unrepairable for ritual purposes. A Tallit (or Tallis – a prayer shawl) can wear and fray, and eventually reach the point that it cannot be repaired, and is too threadbare to continue to use. Then the question arises: these are items that have acquired some level of sanctity by their dedication for religious use – what to do with them?

Jewish Minhag (custom) is specifically not to simply discard these items in the trash: they have acquired a level of sanctity by being set aside and used for ritual or sacred purposes, and so we view them as elevated, and treat them with more respect than we would a printed newspaper or an old tee shirt. Instead, it is customary to ‘retire’ them, and give them a resting place that is suitable, but not on the ash heap, no matter how ‘useless’ they have become. Indeed, if asked, most Jews would tell you that if a Sefer Torah becomes unusable (“dies”), it is to be buried, treated just as we would the body of a person who had died. Although this is not explicitly required by Halachah (Jewish law), it is a common understanding. There has been less certainty about what to do with other materials, such as a Siddur, Tefillin or Mezuzah parchments, Megillot (scrolls of the writings such as Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, etc.), Kippah, and so on. In fact, there has not been a definitive answer offered that is universally accepted.

The response through history to this need to deal with no longer usable ritual items—i.e., items that are thought to have acquired a level of sanctity—has been to handle these discarded items in one of two ways, though the first of these, burial, was (and remains) the preferred method of disposal, with cemetery burial as the highest value.

- First, as described for a Sefer Torah, some of the time certain items of this sort were immediately buried, usually in a Jewish cemetery (more about this later).
- Second, a “temporary” storage or resting place was designated, and all such items were placed there to be dealt with ‘later’.

In both cases, the term for the location in which the items were placed was a ‘Genizah’ (Hebrew, גניזה), plural Genizot, from a root meaning to hide (away) or hidden, hiding place, and which acquired the meaning of referring to the location in which items were placed for ‘out of sight’ storage or to be hidden away, to be dealt with at a later time.

The hiding place, or Genizah, was thought to serve the twofold purpose of preserving good things from harm (protecting items that are elevated in sanctity), and preventing “bad” things (items that somehow convey ill or curses or that are associated with demonic or evil traits) from having the opportunity to harm things, places, or people. The latter aspect arose as a response to accretion of superstitious beliefs, with the increasing focus on demons, evil spirits, and the like that sought to do ill or to cause harm to humankind.

This concern is virtually ignored in the Torah, but begins in the Mishnah (Avot 5:6) (probably in response to Zoroastrian beliefs), and continues in the Babylonian Talmud (see, e.g., Gittin 68a, Shabbat 28a, and Pesachim 110q-112b) but note that the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) all but rejects the concept (Shabbat 1:3, 3b; Gittin 6:6, 48b).

[See

<http://www.zootorah.com/RationalistJudaism/Demons.pdf>,
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/demons.html>,
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/do-jews-believe-in-demons/>, or
<http://unitedwithisrael.org/judaism-demons-does-the-torah-address-the-occult/>

for a smattering of the available materials and articles on this topic online.]

This has come to mean that a burial site, in the cemetery or elsewhere, and a 'storage' space, are both called by the same name, which can be confusing. Both serve the dual purpose of providing a resting place for elevated items and a place of containment or constraint for harmful items.

II. Background

The concept of a Genizah is found from various references in texts. It is derived from a number of different sources and locations.

a. Biblical

There is no direct biblical reference to a Genizah. Despite the details provided in the Torah about the mitzvah (commandment) to 'surely bury' deceased persons (even one executed for crimes) in Devarim 21:22-23, the descriptions of burials (such as for Sarah in Bereshit 23:17-20 and Abraham in Bereshit 25:8-10), the discussions that death and the dead convey tumah (ritual "unfitness" or "impurity", as noted in the parashah on the Parah Adumah/Red Heifer in Vayikra 19:11-13) and render one 'unfit' for participating in sacred acts within sacred precincts, there is still no discussion in Torah of a Genizah, or of burial (other than of a person) or storage of anything.

According to the publication of the United Jewish School of Grand Rapids Michigan for their Genizah ritual in 2013:

In Deuteronomy 12:2-4, we read:

"You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshiped their gods, whether on lofty mountains and on hills or under any luxuriant tree. Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site. Do not do the same thing to Adonai your God."

From these verses, the rabbis in the Talmud understood that the names of God may not be erased or obliterated, as the Israelites were commanded to do with the names of idolatrous gods. This prohibition encompasses seven Biblical names for God: Yod/Heh/Vav/Hey (the Tetragrammaton), Adonai, El,

Elo'ah, Elohim, Shaddai, and Tzeva'ot. Just as God is kadosh, holy, so too these names of God, representations of God, are kadosh. However, since the Torah's language is Hebrew, and the mitzvah concerning destroying the names of false gods and preserving the name of our God is in Hebrew, the prohibition against erasing God's name only applies to these seven names written in Hebrew. This is a way to recognize the sacred role of the Hebrew language in Jewish life and was also intended to be a leniency, meaning that it is not necessary to write G-d for 'God', L-rd for Lord, Ad-nai for Adonai, etc. When writing in Hebrew, these names should not be spelled out completely. For example:

ה-ש-ם (Hashem)
 ה' (Abbreviation for Hashem)
 א-ד-נ-י (Adonai)
 ש-ד-י (Shadai)
 א-ל-ל-ו-ק-ם (Elokim)
 צ-ב-א-ו-ת (Lord of Hosts)

Any piece of paper, parchment, stone, wood, or any other material with one of these names for God written on it in Hebrew therefore, becomes holy. We are forbidden to erase it, burn it, crumple it, and throw it in the garbage, etc., for destroying it is very disrespectful of God, akin to destroying God. The only respectful way of disposing of **תומש** (names of God) is to bury them the way we would bury a human being (also an image of God) who has died. A recent paper by the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards wrote that material intended to be permanent, such as bound books or papers, should be buried. Materials intended to be temporary (loose or lightly bound pages) may be recycled rather than stored in a Genizah for burial.

Since it is inconvenient to run to the cemetery every time one has a single piece of paper to bury, most synagogue have a box or a room known as a **גניזה** Genizah, literally meaning a hiding place. Old papers may pile up for years in that room, before the synagogue decides to take the contents of the Genizah to the cemetery for burial. The most famous Genizah was the upper attic in the synagogue in Cairo, where materials were stored for about 1000 years before being taken out and catalogued by a Cambridge, later Jewish Theological Seminary, founder and scholar named Solomon Schechter.

In the Genizah, we place any unusable book containing God's name, including worn out Siddurim and humashim. We also store unusable Tefillin, and even tallitot for burial. The following two stories about the holiness of the letters of Torah may be helpful to share with your students:

Our rabbis taught that after Moses broke the tablets when he saw the people of Israel worshipping the golden calf, the shattered pieces were kept and placed in the Ark next to the second set of whole ones. Worn out sacred

books/objects never lose their holiness. The Roman government, in the second century, made the study and teaching of Torah illegal. But Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradion occupied himself with it, gathered public assemblies to teach it and kept a Torah scroll under his robe. The Romans found out, arrested him, wrapped a Torah around him, placed branches under him, and set them on fire. Hananiah's disciples called out, "Rabbi, what do you see?" He answered, "The parchment is burning, but the letters are soaring to heaven." The material may disintegrate, but the letters and words remain holy.

<http://shaareikodesh.org/2013/05/Genizah-explanation/>

We see here, and in all other materials that were available, that there is no specific notion of Genizah cited. Instead, there is a line from needing to destroy the forms of worship of other gods, through the commandment to preserve the objects and names used and offer honor and respect for G-d. [Note: please see below at IV.b.iii for the explanation of why I use the 'G-d' form.] The basic concept for Genizah thus apparently derives at root from the Aseret HaDibrot, in the third commandment [as divided and presented in *Every Person's Guide to Shavuot* (Jason Aronson, Inc), and many other writers]. It stems from the mitzvah to honor and protect the name(s) of G-d. Those writings which include the name of G-d are 'elevated' in holiness, and are to be accorded special status, being treated with additional respect.

The relevant text from Shemot 20:6 reads:

וְלֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לְשׁוֹן: כִּי לֹא יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה, אֶת־אִשְׁר־יִשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוֹן. {פ} **6** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. {P}

www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0220.htm

[NB: An entire discussion could be had on the translation of 'lashav' as vain, vanity, futility, lightness, emptiness, valuelessness, etc., and what each might mean to our understanding.]

Similarly, by extension of this concept of holiness, items used in the worship of G-d are elevated and attain accrued sanctity (as with the clothing of the Kohen Gadol).

This understanding seems to be the underpinning of the practice of Genizah from Biblical sources.

b. Talmudic

The concept becomes far more fully fleshed and detailed in the Talmud. The term 'Genizah' appears, and the action of 'hiding', 'secreting', or 'protecting' items is defined and explicated.

[Note: The Talmud is described as the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and legend comprising the Mishnah and the Gemara. There are two versions of the Talmud: the Babylonian Talmud (which dates from the 5th century C.E., but includes earlier material) and the earlier Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud from approximately

a century before. The Talmudic period is often described as roughly the two periods of 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. for the development and redaction of the Mishnah, and 200 C.E. to ca. 470 C.E. for the redaction of the Gemara in the two version noted. Additional materials in the form of commentary continued to be appended long after this period.]

The concept of storing, preserving, protecting, or hiding appears in BT Shabbat 115a, which directs that holy writings in **other than** [emphasis added] the Hebrew and Greek languages require "Genizah," that is, preservation, attesting to the extant (and probably common) practice with regard to Hebrew texts.

The term 'Genizah' became more widely used and applied throughout the Talmud.

- In BT Pesachim 118b "bet Genizah" = "treasury."
- In BT Pesachim 56a Hezekiah hides ("ganaz") a medical work.
- In BT Shabbat 115a, R. Gamaliel orders that the Targum to Job should be hidden ("yigganez") under the "nidbak" (layer of stones). It further states that all sacred writings (scrolls of Torah, Prophets, and Writings) should be preserved in a place where they cannot be destroyed. [Note: a Targum refers to a work of Hebrew that has been translated into another language, often Aramaic, though it could be others. For information on the Targum of Job see the article by Bacher in the Jewish Encyclopedia at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14248-targum>.]
- In BT Shabbat 30b, the sages sought to hide ("lignoz") as heretical the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs.
- The same hiding occurs in BT Shabbat 13b in regard to the Book of Ezekiel.
- Again, hiding occurs in BT Pesachim 62a-b in regard to the Book of Genealogies.

c. Medieval Period

With the spread of Jews and Judaism, and the accretion of certain superstitious behaviors into the practices of Jewish communities, this custom evolved. In medieval times, it became the custom that Hebrew scraps, papers, books, and letters containing a name of G-d were relegated to the Genizah, perhaps with an eye to magic spells and incantations. These items were known as "shemot" (names), because their importance was somehow increased, and their sanctity and consequent claim to preservation were held to depend on their 'containing the "name" of G-d'. Often, this occurred in phrases or even abbreviations for the phrases (such things as B"H, IY"H, or BS"D) that opened a document of an otherwise non-religious character, such as a personal letter, a contract, a bill of sale, or a book. This was the basis for the massive trove of items found discarded in the Cairo Genizah (and other Genizot).

[Note: The abbreviations listed have the following meanings:

- B"H Baruch Hashem Blessed Be G-d
- IY"H Im Yirtzeh Hashem With the help of G-d
- BS"D Besiyata Deshamaya With the assistance of Heaven (Aramaic)]

In addition to papers, articles connected with ritual practices, such as Tzitzit from Tallitot and palm branches and the sprigs of myrtle from Lulavim, became items similarly stored or hidden (cf. BT Shabbat 63a-b; BT Yoma 16a-b, as to the stones of the altar). This same process could also apply to a Parochet (ark hanging), Torah Mantle (cover of the Torah scroll), the Tallit itself, Tefillin boxes and straps, Yadim (Torah pointers), and so on. These items acquired a special status because of their use for sacred purposes.

In some communities, any item that could be used for a religious purpose or that was a religious article came to be included. This added immensely to the number of items that were to be included in a Genizah. The extent of the materials found in the Cairo Genizah (as noted later) is a result of this practice.

d. Modern times

Today, with the use of photocopiers and cheap printers, and in our throw-away society, there are instances of thousands of pounds of so-called 'shemot' that are disposed of by burial on a regular and ongoing basis. This practice causes a significant problem for communities as burial in a cemetery is often regulated and restrictions on what may be placed there apply, and burial in any other location requires permits as a form of 'dumping' or waste disposal. In recent times (2013-2015), I have seen numerous reports in North American news sources about synagogues or cemeteries or funeral homes that have run afoul of the legal system because of the practice of members of the community to drop off huge quantities of these items for disposal. In some instances, the cemetery was forced to go back and dig up and remove the tons of waste material because it was not permitted to be placed in a cemetery by law. In others, the funeral home or synagogue was forced to find a place to use for disposal, at great cost.

This problem has been severely exacerbated by those who have decided that if there is any Hebrew lettering of any sort on an object, it must be placed in a Genizah, no matter what the content (leading to the rather ridiculous result that thousands of copies of old newspapers and advertising flyers wind up in the Genizah, for example). See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZoSfWVDPJc> for an example of one news report from March 17, 2013 on the problem in Lakewood, NJ.

e. Other sources

The topic of Genizah is discussed in the Shulchan Aruch. Sanhedrin 71 and 113 are relevant to our discussion. They appear in Appendix B.

Genizah matters are discussed on Halachipedia, as shown in Appendix C.

Other related Websites and resources are included in Appendix A.

III. The Opportunity

a. How It Happened

The Minhag of burial or storage of ritual/religious articles and writings created an amazing treasure for historians – the treasure of trash. Often archeologists seek out disposal sites, such as disused wells, to look for clues and materials about the life of those who lived in those locations. Historians can gain immense insights into those who were there from the writings and sometimes even from the materials that were left behind. This meant that the contents of Genizot could prove invaluable for study and learning about the people who lived in earlier times, if the materials dated back far enough, and were in a condition that could be accessed and studied.

Unfortunately, those things buried in the ground often decayed (just as a human body does) and were destroyed for all intents and purposes. Even in those locations in cemeteries that are marked as Genizot, there is rarely anything worthwhile left to find after a period of some years, once moisture or water, bugs, and bacteria have had their way. In the instances where burial took place without a marker, it is unlikely that the materials will ever be found and unearthed, or that they will be in any fit shape for study.

However, the practice of setting aside an area, a room, or a building in a community to hide away/store these items proved to be the unexpected pot of gold for this purpose. In some locales, these storage areas were established, and either filled up or otherwise forgotten, without the 'normal' next step of taking the material to be buried at some moment ever taking place. The materials built up over time, sometimes very long periods of time, and were mostly undisturbed.

Add to that the practice among many Jews through history who felt that they had to invoke G-d's name in any communication they had, so that business correspondence, personal letters, bills, invoices, orders, manifests, and even shopping lists would be written to include one or another of the ways of referring to or acknowledging G-d, which suddenly catapulted those items into the realm of material that 'should' be placed in a Genizah. This is the material called "shemot" (or "shamot", "shaimot", "shemos", "shamos", or "shaimos"), and which is what swelled the amount that was subject to burial from a trickle of books to a flood of parchment, vellum, and paper encompassing all of life in the Jewish community. This caused immense proliferation of the number and type of items to be included – and that very material is part of why some Genizot are proving to be a fabulous resource for historical researchers.

b. Jackpot

This is exactly what occurred in some locations, the most well-known of which is called the Cairo Genizah, actually found for the most part in the attic of a synagogue in Fostat, Egypt. This stash dated back to the seventh century, with fragments that may possibly date as early as the 3rd century. It was "discovered" by Jacob Saphir in 1864, revisited by E.N. Adler in 1888, but was made famous (as well as largely removed) by (*inter alia*) Solomon Schechter in about 1896, when he made off with the bulk of the materials, most of the rest of which were also taken shortly afterwards by others. These materials form

the main contents of the Genizah collections at the Bodleian, Cambridge, and JTS libraries. The total size of the combined collection is approximately 300,000 fragments and documents.

The story of Schechter's 'exploits' is documented (and perhaps more than slightly sensationalized) for the general public in two recent books. One is called *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Genizah (Jewish Encounters)* by Adina Hoffman & Peter Cole, and *Sacred Treasure: The Cairo Genizah - The Amazing Discoveries of Forgotten Jewish History in an Egyptian Synagogue Attic* by Rabbi Mark S. Glickman. For more on the Cairo Genizah, See <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/Genizah>.

Aside from the ritual and liturgical matter that was found, and which is being studied using modern scientific equipment and approaches with interesting results, the everyday information about business, family relations, correspondence, and so forth is proving to be massively useful in revealing many details of life in the Jewish community of Fostat (and surrounding areas) over hundreds of years, yielding a picture of how people lived, conducted business, thought, and felt in a way that had previously been unattainable. Thus, this Genizah, and others like it (such as those discovered in Feodosia Ukraine, Bukhara Uzbekistan, Teheran Iran, Aleppo Syria, Rustchuk Bulgaria, and Prague Czech Republic) dating back hundreds of years, have the potential to offer insights and knowledge that is otherwise not discoverable. It is for this reason that ancient Genizot are sought and valued for far more than the liturgical and canonical materials that may be present among the items included.

Along these lines, there has been a theory that the materials found at Qumran in the caves, including significant numbers of scrolls and scroll fragments containing biblical text, among other things, were placed there as in a Genizah. Joan Taylor wrote a paper on this question, which concludes largely that this was not the case. The link to this paper is included in Appendix A as a matter of interest; it does not however, bear directly on this project.

IV. The Problem

All of this history of ancient Genizot is really irrelevant to the situation in most synagogues and Jewish communities today. When we speak of modern Genizot, what we mean is ways to respectfully deal with items that have acquired some degree of sanctity (in the eyes of members of the community) that are no longer useful or desirable to retain.

In regard to a Sefer Torah, or the parchments from Mezuzot or Tefillin, which are no longer usable or repairable, this is not a significant concern, as this happens fairly infrequently, and does not create a significant quantity of material to be handled, so storage or burial is a manageable prospect.

a. How We Got Here

When literacy became more common, writing materials became widespread and relatively inexpensive, and the custom of including a reference to G-d in most writings came into vogue, the quantity of materials that were seen as appropriate for inclusion in the Genizah

increased significantly. Later on, with the advent of the printing press and typesetting and printing in quantity of Siddurim (prayer books), Chumashim (books with printed version of the Torah and Haftarah texts), Talmud volumes, and other 'sacred' writings of texts which contain prayers or writings that include the name of G-d, and more recently the availability and widespread use of the photocopier and desktop printers in the last half century or so, the amount of material that would need to be handled respectfully for disposal exploded to such a degree that today, were we to try to follow the practices of the Fostat community in most Jewish communities, we would drown in paper and there would be no possibility of either burial or storage of the quantity that would be generated.

Fortunately, it is no longer as prevalent a custom to reference G-d on every document, so some of the materials that would have been included in the Fostat community are no longer candidates today. Imagine if you had to preserve every phone bill, electric bill, bank statement, water bill, and newspaper or magazine, because it had a reference to G-d on it! We would all be ripe to star on the reality show Hoarders, and our synagogues and cemeteries would soon fill to the brim.

Still, there is a problem, because we live in a fairly 'disposable' society, and we often find it as easy (or easier) to replace something than to repair it (for example, if a Siddur is damaged (the binding is loose, for example), the cost of repair may exceed the cost of a new copy). When a new edition of a (or a completely new) Siddur is produced and replaces the one that has been in use, we may have dozens or hundreds of copies of a book that is no longer useful, but which contains prayers with the name of G-d included in it that now needs to be disposed of in some fashion.

Even more today, the ready availability of photocopying has exacerbated the problem. When we hold a text study in the synagogue, it has become common to copy and hand out the pages we are looking at for that session, but at the end of the study, what do we do with those pages that contain the name of G-d as part of the text?

And this does not even begin to address other ritual objects which may be thought of as having acquired some level of sanctity, such as Tallitot (Tallesim), Tefillin cases and straps, Mezuzah cases, Torah mantles, Wimpels (Torah binders), a Parochet or Amud cover, Kippot (Yarmulkes, lace, or other head coverings), and so on.

b. Options

i. Rituals and Realities

Ideally, we would treat all Seforim and materials that included a name of G-d, and all articles that had attained a perceived degree of sanctity, as deserving of Genizah storage/burial. Also, ideally, the Genizah would be something more respectful than a box in the closet, or a corner of the basement where items are placed to wait and gather dust until we figure out what to do, and when.

And if we were to plan to deal with this matter regularly, and give it some of the attention which it deserves, we would have on hand the ritual and liturgical resources that are

needed to create a respectful, caring way of handling the matter and honoring these objects which were used and which form a part of the history of the community.

The very existence of the Cairo Genizah (and all others like it) bespeaks two things.

- First, the very exciting and important opportunity that access to this material provides to open a window into the past at a level of detail we have never had prior to this. This is an amazing find, and has led to many discoveries and confirmation of other things known already, so that it is truly a treasure. The existence of the Genizah on this level is a gift.
- The second aspect, on the other hand, is that the very existence of the Cairo Genizah says that we as a people, and as a number of communities, have failed abysmally to live up to what would be the ideal in treatment of objects and items that have accrued sanctity and importance in our lives. We have acted without forethought, carelessly. We have just bumped along, stuffing things into 'temporary' storage, until it becomes a crisis, or the storage space is abandoned and forgotten. We have done little to address the underlying issue, and even less to craft appropriate liturgy and ritual to place these items into the Genizah with the appropriate respect. Even worse, in some cases, we have given up on the responsibility we have for proper care and stewardship of resources by simply dumping everything, without examination or thought.

Now, particularly in our disposable economy, we are faced with a tidal wave of items and objects that we need to deal with somehow. That is exacerbated by the serious shortage of land for burial in some locations, and by the limitation of what may be buried for environmental and other reasons in others. The question is what we will do.

ii. Practicalities

There are simply not enough rooms in any synagogue or Jewish communal structure to contain all the paper and materials that are generated in the course of a few years (let alone hundreds!). Just the number of photocopied pages would create literally boxes full of paper, which would need to be stored, either indefinitely, or until a burial was scheduled.

The idea of using cemetery land for this purpose may also be impractical, because it would take up so much space to bury boxes and boxes of papers or books, and most cemeteries have a limited area, which means they cannot afford to dedicate a significant portion of it to a use that will not help offset the cost of operations (through selling plots or perpetual care). Even in those instances that the same plot(s) are re-opened for burial of additional materials at a later date, the space will eventually be filled and the need for space will outstrip the available spaces.

All of which means that it is necessary to make some decisions on what will be done, and what policies are to be implemented, to deal with this issue.

iii. Decisions on What to Include

I am starting with the initial premise that we cannot simply abandon the concern with honoring the names of G-d, so trashing all of these items is not on the table.

That means that some of the choices that need to be made include the specifics of what to include in the Genizah materials, and what can be disposed of, recycled, or repurposed in other ways.

There are different thoughts on what is appropriate for inclusion in a Genizah. One end of the spectrum is to include ONLY the specific items that contain the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, the four letter name for G-d, Yud-Hey and Vav-Hey, written in the manner that a Sofer (Scribe) does, with a quill on parchment. This would certainly limit the items included to such things as a Sefer Torah, the parchments of Mezuzot and Tefillin, and possibly the occasional formal document such as Teudot from Batei Din. It would exclude other ritual objects

At the other end of the spectrum is the approach that would include any representation of a name for G-d, and anything that had taken on sanctity by use for ritual or worship purposes, or as a religious article. This would expand the items to be included from the list above to add such as Chumashim, Siddurim and Machzorim, Tefillin cases, Tallitot, most Shemot, any photocopied documents, plus any other ritual objects – even those with no writing - such as a worn out Yad, a Parochet, an Amud cover, all Siddurim and Machzorim, any correspondence or letters that included a reference to G-d such as B"SD, IY"H, or the like, photocopies of pages with a representation of a name of G-d (including the versions with two letters Yud, the letter Hey with an apostrophe (indicating the word Hashem as a placeholder), or the words Adonai or the variations on El or Elohim spelled out, all signifying the Tetragrammaton. This seems much closer to what became the practice at Fostat, with practically anything being included in the Genizah – but with the volume magnified many times by our present day technology.

The determination of what to include is likely to vary from community to community.

For example, Rabbi Stuart Kelman wrote an opinion on what to include in the Genizah for the community he led at that time, Netivot Shalom in Berkeley California. In that article, he determined that photocopies should not be included in a Genizah, but instead should be recycled (when produced and no longer needed). [See the document in Appendix J, a newsletter article for Netivot Shalom by Rabbi Kelman discussing this matter.]

At the other end of the spectrum you can see the approach taken in the material presented by Kof-K of Teaneck NJ [found on the Shaimos.org website at <http://www.shaimos.org/> and reproduced without editing in Appendix C]. Here, not only are photocopies to be included, but also bags for Tallitot and Tefillin, wedding invitations, homework assignments that contain any materials from Torah, and many other objects and items. This is a very broad and inclusive approach, which will sweep most materials into the Genizah, multiplying the quantity to be dealt with significantly. I note that this is demonstrated clearly in the earlier cited news report on this very issue at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZoSfwVDPJc> from March 17, 2013, concerning Lakewood, NJ.

(a) My Decision

My approach is somewhere between these two. When I was researching and considering how to respond to this issue in my own communities, I approached it less from consideration of quantity or production source, and more from the perspective of what the text included was, and what the perceived level of sanctity of the ritual objects were.

Based on my research and common sense, I decided that English or other languages did not rise to the level of sanctity that justified inclusion in a Genizah. Just as it is not requisite to use the 'G-d' form instead of 'God', and most people have no concern with uttering the term 'Yahweh' when discussing the Tetragrammaton, other terms in English do not seem to have the same value as the Hebrew, the 'lashon hakodesh' (holy tongue/language). I also determined that I would not include any terms (Hebrew or English) that were descriptors for G-d, such as Almighty, Lord of Hosts, Compassionate, Merciful, etc. [And, yes, I am aware that I have used the "G-d" form throughout this paper despite this statement. It is a matter of habit on my part, and a desire to make others comfortable. It also means that only the page of this document that contains the specific quote from Torah might be included in what is to be placed in a Genizah, for all but the strictest interpretations of this Minhag. Note section II.a.]

Using these criteria, I included all HEBREW texts, in calligraphy, printed, or reproduced in any manner which included the Tetragrammaton, or the accepted direct substitutions and variations on it, and which was brought forth from the context of Torah, Haftarah, Ketuvim, or specific prayers. Thus, I included any Hebrew text material that had the Tetragrammaton itself, or any of the substitutions, which included two letters Yud, a Hey with an apostrophe, or the words Adonai, kEl or kElohim (or other variations) in Hebrew. This incorporated Siddurim, Machzorim, Chumashim, Talmud, Klafim from Tefillin or Mezuzot, documents such as Teudot, and study materials that included passages of Hebrew text with these terms appearing. I did not include texts that may reference G-d through abbreviations, but do not actually include a name, such as the B"SD, IY"H, etc.

For ritual objects, I included those that had a very high level of perceived sanctity. This included any items embroidered or decorated with one of the Hebrew representations of a name for G-d, Torah mantles, Wimpels or binders, Tefillin boxes and straps, and Tallitot, all of which are used directly for performance of a Mitzvah or come in direct contact with something necessary to perform a mitzvah. This is not a definitive list; I am aware that there are other items, which may be included according to these criteria, but I did not encounter them in my work with this project, or in preparing to undertake a Genizah burial at the congregations I serve.

I did not consider how the text was produced: whether it was handwritten with quill on parchment, typeset, photocopied, or computer generated did not affect the decision as to whether to include it. This is a major difference between what I chose to include and what Rabbi Kelman did; the exclusions I determined are the major difference between what I chose and what the Shaimos.org website suggests.

Some things I explicitly exclude from the list of items to be placed in a Genizah are Kippot (Yarmulkeh), doily head coverings, head scarves, Yadim (Torah pointers) and other ornaments for the Torah. These are fungible commodities. There is nothing inherently sanctified about a Kippah or doily, as opposed to a baseball hat, a Stetson, or a pillbox hat. Similarly, the Torah ornaments are adornments and not essential to the purpose or use of the sacred object and may be used with another Torah scroll or recycled. The cloth of a Tallit (without the corner fringes or Tzitzit) is simply a piece of cloth (and a Tallit is pasul (invalid) absent even one of the fringes).

There is no clear single answer, because (despite some who may claim otherwise) this is not based on Halachah, but on Minhag. The Halachah relates to desecration or dishonoring G-d; the way we avoid or prevent that in this area is entirely interpretation. (Those claiming that it is based on Halachah are asserting that their interpretation of Halachah, with understandings and/or extensions to apply to and address the question at hand, is dispositive and binding; this is something that is quite arguable.) Each community and community leader will have to make a determination for that community, and what is chosen will be the Minhag; that means it is not lightly changed, but it is also not unchangeable.

iv. Decisions on Whether/When/How Often to Bury

If your community only accumulates 100 pages of material or one or two books per year, then maintaining a storage area in a closet, in a cabinet in the office or in the library, or other appropriate places makes great sense. You may only need to think about disposal of materials at infrequent intervals, or perhaps not at all in the normal course of things, if you have a large storage area and small volumes of material for the Genizah. In this case, you may never need to conduct a Genizah burial (or it may be many years before it is required).

On the other hand, if your community piles up tens of boxes worth of material every six months, you may need to think about disposal on a more regular basis, perhaps annually, or every three years, or on some other schedule.

And for those communities that produce dozens to hundreds of bags of material in the course of a few months, disposal may be an ongoing issue.

Each community will need to assess its own needs in this regard, and that will also impact how large the Genizah must be, and how readily accessible it should remain. A community that can store, and then buries a half dozen boxes every ten years probably doesn't need to worry about constant access, while a community that buries dozens of boxes each month should plan for storage, regular burials, and a fairly easily re-openable Genizah.

A community that produces a large volume of material for the Genizah may wish to plan ahead, perhaps consciously designing the Genizah in the cemetery for access. One way this has been accomplished, short of re-opening the grave site by digging, is to place a cover over the Genizah site, perhaps a metal or heavy plastic cover, preferably with a mechanism to secure it in place so it won't be accessible to vandalism, and which also has

handles to lift it, and can be removed fairly easily, so that materials can be added to the Genizah without digging, and the cover replaced afterwards. [Note: an example of such a cover can be seen in the YouTube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHqLBOEZSDQ> at the 2:40 time mark.]

Again, local conditions will determine what is needed. An additional factor is that if you invite congregants or community members to bring their shemot in to be stored and disposed of, you may have both more accumulating, and an unpredictable quantity at any given time, so this needs to be taken into consideration.

Another consideration is that if the cemetery (or location of the Genizah) is under the operation of another organization in the community, your organization may need to work closely with that group to assure that everyone is working from the same plan and has similar expectations.

You will also need to work with your local government as well, because there can be regulations about what and/or how much material may be buried in a cemetery, depending on the jurisdiction. This may involve multiple agencies; note what happened in Lakewood NJ, where the Town permitted burial, but the Department of Environmental Quality afterwards forced removal and disposal elsewhere.

One additional factor that may impact how often burial takes place is the Minhag of burial of some number of books and shemot in the grave of a person who is being interred. If this is permissible, and the families agree to allow this, then, depending on the number of burials in the course of a year, this may limit or even eliminate some or all of the stored materials awaiting burial.

If this option is chosen, an approach to doing so might be as follows:

- Obtain agreement from the deceased ahead of time, or from the family or other mourners, to include Genizah items in the grave of the deceased. Explain the concept of Genizah burial, and point out the wording of both prayers, Eyl Maleh Rachamim and Eloha Selichot, in which we ask G-d to grant infinite rest in G-d's sheltering presence 'among the holy and the pure' to the soul of the deceased. [Transliteration: hametzey menukhah nechonah takhat canfey hash'chinah ba'ma'a'lot kedoshim ut'horim]. Note that the shemot and Genizah items are viewed as holy and pure, and can represent in a tangible way for the body at the funeral what we are requesting for the soul of the deceased, reminding the mourners of the concept, 'as below, so above'.
- If agreement is given, then a reasonable quantity of Genizah items should be selected and prepared for transport to the cemetery to be at hand at the time of the burial. The quantity of items taken should be assessed carefully so that there will not be too much, and none of the items will be left over unburied at the end of the funeral.
- After the deceased is lowered into the grave, place some Genizah items around the deceased (not on top of them).
- If a casket is used, place the items around the outside of the casket, near the sides of the grave. Placement can be on all four sides.

- If a vault or liner is used, Genizah items should be placed in the grave outside the vault or liner, so that they are in direct contact with the earth, and not inside the vault or liner. Placement can be on all four sides.
- Placement of the Genizah items should be done gently, with care and great respect for both the items and the deceased. Genizah items should be placed, not thrown or dropped into the grave. Use of a tool for placement, such as a shovel, is permissible; other methods may also be used.
- It may be appropriate to ask the mourners if they would like to place some or all of these items in the grave, with the thought that they are surrounding their loved one with these objects that carry a degree of sanctity and holiness. If they choose to do so, they should certainly be permitted to do so before anyone else does. If they choose not to do so, then those who place the items should exercise care and caution not to do anything that could be viewed as lacking in respect for the deceased or the objects (for example, do not stand on the casket or vault!).
- Genizah items can be placed in such a way as to partially or completely surround the deceased, casket, or liner, but should not be placed so that they are higher (closer to the surface) than the upwards side of the deceased, casket, or liner.
- After the Genizah items are placed in the grave, the ceremony should continue to conclusion, including filling the grave (to whatever degree the Minhag of the community dictates (anything from all placing some dirt, to fully filling the grave).

V. How We Do It

a. Ritual & Liturgy

Just as there is no specific mitzvah that commands a Genizah, there is no specific ritual or liturgy for storing or burying items in the Genizah. This is an area where each community may be creative, innovative, and expressive of its own style, tastes, and values. Some of the options that exist for a ritual include:

Processions – carrying the materials to the site in a formal procession

Readings – Tehillim, Poems, Stories, Selected Prayers, Text readings

Songs – Selected items from the liturgy, Hymns, Silence, favorite songs, music, chants

Participation/Action – inclusion of community members in creating the storage space, digging/opening the Genizah, creating a covering, creating a marker for the Genizah, bringing their own materials to include in the Genizah, creating art work and performance pieces around the Genizah and this ritual

b. Hiddur Mitzvah

As with other specifically stated/commanded Mitzvot, it is possible to not only perform the mitzvah, but to do so in a way that enhances and beautifies it. To that end, here are some thoughts for things that could be included in a ritual for Genizah burial.

- New music

- New readings
- New songs
- New Poetry
- Art or other creative endeavors
- Dance
- Kavvanot
- Teaching about the Mitzvot, Minhag, & Halachah

VI. Examples

- B'nai Shalom West Orange NJ (Jan. 26 2014)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGv1-i2pecw>
- Temple Torah Genizah Ceremony (Jan. 13 2013)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHqLBQEZSDQ>
- Temple Beth El, Norfolk VA (Aug 8 2015)
<http://www.jewishnewsva.org/beth-el-holds-Genizah-ceremony/>
- Shaarei Kodesh and Donna Klein Jewish Academy, Boca Raton, FL (Nov 18, 2013)
<http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com/2013/11/unique-Genizah-mitzvah-project-spans-the-country/>
- Ezra Habonim The Niles Township Synagogue, Skokie IL (Oct 4 2013)
<http://www.juf.org/news/world.aspx?id=417473>
- See Appendix A for other related websites.

VII. Conclusion

This is by no means an exhaustive treatment of the topic. At this point, I am suggesting that the ancient practice of using a Genizah be continued today, albeit somewhat selectively, with a conscious attention to what is included. Materials that do not rise to the level of sanctity for inclusion in the Genizah should be repurposed, reused, or recycled.

There should be a program of communal education about the Genizah, and the Mitzvot that it fulfills. This should be planned as both an initial program of education, and an ongoing process to teach those new to the community, and remind those who are long time members of the community.

Ideally, those items, which are suited for inclusion in the Genizah, should be secured in one location as soon as possible after the determination has been made. Practicalities may dictate how quickly permanent siting can occur; in the meantime, items should be stored and preserved in a respectful fashion.

The community should develop a ritual and liturgical approach both to permanent siting, and ideally to temporary storage as well, that honors the objects, involves the community members, and elevates the general level of holiness.

Burial may be in a specifically identified Genizah area in the cemetery; either in grave(s), or in an accessible underground vault of some sort, or burial may be in smaller quantities in the grave of honored persons who are being buried in the cemetery, so that the items (books and other shemot) will accompany the deceased, and all will be buried together, 'among the holy and the pure'. Where cemetery burial is not an option, another appropriate site should be selected and maintained.

In instances where burial is not an option at all, a permanent and protected storage facility should be found and acquired. As part of the criteria for this facility, consideration should be given to accessibility, number of persons who can be present at one time, and total capacity for storage, in order to allow for communal rituals and liturgy to be followed when items are placed in this storage facility.

APPENDICES

A. Relevant Websites (Not otherwise cited in the body of the paper)

Kavod V'Nichum: Shemot –

<http://www.jewish-funerals.org/shemot>

Kavod V'Nichum: Shemot – Burial of Sacred Writings -

<http://www.jewish-funerals.org/shemot-burial-sacred-writings>

Kavod V-Nichum: Eagle Scout Genizah projects -

<http://www.jewish-funerals.org/eagle-scout-Genizah-projects>

New Jersey Jewish News: Shul Buries Its Holy Books –

<http://njewishnews.com/njjn.com/011008/pmbShulBuriesIts.html>

Jewish Encyclopedia: Genizah entry –

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6582-Genizah>

Jewish Telegraphic Agency: Burying the Genizah –

<http://www.jta.org/2009/09/25/news-opinion/the-telegraph/ask-the-expert-burying-the-Genizah>

Joan E. Taylor. Buried Manuscripts and Empty Tombs: The Qumran Genizah Theory Revisited -

http://www.academia.edu/1065510/Buried_Manuscripts_and_Empty_Tombs_The_Qumran_Genizah_Theory_Revisited

Jewish Scene: Unique Genizah Mitzvah Project Spans the Country -

<http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com/2013/11/unique-Genizah-mitzvah-project-spans-the-country/>

B. Shulchan Aruch

Sanhedrin 71 [Note: Reproduced from <http://www.dafyomi.co.il/sanhedrin/halachah/sn-hl-071.htm> without change]

DESTROYING HASH-M'S NAME [Shem Hash-m: destroying]

Yoreh Deah 276:9

(a) GEMARA

1. We cannot burn a Mezuzah - "Lo Sa'ason Ken la'Shem Elokeichem."
2. Shabbos 61b (Beraisa): if Hash-m's name was written on the handle of a Keli or the leg of a bed, one cuts off and buries the part containing His name.
3. 104b (Beraisa - R. Yehudah): If a scribe needed to write Hash-m's name in a Sefer Torah, but he intended to write 'Yehudah' and forgot the Dalet, he may pass the quill over the letters, to be Mekadesh the name;
4. Chachamim say, this is not an ideal writing of Hash-m's name.
5. Shevuos 35a (Beraisa): One may not erase Kel, Eloka, Elokim, Elokeichem, Echyeh Asher Echyeh, 'Aleph-Dalet', 'Yud-Kei', Shakai, and Tzevakos. One may erase ha'Gadol, ha'Gibor, ha'Nora... Chanun, Rachum....
6. 35b (Beraisa): Once one writes 'Aleph-Lamed' from Elokim, he may not erase it. The same applies to 'Yud-Kei' of Hash-m's name. One may erase 'Shin-Dalet', 'Aleph-Dalet', or 'Tzadi-Beis' from Shakai, Adon-i, or Tzevakos;
7. R. Yosi says, the entire word 'Tzevakos' may be erased, for it is not a name of Hash-m. It refers to Yisrael - "Tziv'osai Es Ami Vnei Yisrael."
8. (Shmuel): The Halachah does not follow R. Yosi.
9. (Beraisa): If 'Lamed', 'Beis', 'Vav', 'Mem', 'Shin', 'Hei', or 'Kaf' is prefixed to Hash-m's name, it may be erased. If 'Nun-Vav', 'Hei-Mem', or 'Chaf-Mem' was suffixed to 'Elokei', it may be erased;
10. Others say, the suffixes may not be erased, because Hash-m's name that precedes them makes them Kodesh.
11. (Rav Huna): The Halachah follows this latter opinion.

(b) RISHONIM

1. Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei ha'Torah 6:2): One who erases a Kodesh name of Hash-m is lashed mid'Oraisa. It says about idolatry "v'Ibadtem Es Shemam... Lo Sa'asun Ken la'Shem."
 - i. Hagahos Maimoniyos (1, citing the Re'em): If one wrote Hash-m's name without intent to be Mekadesh it, it is not Kodesh. If a scribe intended to write 'Yehudah' and forgot the Dalet, the name is not Kadosh.
2. Rosh (Teshuvah 3:15): One may not say 'Shalom' in a bathhouse (Shabbos 10a), but we do not find anyone who forbids erasing it. People write it in letters, and it is thrown out.
3. Tosfos (Sotah 10a DH Ela): One may not say Shalom in a bathhouse. Also, one may not erase it. The Tana (in Maseches Sofrim Perek 4) lists names that one may not erase; he omitted Shalom.

(c) POSKIM

1. Shulchan Aruch (YD 276:9): One may not erase even one letter of the seven names of Hash-m that may not be erased. One may not erase their suffixes, e.g. the final 'Chof' in Elokecha or 'Chof Mem' in Elokeichem. The names are Shem Havayah (Yud 'Kei' Vov 'Kei), Shem Aleph-Dalet (that ends 'noy'), Kel, Eloka, Elokim, Shakai, and Tzevakos. Some texts add 'Echye Asher Echye.'
- i. Bedek ha'Bayis: Orchos Chayim says that Rav Sadya Gaon says that if a scribe wrote a Kinuy in the wrong place, he may erase it. The Ra'avad says that if he did not err, or even if he erred but he wrote the entire verse, he may not erase it. It seems that the Rambam and Tur disagree.
2. Shulchan Aruch (11): If a letter (of a Sefer Torah) stuck to another in Hash-m's name, he can scrape it (the ink joining them) away.
3. Rema: If ink spilled on Hash-m's name, one may erase it, in order to fix it. This is not like erasing (Hash-m's name). It is like fixing. If in a Hei in Hash-m's name the leg properly touches the roof and it looks like a Ches, one may erase and scrape the leg to fix it. If it touches the roof only a little, it is not clear whether it is permitted.
- i. Terumas ha'Deshen (72, cited in Beis Yosef DH Yesh Bo): May one fix a 'Hei' of Hash-m's name (e.g. if the legs touch)? Hagahos Maimoniyos (Hilchos Yesodei ha'Torah 6:2) permits to erase a Hei into which a drop of ink fell, for he intends only to fix it. It seems that the same applies here. Or, perhaps there it is permitted because the entire letter was illegible, but here we merely need a minor correction. Or, perhaps here it is permitted, for one must remove only the leg written improperly, but he will not touch what was written properly. The Tur brings Ri Alexandri, who permits. Lo Sa'asun Ken does not apply. If ink spilled on Hash-m's name, one may erase it, for he intends only to fix. If one may erase a letter that was written properly and became ruined, all the more so one may fix a letter that was never written properly! If the leg of the latter Hei touches the roof and it became a Ches, even though the first half of Hash-m's name was Mekadesh it, one may fix it. If a tiny strand connects the leg to the roof, and it is read like a Hei, the Rosh (Hilchos Sefer Torah 12) says that in Tefilin there is no solution, for they must be written in order. Shabbos 104b says that if one removed part of a letter and changed it to another letter, this is called correcting. It is as if he erased the initial letter. The same applies to erasing the leg of the Hei.
4. Shulchan Aruch (12): If one needed to write Hash-m's name, and wrote 'Yehudah', he makes the Dalet into a Hei, and erases the latter Hei.
- i. Taz (7): Why may he erase the Hei? We should say that the initial 'Yud-Kei' is Kodesh, and it is Mekadesh whatever comes after! We say so only when it has a meaning, e.g. Elokeichem. - your G-d. This is why the Beraisa mentioned particular suffixes that Hash-m's name is Mekadesh, and did not merely say that it is Mekadesh letters appended at the end.
5. Rema (13): L'Chatchilah one may not write Hash-m's name not in a Sefer, lest it come to disgrace. Therefore, we do not write it in letters. Some are careful even not to finish the word Shalom.
- i. Shach (16): Most people are not careful about Shalom. The Rosh (Teshuvah 3:15) permits.
- ii. Nekudas ha'Kesef: However, Tosfos forbids. Some say that this is only to explain the question in Sotah. I say that he truly forbids. Other Poskim do not say that it is forbidden. In practice, this requires investigation.

- iii. Pischei Teshuvah (28): The Radvaz (Chadashos 202) says that one must be careful about a greeting with Shalom, for he gives Shalom from Ba'al ha'Shalom (Hash-m). When it means 'peace', it has no Kedushah.
- iv. Chavos Ya'ir (16): A Chacham permitted to stamp Hash-m's four-letter name with a signet ring, for this is not writing. He assumes that one may write Hash-m's name only in its place, i.e. in a Sefer Torah, Tefilin, Mezuzah, Berachos, etc. The Rema connotes like this. However, there we discuss only in paper and in letters of Reshus (not Mitzvos), where it is prone to come to disgrace. This does not apply to a ring. It is improper to write Hash-m's name without need, lest it come to disgrace, and if one did, it must be buried, but it is not an actual Isur to write it. One who stamps Hash-m's name transgresses Lifnei Iver if the recipient will throw away the paper. Also, sometimes it does not come out so clear the first time, and he stamps again over Hash-m's name, and transgresses Lo Sa'asun Ken.
- v. Chavos Ya'ir (16): Even though the one who made the stamp did not intend for Kedushas ha'Shem, it is Kodesh by itself. Even what a Nochri carved out gets Kedushah! Azkaros (names of Hash-m) in a Sefer Torah require Kedushas Peh (the scribe says that they should be Kodesh), but to be stringent to forbid benefit from the place and erasing them, it is Kodesh automatically due to the letters. This is like a firstborn male Tahor Behemah. It is a Mitzvah to be Mekadesh it, but if one did not, it is Kodesh by itself. Why didn't Hagahos Maimoniyos say that the Rambam argues with Re'em? Perhaps the Re'em discusses only what is needed for a Kosher Sefer Torah. We can give a better answer. Why did the Re'em bring a proof from one who intended to write Yehudah, which Tana'im argue about? He should have brought a proof from a Sefer Torah in which the Azkaros were Lo Lishmah. We say that it is not worth anything (Gitin 54b)! Rather, it is worthless, but the Azkaros are Kodesh, for it was written Stam, and Stam they are destined to be written Lishmah. If so, what was written without Kavanah is not Kodesh. This is unreasonable. Rather, we are stringent to say that it has Kedushah. A Nochri write with intent for Emunas Yisrael. This is why the Bach says that b'Di'eved, if a Yisrael told a Nochri to tan parchment for a Sefer Torah, it is Kosher even if the Yisrael did not help. We do not say so when there was explicit intent for Chol, e.g. to write Yehudah.
- vi. Chazon Ish (Yadayim 8:18): The Isur to erase Hash-m's name applies to anything written with intent for His name. It does not need intent to be Mekadesh it. We learn from handles of Kelim (Shabbos 61b). Perhaps intent to be Mekadesh applies only to Tanach, in which the custom is to be Mekadesh Azkaros like in a Sefer Torah. However, there must be intent for Hash-m's name. If he intended to write Yehudah, it is not Kodesh. He was Mis'asek (engaged in something else). Just like certain names can be Kodesh or Chol, e.g. Adnus and Elokim, also regarding all names, if one merely wrote letters without intent for a name, it is not Kodesh, just like one who intended to write Yehudah. Maseches Sofriim permits erasing it. The same applies to Hash-m's name written by an Apikores.

Sanhedrin 113 [Note: Reproduced from <http://dafyomi.co.il/sanhedrin/halachah/sn-hl-113.htm> without change.]

GENIZAH OF KISVEI HA'KODESH [Genizah: Kisvei ha'Kodesh]

Yoreh Deah 334:21

(a) GEMARA

1. (Mishnah): Kisvei ha'Kodesh (in an Ir ha'Nidachas) are buried.
2. We cannot burn a Mezuzah - "Lo Sa'ason Ken la'Shem Elokeichem."
3. Gitin 45b (Rav Nachman): A Sefer Torah written by a Min (a zealous idolater) must be burned. If a (regular) Nochri wrote it, it is buried;
4. (Beraisa #1): If a Sefer Torah was written by a Nochri, we burn it.
5. This is like R. Eliezer, who assumes that all actions of a Nochri are for the sake of idolatry;
6. (Beraisa #2): We bury it.
7. This is like Rav Hamnuna's Beraisa, which says that a Sefer Torah, Tefilin, or Mezuzah written by a Nochri or Yisrael Mumar is Pasul.
8. Erchin 6a (Beraisa): If a Nochri donated a beam for a Beis ha'Keneses with Hash-m's Name on it, for Yisraelim to use it, we cut off the place of Hash-m's Name, and bury it. The beam may be used.
9. We permit the rest, for a Name not in its place is not Kodesh;
- i. (Beraisa): If Hash-m's Name was written on the handle of a vessel or on the legs of a bed, we cut off the Name and bury it.
10. Shabbos 116a (Beraisa): (On Shabbos) one may not save Sifrei Minim from a fire;
11. R. Yosi says, on a weekday one cuts out the Azkaros (names of Hash-m) and buries them. The rest we burn.
12. R. Tarfon: I would burn it with the Azkaros! Minim know Hash-m and deny Him. They are worse than idolaters, who do not know Hash-m.
13. R. Yishmael says, to make Shalom between a man and his wife (a Sotah) we erase Hash-m's name written in Kedushah. Minim arouse animosity between Yisrael and Hash-m, all the more we should destroy their Azkaros!
14. Megilah 26b (Rava): A worn-out Sefer Torah is buried next to a Chacham, even a Chacham who learned only Halachos.
15. (Rav Acha bar Yakov): We put it in a Keli Cheres (earthenware), so it will last - "u'Nsatam bi'Chli Chares Lema'an Ya'amdu Yomim Rabim."

(b) RISHONIM

1. Rif and Rosh (Hilchos Sefer Torah (after Menachos) 4b and Siman 20): If a Min wrote a Sefer Torah, we burn it. If a Nochri wrote it, we bury it.
2. Rif and Rosh (Hilchos Tefilin 7a and Siman 3): A Beraisa says that if a Min wrote a Sefer Torah, Tefilin or Mezuzah, we burn it. Another Beraisa says that we bury it.
3. Rambam (Hilchos Tefilin 1:13): If a Min wrote a Sefer Torah, Tefilin or Mezuzah, we burn it. If a Nochri or Yisrael Mumar wrote, it is Pasul and we bury it.
4. Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei ha'Torah 6:8): One may not burn or overtly destroy any Kisvei ha'Kodesh or explanations of them, i.e. if a Yisrael wrote it in Kedushah. If a Min Yisrael wrote a Sefer Torah, we burn it with the Azkaros, for he does not believe in the Kedushah of His name; he wrote it like other words. Therefore, the name is not Kodesh. It is a Mitzvah to burn it, lest we leave a name to Minim and their deeds. If a Nochri wrote

Hash-m's name, we bury it. If Kisvei ha'Kodesh wore out or were written by a Nochri, we bury them.

i. Ran (Megilah 8b DH Hani): Even though we bury a Sefer that wore out, we put it in a Keli Cheres so it will last as long as possible.

(c) POSKIM

1. Shulchan Aruch (OC 154:5): If a Sefer Torah wore out, we put it in a Keli Cheres and bury it in a Chacham's grave, even if he learned Halachos and did not serve Chachamim (learn how to resolve difficulties between Mishnayos).

i. Magen Avraham (9): The same applies to other Seforim that wore out. I say that the same applies to all Tashmishei Kedushah; "Lo Sa'asun Ken la'Shem Elokeichem" applies.

ii. Mishnah Berurah (22): The same applies to other Seforim that are written on leather parchment, wound (on rollers), with ink.

iii. Mishnah Berurah (24): The same applies to other Seforim that wore out. One must bury them. He may not burn them, even though he intends to prevent disgrace.

2. Shulchan Aruch (334:21): If Kisvei ha'Kodesh were written by an Apikores, i.e. a devout idolater, or a Mumar to idolatry, we do not save it. Even on a weekday, we burn it with the Azkaros (mentions of Hash-m's name).

i. Gra (28): This is like R. Tarfon. R. Yishmael holds like him.

ii. Beis Yosef (DH ha'Minim): Rashi explains that they wrote it in Ashuri characters in Lashon ha'Kodesh.

iii. Bach (DH ha'Minim): We burn it, because the Azkaros were written l'Shem his idolatry. Therefore, coins with Hash-m's four-letter name on it that Minim minted l'Shem idolatry may not be hung on a Sefer Torah. One may not keep them. He must melt them down.

iv. Mishnah Berurah (52): Rav Yehudah Milar was unsure if one may melt them, for perhaps they are not idolatrous Minim.

v. Chavos Yai'r (16): If Hash-m's name is on handles of Kelim or bed legs, they must cut off and buried. If this is due to disgrace, we permit a ring with his name, for it is not disgraceful. If we forbid handles of Kelim lest Hash-m's name be rubbed out, one may not wear the ring, but he may stamp with it, for this wears it out only a tiny amount. The Taz says that if Hash-m's name was written with Kedushah in the wrong place, it must be buried. It is no worse than Hash-m's name on the handles of Kelim. This implies that His name was on the Kelim with the intent for Kedushah. This is unlike Erchin 6a, which says that not in its place is not Kadosh, like handles of Kelim. We must say like Tosfos, that (even without intent) is Mekadesh the place of the writing.

vi. Chavos Ya'ir (16): Erchin 6a forbids benefit from the Keli as long as Hash-m's name is on even the handle. Therefore, one may not wear the ring or stamp with it. Mas'as Binyamin (99) says that there is Kedushah on Hash-m's name engraved just like when it is written. Even though the one who made the stamp did not intend for the Kedushas ha'Shem, it is Kodesh by itself. Even what a Nochri carved out gets Kedushah! I say the Swedish rings with the four-letter name were made to export them; this is like explicit intent for Chol.

vii. Machatzis ha'Shekel (24 DH b'Chodoshim): This is unlike the Bach. Or, perhaps Chavos Ya'ir discusses rings minted by the kingdom, and the Bach discusses rings that Minim made themselves for idolatry. Or, we can distinguish between Minim and Stam Nochrin.

- viii. Kaf ha'Chayim (98): If one is unsure whether they were minted for idolatry, one may keep them or melt them. However, if they were written in Kedushah, a printing press (or mint) is like writing.
- ix. Kaf ha'Chayim (99): If Nochrim write our Kisvei ha'Kodesh in their language, one should be stringent to bury it. (Shiltei ha'Giborim Shabbos 43a:1)
- 4. Shulchan Aruch (YD 281:1): If an Apikores wrote a Sefer Torah, we burn it. Of a Nochri wrote it, we bury it.
 - i. Beis Yosef (DH Sefer): Tosfos says that if a Nochri wrote it in order to sell to a Yisrael, it is Pasul. Rashi connotes that it is Machshir, but I say that we can explain that he agrees that it is Pasul.
 - ii. Taz (1): We assume that a Min wrote for idolatry. It is a Safek what a Nochri intended. The Rambam says that one may read alone in his house from a Pasul Sefer. The Tur forbids this if there is even a Safek that a Nochri wrote it, for perhaps it was written l'Shem an idol.
 - iii. Shach (3): We bury a Sefer Torah that a Nochri wrote it, even if he did so in order to sell to a Yisrael.
- 5. Shulchan Aruch (OC 39:4): We burn Tefilin that an Apikores wrote. Some say that we bury it.
 - i. Beis Yosef (DH u'Rabeinu): The Tur and R. Yerucham say that if a Min wrote Tefilin we bury them, but we burn a Sefer Torah that he wrote. Rav Nachman discussed only a Sefer Torah. For Tefilin, we follow Rav Hamnuna, who says that we bury them. A Min writes Sifrei Torah for himself, so surely it is for idolatry. Tefilin he wrote for a Yisrael; perhaps it was not for idolatry. The Rif and Rosh say that we burn a Sefer Torah, and bring both Beraisos regarding Sefer Torah, Tefilin and Mezuzah. Since there was no Pesak, we do not overtly burn Tefilin or Mezuzos. Regarding a Sefer Torah, they rely on the ruling they gave.
 - ii. Chidushei Hagahos (2): The text of the Rif and Rosh brings the Beraisos about burning or burying a Sefer Torah, Tefilin and Mezuzah.
 - iii. Taz (3) and Gra (7): The primary text of the Tur says that we burn it. R. Yerucham is a lone opinion.
 - iv. Mishnah Berurah (14): The Shulchan Aruch favors the first opinion.

C. Halachapedia provides the following instructions on items to include in a Genizah:

[Note: Reproduced without change from

http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Burying_Religious_Articles.]

Halachapedia says about itself:

Halachipedia has been a growing encyclopedia of Halacha since November 2009 and currently we have [483](#) pages of content with millions of hits! Besides for the regular pages, we have a number of finalized and reviewed [Halachipedia Articles](#). We would greatly appreciate any contribution as Jews we all have a unique portion of Torah. Anyone can create an account and contribute to Halachipedia. [To learn more about how to contribute to Halachipedia click here.](#) [To learn how to edit Halachipedia click here.](#)

Caution: Halachipedia makes a great effort to ensure that the information presented here is authentic and valid. However, due to the nature of the wiki interface when using this information for practical purposes please make sure to consult a reliable halachic work or competent Orthodox Rabbi.

In an effort to improve the search engine for Halachipedia, we have a [custom Google Search](#) and a [Freefind Search](#), however, because of the ads these are not our preferred search options. Check out our [new Free Android App here](#).

Forms of writing

Divrei Torah which are written in any font or language need Geniza. [1]

However, Divrei Torah written in mirror image fonts don't need Geniza. [2]

Divrei Torah written in Brail need Geniza. [3]

Divrei Torah written in microscopic font, some say they do need Geniza, but some are lenient if there's no name of Hashem. [4]

One shouldn't write Divrei Chol in Ktav Ashurit (block-print font of Hebrew as is written in the Torah). [5]

Erasing Hashem's name

Erasing Hashem's name is learned from the juxtaposition of VeAvadtem Et Shemam and Lo TaAsun Ken LaHashem. In general, it's forbidden to erase even one letter of any of the 7 names of Hashem: Yud Hay Vav Hay, Adonai, Eloah, El, Elokim, Shaddai, Tzivaot. [6]

Many authorities permit erasing Torah or names of Hashem in electronic form. [7]

There is a dispute regarding printing a paper with Divrei Torah which was done for temporary use and without intent of making it Kadosh. [8]

Many poskim permit erasing the name of God written in languages other than Hebrew. [9]

Even though technically it is permitted to cause God's name to be erased [10] nonetheless it is forbidden to let someone with a contagious disease wear a pair of Tefillin and will inevitably have to be burnt for medical purposes. [11]

What must be Buried?

Texts with torah written on them should be buried in shaimos. [12]

A paper that says God in English may be thrown away and does not need to be buried.

[13] The same is true of writing Hashem whether in English or in Hebrew. [14]

The schach, etrog, lulav, hadasim and aravot do not need to be buried, they can be thrown into the trash. [15]

A yarmulke does not need to be buried. [16]

A Tallit gadol or Tallit katan should ideally not be thrown out in a disgraceful manner.

Therefore one should wrap it or place it in a bag before placing it in the garbage. [17]

Things to be careful for

Organizations should not send out advertisements with the name of Hashem written on them because people may unknowingly throw it out. [18]

Many poskim write that one should not write a pasuk on an invitation as most people simply throw these away. [19]

Pesukim should not be placed in newspapers since the people will throw them away. [20]

Sources

1. S"A 154:5
2. Kaf HaChaim O"C 154:38 writes that letters that are written backwards making up a Dvar Torah don't need [geniza](#) as it's not considered letters. This is also the opinion of the Maharsham 3:39 and Ginizei HaKodesh 11:7 in name of Rav Elyashiv.
3. Ginizei HaKodesh 11:7 in name of Rav Elyashiv
4. Ginizei HaKodesh 11:7 in name of Rav Elyashiv says that microscopic font doesn't need [Geniza](#), while Rabbi Karlitz holds they do need [Geniza](#).
5. Rama Y"D 284:2 writes in name of the Sh"t HaRambam 7 (quoted in the Bet Yosef YD 284) that it's disgraceful to write Divrei Chol in the Ktav Ashurit since it's the lettering that the Torah was given in. Even though the Tashbetz 1:2 permits writing Divrei Chol in Ktav Ashurit, most poskim hold like the Rambam including the Orchot Chaim (Talmid Torah 1:9), Sh"t Radvaz (quoted by Pitchei Teshuva 283:3), Sh"t Chovot Yair 109, Sh"t Rav Poalim 4:32, and Aruch HaShulchan 284:8. [Rav Hershel Schachter in a shiur on yutorah.org](#) (min 1-3) says that upon the insistence of his father-in-law his wedding invitations were written with Rashi script and not block letters because many block letters are similar to Ketav Ashurit and also there's a Minhag to extend the above practice and reserve Ketav Ashurit for Tanach.
6. S"A Y"D 276:9
7. Sh"t Yachava Daat 4:50, Sh"t Igrot Moshe 1:173 are lenient because the electronic encryption is illegible but says that it's preferable to be strict.
8. Rav Asher Weiss (quoted by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/739819/Rabbi_Aryeh_Lebowitz/Ten_Minute_Halacha_-_Assorted_Sheimos_Issues) is lenient because of the expense.
9. Mishna Brurah 85:10 and Shach YD 179:10 both hold that it is permitted to erase the name of God in languages other than Hebrew.
10. See Gemara Shabbat 120b
11. Igrot Moshe OC 1:4
12. Ginzei Hakodesh 10:3:19 quoting Rav Elyashiv
13. Mishna Brurah 85:10
14. Iggerot Moshe YD 2:138, Ginzei Hakodesh 7: footnote 8

15. [Star-K](#)
16. [Star-K](#)
17. Ginzei Hakodesh 17: footnote 22 quoting Rav Elyashiv
18. Iggerot Moshe YD 2: 134-135. Ginzei Hakodesh 7:17:footnote 35 quotes Rav Elyashiv that it would be permitted if you do not write the complete name of Hashem.
19. Iggerot Moshe 2:135, Ginzei Hakodesh 9:5, Halichos Shlomo [Tefilla](#) 20:footnote 72. [Rav Hershel Schachter in a shiur on yutorah.org](#) (min 1-2) agrees.[Rav Moshe Heinemann](#), however, writes that the pasuk of od yeshama is only a melitza and not written as a pasuk and is therefore permitted.
20. Rav Elyashiv in Kovetz Teshuvot 1:115. This is based on the Shach 283:4 who writes that the reason Shulchan Aruch 283:4 says one shouldn't write pesukim on a Tallit is because someone may come to throw it away.

D. WWW.SHAIMOS.ORG [Note: Reproduced from www.shaimos.org without change.]

Shaimos.org is hosted by the Israel Bookshop, 501 Prospect Street, Lakewood, NJ 08701 USA. The website has the following as a guideline, which is followed by the Kof-K standards (included in Appendix E. The book shop is apparently affiliated with the Orthodox community in Lakewood, though I did not find any information to support that assumption.)

Shaimos.org indicates as follows, in accordance with the Kof-K standards.

Shaimos Guidelines

Shaimos has holiness and should be put in proper *geniza* or buried. The following categories are listed in order of importance:

1. Holy Writings:

Handwritten parchments such as *Tefillin*, *Mezuzot*, and *Megillah* scrolls. These items need to be double wrapped in plastic before being placed in *shaimos*.

2. Words of Torah:

Printed or photocopied material: *Chumashim*, *Gemarat*, commentaries of the Sages; *Torah* articles that are distributed weekly; *Parsha* sheets, homework which has *Torah* content. Anything with a *pasuk* (Biblical verse) including wedding and *bar* or *bat mitzvah* invitations or greeting cards which have entire *pesukim*. Book cover that is removed from a holy book, or other parts of a holy book.

3. Holy Objects:

Tefillin straps, covers, and bags; *Mezuzah* wrappings and casings; *Torah mantels* and sashes.

4. Mitzvah Objects:

Anything that was used for a *mitzvah*, such as: *Tallit*, *tzitzit*, *etrog*, *shofar*, *lulav*, *gartel* etc. There are those who are careful to treat items in this category as *shaimos*.

Not Shaimos:

Yarmulkas, audio or video materials, computer disks, diagrams or pictures without text.

For any further questions, contact your Rabbi.

Q If you are reading a Jewish newspaper and 80% is advertising and “rubbish” and only 20% is Torah, do you put it all in the garbage or all in Shaimos?

A There are some people who say that if the majority is not Torah you could throw it away but if you want to have a little more respect for God, so cut that section out and place it in a Shaimos box.

Q Why does a *gartel* belong in a shamos box? Tashmishei Mitzvoh is NIZROKIN=Garbage can.

A True, *tashmishei* mitzvah are *nizrokin*, but the prevailing custom is to treat *tashmishe* mitzvah with great respect and bury them wherever possible, as *shaimos*. Suggest that, that person discuss it with their Rov.

Q "Maybe I shouldn't go in to a Jewish web site and learn Torah from my computer screen because I am continuously erasing Torah words on my screen?"

A This is different because those are not words to begin with, they are dots - millions of dots that form words, and are not called words that were ever put down in to some sort of way at all.

Q Is there a "ceremony" before or after the burial of the Shaimos?

A There is no prescribed ceremony for the burying of old or dilapidated holy texts. The reason we bury them is so that they should not be treated disrespectfully. Originally, this practice was for hand written holy writings that had G-d's name written on parchment. Also included were adjuncts to those writings such as special cover for Torah scrolls, Mezuzah covers etc. Later this spread to printed books and other printed materials with Torah content. Actually the items do not have to be buried but could even be archived-- the main point is to treat them respectfully.

Q I am a publisher and have a huge load of shaimos – a misprint of an entire edition of a book. We're talking about 5-6 skids (!) of merchandise, approx. 300 plus boxes, These books CANNOT be sold under any circumstances. What do I do?

According to some Rabaim newly printed sefarim that have not been read from, that are also right off the press and have According problems with them where they can't be distributed do not need to be put in to Shaimos.

A This, together with another psak by a very known Rabbi, says you could double wrap them in black non-see threw garbage bags as an alterative for burying.

But if you still want to dispose of it the traditional way and your conscience doesn't allow you to do the above, I could d come up with a price to take it from you. Please contact us.

E. The Kof-K Shemot standards

[Kof-K is a Kosher supervision agency. It is located at 201 The Plaza, Teaneck NJ 07666-5156. Telephone: 201-887-0500. Website: www.kof-k.org]

[The following is as it appears on the website, including formatting. I have made no corrections. Hebrew characters did not transfer; they appear as boxes. To see them in the original please visit the website.]

The Kof-K standards as shown on <http://www.shaimos.org/>.

[Desposing of Shaimos by the KOF-K.pdf](#)

by the



The Halachos of Shaimos

Many people are not familiar with the *halachos* of *shaimos*. The problem with the volume of *shaimos*, only developed fairly recently with the advent of cheap, commonly utilized printing methods. After reviewing these *halachos* one will have a clear understanding of what is indeed *shaimos* and how to properly dispose of them.

The *posuk*¹ tells us that there is a requirement upon all of *klal yisroel* to destroy and break any idol, and to remove their names from our midst, and one is forbidden to do this to *Hashem's name*. The *issur* to destroy or break a name of *Hashem* is called *Lo Sason Kein L'Shem Elokeycheim*." The *Gemorah*² says that included in this *issur* is the prohibition to erase the name of *Hashem*. The *Rambam*³ says that whoever destroys any of *Hashem's* names receives *malkos*. The *Chinuch*⁴ says the reason for this *mitzvah* is in order to come to fear *Hashem*. Whoever is not careful with the *kedusha* of *seforim* will have to give *adin* and *chesbon* over it after 120 years.⁵

If one gives the right respect to something which deserves to be buried then *Hashem* will have compassion on us and He will make sure that *klal yisroel* does not get destroyed.⁶

The *Mishnah*⁷ says if one honors the *Torah* then he will be honored and liked by the world.

There is a big discussion in the *poskim* if something is not hand written but rather printed if it has *kedusha*.⁸ The consensus of the *poskim* is that it is equal to being hand written.

¹ Devarim 12:4, see Torah Temimah ibid:12:4.

² Mesechtas Makos 22a, see Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 276:9.

³ Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 6:1, see Sefer Hamitzvahs (Rambam) lo sasei 65.

⁴ Mitzvah 433.

⁵ Taz Y.D. 271:8.

⁶ Sefer Matamim page 140:11 (new).

⁷ Pirkei Avos 4:6.

⁸ Refer to Rama M'Pano 93, Taz O.C. 284:2, Y.D. end of 271, Magen Avraham O.C. 32:57, 154:14, 334:17,

Rav Poalim 2:24, Mishnah Berurah 40:4, Maharsham 3:357, Minchas Yitzchok 1:17:8, Eyunei Halachos

2:page 564, Be'er Moshe 3:174:4, 8:47, Shevet Ha'Levi Y.D. 5:163, Tzitz Eliezer 3:1, Ginzei Ha'kodesh

1:footnote 4. Refer to Chazzon Ish Y.D. 164:3 who is lenient.

2

The Names of Hashem

As previously mentioned one is forbidden to erase the name of *Hashem*. Those names

are: □□□-□□ , □□-□ , □□□-□□ , □□□-□ , □-□ , □□□□□ , □□□□□□□.⁹ These names are required to be put into

shaimos.¹⁰ *Rachum*, *Chanun*, *Hagodel Hagibbur* are not required to be placed in *shaimos*.¹¹

There is a dispute if the name of *Hashem* in English (G-d) may be erased.¹² The following does not need *geniza* and one may throw items containing these names in the garbage.¹³

Writing a *Daled*,¹⁴ *Hashem* (in English or Hebrew),¹⁵ *Hakodesh Boruch Hu*,¹⁶ *B'ezeras*

*Hashem*¹⁷ and writing *BS'D* (*bais samach daled*).¹⁸ Some are careful and did not write a

BS'D on top of a letter.¹⁹ Some question if writing a *kuf* instead of a *heh* does not require

shaimos, but the *Minhag* is to be lenient.²⁰ There is a dispute in the *poskim* if one writes the letters *Bais* and *Heh* if they require to be put into *shaimos*. Some were careful about writing these letters on top of a letter if they will be thrown away.²¹ The overwhelming custom is to permit the writing of *bais* and *hey* on top of a letter even if the letter will be thrown away²² (but not in a disgraceful place).²³ This is how the *Brisker Rav* was *noheg*

⁹ Refer to Mesechtas Shavuot 35a-35b, Tur Y.D. 276, Shulchan Aruch 276:9, Bais Yosef. Some say □□□□□□□□ □□□□ (Shulchan Aruch ibid).

¹⁰ Ginzei Ha'kodesh 7:1 page 266:75 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

¹¹ Mesechtas Shavuos and Tur ibid, Aruch Ha'shulchan Y.D. 276:23, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:7, see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 85:2.

¹² Refer to Shach Y.D. 276:11, Pischei Teshuva 11, 19, Mishnah Berurah O.C. 85:10, Aruch Ha'shulchan Y.D. 276:24, C.M. 27:3, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 24.

¹³ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 11.

¹⁴ Aruch Ha'shulchan Y.D. 276:28, see Shevet Ha'kehusi 4:256:2.

¹⁵ Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:138, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 8.

¹⁶ Ginzei Hakodesh 7:5.

¹⁷ Igros Moshe ibid, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:5, Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 257:43, see Doleh U'mashka page 341. The Chazzon Ish did not even write a BS'D when he started writing on top of a paper (Orchos Rabbeinu ibid).

¹⁸ Igros Moshe ibid, Betzel Hachuchma 4:105, Rivevos Ephraim 4:203, Ginzei Hakodesh ibid:footnote 9, Nezer Ha'chaim page 217:166.

¹⁹ Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 257:43.

²⁰ Shevet Ha'kehusi 2:288, 4:256:1, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 12 quoting the opinion of Horav Korelitz Shlita.

²¹ Tz'fnas Pa'ne'ach 196:page 155, Toras Chaim page 138, Piskei Teshuvos 3:292:page 50, Rivevos Ephraim ibid, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 13, Nezer Ha'chaim page 217:166, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 13

quoting the opinions of Horav Ben-zion Abba Shaul zt"l and Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l, see Yugel Yaakov footnotes 350-353, Doleh U'mashka page 341, Nekius V'kovod B'tefilla page 101:37-38. The Betzel Hachuchma 4:105 says *midakdikim* do not throw out a paper with the letters *bais* and *hey*.
 22 Melamid L'huel O.C. 113:20, Yaskil Avdi Y.D. 7:20:3, 8:13, Yechaveh Da'as 3:78, Avnei Yushfei 1:13:2 quoting the opinion of Horav Vosner Shlita, Yugel Yaakov footnotes 350-353, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 13 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita.
 23 Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:138.

3

as well.²⁴ Writing the name *Eibishtar* is permitted and does not need to be put into *shaimos*.²⁵ Many say even if one breaks up the letters of a name of *Hashem* by placing a hyphen between the letters, it still requires *geniza*,²⁶ while others are lenient.²⁷ According to the lenient opinion, if one is concerned that the writing may end up in a disgusting location he should hyphenate the name of *Hashem* (for example G-d).²⁸ Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l was stringent with hyphenated *Hashem's* name.²⁹ When writing the numbers in *Hebrew* of 16 and 17 the *Minhag* is to write *tes vov* and *tes zayin* instead of *yud heh*, and *yud vov*.³⁰ (One should not say *Hashem's* name even in English for no reason.³¹ When one says "thank G-d" it is not considered saying *Hashem's* name for no reason since it is the *derech* for people to say it and he does not have intention of *Hashem's* name to be mentioned per 'se).³²

Sending out Papers with *Hashem's* Name

One should not send out advertisements with the name of *Hashem* written on it because most people just throw it in the garbage without knowing they are not allowed to and it comes to a disgrace. Many organizations do this and it is not correct.³³ One may do so if one is not writing the complete name.³⁴

Chocolate “Gelt”

During *Chanukah* chocolate *gelt* is available on the market which says “in G-d we Trust” on it. The question arises how one is allowed to eat it since he is erasing the name of *Hashem* (albeit in a different language) This does not make a difference according to some *poskim*.³⁵ Some say *l’chatchilah* one should not purchase such chocolates, however, if they were purchased already they can be eaten since when one eats it that is not considered erasing since it is the normal manner to eat it.³⁶ Others say one can purchase

²⁴ Teshuvos V’hanhugos 1:640. He quotes that the Gr’a was stringent.

²⁵ Igros Moshe 1:172 (end), Teshuvos V’hanhugos 1:639.

²⁶ Avnei Nezer Y.D. 365:1, Ginzei Hakodesh 9:9:6:footnote 35.

²⁷ Minchas Yitzchok 9:62:3, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 22:footnote 34, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 29

quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita.

²⁸ Ginzei Hakodesh 7:footnote 26.

²⁹ Sharei Simcha (Shavuot) page 16.

³⁰ Yosef Ometz page 279, Piskei Teshuvos 154:footnote 126.

³¹ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 6:3, see Rivevos Ephraim 5:560 who says one should not say *ado’shem* instead of saying *Hashem’s* name. Refer to *ibid*:5:474.

³² Pischei Halacha (Berochos) Miluyim 3:page 242..

³³ Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:134-135.

³⁴ Ginzei Hakodesh 7:17:footnote 35 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita.

³⁵ Refer to footnote 12.

³⁶ Ve’alu Lo Yeibol 2:page 120:119.

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it even *l’chatchilah* and rely on those *poskim* who maintain the name of *Hashem* written in a different language is permitted to be erased. This seems to be the custom of most

people.³⁷ There is a custom to give a child who is getting his hair cut by his *upsherin* a piece of cake with honey and a *posuk* written on it.³⁸ The reason for it is to open the child's heart to *Torah* by licking the honey and eating the cake.³⁹ Some say that one may eat the piece of cake that contains a *posuk* because it is made for that purpose and has no *kedusha*.⁴⁰ Others took issue with this and did not permit it.⁴¹

Lights with *Hashems* Name

Some *poskim* maintain that lights which spell out the name of *Hashem* are permitted to be turned off and it is not considered that one is erasing the name of *Hashem*.⁴²

The Name *Shalom*

Shalom is a name of *Hashem*,⁴³ therefore it should be treated with more *kedusha* than other names that people are called. One may not greet someone in an inner bathhouse by calling out *Shalom*.⁴⁴ Many are lenient with this and simply drop off the last letter of *Shalom*.⁴⁵ Some maintain if a person is writing *Shalom* on a letter it should be abbreviated and written either without the *mem* or without the *vov*,⁴⁶ while others maintain this is not necessary.⁴⁷ If one is writing *Shalom* as a greeting, then he may write it in the regular way (*Shalom*).⁴⁸

³⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

³⁸ Rokeach 296. Refer to Natei Gavriel Pesach 3:pages 358-359.

³⁹ Dugel Mervuva O.C. 340:3, see Osios Machkimos pages 183-187.

⁴⁰ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Giznei Hakodesh 11:19:footnote 30, page 265:62 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita, see Bais Yitzchok Y.D. 2:107.

⁴¹ Refer to Chavos Yuer 16, Sheilas Yaavetz 2:140, Pri Ha'aretz 2:4, Ginzei Hakodesh 11:19. Refer to Nishmas Shabbos 4:96.

⁴² Sharei Kodesh 166.

⁴³ Refer to Gemorah Shabbos 10b, Ran Shabbos 4b, Tosfas Sotah 10a “eleh,” Magen Avraham 84:2, Sharei Teshuva 151:1. See Aruch Ha’shulchan Y.D. 276:28, Avnei Yushfei 1:12.

⁴⁴ Gemorah Shabbos 10b. Refer to Chai Adom 3:36, Mishnah Berurah 84:6. One is permitted to walk into the bathroom with the name Shalom on a *yarmulka*.

⁴⁵ Refer to Taz 84:3, Machtzis Ha’shekel O.C. 84:2, Pri Megadim M.Z. 3, Chai Adom 3:36, Nishmas Adom 9, Birchei Yosef 85:9, Mishnah Berurah 84:6.

⁴⁶ Rama Y.D. 276:13, Mishnah Berurah 86:4, Yabea Omer Y.D. 4:22, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 22:footnote 34.

⁴⁷ Shach 16, Be’er Moshe 4 :8, Yabea Omer ibid. See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:40:1, Rivevos Ephraim 3:609.

⁴⁸ Radvaz 1:220, Pischei Teshuva Y.D. 276:28.

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Tapes/Discs/Computer

Many times one has tapes with *Hashems* name recorded on it and after a while he wants to copy over the tape (or a C.D) in order to copy something else on to it. If one wants to copy over it he should let a *goy* do it for him or a young child.⁴⁹ Some say he can do it himself and it is not considered erasing *Hashems* name since there is no real substance to the words on the tape.⁵⁰ *Horav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt”l* said other *Torah* should be copied over a *Torah* tape.⁵¹ If there is no *posuk* or name of *Hashem* many *poskim* are lenient to erase it.⁵² These tapes when finished with them may be thrown in the garbage.⁵³ Others say one should wrap the tape in a bag prior to throwing it out.⁵⁴ One should initially try not to record any of *Hashem’s* names on a tape.⁵⁵ One is permitted to erase the name of *Hashem* or a *posuk* that is written on a computer screen since it is not considered erasing.⁵⁶ *Divrei Torah* written in microscopic letters or on microfilm should be treated with the same *kedusha* as a regular *sefer*. If one cannot put it in *shaimos* he should wrap it in a bag before discarding it.⁵⁷

Writing *Torah* on a Blackboard

Many times a teacher writes *Torah* on a blackboard. Some *poskim* say that they can write *Torah* and erase it, since the intention is to write more *Torah* on the blackboard.⁵⁸ Some say the reason why it is permitted is because there is an unspoken condition made that no *kedusha* should be placed on this *Torah*.⁵⁹ The eraser is not required to be put into *shaimos*.⁶⁰ One is not allowed to erase something on a blackboard that contains the name

⁴⁹ Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:173, 2:142, O.C. 3:31, Kinyan Torah 1:34:5, Rivevos Ephraim 7:379:6, Tzitz Eliezer 13:1, Shevet Ha'Levi Y.D. 2:145, 6:154, Minchas Yitzchok 3:102, Oz Nedberu 5:12:2, Har Tzvi 1:page 280, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:footnote 34, Divrei Chachumim Y.D. 100:1, Emes L'Yaakov Y.D. 276:footnote 195, Chai Ha'Levi 4:83, Sharei Ha'beracha 10:16, see Chelkes Yaakov 3:98:2 and Yaskil Avdi 8:page 179a who say it is forbidden in any case.

⁵⁰ Yabea Omer Y.D. 4:40, 8:26, Yechaveh Da'as 4:50, Yeishiv Moshe page 145, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 3:325, Shearim Metzuyananim B'halacha 28 (kuntres achron) 15, Ginzei Hakodesh 7:40, Tzedaka U'mishpat 16:footnote 83, Nezer Ha'chaim page 219:170, see Be'er Moshe 5:66:5, 7:kuntres electric 62.

⁵¹ Emes L'Yaakov Y.D. 276:footnote 195.

⁵² Yugel Yaakov page 106 quoting the opinion of Horav Henkin zt"l, Piskei Teshuvos 154:footnote 132.

⁵³ Ginzei Hakodesh page 272:2.

⁵⁴ The Laws of Pesach A Digest (Rabbi Blumenkrantz zt"l 2006) page 726.

⁵⁵ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, Be'er Moshe 4:91.

⁵⁶ Avnei Yushfei 4:105, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 3:326, Ginzei Hakodesh page 298:19 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita. Refer to Laws of Pesach A Digest 5766:page 727.

⁵⁷ Laws of Pesach A Digest 5766:page 726.

⁵⁸ Refer to Tashbatz 1:2, Pischei Teshuva Y.D. 283:2, Rivevos Ephraim 4:209, see Divrei Chachumim Y.D. 100, Shevet Ha'kehusi, 5:191.

⁵⁹ Ein Yitzchok O.C. 5:10-11.

⁶⁰ Ginzei Hakodesh 11:12:footnote 17.

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of *Hashem*.⁶¹ The custom seems to be, to permit the erasing of *BS'D* (in Hebrew) on top of a blackboard.⁶²

Seforim

The *Magen Avraham*⁶³ says just as a *sefer Torah* which is unusable needs to be put into a earthenware utensil and buried, so too regarding *seforim*. The *Minhag* is not like this *Magen Avraham*.⁶⁴ A *T'nach, Gemorah, Mishnayos, Siddur, Halacha, or Mussar sefer*⁶⁵ that is unusable has to be put into *shaimos*.⁶⁶

*Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*⁶⁷ said an old *sefer* of *Torah Sh'bal Peh* may be thrown out if it becomes unusable (if it does not contain the name of *Hashem*).⁶⁸ The reason is because *Torah Sh'bal Peh* only has *kedusha* if one is learning from it. Once the initial use is gone one may throw it out. This is a big *chiddush* and he says it is only true if the *gedolim* in *Eretz Yisroel* would agree with him. The *gedolim* in *Eretz Yisroel* hold one may not rely on this, and *chas v'sholom* to throw an old *Gemorah* etc in the garbage.⁶⁹ *Horav Moshe zt"l* himself never *paskined* to throw out an unusable *Gemorah* etc. as a matter of *halacha l'maseh*.⁷⁰

Some say if a new, corrected version of a *sefer* is published, the old one may be put into *shaimos*.⁷¹ One should not place a *sefer* which one does not want to bind into *shaimos*, rather he should see to it that it is bound.⁷² A bookmark that was used for a *sefer* may be thrown in the garbage.⁷³ A *sefer* that was never used may be placed in *shaimos* because it does not have *kedusha*.⁷⁴ If a page of a *Gemorah* ripped out and one would not use the

⁶¹ Tashbatz 1:2, Pischei Teshuva Y.D. 283:2, Rivevos Ephraim 8:388:11, Ginzei Hakodesh 11:11, Divrei Chachumim Y.D. 100:2.

⁶² Ginzei Hakodesh page 266:74.

⁶³ O.C. 154:9, see Rambam Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 6:8.

⁶⁴ Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham O.C. 154:9. Mishnah Berurah 154:24, Aruch Ha'shulchan 8, Kaf Ha'chaim 37.

⁶⁵ Refer to Rashi Mesectas Shabbos 115 "ha'berochos."

⁶⁶ Ginzei Hakodesh 8:1.

⁶⁷ Igros Moshe O.C. 4:39.

⁶⁸ Sdei Chemed gimmel 23:page 49.

⁶⁹ Ginzei Hakodesh 8:footnote 8 quoting the opinions of Horav Korelitz Shlita, Horav Vosner Shlita, and Horav Elyashiv Shlita. Refer to ibid:page 264:59 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

⁷⁰ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁷¹ Piskei Teshuvos 154:footnote 95. Refer to Moer V'ketzia page 160.

⁷² Ginzei Hakodesh page 277:6.

⁷³ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita in Ginzei Hakodesh 8:footnote 30.

⁷⁴ Letters of the Chofetz Chaim 83, see Chelkes Yaakov O.C. 40 who discusses this question as it applied after the Holocaust. Others say no *shaimos* is required (Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 201:21).

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rest of the *Gemorah* one may put the *sefer* into *shaimos*.⁷⁵ When the binding of a *sefer* falls off it should be put into *shaimos*.⁷⁶ Many times the string that a *sefer* was bound with comes off. These strings require to be put into *shaimos* since they were in the *sefer* for a long period of time it is considered as part of the *sefer*.⁷⁷

One who writes *mareh mekomos* on a paper which only he can read does not have to be placed into *shaimos*.⁷⁸ Some say this refers to a sheet which has *mareh mekomos* for *ashiur* without any *halacha* or *gemorah* on them.⁷⁹

Children who come home with *Torah* sheets from *Yeshiva* should place them in *shaimos*.⁸⁰ Others say one can be lenient and place them in a plastic bag in the garbage.⁸¹

Rough Drafts

Many *poskim* dealt with the problem they had at hand which was the printer's rough drafts. The printers would make rough drafts that were full of errors. They would correct them trying to produce a final draft. The question many *poskim* dealt with is what to do with the rough drafts. After a while they had hundreds of these drafts. Eventually the place to store them became very scarce and a solution was needed. Some *poskim* suggested that the rough drafts be burned since it costs a lot of money to keep all these rough drafts around, and if they were not burnt then they would come to a greater disgrace by just lying around.⁸² Nonetheless, many *poskim* disagreed with this premise and said it is forbidden to burn any *sefer*⁸³ including rough drafts.⁸⁴ Throughout

⁷⁵ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita in Ginzei Hakodesh 8:footnote 9. Some say one may rip out the pages that are going to *shaimos* from a *sefer* and use the rest of the *sefer* (Shevet Ha'Levi 3:15:4).

⁷⁶ Ginzei Hakodesh 8:10.

⁷⁷ Ibid:footnote 28 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita and Horav Korelitz Shlita.

⁷⁸ Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:75, Tzedaka U' mishpat 16:footnote 93. The Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:22 says to put them in *shaimos*.

⁷⁹ Poskim.

⁸⁰ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, Chai Ha'Levi 4:84:3.

⁸¹ Shraga Hamei 5:61:1.

⁸² Shevus Yaakov 3:12, Sdei Chemed mareches gimmel 23:pages 48-49, Tzitz Eliezer 3:1. Refer to Minchas Yitzchok 1:18.

⁸³ Magen Avraham 154:9, Mishnah Berurah 154:24, Aruch Ha'shulchan Y.D. 282:8, Kaf Ha'chaim 154: 37, see Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 154:9.

⁸⁴ Refer to Knesses Yecheskel 37, Salmas Chaim 521 (old), Zekan Aaron 1:9, Ginzei Hakodesh 15:footnote 37, Avnei Yushfei 1:204:page 349, see Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 154:9.

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the years people have burnt *seforim*, but that was because the *goyim* would have done disrespectful acts to it and it would have come to a greater disgrace.⁸⁵

Other *poskim* suggested that *divrei Torah* is only forbidden to be thrown out etc. if one has intention for the *Torah* to acquire *kedusha*. However, if one does not have that intention, then *divrei Torah* without the name of *Hashem* may be thrown away (not in a disgraceful manner, but put in the garbage wrapped in a plastic bag).⁸⁶ Therefore, according to this reasoning the printers should have in mind beforehand that these pages should not have *kedusha*, since these pages are not being learnt from and are just printed to correct.⁸⁷ Some say no condition is needed because one does not have intention for these pages to last, only for one to look at the mistakes and to correct them.⁸⁸

Others suggest one should get rid of it by a *grama*. A *goy* or child⁸⁹ should take them away even if they will be destroyed.⁹⁰ Accordingly, one would be able to take them and place them in front of one's house for the garbage men to take. However, this is only true for *shaimos* which do not contain any of *Hashems* names in them. Many *poskim* did not like this idea, since doing so is considered destroying it with his own hands.

Many of the contemporary *poskim* say that today the above *heterim* do not apply and one should treat the rough drafts with *kedusha*. These *heterim* were used when the *Torah* would otherwise come to disgrace, this is not true today when we can place them into *shaimos*.⁹¹

Newspapers

There are some *poskim* who wish to suggest that just as many hold that the printer's

drafts do not need to be placed in *shaimos*, so would be true regarding our journals and newspapers. They reason that since they are normally thrown out after a short period of

⁸⁵ Yaskil Avdi Y.D. 7:20, Piskei Teshuvos 2:page 287. Refer to Divrei Chachumim Y.D. 99:4 about waterlogged *seforim*.

⁸⁶ Chazzon Ish Y.D. 164:3.

⁸⁷ Ein Yitzchok O.C. 1:5-7.

⁸⁸ Refer to Meishiv Dover 2:80, Tzedaka U' mishpat 16:footnote 93.

⁸⁹ Sdei Chemed ibid:35:page 53.

⁹⁰ Achi Ezer 2:48.

⁹¹ Refer to Kaf Ha'chaim 154:37, Yeishiv Moshe 2:31, Salmas Chaim 521, 370, (old), Toras Chaim page 137:footnote 4, Ginzei Hakodesh (miluyim) 7: pages 206-209. This is the opinion of the Steipler zt"l, Horav Ben-zion Abba Shaul zt"l, Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l, Horav Elyashiv Shlita and Horav Korelitz Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh ibid:page 209, see ibid:8:footnote 25.

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time one would be able to discard them.⁹² Others say to wrap it in a bag first.⁹³

Nonetheless, most *poskim* maintain that one may not discard a newspaper containing *Torah*.⁹⁴ The publishers have intent for one to learn from the *Torah* in the newspaper.

Therefore, they are sanctified and a condition prior to the printing would not help to rid the newspaper of *kedusha*.⁹⁵

Therefore, one should rip out the *divrei Torah* in the newspaper and place it in *shaimos*.⁹⁶

Although this may seem difficult with some papers whose *Torah* is spread throughout the newspaper one will get the hang of it eventually.⁹⁷

Many *poskim* took strong issue with the fact that newspapers contain *divrei Torah* and they say a newspaper is not a place for *Torah* since many treat the *Torah* in a newspaper with disrespect by throwing it out etc.⁹⁸

In conclusion, on this issue of newspapers, you see many people are not careful with this and throw out the newspapers with the *divrei Torah* in them. If one is going to throw out a newspaper containing *divrei Torah* (without the name of *Hashem* or a *posuk*)⁹⁹ he should wrap it in a bag and then put it outside together with the rest of the garbage and let the *goyim* take it away.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, we are dealing with the honor of the *Torah*, and many *poskim* maintain that one should not throw out the *divrei Torah*, but rather one should place it in *shaimos*. This being the case one should try to do whatever he can in order to place the *divrei Torah* in *shaimos*. When putting the *divrei Torah* in *shaimos* you should cut it out of the paper. It is

⁹² Minchas Yitzchok 1:17.

⁹³ Teshuvos V'hanhugos 1:553, 554.

⁹⁴ Be'er Moshe 3:183, Shevet Ha'Levi Y.D. 5:162:2.

⁹⁵ Be'er Moshe ibid, Ginzei Hakodesh 14:2, page 235:1, Kovetz Teshuvos 2:6.

⁹⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Salmas Chaim 368 (old), Toras Chaim page 139:9, Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 201:22, Shevet Ha'kehusi 4:258, Sharei Simcha (Shavuos) page 16 quoting this as the opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l. Refer to Vayeishiv Moshe 2:33.

⁹⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁹⁸ Be'er Moshe ibid, Igeres Chazzon Ish 1:83:page 166, Zekan Aaron 2:70.

⁹⁹ Toras Chaim page 137:4.

¹⁰⁰ Refer to Yeishiv Moshe 2:33, Minhag Yisroel Torah O.C. 154:2, Nekius V'kovod B'tefilla pages 102:39 quoting the opinion of Horav Vosner Shlita ibid pages 153-157, Ginzei Hakodesh 14:footnote 9, Yugel Yaakov quoting the opinion of Horav Henkin zt"l in regard to the Jewish Press.

disrespectful to the *shaimos* if the whole paper is placed in *shaimos*.¹⁰¹ One should be careful that the *divrei Torah* part of the newspaper is not on the floor.¹⁰²

Book of the Missionaries

Many *poskim* maintain that a “book” of the missionaries which may contain a *t’nach* may be burnt and one should not keep this in his possessions.¹⁰³ Others maintain that one should place this *sefer* in *shaimos*.¹⁰⁴

Recycling

Some *poskim* say one is permitted to recycle *shaimos* (without *Hashems* name) if one is doing so to write new *seforim*.¹⁰⁵ However, one would not be able to do this if the *divrei Torah* being recycled is going to be used for secular material or for toilet paper (common in *Eretz Yisroel*).¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, most *poskim* disagree and hold one is forbidden to recycle *divrei Torah* for any reason whatsoever. The reason is because it is a great disgrace to the *seforim* or *divrei Torah*.¹⁰⁷

Pesukim

One is forbidden to write a *posuk* if the object it is written on will come to a disgrace.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, one should refrain from writing a *posuk* in a newspaper since it will come to a disgrace.¹⁰⁹ Some say one should not write a *posuk* (i.e. *la’yehudim* etc) on the *mishloach manos* for this reason.¹¹⁰ Writing *pesukim* like *kol sasson* on invitations will be discussed below.

¹⁰¹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see *Ginzei Hakodesh* 14:4. Opinion of Horav Heinenman Shlita in a Star-K article.

¹⁰² *Ginzei Hakodesh* 14:footnote 13 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita.

¹⁰³ *Igros Moshe* Y.D. 1:172, *Yaskil Avdi* Y.D. 7:20, see *Maharam Shik* O.C. 66.

¹⁰⁴ *Avnei Yushfei* 1:204, *Emes L’Yaakov* Y.D. 281:footnote 199, *Ve’alu Lo Yeibol* 2:page 121:121, *Yugel Yaakov* page 251, *Divrei Chachumim* Y.D. 100:5. Refer to *Betzel Hachuchma* 3:133 if one is allowed to read such material.

¹⁰⁵ Refer to Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society Fall 1991:pages 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ Refer to the Letters on this issue in Ginzei Hakodesh pages 308-316.

¹⁰⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Ginzei Hakodesh 8:footnote 7 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, see Ibid:15:footnote 38.

¹⁰⁸ Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 283:4, Rambam (Pe'er Hador) 7:pages 14-18, Shach 6, Taz 3, Gilyon Maharsha 6, Pischei Teshuva 3, Be'er Heitiv 3, Mishnah Berurah 24:9. One should not write *pesukim* on *ayarmulka* (V'ei Lumo Michshal 1:page 98:footnote 9).

¹⁰⁹ Ginzei Hakodesh 9:footnote 2.

¹¹⁰ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh 9:footnote 2.

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The custom is to write a *posuk* on a *challah* cover,¹¹¹ a *tzedaka* box¹¹² or a *becher*¹¹³ since these objects do not come to a disgrace.

One is forbidden to write a *posuk* or a *beracha* on a *tallis godel* since one might take the *tallis* into the bathroom.¹¹⁴ If one bought such a *tallis* then a *beracha* may still be recited on it.¹¹⁵ Today, we see *talleisim* printed with a *posuk* on them and one begins to wonder how can they do this when it is seemingly against *halacha*. However, today the custom is that one does not take a *tallis* into the bathroom for any reason. Therefore, one can say that this is why the *Minhag* of some circles is to have a *posuk* written on a *tallis*. One must be careful not to sit on the words on the *tallis*.¹¹⁶

On *Succos* many decorations contain *pesukim*. Some *poskim* say that since these decorations come to a disgrace by being stepped on, one is not allowed to buy such decorations.¹¹⁷ However, the *Minhag* in *klal yisroel* is that buying these posters is permitted and one should make sure to treat them with the proper respect.¹¹⁸

What is considered a *Posuk*?

Two or three words of a *posuk* are considered like a whole *posuk* if one is able to understand that it was taken from a *posuk*.¹¹⁹ If one is not able to tell that it is from a *posuk* then one may not write four words.¹²⁰ One word from a *posuk* does not require being put into *shaimos*.¹²¹

¹¹¹ Minchas Yitzchok 4:45:4, 8:87, Ginzei Hakodesh 12:5:footnote 9, see Maharsham 1:96.

¹¹² Tzedaka U'mishpat 16:32.

¹¹³ Emes L'Yaakov Y.D. 283:footnote 201.

¹¹⁴ Rambam ibid, Bais Yosef Y.D. 283, Shulchan Aruch ibid, Be'er Heitiv 24:4, Chesed L'alafim 24:4, Rav Poalim Y.D. 4:32, Mishnah Berurah O.C. 24:9, Kaf Ha'chaim 24:24, Aruch Ha'shulchan 24:4, Minchas Yitzchok 4:45, Vayeishiv Moshe 2:32.

¹¹⁵ Sharei Teshuva O.C. 24:2, Kaf Ha'chaim 24:24, sefer Tzitzis page 452. One may do business with such a tallis as well (ibid:page 453:footnote 34).

¹¹⁶ Bais Boruch 11:3:page 197.

¹¹⁷ Mishnah Berurah 638:24, Taamei HaMinhagim page 73 (kuntres achron).

¹¹⁸ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Succos K'hilchoso 7:footnote 6 quoting this as being the opinion of many contemporary *poskim*.

¹¹⁹ Ginzei Hakodesh 9:3.

¹²⁰ Shulchan Aruch 284:2, Pischei Teshuva 284:1, Ginzei Hakodesh 9:3.

¹²¹ Ginzei Hakodesh 9:4:footnote 8 quoting the opinion of Horav Korelitz Shlita.

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Invitations

One is not allowed to write a *posuk* or a message from *chazal* on an invitation because an invitation is generally discarded.¹²² One who receives an invitation with a *posuk* on it should cut out the *posuk* and place it in *shaimos*.¹²³ Some change the format of the *posuk* and write it on two different lines in order to avoid the *pesukim* from coming to be

disgraced by throwing it out. The reason why this is not considered writing a *posuk* is because it is on two different lines and is not read as one *posuk*. Based on this some *poskim* say that one should write *kol sosson; v'kol simcha; kol chosson; v'kol kallah* on different lines.¹²⁴ Many *poskim* did not write any *pesukim* on an invitation even in the aforementioned manner.¹²⁵ *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* maintains this is how one should act.¹²⁶ Some say the custom is not to write a *posuk* etc. on an invitation.¹²⁷

The words of *od yishoma* etc. are taken from two different parts of one *posuk*.¹²⁸ Some say one should be stringent with this as well.¹²⁹ Others say a group of words which have no intention of being written for a *posuk*, but rather as a “*melitzah*” is permitted to be written.¹³⁰ Therefore, the custom of many has become to write *od yishoma* etc on an invitation.¹³¹

A *posuk* in which the language is changed from singular to plural may be written on the invitation.¹³²

Some have the custom to write “*naaleh*” *eis Yerushalayim* instead of the real word to avoid having the *posuk* come to being disgraced when the invitation is thrown out.¹³³

¹²² Ginzei Hakodesh 9:5, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:footnote 72.

¹²³ Ibid:9:6:footnote 12 quoting the opinion of Horav Korelitz Shlita and Horav Elayshiv Shlita. Refer to Kovetz Teshuvos 1:115, Laws of Pesach A Digest 5766:page 726.

¹²⁴ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:38, Avnei Yushfei 2:79.

¹²⁵ Refer to Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:135, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:footnote 72, Opinion of Horav Korelitz Shlita quoted in Bishvili HaMinhag 2:page 132.

¹²⁶ Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:135.

¹²⁷ Refer to Vayivorech Dovid 1:114.

¹²⁸ Yermia 33:10. Refer to Nekius V'kovod B'tefilla page 152, V'ein Lumo Michshal 1:page 98-99.

¹²⁹ Oz Nedberu 7:65:2.

¹³⁰ Nekius V'kovod B'tefilla ibid, Shevet Ha'levi 7:167, Ginzei Hakodesh 9:14, Opinion of Horav Moshe

Heineman (Star-K). Refer to Ginzei Hakodesh page 265:68 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim

Kanievesky Shlita who disagrees.

¹³¹ Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l quoted in Lev Ita 1:2:3.

¹³² Ginzei Hakodesh 9:footnote 18.

¹³³ Halichos Shlomo ibid, see Vayivorech Dovid ibid. Refer to Doleh U'mashka page 344.

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According to some *poskim* writing a *posuk* in a way that is not allowed, would not be permitted even if it is written in a different shape.¹³⁴ Some say that since they write *od yeshoma* in a different form than in the *posuk* (rainbow shaped) it is permitted to be done.¹³⁵ Some say if one gets an invitation with a *posuk* on it that is not written in a permitted fashion he may throw out the invitation, but he should wrap it in a bag beforehand.¹³⁶

Invitations- Kesav Ashuris

Many *poskim* maintain that one should refrain from writing secular material in *kesav ashuris* (the script used to write a sefer *Torah*),¹³⁷ especially if one is going to discard the invitation. This form of writing has a special *kedusha* to it. Therefore, one should refrain from writing wedding invitations in this manner since one is going to throw out the invitation.¹³⁸ Others say an invitation is considered a *devar mitzvah* and one would be permitted to write a wedding invitation using *kesav ashuris*.¹³⁹ Some *poskim* say that *kesav m'ruva* (the standard way of written Hebrew) is considered like *kesav ashuris*.¹⁴⁰ Based on this one would not be able to write an invitation with this lettering and one would have to use *Rashi* lettering instead.¹⁴¹ However, many *poskim* say that *kesav m'ruva* does not have the same *kedusha* as *kesav ashuris*.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Halichos Shlomo ibid, Ginzei Hakodesh page 262:30 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

¹³⁵ Tzedaka U'mishpat 16:footnote 94, see 97. Refer to Ginzei Hakodesh 9:footnote 9 who says if *kol sasson* is in between *od yishoma* then it is permitted if *od yishoma* is in a rainbow shape with *kol sasson* etc at the end of the rainbow (Ginzei Hakodesh 9:footnote 9).

¹³⁶ Oz Nedberu 7:65:2.

¹³⁷ Rama Y.D. 284:1, Magen Avraham O.C. 334:17, Pischei Teshuva 271:20, 283:3. Refer to Aruch Ha'shulchan Y.D. 284:8. Some say one should not write the secular date on the invitation (Bishvili HaMinhag 2:pages 134-135, Lev Ita 1:2:4). Some say one should not write the name of a lady on the invitation (Birchos Hashem E.H. 33).

¹³⁸ Refer to Eyunei Halachos 2:pages 548-593 in great depth, Vein Lumo Michshal 1:page 97:8, Halachos V'halichos Bar Mitzvah 3:8, Yabea Omer 9:page 459.

¹³⁹ Opinion of the Chasam Sofer quoted in the Kesav Sofer E.H. 22, Yabea Omer Y.D. 9:24.

¹⁴⁰ Reishis Chuchma Shar Hayira 15:page 179 (new), Gilyon Maharsha Y.D. 284:2, Yosef Ometz page 276, Ginzei Hakodesh 11:footnote 7 quoting the opinion of Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l, Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 161:41, Avnei Yushfei 2:79.

¹⁴¹ Refer to Kaf Ha'chaim 154:37.

¹⁴² Tzur Yaakov 82, Rav Poalim Y.D. 4:32, Machaneh Chaim 1:25, Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:76, Be'er Moshe 3:183:5, Tzedaka U'mishpat 16:38:footnote 98, Shevet Ha'Levi 8:228, 365, Soveh Smochos 1:page 38:24, Chazzon Yeshaya page 219, Teshuvos ibid:27, Natei Gavriel (Nesuin) 10:6-7, Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 230:25, Eyunei Halachos ibid, Yabea Omer ibid. Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah Nesuin pages 97-98.

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Halacha on a Food Item

A food label that says which *beracha* to recite on the food does not require to be placed in *shaimos*.¹⁴³ For example, a bottle of wine that says one recites a *hagofen*.¹⁴⁴ Some say only if the words are not written on one line can one be lenient.¹⁴⁵ In any case the

Minhag is that the above does not require *shaimos*.¹⁴⁶

Miscellaneous

A story book that is meant for children and teaches something to them has *kedusha* and is required to be put into *shaimos*.¹⁴⁷ Some say *tzadikim* biographies that contain no *pesukim* or a *mamer* of *chazal* may be thrown into the garbage.¹⁴⁸

Tests which have *divrei Torah* on them need to be placed in *shaimos*.¹⁴⁹

A *nusach* that *chazal* established, even if it does not contain *Hashems* name requires to be placed into *shaimos*. Therefore, a *tefillas haderech* card requires to be placed into *shaimos*.¹⁵⁰

Pictures drawn in order to understand the *parsha* do not require *shaimos* if a *posuk* is not written on them.¹⁵¹ The same would apply to *Noachs* tent made from paper etc.¹⁵²

A *sefiras ha'omer* chart which just say the day without a *beracha* may be thrown out.¹⁵³

A chart which says the time of *krias shema* or *tefilla* should be put into *shaimos*. A chart which just says when *Shabbos* comes in and when *Shabbos* is over, may be thrown out.¹⁵⁴

A paper on which *Divrei Torah* was written which ripped needs to be put into *shaimos* even if the *divrei Torah* is not on the entire paper.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴³ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:footnote 72, Ginzei Hakodesh 10:footnote 19, 12:4:footnote 7.

¹⁴⁴ Ginzei Hakodesh page 277.

¹⁴⁵ Ginzei Hakodesh 12:footnote 8.

¹⁴⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

¹⁴⁷ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh 10:3:footnote 15.

¹⁴⁸ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh ibid:footnote 17.

¹⁴⁹ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh ibid:footnote 19.

¹⁵⁰ Refer to Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:135, Giznei Hakodesh 10:13:footnote 29.

¹⁵¹ Ginzei Hakodesh 10:footnote 26.

¹⁵² Ibid:page 264:55.

¹⁵³ Ibid:2:6. If it ripped out of a *Siddur* then it requires *shaimos* (Ibid:footnote 11).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid:12:7. See ibid:page 263:51 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

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Many times one is walking in the street and a poster of some sort of *Yiddish* relevance is on the street. One does not have to throw this poster in *shaimos* if it does not contain a *posuk* or a *halacha*. However, one should be careful not to step on it.¹⁵⁶

Zemiros Shabbos that does not contain *halacha*, name of *Hashem* or a *posuk* should still be placed in *shaimos* since it contains praises of *Hashem*.¹⁵⁷

The *Shaimos* Bag

Every house should have a designated bag for *shaimos*. One does not have to place *shaimos* in a bag in an orderly fashion.¹⁵⁸ One is permitted to place a *chumash* on top of a *gemorah*.¹⁵⁹ One should be careful not to step on the bag of *shaimos*.¹⁶⁰ One should not place a *shaimos* bag in a place where it may rain.¹⁶¹ The *Minhag* seems to be that there is no concern with placing the *shaimos* in a bag on the floor.¹⁶²

The “*Shaimos* Box”

Many times one refrains from placing items in *shaimos* because the accumulated amount of *shaimos* takes up a lot of room in one’s house.

However, this problem was solved with the innovation of the *Shaimos* Box. One can pick up this box in any *seforim* store. It is a box which measure 12” x 7” x 15” which is enough for twenty pounds of *shaimos*. One can put it in a corner of his house let it fill up and when it is full one can mail it to the address on the box. Once it is there the OU

certifies that the *shaimos* will be buried according to *halacha*. It is usually buried during *Tisha B'av*. With this box one does not have to wait until *Pesach* to bring many heavy bags of *shaimos* to a drop off location.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid:10:9.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid:2:footnote 6 .

¹⁵⁷ Opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita quoted in Ginzei Hakodesh page 265:65.

¹⁵⁸ Ginzei Hakodesh 15:13.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid:15:14.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid:15:16.

¹⁶¹ Ibid: 8:footnote 7.

¹⁶² Ibid:15:15:footnote 31.

F. Temple Bat Yahm Genizah Ceremony Flyer

The following was produced as a flyer announcing the Genizah ceremony at Temple Bat Yahm. It may prove a useful template.

[Temple Bat Yahm, 1011 Camelback St, Newport Beach, CA 92660
(949) 644-1999. <http://www.tby.org/>.]

Temple Bat Yahm is constructing a Genízah on its campus!

Join us for a brief ceremony followed by a small reception on
Sunday, April 29

10:15am

Warsaw Family Amphitheater

A Genízah is a repository for no longer usable Jewish books and religious articles. In keeping with Jewish tradition, anything containing the name of G-d is to be respectfully buried and should never be disposed of as trash. This includes books, frayed talit, and other Jewish ritual items.

Congregants will have the opportunity to deposit their own small Judaica items in the Temple's Genízah on April 29.*

Feel free to bring them with you to the ceremony.

Reservations are requested. Please contact the Temple office if you are planning on attending at 949.644.1999 or email Bonnie at bervin@tby.org.

*Please note, the space allotted is limited and we may not be able to accommodate everything. Anything that you bring with you that is not buried

on April 29 must be taken with you and brought back the next time the



Genizah is opened. The Temple cannot store your items.

G. God's name(s) – which rise to the level of shemot?

Website Mi Yodea: Mi Yodea is a question and answer site for those who base their lives on Jewish law and tradition and anyone interested in learning more.

[Note: Mi Yodea is hosted at: <http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/83/when-blogging-emailing-etc-do-i-use-god-or-g-d>. I was unable to determine anything about who is responsible for the site.]

When blogging/emailing/etc., do I use “God” or “G-d”?

up
vote **24** down
n vote
6

Is there a religious problem with typing out the name: "G-o-d"?

[words](#) [internet](#) [shemos-sacred-names](#) [electricity](#)
[shareimprove this question](#)

[edited](#) Mar 25 '12 at 2:36



[Double AA](#) ♦
52.2k5116231

asked Dec 16 '09 at 15:59



[Shalom](#)
85k381272

16 Your question title seems to presuppose an answer! :) – [Isaac Moses](#) Dec 16 '09 at 16:01

[add a comment](#)

5 Answers

[active](#) [oldest](#) [votes](#)

up vote **11** down
vote **accepted**

I recall having learned in the beginning of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch that one may not recite God's name in any language when not needed. I suppose the spelling of G-d is an extension of the same idea to writing.

In general. I have a problem with this approach. It seems to me that the term "god" is no different than "Hashem". In fact spelled with a capital or without - it's a generic reference to the idea of a higher power and not reserved for the Jewish god, whereas Hashem is only used for the Jewish god. Therefore, it would seem to me that the use of Hashem should be more guarded.

To me we have two logical choices:

Yud-kay-vav-kay and related Hebrew spellings are the true names of God and all others are abstracted references and may be used casually.

An abstracted reference such as those used by non-Jews in foreign languages are still akin to the name of God and therefore their usage should be guarded. By the same logic, any reference to God's name will become eventually become synonymous with God's name like Hashem and we have to stop using that too. I suppose every generation could come up with their own reference until it becomes overused and then it's time to change it again.

I don't have a resolution to this dilemma but I personally find approach #1 more consistent with our overall practice.

With regard to its use on blogs etc. I think we have more leeway. I asked a rabbi many years ago regarding a recording to VHS of a program on TV where they recited God's name. I was told I could erase the video tape and that such recordings be it video or audio did not have take on any special status. Basically, that K'tiva (writing) involves ink on paper and not magnetic particles that can only be read by special machines and then interpreted into God's name. In fact, at the time, dot matrix printers were the most popular choice for home use, and I learned that they didn't count either, that since you could see the individual dots (early models) that they didn't count as whole letters. I have re-asked that question more recently, and been told that even though a laser printer is a collection of particles, that goes on dry, and is not ink, it is the equivalent and makes whole letter representations.

In short, if we were to extend the kedusha of representations of God's name to the digital medium then we could not enjoy the benefits of something like the Bar Ilan CD/DVD. Any representation on the CD/DVD gets transferred to your computer's RAM and then you couldn't shutdown the program or turn off your computer. Therefore, logically, we can't bestow any special status to the disc itself either. In the same way, it would seem that however we represent God's name on this blog... unless you're printing it, you don't have to worry.

[share/improve this answer](#)

[edited](#) Dec 16 '14 at 20:02

[answered](#) Dec 16 '09 at 16:40



[Scimonster](#)
9,924,323,64



[Aaron Greenberg](#)
1,473,121

Sorry, but 'God' is different to 'Hashem'. 'God' is a translation of Hashem's name and therefore a kiuni 2 (nickname). 'Hashem' isn't. See doseofhalacha.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/god-or-g-d.html – [Zvi](#) Jul 21 '14 at 7:06

[add a comment](#)

up vote **12** down vote The [Shach](#) ([Yoreh De'ah 179:11](#)) ruled that "God" spelled in a foreign language does NOT have the status of a "shem" and thus may be erased, lehatkhila. For more information, you can read this

article: <http://www.shamash.org/lists/scj-faq/HTML/faq/11-03-01.html>

[share/improve this answer](#)

[edited](#) Jul 2 '12 at 18:53

[answered](#) Mar 25 '12 at 3:03



[Adam Mosheh](#)
3,080,115,39

[add a comment](#)

up
vote **5** down
n vote

I heard from a student of R. Yosef Dov Soloveitchik z"l that whether the the English has the status of a shem or not, replacing a letter with another symbol e.g. "G-d" accomplishes nothing, because there are no formal laws about the lettering of English as there are with Hebrew (e.g. regarding the laws of writing a Torah and the like). Rather, the legal significance of letters in English is the ideas that they represent. G-d obviously represents the exact same thing as "God", so nothing has been accomplished.

[share/improve this answer](#)

answered Jan 27 at 15:56


[mevaqesh](#)

5,185847

add a comment

 up
 vote **2** down
 n vote

For k'tiva, I thought there were two basic categories: 1) H's primary names, in Hebrew 2) Kinnum, i.e. nicknames, like "Shalom" in Hebrew, or "God" in English. Since G-d would seem to have the same level of nicknamedness as God, there shouldn't be a halakhic difference in actual writing. Perhaps G-d would be more appropriate in typing, where it sounds like all is permitted anyways, but still serves as an allusion to the halakhot of writing, a practice that may be forgotten to the future generations, like grafting and treating skins on Shabbat.

[share/improve this answer](#)

answered Jan 13 '10 at 17:48


[Jeremy](#)

5,677935

add a comment

 up
 vote **1** down
 n vote

The prohibition of erasing divine names is derived from the juxtaposition of "...*we'avadtem eth shemam...*" ("and destroy their names...") and "*Lo ta'asun kein la'hashem...*" ("Do not do likewise to the L-rd..."). In general, it's forbidden to erase even one letter of any of the 7 divine names : יהוה, יהוה, יהוה, יהוה, יהוה, יהוה, יהוה (the Tetragrammaton, Adonai, Eloah, El, Elohim, Shaddai, Tzva'oth; S'A Y'D 276:9; see [Halachipedia](#)).

However, since we do not generally treat electronic representations of G-d's names or of torah to have the same halachik status as written/printed*, the issue would primarily be if there is a concern that the text could eventually be printed out by a reader. The Talmud equates writers (and, presumably, publishers) of blessings to those who burn torah scrolls because of the possibility that the writing will eventually be burnt.

Nonetheless, with regard to divine names in languages other than Hebrew, it is [controversial](#) if divine names in English, such as G-d, may be erased. (see Shach Y.D. 276:11, *Pith'hei Teshuva* 11, 19, *Mishnah Berurah* O.C. 85:10, *Aruch Ha'shulchan* Y.D. 276:24, C.M. 27:3, *Ginzei Hakodesh* 7:footnote 24), the *Mishna Brurah* 85:10 rules leniently that the name itself does not require *geniza* (burial) and can be thrown away (though *divrei torah* (words of torah), whether or not G-d's name is mentioned, do regardless require *geniza* [S'A 154:5]).

*See, however, *Shu"t Y'chava Da'ath* 4:50 and *Shu"t Igroth Moshe* 1:173 who, according to [halachipedia](#), are lenient because the electronic encryption is illegible, but nonetheless say that it's preferable to be strict.

[share/improve this answer](#)

answered May 18 at 17:56



Loewian

4,952522

add a comment

H. Examples of Genizah Ceremonies from several synagogues

Temple House of Israel, Staunton VA
Temple House of Israel
15 N. Market Street,
P.O. Box 1412
Staunton VA 24402-1412
540-886-4091
www.thoi.org

Genizah Ceremony Program Temple House of Israel Cemetery May 18, 2014/18 Iyar 5774 Rabbi Joe Blair



Welcome

Appreciation

Explanations – What is a Genizah?
Jewish History
Why do we do this?
The Second Saying

The Two Tablets

Respect for our Dead

Kavod – in the face of others treatment

Grave as Aron

Read: Things without limit (Pg 44 MT)

Tefillin - Elisha, wings of a dove (Pg 29 MT)

Mezuzot (Pg 66 MT)

Fringes (Pg 68 MT)

Wrapped in a Tallit (Pg 191 MT)

Read & Sing: Name is holy (Pg 80 MT)

Read & Sing: Nekadesh et Shimcha (Pg 82 MT) Hebrew & English

Chant: La'asok bedivrei Torah (Pg 204 MT)

Read: Hashivenu La'Torah (Pg 84 MT)

Place items in The Grave (if not already done)

Read & Sing: *Ki Mitzion (Pg 364 MT)*

Baruch Shenatan (Pg 365 MT)

Chant: El Maley Rachamim (Pg 582 MT, adapted)

Read: *God, full of mercy and compassion, who dwells on high, grant true rest under the wings of the Shechinah, in holiness and purity, to all the holy books, Siddurim, machzorim, Tefillin, chamashim, tallitot, mezuzot, and shemot which have become worn out or torn. May they find use in Gan Eden. Master of mercy, help us to dedicate for ourselves new items of holiness in their place so that we may continue to be bound in the chain of the living Torah. The Lord is our portion. Let us say, Amen.*

Read: Let the words of Torah (Pg 42 MT)

Sing: *Etz Chayim Hi* (Pg 110 MT)

Sing: *It is a Tree of Life* (Pg 110 MT)

Read: Kaddish Derabbanan (Pg 48 MT) Hebrew then English

Sing: *Yihyu le'ratzon* (Pg 337 MT)

Concluding Thoughts

Sing: Shehechiyanu (Pg 648 MT)

Beth El Congregation, Harrisonburg VA
Beth El Congregation
830 Old Furnace Road
P.O. Box 845
Harrisonburg VA 22802-0845
540-434-2744
<http://bethel-harrisonburg.org/>

Genizah Ceremony Book & Sacred Objects Burial Program

Beth El Congregation Cemetery
June 22, 2014/24 Sivan 5774



Rabbi Joe Blair

Welcome

Appreciation

Explanations – What is a Genizah?
Jewish History
Why do we do this?
The 2nd & 3rd Sayings

The Two Tablets

Respect for our Dead

Kavod – in the face of others treatment

Grave as Aron

Readings: Acknowledgement for those
sacred objects we are burying

Things without limit (Pg 44 MT)

Tefillin - Elisha, wings of a dove (Pg 29 MT)

Mezuzot (Pg 66 MT)

Fringes (Tallitot) (Pg 68 MT)

Wrapped in a Tallit (Pg 191 MT)

Read & Sing: Name is holy (Pg 80 MT)

Read & Sing: Nekadesh et Shimcha (Pg 82 MT) Hebrew & English

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Baruch Shenatan (Pg 365 MT)

Chant: El Maley Rachamim (Pg 582 MT, adapted)

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It is a Tree of Life (Pg 110 MT)

Read: Kaddish Derabbanan (Pg 48 MT)
Hebrew then English

Sing: *Yihyu le'ratzon* (Pg 337 MT)

Concluding Thoughts

Invite others to share
President
Rabbi

Sing: Shehechyanu (Pg 648 MT)

Reading: *Hashivenu La'Torah* (Pg 84 MT)

Return to the Synagogue for Light Refreshments and a time for mingling in community.



Temple Beth El, San Antonio, TX
211 Belknap Place
San Antonio, TX 78212
(210) 733-9135
www.beth-elsa.org/

Temple Beth-El
San Antonio, Texas

Burial of the Books Ceremony

Introduction

Reader: We gather in this cemetery for a burial-of-the-books ceremony. Just as the Jewish tradition bids us to bury reverently a dead human being, so does our tradition tell us to deal respectfully with "dead" books - books that can no longer be used.

"K'vod has'farim - Honor for Books" is to be extended to all books. We are taught not to throw a book on the floor and not to leave a book containing God's name on the floor. If a Hebrew book containing God's name slips from our grasp and falls, we are urged to pick up the book immediately. We are to kiss it as an indication of our regret, respect, and love.

As a mark of the special regard we should have for God and a religious book, a Jewish book containing God's name - particularly a religious volume - is to be disposed of properly. If such a book is beyond repair, defaced, or of no more use to anyone, we are not to put it in the garbage or fire. Rather, we should store such books in our home, give them to the Temple for safe-keeping, or bury them. To-day we are burying such books that have been in Temple Beth-El's possession for several years.

No other people holds a ceremony comparable to what we are doing. But we Jews, who have valued learning - and, above all, learning means the study of books - give respect to the main source of knowledge during a book's useful days and grieve when a book's condition makes it beyond use.

Jewish Devotion to Learning, Study, and Books

Reader: In the ancient Jewish tradition, the scholar was extolled. He was the elite of Jewish society. No wonder that in Jewish lullabies, mothers sang hopefully that their male babies would become scholars. Parents eagerly looked for a learned Jew as a marriage partner for their eligible daughter.

In our day, we hope that all Jewish children, male and female, will be learned in Torah. Unfortunately, Jewish learning is not valued by as high a percentage of Jews as it was in former centuries. Yet, most parents insist that their children go to college. Not only do they hope that they will obtain a well-paying job. Such parents also retain the age-old Jewish appreciation of education as a key to opening the full life.

1

Fortunately, even today, a large percentage of Jewish parents send their children to a religious school. Such parents realize that to know what a Jew is, what a Jew should do, and why a Jew should be happy with his or her Jewish identity, involves a study of Jewish books. Learning, study, books - these have characterized the Jewish people for centuries. Let us read responsively these statements from Jewish sources on learning, study, and books.

Jewish Statements on Learning, Study, and Books

Reader: A natural love of learning is a person's highest possession.

Cong.: The advancement of learning is the highest commandment.

Reader: The road to learning is endless.

Cong.: Those who do not learn cannot truly love God.

Reader: Without learning, there is no Judaism.

Cong.: Learning - learning - learning: that is the secret of Jewish survival.

Reader: Do not say, "When I have leisure I shall study." You may not have leisure.

Cong.: Make fixed times for the study of Torah.

Reader: Study, even though you may forget, even though you do not fully understand.

Cong.: Study leads to action.

Reader: Great is study, for it leads to love.

Cong.: No person is wise without books.

Reader: Take care of your books. Keep them from the rain above, from mice and other damage, because they are your precious treasure.

Cong.: Make your books your companions. Bask in their paradise. Gather their fruit. Pluck their roses. Taste their spices.

Reader: A book is the most delightful companion. No friend in the world is more faithful and attentive, no teacher more proficient.

Cong.: It will join you in solitude, be your candle in the dark, and entertain you in your loneliness.

Reader: It will do you good and ask no favor in return. It gives and does not take.

Cong.: Books must be treated with respect.

2

Reader: Books must be treated with respect. These are holy books that are beyond repair or of no apparent use now. We are here to dispose reverently of these volumes.

Let the books be buried.

The Books are Buried

Mourner's Kaddish

יִתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא כְרֻעוּתָהּ,

Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba be-al-ma di-ve-ra chi-re-u-tei,

וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמִיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית

ve-yam-lich mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei
de-chol beit

יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמָא.

Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-ma-ya.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדָּר

Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach, ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei, ve-yit-ha-dar

וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלֵּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעָלְמָא מִן־כָּל־

ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu, le-ei-la min kol

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא דְּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא,

bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta, da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma,

וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מְרַשְׁמֵיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל,

Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-ma-ya ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,

וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־

O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu ve-al kol

יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

Concluding
Statement

Reader: The books which we have buried have been handled and studied by children and adults. If the pages of these books could talk, what tales could they tell of the persons who once held them and studied from them, of the rooms, buildings, and countries in which they have been.

Some of these books were printed in Europe, some in the United States, some perhaps in other lands. Jews from the Old World and the New wrote, printed, and read these books.

Many of those Jews - individuals who believed that it was important to learn, study, and pray from these volumes - are now dead. Some of those persons are still living.

Cong.: But as we stand here together, we stand as Jews who, while mourning the death of these books, rejoice in the service rendered by these precious volumes. We are glad that they gave the Jews who held them great guidance and delight, inspiration and comfort.

We stand as Jews who pledge to be faithful to these books - to their good teachings, writers, and readers - by continuing the chain of Jewish learning, Jewish study, and Jewish living, with the aid of Jewish books. AMEN

This service is based on the "Burial-of-the-Books Ceremony," of Dr. Louis L. Kaplan and was edited by Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl.

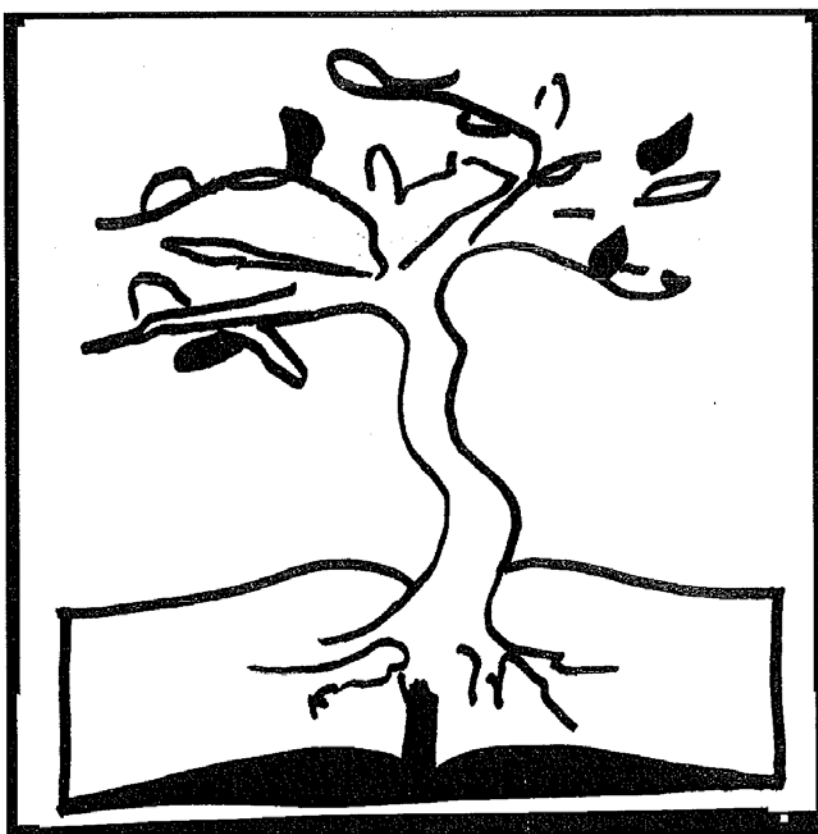
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Temple Emanu-El, Dallas TX

Temple Emanu-El, 8500 Hillcrest Rd, Dallas, TX 75225 (214) 706-0000

www.tedallas.org/

Temple Emanu-El Dallas, TX
Geniza Ceremony
October 5, 2008/ 6 Tishri



Temple Emanu-El Cemetery
3430 Howell St
Dallas TX 75204



AL SH'LOSHAH D'VARIM

Al sh'loshah d'varim haolam omeid: על שלשה דברים העולם עומד:
 al HaTorah, v'al haavodah על התורה, ועל העבודה
 v'al g'milut chasadim. ועל גמילות חסדים.

The world is sustained by three things: Torah, worship and loving deeds.
 (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

"A book is the most delightful companion. There is in the world no friend more faithful, no teacher more proficient, no message more enduring. It will join you in solitude, accompany you in exile, serve as a candle in the dark, and entertain you in your loneliness. It will do you good yet ask no favor in return. It gives and does not take."

These words, written at the beginning of the twelfth century by Moses ben Ezra, a Spanish Hebrew poet and philosopher, explain how a person can never be alone when surrounded by books. The Jewish people value learning as a highest priority and learning is symbolized by the study of books. We bestow respect on this primary source of knowledge during a book's usable days, and we show respect when it deteriorates beyond use. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, one of our greatest rabbinic authorities, states, "A scroll of Torah which has become old or unfit for use is to be laid in an earthen vessel and buried beside a scholar."

In our congregation's cemetery, there is a sacred place where worn-out books are buried. Because these books contain God's name, they are called *Shemot*, or names, and their burial place is indicated with the words *Sifre Kodesh*, Sacred Books.

WISDOM AND WONDER,
 passion and instruction,
 story and symbol.

All these things
 Your Torah gives to us.

And the more we devote ourselves to it,
 the more it grows and gives.

What could be a truer token
 of Your abiding love

than this holiest of Your works,
 and the living language
 that gives it form?

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהי עמו ישראל.
 Baruch atah, Adonai, ohev amo Yisrael.

These words in the Torah from Deuteronomy 6:15-9 and Numbers 15:40-41 remind us every time we use the prayer book to always be teachers and students of Torah every day and throughout our lives. When we read them together today, we affirm they endure not only in books and scrolls, but on our hearts and in our souls.

V'AHAVTA et Adonai Elohecha,
b'chol l'vav'cha uv'chol nafsh'cha uv'chol
m'odecha. V'hayu had'varim ha-eileh
asher anochi m'tzavcha hayom al
l'vavecha. V'shinantam l'vanecha v'dibarta
bam b'shivt'cha b'veitecha uv'lecht'cha
vaderech uv'shochb'cha uv'kumecha.
Ukshartam l'ot al yadecha v'hayu
l'totafot bein einecha. Uchtavtam
al m'zuzot beitecha uvish'arecha.

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-
מַאֲדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-
לִבְּךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ
בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכֻתְךָ
בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ
לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְכָתַבְתָּם
עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

YOU SHALL LOVE Adonai your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all your might.
Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.
Impress them upon your children.
Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away,
when you lie down and when you get up.
Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead;
inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Lmaan tizk'ru, vaasitem et
kol mitzvotai vihl'yitem k'doshim
l'Eloheichem. Ani Adonai Eloheichem asher
hotzeiti et-chem mei-eretz
Mitzrayim lih'yot lachem l'Elohim
ani Adonai Eloheichem.

לִמְנַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְנַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-
כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים
לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר
הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים
אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Thus you shall remember to observe all My commandments
and to be holy to your God.
I am Adonai, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God:
I am Adonai your God.

Burial of sacred books and Torah scroll.

Kaddish D'rabbanan, the Rabbis Kaddish is recited by students and teachers at the conclusion of a unit of study. We recite it together to conclude the use of these sacred books in our congregation.

YITGADAL v'yitkadash sh'meih raba

b'alma di v'ra chiruteih,

v'yamlich malchuteih

b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon

uv'chaye d'chol beit Yisrael,

baagala uviz'man kariv,

v'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varach

l'alam ul'almei almay.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar

v'yitromam v'yitnasei,

v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal

sh'meih d'kud'sha b'r'ich hu,

l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,

tushb'chata v'nechemata,

daamiran b'alma, v'imru: Amen.

Al Yisrael v'al rabanan,

v'al talmideihon

v'al kol talmidei talmideihon,

v'al kol man d'askin b'oraita,

di v'atra hadein v'di

v'chol atar vaatar.

Y'hei l'hon ul'chon sh'lama raba,

china v'chisda v'rachamin,

v'chayin arichin,

um'zonei r'vichei, ufurkana,

min kadam avuhon

di vish'maya v'ara v'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,

v'chayim tovim aleinu v'al kol

Yisrael v'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav

hu b'rachamav yaaseh shalom

aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'al kol

yoshvei teiveil, v'imru: Amen.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא

בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְּרַעוּתָהּ,

וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ

בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ

וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,

בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזֶמַן קָרִיב,

וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ

לְעַלְמֵי וּלְעַלְמֵי עֲלָמָא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר

וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,

וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל

שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,

לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא,

תְּשֻׁבָּתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא,

דְאָמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל רַבָּנָא,

וְעַל תַּלְמִידֵיהוֹן

וְעַל כָּל תַּלְמִידֵי תַלְמִידֵיהוֹן,

וְעַל כָּל מִן דְּעַסְקִין בְּאוֹרֵיתָא,

דִּי בְּאַתְרָא קְדִין וְדִי

בְּכָל אֲתָר וְאֲתָר.

יְהֵא לְחוֹן וּלְכוֹן שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא,

חֲנָא וְחֻסְדָּא וְרַחֲמִין,

וְחַיִּין אֲרִיכִין,

וּמְזוֹנֵי רוּחִי, וּפְרָקָנָא,

מִן קֳדָם אֲבוּהוֹן

דִּי בְשִׁמְיָא וְאַרְעָא וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמָיָא,

וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל

יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמָיו

הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם

עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל

יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

EXALTED and hallowed be God's great name,
in the world which God created, according to plan.
May God's majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime
and the life of all Israel —
speedily, imminently.
To which we say: Amen.

Blessed be God's great name to all eternity.

Blessed, praised, honored, exalted,
extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded
be the name of the Holy Blessed One,
beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing, praise, and comfort.
To which we say: Amen.

GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, grant abundant peace
to our people Israel and their rabbis, to our teachers and their disciples,
and to all who engage in the study of Torah here and everywhere.

Let there be for them and for us all, grace, love, and compassion,
a full life, ample sustenance, and salvation from God, and let us respond: Amen.

For us and all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true,
and let us respond: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,
let peace descend on us, and on all Israel, and on all the world,
and let us respond: Amen.

PASUL

Say goodbye
To this scroll, worn thin
By generations seeking
Stories of our people, verse by verse:
Words that reveal joy, yearning,
Envy and anger--
In all time

Lie in peace
Frayed, tattered siddur
That no longer has a home
In the bins where we store our handbags,
Announcements, *hippot*, crayons
And tissues for when
We must cry

Remember
Torah is alive
The soul of prayer never dies
Though the texts of our Jewish journeys
Are buried beneath the ground
They are part of us
Forever...

As a child
I stroked the ribbon
That divided the pages
Of the much loved old Union Prayer Book
With care I tucked it inside
Until Shabbat came
The next week
I'm at camp
Mesmerized by song
Drawn by the guitar, to dance;
Realization dawns, through the voices
Of hundreds strong, and yet one
This too, is prayer
Reaching God

My child squirms
I sing a *niggun*
Holding her close and praying
While my spouse points out the Hebrew words
Hoping that one day she'll know
Their awesome power
To change lives

It is time
To say our goodbyes:
To books that need sacred rest
To a Torah excused from duty--
We mourn them and yet rejoice
As they, swathed in love
Return home.

Connie Dufner
September 2008

OSEH SHALOM

Oseh shalom bimromav,
hu yaaseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru: Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמָיו,
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens let peace
descend on us and on all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Note: All prayers and translations are from Mishkan T'filah published by CCAR Press.

Winnipeg Jewish Community

Book Burial Ceremony
Winnipeg Jewish Community
כ"ט תשרי תשס"ה—29 Tishrei 5765
October 14, 2004



וַיְהִי בְּנִסּוֹעַ הָאֶרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, קוּמָה | ה', וַיִּפְּצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ, וַיִּנָּסוּ
 מִשְׁנֵאֶיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ: כִּי מֵצִיֹּן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה, וּדְבַר ה' מִירוּשָׁלַיִם:
 בְּרִיךְ שְׁמֹתְךָ תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ:

Whenever the Ark was carried forward, Moses would say: "Arise, Hashem! May Your enemies be scattered, may Your foes be put to flight. Torah shall come out of Zion, the word of Hashem from Jerusalem. The source of Blessing is the One who gave Torah to G-d's people, Israel, in holiness."

Rabbi:

We have been called **עַם הַסֵּפֶר**, *Am Ha-Sefer*, the People of the Book. It is a title we have worn with pride. At the celebration of *b'nai mitzvah*, we give gifts of books. At *aufrufen*, we give books. We are the People of the Book because it is through them that the doors are opened to our people's past and to the beauty of Jewish life. When we drop, a book which contains G-d's name, we kiss it as a sign of respect. We learn that books are almost living beings and should be treated as we would honor a friend or a teacher. And when a book is old, worn, and no longer of any practical use, we still treat it with respect by burying it as we would a deceased friend who has taught us ways of wisdom and truth. This is our expression of love and honour for friends and teachers of life.

Reader #1:

"Without the love of books, the richest man is poor; but endowed with this treasure of treasures, the poorest man is rich. He has wealth which no power can diminish; riches which are always increasing; possessions which the more he scatters the more they accumulate; friends which never desert him and pleasures which never die."

Reader #2:

"A book is the most delightful companion. There is in the world no friend more faithful, no teacher more proficient, no message more enduring. It will join you in solitude, accompany you in exile, serve as a candle in the dark, and entertain you in your loneliness. It will do you good, yet ask no favor in return. It gives and does not take."

-Moses ibn Ezra (12th Century Spanish Scholar)

בְּרִאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּ, וּבְיוֹם כִּפּוּר צוּם כְּפוּר יִחְתְּמוּ ...

On Rosh Hashanah it is written, On Yom Kippur it is sealed....

Rabbi:

According to a Talmudic statement, the day after Rosh Hashanah was designated to bury all documents in which the name of G-d appears. Following the cycle of fall holy days, we are aware that we have all closed our own personal Book of Life for the past year. We will not forget what we have written. Rather, we will build upon it as we sign our names into a new Book for this New Year.

Likewise, when we bury these old books that have meant so much to us, we need not be saddened. For we remember all of their teachings and the guidance they have given us. And as we study new books, we approach them having been prepared by the knowledge and inspiration that the old books have imparted.

בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים, בְּרָכָה, וְשָׁלוֹם, וּפְרִיָּסָה טוֹבָה,
נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל עַמּוֹךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם.

In the Book of Life, Blessing and Peace, and Sustenance, may we and the entire House of Israel be remembered and recorded for a good life and for peace.

Placement of books in Geniza

Reader #3:

Just as we bury our dead, so too do we bury our sacred books and ritual items which contain G-d's name, which we use to worship G-d. There comes a time when our holiest texts can no longer be read; they can no longer shed light or raise up light within us. It is time to inter them in the earth.

This is not like what the ancient Romans, the medieval Church, the Nazis, and the government of the Soviet Union—*y'mach sh'mam*—burned our *Sifrei Torah* and holy books in an attempt to destroy us. At those times, we wrote them again and made them live.

When our sacred items and texts become unusable, we bury them with loving care and respect. At this time of year, as the leaves drop from the trees and return to the earth to replenish the soil, we commit these boxes to the earth, where in time they, too, will enrich the soil out of which trees grow, and from which we create more books. We are participating in an endless chain of life. These old books and ritual items have served us faithfully. It is time for them to be laid to rest.

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים.
המצא מנוחה נכונה על פנפי השכינה.
במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים
את כל הספורים, ואת כל הסדורים, ואת כל החמשים, ואת כל
התפילין, ואת כל מזוזות, ואת כל הטליתות האלה,
שהם בלויזות וקרועות.
לכן בעל הרחמים, הנה עזר לנו
להקדיש את כלים חדשים להחזיר אותם
להיות אותות של כבודך.
יסתירם בסתר כנפיו לעולמים.
?? הוא השׁרש שלהם,
ועכשו באהבה הם חוזרים לשׁרש. ונאמר אמן:

O G-d, full of compassion, dweller on high, grant perfect peace within the sheltering wings of Your Presence, in holiness and purity, to all these holy books, siddurim, humashim, tefillin, mezuzot, and tallitot, which have become worn out and torn. Therefore, Master of Mercy, help us to dedicate for ourselves new instruments of holiness in their place, so that we may be bound in the chain of the living Torah. Hashem is their Source, and now with love they are returned to Him, and let us say, Amen.

ותגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא.
בעלמא די ברא כרעותיה, וימליך מלכותיה
בחיכון וביומיון ובחיי דכל בית ישראל.
בעגלא ובזמן קריב ואמרו אמן:
יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עולם:
ותברך וישתבח ויתפאר ויתרומם ויתנשא
ויתחדר ויתעלה ויתחלל שמה דקדשא בריך הוא
לעלא מן כל ברכתא ושירתא תשבחתא ונחמיתא,
דאמרו בעלמא, ואמרו אמן:
על ישראל ועל רבנו, ועל תלמידיו
ועל כל תלמידי תלמידיו,
ועל כל מאן דעסקין באורייתא,
די באתרא הדיו ודי בכל אתר ואתר.
יהא להון ולכון שלמא רבא, תנא וחסדא ורחמין,
וחיון אריכין, ומזוני רויחי, ופרקנא,

מִן קֶדֶם אֲבוֹהוֹן דִּי בְּשִׁמְיָא וְאַרְעָא וְאַמְרוּ אֱמֹן.
 יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמִיָּא, וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים עָלֵינוּ
 וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַמְרוּ אֱמֹן.
 עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו
 יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 וְאַמְרוּ אֱמֹן:

Rabbi:

May the words of Torah, Hashem our G-d, be sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people, the House of Israel. Through them, may we, Your children, come to know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake. You are the Source of Blessing, Hashem, Who teaches Torah to Your people Israel.

Reader #4:

The Jewish poet Marge Piercy has written:

We are the people of the word
 and the breath of the word fills our minds with light.
 We are the people of the word
 and the breath of life rings through us
 playing on the pipe of our bones ...
 We must live the word and make it real through us

We are the people of the book
 and the letters march busy as ants
 carrying the work of the ages through out minds.

We are the people of the book
 Through fire and mud and dust we have borne
 our books tenderly as a baby swaddled in a blanket,
 travelling with our words sewn in our clothes
 and carried on our backs.

Let us take up the scrolls of Torah
 and all our books
 and dance with them and touch them
 and read them out, for the mind
 touches the word and makes it light.
 So does light enter us, and we shine.

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה, ותמכיה מאשר.
 דרכיה דרכי נעים, וכל נתיבותיה שלום.
 השיבנו ה', אליך ונשובה, חדש ימינו בקדש.

The Torah is a tree of life for all who grasp it, and all who uphold it are blessed. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are paths of peace. Help us turn to you, Hashem, and we shall return; renew our lives as in days of old.



This service contains material adapted from geniza burial services developed by Rabbis Arie Becker, Edward M. Friedman, Aaron Garber, and Alan B. Lucas. It has been edited, revised, and emended by Rabbi Larry Pinsky, who also has elected not to correct suspect texts. The artwork is from Ben Shahn.

- I. Plans/Thoughts for a Proposed Genizah ceremony by Rabbi Jeremy Schwartz
ravjeremy@templebnaaisrael.org 860-423-3743

Otsar Dinim Uminhagim

Megilat Ta'anit says Tishrei 3 was a yom tov on which they would take out the azkarot.

Sfardei Jerusalem would take them in straw baskets or sacks or, for sifrei torah in clay containers, and would go out of the city as a celebrating throng, with the people carrying at the front, led by rabbis and elders under a silk huppah, and a drum leading them and they dance and sing appropriate psalms and hymns and shofar. And they have a tradition that this brings rain and prevents troubles (may they not come).

Algier: On Rosh Hodesh Iyyar, take the stuff in sacks and bury it in the cemetery in the ground, and make a banquet

In Eastern Europe, they'd put an *ohel* [apparently a building, like a mausoleum - where people could visit out of the rain - like there are "ohalim" over the graves of tsadikim? or is it just a stone?] over the spot, so people would know to treat the place as holy. And the rabbi sermonizes in relation to whatever the item is. And they do it at a time of plague, to arouse compassion through the Holy Names we are honoring.

Conservative Moreh Derech

Rabbi talk

ובנוחה יאמר ... פני משיחך

כי לקח טוב ... כקדם תורת ה' תמימה...

אלו דברים שאין להם שיעור...

bury, possibly commenting on what the books are.

J. Approach to What to Include in the Genizah by Rabbi Stuart Kelman
Stuart.kelman@gail.org 510-469-7302

From the Rabbi **Tu Bish'vat, God and the Xerox Disposal Problem**

By Rabbi Stuart Kelman

Tevet is a pretty quiet month - followed by Sh'vat and the 15th of that month, the "New Year for (fruit bearing) Trees". Originally, this minor holiday was tax time for fruit trees; i.e., the date on which one took inventory of fruit for purposes of tithing and counting towards the first three years. Today, this seemingly minor holiday has been transformed - first by the mystics, who fashioned a Seder of wine, fruits and verses/poetry/blessings; and second by the environmentalists/ecologists, who use the 15th of Sh'vat to focus our attention on the major elements of our world and how we treat it.

So, with that in mind, if you would like to conduct a Tu Bish'vat Seder in your own home or with friends, stop by and pick up a Haggadah written by Claire Sherman (or even one that has been translated into Spanish for our sister congregation in Santiago de Cuba). Both have clear instructions for your own do-it-yourself celebration.

For us as a congregation, there are other issues to ponder as we consider our new home and just how "green" we are to be. What precipitated this column was the question that was asked about our current practices of photocopying, in specific, our paper recycling procedures in the office. More specifically, I want to respond to this issue in the format of sheylah v'teshuva, question and response. At the outset, I need to thank Barbara Bibel and Nathan Martin who helped me with the research and the writing of this *responsa*.

Question: Is the recycling of photocopies of sacred texts that contain the name(s) of God permissible at Netivot Shalom?

Answer: Historically, Jews bury sacred texts such as Torahs, *Siddurim*, *chumashim* and Talmud in a *Genizah*, a small room that often was a storeroom adjacent to a synagogue. The *Genizah* of Cairo, for example, discovered in the 1800's by Solomon Schechter, gave us an enormous amount of texts, which significantly advanced our understanding of medieval Jewry. Today, the more common practice is to bury these sacred texts in a Jewish cemetery either in a separate plot or with people.

Specifically, the question of what needs to be placed in a Genizah is related to four different *mitzvot*:

1. It is biblically forbidden to actively destroy or erase one of the seven holy names of God (Deut. 12:3-4, and Sifre Deut. Ad loc.)

2. A Torah scroll that has become worn out needs to be buried next to a Torah scholar (Meg. 26b)
3. There is an additional prohibition against destroying biblical books (Shab. 115a) (Later on, Talmud and Midrash were added.)
4. It is forbidden to toss or throw biblical books (Eruvin 98a), which means they must be treated with respect.

With the advent of printing, and more recently, photocopying, the sheer volume of materials has grown to enormous proportions. This growth has direct impact on the ability of the community to dispose of large quantities of sacred material in existing Genizah space.

With regard to photocopying, other questions arise.

1. What type of "destruction" is prohibited? Indirect erasure seems to be permitted (Shab. 120b)
2. Is there a difference between books written by hand and books "written" by a printing press or a photocopy machine? Today, most rabbis agree that printed bibles and other sacred texts are holy and cannot be destroyed though they do not have the same degree of sanctity as a Torah scroll.
3. When exactly does a page of bible or other texts become holy? Galleys, for example, were never intended to be used; hence they may be discarded. Photocopies, on the other hand, are legible and intended to be used.
4. Does the law change given the current circumstances - i.e., the meteoric growth of paper consumption in modern society. In the United States alone, approximately 25 million tons of printing and writing paper are produced each year, much of which winds up in landfills. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that paper and paperboard make up the largest component of solid waste by weight, over 40% of all municipal solid waste.

In the early part of the 18th century, Rabbi Jacob Reisher ruled that large barrels of holy books and pages which were left standing in a cemetery and were being stolen or used as toilet paper, should be burned in private and the ashes be placed in a clay jar and buried next to a Torah scholar. Large bags of books and pages were actually reported to have been found in recent years at Har Hamenuchot in Jerusalem. Rabbi Solomon Freehof in a Reform Responsa (Solomon Freehof, in *New American Reform Responsa*, 1980) rules that recycling is merely an extension of burning and is therefore permissible. In 1991, the Central Conference of American Rabbis ruled that while "historically great care was always taken with the name of God and every effort made to protect texts" by placing them in a Genizah, this method "did not prevent the ultimate destruction of the texts". They further argued that that the real task was that of protecting the text from improper use, which would be offensive.

Ecological values such as the saving of natural resources and baal tashchit, the prohibition of wanton destruction come into tension with the desire to protect texts that

contain God's name. Furthermore, one may reuse *mitzvah* objects (Shab. 117b) such as lulavim (put away and used to burn chametz before Passover), the etrog (poked full of cloves and used for Havdalah), old tzitzit (used as bookmarks), olive oil (hung in a container in a Sukkah and then used for the Chanukiyah), a talit used as a chuppah (and then given to the groom.) [Rabbi Binyomin Adilman, "Recycling in Jewish Tradition", The Jewish Student Research Center, (JSOURCE), Jerusalem, 2001.]

In a teshuvah for the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee in Israel, Rabbi Chaim Wiener brings four opinions [Rabbi Chaim Weiner: "The Disposal Problem of Photocopies of Bible, Siddur, Talmud, and Midrash". in *Responsa of the Va'ad Halakhah of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel* V 44 5570/5752. Rabbinical Assembly, Masorti Movement, Jerusalem: 1992, pp xxiii-xxv, 65-72]:

1. Rav Chayim David HaLevi ruled that a book with one of the seven names of God cannot be recycled. As for texts that do not have the name of God, he is unclear. As for newspapers that have God's name, they can be recycled.
2. Rav Shavty Avraham HaCohen Rappaport at Yeshiva Har Zion rules that it is acceptable to recycle the paper of sifrei kodesh (sacred texts). His reasoning is that one is not throwing away a text when it is put into a collection bin, so one is not liable for purposely throwing away a text. The new paper that is made from recycled material is a totally new thing (*davar chadash legamrei*) by throwing them into a receptacle.
3. Rav Moshe Feinstein (with regard to Rav Rappaport (above) rules that it is permissible to recycle texts without the seven names of God again because there is no direct cause of loss of the texts (*ibud bayadayim*) by throwing them in a receptacle.
4. Rav Uri Dasberg notes that in a recycling facility, different types of papers are separated. Therefore one can't say that the workers who separate cannot identify sacred texts. He therefore recommends recycling pages that only are thrown away from printing houses.

Rabbi Chaim Wiener concludes, "Books are "holy objects" which are more sacred, but if we are already desperate enough to ignore their holiness and burn them, it would be preferable to recycle the paper...."

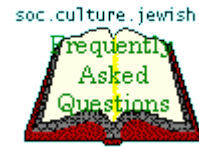
In conclusion, it is permissible to recycle photocopies of sacred texts that contain the name(s) of God at Netivot Shalom, provided that these pages are placed in a designated recycling container and that this container is specifically given to a designated recycling agency.

K. Jewish News Group Responses to Why Write 'G - d'?

[Note: Reproduced from <http://www.shamash.org/lists/scj-faq/HTML/faq/11-03-01.html> without change.]

**Soc.Culture.Jewish Newsgroups
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Question 11.3.1:

Writing: Why do some people write "G-d" with a hyphen instead of an 'o'?

Based on the words in Deut. 12:3-4, the Rabbis deduced that it is forbidden to erase the name of G-d from a written document. Since any paper upon which G-d's name was written might be discarded and thus "erased", the Rabbis forbade explicitly writing the name of G-d, except in Holy Books, with provisions for the proper disposal of such books.

According to Jewish Folklore, G-d has 70 names. However, only one of these names is the *ineffable name*, which cannot be erased or pronounced. Further, of the 70 names, seven may not be erased but they can be pronounced on certain occasions (such as when reading the Torah). The other names may be erased and pronounced, but still must be treated with respect. The Talmud (Shevuot 35a-b) makes it clear that this prohibition applies only to seven Biblical names of G-d and not to other names or attributes of G-d, which may be freely written. The prohibition was later codified by Maimonides (Mishneh Torah, Yesodei HaTorah 6:1-2). The practice of writing "G-d" is supported in Shut Achiezer, 3:32, end, where it is endorsed and accepted as the prevailing custom. Rambam cites Deut. 12-03:04, which states "and you shall destroy the names of pagan gods from their places. You *shall not* do similarly to G-d your Lord." The intent of this is to create an atmosphere of respect for G-d's name vs pagan gods names.

As a result of this, people acquired the habit of not writing the full name down in the first place. Strictly speaking, this only applies to Hebrew on a permanent medium, but many people are careful beyond the minimum, and have applied it to non-Hebrew languages. Hence, "G-d". One explanation is that using G-d is a reminder that anything which we may say about G-d is necessarily metaphorical. Spelling out the Name (even in a language other than Hebrew) would imply that one could speak meaningfully (not just metaphorically) about G-d.

However, the Shach (Yoreh De'a 179:11) ruled that "God" spelled in a foreign language does NOT have the status of a "shem" and thus may be erased, lehatkhila. There is a story about Rav Soloveitchik (z"l) intentionally writing GOD on the board while teaching a class and then just as deliberately and intentionally erasing it, so as to demonstrate by his own example that this was not a halakhically a problem.

Conservative

(ref: <http://communities.msn.com/JudaismFAQs&naventryid=160>) and Reform practice is to use "God". However, even some who are not strict (or even observant) in general will write "G-d", to emphasize that Jewish conceptions of G-d are meant.

Note: There is one exception to the destruction of G-d's name. In Numbers 6, the Suspected Wife Ceremony, a man who suspects his wife of adultery (with witnesses seeing a forbidden seclusion) brings his wife to the temple. The Priests test the women by pronouncing the horrible Biblical curse. After reading the curse it is written on parchment and dissolved in water (which the women drinks). If she is guilty she dies and otherwise the couple gets their marriage back. Thus, G-d actually allows the ineffable name to be dissolved in water that the women drinks. As the Talmud notes: G-d allows the ineffable name to be erased for the sake of bringing peace between a husband and wife.

Note that if you disagree with another poster's decision to omit or include the hyphen, you should not publicly criticize or ridicule said poster.

The FAQ is a collection of documents that is an attempt to answer questions that are continually asked on the soc.culture.jewish family of newsgroups. It was written by cooperating laypeople from the various Judaic movements. You **should not** make any

assumption as to accuracy and/or authoritativeness of the answers provided herein. In all cases, it is always best to consult a competent authority--your local rabbi is a good place to start.



Hopefully, the FAQ will provide the answer to your questions. If it doesn't, please drop Email to questions@scjfaq.org. The FAQ maintainer will endeavor to direct your query to an appropriate individual that can answer it. If you would like to be part of the group to which the maintainer directs questions, please drop a note to the FAQ maintainer at maintainer@scjfaq.org.

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