



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Suggested hed: <How Jews bury their treasure, Part I>

On Wed., May 6 – *erev Lag B’Omer* – Prof. Oren Kosansky delivers “Hidden Treasures: Lives and Afterlives of Jewish Texts.” In his talk, Dr. Kosansky describes his fortuitous discovery of a “Genizah” in Rabat, Morocco and explores the Jewish respect for the written word. Free and open to the public. Kosansky’s talk begins at 7 p.m., at Congregation Shir Tikvah, 7550 N.E. Irving St., Portland, 97213.

Kosansky is director of The Rabat Genizah Project and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Lewis and Clark College. He explains that the word *genizah* is related to the verbs “to set aside, reserve, hide.” In Judaic tradition, documents containing references to God are forbidden from being destroyed, including any item with religious or legal references, such as *ketubot* (marriage documents) or business contracts.

The professor said in an interview, “A *genizah* is a repository for sacred Jewish texts that have gone into disuse. They should be protected from desecration, and treated with respect. Following the rabbinic principle of treating sacred texts as living bodies, a *genizah* repository is often destined for burial in a cemetery.”

Dr. Kosansky will teach about the origins of the practice, the practice itself, what it says about the Jewish respect for the written word, and respond to related questions.

Congregation Shir Tikvah Rabbi Ariel Stone said that this lecture is being offered to the community as part of the synagogue’s “coming of age,” as it enters its 13th, or “bat mitzvah,” year.

Rabbi Stone said “We want to learn what the Jewish community worldwide does with its texts. And this learning is one way to serve the many people who have come through Shir Tikvah’s door, often not members, just East Side Jews who have come into possession of Hebrew texts that they know are special.”

“And since we are celebrating our congregational bat mitzvah,” Stone continued, “we see this event as one of our two-part Mitzvah Project – first a lecture and second, at the end of the month, a ritual burial. – as a way of giving back something to our larger Jewish community.”

Look for more information about the Jewish ritual burial event at shirtikvahpdx.org/sacred-trash/

For more on Prof. Kosansky’s research and writings, please click to <https://www.lclark.edu/live/news/7422-anthropologist-wins-neh-grant-to-create-digital>

And for more information about Shir Tikvah, please click to shirtikvahpdx.org.

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