SHEIMOT

SHEIMOT: WHAT ARE SHEIMOT

Sheimot: Definition

Sheimot/sheimos are written items with:

- God's name in *Hebrew* or even in other languages;
- Three consecutive words of *Torah* in *Hebrew* (or commentaries on the *Torah* in any language); or
- Halacha in any language.

Sheimot: Illegible

If a normal person is not able to read your handwriting, then even if you wrote holy words, Torah, or halacha , they are not considered sheimot.

SHEIMOT: TREATMENT

SHEIMOT: HOW TO TREAT

Sheimot: Summary of Treatment

Sheimot must be treated carefully, protected from unclean places, and buried or-in some cases—double-wrapped rather than trashed. See individual listings below for details.

SHEIMOT: HOW TO DISPOSE OF

Sheimot: Disposal

These holy writings (tashmishei kedusha) may not be thrown directly into the trash, but should ideally be buried with like items (*sheimot*):

- Holy writings that contain God's name.
- Parts of Tanach (24-book Jewish Bible).
- Explanations of the Torah or commandments.

However, if a printed or written page (in contrast to parchment scrolls such as tefilin, Torahs, or mezuzas) contains God's name plus secular content, it must be double wrapped in plastic before being thrown in the trash.

- REASON It would be a disgrace to bury Torah words with secular content. NOTE You may find collection boxes (marked "sheimot/sheimos" or "geniza") at a local Jewish school or synagogue into which you can deposit your sheimot items. NOTE
 - Tashmishei mitzva—items used to do a mitzva (such as talit or tzitzit)—must be wrapped in:
 - One layer of plastic if they will be thrown away in dry trash, or
 - Double layer of plastic if they will be thrown away into wet garbage.

Sheimot/Bury

Do not throw into trash, even if double wrapped:

• Handwritten scrolls of Torah, tefilin, mezuza.

• Printed Torah, Talmud, siddur, books of halacha, or Torah commentaries.

Rather, put them into a *sheimot* collection box or wrap in plastic and bury in a place where they will not be dug up. It does not need to be a cemetery.

Double Wrap and Throw into Trash

Double wrap and throw into trash:

• Newspapers and flyers that have *Torah psukim* or *Torah* commentaries and also have non-*Torah* content.

REASON Non-*Torah* material should not be buried as *sheimot*.

• Children's school handouts with *psukim* from the *Torah* or *halachot* that also contain non-*Torah* content (if they ONLY contain words of *Torah*, they should be buried as *sheimot*).

Single Wrap and Throw into Trash

For disposal of items used for *mitzvot* (*tashmishei mitzva*), you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it in normal garbage:

- Lulav,
- *Etrog*, or
- *Talit/tzitzit* (but NOT *tefilin*!)

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