



Shaimos Guidelines:

Discarding Holy Objects



As we clean for Pesach, we tend to use the opportunity to declutter our homes as well. We find that over the course of the year we manage to collect a sizeable collection of Torah and *mitzvah* 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*, must be discarded in the respectful manner that is outlined in *halachah*.

Many cities have an organization that deals with *shaimos* burial. People collect their personal *shaimos* materials and place them either in a designated bin, or, as is the practice in Cleveland, wait for a city wide *shaimos* collection. Just as it is important to clarify which items belong in *shaimos*, it is also important to know what is not considered *shaimos*, since there are times that it is considered disrespectful to bury non-*shaimos* with regular *shaimos*.

The following are considered Shaimos:

- *Tefillin*, *mezuzos*, and *megilos*
- *Chumashim*, *siddurim*, *benchers*, *mishnayos*, *gemara*, Torah commentaries, *Shulchan Aruch* and *halacha seforim* etc.
- *Mezuza* covers, *tefillin* straps, boxes and bags
- Paper that contains Hashem's name

The following items that are used once or twice should be double wrapped before being disposed of:

- Children's *lemudai kodesh* homework and *parsha sheets*
- The *divrei* Torah from Jewish publications such as newspapers and shul newsletters. The social sections may be disposed of. 