

OR v2 SHALOM
CHEVRA KADISHA

should decide ahead of time how the Tahara is to be performed, who is to do what, and if there are special circumstances requiring specific changes to normal procedures, etc. This must be communicated ahead of time to the team performing the Tahara so everyone understands how the ritual will be performed, and minimize questions and unnecessary talking during the procedure.

Furthermore, the leader is the one who will make decisions during the procedure if unexpected situations arise. The leader coordinates all activities, working closely with the reader. The reader delineates what is to be done, while the leader ensures it is done properly. If there are new members who have not done this before, it is the leader who guides and shows them how it is to be done.

The Layout of This Document

This document includes a special outline on the upper left of most pages, with the current activity in bold. This outline is to remind the reader where we are in the overall process at any given time. Prayers (tefilloth) that are part of the Tahara itself are noted in both Hebrew and in English. The prayers have both intellectual and vibrational value for both the deceased and the members of the Chevra who are involved. *Hence it is recommended that unless all persons in the room (including the deceased) are fluent in Hebrew, all prayers should be said in both languages, and at a speed which shows respect and allows all present to understand and appreciate their content.* In addition, although this work is primarily for use in the Tahara room itself, an appendix is provided at the end of this work with additional information useful outside of the Tahara room.

- **Preparations**
 - Washing the Met
 - The Tahara
 - Dressing the Met
 - Moving the Met into the Aron
 - Cleaning up

The most important thing during the performance of Tahara is to have intentions of kindness, dignity and respect.

There should be no unnecessary talking or activity.

Tasks for team members are as follows:

- ❖ Tasks marked with this symbol are preparatory tasks.

➤ **Leader**

- ❖ Ensures room is properly organized, met covered with clean sheet and in proper position with feet facing the door if possible, table properly tilted and locked in place (wheels too), extra table for spreading out contents of kit or tachrichim, etc.
- ❖ Lights candle (yartzeit candle or other long-burning candle); this candle will be placed on the aron after the Tahara is completed.
 - Handles overall coordination and all decision-making.
 - Guides others.
 - Interfaces with funeral home personnel.

➤ **Reader and shroud checker**

- ❖ Lays out the shrouds (tachrichim) ensuring all parts are there and can be found easily in the order required.
 - Follows the outline and directs the order of events.
 - Reads all prayers in both languages (or leads this and all read together).

➤ **Casket (aron) organizer**

- ❖ Places aron in proper position in the room, positioning it so the transfer of the body (met) will be most easily managed (feet facing door, etc.).
- ❖ As appropriate:
 - Removes straw or padding from the aron, leaving enough for support of the head; placing extra straw along sides to hold the met in position.
 - Drills holes in bottom of the aron, if not already done by funeral home. (Note that it shows more respect if you move the aron into another room to drill holes.)
 - Sprinkles earth from Israel (afar) into the aron.
 - Arranges the burial sheet (sovev) into position, diagonally across the aron.
 - For a man, cuts one tzitzit off of the tallit and places the tallit into the aron. The removed tzitzit is tucked into the belt (gartel) when the met is placed into the aron.

➤ **Bucket filler**

- ❖ Fills 2 buckets or washing bowls with warm water for washing the met, placing them near the head of the met.
- ❖ Ensures small pitchers are in place for hand washing.
- Fills 3 buckets with cold water at the beginning of the Tahara portion of these procedures (after washing is completed).

➤ **Kit contents organizer**

- ❖ Lays out contents of Chevra Kadisha (Tahara) Supply Kit in an orderly manner so things can be found quickly and easily.
- ❖ Locates sheets and towels, moves them closer if needed.
- ❖ Ensures paper batting or equivalent is available for washing the met.
- ❖ Notes if supplies are getting low, so they can be replenished after this Tahara.

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➤ *Chamol for Men*

For men the following *tefilla* is said after washing hands and getting ready. The names of the *met* and his father are inserted in the spaces.

רבונו של עולם חמול על _____ בן _____ המת
הלז שהוא בן אברהם יצחק יעקב, שרה רבקה רחל
ולאה עבדי, ותנוח נפשו ונשמתו עם הצדיקים כי
אתה מחיה המתים וממית חיים. ברוך אתה מוחל
וסולח לחטאים ולעונות ממתי עמך ישראל
בתחנונים: ובכן יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהנו ואלהי
אבותנו שתסבב מלאכי רחמים לפני המת, שהוא
עבדך בן אמתך: ואתה יי אלהנו ואלהי אבותנו
משכיל אל כל מלטהו מכל צרה ומיום רעה ומדינה
של גיהנם: ברוך אתה גדול החסד ובעל הרחמים:
ברוך אתה העשה שלום במרומו לעבדיו וליראי שמו:
ברוך פודה עמו ישראל ממיני פורעניות ברחמים:
ובכן יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהנו ואלהי אבותנו
שתזכור זכות ברית קדש שבבשרו ויהיה פדיון לו
משׂרפת גיהנם ותחליצו. ברוך אתה כורת הברית
ברחמים: ברחמים הסתר והצלם פשעי המת הזה
עבדך, משׂרפת אש תחליצו שהוא צריך לרחמיך
הרבים: ואתה יי אלהינו טוב וסלח לכל קוראיך. ברוך
אתה גדול העצה ורב העלילה ברחמים. עם רגלי
צדיקים וצדקניות בגן עדן ידרוך, כי מקום ישרים הוא
רגלי חסידיו ישמור: ברוך אתה הנותן רחמים גדולים
ורב תחנונים למתי עמו ישראל: אמן, כן יהי רצון:

➤ **Preparations**

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Ruler of the universe! Have compassion for _____, the son of _____, this deceased, for he is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, Your servants. May his soul and spirit rest with the righteous, for You revive the dead and bring death to the living. Praised are You who pardons and forgives the sins and trespasses of the dead and your people, Israel, upon petition. Therefore, may it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors to bring a circle of angles of mercy before the deceased, for he is your servant and son of your maidservant. And You, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, who is concerned with the poor, save him from all misery and from a day of evil and from banishment. Blessed are You who makes peace in the heights for Your servants and for those who revere Your name. Blessed is the one who mercifully redeems the people Israel from all kinds of suffering. Therefore, may it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, to remember the merit of the sacred covenant which is in his flesh. May this covenant be a redemption from banishment. Blessed are You who establishes the merciful covenant with mercy. Through mercy, hide and disregard the transgressions of this departed, your servant. Deliver him from consumption by fire, for he needs your great mercy, and You, Adonai our God, are good and forgiving to all who call upon You. Blessed are You, great in counsel and mighty in achievement in mercy. May he tread with righteous feet into the Garden of Eden, for that is the place of the upright, and God protects the feet of the pious. Blessed are You who gives great mercy and abundant grace to the departed of the people Israel. Amen. May such be your will.

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Ruler of the universe! Have compassion for _____, the daughter of _____, this deceased, for she is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, Your servants. May her soul and spirit rest with the righteous, for You revive the dead and bring death to the living. Praised are You who pardons and forgives the sins and trespasses of the dead and your people, Israel, upon petition. Therefore, may it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors to bring a circle of angles of mercy before the deceased, for she is your maidservant and daughter of your maidservant. And You, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, who is concerned with the poor, save her from all misery and from a day of evil and from banishment. Blessed are You who makes peace in the heights for Your servants and for those who revere Your name. Blessed is the one who mercifully redeems the people Israel from all kinds of suffering. Through mercy, hide and disregard the transgressions of this departed, your maidservant. Deliver her from consumption by fire, for she needs your great mercy, and You, Adonai our God, are good and forgiving to all who call upon You. Blessed are You, great in counsel and mighty in achievement in mercy. May she tread with righteous feet into the Garden of Eden, for that is the place of the upright, and God protects the feet of the pious. Blessed are You who gives great mercy and abundant grace to the departed of the people Israel. Amen. May such be your will.

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Vaya'an Vayomer

As the met is uncovered, the following is said:

וַיֵּצֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָעֹמְדִים לִפְנָיו לֵאמֹר הִסִּירוּ הַבְּגָדִים
 הַצִּאִים מֵעַלְיוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו רְאֵה הָעֵבֶרְתִּי מֵעַלֶיךָ עֲוֹנָךְ
 וְהִלְבֵּשׁ אֶתְךָ מִחֻלְצוֹת: זכריה ג'-ה

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

Zecharia 3:4-5

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Show respect:

- **Never walk behind the head of the met.**
- **Never pass items over the met.**
- **Speak softly and only as necessary.**

Washing the Met or Metah

1. Examine the body area by area, exposing only what needs to be exposed for cleaning. Clean the right side first, then the left, in this order: head, arm, hand, torso, legs, feet.
 - Clean the entire body, focusing especially on areas that need more cleaning, using a small amount of warm water and a cotton ball or cloth or cotton batting or paper towel.
 - Wash outside but not inside the nose, mouth, and eyes.
 - Upon completion of washing, water is poured the length of the body to rinse, as specified below. When washing the head, pour over the head but not over the face.
2. Remove any nail polish.
3. Clean under fingernails and toenails.
4. Use skin sealer or tape on any punctures or wounds to prevent fluid flow.
5. Remove dried blood with cotton ball and place ball into sack to be included in the aron. (All blood that is present should be preserved in this way, except for unusual conditions which require special actions determined by the leader.)
6. All loose hairs should be saved for inclusion in the sack.
7. The palms of hands and feet are carefully washed to remove any perspiration.
8. While the met is being washed, *Rosho Ketem Paz* (found on facing page) is said.
9. Once washed, with one person holding the head, turn body on right side to expose the back and pour water the length of the body. Place body onto the back again, and pour water the full length over the exposed front.
10. Again holding the head, turn the body on the left side to expose the back and pour water the length of the body. Place body on back again to expose the front, and pour water the full length again.
11. After completing step 10 above, cover met with clean sheet and discard remaining water.
12. Gloves are removed and discarded.

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Rosho Ketem Paz

While washing the met, the following is said:

רֹאשׁוֹ כֶּתֶם פֶּזָז קְנוּצוֹתָיו תִּלְתָּלִים שְׁחֹרוֹת כְּעֹרֹב:
עֵינָיו כִּיּוֹנִים עַל־אַפִּיקֵי מַיִם רְחֻצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב יִשְׁבוֹת
עַל־מְלֵאֲתָ:

לִחְיוֹ כְּעֶרְוֶגֶת הַבֶּשֶׂם מְגַדְּלוֹת מְרַקְחִים שְׁפָתוֹתָיו
שׁוֹשָׁנִים נְטֹפּוֹת מֹדַר עֵבֶר:

יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מְמַלְאִים בְּתַרְשֵׁישׁ מַעְיוֹ עֹשֶׂת שֵׁן
מַעֲלֶפֶת סַפִּירִים:

שׁוֹקֵיו עֲמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מִיִּסְדִּים עַל־אַרְגָּמָן מְרֹאֵהוּ כְּלִבְנוֹן
בְּחֹדֶר כְּאֶרְזִים:

חֲכוֹ מִמֶּתְקִים וְכֹלֹ מִחֲמָדִים זֶה רֹדֵי וְזֶה רָעִי בְּנוֹת
יְרוּשָׁלַם: שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים הָיָא-יוֹ

His head is burnished gold, the mane of his hair black as the raven.

His eyes like doves by the rivers of milk and plenty.

His cheeks a bed of spices, a treasure of precious scents, his lips red lilies wet with myrrh.

His arm a golden scepter with gems of topaz,

his loins the ivory thrones inlaid with sapphire,

his thighs like marble pillars on pedestals of gold.

Tall as Mount Lebanon, a man like a cedar!

His mouth is sweet wine, he is all delight.

This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Song of Songs 5:11-16

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The Tahara

1. Wash hands again (exactly as before), and again double glove.
2. Fill three buckets with fresh cold water, at least 8 quarts in each.
3. In preparation for the Tahara ritual itself, *Omar Rabbi Akiva* is said:

אמר רבי עקיבה אשריכם ישראל לפני מי אתם
 מטהרין ומי מטהר אתכם-אביכם שבשמים שנאמר
 וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם מכל טמאותיכם
 ומכל-גלוליכם אטהר אתכם: (יחזקאל לז:כה) ואומר מקוה
 ישראל יהודה: (ירמיה ח:יד) מה המקוה מטהר את הטמאים
 אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מטהר את ישראל: גנים באר
 מים חיים ונזלים מן-לבנון: (שיר השירים ד:טו)

אם רחץ אדני את צואת בנות-ציון ואת דמי ירושלים
 ידים מקרבה ברוח משפט וברוח בער: (ישעיהו ד:ד)
 וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם מכל טמאותיכם
 ומכל-גלוליכם אטהר אתכם: (יחזקאל לז:כה) זמא היט

Rabbi Aiva said, "You are fortunate, Israel. Before whom do you purify yourselves and who purifies you? Our father in heaven. As it is said: 'And I will pour upon you pure water and you will be purified of all your defilements, and from all your abominations I will purify you.' (Ezekiel 36:25). And it says: 'God is the hope of Israel.' (Jeremiah 17:13). Just as the reservoir of the ritual bath purifies the impure, so does the Holy One, purify Israel. 'A fountain for gardens, a well of living waters and flowing streams from Lebanon.' (Song of Songs 4:15). '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 judgement and with a searing breath.' (Isaiah 4:4). 'And I will pour upon you pure water and you will be purified of all your defilements, and from all your abominations I will purify you.' (Ezekiel 36:25)." Yoma 8:9

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4. Place the met into the position desired for the Tahara cleansing:
 - The met may be placed in a standing position, on a board placed on the floor.
 - The met may be placed in a sitting position, sitting on a board on the edge of the table.
 - The met may be placed in a supine position, lying on the table with boards under it, one under the head, the shoulders, the hips, and the calf.
 - Boards should be dipped into the Tahara water in one of the buckets before being placed under the met.
 - *Note: our custom (minhag) is to lay the met on the boards on the table. This is the most respectful position in our opinion.*
5. If enough Chevra Kadisha personnel are present, create a canopy over the met by holding a clean sheet above the table. Those holding the canopy face away from the table to show respect.
6. Remove the covering sheet placed on the met after washing (this should not be the sheet used for the canopy). Water is now poured in a continuous flow, two or three people alternating buckets, until a full 24 quarts of water have been poured in an uninterrupted flow. One person begins pouring and as that bucket is almost empty, the second person begins pouring, and when that bucket is almost empty, the third bucket is poured, so there is no break in the flow.
7. If the met is *sitting or standing*, the water is poured over the head so it automatically falls on the rest of the body. If the met is *lying* down, the water may be poured in one of two ways:
 - a. Begin at the head and pour down the entire length of the right side, begin at the head and pour down the entire length of the left side, begin at the head and pour down the entire front, until the 24-quart flow has been fulfilled. (*Our minhag is this approach.*)
 - b. One person pours slowly over the head, while two others pour down the sides of the met the full length of the body.
8. As the water is poured, all participants say the following 3 times each:

FOR A MALE טָהוֹר הוּא Tahor hu. He is pure.

FOR A FEMALE טְהוֹרָה הִיא Thorah hi. She is pure.

9. If there is a break in the flow, the buckets must be refilled and the entire flow must be repeated until a complete 24-quart flow has been fulfilled.
10. After the pouring the table is dried, boards removed, and the met is laid again onto the dry table and covered with a clean sheet. If a canopy is used, this is simply lowered onto the met to become this new cover. Some people put a dry sheet on the table before laying the met down again, to help dry the back of the body.
11. Dry the met thoroughly while continuing to show respect with the covering sheet.
12. A clean dry sheet is placed over the now dry met.

Do not use the same sheets or towels to dry the met that are used to dry the table or boards.

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Dressing the Met ör Metah

1. If the burial shrouds (tachrichim) were not laid out in proper order during the preparation time (perhaps due to space restrictions), it should be done now.
2. Before beginning to dress the met, *Sos Assis* is said:

שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בִּיהוּה תִּגְלַל נַפְשִׁי בְּאֱלֹהֵי כִי הִלְבִּישְׁנִי בְּגָדֵי
 יִשַׁע מְעִיל צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי. כְּחֹתֶן יִכְהֶן פָּאָר וּכְכֹלָה
 תַּעֲדָה כְּלִיָּהּ: (ישעיהו סא"י) וְאָמַר יְשִׁימוּ צְנִיף טְהוֹר
 עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִשִּׁימוּ הַצְנִיף הַטְהוֹר עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִלְבְּשֻׁהוּ
 בְּגָדִים וּמִלְאָף יִהְיֶה עִמָּד: (זכריה ג'ה) כִּי כְּאֶרֶץ תּוֹצִיא
 צִמְחָה וּכְגִנָּה זְרוּעֶיהָ תִּצְמַח כֵּן יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים יִצְמַח
 צְדָקָה וּתְהִלָּה נִגְדַּר כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם: (ישעיהו סא"א) וְנָחַךְ יִהְיֶה
 תָּמִיד וְהַשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצִחְצֻחוֹת נַפְשָׁךְ וְעֲצֻמֹּתֶיךָ יִחְלִיץ.
 וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֹן קֹוֶה וּכְמוֹצָא מֵיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִכָּזֶבֶו

מִיָּמִיו: (ישעיהו נח"א)

I will greatly rejoice, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for God has clothed me with the garments of salvation; God has covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom puts on priestly glory and as the bride adorns herself with jewels (Isaiah 61:10). And I said, "Let them set a pure headdress upon his head," and they set the pure headdress upon his head, and they clothed him with garments, and the angel of Adonai stood by (Zechariah 3:5). For as the earth brings forth her growth, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so Adonai will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations (Isaiah 61:11). And Adonai will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in time of drought, and make strong your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters never fail (Isaiah 58:11).

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3. Garments should be placed onto the met in the following order, and each prayer is said while the garment is being installed:

- (a) **headdress** (mitsnefet for a man, bonnet for a woman) – place kippah on a male met (or woman if she wore one normally) before installing the mitsnefet. Recite:

וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בֵּד יִצְנָף.

And he shall be attired in a linen headdress.

- (b) **pants** (michnasayim) – place pants on and then
- Two people tie the band at the waist, it is twisted four times while counting aloud as *alef, bet, gimmel, dalet*, then tied with a bow or as shown on **page 22**, resulting in two loops pointing toward the head of the met.
 - Bands are similarly tied around each leg by two people, for a man they are tied just above the ankle, for a woman they are tied just below the knee.
 - Recite:

וּמִכְנָסֵי בֵד יִהְיוּ עַל בְּשָׁרוֹ.

And linen breeches shall be upon his flesh.

- (c) **shirt** (k'tonet, has no collar) – tuck into pants, tie at neck is two loops as above, but tied by only one person. Recite:

כְּתֹנֶת בֵּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבַּשׁ.

He shall don a holy linen tunic.

- (d) **jacket** (kittel, has collar) – not tucked in, tie at neck is identical to the above and again tied by only one person.
- (e) **belt** (gartle or avnet) – is place around the waist outside of kittel and tied by two people, this time with three loops making a shin (see **page 20**). Some traditions add a forth loop to make a dalet. The tzitzit cut from the tallit should be tucked into this belt. Recite:

וּבְאַבְנֵט בֵּד יִחְגֹּר.

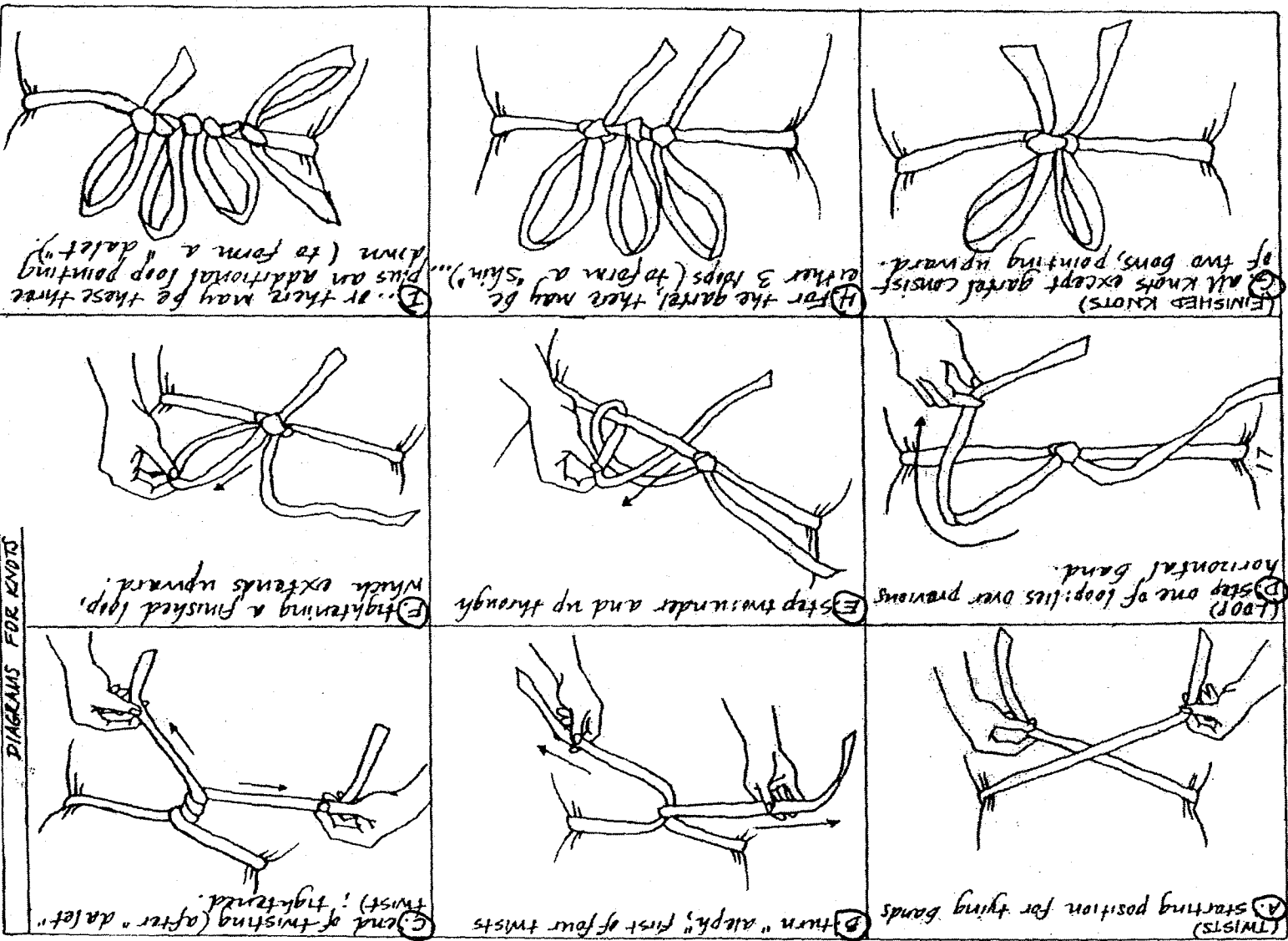
And he shall be girded with a linen sash.

- f. If a metah is not buried in a tallit, place the apron on her and tuck it into the avnet. Next place the face cover on the metah.
- g. For both met and metah, recite:

וְאֵל שַׁדַּי יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים.

And God Almighty give you mercy.

Note: If the condition of the body is such that a Tahara cannot be performed, the met is placed into the aron and wrapped in the burial sheet (sovev), then the tachrichim are placed over the met in the same order as above, and on the parts of the body they would normally have covered.



DIAGRAMS FOR KNOTS

- Preparations
- Washing the Met
- The Tahara
- Dressing the Met
- **Moving the Met into the Aron**
- Cleaning up

Moving the Met or Metah into the Aron

1. If not done during the Preparations stage, sprinkle some Israeli earth (afar) into the aron, and drape the sovev across the aron diagonally so it overlaps the sides of the casket on all four sides.
2. Place the met into the aron. (Feet should go at the end where the Magen David will go on the lid.) Recite:

וְלֹא-יָבוֹאוּ לְרֹאוֹת כְּבִלְעַת אֶת-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ

And they shall not come in to see the covering of the holy objects, lest they die.

3. Place pottery shards (sherblach) directly on each eye and on the mouth. If necessary, a dab of Vaseline may be used to stick the shards in place. (The headdress is pulled back just enough to do this, and then replaced.)
4. Place afar on the eyes, heart, and genitals of the met – first on the eyes, then the heart inside the shirt, then on the genital area inside the pants. Each time dirt is sprinkled the following is said:

וּכְפָר אֶדְמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ

And God's earth shall atone for God's people.

5. The tallit is wrapped around the met at this point. (If not done earlier, the tzitzit that was cut off the tallit should be tucked into the avnet.)
6. The burial sheet (sovev) is now folded over and around the met in the following order: feet, right side, left side, head.
7. Straw is placed under head for a pillow, and on both sides to support the head upright.
8. Check the room and tables for any hair or bloody items to be included in the sack to be placed in the aron. Place sack at foot of met in the casket.
9. Double check that all is complete – remove gloves and if bloody, include them in the sack, otherwise discard them.
10. Members of the Chevra Kadisha team surround the casket and quietly individually ask that the deceased forgive them for any act or omission that did not show respect or in any way might have caused offense. Some may wish to recite the following aloud together:
 “_____ (name of met or metah), please forgive us for any indignity that you may have suffered at the hands of this Chevra Kadisha in our efforts to usher you from this world to the next. We acted in good faith and did this work for the sake of All That Is Holy.”
11. The aron is closed and is not to be reopened for any reason.
12. The candle lit during Preparations is now placed on the foot of the casket (some place a candle at both ends).
13. Recite prayers on the following page.

Put the met into the aron by placing the aron at the foot of the table on which the met lies, in line with the table, with the head of the casket at the foot of the table. With two people on each side of the met, and one supporting the head, lift together and walk the met to the casket and gently lower the met inside.

- Preparations
- Washing the Met
- The Tahara
- Dressing the Met
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- Cleaning up

הִנֵּה מִטָּתוֹ שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹמֹה שְׁשִׁים גִּבּוֹרִים סָבִיב לָהּ מִגִּבּוֹרֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: כָּלֶם אֶחָזִי חֶרֶב מִלְחָמָה אִישׁ חֶרְבוֹ
עַל־יָרְכוֹ מִפֶּתַח בִּלְיֹת:

Behold, it is the couch of Solomon.
Sixty mighty men are about it, of the mighty men of
Israel. They are all swordsmen and expert in war.
Each man has his sword on his thigh
because of the dread in the night.

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ: יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּנּוּ:
יֵשָׁא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׂם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם:

May Adonai bless you and protect you.
May Adonai's face shine unto and be gracious to you.
May Adonai's countenance be lifted unto you
and give you peace.

יָלְכוּ יוֹנְקוֹתָיו וִיהִי כְּזִית הוֹדוֹ וְרֵיחַ לוֹ כִּלְבָּנוֹן:

His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as
the olive tree, and his fragrance as Lebanon.

וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל־נָא כַחַּ אֲדֹנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לֵאמֹר:

וְאוֹלָם חַי־אֲנִי וְיִמְלֹא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה

אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

And now, may the might of Adonai be great,
as you have spoken, saying, "But as truly I live,
the glory of Adonai shall engulf all the earth."

- Preparations
- Washing the Met
- The Tahara
- Dressing the Met
- Moving the Met into the Aron
- Cleaning up

14. Move the casket out of the Tahara room, feet first, to a quiet place that is not connected with the Tahara room.

15. Recite the following prayers:

ובנסע המשכן יורידו אתו הלוים, ובחגת המשכן

יקימו אתו הלוים, והור הקרב יומת:

And when the tabernacle sets forward,
the Levites shall take it down,
and when the tabernacle is to be pitched,
the Levites shall set it up,
and the stranger who approaches shall be put to death.

ויהי בנסע הארון ויאמר משה קומה יהוה ויפצו איביו

וינסו משנאיו מפניו:

And when the ark set forward Moses would say,
"Rise up, Oh Adonai, and let Your enemies be scattered,
and let those who hate You flee before You."

כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרה בכל דרכיך:

על כפים ישאונו פן תגף באבן רגלך:

לא תאנה אליך רעה ונגע לא יקרב באהלה:

No evil shall befall you,
nor shall any plague come near your tent.
For God will give angels charge over you to watch you in
all your paths. They shall bear you upon their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

יהוה איש מלחמה יהוה שמו:

Adonai is a warrior, Adonai is God's name.

יהוה ילחם לכם ואתם תחזקו:

Adonai will fight for you and you shall hold your peace.

- Preparations
- Washing the Met
- The Tahara
- Dressing the Met
- **Moving the Met into the Aron**
- Cleaning up

16. Casket is left with candle(s) burning, shomrim or a member of the Chevra may sit with it, while the Tahara room is cleaned up and restored to order.

- Preparations
- Washing the Met
- The Tahara
- Dressing the Met
- Moving the Met into the Aron
- **Cleaning up**

Please note:

We are fortunate to work with funeral directors who are very cooperative and try their best to accommodate our needs.

- We should make certain that when we leave after a Tahara, that the Tahara room is as neat and clean as when we arrived (with a wet floor, etc.).
- We should cooperate with the funeral directors in every way we can. If there are problems encountered in the funeral home facilities, these should be communicated to the funeral home director in a polite and cooperative manner.

Cleaning Up

1. Preferably all participants help restore order to the Tahara room.
2. Ensure all trash is picked up and properly disposed of, all sheets, cloth towels, etc., are deposited into proper laundry repositories, any batting or other materials used in cleaning the deceased should be disposed of in proper biohazard containers.
3. The wooden boards used in the Tahara should be thoroughly rinsed and carefully dried, then placed back into their carrying bag.
4. All appropriate items should be restored in an orderly fashion to the Tahara Supplies Kit – items should be washed if need be, and notes should be made of items that have been depleted during the performance of the Tahara. Buckets, washing bowls, hand-washing cups should be dried thoroughly before restoring them to the Kit bag.
5. All participants wash hands twice:
 - Once more like *n'tilat y'dayim* without the bracha, and
 - Once thoroughly with disinfectant soap and warm water.
6. All participants take a few moments to examine themselves in relation to what just happened, what they just participated in. Participants should then take an additional few moments to share with each other any deep feelings, personnel issues, adverse reactions, or other sensitive emotions or physical symptoms going on. It is the Tahara leader's responsibility at this point to check in with each person to be sure they are ready and able to reintegrate into daily life. If help is needed, this is the time to arrange for it. It is not unusual for participants to have delayed symptoms that come up at the end of the ritual. And, of course, it is possible that a participant could have problems early on during the procedures – we have seen allergic reactions to the smells in the room, as well as physical revulsion to the state of the deceased on occasion. The team may have to excuse a member and do the procedure with one less person under these circumstances. Have the excused member wait in the funeral home in a comfortable place until the entire procedure is completed.

Additional Information for Chevra Kadisha Members

Requirements Asked of the Funeral Home

The Tahara is a ritual preparation of the body for burial. It includes a physical washing of the body along with spiritual rituals. We will provide much of what is needed for this process, however we need your help in the areas listed below.

- If you have them, please provide a Jewish burial shroud set for the appropriate gender of the dead. If you don't have these, please let us know so we can obtain one ahead of time.
- Please provide jackets, aprons, or smocks for the Tahara team to wear (usually four to six people are needed). A supply of heavy-duty rubber or latex gloves should be on hand.
- The body should be lying on his/her back with eyes closed on a table that tilts with the table tilted just slightly toward the feet. The body should be covered with a clean sheet. All catheters in the body should be removed before our arrival.
- The table on which the body is resting should be locked into position, both the tilt and the wheels.
- The coffin should be in the room on a separate table.
- There should be a third empty table available in the room for spreading out shrouds and supplies, etc.
- There should be plenty of clean, dry sheets available.
- If cotton batting or paper towels are not available, there should be plenty of clean cloth towels available.
- A water source should be close at hand – a sink big enough to fill buckets in, wash hands, etc.
- The room should have a working drain in the floor or at the end of the table on which the body is resting.
- A large trash can should be available in the room, lined with a plastic trash bag. This might end up containing bio-hazardous material after the Tahara.
- There should be another trash can or laundry bin for used sheets and cloth towels.
- Arrangements should be made to turn off any buzzers, phones, alarms, etc., that are in the room where the Tahara takes place.
- Once the Tahara is completed, the coffin with the body inside will need to rest in a different room from where the washing occurred. It should be a place safe for a candle to be lit, and have space for a person to sit near the coffin. Please make arrangements for family members or others to sit with the body until burial. This could easily be through the night or over a weekend.
- At the gravesite, please ensure that there is a mound of dirt near the grave, and several shovels available. Part of the burial service includes family members shoveling some dirt into the grave onto the casket.
- The casket should be simple wood, not metal or other material. It should have holes cut into the bottom, and be free of fancy linings or other embellishments.

Questions To Be Asked Of The Family

- What is the full Hebrew name of the deceased?
- What is the full English name of the deceased?
- What should be done with the wedding band (if any), buried with the dead or given to the family? What about any other jewelry found on the body?
- Does the family want to participate in Shmirah? (Sitting with the casket, reading psalms.)
- Does the deceased have a tallit? Do the family members want him (or possibly her) buried in it?
- Any special requests?

Why Stay With The Body? (What Is Shmirah?)

From the moment of death to the moment of burial, the body of a Jew is never left alone. During this time, the met, the holy vessel that contained this person, deserves respect. It would be very insensitive to leave the met alone as if it were being discarded because it was no longer of value, especially since the essence of this person (the neshama) is still present in non-physical form in the vicinity of the body. Arrangements should be made for attendants, so-called "watchers" or shomrim, to sit with the met at all times until burial. This process is called shmirah. These watchmen and women stay with the met day and night (as needed from the time of death up to the start of the Tahara, and from the end of the Tahara until burial), reciting passages from the Book of Psalms. This lends great comfort to the neshama of the deceased while it waits for the burial of its body and its own ascent to the Eternal World.

Contents Of The Tahara Supplies Kit

The Kit contents are stored in several large duffle bags, a tool bag, and a canvas "fire wood carrier." The tool bag contains the electric drill, drill bits including screwdriver bits, wooden dowels, wood glue, and an extension cord. The canvas wood carrier is used to store and carry the redwood 2x4 pieces that are placed under the met during the Tahara itself. The duffle bags contain all the rest of the kit elements, organized neatly by using Tupperware or similar plastic containers.

- 3/8" electric drill, full array of drill bit sizes for drilling wood, including a 1" quick-boring bit
- 10' standard extension cord able to handle the current specifications of the drill
- Some 1/4" standard woodworking gluing dowels
- Titebond or Elmer's wood glue
- Two double-handled plastic hand washing pitchers
- Three 8- to 10-quart rubber or durable plastic buckets with measurement marks on the side and a good pouring handle
- Two durable plastic washing bowls (2- to 4-cup measuring cups with handles work well)
- One 8' redwood 2x4 cut into four 18" lengths and one 14" length, edges sanded smooth
- Large roll of cotton batting
- One complete set of shrouds (tachrichim) for a male
- One complete set of shrouds (tachrichim) for a female
- This book, preferably in a loose-leaf binder or spiral-bound cover
- Tupperware or similar plastic containers organizing the following:
 - Earth from Israel
 - Broken pottery shards (simple natural clay flower pot, broken into 1" pieces)
 - Scissors
 - Wooden nail-cleaning sticks
 - Nail polish remover
 - Cotton balls, gauze pads
 - Superglue, rubber cement
 - Skin sealer tape or surgical tape
 - Pierce seal powder
 - Rubber or latex gloves, size large
 - Disposable smocks or aprons
 - Disposable diapers for adults
 - Face (mouth-nose) masks
 - Large bandages
 - Extra tallit
 - 8-10 Kippoth (for Chevra members as well as for deceased)
 - Yartzeit candles and matches