How to donate books

Donating Yiddish and other Jewish books is simple, it’s easy, it’s tax-deductible – and best of all it’s a mitzvah! Just email us at bookdonations@bikher.org or phone us at 413-256-4900 x153. Depending on where you live and how many books you have, we’ll dispatch a zamler (a local, volunteer collector), or tell you how to pack and ship them yourself.

What sort of books does the Yiddish Book Center accept?

We accept donations of Yiddish books of all sorts, regardless of title or condition (provided they’re not farshimlt – covered with visible mold).

We also accept:
- All titles in Ladino;
- Yiddish/English dictionaries, textbooks, and music books;
- English translations of Yiddish works and books directly relating to Yiddish language and literature.

We cannot accept:
- English books in categories other than the above;
- Siddurim (prayer books) and makhzeyrim (High Holiday prayer books);
- Biblical texts, Talmud and other religious books in Hebrew;
- Hebrew school primers and textbooks;
- Modern Hebrew literature.

If you have questions...

If you are unsure of what you have – particularly if you are having a hard time distinguishing between Hebrew and Yiddish – simply send us photocopies of a few sample title pages. (Remember that Hebrew and Yiddish books open from right to left.) We’ll get back in touch with you promptly and let you know exactly what you have – and whether or not the titles are of interest to the Yiddish Book Center.

Title pages can be sent to us by fax at 413-256-4700, or else mailed to us at Book Donations, Yiddish Book Center, 1021 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002.

Are Donated Books Tax-Deductible?

Yes. The Yiddish Book Center is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and all donations of books are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. We will be happy to send you a receipt for federal tax purposes upon request.

How can I ship books myself?

First, you’ll have to pack them into small, sturdy cardboard boxes. Empty boxes from a local store are fine, but please note that the Post Office will no longer accept parcels packed in recycled liquor boxes. Please have rakhmones on the postal workers – and our staff! – and don’t pack more than 20 or 30 books (20-25 pounds) to a box.

There are two easy ways to ship boxes to us. The first is through the local Post Office. The books can be shipped via “Media Mail” or “Library Mail,” which is quite inexpensive. Even easier (though slightly more expensive) is to ship via UPS, since their drivers will pick up the boxes directly from your home. Our shipping address is:

Yiddish Book Center
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building
1021 West Street
Amherst, MA 01002-3375

Please be sure to include your return address – both on the outside of the package, and on a piece of paper on the inside of each box as well. Number each box and let us know how many boxes there are in your total shipment (1 of 4, 2 of 4, etc.). This inside “cover sheet” is also a good place to let us know if you require a formal receipt for federal tax purposes.

I can’t ship the books myself. What should I do?

If you have a great many books to send (several hundred volumes or more), or if you are physically unable to pack and ship them yourself, we may be able to dispatch a zamler, a volunteer book collector, who will come to your home to help with the packing and shipping.

How do I find the zamler nearest me?

If you need help – or if you’re interested in becoming a zamler yourself – please phone Catherine Madsen at 413-256-4900 x153, or else email her at cmadsen@bikher.org.

Can I donate records?

We are currently not taking records. If you have records that you want to donate, we suggest that you contact the following:
- Judaic Sound Archives, Florida Atlantic University, www.judaicfa.org, Dr. Meirah Schikelman, Director (mschikela@fau.edu/1/756-287-2202)
- Dartmouth Jewish Sound Archive, http://djm.dartmouth.edu/ or alex.hartov@dartmouth.edu / 603-646-3936
- Robert and Mollie Freedman Jewish Music Archive, University of Pennsylvania, http://jma.library.upenn.edu/Freedman/ or by email at yidsong@pobox.upenn.edu.