



What is a Sheimos Bank used for?

Halacha forbids us from destroying any item that has *kedusha* associated with it. These items fall into various categories – first, those that have intrinsic *kedusha*, which includes anything from *mezuzos* and *tefillin*, and printed *sefarim* such as *siddurim*, *chumashim* and *gemaros*. This would also include any printed papers (newspapers, magazines, *Parsha* sheets) that include the name of Hashem in full. *Sifrei Torah* constitute a category of their own and need to be treated with extra *kedusha* and as such should not be placed in the *Sheimos* Bank. (see table for further details)

ITEM	ACTION
• <i>Sifrei Torah</i>	DO NOT PLACE IN SHEIMOS BANK
• <i>Mezuzos</i> • <i>Tefillin</i> • <i>Tefillin straps</i>	PLACE IN SHEIMOS BANK INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED ENSURE SEALED AND WATERPROOF
• Empty <i>tefillin</i> bags and empty <i>mezuzah</i> cases • <i>Sefarim</i> / photocopied source sheets with <i>Shem Hashem</i>	PLACE IN SHEIMOS BANK IN BAGS
• Torah content in Jewish newspapers and magazines which do not contain <i>Shem Hashem</i> • Photocopied source sheets which do not contain <i>Shem Hashem</i> • <i>Parsha</i> sheets • School projects • Wedding invitations with <i>pesukim</i>	DOUBLE WRAP AND DISPOSE OF IN A REGULAR BIN – DO NOT RECYCLE
• Jewish music, video or story DVDs or CDs	DISPOSE OF IN A REGULAR BIN

Which names of Hashem need real Geniza?

The seven names of Hashem recorded in the table below, may not be erased and *geniza* (burial) is required when disposing of them. In order to avoid requirement for *geniza* of this page, they have to be changed from the way in which one would find them in a *chumash* or *siddur*. In each word a letter has been replaced with 'ק'.

REQUIRE GENIZA	REPLACED LETTERS
יְקוּק	ה
יֵק	ה
ק-ל	א
אלו-קים	ה
ש-קי	ד
צב-קות	א
ק-היה (see <i>Parshas Va'eira</i>)	א

When Hashem's names as listed have been **transliterated** they require *geniza*.

When in direct reference to Hashem, terms describing **Hashem's middos** such as רחום are used, they require burial as *geniza*. This needs to be judged contextually.

Which names can be discarded?

When found in newspapers, *Parsha* sheets etc, Hashem's names can be discarded by double-wrapping in the following cases:

- When one of the letters has been **replaced** (like in the above with ק)
- If a **hyphen separates** the letters
- If two letters have been **merged** (this became convention in some *siddurim* with the letters ך and ם)
- Additional names of Hashem can be respectfully discarded (double-wrapped):
 - Where Hashem's name has been replaced with **two letters**
 - English translations such as "God", and "Hashem"
 - 'ה or 'ש – **single letter references** such as these are viewed by poskim as being possible shorthand for one of the above names and therefore should be double-wrapped.

How do I place items in the bank?

Items that are placed in the *Sheimos* Bank should be put into bags before inserting in the slot. Please note that *mezuzos* and *tefillin* should be individually wrapped before inserting and care should be taken to ensure that the wrapping is waterproof.

What is a Sheimos Bank not to be used for?

Printed material that includes *Divrei Torah* or incidental mention of *Divrei Torah* (see table for examples) are not subject to the same *halachos* as items with *kedusha*, but they may not be treated with direct *bizayon*, ie in a manner that 'disgraces' them. (See question below for further details)

If my item should not go to *geniza*, how do I dispose of it?

It should be double-wrapped before disposing as normal with other waste. Broken *tzitzis* strings would also fall into this category. (See table for further details.)

Can I use my recycling bin?

The Federation Beis Din takes the position that recycling should be avoided. The recycling process often sends paper to factories which produce tissue paper rolls and thus is considered to be a direct *bizayon*.

Who should I contact if I have questions or I'm not sure?

If you have a question as to whether your item is *sheimos* or not, you can contact the Federation's *shaila* service ShailaText by sending a message to 07860 017 641, for a response within four working hours.

Do I need to pay to use this service?

The Federation's *Sheimos* L'Geniza Service is offered to the entire community free of charge. However, we do appreciate donations that help to defray the cost of transporting the *sheimos* items for burial. To make a donation text SHEM05 £1/£2/£3/£4/£5 to 70070 or visit www.federation.org.uk

It would be great if there was a Sheimos Bank closer to my home! Who do I contact to find out more about setting one up?

To find out if it is possible to set up a Federation *Sheimos* L'Geniza near you, please email info@federation.org.uk or telephone 020 8202 2263

FAQ by Rabbi Sruli Guttentag

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