



A Guide to Ritual Objects

at Peninsula Sinai Congregation

Religious Practices Committee

January 27, 2015

1. Purpose

In April of 2014 at the PSC annual meeting, a motion was unanimously passed to re-designate the Machzorim Restricted Fund to a Ritual Special Fund with the intent of the ritual special fund to be used for ritual objects such as a new chumashim, Torah needs. Etc.

Subsequently, this ritual policy was drafted to create a framework for defining expectations of the use of these funds with regard to the purchase, maintenance and security of PSC ritual objects as well as for parameters for using non-PSC ritual objects at PSC to ensure that no burden to PSC is created for maintenance or security of personal ritual items.

2. Background

Ritual objects have been used in many contexts in the religious and spiritual life of Peninsula Sinai Congregation throughout the shul's existence. Ritual objects have been purchased, bequeathed, long-term loaned, and short-term loaned for use. In most cases, ritual objects are gifts, becoming the property of PSC. For example, in 2011 the B'nai Mitzvah class donated tallitot to PSC allowing the RPC to replenish and remove non-kosher tallitot from community tallitot. In the last decade, several Torahs have been used at PSC: two (2) large Czechoslovakian Torahs that were recovered from the holocaust, one of which was restored, and one (1) small Torah that was purchased new.

Consistent with other ritual policies that govern our spiritual and religious practice, it is expected that PSC, under the direction of the Rabbi as mara d'atra, will maintain PSC owned ritual objects in conformance with halakah, by insuring, repairing or replacing objects in need. This expectation includes Torahs, Siddurim, Chumashim, Machzorim, Tallitot, Mezzuzot, Kiddush cups, challah boards/knives, candlesticks, menorahs, Sukkah supplies, and other similar items. For example, in 2010, a sofer was retained to review and assess PSC mezuzah scrolls; non-halakhic scrolls were replaced with new scrolls purchased through PS Women. Similarly, beginning in 2012, PSC entered into an agreement with Sofer on Site to annually evaluate, maintain, and repair our sacred scrolls currently owned by PSC.

3. Shabbat and Festivals

Ritual objects may not be brought into or removed from PSC on Shabbat, the Yamim Noraim (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), or the festival days of Sukkot (first two days), Shemini Atzeret, Passover (first two and last two days), and Shavuot (both days).

4. Kashrut

Ritual objects subject to the laws of Kashrut must be new or kashered prior to use at PSC. Examples include: Kiddush cups, challah boards/knives. All items subject to the laws of Kashrut must be cleared by the Rabbi in his/her role as mara d'atra.

5. Use

PSC's overall goal is to create an inclusive Jewish environment; that is, to offer hospitality to all Jews regardless of their level of observance where all will be able to enjoy the spiritual and social aspects of participation in the PSC community.

PSC will provide halakhic ritual objects for PSC member use for all Shabbatot, Festivals, and S'machot held at PSC. Included are Torahs, Siddurim, Chumashim, Machzorim, Tallitot, Mezzuzot, Kiddush cups, challah boards/knives, candlesticks, menorahs, Sukkah supplies, and other similar items as deemed appropriate by the RPC in consultation with the Rabbi.

The use of a non-PSC sentimental ritual objects (for example Kiddush cup or Torah) are permitted under the following conditions:

- The ritual object(s) must meet halakhah. If repair or kashering is required, it is the sole responsibility of the owner to pay for services required to attain halakahah and to have those services reviewed/accepted by the Rabbi.
- The ritual object(s) shall arrive at PSC before Shabbat/Festivals and depart after Shabbat/Festivals are concluded.
- Duration of ritual object(s) residence at PSC is temporary and must be minimized to ensure object security. All loaned objects remain the responsibility of the owner. Although due care and storage can be provided, PSC assumes no responsibility for the maintenance and/or security of loaned objects while on the property of PSC.