

PSJC *Hevra Kadisha*

Taharah Manual

מדריך לטהרה

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

“Laying out the dead” is a time-honored ritual process, both spiritual and practical, that spans world cultures. In Judaism, this ritual process is the responsibility of the *Hevra Kadisha* (חברא קדישא), the Sacred Society whose members have presided for centuries over the burial practices of Jewish communities throughout the world.

There are five core practices that comprise the work of the *Hevra Kadisha*:

Sh'mirah (שמירה): Vigil-keeping from the time of death until burial;

Rehitzah (רחיצה): Washing the body to remove dirt and foreign matter;

Taharah (טהרה): Ritual purification of the body;

Halbashah (הלבשה): Dressing the body in *takhrikhim* / shrouds (תכריכים);

Hashkavah (השכבה): Placing the dead in the coffin (the actual “laying out”).

Taharah, the specific term for ritual purification, is also the word conventionally used to encompass all of the practices from washing to laying out the dead. This *Taharah* Manual is based upon the broader definition of *taharah*. The responsibilities of *sh'mirah* are presented elsewhere, in materials prepared by our *Hevra Kadisha* and others.

Taharah traditions have evolved over centuries and continents; the rituals are learned through practice and passed from one generation to the next. Over time, each *Hevra Kadisha* develops its own unique customs (*minhagim*) as appropriate to the values and needs of particular communities, in keeping with the general principles of *taharah*.

This *Taharah* Manual, like many others from which it has drawn inspiration and guidance, is another link in the chain of tradition. It is a work in progress, expressing our best understanding at this time of how to honor and care for the dead in our own community of Park Slope Jewish Center (PSJC).

Heartfelt thanks to all whose expertise and commitment are reflected in these pages; specific acknowledgements are listed at the end. This Manual was prepared under the supervision of Rabbi Carie Carter, and is offered in special tribute to all of the members of our PSJC community who have facilitated and participated in this sacred work.

Rabbi Regina L. Sandler-Phillips
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PREPARATION FOR TAHARAH

Taharah supply kits are kept with the *rosh metaher/et*, the leader of each of our men's and women's *taharah* teams. The kits should be checked between mobilizations for *taharah* so that supplies and materials can be replenished as necessary.

Before going into the preparation room, the team members gather in a meeting room of the funeral parlor where the *rosh* will share any pertinent information s/he may have obtained about the *meit/ah* (person who has died), including the Jewish name of the *meit/ah*, the circumstances of death, and the condition of the body. This is also a time to share and address any personal concerns that team members (especially first-timers) may have before beginning the actual *taharah*.

The basic rules of *k'vod hameit* (honoring the dead) are reviewed:

- Always refer to the *meit/ah* by her/his name (Jewish, if known).
- There is no conversation except as necessary to perform the *taharah*.
- Do not stand at the head of the *meit/ah* except when absolutely necessary.
- Do not pass anything over the body of the *meit/ah*.
- Follow the directions and decisions of the *rosh*. Any disagreements during the process should be aired and resolved later, after the *taharah* is completed.
- Details of the *taharah* are not to be discussed with anyone outside the team.

If *sh'mirah* (the vigil over the dead) is already in progress at the time of the *taharah*, the vigil-keeper/s on duty can continue to provide a sacred space for both the *meit/ah* and the *taharah* team by continuing to recite Psalms at a respectful distance from the room in which the *taharah* is performed.

At the end of the pre-taharah briefing,
all members of the team stand and recite the following blessing together:

**Source of kindness and compassion, whose ways are ways of mercy and truth,
You have commanded us to act with loving-kindness and righteousness toward
the dead, and to engage in their proper burial. Grant us the courage and the
strength to properly perform this work, this holy task of cleaning and washing
the body, dressing the dead in shrouds, and burying the deceased. Forgive us for
any errors we may commit during this process. Guide our hands and hearts as we
do this work, and enable us to fulfill the commandment of love. Help us see Your
face in the face of the deceased, even as we see You in the faces of those who
share this task with us. Source of life and death, be with us now and always.**

Except where otherwise indicated, the prayers and passages in this Manual should be recited in Hebrew by a designated team member who is comfortable with the language and understands what s/he is reciting. If no such team member is available, the words may be recited by one or more team members in English. At the discretion of the rosh, some or all passages may be recited in both Hebrew and English.

Entering the Taharah Area

Wash your hands (after removing any rings or bracelets) by pouring water alternately over each hand three times from a vessel, without reciting a blessing. Allow to air dry.

Put on gowns, booties and rubber gloves. These are universal health precautions, to insure the safety of the living as well as to give equal and respectful treatment to each *meit/ah*, regardless of the cause of death.

Cut and tear sheets in preparation for covering and washing the body during the *taharah*. Be sure to prepare large sheets as well as smaller pieces, for covering the face as well as for washing.

Rinse and fill three large buckets with cold water for *taharah*, and saucepans or other smaller vessels with lukewarm water for *rehitzah* (washing).

Open the package of *takhrikhim* (shrouds) and prepare the *aron* (coffin). Remove 1/3 of the straw from the *aron* and put it aside, along with some of the *afar* (earth from Israel), with the small pillowcase that comes with the *takhrikhim*. The rest of the straw should remain in the *aron*, and about half of the remaining *afar* should be sprinkled over it.

Lay out the *sovev* (winding sheet) from the *takhrikhim*, draped over all four sides of the *aron*. If the *sovev* is not long enough to extend over the head and foot, turn it diagonally. If it is still too short, be sure it is draped over the head. If the *meit/ah* will be buried in a *tallit* (prayer shawl), lay out the *tallit* over the *sovev* near the head. It is customary to cut off one of the *tzitziyot* (ritual fringes) of the *tallit* in which the *meit/ah* will be buried.

Lay out the rest of the garments on the edge of the *aron*, placing them over the *sovev* in the reverse order in which they are going to be used: First the empty pillowcase, then the *mitznefet* (head covering), *avnet* (sash for the waist, also called a *gartel*), *kittel* (robe with collar), *mikhnasayim* (pants), ankle bands (sometimes called *bendelakh*), and the *k'tonet* (collarless tunic). If the *meit/ah* is to be buried in her/his own *kittel*, it should be laid out under the *kittel* from the shroud set after any buttons or snaps are removed.

Bringing in the Body

The body is brought into the *taharah* room feet first, and members of the *taharah* team gather around the *meit(ah)* to request *mekhilah* (forgiveness). *Mekhilah* will also be requested at the end of the *taharah*. If the person's Jewish name is not known, use her/his full English name.

All recite the following:

_____, daughter / son of _____ and _____, we ask your forgiveness for any distress we may cause you during this *taharah*. We will do everything possible to insure that you are treated with respect, and that all the elements of *taharah* are properly completed. Everything we are about do is for the sake of your honor.

Recite *Hamol* (Prayer for Compassion):

FOR A FEMALE:

Master of the universe, have compassion for _____, the daughter of _____ and _____, this *meitah*, who is the daughter of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, Abraham, Issac and Jacob, Your servants; and may her spirit and soul rest with the righteous, for You give life to the dead and death to the living. Blessed are You Who forgives sins and transgressions of the dead of Your people Israel, upon petition. And also let it be acceptable before You, our Eternal God and God of our ancestors, to bring a circle of angels of mercy before the *meitah*, who is Your servant-woman, daughter of your servant-woman. And You, our Eternal God and God of our ancestors, Who is concerned with the poor, save her from all misery and from an evil day and from the judgment of purgatory. Blessed are You, Great One of kindness and Master of compassion. Blessed are You

(Continued on next page)

רבונו של עולם, חמול על _____
בת _____ וְ _____, הַמְתָּה
הַלְזוּ, שְׁהִיא בַת שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל
וְלֵאָה, בִּלְהָה וְזִלְפָּה אַמְתֶּיךָ, בַּת
אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב עֲבָדֶיךָ; וְתַנּוּחַ
נַפְשָׁהּ וְנִשְׁמָתָה עִם הַצְּדִיקִים, כִּי
אַתָּה מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים וּמְמִית חַיִּים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה מוֹחֵל לַחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת
מִמֵּתֵי עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַחֲנוּנֵים. וְכֵן
יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֵלֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּסְבֵּב
מִלְּאֲכֵי רַחֲמִים לְפָנֵי הַמְתָּה, שְׁהִיא
אַמְתֶּךָ בַּת אַמְתֶּךָ: וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֵלֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ מְשַׁפֵּיל
אֶל דָּל, מִלְּטָה מִכָּל צָרָה וּמִיּוֹם רָעָה
וּמִדִּינָהּ שֶׁל גְּהֵנָם: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְּדוּל
הַחֶסֶד וּבַעַל הַרַחֲמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה

Who makes peace in Your heights, for Your servants and those who revere Your name. Blessed is the One who redeems Your people Israel from all kinds of tribulation with compassion. With compassion hide and cause to disappear the wrongdoings of this *meitah*, your servant. From burning fire save her, for she is in need of Your great compassion. And You, our Eternal God, are good and pardon all who call upon you. Blessed are You, great in counsel and Master of achievement in compassion; with the feet of the righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden may she tread, for that is the place of the upright, and God's pious ones will be protected. Blessed are You Who imparts great compassion and forbearance to the dead of Your people Israel. Amen; may this be Your will.

הַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו לְעַבְדְּךָ
וּלְיִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ: בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֵה עַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּינֵי פּוֹרְעָנוּת בְּרַחֲמִים:
בְּרַחֲמִים הַסֵּתֵר וְהַעֲלֵם פְּשָׁעֵי הַמֵּתָה
הַזֹּאת אִמְתָּךְ. מִשְׂרַפַּת אֵשׁ תַּחֲלִיץ
שָׂהִיא צְרִיכָה לְרַחֲמֶיךָ הָרַבִּים: וְאַתָּה
יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ טוֹב וְסֹלַח לְכָל קוֹרְאֶיךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְדוֹל הָעֶצְהָ וְרַב הָעֲלִילָה
בְּרַחֲמִים, עִם רַגְלֵי צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקֵי
בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּדְרוּךְ, כִּי מְקוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל
הוּא רַגְלֵי חֲסִדְךָ יִשְׁמֹר: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
הַנוֹתֵן רַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים וְרוֹב תַּחֲנוּנִים
לְמֵתֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל: אָמֵן, כֵּן יְהִי
רְצוֹן:

FOR A MALE:

Master of the universe, have compassion for _____, the son of _____ and _____, this *meit*, who is the son of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, Your servants; and may his spirit and soul rest with the righteous, for You give life to the dead and death to the living. Blessed are You Who forgives sins and transgressions of the dead of Your people Israel, upon petition. And also let it be acceptable before You, our Eternal God and God of our ancestors, to bring a circle of angels of mercy before the *meit*, who is Your servant-man, son of your servant- woman. And You, our Eternal God and God of our ancestors, Who is concerned with the poor, save him from all misery and from an evil day and from the judgment

רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, חַמּוּל עַל _____
בֶּן _____ וְ_____! הֵמֵת הַלְזוֹ,
שֶׁהוּא בֶּן אֲבֹרָהֶם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
עַבְדֶּיךָ, בֶּן שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה,
בְּלֵהָה וְזֵלְפָה אִמְתֶּיךָ; וְתַנּוּחַ נַפְשׁוֹ
וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ עִם הַצְּדִיקִים, כִּי אַתָּה מְחַיֶּה
הַמֵּתִים וּמְמִית חַיִּים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
מוֹחֵל לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת מִמֵּתֵי עַמְךָ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַחֲנוּנָם. וְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן
מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּסַבֵּב מִלְּאֲכֵי
רַחֲמִים לְפָנֵי הַמֵּת, שֶׁהוּא עַבְדְּךָ בֶּן
אִמְתְּךָ: וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ מְשַׁכֵּל אֶל דֵּל,
מִלְּטָהוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וּמִיּוֹם רָעָה וּמִדִּינָה

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of purgatory. Blessed are You, Great One of kindness and Master of compassion. Blessed are You Who makes peace in Your heights, for Your servants and those who revere Your name. Blessed is the One who redeems Your people Israel from all kinds of tribulation with compassion. With compassion hide and cause to disappear the wrongdoings of this *meit*, your servant. From burning fire save him, for he is in need of Your great compassion. And You, our Eternal God, are good and pardon all who call upon you. Blessed are You, great in counsel and Master of achievement in compassion; with the feet of the righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden may he tread, for that is the place of the upright, and God's pious ones will be protected. Blessed are You Who imparts great compassion and the many ways of petition to the dead of Your people Israel. Amen; may this be Your will.

שֶׁל גְּהֵנָם: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְּדוֹל הַחֶסֶד
וּבְעַל הַרְחָמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַעֲשֵׂה
שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו לְעַבְדְּךָ וּלְיִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ:
בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֵה עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּינֵי
פּוֹרְעַנְיּוֹת בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרַחֲמִים הַסֵּתֵר
וְהַעֲלֵם פְּשָׁעֵי הַמֵּת הַזֶּה עַבְדְּךָ.
מִשְׂרַפַּת אֵשׁ תַּחֲלִיצֵהוּ שֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ
לְרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים: וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ
טוֹב וְסֹלֵחַ לְכָל קוֹרְאֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
גְּדוֹל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הָעֲלִילָה בְּרַחֲמִים,
עַם רַגְלֵי צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקֵי עֵדֶן
יְדַרְוּךָ, כִּי מְקוֹם יְשָׁרִים הוּא רַגְלֵי
חֶסְדְּךָ יִשְׁמֹר: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַנוֹתֵן
רַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים וְרוֹב תַּחֲנוּנִים לְמֵתֵי
עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל: אָמֵן, כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן:

רחיצה / WASHING REHITZAH

The *meit/ah* should be on her/his back with feet facing the sink. If possible, elevate the head of the table by tilting the table upwards. Be sure that the drainage hole at the foot of the table is over the sink, so that the water used for washing or during the *taharah* flows directly into the sink.

Unwrap and undress the body and cover it with a large sheet. Place the head upon a headrest; the head should be protected from falling at all times during the process.

As the body is uncovered and examined, recite *Vaya'an Vayomer* (Zekhariah 3:4):

And [the angel of God] raised his voice and spoke to those standing before him, saying: "Remove the soiled garments from him"; and said to [the High Priest]: "Behold, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you in fine garments."

וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָעֹמְדִים לְפָנָיו לֵאמֹר
הֲסִירוּ הַבְּגָדִים הַצְּאִים מֵעָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלָיו רְאֵה הֲעִבְרַתִּי מֵעָלֶיךָ עֲוֹנֶךָ
וְהִלְבַּשׁ אֶתְךָ מַחֲלָצוֹת:

With the face and genitals covered, carefully survey the body and inspect for blood and other bodily fluids, as well as for wounds, abrasions and other conditions of the skin. Prepare a biodegradable bag to hold any bloodstained material. Within reason, all bloodstained bandages, clothing, rags, etc. should be collected for burial in this bag, which will be placed in the coffin at the foot of the *meit/ah* and buried with her/him.

Any problems to be addressed, such as bandages, tubes, open bleeding, etc., should be identified at this time. All foreign materials should be removed UNLESS this is deemed likely to produce excessive bleeding or otherwise threaten the integrity of the body. The principle of *k'vod hameit* (the honor of the dead) is our ultimate concern. Problems should be resolved under the direction of the *rosh*, who may consult with a more experienced *rosh* or rabbi outside the *taharah* room if necessary.

Order of Washing סדר רחיצה

For our purposes, the “personal space” of the *meit/ah* extends above the body and over the head; this is where the *neshamah* (soul) is traditionally believed to hover during the period before burial. We respect this soul-space by not passing any materials or utensils over the body; we take care to pass them around the table instead. Similarly, we take care not to stand over the head of the *meit/ah*, except as necessary to support the head when washing or turning the body.

We begin at the top of the body and work downwards. Uncover only the portion of the body being washed, and then re-cover it. Begin by pouring water on the hair and washing the face with a cloth, around the eyes and nose and behind the ears, taking care not to pour water directly on the face or into the mouth. Proceed to wash the neck and right shoulder.

The right side is washed before the left, and the front is washed before the back. Clean the fingernails and toenails with toothpicks, and remove any nail polish. After washing from head to toe on the right side, cross the right leg over the left leg at the ankle and turn the *meit/ah* onto her/his left side to wash the right side of the back. Do the reverse for the left side. The head should always be supported when turning the body.

Respectfully clean the genital and rectal areas. Consult with the *rosh* about any excessive or repeated discharges of bodily fluids.

Collect any blood that flows from the body with the material on which it flowed (washcloths, etc.) in the biodegradable bag designated for this purpose. It will later be placed at the feet of the *meit/ah* in the *aron*.

As the body is washed, recite one of the following passages from the Song of Songs:

FOR A FEMALE: *Hinakh Yaffah* (Song of Songs 4:1-5, 7):

How beautiful you are, my beloved friend: your eyes are doves from behind your tresses; your hair as a flock of goats that trail down from Mount Gil'ad. Your teeth like a flock of sheep that rise from the washing-pool, that are all matched with no break among them. Like a crimson ribbon your lips, and your speech is pleasant; like a pomegranate is the curve of your cheek from behind your tresses. Like a tower of David your neck, raised in splendor; a thousand shields hang upon it, shields of the warriors. Your two breasts as two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that graze among the lilies. You are all lovely, my beloved friend, and there is no flaw in you.

הַנָּךְ יָפָה רְעִיתִי הַנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים
מִבַּעַד לְצַמֶּתֶךָ שְׁעָרֶיךָ כְּעֵדֵר הָעֲזִים
שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מִהַר גִּלְעָד: שְׁנֵיךָ כְּעֵדֵר
הַקְּצוּבוֹת שֶׁעָלוּ מִן־הַרְחֻצָּה שְׁכֵלָם
מִתְאַיְמוֹת וְשִׁכְלָה אֵין בָּהֶם: כְּחוּט
הַשְּׁנִי שֶׁפֶתְתֶיךָ וּמִדְּבָרֶיךָ נֶאֱוָה כְּפֶלֶח
הַרְמוֹן רִקְתֶּךָ מִבַּעַד לְצַמֶּתֶךָ: כְּמִגְדָּל
דָּוִד צִוְּאֶיךָ בָּנוּי לְתִלְפִיּוֹת אֶלֶךָ
הַמְּגִן תְּלוּי עָלָיו כָּל שְׁלֹטֵי
הַגְּבוּרִים: שְׁנֵי שְׁדֵיךָ כְּשְׁנֵי עֶפְרַיִם
תְּאוּמֵי צִבְיָה הַרוֹעִים בְּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים: כְּלָךְ
יָפָה רְעִיתִי וּמוֹם אֵין בָּךְ:

FOR A MALE: *Rosho Ketem Paz* (Song of Songs 5:11-16)

His head is fine gold; his heaps of curls are black as a raven. His eyes are like doves at water-brooks; bathing in milk and fully set. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, towers of sweet herbs; his lips are lilies that drip with flowing myrrh. His arms are gold cylinders set with gems of topaz; his abdomen is polished ivory set with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble, established upon fine gold; his appearance is like Lebanon, a man like cedars. His mouth is sweet, and all of him is delightful; this is my beloved and this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem.

רֹאשׁוֹ כֶּתֶם פָּז קוֹצוֹתָיו תִּלְתְּלִים
שְׁחָרוֹת כְּעוֹרֵב: עֵינָיו כִּיּוֹנִים
עַל־אַפְיָקֵי מַיִם רְחֻצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב יִשְׁבוֹת
עַל־מִלְּאֵת: לֶחָיו כְּעֶרוֹגַת הַבָּשֶׂם
מִגְדָּלוֹת מְרֻקְחִים שֶׁפֶתוֹתָיו שׁוֹשַׁנִּים
נִטְפוֹת מוֹר עֵבֶר: יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב
מְמֻלְאִים בְּתַרְשִׁישׁ מֵעֵיו עֲשֵׂת שֵׁן
מְעֻלְפֶת סְפִירִים: שׁוֹקֵיו עֲמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ
מִיִּסְדִּים עַל־אֲדָנֵי־פָז מְרֻאָהוּ כָּל־בְּנוֹן
בְּחוּר כְּאַרְזִים: חִכּוֹ מִמְתְּקִים וְכָל־
מַחְמָדִים זֶה דוֹדִי וְזֶה רְעִי בָנוֹת
יְרוּשָׁלַם:

When the washing is completed, pour the remaining water from the pans down the table to clean it. Dry the *meit/ah* and the table with separate pieces of cloth sheet, and place a fresh sheet over the body. Once the washing is completed, all team members should discard their rubber gloves and wash their hands again, without a blessing, and put on a fresh pair of rubber gloves.

TAHARAH / RITUAL PURIFICATION טהרה

Preparation for Purification

If three buckets (representing 9 *kavim*, or approximately 24 quarts) have not yet been rinsed and filled with cold water, they should be at this time.

Boards are now placed under the *meit/ah* so that the 9 *kavim* can flow freely over her/his body. 2"x4" varnished boards are dunked at each end into the buckets of water, and then placed under the body at the shoulders, hips, and ankles. Be sure that no part of the body is touching the table. The *rosh* will determine the best way for team members to support the head during the *taharah*.

**Before the water is poured for *taharah*, recite *Amar Rabbi Akiva*
(*Mishnah Yoma* 8:9 and related Biblical verses):**

Said Rabbi Akiva, "You are fortunate, Israel. Before Whom do you purify yourselves, and Who purifies you? Your Father in heaven, as it is said: 'And I will pour pure water upon you, and you shall be purified' (Ezekiel 36:25), and it says: 'The *mikveh* / ritual bath of Israel is God' (Jeremiah 17:13). Just as a *mikveh* purifies the defiled, so does the Holy Blessed One purify Israel" (*Mishnah Yoma* 8:9). A fountain for gardens, a well of living waters, flowing from Lebanon (Song of Songs 4:15). And I will pour pure water upon you, and you shall be purified from all of your impurities; and from all of your abominations I shall purify you (Ezekiel 36:25).

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל,
לְפָנַי מִי אַתֶּם מְטַהְרִין, וּמִי מְטַהֵר
אֶתְכֶם, אֲבִיכֶם שְׁבַשְׁמִים, שְׁנֹאָמַר,
(יחזקאל לו, כה) וְזָרְקֵתִי עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם
טְהוֹרִים וּטְהַרְתֶּם. וְאוֹמַר, (ירמיה יז,
יג) מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ, מִה מְקוֹה מְטַהֵר
אֶת הַטְּמֵאִים, אֵף הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
מְטַהֵר אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל: מֵעֵין גַּנִּים בְּאֵר
מַיִם חַיִּים וְנִזְלִים מִן־לְבָנוֹן: וְזָרְקֵתִי
עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם טְהוֹרִים וּטְהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל
טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל־גְּלוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר
אֶתְכֶם :

סדר טהרה Order of Purification

The three buckets of water must be poured in a continuous flow over the entire body. This is the only time during the process that the body of the *meit/ah* is completely exposed, so there should be no unnecessary delay between uncovering and re-covering.

As soon as the sheet covering the *meit/ah* is removed, one team member begins to pour the first bucket of water over the top of the head, and before the first bucket is emptied a second team member begins pouring the second bucket of water down the right side of the body. Before the second bucket is emptied, a third team member begins pouring the third bucket of water down the left side of the body.

All team members recite the following three times as the third bucket is emptied:

FOR A FEMALE:

טְהוֹרָה הִיא...טְהוֹרָה הִיא...טְהוֹרָה הִיא

Tehorah hee...Tehorah hee...Tehorah hee.

She is pure...She is pure...She is pure.

FOR A MALE:

טְהוֹר הוּא...טְהוֹר הוּא...טְהוֹר הוּא

Tahor hu...Tahor hu...Tahor hu.

He is pure...He is pure...He is pure.

If there is any break in the pouring, the three buckets of water should be refilled and poured again in a continuous flow, and the recitation is repeated.

As soon as the three buckets have been poured in a continuous stream, cover the *meit/ah* with a fresh sheet. As the body is raised to remove the boards underneath, spread another fresh sheet on the table under the *meit/ah* as well.

Dry the body carefully with the sheets, and replace the top sheet with a dry one (the bottom sheet will be removed during the dressing process).

הַלְבָשָׁה / HALBASHAH / DRESSING

Before the *meit/ah* is dressed, recite *Sos Assis*
(Isaiah 58:11, 61:10-11 and Zekhariah 3:5):

Rejoicing will I rejoice in the Eternal; my soul will be glad in my God; for God has clothed me in the garments of salvation, in a robe of righteousness will God cover me; as a bridegroom puts on priestly glory, and as a bride adorns herself (Isaiah 61:10). And I said, "Let them set a pure headdress on his head," and they set the pure headdress on his head and dressed him in garments, and an angel of God stood by (Zekhariah 3:5). For as the land will bring forth its growth, and as a garden will sprout its seedlings, so will God sprout forth justice and praise in the face of all the nations (Isaiah 61:11). And God will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in times of drought and strengthen your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters never fail (Isaiah 58:11).

שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בִּיהוָה תִּגְלַל נַפְשִׁי
בְּאֱלֹהֵי כִי הַלְבִישְׁנִי בְּגָדֵי-יִשְׁע מְעִיל
צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי כַחֲתָן יִכְהֶן פָּאֵר וְכִפְלָה
תַּעֲדָה כְּלִיָּהּ: וְאָמַר יִשְׁימוּ צַנִּיף
טְהוֹר עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּשְׁימוּ הַצִּנִּיף
הַטְהוֹר עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּלְבְּשֵׁהוּ בְּגָדִים
וּמְלֵאָהּ יְהוָה עֹמֵד: כִּי כְאֶרֶץ תּוֹצִיא
צִמְחָהּ וּכְגִנָּה זְרוּעֶיהָ תִצְמִיחַ כֵּן |
אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה יִצְמִיחַ צְדָקָהּ וּתְהִלָּהּ נֶגֶד
כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם: וְנַחֲחַ יְהוָה תְּמִיד וְהַשְׁבִּיעַ
בְּצַחְצַחוֹת נַפְשֶׁךָ וְעִצְמֹתֶיךָ יַחֲלִיץ
וְהֵייתָ כְּגֵן רוּחַ וְכְמוֹצֵא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר
לֹא-יִכָּזְבוּ מִימּוֹ:

סדר הלבשה / Order of Dressing

Portions of **Leviticus 16:4**, which describes how Aaron is to be clothed as the High Priest, are recited after the *meit/ah* is dressed in each of the corresponding garments. It is our *minhag* (custom) to proceed according to the order of the verse, placing the head covering last. However, care should be taken to keep the face covered while the body is dressed in the rest of the *takhrikhim*.

1. The *k'tonet* (collarless tunic) is most easily put on as follows: Lay the garment face down on the body, with the head opening toward the feet of the *meit/ah*. One team member on either side inserts a hand into the end of the sleeve, reaches around and down through the bottom of the garment, and draws the hand of the *meit/ah* into the sleeve. The sleeves are drawn up until the armhole meets the armpit of the *meit/ah*. A third team member gathers up the garment near the head, the *meit/ah* is lifted at the upper body and the *k'tonet* is pulled over the head and smoothed down over the body, crossing the legs to turn the body as necessary.

The ties at the neck are wound four times while reciting *Aleph, Bet, Gimmel, Dalet*, and tied into two loop bows (see diagram on next page). **Recite:**

[You] shall wear a holy linen tunic.... כְּתָנֶת-בֵּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ

- The *mikhnasayim* (pants) are pulled over the feet of the *meit/ah*, and the *k'tonet* is tucked neatly into the *mikhnasayim* and smoothed down inside. Gather the pants at the waist and close the ties with four counted windings and two loop bows, as above. Tie each of the ankle bands the same way. **Recite:**

...and breeches of linen shall be upon [your] flesh.... וּמְכַנְסֵי-בֵד יְהִיוּ עַל-בְּשָׂרוֹ

- The *kittel* (robe with collar) from the *takhrikhim* set is put on in the same manner as the *k'tonet*. Care should be taken when putting on the *kittel* that the sleeves of the *k'tonet* are grasped so that they will reach to the wrists.

If the *meit/ah* is to be buried in her/his own *kittel*, there are a few possible ways to put on this (open) *kittel* (over the previous one, if possible) after its buttons or snaps have been removed. Follow the instructions of the *rosh*.

- The *avnet / gartel* is passed under the body as a belt, taking care that it remains flat and not twisted underneath. It is wound around 13 times by two team members counting *Aleph, Bet, Gimmel, Dalet, Heh, Vov, Zayin, Het, Tet, Yud, Yud-Alef, Yud-Bet, Yud- Gimmel*. The *avnet* is tied in a *shin* knot, with three loop bows (see diagram on next page). **Recite:**

...and a linen sash shall [you] tie.... וּבְאַבְנֵט בֵּד יִחַגֵּר

- FOR A FEMALE:** The veil is placed on the forehead and tied at the back. The *mitznefet* (bonnet) is placed on the head and drawn down to cover the entire head and neck, with the hair gathered under the cap. Tie the bonnet with a bow, or using the method specified for the *k'tonet* (as above).

FOR A MALE: Fit the *mitznefet* (hood) over the head, making sure that the face and back of the head are covered.

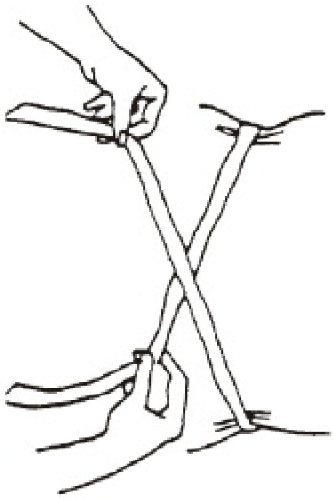
Recite:

...and a linen headdress shall [you] don.... וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בֵּד יִצְנֶה

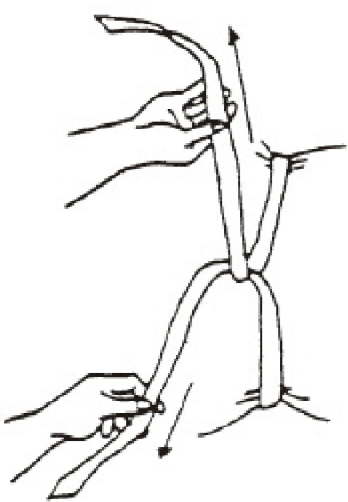
F - Diagram for knots

The following diagrams illustrate the procedure for tying the knots.

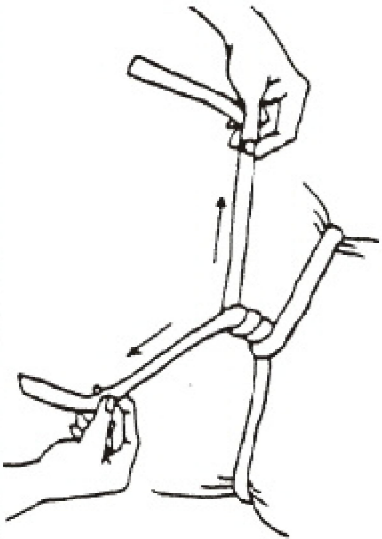
A. Starting position for tying bands (twists).



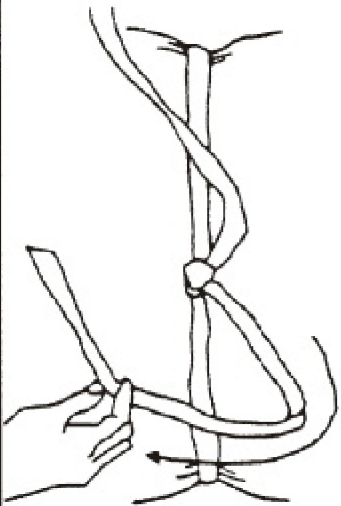
B. Turn "aleph" first of three twists for men, four twists for women.



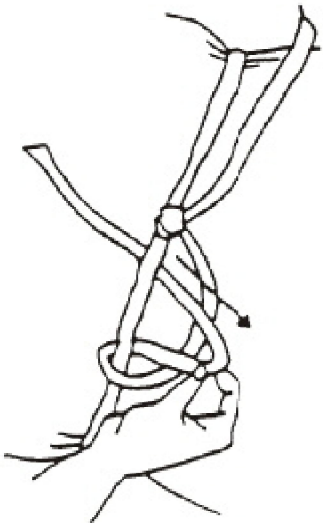
C. End of twisting, tightened.



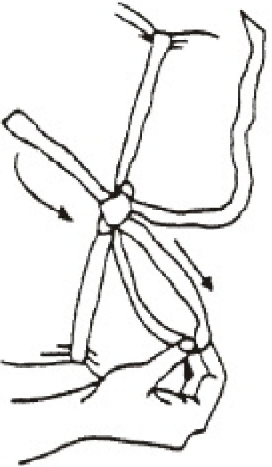
D. Step one of loop; lies over previous horizontal band.



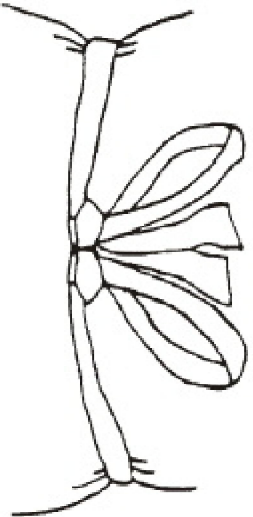
E. Step two: under and up through.



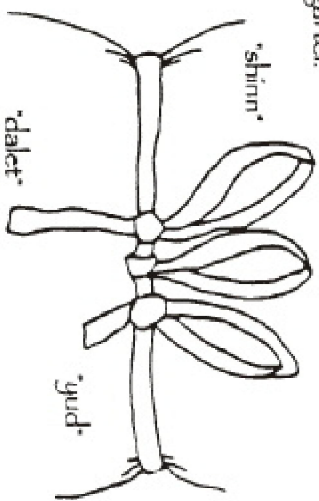
F. Tightening a finished loop, which extends upward.



G. Finished knots, with ends turned up. This is the completed "shin" for the neck, pants and ankles.



H. This is the completed "shaddai" for the gartel.



**At the conclusion of the dressing, recite the conclusion of Numbers 16:4,
as well as the beginning of Genesis 43:14:**

...these are garments of holiness, and [you] shall bathe [your] flesh in water and put them on. And may the God of nurturance give you compassion.

בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם
אֶת-בְּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשָׁם: וְאֵל שְׂדֵי יִתֵּן
לְכֶם רַחֲמִים:

If the condition of the body is such that the ritual purification and dressing cannot be performed, the *meit/ah* is placed into the *aron* (see below) and wrapped in the *sovev*, and the *takhrikhim* are placed over the *meit/ah* in the same order as above, and on the parts of the body they would normally have covered. Follow the directions of the *rosh*, who may consult with a more experienced *rosh* or rabbi outside the *taharah* room if necessary.

HASHKAVAH / LAYING TO REST השכבה

Turn the table so that the feet of the *meit/ah* are facing the door. Bring the *aron* into the room and position it alongside the table, also facing the door, and then place the lid of the *aron* against a wall to the side. The *sovev* should already be laid out over the four sides of the *aron*, and the *tallit* (if the *meit/ah* is to be buried in one) laid out widthwise over the *sovev*, toward the head.

Order of Laying to Rest סדר השכבה

Put a handful of straw and the designated portion of *afar* into the small pillowcase.

Place the pillowcase at the head of the *aron* and recite *Vehu Rahum* (Psalm 78:38):

And [God], being compassionate, will effect atonement for transgression and will not destroy, and has repeatedly turned back [God's] anger, and will not arouse all of [God's] wrath.

וְהוּא רַחוּם | יְכַפֵּר עֲוֹן וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית
וְהִרְבָּה לְהִשְׁיב אָפּוֹ וְלֹא-יַעֲזִיר
כָּל-חַמָּתוֹ:

The details of the actual *hashkavah* will depend upon the condition and weight of the body, as well as the number of team members present to lift the body. Follow the directions of the *rosh* in lifting the *meit/ah* and placing her/him in the *aron*, as gently and respectfully as possible. Be sure the head is supported at all times.

Recite Velo Yavo'u (Numbers 4:20):

And they shall not come to see the covering
of the holiness, lest they die.

וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְרֹאֲוֹת כְּבֹלַע אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ
וּמָתוּ:

Straighten and arrange the *takhrikhim* and the ties neatly on the *meit/ah*. The remainder of the *afar* is then sprinkled over the eyes, heart, and genital area, taking care that no *afar* enters the nose or mouth.

Recite Vekhiper Admato Amo (Deuteronomy 32:43):

...And [God] will effect atonement for [God's] land, [God's] people. וְכִפֶּר אֲדַמְתּוֹ עִמּוֹ:

Place shards of pottery over the eyes and mouth. Like the *afar*, the shards reflect the vulnerable connection between *adam* (humanity) and *adamah* (earth), to which the body will return in burial.

Wrap the *tallit* (if the *meit/ah* is to be buried in one) over the shoulders. Wrap the *sovev* over the head, the sides of the body, and the feet. Place the bag contained blood-stained materials at the feet of the *meit/ah*.

Recite Hinei Mitato (Song of Songs 3:7-8 and related Biblical verses):

Behold the couch of Solomon: sixty mighty men surround it from the heroes of Israel; each of them grasping a sword, learned in war; every man his sword upon his thigh, from fear in the night (Song of Songs 3:7-8).

הִנֵּה מִטַּתוֹ שֶׁל־שְׁלֹמֹה שְׁשִׁים גִּבּוֹרִים
סָבִיב לָהּ מִגִּבּוֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כָּל־סֶבֶל אֶחָזִי
חָרֵב מִלְמַדֵי מִלְחָמָה אִישׁ חָרְבוֹ
עַל־יָרְכוֹ מִפֶּחֶד בְּלִילוֹת:

FOR A MALE:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ: יְאֵר יי | פָּנָיו
אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ: יִשָּׂא יי | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

FOR A FEMALE:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ: יְאֵר יי פָּנָיו
אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ: יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

May the Eternal bless you and watch over you.
May the the face of the Eternal shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May the face of the Eternal be lifted toward you
and give you peace (Numbers 6:24-26).

[Israel's] branches shall spread out, and like the olive tree will be his beauty; and his fragrance like Lebanon (Hosea 14:7). Who are you, O mighty mountain? before Zerubavel as a plain, and he shall bring forth the cornerstone with shouts of "Grace! Grace!" upon it (Zekhariah 4:7). And now, let the power of my Lord be great, as you have spoken, saying (Numbers 14:17)...But as truly as I live, the honor of God will fill all the earth (14:21).

יִלְכוּ יוֹנְקוֹתָיו וַיְהִי כְזֵית הַיְּהוּדָה וְרֵיחַ
 לוֹ כַּלְבַּנוֹן: מִי־אַתָּה הָר־הַגָּדוֹל לְפָנַי
 זֶרֶבְבֶלֶל לְמִישֹׁר וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הָאֶבֶן
 הָרְאשָׁה תְּשֹׂאוֹת חֵן חֵן לָהּ: וְעַתָּה
 יִגְדַל־נָא כַּח אֲדֹנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
 לֵאמֹר: וְאוֹלָם חֵי־אֲנִי וַיִּמְלֵא
 כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

All team members now gather quietly around the *aron*.

Recite *Anu Mevakshim Mekhilah* (Final Request for Forgiveness):

FOR A MALE:

FOR A FEMALE:

בֶּן _____ וְ _____ ,
 אָנוּ מְבַקְשִׁים מְחִילָה מֵאַתָּךְ אִם לֹא
 עָשִׂינוּ כְּפִי כְבוֹדְךָ, אֲבָל עָשִׂינוּ
 כְּמִנְהַג הַמְּקוֹם.

בַּת _____ וְ _____ ,
 אָנוּ מְבַקְשׁוֹת מְחִילָה מֵאַתָּךְ אִם לֹא
 עָשִׂינוּ כְּפִי כְבוֹדְךָ, אֲבָל עָשִׂינוּ
 כְּמִנְהַג הַמְּקוֹם.

_____, daughter / son of _____ and _____
 we ask your forgiveness if we did not act according to your honor,
 even though we acted according to our custom.

In silence, each individual team member then takes the time to ask forgiveness of the *meit/ah*, by name, for any errors of omission or commission on her/his part. **Allow at least one FULL minute for this.**

The designated team recitation leader ends the period of silence with singing (see **SONGS AND CHANTS** at the end). The rest of the team members may join in the melody, words, and/or listening, according to personal comfort level.

Place and secure the lid over the *aron*. Affix the Star of David, if available, toward the foot of the lid. The *aron* should not be opened again, except for private identification and leavetaking by those closest to the *meit/ah* before the funeral service.

Recite Uvinso'a Hamishkan (Numbers 1:51 and related Biblical verses):

And in the traveling of the Tabernacle, the Levites shall lower it, and in the pitching of the Tabernacle, the Levites shall raise it; and the stranger who approaches shall be put to death (Numbers 1:51). And it shall be, in the traveling of the *aron*, that Moses will say: Arise, Eternal One, and let Your enemies be scattered; let those who hate You flee before you (Numbers 10:35). No evil shall befall you, and disease will not approach your tent. For [God's] angels will be commanded to guard you in all your journeys. On their hands will they carry you, lest you strike your feet upon a stone (Psalm 91:10-12). God will do battle for you, and you shall hold your peace (Exodus 14:14).

וּבְנִסְעַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם
וּבַחֲנֻת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקְיֵמוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם
וְהַזֵּר הַקָּרֵב יוּמָת: וַיְהִי בְנִסְעַת הָאָרֶץ
וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה | יְהוָה וַיִּפְצוּ
אֵיבֹיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֶיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ:
לֹא-תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְנִגַּע לֹא-יִקְרַב
בְּאֹהֶלְךָ: כִּי מִלְּאֹכְלוֹ יִצְוֶה-לְךָ לְשִׁמְרֹךָ
בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: עַל-כַּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ
פֶּן-תִּגָּף בְּאֶבֶן רַגְלֶךָ: יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם
לְכֶם וְאַתֶּם תִּחְרְשׁוּן:

Wheel the *aron*, feet first, out of the *taharah* room to the place where the vigil-keeper/s will continue with *sh'mirah* until the funeral.

In taking leave of the *aron*, all team members recite together:

**House of Israel, come let us walk in God's light.
The Rock of Israel has spoken and called the world into being,
from the east where the sun rises to the place where it sets.
Peace shall come, and each of us shall rest in our appointed place.
For dust we are, and unto dust we return.
God has given, and God has taken away;
may the name of God be blessed.**

All team members return to the *taharah* area, remove gowns and gloves, and wash their hands one more time without a blessing. A wordless melody (*niggun*) may be sung during this time (see **SONGS AND CHANTS** below for possibilities). Otherwise, this should be done in silence to the extent possible, until the team gathers again for **DEBRIEFING** (see below).

DEBRIEFING AFTER TAHARAH

All team members gather again in the meeting room of the funeral parlor to review and discuss the *taharah* that has just been completed. This is the appropriate time to share questions, perspectives, and feelings, and to clarify any points of confusion or disagreement that may have arisen during the process. Since each person is different, each team member should try to speak in terms of her/his own experiences, and to accept that others may have different feelings and perspectives. The *rosh*, rabbi and/or another experienced team member should monitor the discussion to ensure a basic level of acceptance and emotional safety for all participants.

In previous generations of Judaism, Jews sustaining direct contact with the dead were isolated by law and custom from various ritual and communal functions. Purification rituals for the living, along with specified waiting periods before resuming normal activities, date from the time of the Bible.

Although these laws and customs are no longer universally upheld, it is still true that participation in *taharah* is among the most powerful of human experiences. We believe it is essential to provide a transition space and time for all team members following each *taharah*, regardless of how many times individual members may have participated in the past. Like the initial briefing before entering the *taharah* room, debriefing should be considered an integral part of the time allocated to the *taharah* as a whole.

It is particularly important to have this sharing time because **details of the *taharah* are not to be discussed with ANYONE outside of the *taharah* team.** Our primary concern is to protect the honor and privacy of the *meit/ah*, with whom the team members have come into very intimate contact at this most intense and vulnerable time.

In the same light, the names of team members participating in a given *taharah* are not identified to surviving family members of the *meit/ah*, or to the community at large. This is to ensure that the sacred work of the *Hevra Kadisha* is maintained on the basis of *hesed shel emet*: kindness at the moment of truth, with no expectation of reward.

Members of the team are encouraged to stay in touch with their team leader/s and rabbi about any issues that may arise for them following the *taharah*. The members of our *Hevra Kadisha* as a whole are also honored publicly once a year, at our annual *Hevra Kadisha* dinner, as is traditional.

Following the debriefing, team members may choose to end the discussion with a *niggun* and/or a prayer before participants return to their usual routines (see **SONGS AND CHANTS** below).

SONGS AND CHANTS

Our use of songs and chants during *taharah* draws upon an established tradition in parts of the Jewish world, particularly among Sephardic Jews. We believe that singing is, first and foremost, a human birthright, and we do not approach it here from the standards of performance art.

Just as we sing lullabies to those who have recently been born into this life, washing and dressing them when they cannot do so for themselves, so we sing to provide a space of comfort for those making the transition beyond this life.

The singing also helps to center, calm and reassure the living members of the *taharah* team. In most cases, the designated team member who recites the ritual passages will choose the songs and chants. The other team members are encouraged to sing, hum, or listen to the various melodies, with or without words, according to each member's personal comfort level and what helps each one to focus on the tasks at hand.

And it is written...that three forces of the Holy Blessed One come among God's cherished people in the power of chants, songs and praises....And it said that there is a chamber hidden above that cannot be opened except through melody / *niggun*.... And the soul benefits from the melody as it is familiar with melodies of the song of the ministering angels and the song of the celestial wheels....And the melody when it ascends, ascends through six / *sheish* levels, and also when it descends, descends through six, and about this it is said: "His legs are pillars of marble / *sheish*" [Song of Songs 5:15].

וכתוב...כי שלש חיילות מקב"ה
באות בתוך עם סגולתו בכח זמירות
שירות ותושבחות....ואמר כי יש
היכל למעלה גנוז שאינו נפתח אלא
בניגון....והנשמה נהנית מהניגון
לפי שהיא רגילה בניגונים בשיר של
מלאכי השרת ושיר הגלגלים....
והניגון כשעולה עולה בשש
מדרגות, וכן כשירד יורד בשש,
ועליו נאמר שוקיו עמודי שש [שיר
השירים ה, טו].

Rabbi Aharon Berakhiah of Modena (1626)
מעבר יבק / CROSSING THE YABOK (Part One, Chapter 31)

Silence is golden, especially an intelligent silence,
but that is when we are on the level of speech.
A *niggun* / wordless melody is better than silence.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyadi (1745 - 1812)

The applications below are offered only as suggestions.
 For our purposes, the melody and *kavannah* (spiritual intention)
 are more important than the words, and often more appropriate without words.

FOR BRIEFING AND/OR DEBRIEFING:

The whole entire world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is not to fear at all.	Kol ha'olam kulo Gesher tzar me'od Veha'ikar Lo lefakhed klal.	כל העולם כולו גשר צר מאד והעיקר לא לפחד כלל.
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Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav (1772 - 1811)

FOR WASHING AND/OR DRESSING:

An angel weeps, an angel weeps, And bedecks the grass with dew; My beloved, my beloved, I long so for you....	A malekh veynt, a malekh veynt, Un badekt di groz mit toy; Libster mayner, libster mayner, Ikh benk nokh dir azoy....	א מאלך וויינט (2x) און באדעקט די גראז מיט טוי ליבסטער מיינער (2x) איך בענק נאך דיר אזוי
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Yiddish Words and Music by Peretz Hirshbein

My beloved is mine and I am his, who shepherds among the lilies. Who is this coming up from the wilderness, Fragrant with myrrh and incense? You have won my heart, my sister, my bride. Awake, north wind, and come, south wind.	Dodi li va'ani lo Haro'eh bashoshanim. (2x) Mi zot olah min hamidbar Mi zot olah Mikuteret mor ulevonah Mor ulevonah. Libavtini akhoti kalah Libavtini kalah. (2x) Uri tzafon uvo'i teiman. (2x)	דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים: מי זאת עלה מן-המדבר מקטרת מור ולבונה: לבבתי אחתי כלה: עורי צפון ובואי תימן:
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Song of Songs 2:16, 3:6, 4:9, 4:16 / Melody by Nira Chen

How fine you are,
my beloved...
Your eyes are like doves
from behind your tresses;
Your hair is like the flocks
that graze...As they trail
down from Mount Gil'ad.

Hinakh yafah, rayati;
Hinakh yafah,
einayikh yonim
Miba'ad latzamatekh
Se'arekh ke'eder ha'izim...
Shegalshu mihar Gil'ad.

הַנָּךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי
הַנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים
מִבְּעַד לְצַמֶּתְךָ
שְׁעָרֶךָ כְּעֶדֶר הָעֹזִים
שֶׁגִלְשׁוּ מִהַר גִּלְעָד:

Until the morning draws
its breath and sighs,
And all the shadows flee
the rising sun,
Set me as a seal
upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm...
For love is strong, stronger than death.

Ad sheyafu'akh hayom
Venassu hatz'lalim
Simeni khakhotam
al libekha,
Kakhotam al zero'ekha...
Ki azah khamavet ahavah.

עַד שֶׁיָּפֹחַ הַיּוֹם
וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים
שִׁימֵנִי כַחֲוֹתֶם עַל-לִבְּךָ
כַחֲוֹתֶם עַל-זְרוּעֶךָ
כִּי-עֲזָה כַמּוֹת אַהֲבָה:

Song of Songs 4:1,2:17, 8:6

Melody by Yosef Mustaki / Singable English by Rabbi Regina L. Sandler-Phillips

FOR LAYING TO REST:

Durme, durme, hizhiko/a de madre
Durme, durme, sin ansia y dolor (2x)

Sleep, sleep, little mother's child
Sleep, sleep, without anxiety or pain

Siente, djoya, palavrikas de tu madre
Las palabras de *Shema Yisrael* (2x)

Listen to the little words of your mother
The words of *Shema Yisrael*

Durme, durme, hizhiko/a de madre
Con hermozura de *Shema Yisrael* (2x)

Sleep, sleep, little mother's child
With the beauty of *Shema Yisrael*

Bosnian Ladino Lullaby as sung by Flory Jagoda

In the name of the Eternal,
the God of Israel:
On my right, Michael,
and on my left, Gabriel,
and before me, Uriel,
and behind me, Raphael,
and above my head
the Divine Presence
of God.

Beshem Hashem
Elohei Yisrael (2x),
Mimini Mikha'el,
Umismoli Gavri'el,
Umilifanai Uri'el,
Ume'akhorai Rifa'el,
Ve'al roshi
Shekhinat El (2x).

בְּשֵׁם יְיָ אֱלֹ-הֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
מִימִינִי מִיכָאֵל,
וּמִשְׂמָאלִי גַבְרִיאֵל,
וּמִלְפָנַי אֲוִרִיאֵל,
וּמֵאַחֲרַי רַפָּאֵל,
וְעַל רֹאשִׁי
שְׁכִינַת אֵל.

*From the traditional liturgy for the bedtime Sh'ma
Melody (Yedid Nefesh) by Ehud and Sarah Zweig*

Lay us down, Eternal One,
 O our God, in peace,
 And raise us up again,
 O our Sovereign,
 To life renewed,
 to life restored.
 And spread over us
 the *sukkah* of Your peace,
 And shelter us beneath the
 shadow of Your wings.
 Guard our going out
 and our coming in
 Unto life and peace,
 from this time forth
 and ever more.

Hashkiveinu Adonai
 Eloheinu leshalom,
 Veha'amideinu,
 Malkeinu,
 Lekhayim, lekhayim.
 Ufros aleinu
 Sukkat sh'lomekha,
 Uvetzel k'nafekha
 tastireinu,
 Ush'mor tzeitenu
 uvo'einu
 Lekhayim uleshalom
 me'atah ve'ad olam.

הַשְּׂכִיבֵנוּ יי
 א-לֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,
 וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
 לְחַיִּים (לְחַיִּים),
 וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ
 סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ,
 וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תִּסְתֵּינֵנוּ,
 וּשְׁמֹר צֵאתֵנוּ וּבֹאֵנוּ,
 לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם,
 מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

*From the traditional evening liturgy / Music from a South African melody
 as taught by Cantor Sue Roemer to Cantor Natasha J. Hirschhorn
 Adapted and translated by Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips*

May the words of my mouth
 And the meditations
 of my heart
 Be acceptable
 here before You
 O God, my Rock
 and my Redeemer.

Yihiyu leratzon
 Imrei fi vehegyon libi
 Lifanekha, Adonai,
 Tzuri vego'ali.

יְהִיוּ לְרָצוֹן
 אִמְרֵי פִי וְהַגִּיזוֹן לְבִי
 לְפָנֶיךָ, יי
 צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

*Psalm 19:15
 and the traditional liturgy*

FOR THE CLOSE OF DEBRIEFING:

Return us, O God, to You
 and we will return;
 Renew our days as of old.

Hashiveinu (2x)
 Adonai elekha
 Venashuvah (2x)
 Hadesh (2x)
 yameinu kekedem.

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְנָשׁוּבָה
 חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Lamentations 5:21

The songs here are among those selected for recording on *Ma'avar: Jewish Melodies, Chants and Songs of Passage and Transition* (forthcoming; please visit www.waysofpeace.org for more information).

NOTES ON SPECIFIC PRACTICES

1. ***Hamol / Prayer for Compassion*** (pp. 4-6): Corresponding to the three fathers, we invoke the names of all six mothers of Israel. Bilhah and Zilpah are mothers of four of the Twelve Tribes, and (according to rabbinic tradition) half-sisters of Rachel and Leah. It is particularly fitting that Bilhah and Zilpah be named at this juncture, since (a) as servant-wives in the Biblical testimony, they are most directly identified with the humble title of *amah* (servant-woman) invoked here, and (b) as near-anonymous attendants believed to play significant peacemaking roles in the family drama of the Twelve Tribes, they provide the clearest model for the anonymous attendants of the *Hevra Kadisha*. For an introduction to the Biblical and rabbinic sources on these neglected Biblical mothers, refer to *Who Knows Four? I Know Six!* by Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips (see below).
2. **“Any problems to be addressed...”** (p. 7): The main concern in deciding whether to remove specific bandages and tubes is how to minimize the flow of blood from the body. The *rosh* has access to specialized instructions, as well as to medical volunteers on call if necessary. It is understood that, regardless of specifics, we do the best we can for the honor of the *meit/ah*. Our requests for *mekhilah* (forgiveness) before and after the *taharah* help us to stay focused on our primary purpose.
3. **“Boards are now placed under the *meit/ah*...”** (p. 9): For when a *mikvah* is not available or appropriate. Although we make use of a *mikvah* available at our local funeral home, it should be noted that such prominent rabbinic authorities as Moshe Feinstein, Dovid Lifshitz and Moshe Heinemann hold that the pouring of nine *kavim* is more appropriate to *k’vod hameit* than is immersion in a *mikvah*. Refer to the discussion of this issue in *Tahara Manual of Practices* by Rabbi Mosha Epstein (pp. 28-29; see below).
4. **“It is our *minhag* (custom) to proceed according to the order of the verse...”** (p. 11): We recite Leviticus 16:4 in its entirety, which we believe to be appropriate in context. However, we do not consider the references to the linen garments of the High Priest to be a literal prescription for the *Hevra Kadisha*. Rabban Gamaliel’s directive (as recorded in the Talmud, *Moed Katan* 27a-b) that he be buried in flaxen garments is clearly presented in the context of rabbinic concerns “for the honor of the poor,” and is followed by Rav Pappa’s uncontested assertion that “nowadays, [burial] is customary even in hemp cloth worth one *zuz!*” Today, linen shrouds are the most expensive, and some authorities even countenance a two-class system whereby poor people are “permitted” to use less expensive fabrics. We believe that this negates the original concern.

The *Shulkhan Arukh* declares that “The dead is not to be buried in expensive shrouds, even for a prince of Israel. It has been the custom to bury in white garments” (*Yoreh De’ah* 352:1-2). The connection between the flaxen (Hebrew: *pishtan*) garments of Rabban Gamaliel and the linen (Hebrew: *bahd*) garments of the High Priest appears to be a later addition to burial custom; the recitation of Leviticus 16:4 is not found in *Ma’avar Yabok*. We try to uphold “the honor of the poor” by using muslin *takhrikhim* for every *meit/ah*.

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Rabbi Regina L. Sandler-Phillips
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*Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Hebrew
are by Rabbi Regina L. Sandler-Phillips.*