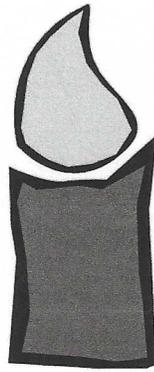


**NEW COMMUNITY CHEVRA KADISHA
OF GREATER PITTSBURGH**



Liturgy for a Woman's Taharah

August 2022 | Av 5782

[Final: 7/31/22]

General Guidance

The ROSHA will lead the practical process of washing and dressing the meitah. The LITURGY LEADER will stand just inside the door or off to the side of the taharah room, away from the team, lead the verbal/singing part of the liturgy, and provide prompts as needed to the taharah team.

ROSHA:

- Arrive at the funeral home about 15-20 minutes before the taharah start time. Don your PPE as per chevra instructions
- Find out if we will place the meitah in the aron or in the refrigeration unit; if in the aron, make sure the aron is right outside the taharah room so that we can retrieve it without walking in our PPE into the main part of the funeral home
- Take the Women's Taharah Kit into the taharah room and check to see if all is in readiness.
- As team members and the liturgy leader arrive, direct them to don PPE except for gloves in the garage and then to gather in the rabbi's room where the liturgy leader will read the obit, inform the team of the meitah's English and Hebrew names, and start the liturgy.
- THE TEAM SHOULD NOT ENTER THE TAHARAH ROOM UNTIL THE INITIAL PART OF THE LITURGY HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN THE RABBI'S ROOM.
- Decide in the rabbi's room who will do what once you enter the taharah room—lay out tachrichim, fill buckets and watering cans (these are in the small garage near the PPE kit), get out towels and sheets, get shards and put Vaseline on them, fill the pillowcase with straw, lay out the other items (comb, nail implements, scissors, etc).
- As team members enter the taharah room, quietly remind all to do the ritual handwashing with the 3 small pitchers and then don gloves—before touching anything else.
- When handwashing/glove donning is complete, direct the team to lay out the tachrichim in order of use, with the veil & bonnet on the bottom of the pile and the pants on the top; the 3 ties are usually in the pillowcase. Make sure all other items for the taharah are laid out neatly.
- [NOTE: if you need something from the funeral directors during the taharah, call them at the front desk from your cellphone instead of walking through the funeral home in your PPE: (412) 621-8282.]

LITURGY LEADER:

- The day before: get the meitah's obituary online (www.schugar.com/obituaries or www.dalessandrold.com/obituaries; Malke will get her Hebrew/Yiddish name and the names of her parents, in Hebrew/Yiddish if possible, and let you know what they are.
- Review your manual and ready yourself to lead the liturgy and songs.
- Ask the Roshah if she wants to use pottery shards on the eyes and sprinkle *afar* (sand from Israel) into the aron/sovev. Note this so you can provide the prompts (or not) at the appropriate times.
- During the taharah, give team members prompts for each new action, as needed.

TEAM MEMBERS:

- Ahead of time, review the Manual to remind yourself of the steps of the taharah process. Do not bring your manual to the taharah room.
- Arrive at the funeral home at least 10-15 minutes before the taharah start time

- Masks:
 - Wear your own personal mask into the funeral home
 - Change into an N95 mask in the funeral home and keep your personal mask in your pocket to re-don after the taharah and before the closing ritual; take the taharah N95 mask home with you and place it in a paper bag or outside in the sunshine for 3-5 days; bring this mask with you each time
 - Don PPE, except gloves, when you arrive. (PPE are in the Women's PPE Kit in the garage.) **EVERYONE MUST WEAR, AT MINIMUM, A PLASTIC GOWN, A MASK, AND SOME KIND OF EYE COVERING** (your own glasses, one of 2 kinds of safety goggles provided in the PPE kit, or a face shield from the PPE kit--or on top of the towel shelf in the Schugar's taharah room)
 - When fully protected in PPE except for gloves, move into the rabbi's room for the reading of the obituary and the beginning prayers.
 - When we move into the taharah room, complete the initial ritual handwashing (Liturgy Leader also), using the 3 small pitchers, then don gloves. You may dry your hands after the handwashing before donning gloves if you wish.
 - In the taharah room, remain silent as much as possible; if verbalization is needed, step away from the meitah and from other team members before speaking and speak quietly. You may hum or sing softly as the Liturgy Leader comes to the musical parts of the liturgy.

OUTLINE of TAHARAH STEPS

1. Creating sacred space (p.3)
2. Washing the meitah (p.4)
3. Taharah (pouring) (p.5)
4. Dressing the meitah (p.6)
5. Laying the meitah to rest (p.7)
6. Escorting the meitah (p.9)
7. Closing ritual (p.10)

New Community Chevra Kadisha Liturgy for a Woman's Taharah

#1: Before entering the taharah room, we put on PPE except for gloves then gather in the rabbi's room for introductory words. After the 1st paragraph at right, read the meitah's obituary & share her Hebrew/Yiddish name.

Then we recite this prayer for the Chevra:

#2: In the taharah room we complete our preparations:
(1) Do ritual handwashing and don gloves;
(2) lay out the tachrichim in order of use, handful of straw in the pillowcase, set out clean sheets & towels, fill 3 pails with a small amount of warm water & wash cloths, fill 3 watering cans FULL of water;
(3) the Roshah sets out supplies. We now dedicate our attention to the meitah.

#3: Remove body bag/street clothing, then cover meitah with a clean sheet and face covering. The team examines the meitah.

[Complete box #1 at left in the rabbi's room/anteroom before beginning]

In the Rabbi's room/anteroom, the **LITURGY LEADER READS:**

May we be guided by the wisdom of our ancestors as we perform the holy work of taharah and be inspired by the call to serve in these moments. May [English name] be sheltered under the wings of the Shechinah and guided on her way. May we all be grounded in our holy task by the light and love of each other and of being in sacred community 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 [English name]. Grant us the courage and the strength to properly perform this work, this holy task of cleaning and washing [English name], dressing [English name] in tachrichim, and preparing [English name] for burial. 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 [English name]'s face, 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.

[Enter the taharah room. Complete boxes #2 and #3 at left before proceeding]

[All say the meitah's Hebrew name quietly:] _____ bat _____ v' _____, **[L. LEADER only:]** may our loving presence and compassionate words be a source of comfort to you. May this act of lovingkindness honor you as we midwife your soul during this tender and liminal space and time.

L LEADER: Kavanah Mechilah:

_____ bat _____ v' _____, we stand here ready to begin our work. Before we do, we ask your understanding that we will do our best to prepare you for your final journey.

[All say her Hebrew name quietly:] _____ bat _____ v' _____, **[L. LEADER only:]** we ask your forgiveness for any distress we may cause you during this taharah. We will do everything possible to ensure 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.

Kavanah Chamol:

L LEADER: Ruach Ha'Olam, we are acting on behalf of the neshamah of _____ bat _____ v' _____, asking You for compassion and mercy on her behalf.

Source of Life for all Worlds, we ask compassion for _____ bat _____ v' _____, this meitah, who is the daughter of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, and of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. May her soul and spirit rest with those who have gone before her. May it be Your will, our God and God of our ancestors, that we

encircle [English name] with kindness, just as Your angels will receive her with love. We ask, too, for you to forgive her for any wrong-doings and misdeeds. Blessed are You who imparts great compassion on Your people Israel. Amen, may this be Your will.

Reebono shel olam, chamol al _____ bat _____ v' _____
hametah hazo shehee bat Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, v'Zilpa,
v'Avraham, Yitzchak, v'Ya'akov, shehalchoo acharecha be-emoonah.
Tanooach nishmatah b'shalom im kol hadorot, kee soleach oomochel
pish'eey hameteem atah. Y'hee ratzon Elohey avoteynoo
v'eemoteynoo shetitzror et hametah ha-ahoovah alechah.
Baruch ata Adonai hanoten ahavah g'dolah l'metey amo Yisrael.
Amen, ken y'hee ratzon.

רבונו של עולם חמול על _____ בת _____
המתה הזו שהיא בת שרה, רבקה, רחל, לאה, בלהה וזלפה
ואברהם, יצחק, ויעקב, שהלכו אחריו באמונה.
תנוח נשמתה בשלום עם כל הדורות, כי סולח ומוחל
פשעי המתים אלה. יהי רצון אלוהי אבותנו ואמותינו
שתצור את המתה האהובה עליך.
ברוך אתה הנותן אהבה גדולה למתי עמו ישראל.
אמן, כן יהי רצון.

WASHING THE MEITAH

[L. LEADER:] Kavanah Rechitzah:

Just as _____ bat _____ v' _____, was created in God's image and was beautiful while alive, so may we continue to recognize the beauty of her neshamah.

And the angel of God spoke out and said to those standing there: "Remove their soiled garments"; and they said, "Behold, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you in fine garments."
(Zecharia, 3:4-5) As before birth you were surrounded by water, now as you depart this world, we bathe you in water.

Vaya'an vayomer el ha'omdim l'fanav leimor:
"Hasiru hab'gadim hatzo'im me'alav." Vayomer elav:
"R'eh he'evarti me'alecha avonecha
v'halbeish otcha machalatzot."

ויען ויאמר אל העמדים לפניו לאמר:
"הסירו הבגדים הצאים מעליו." ויאמר אליו:
"ראה העברתי מעליך עונך והלבש אתך מחלצות."

We are now ready to wash the meitah. As the team washes, L. LEADER recites the phrases at right. If needed, remind team to save nail clippings, hair, & blood products & place in muslin bag for burial with the

While the head is bathed:

"Blessed is your head that housed your thoughts, words, dreams and visions."

While the neck is bathed:

"Blessed is your neck that held your head and was a bridge between your head and body."

While the right arm and hand are bathed:

"Blessed are your shoulder, arm and hand that labored in your life – shaping and touching and reaching out."

While the right torso is bathed:

"Blessed are your chest and abdomen that held your organs of breath and life."

While the right leg and foot are bathed:

"Blessed are your leg and foot that supported and carried you on your path."

While the left arm and hand are bathed:

"Blessed are your arm and hand that opened in friendship and received the gifts that life offered."

While the left torso is bathed:

"Blessed again are your chest and abdomen that held your vital organs.
Blessed is your heart, the vessel of feeling."

While the left leg and foot are bathed:

"Blessed are your leg and foot that enabled you to journey on your path."

While the back of the body is bathed:

“Blessed is your spine that has held you and carried your vital energy.”

When washing is complete, **L LEADER** recites:

When Rechitzah is completed, pour a small amount of water down the table to wash it off. Place a clean sheet and face covering.

כָּלָךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי, וּמוֹם אֵין בְּךָ.

Koolach yafa ray'yati, u'moom ayn bach

You are beautiful my beloved friend, and there is no flaw in you.

(Song of Songs, 4: 7)

TAHARAH

[L LEADER:] *Kavanah Taharah:*

To midwife the soul is the purpose of taharah. As the central element of this ritual, the spiritual phase is perhaps one of the most simple of tasks, yet also one of the most significant.... It is the goal to purify the deceased through the transformative power of water. We simulate this act with a continuous pouring of water (adapted from *To Midwife a Soul* by Richard A. Light.)

We now prepare the meitah for taharah.

Said Rabbi Akiva, You are fortunate, Israel. Before Whom do you purify yourselves and Who purifies you? Your God in heaven, as it is said: “And I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you shall become purified” (Ezekiel, 36:25), and it says: “Mikveh Yisrael, Adonai” “God is the Hope, The mikvah of Israel” (Jeremiah, 17:13). Just as a mikvah purifies the impure, so too does the Holy One of Blessings 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 I shall purify you (Ezekiel, 36:25).

Amar Rabbi Akiva: Ashreichem Yisra'el, lifnei mi atem mitaharin umi m'taher etchem? Avichem shebashamayim, shene'emar: “V'zarakti alechem mayim t'horim ut'hartem.” V'omer: “Mikveh Yisra'el Adonai.” Ma mikveh m'taher et hat'me'im, af haKadosh Baruch Hu m'taher et Yisra'el.

Ma'ayan ganim b'er mayim chayim v'nozlim min l'vanon.

V'zarakti aleichem mayim t'horim ut'hartem mikol tum'otechem umikol giluleichem ataheir etchem.

אמר רבי עקיבא: אשריכם ישראל, לפני מי אתם מטהרין ומי מטהר אתכם? אביכם שבשמים, שנאמר: "וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם" (יחזקאל לו:כה). ואומר: "מקוה ישראל" (ירמיה יז:ג). מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים, אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מטהר את ישראל.

מעין גנים באר מים חיים ונקלים מן לבנון.

וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם מכל טמאותיכם ומכל גלוליכם אטהר אתכם.

Water is poured in one direction only, in succession (right, left, middle) and with a continuous stream. Remind team to empty ALL the water from the cans. Cover the mouth.

L LEADER says, "Now, let's begin to pour" and reads (team members can quietly say as well):

טְהוֹרָה הִיא טְהוֹרָה הִיא טְהוֹרָה הִיא
 Tehorah hee Tehora hee Tehorah hee
 She is pure She is pure She is pure

As soon as the pouring is completed, cover the meitah with a clean sheet. With towels dry the meitah and the table. Place a clean sheet and face covering on the meitah.

L LEADER SINGS (and team members can sing quietly):

Elo-hai, Elo-hai, neshama	אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה	The soul that You, my God,
shenatata bi tehora hi.	שָׁנַתַּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.	have given me is pure.
Ata ve'rata ata yetzarta,	אַתָּה בְּרַאתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרַתָּהּ,	You created it, You formed it,
ata nefachta bi,	אַתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי,	You breathed it into me,
ve'ata me'shamra,	וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי	You protect it within me
me'shamra be'kirbi		

(DEBBIE FRIEDMAN)

Return again, return again
 Return to the land of your soul (x2)

Return to who you are
 Return to what you are
 Return to where you are
 Born and reborn again (repeat lines 1-2 at beginning) (SHALOM CARLBACH)

[MOMENT OF SILENCE]

DRESSING THE MEITAH

[L LEADER] Kavanah before dressing the meitah:

We have now completed the pouring ritual of taharah, and will dress you, [English name], in plain white garments. According to the Zohar, the tachrichim correspond to "chalukkah d'rabbana" - the robe of the sages, woven from a person's mitzvot that she fulfilled while alive.

I greatly delight in Adonai; my soul rejoices.
 For God has clothed me in garments of redemption and wrapped me in a cloak of justice as a bridegroom and a bride adorn themselves. (Isaiah, 61:10)

Sos asis ba'Adonai tageil nafshi beilohai	שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בִּיהוּה תִּגַּל נַפְשִׁי בְּאֵלֹהֵי
ki hilbishani bigdei yesha m'il tzedakah y'atani	כִּי הִלְבִּישָׁנִי בְּגָדֵי יֵשַׁע מְעִיל צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי
kechatan y'chahein p'eir v'chalah ta'deh cheilehah.	קָחַתָּן יְכַהֵן פָּאֵר וְכַפְלָה תַעֲדָה כְּלִיָּהּ.

1. Pants / Michnasayim.

Linen pants shall be on your flesh

(Tie bows at the ankle and a dalet-tie at the waist)

U'michn'sei bad yihyu **וּמִכְנָסֵי בֵד יְהִיוּ עַל בְּשָׂרָה**
al b'sara

2. Collarless tunic / K'tonet

You shall wear a holy linen tunic

(Tie with a dalet-tie)

K'tonet bad kodesh tilbash **כְּתוֹנֶת בֵד קֹדֶשׁ תִּלְבַּשׁ**

3. Tunic with collar / Kittel Gartel / Avnet

... and a linen sash shall you tie

(Wind the avnet 13 times, tie in a shin bow)

Uv'avnet bad tachgor **וּבְאַבְנֵט בֵד תַּחְגֹּר**

Counting the ties: aleph, bet, gimmel, dalet/ hey, vav, zion, chet, tet, yud, yud aleph, yud bet, yud gimmel

[Place the meitah in the aron or on the gurney before placing the veil, bonnet, and shards. See box below left before proceeding.]

4. Bonnet/ Mitznefet

... and a linen headdress shall you don

(The veil is placed to cover the face and tied at the back. The mitznefet is placed on the head and ties with a regular bow under the chin, leaving the bottom of the veil free in case the family is having a viewing.)

Uv'mitznefet bad titznof **וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בֵד תִּצְנוֹף**

Bring in the aron or gurney. Place towels/sheets over the edges of the aron so it is not scratched. Sprinkle afar in the aron. Place the sovev in the aron (or on the gurney), oriented to form a diamond & making sure the seam is on the inside. Sprinkle afar on the sovev. Move the meitah to the aron/gurney. Place pottery shards over eyes, then place the veil, then bonnet.

After the meitah is fully dressed **L Leader** recites:

Bigdei kodesh hem v'rachatz bamayim **בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרָחַץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת בְּשָׂרָה וְלַבָּשָׂם.**
et b'sara ul'vasham.

V'El Shaddai yiten lach rachamim. **וְאֵל שְׁדַי יִתֵּן לְךָ רַחֲמִים.**

... 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 (Leviticus, 16:4)

LAYING THE MEITAH TO REST

[Complete tasks in the box below left before proceeding.]

Place the pillowcase under the meitah's head. Place the muslin bag at her feet. Wrap the sovev around the meitah. If using a gurney, place towels between the straps and the tachrichim.

L LEADER:

Ye'var'chech Adonai ve'yishme'rech.

Ya'er Adonai panav e'la'yich vee'chu'nech.

Yisa Adonai panav e'la'yich ve'ya'sem lach shalom. **יִשָּׂא אֲדֹנָי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשָּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.**

May God bless and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May God's face be lifted up to you and give you peace.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנֶּנֶךָ:

(Numbers, 6:24-26)

Hinei lo yanum vlo yishan, shomer Yisrael. **הִנֵּה לֹא יִנּוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן, שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל.**

For the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

(Psalms, 121:4)

B'sheim Adonai elohei yisrael:
mimini Michael, umismoli Gavriel,
umilfanai Uriel, umeachorai Rafael,
v'al roshi shechinat el.

בְּשֵׁם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
מִיְמִינִי מִיכָאֵל, וּמִשְׂמָאלִי גַבְרִיאֵל,
וּמִלְפָנַי אֲוִרִיאֵל, וּמֵאַחֲרַי רַפָּאֵל,
וְעַל רֹאשֵׁי שְׁכִינַת אֵל

In the name of the God of Israel:
At my right hand Michael, at my left hand Gavriel;
Before me Uriel, behind me Raphael;
And above my head, the Shechina, God's sheltering Presence. (from the bedtime Shema)

* * * * *

Let us sing the soul in every name, and the name of every soul.
Let us sing the soul in every name, the sacred name of every soul.

We gather around the meitah and make a closing request for forgiveness.

L. LEADER: Kavanah Mechilah:

_____ bat _____ v' _____, during this sacred time with you, we hope we have treated you with dignity. Please know that our intention, our kavanah, has been to honor you as we have prepared you for your final journey.

_____ bat _____ v' _____ anu mevakshot
mechila meitach im lo aseenu kefee chvodech,
aval aseenu k'minchag ha'makom.

בֵּית _____ אָנוּ מְבַקְשׁוֹת
מְחִילָה מֵאַתָּה אִם לֹא עָשִׂינוּ כְּפִי כְבוֹדְךָ,
אָבֵל אֲשֵׁינוּ כְּמִנְחַג הַמָּקוֹם.

[All say her Hebrew name quietly:] _____ bat _____ v' _____, [L. LEADER only:] we ask your forgiveness if we did not act according to your honor, even though we acted according to our custom.

Beyt Ya'a'kov l'chu v'nel'chah b'or Adonai.
El Elohim Adonai diber va'yik'rah aretz, mi'miz'rach shemesh
ad m'vo'oh. Ya'vo shalom, ya'nu'chu al mish'ka'votam,
Kee afar a'nach'nu v'el a'far na'shuv.
Adonai na'tan v'Adonai la'kach; Y'he shem Adonai m'vo'rach.

בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לְכוּ וְנִלְכָה בְּאוֹר יְיָ.
אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְיָ דָּבַר וַיִּקְרָא אֶרֶץ מִמִּזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ.
יְבֹא שְׁלוֹם יְנוּחוּ עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹתֵם, כִּי עָפָר אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֵל עָפָר נָשׁוּב.
יְיָ נָתַן וַיְיָ לָקַח; יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ.

House of Israel, come let us walk in God's light.
God 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.

ESCORTING THE MEITAH

#1: Place and secure the lid over the aron.

Place towels or a sheet over all edges of the aron so it is not scratched as you leave.

[Complete box #1 at left before proceeding.]

L LEADER: Kavanah:

We now have the honor of escorting [English name] on her journey on behalf of the House of Israel.

May you be blessed and protected.

May you be filled with light and grace, with sacred presence and peace.

#2: Move the aron/gurney so that it can be wheeled out of the room feet first, if possible. As we escort the meitah from the taharah room, we sing:

[Complete box #2 at left before proceeding.]

L'chi lach, to a land that we will show you.

Leich l'cha, to a place you do not know.

L'chi lach, on your journey we will bless you

And (you shall be a blessing) 3x l'chi lach.

L'chi lach, and we shall make your name great.

Leich l'cha, and all shall praise your name.

L'chi lach, to the place that we will show you

(L'sim-chat cha-yim) 3x l'chi lach.

(DEBBIE FRIEDMAN)

[NOTE: The word "we" is used here to emphasize that the community performs this mitzvah.
The word "I" in the original Debbie Friedman song refers to God.]

Move the aron to its designated position in the funeral home, then gather around.

*[All say her Hebrew name quietly:] _____ bat _____ v' _____, **L. LEADER only:** (English name), we now take our leave of you. We were honored to prepare your body that embraced your soul during your time on earth.*

[pause, pause....]

May (English name)'s memory be a blessing.

Return to the taharah room. Clean up room and return all items to the taharah kit. Take off PPE, removing gloves last. Team dons their own personal masks.

Move out of the taharah room to the rabbi's room/anteroom for the closing ritual on the next page.

In the rabbi's room, wash hands with soap & water. Standing in a circle, we rub hand cream on our hands and then recite quietly together:

CLOSING RITUAL

Ruach Ha'olam, we have just completed our mitzvah of g'mi'lat chesed for _____ bat _____ v' _____,

We are thankful for the strength and courage to perform this mitzvah.
We cherish the bond that brings us together in this sacred community.

Bless these Hands
For the Kindness they show
For Holiness they embody
For the Mitzvot they enact

May this mitzvah be a blessing that we take with us throughout our day and into our lives.

Time for sharing thoughts about the taharah.

L. LEADER: *Fill out the taharah certificate, have team members sign, and return it to the funeral home office as you leave.*