

DISPLAY OF A PASUL TORAH IN A MUSEUM CASE

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The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly provides guidance in matters of halakhah for the Conservative movement. The individual rabbi, however, is the authority for the interpretation and application of all matters of halakhah.

שאלה

Is it permitted to display a pasul Sefer Torah in a museum case in a place of honor and dignity as a reminder of the Holocaust?

תשובה

All Hebrew books have a measure of holiness if they contain the name of God. However, the Sefer Torah is considered especially sacred because it not only contains the name of God, it is considered to be the word of God, and it plays a central role in the Jewish worship service.

The Sefer Torah in the Synagogue

The writing of a Sefer Torah is carefully prescribed to assure both sanctity and accuracy.¹ The כבוד, the honor and dignity, of the Sefer Torah is of great concern.² Its כבוד is assured by keeping it in a special container, the ארון הקודש (Holy Ark), except when it is in active use. Care is taken not to drop the Torah. Should it be dropped, the person who dropped the Torah is required to fast. According to some traditions, those who see a Torah fall are also required to fast.³ The fasting serves to impress the congregation with the sacredness of the Sefer Torah.

¹ Rambam, M.T. Hilkhot Sefer Torah, ch. 7-10. See also Y.D. 270-278.

² An entire chapter of the Yoreh De'ah, Y.D. 282, describes in detail different ways in which the Sefer Torah must be shown honor and its dignity preserved. I have chosen to describe only a few of the more common ways.

³ Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 253. Rabbi Klein cites the Kitsur Shulhan Arukh 28:12; Magen Avraham to O.H. 44, n. 5.

Keeping a congregation conscious of the sacredness of the Sefer Torah was a constant challenge, as witness the condemnation of people talking, leaving the synagogue in the middle of the Torah reading,⁴ or failing to close the Sefer Torah upon departure. It should be noted that the struggle to assure the reverent attention of the congregation during the Torah reading continues in our day.

The Sefer Torah Elsewhere

A possible detriment to the כבוד (dignity) of the Sefer Torah would arise if it were casually moved from place to place. Custom permits the moving of a Torah for services but sets limits:

1. An appropriate Ark, closet, or other storage must be prepared in advance.
2. The Torah must be read, at the new location, at least three times before it is returned.

Hence, if it is to be read at a *shivah* מניין in a home, the practice has arisen of having מנחה services on Shabbat at the home of the mourner so as to use the Torah three times.⁵

Individuals may own a Sefer Torah. However, if a Sefer Torah is not kept in the synagogue, but in a home or elsewhere, it may not be kept in a bedroom (where conjugal relations take place). It must be stored in an appropriate container which will assure its honor and dignity.⁶

A פסול Sefer Torah

The Rambam makes note of twenty factors which would disqualify a Sefer Torah from being read at a service, such as: written on skin of a non-כשר animal, an untanned skin, skin that had been tanned without the express purpose of being used as a Sefer Torah, or even if a single letter was omitted, or a single letter was so marred that it cannot be read, etc.

Such scrolls need not be put into a גניזה (hidden). The Rambam holds that such פסול Torahs still have a purpose. They can be used for educational purposes. However it must be noted they do not possess, and never had, the sanctity of a Sefer Torah.

עשרים דברים הן שכל אחד מהן פוסל את ספר תורה. ואם נעשה בו אחד מהן הרי הוא כחומש מן החומשים שמלמדים בהן התינוקות ואין בו קדושת ספר תורה, ואין קורים בו ברבים.

There are twenty factors, any one of which disqualifies a scroll of the law. If any of these occurs, the scroll is like one of the books of the Pentateuch out of which children are taught. It does not possess the sanctity of a scroll of the law, and is not used for public reading.⁷

A Sefer Torah that once had been כשר but is found to be פסול (defective) can no longer be read in the synagogue service. It must be repaired as soon as possible. If it is so worn or torn that it can no longer be repaired, it is not casually discarded.

⁴ B. Berakhot 8a.

⁵ J. David Bleich, *Contemporary Halakhic Problems* (New York: Ktav and Yeshiva University Press, 1977), pp. 67-69. Rabbi Bleich discusses the moving of a Sefer Torah for services. I only cite moving a Sefer Torah to a house of mourning because it is the most common reason for moving a Torah in our congregations.

⁶ *Pesikta deRav Kahana*, 14, and B. Megillah 22a. See also the interesting note in *Talmud El Am Berakhot*, p. 148, entitled "The Torah Scroll."

⁷ M.T. Hilkhhot Sefer Torah 10:1.

It is disposed of in a way that will assure that it not desecrated.⁸ In some communities it is buried in a cemetery, near the grave of a scholar if possible. The Shulhan Arukh states:

ספר תורה שבלה מניחין אותו בכלי חרס וגונזין אותו בקבר תלמיד חכם.

A worn-out Sefer Torah is placed in a clay vessel and buried near the grave of a scholar.⁹

In other communities they are placed in a גניזה (a designated storage room) in the synagogue. The גניזה in the synagogue in Cairo, found by Solomon Schechter, had several centuries of worn Hebrew books and documents and serves as a rich source of information for scholars. The common practice in our communities is to bury worn-out scrolls and other ספרי קודש (holy books) in our cemeteries.

Torahs of the Holocaust

The Nazis collected Sifrei Torah from despoiled, burning or water soaked synagogues. The Nazis did not destroy them but stored them near Prague. The reason, some say, was to establish a museum after the war, which would record the culture of an extinct race, destroyed by the Nazis.

Some 1,100 Sifrei Torah have been recovered, many of them in various stages of disrepair, some seriously damaged. Those that could be repaired, were repaired and given to synagogues to be used for services. The question arose as to what should be done with those Sifrei Torah that were so damaged that they could no longer be repaired and consequently were not fit for public reading in a synagogue.

The Sifrei Torah had been transferred to the Westminster Synagogue in London. The synagogue catalogued them, and noted their origins as best they could. In this task of identifying the Torahs, they were aided by the German practice of tattooing numbers on the Torahs, much as concentration camp inmates were tattooed.¹⁰

The question now arose, "What is to be done with these פסול Torahs?" Should they be put into a גניזה (hidden away or buried), or can they still have a use? It was decided that they could continue to serve an important educational purpose. They could serve as a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, a silent witness to the determined efforts of Hitler and the Nazis to destroy the Jews and Judaism and of the indifference or passivity of so many Europeans in the face of such evil.

The Memorial Scrolls Trust

An organization to accomplish this purpose was set up and named the Memorial Scrolls Trust. A notice was sent to synagogues, museums, colleges and similar institutions throughout the world offering such a scroll on condition that they be kept on perpetual display as a reminder of the Holocaust. Over four hundred synagogues, museums, colleges, etc., have

⁸ B. Megillah 26b, Shulhan Arukh, Y.D. 282:10; O.H. 154:5.

⁹ S.A. Orah Hayyim 154:5. There is a later discussion as to whether the burial receptacle is restricted to a clay vessel, or whether other receptacles may be used, e.g. a wooden box or even nylon wrapping. See Rabbi Hayyim David HaLevi, *Mekor Hayyim*, pt. 3, p. 96.

¹⁰ This practice is the basis of the book for children, Marvell Ginsburg et al., *The Tattooed Torah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1983).

received such Torahs and keep them on display as a reminder of the Holocaust.¹¹

In essence, the purpose of the Memorial Scrolls Trust was to establish another category of Sifrei Torah which parallels the category described by the Rambam of Torahs which are פסול and cannot be used in the synagogue but which have educational uses. The vital difference between the categories is that the category described by the Rambam had never been כשר, while the Holocaust Torahs had once been כשר and still had residual sanctity. Usually they would have been put in a גניזה.

גניזה

The question must now be asked, “Is the term גניזה limited to burial or to storage in a special room, or are there other acceptable forms of גניזה?” To answer this question, we turn to the rules governing a Sefer Torah in which an error is found. It is forbidden to use such a Sefer for Torah reading. However the Sefer does not lose its sanctity. It may be kept in the ארון קודש until it is corrected, but must be tied or wrapped in a distinctive manner, so that it will not be taken out by mistake and read. It is our practice to put the Torah binder on the outside of the Torah mantle as a reminder not to use that Torah for public reading.

How long may a Torah which is פסול (disqualified) stay in the ארון קודש? The Yoreh De’ah limits it to thirty days, and the Rama adds that this applies to all ספרים (holy books):

ספר תורה שאינו מוגה אסור להשהותו יותר משלשים יום אלא יתקן או יגנו. (והוא הדין לשאר ספרים.)

It is forbidden to leave a Sefer Torah, which has not been corrected, more than thirty days (in the ארון קודש or elsewhere). One must either correct it or “hide” it. (The Mapa adds: And that is the law for all other holy books.)¹²

¹¹ I am grateful to Rabbi Bernard Raskas for supplying information on the Holocaust Torahs. A brief pamphlet describing the work of the Czech Memorial Scrolls Committee between the years 1964 and 1988 has been published. What follow are brief excerpts describing the procedure followed by the Committee:

... A system of cataloguing was devised; and in accordance therewith, each scroll was gone through by an expert, and a record made, so far as was possible, of the origin and age of the scroll, the physical condition of its components and, most important, the state of the writing and the defects therein. On the basis of this study, the scrolls classified into grades, from best to unusable. The middle grades were such as could be made usable by a little or a greater amount of labour, and such as had some parts which were or could be made usable. Of the remainder, most were destined to serve as sacred memorials.

... In the allocation of scrolls during the past 20 years, priority has been given to Synagogues needing a scroll for use in services. ... Practically all the scrolls which can be made kosher have been distributed, and the remainder are being allocated to those congregations who wish to have a memorial to the martyred communities.

Some scrolls, not necessarily fit for use in synagogue but appropriate as solemn memorials, have been assigned for display in religious and educational centres. ... One went to Westminster Abbey, where it was a feature in the exhibition arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews in connection with the Abbey’s 900th Anniversary Commemoration, and is now permanently in the library of the Council of Christians and Jews. Others have gone to the Royal Library at Windsor; Brandeis University, ... Northwestern University, ... University of Rochester, ... University of York and York Cathedral and Yad Vashem.

It is apparent, from the list of educational and religious institutions, that Memorial Scrolls were distributed to both secular and religious institutions including Christian cathedrals despite the presence of Christian symbols. This subject requires further study in another תשובה.

¹² Y.D. 279:1.

The Arukh HaShulhan concurs and explains that the Rabbinic authorities say that if it remains in the ארון it may lead to the sin of the vain recitation of blessings (if the Torah is read by mistake):

אמרו חז"ל בכתובות (יט, ב') דספר תורה שאינו מוגה אסור להשהות יותר משלשים יום ואחר זמן זה מחוייב לתקנו, ולא דווקא ספר תורה. וחז"ל אמרו ספר סתם, אלא שהפוסקים אמרו ספר תורה, מפני שבה יש קלקול גדול שמברכים ברכות לבטלות, אבל איסור יש בכל הספרים, בין ספרי תנ"ך ובין תלמוד ופוסקים, כי על פי טעות ביכולת לבוא לידי מכשול הוראה.

Hazal said in Ketubot 19b that it is forbidden to leave a Sefer Torah that has not been corrected (in an Ark) for more than thirty days, and after this period of time one must correct it. And not necessarily a Sefer Torah, but any ספר (holy book). However the poskim (rabbinic authorities) were especially concerned about a Sefer Torah for it can result in a great sin, the recitation of “vain blessings.” But the prohibition applies to all ספרים (holy books), whether it be other books of the Bible, the Talmud, or the Poskim (rabbinic authorities), for textual errors can lead to mistaken teachings.¹³

Both the Shulhan Arukh and the Arukh HaShulhan agree that the need for גניזה applies to all holy books that need correction or are so worn that they are no longer usable. The stringency for the Sefer Torah was to avoid the possibility of it being mistakenly read at a service leading to the recitation of לבטלה ברכה (a blessing recited in vain). One might therefore conclude that if proper precautions are taken to avoid mistakenly reading the Torah, that the same rules for גניזה that apply to all ספרים would apply equally to a Sefer Torah.

גניזה is Not Limited to “Hiding Away”

Are there forms of גניזה other than “hiding away” that would be permitted? The Nodah b'Yehudah deals with the issue in a responsum answering the question, “Is it permitted to leave defective ספרים, which can not be repaired, in an ארון (Ark) used for kosher ספרים?”

He points to congregational practice and uses halakhic reasoning to answer the question:

אם הלכה זו רופפת בידך פוק חזי מה עמא דבר. ומעשים בכל יום כשמוצאים טעות בשבת בשעת קריאה מחזירין ספר זה לארון ומוציאים אחרת, הרי שאף שספר זה נמצא פסול לשעתו, אפילו הכי מחזירין לארון הקודש המיוחד לספרים הכשרים.

If you are uncertain about the halakhah, “Go check the practice of the people.” It is common practice that when an error is found on Shabbat during the Torah reading that this Torah is returned to the Ark and another Torah is taken out. Thus a פסול Torah is put into an Ark specially designated for kosher Torahs.

He reasons that a defective Torah retains its קדושה and the difference between a Sefer Torah that can be corrected and one that cannot is only a matter of economics. It is cheaper, in cases of extensive wear or damage, to write a new Torah than to repair

¹³ Yehiel Epstein, Arukh HaShulhan, Y.D. 279:1.

the defective Torah. And he concludes:

ואם כן כשם שמחזירין בשבת ספר שנמצא בו פסול לארון כן אין אסור להניח ספרים הללו בארון הקודש.

Since it is permissible to return a Sefer Torah in which a defect is found, while reading the Torah on Shabbat, to the Ark, so it is *not* forbidden to leave פסול (disqualified) Torahs in the Ark.¹⁴

The Nodah b'Yehudah adds that the reason for the 30 day restriction is to assure that the Torah will be quickly repaired and thereby avoid the possibility of mistakenly taking the defective Sefer Torah from the Ark and reading it at a Service.

One could therefore conclude that it would be permissible to mark a Sefer (e.g. by putting the binder outside the mantle) and thereby avoid the possibility of making a mistake, and leave it indefinitely in the ארון. Or, alternatively, put the Sefer in a special receptacle in the ארון or outside of it, where it could not be taken out by mistake and read at a Service.

Rabbi Jacob Ettinger, in his book of Responsa entitled *Binyan Tzion*, expands on this thesis. He says that the practice of burying worn out or defective Sifrei Torah near the grave of a scholar is advice to be followed:

זה דוקא אם אין לו מקום להניחו וצריך לגנוזו קמל"ן היאך יגנוזו. אבל אם רצה להניחו בארון הקדש במקום מיוחד, זהו גניזתו.

Only if he has no place to put it and he has to “hide” it, then this is the proper way to do it. However, if he wants to put it in a special place in the ארון הקודש he may do so, and this is its גניזה – “hiding.”¹⁵

Rabbi Ettinger differs with the Nodah b'Yehudah in the reason for the thirty day limitation on keeping a defective Torah in the ארון קודש, holding that the reason is not the likelihood of mistakenly reading the Torah, but that it is a sin not to correct a Torah that can be corrected. However, regarding a Torah which is so defective that it cannot be corrected and there is no intention of ever reading from it, there is no sin involved in leaving it in a special place in the ארון קודש. And this place is to be considered an appropriate גניזה.¹⁶

And Rabbi Ettinger makes a very pragmatic observation:

ולכן מה שנוהגים בהרבה קהלות שאינם גונזים ספרי תורה שבלו רק מניחים אותם בארון הקדש במקום מיוחד ומוצאים אותם בשמחת תורה להרבות ההקפה.

Therefore the practice in many congregations is not to “hide” the worn out Sifrei Torah, but to place them in a special place in the ארון קודש and to take them out on שמחת תורה for use during the הקפות (Torah circuits).¹⁷

It is therefore clear that the useful life of a Sefer Torah need not end when it can no longer be read in a service. And he cites the practice in many congregations as prece-

¹⁴ Yehezkel Landau, *Nodah b'Yehudah*, O.H. siman 9. Emphasis added. I am grateful to Rabbi Joel Roth for suggesting this source, as well as the following source, from the *Responsa of the Binyan Tzion*.

¹⁵ *Binyan Tzion*, O.H. siman 97.

¹⁶ Op. cit.

¹⁷ Op. cit.

dent for using such פסול Torahs for another purpose, the הקפות at תורה שמחת תורה. And we can add still another use – to be held by a congregant during the Kol Nidre service.

Museums

This leads to another question, that must now be considered. The additional use of the defective Sefer Torah seems to be related to a synagogue service. Would it be permissible to place a Sefer Torah in a museum and use it as an educational exhibit?

There is no clear prohibition, only limitations on the reasons that one may sell a Sefer Torah. Nonetheless, Jewish sentiment may be opposed to turning over a Torah for the purposes of public exhibition. However, an example from the early history of the State of Israel in which the Seminary played a role provides a precedent.

President Chaim Weizmann came from Israel to the United States to see President Harry Truman. He wanted to present President Truman with a meaningful gift that would show appreciation for having helped Israel win recognition as an independent state. He consulted with Dr. Louis Finkelstein, then the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and decided to give President Truman the gift of a Torah which belonged personally to Dr. Finkelstein. Rabbi Bernard Lipnick, then a student, was the שליח who brought the Torah from Dr. Finkelstein to President Weizmann. President Weizmann then presented the Torah to President Truman.

The Torah was put into a suitable museum case, and was exhibited at the White House for several years. The Torah was then transferred to the Truman Library, where it still is on public exhibition.¹⁸

When we decide halakhah, we do not only turn to literary precedents, but also to the precedents set by halakhic personalities. Dr. Finkelstein was a great authority in halakhic literature, and well aware that he was a role model, at least for Conservative rabbis. Dr. Finkelstein was aware of the implications of the gift, and he would not have done anything that was contrary to Jewish law, as he understood it.

When Dr. Finkelstein turned the Torah over to President Weizmann, he was aware of the possibility that it would be publicly exhibited, as were so many other gifts to presidents. And even when he sought to have President Truman donate the Torah to the Jewish Theological Seminary, it still was for the purpose of exhibiting it at the Seminary or at the Jewish Museum, as an historical object.¹⁹ Hence, it is fair to conclude that

¹⁸ In the process of preparing this paper, I discovered this family tradition about my brother-in-law, Rabbi Bernard Lipnick, of which I was not aware. In response to an inquiry from Rabbi Lipnick about the present whereabouts of the Sefer Torah, President Truman wrote,

February 12, 1953

Dear Rabbi Lipnick:

The Torah to which you refer was presented by President Weizmann. The ark to contain it was presented by the people of Israel. The Torah is in the Ark and is now on exhibition in the Smithsonian. When the Truman Library is constructed that is where it will be placed.

Sincerely yours,

Harry Truman

¹⁹ The proposition that Dr. Finkelstein was agreeable to having this Torah publicly displayed is not mere speculation. Rabbi Judah Kogen related to me that Dr. Finkelstein told him that when President Truman visited the Seminary after leaving office, Dr. Finkelstein asked the former president's permission to exhibit this Torah scroll at the Jewish Museum. President Truman decided instead to exhibit the Torah scroll at the Truman Library where it would be viewed by many more people. The Torah has been on display at the Truman Library ever since and Dr. Finkelstein was pleased with the outcome.

there is no halakhic objection to exhibiting a Sefer Torah in a public place, or a museum, even if the museum is not under Jewish auspices. And a museum case in which the Torah can be properly exhibited and viewed, could be considered an appropriate receptacle.

The Torah given by Dr. Finkelstein was a כשר Torah (which can be used at synagogue services), and the שאלה (question) we are dealing with concerns a פסול Torah (which can not be read in the synagogue). Using the logic of the Talmud (a קל וחומר) we can say that if a כשר Torah can be exhibited publicly, how much more so a פסול Torah.

In addition, there have been, to my knowledge, no objections to displaying ancient Hebrew manuscripts in museums as, for example, the Isaiah scroll in the Jerusalem Shrine of the Book. Since all פסול sefarim are on a par when there is no opportunity to mistakenly read such a Sefer Torah at a service, this is another precedent for the permissibility of exhibiting a פסול Sefer Torah in a museum.

An Open or Shut Case

This, however, does not answer the question, “May a פסול Torah be exhibited partially unrolled, or must it be rolled and covered?” We are conditioned to showing כבוד to the Torah by keeping it rolled or covered, except when it is actually being read at services (and on occasion to acquaint the Torah Reader in advance with the כתב of the scroll). This also serves to protect the ink from fading because of too much exposure to the light, and prolonging its use as a כשר Torah.

But, what would constitute כבוד for a Holocaust Torah? The purpose of the Holocaust was to close the chapter on the Jewish people in the history of Europe. A closed Sefer Torah would seem to be a symbolic confirmation of the success of the Nazi endeavors. An open Sefer Torah sends the message, “The Jewish people live, and its history is open-ended.” Hence, כבוד for a Holocaust Torah can be found in leaving it open and, if it is possible, at a place which conveys a meaningful message – e.g., “Remember what Amalek did. . . ,” or the Ten Commandments, or the שמע ישראל.

The “Practice of the People”

If there are still doubts as to what the halakhah should be, then פוק חזי מה עמא דבר, “Go check the practice of the people.” The Jewish museums and the synagogues that I have visited exhibit the Holocaust Torahs with a column or two unrolled. I remember vividly a “leather jacket” made from the קלף (parchment) of a Torah scroll that was exhibited in a Holocaust exhibit on Mt. Zion. When the Shrine of the Book exhibited the original Isaiah scroll, it too was unrolled.

The Meaning of עמא

When I use the term עמא, I use it to mean serious individuals who are concerned about tradition and devoted to the Jewish people, not Jews who may be indifferent to Jewish tradition. Those who are in charge of these exhibits, in synagogues or in Jewish museums, both here and in Israel, are serious and responsible Jews. They seem to have decided that the message of the open scroll is the correct message for our day. The sight of such open scrolls has not evoked protest from the countless Jews who have viewed these exhibits. Hence, the practice of the עמא can be a reliable guide in helping decide what the halakhah should be.

In The Synagogue

Museums are generally quiet places where people behave with decorum. Where synagogues have special museums, separated from the foyers, this is the preferred location for a Holocaust Torah. If, as in most synagogues, the Holocaust Torah is exhibited in the foyer of the synagogue, then some precautions are advisable to assure the כבוד of the Torah.

The foyer is a multipurpose area used for social purposes, for Purim carnivals, for youth activities, as well as for entering and leaving the synagogue building. At times the behavior of people may not be decorous. If possible, the museum case should be built with a curtain which can be drawn, or a screen placed in front of the case, or a cover put on the museum case when a lack of decorum is anticipated.²⁰

The exhibit case, whether in the synagogue or a museum should have a label which explains the significance of the Torah as a “witness” to the Holocaust. It should also refer to the fact that the sefer is פסול, so damaged that it can no longer be used at a synagogue service.

Summary

The Sefer Torah is venerated by Jews and every effort is made to assure that it will be treated with כבוד, honor and respect. When it can no longer serve the sacred purpose of being read publicly in the synagogue, it is disposed of by a process called גניזה. גניזה may mean burial, placing in a special chamber for worn out ספרים (holy books), marking it (so that it will not be mistaken for a valid Torah) and leaving it in the ארון קודש (Holy Ark), placing it in a special place in the Ark, or elsewhere in a suitable receptacle. A clearly marked פסול Torah may be used for purposes other than reading in the synagogue service, i.e. הקפות at Simhat Torah, or as an educational exhibit in a synagogue or museum.

The Torahs that have survived the Holocaust were not and should not be buried or hidden away. Just as the Rambam spoke of a category for educational purposes, these Sifrei Torah also constitute a special category; one not envisioned in the past. This is a category of scrolls that may no longer be used in the synagogue service, in which the previous sanctity still adheres, and to which history has added a significant dimension. For, even in their damaged condition they still have a purpose and can function in the spirit of their original intent – to educate.

They can continue to serve as silent witnesses to the vitality of Jewish life before the Holocaust, to the murder of six million Jews, helping to educate coming generations about the evils that the Nazis perpetrated, and to serve as a warning that “it can happen again” unless people are ready to oppose evil. The common practice of exhibiting the scroll (where possible) unrolled to a relevant passage can teach that the Jewish people live and Judaism has a message for the world.

Conclusion

It is permitted to utilize a Sefer Torah that is פסול (invalid) as a Holocaust display. Every effort should be made to assure the honor of the Torah scroll. It should be displayed in a museum case that would be appropriate to the sacred nature of the scroll. Since the pur-

²⁰ See Walter Jacob, *Questions and Reform Jewish Answers* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1992), pp. 218-220, for a Reform responsum on the question of Holocaust Torahs.

pose is to educate the viewer, and not to be read at a service, the Sefer Torah may be left open to an appropriate place. The museum case should stand in a room or corridor where people behave with dignity and reverence, and have a cover or screen that can be used if less than decorous behavior is anticipated. The case should have a plaque explaining the history of the Torah, its significance as a witness to the Holocaust, and pointing out that it was so damaged that it cannot be used for reading at services.

It should be emphasized that this responsum applies only to a פסול Sefer Torah. The display of a כשר Sefer Torah in a museum case requires further study, and a separate תשובה.