

How to Take Care of a Torah in Your Home

One is obliged to behave with the greatest respect towards a sefer Torah...as it is said, "it shall be a witness unto you;" and one should accord it the respect due to its strength.

-Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 282

Where to Keep the Torah

Where we keep things says a lot about how we think of them. In the synagogue putting the sefer Torah in an aron kodesh (ark) says: this is a very special object. Even though you don't have an aron kodesh in your home, we can transfer the concept by making sure the sefer is stored in a place of respect.

Whenever the Torah is not being used it should be wrapped in the tallit provided and placed in its duffel bag. All of the following rules apply to the Torah **whether it is in the duffel bag or out.**

- One may not sit or stand on a chair, table or bed which the Torah is lying upon.
- The Torah scroll may never be placed on the ground. Even in the duffel.
- No other item should be placed on top of the Torah.
- Ideally, the Torah should be placed upright but it can be put down horizontally if there is no secure way to store it upright. It should never be upside down or on its face.
- Prevent damage from organisms – Parchment is made from animals. Make sure that mice and dogs cannot get to the sefer. They will chew on it.
- Climate control – Like people, parchment likes a cool room temperature with low humidity. Storing a sefer in a very damp place, or near a radiator, is not good; moisture especially is tremendously damaging to parchment. Avoid rapid changes in temperature and humidity.

Being in a Room with the Torah

A sefer Torah makes the space it is in holy. How we behave around a sefer Torah is representative of our attitude towards holiness. When in doubt, if you wouldn't do it at the dinner table, don't do it around the Torah.

Transporting the Torah

- The Torah should always be held upright.
- When the Torah is being carried from one place to another, those nearby must rise and remain standing until the Torah reaches its destination, or is out of sight.
- When the Torah is being transported, ideally it should be held by a person, instead of being placed on a car seat or in the trunk.

It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and all who hold to it are joyous.

-Proverbs 3:18