

For the Community

Chevra Kadisha Kavod is available to individuals, schools, congregational committees and other community groups to provide information and educational programs about the ancient Jewish practice of taharah.

We are happy to discuss our mission and the work of the Chevra Kadisha. The details associated with any specific taharah are kept in the strictest confidence to maintain respect for the deceased and their loved ones.

Chevra Kadisha Kavod is a volunteer organization working in consultation with the Reform, Conservative, Military, and Unaffiliated communities of Oahu

Contributions to Chevra Kadisha Kavod are used to further the work and the educational activities of Chevra Kadisha Kavod of Oahu.



If you are interested in becoming a member of Chevra Kadisha Kavod or for further information, please contact:

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Some material in this brochure is adapted from publications of Kavod V'Nichum, the Chevra Kadisha groups of Evanston, IL, and Yonkers, NY, the Hebrew Free Burial Association of NY, NY., and the New Community Chevra Kadisha of Pittsburgh.

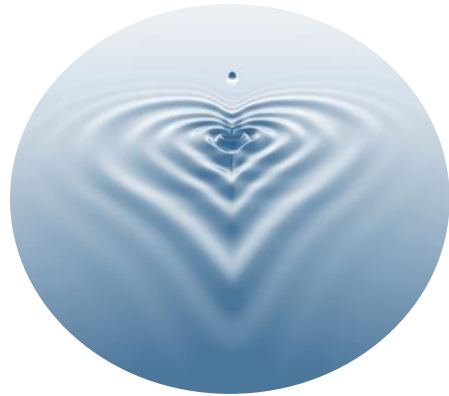
Chevra Kadisha Kavod of Oahu



The Ultimate Kindness

The highest act of gemilut chesed (deeds of loving-kindness) is that which is done for the dead, for there can never be any thought of repayment.

Tanhuma Vayehi. 107A



What is a Chevra Kadisha?

In Judaism we believe that all individuals have innate dignity, a spark of the divine. We are all said to be created in God's image. Judaism holds that death does not remove this holiness. Our bodies retain a remnant of the divinity they once housed. Jewish burial rituals emphasize that all people enter the world as equals and that we leave the world as equals as well.

Taharah, the ritual purification of the dead, is a beautiful and powerful, centuries-old Jewish burial tradition. Death is a part of the cycle of life. Just as a newborn is washed and dressed so, too, the deceased is respectfully washed and dressed in preparation for leaving the physical world.

Because we are holy beings, this spiritual work helps to midwife the soul on its journey from this world to the next with dignity and respect. Performing the taharah ritual is the work of the Chevra Kadisha, the Sacred Society.

About Chevra Kadisha Kavod

The mission of the Chevra Kadisha Kavod is to:

- Perform the taharah ritual in the Oahu Jewish community.
- Provide an opportunity for all interested members of Oahu Jewish community to perform the mitzvah of taharah. This mitzvah is the ultimate act of *chesed shel emet* (true kindness) that one Jew can offer to another.
- Act as a resource for the Oahu Jewish community for education about the rituals and traditions related to dying, death, and funerals.

Chevra Kadisha Kavod adheres to traditional taharah practices. Members of the Chevra Kadisha Kavod represent a diverse spectrum of congregational affiliations and individuals from the Oahu Jewish community. We welcome members of the Oahu Jewish community who wish to perform the mitzvah of taharah.. We also welcome participation in a variety of ways (phone calls, sewing tachrichim, technical support, administration, and other related service).



What We Do

A Chevra Kadisha carries out the sacred task of preparing the deceased for burial. When a family requests a taharah, the funeral home, rabbi, or family notifies the Chevra Kadisha. At the funeral home the Chevra Kadisha performs the taharah ritual with *k'vod hamet* (respect for the dead), ensuring that the traditions of preparing the body for Jewish burial are carried out. A Chevra Kadisha's greatest concern is the sensitive care and dignity of the deceased.

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Members of the Chevra Kadisha wash the deceased. The ritual purification involves a gentle pouring of water over the body and the recitation of a traditional chant. The deceased is dressed in tachrichim (simple white burial garments), wrapped in a cloth, and placed in the aron (casket/plain pine box). Throughout the taharah process the Chevra Kadisha recites special blessings, prayers, and readings selected from Torah, Prophets, and the Song of Songs.

Out of respect, the Chevra Kadisha asks for forgiveness from the deceased and offers prayers for the soul's eternal peace. The aron is then closed.