

# PRAYERS AND ORDER FOR *TOHORAH*

*Women's Manual*

תפילה וסדר  
לטורה



TIKVAT ISRAEL CONGREGATION  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND



## Introduction

“You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19)

**The *Hevrah Kadishah*** (Burial Society) takes charge of preparing a body for burial. Burying the dead is considered a great *mitzvah*. Traditionally, the most pious members of a community performed this service. Besides ensuring that the *metah* (the deceased) has been prepared for burial according to Jewish law, our service also helps to keep down the cost of the funeral and burial for the family and the community.

**We must remember** that we have been entrusted with the awesome responsibility of preparing the *metah* (the deceased) for the *olam ha-emet* (the next world).

**Our primary concern is *kavod ha-metah*** (respect for the dead). Everything we do must be done in a dignified and respectful manner.

To that end –

- ✧ We avoid unnecessary conversation,
- ✧ We never look at the *metah* with curiosity, and
- ✧ We keep the *metah* covered as much as possible, especially the face and private areas.

**Coffins:** The coffins we use for burial are made of plain wood. These are preferable because a metal coffin would slow down the natural process of “dust to dust” as the body returns to the earth. Equality and simplicity are additional reasons for using a plain wooden coffin.

**Shrouds:** The body is buried in plain white garments made of linen or cotton, devoid of ornamentation.

## Reference Notes

**Members of the *hevrah* team** should be assigned responsibilities –

- ✧ Reader of *t'fillot* (prayers): One member, usually the least experienced,
- ✧ Right side team: Usually the two most experienced members, and
- ✧ Left side team: Two members.

**For reference throughout, the order** for examining, washing, and drying is –

Right side team:

- Head (hair, face, ears)
- Neck
- Right shoulder
- Right arm
- Right hand

(Now the left side team begins with the left shoulder, always staying a bit behind the progress of the right side team)

Teams continue:

- Torso
- Genitals (right side team only)
- Leg
- Foot

Left side team: Incline the body on the left side, so that right side team can inspect the back, beginning with the shoulder

Right side team: Incline the body on the right side, so that the left side team can inspect the back, beginning with the shoulder

**If the *hevrah* team finds any jewelry,** the family should be contacted.

## STEP 1: Before Coming into the Presence of the *Metah* (מתה)

Wash hands ritually, alternating left and right three times (no blessing).

Put on gloves and apron.

Recite prayer (NOT in the presence of the *metah*)

אָנָּא אֱלֹהִים הַחֶסֶד וְהַרְחָמִים שְׁכָל אוֹרְחוֹתֶיךָ חֶסֶד וְצוֹיֹתֵינוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת חֶסֶד  
וְאֶמֶת עִם הַמֵּתִים וְלַהֲתַעֲסֵק בְּקַבּוּרָתָם כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתוֹב כִּי קַבּוּר וְתַקְבָּרְנוּ יְהִי  
רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁתַּמְצָנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלַאכְתֵּנוּ מִלְּאֲכָם שָׁמַיִם זֶה  
כְּרָאוּי בְּטַהֲרַת הַמֵּת הֵן בְּלְבִישָׁתוֹ וּבְקַבּוּרָתוֹ מִכָּל נֶזֶק וְיִתְקַלָּה שְׁלֵא  
נִפְשָׁל בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יַדֵּינוּ לְקַיֵּם בְּנוֹ הַמְּקַרָּא שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יִדַּע דְּבַר רָע וְתַעֲמֹד לָנוּ  
זְכוֹת מִצְוֹת גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶד וְאֶמֶת לְמַלְאֵת יְמֵינוּ בְּטוֹבָה וְחֶסֶד ה' עֲלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם.

Ana elohim ha-ḥesed v-ha-rachamim she-kol or'chote-kha chesed v-tzivotanu la'asot ḥesed v-emet im ha-metim u-l-hit'aseik bi-k'voratam k'mo she-katuv ki kavor tik'b'renu y'hi ratzon milfane-kha Adonai eloheinu she-tam'tzeinu la'asot m'lakh'teinu m'lekhem shamayim zo kara'u b-taharat ha-met hein bi-l'vishato u-vi'k'vurato mi-kol nezek u-t'kalah shelo nikasheil b-ma'aseih yadeinu l-kayem banu ha-mik'ra shomeir mitzvah lo yeida davar ra v-ta'amod lanu z'khor mitzvat g'milut ḥesed ve-emet l-mal'ot yameinu b-tovah v-ḥesed Adonai aleinu l-olam.

Source of kindness and compassion, whose ways are ways of mercy and truth, You have commanded us to treat the dead with true kindness, and to engage in their proper burial, as it is written: "You shall bury them."

Please strengthen us to do our work properly, for it is holy work, this cleansing of the dead, and dressing the dead in shrouds, and burying the dead. Guide our hands and hearts as we do this work, and enable us to fulfill this commandment of love. Help us to 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.

## STEP 2: Preparing the Equipment

### Assemble washing equipment –

- ✧ Towels (4), washcloths (4), sheets (3)
- ✧ Two buckets, half full of lukewarm water, with a pot in each one (for washing the *metah*), and
- ✧ Three buckets of cold water (for *taharah*), at least 8 quarts in each.

### Lay out burial garments in order –

- ✧ Face covering,
- ✧ Bonnet,
- ✧ Pants,
- ✧ Two short ties (for under knees),
- ✧ Blouse (tunic top with no collar),
- ✧ *Kitel* (tunic with collar),
- ✧ *Gartel* (long tie for waist), and
- ✧ Sheet for casket.

### Prepare casket (*aron*) --

- ✧ Spread straw in bottom,
- ✧ Fill small pillowcase with straw and place at head end, and
- ✧ Get sheet that came with burial garments. Drape sheet diagonally over inside of *aron*, leaving enough material at the head end to fold over the *metah's* head and face.

## STEP 3: Bringing in the *Metah*

**Check ID:** Whether the *metah* is in the cooler or in the *tohorah* room, check the *metah* for identity tags.

**Transport *metah*:** If necessary, wheel the *metah* from the cooler into the *tohorah* room.

**Get Hebrew name:** Set aside papers containing the deceased person's Hebrew name. If there is no Hebrew name (it happens), use the person's English name.

**Shift *metah*:** Move the *metah* to the table. Put away the cart.

**Recite together:**

We ask forgiveness for any indignity we may do, for it is our intention to work with respect.

**Remove coverings:** Open and spread out the body bag or sheet in which the *metah* is wrapped. Incline the *metah* on one side, no more than 90 degrees (remember, never place the *metah* face down). Push the body bag or sheet under the *metah* from the other side. Incline the *metah* in the opposite direction, and pull away the body bag or sheet. Remove clothing, cutting it away with scissors, if that is easier.

**Cover:** Cover the *metah's* face with a washcloth, and the body with a sheet.

## **STEP 4: Examining the *Metah***

While the *metah* is examined, one member of the *hevrah* reads prayers aloud. See the following pages for instructions and prayers.

**Remember –**

**The purpose of examining the *metah*** is to remove extraneous material (tubes, bandages, nail polish, etc.) and to stop any discharge from bodily orifices, before washing the *metah*.

**The *metah* is examined in a specific order,** and extraneous material is removed or discharges attended to, as that body part is reached.

**Preventing bleeding is very important.** Do NOT remove any extraneous material if the removal may cause bleeding. If necessary, cover open sores to prevent bleeding. If pouring *taharah* water is likely to cause bleeding, do not do it.

**Any blood or blood-stained linens must be saved** if the blood is *dam ha-nefesh* (blood directly associated with the death of the person). If blood is on linens or clothing, cut out the part that contains the blood. Put bloodstained items into a plastic bag, and place it in the foot of the *aron*, to be buried with the *metah*.

**Other things to save and bury with the *metah* are:** Nail parings (if the nails are cut); tufts of hair (not strands); and false teeth (leave them in place if they are not loose).

**Things not to save for burial:** Body wastes (wash away with the hose) and jewelry (remove for return to family).

**While the examination proceeds,** one member of the *hevrah* reads prayers aloud. You can find these prayers on the following pages.

## **STEP 4: Examining the *Metah* (continued)**

**Examine *metah* in this order:** Two teams, right and left sides –

- ✧ Head (brush hair, close eyes and mouth),
- ✧ Neck,
- ✧ Proceed with the right side first, beginning with the shoulder, and then the arm and hand. Once the right hand is reached, someone else begins examination on the left side. The work on the right side is always a little in advance of the work on the left side,
- ✧ Torso,
- ✧ Leg,
- ✧ Foot,
- ✧ Incline *metah* on left side. Examine right side of back and private parts,
- ✧ Incline *metah* on right side. Examine left side of back.

**Check and remove –**

- ✧ Bandages (inspect any sores for bleeding),
- ✧ Dirt and bloodstains,
- ✧ Nail polish,
- ✧ Dirt under fingernails and toenails,
- ✧ Rings,
- ✧ Name bands and toe tags (leave one on ankle for official ID purposes),
- ✧ Stop flow of discharges.

## **STEP 4: Examining the *Metah* (continued)**

**Recite prayers:** One member of the *hevrah* recites these prayers aloud, in Hebrew or English. Insert the deceased person's Hebrew name in the blanks in the first prayer.



<p>Ribon shel olam! Chamol al  _____ bat _____ sh-hi bat  Avraham, Yitchak, Ya'akov, Sarah,  Rivkah, Raḥel v-Lei'ah, avade-kha.</p> <p>V-t'nuah naf'shah v-nishmatah im ha-  tzadikim, ki atah meimit u-m'ḥayeh.</p> <p>Barukh atah mocheil v-solei'ach la-  chata'im v-la-avonot mi-m'tei am-kha  Yisraeil b-taḥanunim.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">רבוֹן שֶׁל עוֹלָם! חַמּוֹל עַל  _____ בַּת _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">שְׁהִיא בַּת אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב,  שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה, עַבְדֵיךָ.  וְתַנּוּחַ נַפְשָׁהּ וְנִשְׁמָתָהּ עִם  הַצְּדִיקִים, כִּי אַתָּה מְמִית וּמְחַיֶּה.  בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לַחַטָּאִים  וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת מַמְתִּי עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל  בְּתַחֲנוּנִים</p>
<p>Master of the Universe!</p> <p>Have compassion for _____ bat _____, for she is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, Your servants.</p> <p>May her soul and spirit rest with the righteous, for it is You who revives the dead and brings death to the living.</p> <p>Praised are You who pardons and forgives the sins and trespasses of the dead of Your people Israel, when we call upon You.</p>	

(More prayers on the following page ... )

## STEP 4: Examining the *Metah* (continued)

### Prayers (continued) –

<p>U-v-khein y'hi ratzon milfane-kha Adonai Eloheinu vei-Elohei avoteinu she-t'sabeiv mal'akhei rachamim lifnei ha-metah sh-hi amat-kha bat amate-kha.</p> <p>V-atah Adonai Eloheinu vei-Elohei avoteinu mas'kil el dal malteha mi-kol tzarah u-miyom ra'ah.</p> <p>Barukh atah g'dol ha-chesed u-va'al ha-rachamim.</p> <p>Barukh atah ha-oseh shalom bim'romav la-avadav u-l'yir'ei sh'mo.</p> <p>Barukh podeh amo Yisra'eil mi-minei pur'aniyot b-rachamim.</p>	<p>וּבְכוּן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֶיךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שְׁתַּסַּבּב מַלְאָכֶיךָ רַחֲמִים לְפָנֶי הַמֵּתָה שֶׁהִיא אֲמָתְךָ בַּת אֲמָתְךָ. וְאַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֶיךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִשְׁכִּיל אֶל דָּל מִלְטָה מִכָּל צָרָה וּמְיוֹם רָעָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְּדוֹל הַחֶסֶד וְיַבְעַל הַרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַעֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו לְעַבְדָּיו וּלְיִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ. בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּינֵי פוֹרְעָנוֹת בְּרַחֲמִים.</p>
<p>Therefore, may it be Your will, Adonai our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, to bring a circle of angels of mercy before the deceased, for she is your maidservant, daughter of your maidservant.</p> <p>And You, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, who concerns Yourself with the poor, save her from all misery and a day of evil.</p> <p>Praised are You, great in lovingkindness and Master of mercy.</p> <p>Praised are You who makes peace in the heights for Your servants and for those who revere Your name.</p> <p>Praised are You who mercifully redeems Your people Israel from all kinds of suffering.</p>	

(More prayers on the following page ... )

## STEP 4: Examining the *Metah* (continued)

### Prayers (continued) --

U-v-khein y'hi ratzon milfane-kha  
Adonai Eloheinu vei-Elohei avoteinu  
she-tiz'kod z'khot b'rit kodesh  
she-b'libah v-yiyeh pid'yon lah.

Barukh atah korat b'rit ha-rachamim  
b-ha-rachamim.

וּבְכֹן יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּזְכּוּד זְכוֹת  
בְּרִית קֹדֶשׁ שֶׁבְּלִבָּהּ וַיְהִי פְדִיוֹן  
לָהּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה כּוֹרֵת בְּרִית  
הַרְחָמִים בְּהַרְחָמִים.

Therefore, may it be Your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, to remember the merit of the sacred covenant that is in her heart, and may it be a ransom for her so that You may deliver her.

Praised are You who establishes the merciful covenant with mercy.

(More prayers on the following page ... )

## STEP 4: Examining the *Metah* (continued)

Prayers (continued) --

<p>B-rachamim ha-s'tar v-ha-aleim pis'ei ha-metah ha-zot amate-kha b-rachame-kha ha-rabim.</p> <p>Atah Adonai Eloheinu tov v-salach l-kol kor'a-kha.</p> <p>Barukh atah g'dol ha-eitzah v-rav ha-alili'ah bi-rachamim.</p> <p>Im rag'lei tzadikim b-Gan Eiden tid'ron ki mi-kom y'sarim hu rag'lei chasidav yismor.</p> <p>Barukh atah ha-notein rachamim v-rov tachanunim l-meitei amo Yisra'eil amein kein y'hi ratzon.</p>	<p>בְּרַחֲמִים הַסֵּתֵר וְהַעֲלִים פְּשָׁעֵי הַמֵּתָה הַזֹּאת אֲמַתְךָ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים. אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ טוֹב וְסֹלַח לְכָל קוֹרְאֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְּדוֹל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הָעֲלִילָה בְּרַחֲמִים. עִם רַגְלֵי צַדִּיקִים בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּדְרֹן כִּי מְקוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא רַגְלֵי חֲסִידָיו יִשְׁמֹר. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַנוֹתֵן רַחֲמִים וְרוֹב תַּחֲנוּנִים לְמֵתֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן</p>
<p>Through mercy, hide and disregard the transgressions of this departed, Your maidservant. Deliver her, for she needs Your great mercy, and You, Adonai our God, are good and forgiving to all who call upon You.</p> <p>Praised are You, great in counsel and mighty in granting mercy. May she walk with righteous steps in the Garden of Eden, for that is the palace of the upright, and God protects the steps of the pious.</p> <p>Praised are You who gives great mercy and abundant grace to the departed of Your people Israel.</p> <p>Amen. May it be Your will.</p>	

(End of prayers)

## STEP 5: Washing the *Metah*

### Using wash water:

**First person:** Dip the small pot into the bucket of lukewarm water. Pour backhand over the area of the body to be washed.

**Second person:** Rub skin gently with washcloth.

**Reading aloud:** While the *metah* is being washed, one person reads aloud. The readings are given on the following pages.

**Expose** only the parts being washed. Keep the rest of the *metah* covered with the sheet.

**Wash the *metah*, in this order:** Two teams, right and left sides –

- ✧ **Head and neck:** The right side team begins here. Use washcloth dipped in bucket (wring out excess water). Clean hair, if necessary. Clean ears. Clean face, then neck,
- ✧ **Below the neck:** Use a small pot to pour water over body. Proceed with the right side first, beginning with the shoulder, and then the arm and hand. Once the right hand is reached, the left side team begins washing the left shoulder. The work on the right side is always a little in advance of the work on the left side,
- ✧ **Torso,**
- ✧ **Leg,**
- ✧ **Foot,**
- ✧ **Right back:** Incline *metah* on left side, then wash right side of back and private parts,
- ✧ **Left back:** Incline *metah* on right side, then wash left side of back.

**Cover *metah*** with a clean sheet.

## STEP 5: Washing the *Metah* (continued)

One person reads aloud while the *metah* is being washed.

Rosheikh alayikh ka-Karmel v-dalat rosheikh ka-argaman melekh asur ba-r'hatim.	רֹאשׁוֹךְ עֲלֶיךָ כְּכַרְמֶל וְדַלַּת רֹאשׁוֹךְ כְּאַרְגָּמָן מֶלֶךְ אָסוּר בְּרֵהָטִים
Your head is like Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is caught captive in its tresses.	

Hinakh yafah ra'yati hinakh yafah einayikh yonim mi-ba'ad l-tzamateikh sa'reikh k- eider ha-izim she-galshu mei-Har Gil'ad.	הֵנָּךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי הֵנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים מִבְּעַד לְצִמְתֶּךָ שְׂעָרְךָ כְּעֶדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מֵהַר גִּלְעָד
Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful. Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; your hair is like a flock of goats that trails down Mount Gilead.	

Shinayikh k-eider ha-k'tzuvot she-alu min-ha- rach'tzah she-kulam mat'imot v-shakulah ein bahem.	שֵׁנֶיךָ כְּעֶדֶר הַקְּצוּבוֹת שֶׁעָלוּ מִן־הַרְחֲצָה שְׂכֵלָם מִתְּאִימוֹת וְשֵׁכֵלָה אֵין בָּהֶם
Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing; all are paired, and none among them is bereft.	

K-chut ha-shani sif'tota'yikh u-mi-d'bareikh naveh k-felach ha-rimon rakateikh mi-ba'ad l-tzamateikh.	כְּחוּט הַשָּׁנִי שֶׁפִּתְתֶיךָ וּמִדְּבָרֶיךָ נְאוּהַ כְּפֶלַח הָרִמּוֹן רִקְתֶּךָ מִבְּעַד לְצִמְתֶּךָ
Your lips are like a thread of scarlet, and your mouth is comely; your cheeks are like a pomegranate split open behind your veil.	

(More readings on the following page ... )

## STEP 5: Washing the *Metah* (continued)

### Readings (continued) –

K-mig'dal David tzavareikh banu l-talpiyot elef ha-magein talu alav kol shiltei ha-giborim.	כְּמִגְדַל דָּוִד צְוֹאֲרֶךְ בְּנוֹי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת אֶלֶף הַמָּגֵן תָּלוּי עָלָיו כָּל שְׁלֵטֵי הַגִּבּוֹרִים
Your neck is like the Tower of David, built with turrets, on which hang a thousand shields, all of them the armor of mighty men.	

Sh'nei shadayikh ki-sh'nei afarim t'omei tz'viyah ha-ro'im ba-shoshanim.	שְׁנֵי שְׂדֵיךָ כְּשְׁנֵי עֲפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צְבִיָּה הַרוֹעִים בְּשׁוֹשָׁנִים
Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.	

Shar'reikh agan ha-sahar al-yech'sar ha-mazeg bi-t'neikh areimat chitim sugah ba- shoshanim.	שָׂרְרֶךְ אֶגֶן הַסַּהַר אֶל־יַחְסֵר הַמְּזֶג בְּטֶנֶךְ עֲרִמַת חֲטִים סוּגָה בְּשׁוֹשָׁנִים
Your navel is like a round goblet filled with mingled wine; your belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies.	

Sh'lachayikh par'deis rimonim im p'ri m'gadim k-farim im-n'radim.	שְׁלַחַיֶּךָ פְּרִדִּים רְמוֹנִים עִם פְּרִי מְגָדִים כְּפָרִים עִם־נְרָדִים
Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, henna and spikenard plants.	

(More readings on the following page ... )

## STEP 5: Washing the *Metah* (continued)

Readings (continued) –

Mah-yafu f'amayikh ba-n'alim bat-nadiv chamukei y'reikhayikh k'mo chala'im ma'aseih y'dei aman.	מַה־יָפּוּ פְעָמֶיךָ בְּנַעֲלִים בַּת־נָדִיב חַמוּקֵי יָרְכִיךָ כְּמוֹ חֲלָאִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמֵן
How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist.	

Kulakh yafah ra'yati u-mum ein bakh.	כֻּלְךָ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי וּמוֹם אֵין בְּךָ
You are all beautiful, my love; there is no blemish in you.	

End of readings)



## STEP 6: The *Tohorah* טְהוּרָה

**Wash your hands ritually** (no blessing). Put on fresh gloves.

**Read aloud:** One *hevrah* member reads aloud (see below) while the others work.

**Swish *toharah* water** (the cold water) over the table (right, then left), and the straps. Dip headrest in *tohorah* water (while one *hevrah* member holds the head up). Replace the headrest.

**Fasten straps:** Reach under the sheets and fasten the straps securely across the *metah*. Raise the board at the foot of the table, to prevent the *metah* from sliding off the end of the table. Incline the table by raising the head and lowering the foot.

**Read aloud:** One member reads aloud –

Amar Rabi Akiva: Ashrei-khem Yisra'eil, lifnei mi atem mitaharin u-mi m'taheir etkhem? Avi-khem she-ba-shamayim!	אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אַשְׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, לִפְנֵי מִי אַתֶּם מְטַהְרִין וּמִי מְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם? אָבִיכֶם שֶׁבַּשְׁמַיִם!
Rabbi Akiva said: You are fortunate, Israel. Before whom do you purify yourselves, and who purifies you? Your Guardian in heaven!	

(More readings on the following page ... )

## STEP 6: The *Tohorah* (continued)

### Readings (continued) –

<p>She-ne'emar V-zarak'ti alei-khem mayim t'horim u-t'hartem mi-kol tum'otei-khem u-mi-kol-gilulei-khem ataheir etkhem</p>	<p>שְׁנֵאֵמַר וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטָהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל-גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם</p>
<p>As it is said: I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be purified from all your uncleanness and from all your abominations (<i>Ezekiel 36:25</i>).</p>	

<p>V-ne'emar Mikveih Yisra'eil Adonai</p>	<p>וְנֵאֵמַר מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל ה'</p>
<p>And it is said: The <i>mikvah</i> (hope) of Israel is God (<i>Jeremiah 17:13</i>).</p>	

<p>Im rahatz Adonai eit tzo'at b'not-Tzi'yon v-eit-d'mei Y'rushalayim yadi'ah mi-kirbah b-ruah mi-sh'pat u-b-ruah be-eirsh</p>	<p>אִם רָחַץ אֲדֹנָי אֶת צֹאת בָּנוֹת-צִיּוֹן וְאֶת-דַּמֵּי יְרוּשָׁלַם יָדִיחַ מִקְרָבָהּ בְּרוּחַ מְשַׁפֵּת וּבְרוּחַ בְּעִרְשׁ</p>
<p>And Adonai shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by a spirit of judgment and with a searing breath (<i>Isaiah 4:4</i>).</p>	

(More readings on the following page ... )

## STEP 6: The *Tohorah* (continued)

### Readings (continued) –

V-omer Mah ha-mikveih m'taheir'et ha-t'mei'im, af ha-kadosh barukh hu m'taheir et Yisra'eil	וְאָמַר מָה הַמִּקְוָה מְטַהֵר אֶת הַטְּמֵאִים, אֵף הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְטַהֵר אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל
And it is said: Just as the <i>mikvah</i> cleanses those who are impure, so does the Holy One cleanse the community of Israel ( <i>Mishnah Yoma 8:9</i> ).	

Ma'yan ganim b-eir mayim hayim v-noz'lim min-L'vanon:	מַעְיַן גַּנִּים בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים וְנוֹזְלִים מִן-לְבָנוֹן:
A fountain for gardens, a well of living waters, flowing from Lebanon ( <i>Shir ha-shirim 4:15</i> ).	

(End of readings here)

## STEP 6: The *Tohorah* (continued)

### Prepare to pour *taharah* water:

- ✧ Remove sheet from *metah*,
- ✧ One person dips her gloved hand into the *taharah* water, & then she covers the *metah's* nose and mouth with that hand. (This is to protect the *metah's* face from the force of the pouring water.)

**Read aloud:** While others are pouring, one *hevrah* member reads aloud (see below).

**Pour *taharah* water:** Two teams, at right and left sides, plus a person for the center --

Pour the contents of the three buckets in a continuous flow, as follows –

- ✧ The person on the right side starts pouring at the head,
- ✧ When she reaches the right hand, the person on the left side begins with the shoulder,
- ✧ When the left side pouring reaches the left hand, a third person begins to pour water down the center line of the *metah*, walking on the left side,
- ✧ Each bucket should be emptied completely without stopping, as quickly as possible. Empty any leftover water at the feet.

**Reading** (one person reads while the others are pouring) –

V-zarak'ti alei-khem mayim t'horim u-t'har'tem mi-kol tum'otei-khem u-mi-kol-gilulei-khem ataheir etkhem:	וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטָהַרְתֶּם מִכֹּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל-גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם:
I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your abominations ( <i>Ezekiel 36:25</i> ).	

## STEP 6: The *Tohorah* (continued)

After pouring, all say together:

Taharah hi, taharah hi, taharah hi.	טְהוֹרָה הִיא, טְהוֹרָה הִיא, טְהוֹרָה הִיא
She is pure; she is pure; she is pure.	

Cover *metah* with a clean sheet.

## STEP 7: Drying and Dressing the *Metah*

**Unfasten straps** and dry table around *metah* with clean towels.

**Drying the *metah*:** Two teams, right and left sides –

- ✧ Pat *metah* gently with clean towels.
- ✧ One person begins with the head and neck, and then moves to the left side of the *metah* and waits.
- ✧ The right side team leader begins drying the right shoulder, moving down the arm to the hand. She is followed by another team member, who dries the table behind her (and gets any water droplets remaining on the *metah*).
- ✧ After the right side team reaches the right hand, the left side team leader begins drying the left shoulder, moving down the left side, staying a step behind the right side team's progress.
- ✧ The person waiting (who dried the head and neck) now follows the left side team leader, drying the table on the left side (and gets any water droplets remaining on the *metah*).
- ✧ Incline the *metah* on the left side. Dry the right side of the back, beginning with the shoulder, and include the private parts.
- ✧ Incline the *metah* on the right side. Dry the left side of the back, beginning with the shoulder.

**Dress the *metah* in this order:** Two teams, right and left sides –

### 1 Face covering

Place over face. Bring ties around to the front & tie in a bow under the chin.

### 2 Bonnet

Place over back of head and draw up toward face. Tie in a bow under the chin.

### 3 Pants and short ties

Put the right leg on first, then the left leg.

Use the short ties to tie a bow under the right knee, then the left.

With two people facing each other across the *taharah* table, gather the waistband by gently pulling on the ties. Twist the ties seven times, counting each twist aloud in Hebrew (*alef, bet, gimel, daled, hei, vav, zayin*). Make a bow in the shape of the letter *shin* (give the bow three loops to imitate the letter's shape).

### 4 Blouse (no collar)

Put over head. Put right arm through sleeve (gather up sleeve first, it's easier), and then left arm through sleeve.

Tie the neckband in a bow.

### 5 *Kitel* (has a collar)

Put over head. Put right arm through sleeve (pull blouse sleeve down inside *kitel* sleeve, so it doesn't ride up), and then put left arm through sleeve.

Tie the neckband in a bow.

### 6 *Gartel* (long tie)

Work *gartel* under *metah*, making sure that *gartel* stays flat.

With two people facing each other across the *taharah* table, twist the *gartel* seven times, counting each twist aloud in Hebrew (*alef, bet, gimel, daled, hei, vav, zayin*). Make a bow in the shape of the letter *shin* (give the bow three loops to imitate the letter's shape).

## STEP 8: Placing the *Metah* in the *Aron*

Place any saved items, including IDs, in a plastic bag, and put this in the foot of the *aron*.

All together, say:

V-lo yavo'u lir'ot k'vala et ha-kodesh va-meto	וְלֹא יָבוֹאוּ לְרֹאוֹת כְּבִלְעֵ אֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְיָמָתוּ
But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die (Numbers 4:20).	

### Moving the *metah*:

- ✧ Work stretcher straps or a sheet under the *metah*. One person should hold the head, to keep it supported.
- ✧ Move the *aron* alongside the table.
- ✧ Shift the *metah* into the *aron*.

### Pottery –

Get three pottery shards. Gently push aside the face covering on the *metah*. Lay the shards upon the *metah's* eyelids and mouth.

### Sprinkle earth (*hevrah* members take turns, passing the packet around) –

- ✧ Under the head (inside the bonnet),
- ✧ Open the *kitel* and blouse to sprinkle earth over the heart (left side),
- ✧ On the pants above the genitals, and
- ✧ Around the body, inside the *aron*.

**Wrap the sheet –**

Wrap the sheet over the left side first, then the right, and last, over the head.

**STEP 8: Placing the *Metah* in the *Aron* (continued)**

All together, ask *m'hilah* (מחילה -- forgiveness) –

\_\_\_\_\_ bat \_\_\_\_\_ : We ask *m'chilah* for anything we have done improperly, and we ask *m'hilah* for anything your family, friends, and community have done improperly.

**Close the *aron* –**

- ✧ Put the lid on the *aron*.
- ✧ Fill out *tohorah* paperwork and leave on the *aron* to show which is the head end.
- ✧ Move the *aron* out of the *taharah* room, feet first, into the cooler or the hallway. If the *aron* goes into the cooler, be sure the feet end is closest to the door.



## **STEP 9: Finishing Up**

**Discard** the funeral home's *taharah* clothing in the appropriate container.

**Wash hands with soap and water** as a health precaution.

### **Outside the funeral home –**

- ✧ Fill a cup with water (if there isn't one already out there, bring a cup of water with you from inside),
- ✧ Be sure you are not standing under a roof overhang,
- ✧ Wash hands ritually (no blessing),
- ✧ Do not dry hands, and
- ✧ Do not pour any leftover water over plants.

## Appendix – Using the Body Lift at Danzansky (current as of May 2010)

In the employee area at Danzansky, there is a body lift that the *taharah* teams may use. It is portable, so you can wheel it into the *taharah* room.

The lift can be used to move a body –

- ✧ From the gurney to the *taharah* table, and
- ✧ From the *tohorah* table into the *aron* (coffin).

The photo on this page shows a body lift similar to the one currently at Danzansky. Here, the machine's lifting arm is shown in two positions – one, raised to its full height, and the other, lowered. The removable body straps are shown attached to the lifting arm.

In order to position the body lift next to the *tohorah* table, first adjust the lift's feet. (If you leave the feet in the position shown in the photo, they will slip into the pit beneath the table.) To adjust the feet, pull out the pins that lock the legs in place (indicated by the red arrows). Rotate the feet 90 degrees outward (as shown by the yellow arrows), so that each leg forms a right angle, and then replace the pins to lock the legs in place.

Anchor the body lift in place using the grey plastic foot brakes located above the front wheels (not shown in photo). Press each brake down with your foot. Release them by flipping them up with the toe of your shoe.

While the lift is in use, someone must stand on the back of the machine, thus serving as a counterweight to insure that it does not tip over.

The straps can be fastened in the way shown in the photo. However, if you CROSS them, they will support the body more securely. You can attach each set of two straps to the lifting arm to form an "X." While the lift is in use, one member of the *tohorah* team must support the head of the *meit/metah* (deceased person) so that it does not dangle loosely.

Supposedly, this body lift can hold up to 800 pounds. It should be kept plugged in when not in use, so that its batteries will be fully charged.

