

EITZ CHAYIM HALACHAGRAM -- SHAIMOS GUIDELINES

The *halacha* prohibits disposing certain holy objects (known as *shaimos*) by throwing them in the trash. The proliferation of all kinds of Torah publications creates many *shaimos* issues. This *halachagram* has been prepared to provide some guidance in dealing with the most common *shaimos* questions. Objects which qualify as *shaimos* should be placed in a separate bag/container and buried. Items which do not qualify as *shaimos* should not be placed into a *shaimos* bag. Contact Rabbi Schwalb if you need further information about where you can deliver your *shaimos* for proper burial.

I. Objects which require burial include: (1) any paper where one of the names of G-d is written (e.g., *Adosheim, Elokim, Shakai, Keil*); (2) *tefilin*; (3) *tefilin* boxes and velvet bags; (4) *mezuzos*; (5) *Torah* books, whether handwritten, printed, or photocopied (6) *divrei Torah* sheets distributed by school, email, Jewish newspapers [e.g., the “Jewish Press” may be completely placed into *shaimos* because Torah is dispersed throughout]; (7) secular newspapers that contain photographs of *pesukim* from *Tanach* (even if Hashem’s name does not appear); (8) a paper on which three consecutive words of a *posuk* from *Tanach* have been written in one line, unless the phrase from *Tanach* is being used as a *melitzah* (e.g., if you have a firstborn son named Yisroel, an invitation stating “*bni bechori Yisroel*,” which is a portion of a Torah verse is not *shaimos*, but most authorities assume that if “*od yeshama b’arei yehuda*” is written in a straight line on a wedding invitation, it is *shaimos*); (9) the cover of a Torah book that was removed or fell off, even if it lacks any writing on it; (10) homework and test papers in *Limudei Kodesh* may be *shaimos* depending on whether they fall into the above categories; and (11) all of the above, even if written in English or any other non-Hebrew language.

II. Objects which do not require burial include: (1) names of G-d which are halachically considered “nicknames” (such as Hashem, IY”H, BE”H, B”H, BS”D, God, in Hebrew or English); (2) Hebrew literature, that does not conform with the specifications of Point I (including Jewish history, secular stories, etc.); (3) *Tanach* vocabulary lists; (4) Torah emails on the computer screen; (5) *mezuzah* covers [unless the *mezuzah* which was in it was not wrapped in a plastic or paper cover]; and (6) a *yarmulka*. All of these items may be disposed of directly in the garbage. Although objects which have been used for a *mitzvah* (such as *s’chach, tzitzis, esrogim, lulavim, hadasim, aravos*, and a *talis* bag) do not require burial, it is proper to dispose of them by wrapping them in a separate bag before placing them in the garbage.

A final note -- this summary constitutes *shaimos*.