

SHAIMOS GUIDELINES: DISCARDING HOLY OBJECTS

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Issued by The Sydney Chevra Kadisha (SCK) with authority from The Sydney Beth Din – Nissan 5777

As we clean for Passover, we tend to use the opportunity to de-clutter our homes as well. We find that over the course of the year we manage to collect a sizeable collection of Torah and *mitzva* related material. Since the Torah requires us to treat holy writings and objects with dignity even when they won't be used anymore, many of these items cannot be thrown out in the regular garbage. These items, known colloquially as *shaimos*, (or "names" referring to Hashem's Holy Name that may not be erased), must be discarded in the respectful manner that is outlined in *Halacha*.

Just as it is important to clarify which items belong in *shaimos*, it is also important to know what is *not* considered *shaimos*, since it is considered disrespectful to bury non-*shaimos* with regular *shaimos* and wasteful of Holy cemetery ground.

The following *shaimos* that contain Hashem's name or have had a mitzva performed with them and should be placed in a closed cardboard box before being brought to the Sydney Chevra Kadisha (SCK):

- *Tefillin, mezuzot, and megilot*
- *Chumashim, siddurim, benchers, machzorim, Hagadot and any book or printed material that has Hashem's name Yud – Kei – Vav – Kei, Yud – Kei, Adnay, Elokim, Shakai printed or written in the full original spelling*
- *Mezuzah covers, tefillin straps, boxes and bags*
- *Tzitzis, tzitzis strings, and talleisim*
- *Talmud, Mishnayot, Shulchan Aruch and similar classic printed texts.*

According to HoRav Moshe Feinstein ZT"L recycling holy items that do not have Hashem's name on them is permitted as they are not treated disrespectfully during the process. Therefore the following may be discarded by placing them in the paper cardboard recycling bin. These items should not be brought to the SCK and will not be accepted for burial.

- Printed material which by their nature are not intended to be saved, and that do not have Hashem's name written in full i.e. weekly *Divrei Torah* flyers, *Torah* articles printed in newspapers and magazines, *Torah* magazines without Hashem's name etc
- Children's *Limudei kodesh* homework and *parsha* sheets that (should not, and) do not have Hashem's name printed in full
- Invitations that contain *pesukim (verses)*.

The following should be placed in the green garden waste bin and not brought to the SCK. They will not be accepted for burial.

- Lulav (There is a custom to save the lulav and burn it with the chametz Erev Pesach but it may also be burned prior)
- Etrog (It is customary for it to be allowed to dry and shrivel first)
- Hoshanot.

The following are *not shaimos* and may be disposed of in the normal manner and not brought to the SCK

- CDs, DVDs, tapes, computer disks, USB sticks and hard drives that contain *Torah shiurim*

If one does not have the ability to bring actual shaimos to the SCK there are authorities that permit placing them in two bags – that is filling a bag with shaimos, sealing it and putting that bag into a second bag and sealing it – and then disposing of the doubly sealed bags in the normal garbage. This is not the preferred option. It should not be used for actual Tefillin and Mezuzot.

For security reasons, please do not leave any shaimos outside the SCK. Call the office first to arrange a day and time for the drop off.