

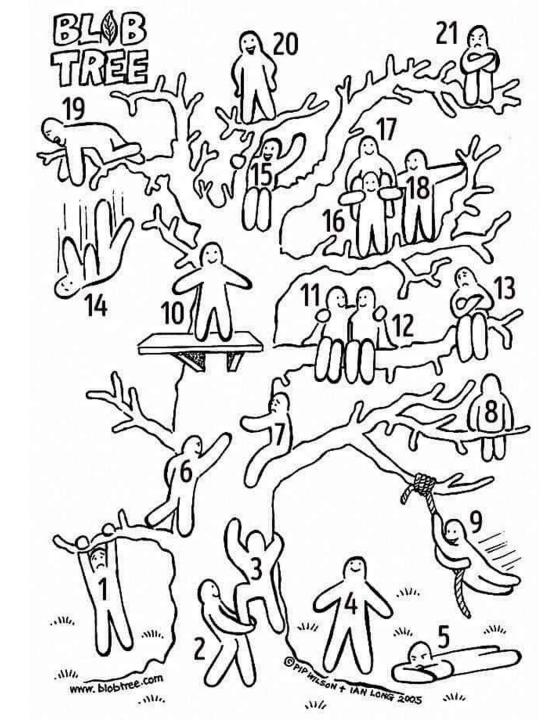
CARING FOR JUDAICA



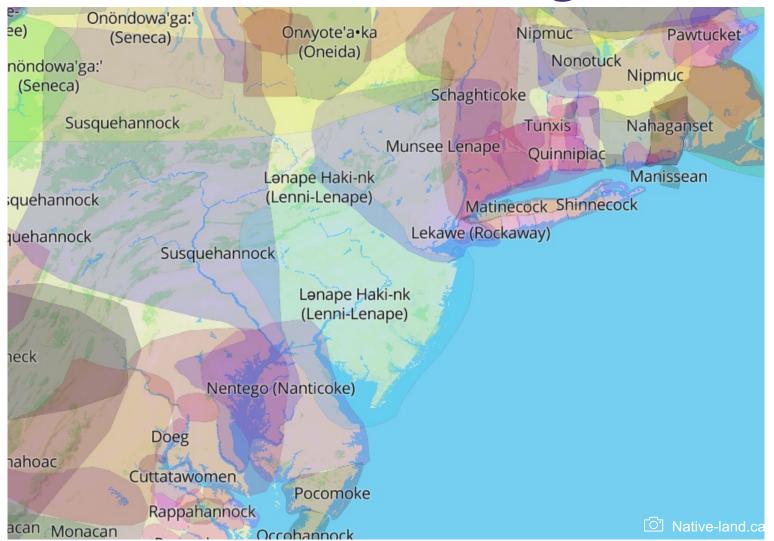
Margalit Schindler (they/them)
Principal Conservator
Pearl Preservation, LLC.
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Check - In

Which BLOB do you relate to today?



Land Acknowledgement





Ruth and David Levine, September, 1958

Overview

Jewish People and Material Culture

What is Judaica?

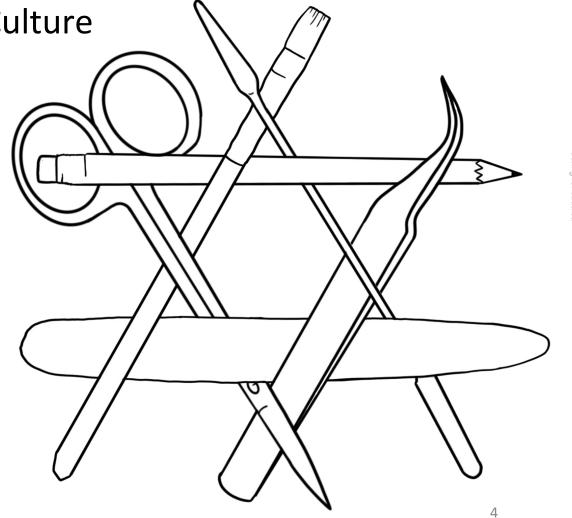
Material Considerations

Sacred Considerations

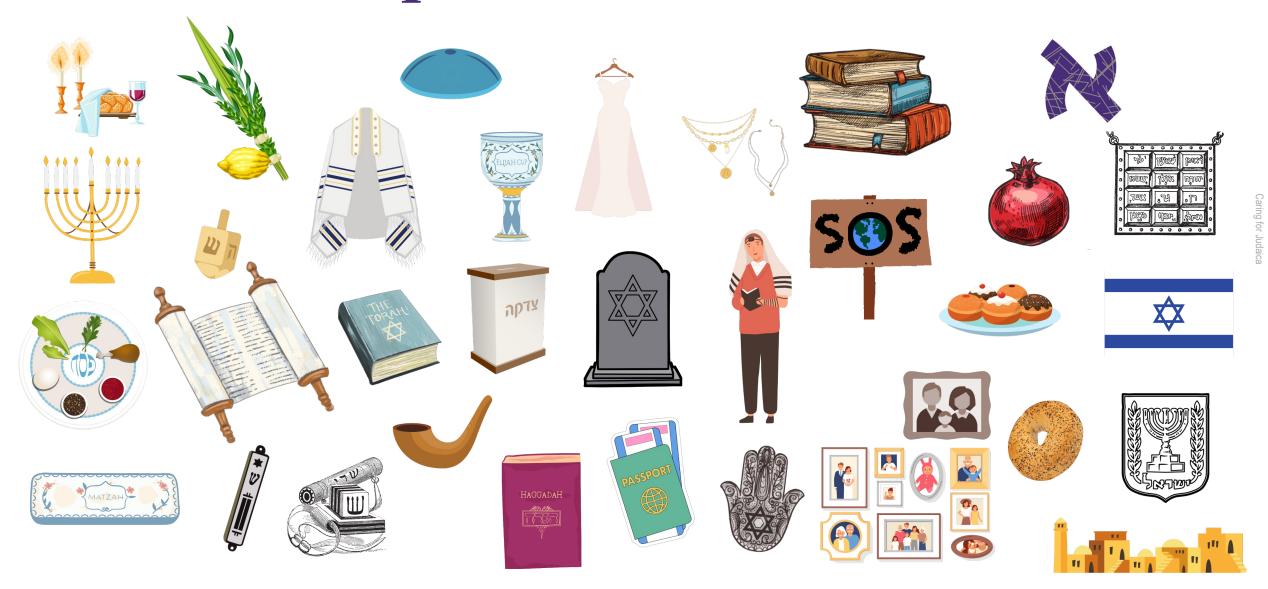
Creative Thinking

Intention

Practical Steps



Jewish People and Material Culture



Most Jews say they own a menorah, mezuzah

% of U.S. Jews who say they own a ...

Pew Study

Ownership of Jewish items

Eight-in-ten U.S. Jews say they own a menorah, a candelabra used to mark the eight days of Hanukkah. Nearly two-thirds own a mezuzah, which is a parchment containing scripture passages typically affixed to the doorposts in Jewish homes. Six-in-ten U.S. Jews say they own a Hebrew-language siddur (Jewish prayer book), and 56% say they have a Seder plate designed to hold the six symbolic foods associated with the Passover meal.

	Menorah	Mezuzah	Hebrew- language siddur	Seder plate
	%	%	%	%
NET Jewish	81	64	59	56
Jews by religion	90	78	72	68
Jews of no religion	57	28	24	23
Orthodox	95	96	96	81
Conservative	93	82	77	79
Reform	88	73	65	63
No particular branch	62	35	33	28
Men	79	62	57	52
Women	83	67	61	60
Ages 18-29	74	57	54	42
30-49	80	58	56	54
50-64	85	73	63	62
65+	84	70	63	64
Married	87	71	66	63
Spouse Jewish	96	90	80	80
Spouse not Jewish	74	46	45	40
Not married	73	54	50	46
High school or less	81	64	63	64
Some college	78	61	57	53
College graduate	79	61	54	51
Postgraduate degree	85	70	63	59
Household income <\$50K	69	51	49	40
\$50K-\$99,999	84	67	62	57
\$100K-\$199,999	84	69	61	59
\$200K or more	86	68	65	65

FOR RELEASE MAY 11, 2021

Jewish Americans in 2020

U.S. Jews are culturally engaged, increasingly diverse, politically polarized and worried about anti-Semitism









Source: Survey conducted Nov. 19, 2019-June 3, 2020, among U.S. adults.

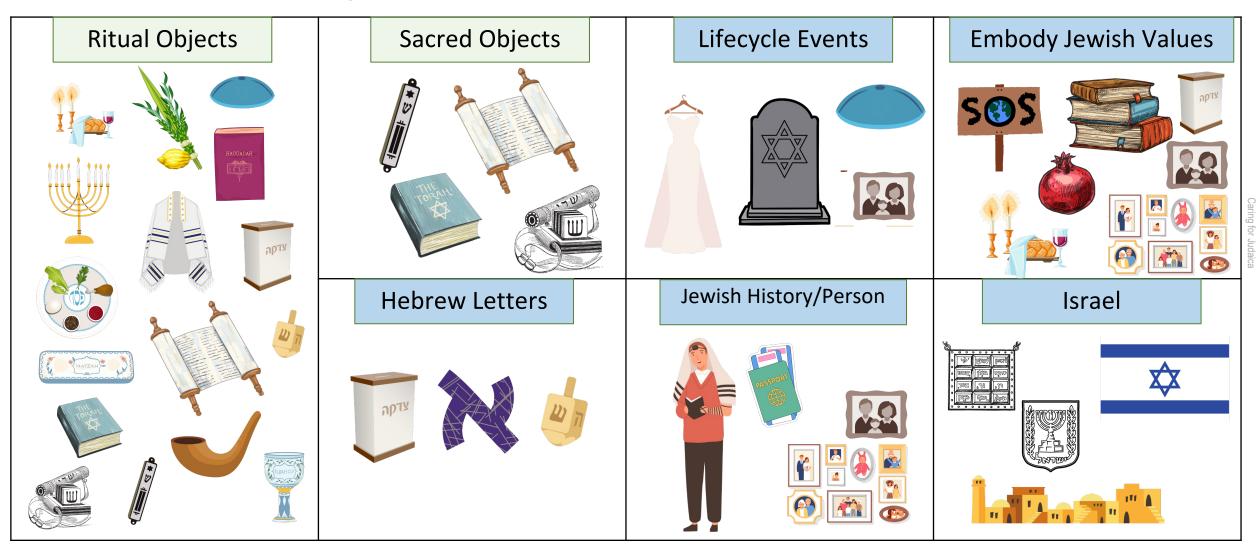
"Jewish Americans in 2020"

What is Judaica?



What is Judaica?

Traditional Classification



ring for Judaic

Traditional Classifications

Ritual Objects

Sacred Objects

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Traditiona	1 ()	lacciti	cations
Haulliona		ıassııı	cations

	Traditional Classifications	
Hebrew	Transliteration	English
כלי קודש	Klei Kodesh	Holy objects (literally "vessels of holiness")
תשמישיי קדושה	Tashmishei Kedushah	Accoutrements of holy objects (literally "holy utensil")
תשמישיי מצווה	<u>Tashmishei</u> Mitzvah	Ritual implements (literally "commanded utensil")
רשות	Reshut	Optional ritual object (has several definitions, but we'll use "optional")

Traditional Classifications

Ritual Objects

Sacred Objects

Traditional Classifications

English Transliteration Hebrew

Holy objects

(literally "vessels of holiness")

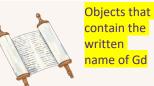
Accoutrements of holy objects (literally "holy utensil")

Ritual implements

(literally "commanded utensil")

Optional ritual object

(has several definitions, but we'll use "optional")



Objects that

objects

Klei Kodesh

contact holy **Tashmishei Kedushah**

Tashmishei Mitzvah

Reshut

כלי קודש

תשמישיי קדושה

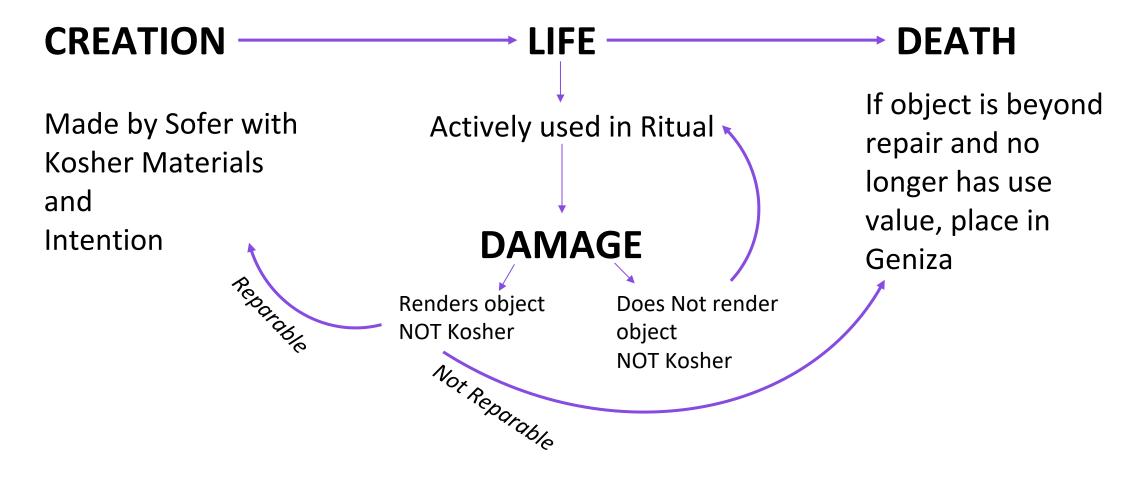
תשמישיי מצווה

רשות



Klei Kodesh Lifecycle

Sofer/et = Holy Scribe
Kosher = fit for ritual use
Geniza = ritual burial for sacred texts



aring for Judaic

What is Judaica?

Traditional Classification

Sacred Hierarchy









Contemporary Classification

Explicitly Jewish

Implicitly Jewish







Aron Kodesh – Holy Ark



Torah Scroll

Rimonim

(Lit. Pomegranates)

Finials

This diagram illustrates the

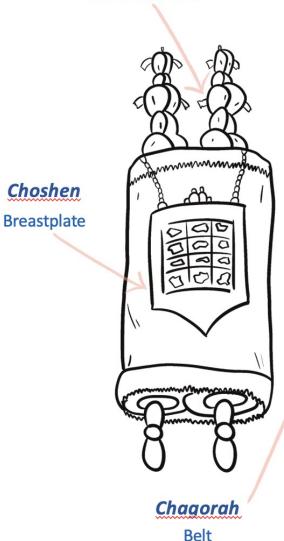
The scroll itself is considered klei kodesh. All other objects are Tashmishei Kedushah, and are not, themselves, sacred. (The exception is an etz chaim that has already been attached to a klaf - it, too, requires geniza.)

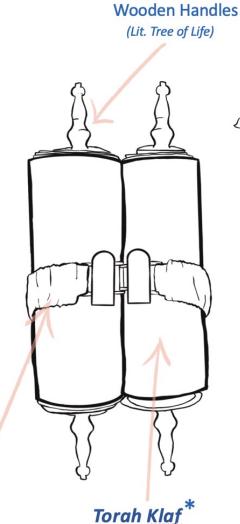
components and accoutrements of a

Torah.

traditional Ashkenazi

(Eastern European) sefer



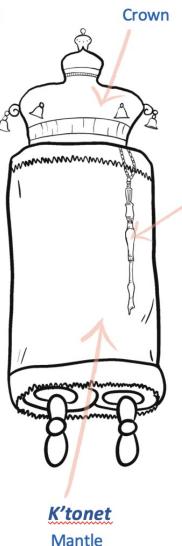


Parchment

Sefer Torah

Torah Scroll

Etz Chaim



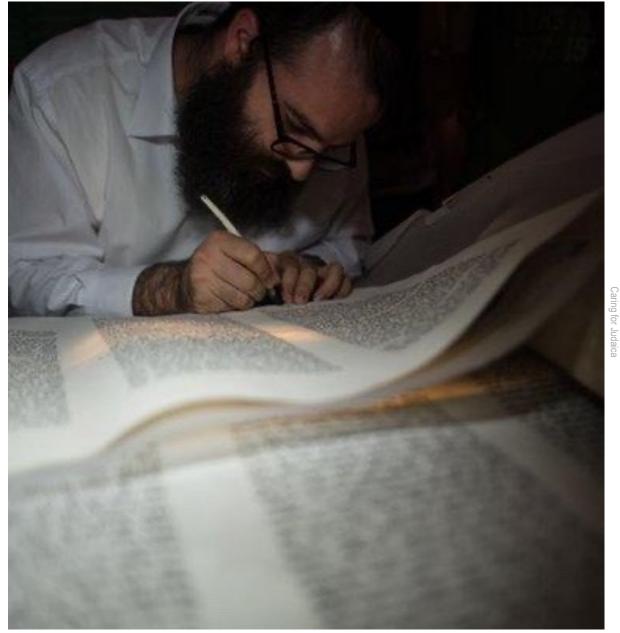
Keter

Yad **Pointer** (Lit. Hand)



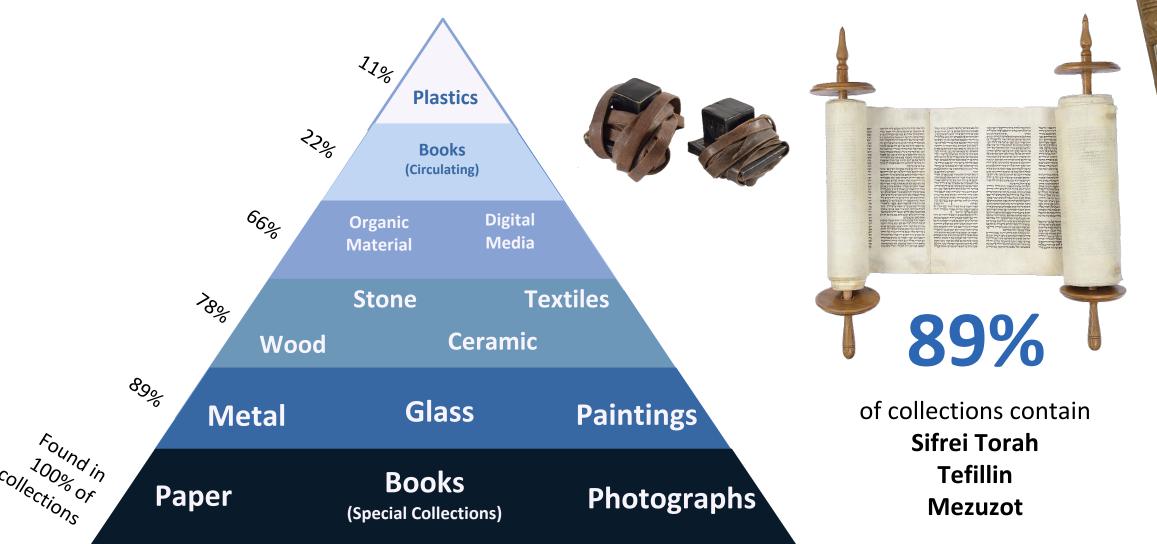








What Types of Materials are Represented?



Material Considerations for creation and repair

Hi Margalit,

Greetings from the conservation lab at where I am currently a fellow in paper. I was hoping you you might have some insight into a ketubbah on parchment that I am about to treat.

The ink on the document is flaking and I would like to consolidate it before it leaves for exhibition at the end of next month. I am considering the different consolidants we have in the lab, but want to rule out anything that wouldn't be considered appropriate for use with a Hebrew document. My instinct is to avoid any animal-based adhesives, but is there anything else I should know for choosing the consolidant?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on this if you have time to answer; your insight would be a tremendous help to me.

Material Considerations for creation and repair

Hi Margalit,

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These are some common symbols; they usually appear on the front of a package. These are widely accepted by most rabbis.















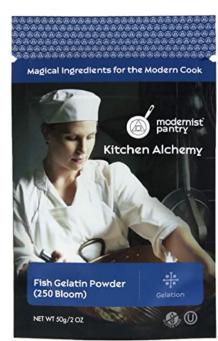








Prepared by Gayle Levine Schindler | Foody Fun LLC www.FoodyFunKosher.com | GayleSchindler@comcast.net © Copyright 2023 | All Rights Reserved





Marriage contract





Sacred Considerations

- What kind of object is it?
- Does it contain the written name of Gd?

Yes / No

Subject to Sofer and Geniza

No additional barriers

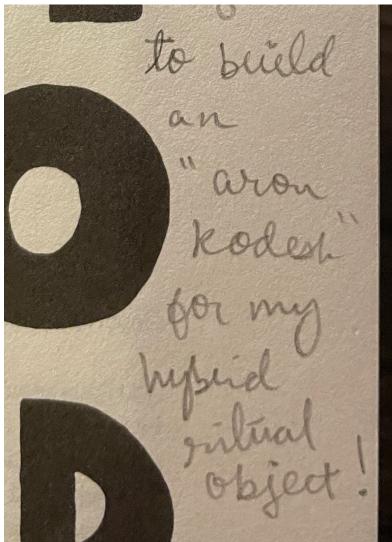
Tradi	tional Classifications	
English	Transliteration	Hebrew
Holy objects (literally "vessels of holiness")	Klei Kodesh	כ לי קודש
Accoutrements of holy objects (literally "holy utensil")	Tashmishei Kedushah	תשמישיי קדושה
Ritual implements (literally "commanded utensil")	<u>Tashmishei</u> Mitzvah	תשמישיי מצווה
Optional ritual object (has several definitions, but we'll use "optional")	Reshut	רשות



- Primary condition concern is legibility and perfection of the written letters
- Any imperfection in the text renders it not kosher, or fit for ritual use

Creative Thinking and Embracing Jewish Values







Working with The Jewish Museum of Maryland to build custom housing and transport for extra-long artwork by contemporary artist Arielle Tonkin, which was exhibited in *A Fence Around the Torah*

Kavanah – Intention

Kavanah requires both freedom from extraneous thoughts and distractions and the cognizance that a person is standing before a divine presence.

Five Essential Elements

For Proper Prayer according to Maimonides in Mishnah Torah

These are all good practices for collection care professionals regardless of collection or object!

Kavanah – Intention/Mindfulness

Clean hands

A covered body

A clean space

Removal of distractions

Practical Steps

- Determine the type of object you have and identify whether it has additional sacred considerations
- Basic Storage Enclosure is okay
 - Anything to buffer against fluctuations in RH, pests, dust, and light
- Respect Do not store objects on the ground or in/near a restroom
- Do your best protect objects using what is available
- Don't know? ASK
 - Reach out to local synagogues or Jewish communities or contact Pearl Preservation for recommendations



Jewish Value Considerations When Working with Judaica

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Overview

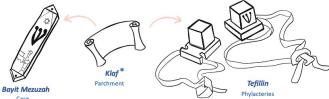
The purpose of this poster is to introduce traditional classifications for Jewish holy objects and suggest ways that their cultural significance may be recognized and respected in tandem with modern preservation practices. By looking at these traditions and techniques, we can examine the values they are trying to communicate and apply those larger values to collection care work. This poster is designed for anyone who may steward Judaica in an institution, community or home.

Traditional Classifications

According to the traditional classification of sacred Jewish objects, there are four categories, each with different rules about the creation, use, and end of the object. Some categories have strict rules, others are more relaxed. These traditional classifications only consider traditional ritual objects and are based in *halakha* – Jewish rabbinic law – which are laid out in the *Talmud*, a compendium of Jewish law and rabbinic interpretation.

In this system, there is a hierarchy of sacred objects and rules that dictate how they are to be made, handled, repaired, and disposed of through burial. Klei kodesh are holy objects (literally translate to "vessels of holiness") because they have the name of G-d written on them one or more times. They are considered sacred whether they are in use or not. Examples of klei kodesh are a sefer Torah (Torah scroll), tefillin or mezuzah parchment scroll, all of which are carefully crafted by a sofer, or scribe, who must handwrite every letter flawlessly. The very creation of these items involves spiritual kavana – intent – to infuse them with kedusha - holiness. Objects that are traditionally "more holy" have special handling guidelines, aimed at preserving the structural integrity of the ink on the parchment and legibility of the text, which, if damaged, deems the objects no longer kosher, or fit for ritual use.

Other objects fall into one of three categories, each different in nuanced ways, but for the sake of collection care practices can all be considered "not sacred."

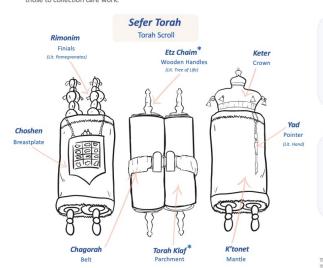


Hebrew
כלי קודש
תשמישיי קדושו
תשמישיי מצווה
רשות

"A person must have great respect for a *Sefer Torah*. It is their duty to assign a special place "וחיב אדם לנהג כבוד גדול בספר תורה." "for it and to treat this place with honor, and to hold it in utmost reverence."

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 28:3

Outlined below are some practical collection care notes for the most spiritually sensitive, the Sefer Torah still in ritual use, which is klei kodesh, the most holy object in the Jewish tradition. The following recommendations are based on a Sefer Torah still in ritual use, which must stay free from imperfections to remain kosher and be used in ritual. These are the strictest limitations, and do not apply to all Judaica. However, by examining these traditions and techniques, we can examine the values they are trying to communicate and apply those to collection care work.



Storage

A sefer Torah is usually stored upright, at an angle – its attect chaim, or wooder rollers lift. "trees of life", Testing on a backboard, its front feet up against a footrest. The scroll is stored inside its protective and decorative wrappings and adornments. One or several Torah scrolls can be stored together. An aron kodesh is a special nook, box, or cabinet that of selegizated to store the scrolls, and should not be used to store other objects. The aron kodesh is kept closed, and it is customary for folks to stand to show respect when it is opened. In addition to respect, this arrangement also has practical benefits of thoughtful storage practice—protection from light, water, persk, and fluctuations in relative humidity.

→ Safe spaces have tangible and intangible value.

Behavior and Conduct

inhabits holy. How we behave around a sefer Torah is representative of our attitude towards holiness. There are some holder's specifications, but essentially it is forbidden to do anything disrespectful in the presence of a Torah scroll. The sefer Torah should not be kept in or near a bathroom or gravehouse. It is also considered imposite to it on the same surface on which a Torah is resting. As a rough guide, if you wouldn't do it at the dinner table, don't oli taround the Torah. In many traditions, it is customary to kiss the Torah as it passes by.

The holiness of a sefer Torah extends around it, making the space it

Encourage dignity and respect.

Handling

When handling or using, users are careful to not touch the written surface of the Torah parchment. Partly, this is to make sure the sefer is respected (not touching something is a powerful way to signify importance); partly, it is because touching can cause damage to the text, which may ritually invalidate the entire object. If you need to touch the parchment for some reason, do it in private. It is both customary and practical to place a lining or covering on the

surface before placing the Torah down.

All people, including non-Jews and women, may hold a sefer Torah and read from it. While some communities may have their own traditions that prohibit this, there is no halakha (law) against it.

Traditionally, a scroll is carried by resting it against one's body and supporting it from the bottom.

Dropping a sefer Trada is considered a tragedy, a communal traumatic event, and should be avoided with careful handling. If it happens, a Rai

Dropping a sefer Torah is considered a tragedy, a communal traumatic event, and should be avoided with careful handling. If it happens, a Rabbi should be consulted immediately for next steps, which will likely include some sort of communal fasting to symbolize grief.

→ Work with intention

Emergency Preparedness

The Torah is considered is the soul of the community, their "portable homeland" and embodies the holiness of its message. After prioritizing human life and safety, Torah scrolls should be a salvage priority before, during, and after disasters.

→ Value life, center people.

Torah.

This diagram illustrates the components and accourtements of a traditional Ashkenazi (Eastern European) sefer Torah. The scroll Itself is considered klei kodesh. All other objects are Tashmishel Kedushah, and are not, themselves, sacred. (The exception is an etz chafur that has already been attached to a klaff - it. too. reculivers earliza).

Fixing Problems

(parchment, ink, seams, wooden rollers), a sofer (scribe) should be consulted.

It is recommended to inspect Torah scrolls regularly (every five years) to make sure the Torah is in stable condition. This way, any minor issues can be resolved before they expand into the text, rendering the scroll "not kosher"

It is encouraged that Jewish people actively engage with ritual by challenging tradition, asking questions, and engaging with texts.

→ Know when to ask for help.
→ Be curious and ask questions.

End-of-Life

Religious manuscripts, including sifred Torah, that time or human error have rendered unif for use cannot be 'thrown out,' but rather 'require genizah' - removal, for example, to a jar, closet, or burial plot that they may 'decay of their own accord'. While this may not be applicable to objects that have shifted in meaning upon entering a museum collection, stewards should consider the tradition and implied values.

Sometimes you must say goodbye.

About the Author

Margail Scinical probability is a Proceeding Consensation Glaudated Foliation in the Wittensfruity/Inventing of Delaware Programs in Art Conservation, Martin the granted last of Holiations at sources and in an adapting and the grant produced in the Scinical Scinic

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Taylor Friedman, Jernifer. 2014. "Caring for Your Sefer Torah." Natioferet.Com: https://www.haseferet.com/serviess-for-communities/caring-for-your totals."

Upcoming Publication!

Shares topics in this lecture in more detail

 Discusses the paradox of the Holocaust Torah PRIORITIZING PEOPLE IN ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AND CARING FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Chapter 10

RELIGIOUS VALUES AS CONSERVATION PRACTICE

Caring for Judaica

Margalit Schindler



Resources

- MyJewishLearning.com https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-torah-service/
- BimBam https://www.bimbam.com/
- WorldWideReb Rabbi David Paskin https://www.youtube.com/c/DavidPaskin
- BreadandTorah https://breadandtorah.org/
- JudaismUnbound https://www.judaismunbound.com/podcast/episode-270
- Pearl Preservation LLC https://www.pearlpreservation.com/
- Jewish Value Considerations When Working with Judaica. AIC POSTER:
 <a href="https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/publications/annualmeeting/2022-posters/27-jewish-value-considerations-when-working-with-judaica---margalit-schindler.pdf?sfvrsn=84ef1720_7
- Annotated Bibliography: Judaica Preservation and Jewish Museums and Collections



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