



## Guide to Tahara l'Nefesh



### Men's Edition



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

Tanchuma Vayechi 107A

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# Blessed Are These Hands

*For private reflection or to be  
used at the leader's discretion.*

Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One.

Blessed be these hands that have touched life.

Blessed be these hands that have held pain.

Blessed be these hands that have nurtured creativity.

Blessed be these hands that have embraced with passion.

Blessed be these hands that have tended gardens.

Blessed be these hands that have closed in anger.

Blessed be these hands that have planted new seeds.

Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe fields.

Blessed be these hands that have become knotty with age.

Blessed be these hands that have cleaned, washed, mopped, scrubbed.

Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and scarred from doing justice.

Blessed be these hands that have reached out and been received.

Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the future.

Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One.

—*Diann L. Neu, from the book Earth Prayers*



Diann L. Neu, Co-director of WATER  
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual  
8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 310  
Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA  
Phone 301.589.2509  
[www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org) | [dneu@hers.com](mailto:dneu@hers.com)



# In This Time of Distancing

Dear Tahara team member,

One of the most basic principles in Jewish law is “*pikuach nefesh*” — saving a life. For ages we have known that, if a human life is in danger, under certain circumstances, it is acceptable to break the rules of Shabbat, fasting, and keeping kosher. Throughout our history Jews have fought to survive in many ways, including hiding their religion from others by converting. We have long been taught to celebrate every moment of life. We are reminded of this at every *simcha* as we shout, “*l’chaim!*”

Today we have come face to face with a new, frightening challenge. As COVID-19 exponentially spreads to all corners of our world and increasingly takes the lives of those we love, we find ourselves physically separated from friends, family, and community. Members of Chevra Kadishas throughout the world are working to figure out how to ensure the safety of their membership while continuing to honor the deceased through our ancient final life cycle ritual, *tahara*.

As this is being written, funerals, shiva minyans, and daily services are being broadcast around the world via video sharing platforms. We are fighting in every way we can devise to still be a community, to give each other strength, and observe our rituals. In the face of profound adversity filled with the unknown, we strive to persevere.

We, the members of the community Chevra Kadisha of Portland, Oregon, Chevra Kavod haMet, have modified our existing procedural tahara guides and created a new, modified ritual called “*tahara l’nefesh*”. This adapted tahara ritual, performed at a distance from the deceased, has been crafted with the utmost care for the *neshamah*.

Water is central to the *tahara* purification process. In times when we are not able to perform a complete *tahara* for an individual we try to use water in some manner, whether it be limited immersion, pouring or sprinkling. We encourage you to pour water in this modified ritual as well. You could find a space outside where you could pour water directly into the earth. Or, pour water into a bowl which you will later give to the earth.

And because we cannot be present with the deceased, we have also asked funeral home staff to sprinkle soil from Israel inside the *aron*, put a retired prayer book (destined for burial) in the *aron*, and in lieu of using *tachrichim* (which in our case is made locally) cover the deceased with a *tallit*.

As we find ourselves at a distance from the *met*, we have incorporated some suggested visualizations which aid us in focusing our minds and hearts on the spiritual, more foundational aspects of *tahara*.

Take this opportunity to rely on the strength of community. The collective focus of your *tahara* team will offer the *neshamah* of the deceased the comfort it needs in this time of confusion and transition. Put your every intention into the steps and prayers the same way you do when in the *tahara* room. You will know that you have done all that you can, in this time of *pikuach nefesh*, and the soul will be comforted. Families and friends who mourn their lost loved ones during this time will know that their community came together and did what it could, to do what it has always done.

In blessing and hope for courage and strength,



# Before We Begin the Tahara Ritual

Team members should be assembled together, either in person employing social distancing as may be required, or connected via a video sharing platform or via phone.

## Leader, please ensure your team members:

- Are in the physical space they have chosen to perform the ritual.
- Have a vessel filled with water and another into which they will pour their water if not pouring outside.
- Have their portable hand washing area set-up or know which sink they will use.
- Have told anyone in the vicinity that they are not to be disturbed.

## and:

- Ask them to write down the *met's* (Hebrew Name) or (English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sara”) and adhere it to their printed manual.
- Designate yourself or another team member as the Reader.
- Offer a suggested location to visualize performing the ritual, i.e. a meadow or stream.
- Remind everyone that to preserve his dignity, the *met* would be covered with a sheet at all times, with the exception of the *tahara* itself.
- Answer any questions.

## Leader, recite:

Preparing someone for burial requires from us the utmost in care and respect for that individual, for how we treat our dead reflects how we should treat everyone. We are aware of the holiness of our actions and the respect we will give the deceased. We are mindful that the soul of the deceased is with us in spirit. We will speak quietly and only as is necessary.

Together, mentally enter the Tahara space.

## Suggested Visualization, read slowly by the Leader

We are together, outside in a forest wilderness. The heavens, though high above, feel closer, clearer. Before us the flow of a stream stumbles around the rocks, creating the sound of *mayim chayim*, living waters. These waters have been here for generations, cutting a smoothly curved path through the surrounding trees. The air is crisp, fresh and a wonder of purity. The wind, carrying melodious birdsong, brushes against our skin with a gentle reminder that nature is everlasting.

While we see each other in this sacred space we also see the power of the life cycle resting before us. The *met* is covered in a white cloth, as though in peaceful slumber. But we know the *neshamah* is restless, confused and frightened by the separation from a part of itself, and the fear of what may come.

We are community and together we will comfort and accompany the *neshamah* on every step of this journey. We will lovingly prepare him to meet his G-d, who is our G-d, and the G-d of our ancestors.

## Remember

### Pikuach nefesh

The preservation of human life takes precedence over all of the other commandments in Judaism.

One is not merely permitted - one is required to disregard a law that conflicts with life or health.

It is not virtuous to observe laws at the risk of one's life. Such conduct is regarded as foolish, even as sinful.

The Sages described this stubbornness as a “piety of madness.”

from *The Language of Jewish Life* by Jason Aronson.

# Preparing Ourselves: Mechilah

## Kavanah (holy intention)

Leader, recite:

Holy One of Blessing — May you bless the work of our hands, hearts and souls as we prepare to honor the soul of (Hebrew Name) or (English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sarah”) as he moves into his eternal life with You. Remove all distractions from before us, and focus our intentions and actions to benefit this holy soul. Amen.



In silence put on your head covering, such as a *kippah*.

While being mindful to maintain silence, and remembering that the *neshamah* is with you in spirit, proceed to where you will wash your hands.

Use a small hand washing pitcher or cup to ritually wash your hands, without reciting a *beracha* (blessing). Pour some water on your right hand and then on your left.

Do this two more times. (Right-left-right-left-right-left).

Allow your hands to air dry completely.

Once you are ready you may return to your *tahara* space and again visualize standing with the *met*. While holding this manual in one hand, you may imagine placing your other hand on the *met* to offer comfort.



## Together, recite:

(Hebrew Name) or (English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sarah”), we stand here ready to prepare you for your final journey. During this time of *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) we ask your forgiveness for any distress we may cause you during this modified *tahara*. We will do everything possible to ensure that you are treated with respect, and that as we are able, all the elements of *Tahara* are properly completed in accordance with our local custom. Everything we do is for the sake of your honor.

## Reader, recite:

O house of Jacob, come and let us go in the light of The Eternal. G-d has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto its setting. Peace will come; they rest on their beds, each one that walks in uprightness. For dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.

בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לְכוּ וְנִלְכָה בְּאוֹר יְהוָה: אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה דְּבָר  
וַיִּקְרָה אֶרֶץ מִמְזֹרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ: יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם יְנוּחוֹ  
עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹתֵם הַלַּיְלָה נִכְחוּ: כִּי עָפָר אַתֶּם וְאֶל עָפָר תִּשׁוּבוּ:

(Isaiah 2:5, Psalm 50:1, Isaiah 57:2, Genesis 3:19)

## Remember

It is essential to note that the *m'taharim* (team members) address the *met* directly, implying that the deceased's *neshamah* (soul) is present and aware of what is happening, a well-established belief in Rabbinic theology. We are not simply performing a ritual, but we are concerned with the transition that the *neshamah* is making. — *Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness*

# Preparing Ourselves: Chamol

Chamol (prayer for the *met*): We recite our first prayer to G-d, on behalf of the *met*.

## Together, recite:

G-d of all Creation! Have compassion for (*Hebrew Name*) or (*English Name followed by "ben Avraham v'Sarah"*) for he is a son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. May his soul and spirit rest with the righteous, for You give life to the dead and bring death to the living. Blessed are You who pardons and forgives those who have sinned and transgressed, the dead of Your people.

## Reader, recite:

Therefore, may it be Your will, G-d and G-d of our ancestors, to encircle messengers of mercy around the deceased, for he is Your servant and son of Your servant. And You, Holy One, and our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, who are concerned with the poor, save him from all misery, from a day of evil, and from unending judgement. Blessed are You, great in loving kindness and provider of mercy. Blessed are You who makes peace in the high places for Your servants and for those who revere Your name. Blessed is the One who redeems the people Israel from all suffering through mercy.

And may it be Your will, G-d and G-d of our ancestors, to remember the sacred covenant. In mercy, the transgressions of this deceased, Your servant, will be hidden and forgotten. Deliver him from unending sorrow, save him for he needs Your great mercy. And You, Eternal our G-d, are good and forgiving to all who call upon You. Blessed are You, mercifully great in counsel and grand in achievement. May he tread with the feet of the righteous in the place of deepest contentment, for that is the place of the upright. G-d protects the feet of the pious. Blessed are You who gives great mercy and abundant grace to the deceased of Your people Israel.

## Together, recite:

Amen. May it be G-d's will.

רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם חָמוּל עַל \_\_\_\_\_ בֶּן \_\_\_\_\_ הַמֵּת  
הַלְזוּ שֶׁהוּא בֶּן אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל  
וְלֵאָה עֲבֹדָי, וְתַנּוּחַ נַפְשׁוֹ וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ עִם הַצְּדִיקִים כִּי  
אַתָּה מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים וּמִמֵּית חַיִּים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה מוֹחֵל  
וְסוֹלֵחַ לַחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת מִמֵּתֵי עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּתַחֲנוּנֵינוּ: וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּסַבֵּב מִלְּאֲכֵי רַחֲמִים לְפָנֵי הַמֵּת, שֶׁהוּא  
עֲבֹדְךָ בֶּן אֲמָתְךָ: וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
מְשַׁכֵּיל אֵל דָּל מְלַטְהוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וּמִיּוֹם רָעָה וּמִדִּינָה  
שֶׁל גִּיהֵנוּם: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה גְּדוֹל הַחֶסֶד וּבַעַל הַרַחֲמִים:  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו לְעַבְדְּךָ וּלְיָרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ:  
בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּינֵי פּוֹרְעָנוֹת בְּרַחֲמִים:  
וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵנוּ  
שֶׁתִּזְכּוֹר זְכוּת בְּרִית קֹדֶשׁ שֶׁבְּבִשְׂרוֹ וַיְהִי פְדִיּוֹן לוֹ  
מִשְׁרַפַּת גִּיהֵנוּם וְתַחֲלִיצָהוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה כּוֹרֵת הַבְּרִית  
בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרַחֲמִים הַסֵּתֵר וְהַעֲלֵם פֶּשְׁעֵי הַמֵּת הַזֶּה  
עֲבֹדְךָ, מִשְׁרַפַּת אֲשֶׁר תַּחֲלִיצָהוּ שֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ לְרַחֲמֶיךָ  
הַרְבִּים: וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ טוֹב וְסֹלֵחַ לְכָל קוֹרְאֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ  
אַתָּה גְּדוֹל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הַעֲלִילָה בְּרַחֲמִים. עִם רַגְלֵי  
צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקָנוֹת בְּגֵן עֵדֶן יְדְרוּךְ, כִּי מְקוֹם יְשָׁרִים הוּא  
רַגְלֵי חֲסִידְךָ יִשְׁמֹר: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַנּוֹתֵן רַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים  
וְרַב תַּחֲנוּנִים לְמֵתֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל: אָמֵן, בֶּן יְהִי רְצוֹן:

# Preparing Ourselves: Ana Elohei HaChesed

**Ana Elohei:** *As the prayer for our service, we ask G-d to give us strength, keep us from harm, and give us heightened awareness of what we are doing.*

## Together, recite:

G-d of loving kindness and compassion, all of whose ways are loving kindness and truth, You have commanded us to practice loving kindness and truth with the dead and to attend to their burial, as it is written, “you shall surely bury him.” (Deuteronomy 21:23).

אָנָּא אֱלֹהֵי הַחֶסֶד וְהַרְחָמִים, שְׁפֹל אוֹרְחוֹתֶיךָ חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת,  
וְצוֹיָתְנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת עִם הַמֵּתִים וּלְהַתְעַסֵּק  
בְּקַבּוּרָתָם, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב: “כִּי קָבוּר תִּקְבְּרֵנוּ” (דְּבָרִים כ"ג:ב)

וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּאֱמָצְנוּ וְתַחֲזֹקְנוּ  
לַעֲשׂוֹת מִלְּאֲכָתְנוּ מִלְּאֲכַת שְׁמַיִם זוֹ כְּרָאוּי, הֵן בְּטַהֲרַת  
הַמֵּת, הֵן בְּלְבִישָׁתוֹ וּבְקַבּוּרָתוֹ, וְתִשְׁמְרֵנוּ מִכָּל נֶזֶק וְתִקְלָה,  
שְׁלֵא נִבְשַׁל בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ.

Sustain in us the statement: ‘One who observes a *mitzvah* encounters no evil’ (Ecclesiastes 8:5). Establish for us the privilege of the *mitzvah* of *gemilut chesed v’emet*, that it fills our days with goodness. And may G-d’s loving kindness be upon us forever.

לְקַיֵּם בָּנוּ הַמִּקְרָא “שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יִדַּע דָּבָר רָע” (קִהְלַת ח:ה).  
וְתַעֲמֵד לָנוּ זְכוּת מִצְוֹת גְּמִילוֹת חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת לְמִלְּאֹת יָמֵינוּ  
בְּטוֹבָה. וְחֶסֶד יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם.



# Preparing the Met: Rechitzah (Ritual Cleansing)

## Kavanah

### Leader, recite:

The *Rechitzah* is the next phase of our ritual. Now is the time we visualize assisting the *met* with his physical preparations so he is ready to put physical cares behind and advance to the spiritual *tahara*. Let us remember how we would cleanse and groom the *met* so he is ready for his purification. We would do our work by carefully lifting the white sheet and then replacing it after completing our tasks so as to preserve his dignity.

O G-d help us to take the first step in preparing (*Hebrew Name*) or (*English Name followed by "ben Avraham v'Sarah"*) for his last journey. As we do so, may we be aware of treating this holy *neshamah* with great dignity and respect.

Take a few moments to imagine this step.



### Reader, recite:

And the angel of G-d spoke in a loud voice to those who were standing there, saying, "Remove the soiled garments from the High Priest," and the angel said, "Behold, I have removed the soiled garments from the High Priest, and I have removed your iniquity from you and I will clothe you in fine garments."

(Zechariah 3:4)

וַיֵּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי הַעֲמֻדִים לְפָנָיו לֵאמֹר הִסִּירוּ הַבְּגָדִים הַצְּאִים מֵעַלָּיו  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי רָאָה הִעֲבַרְתִּי מֵעַלָּיו עֲוֹנָה וְהִלְבִּישׁ אֶתֶּךָ מַחֲלָצוֹת:



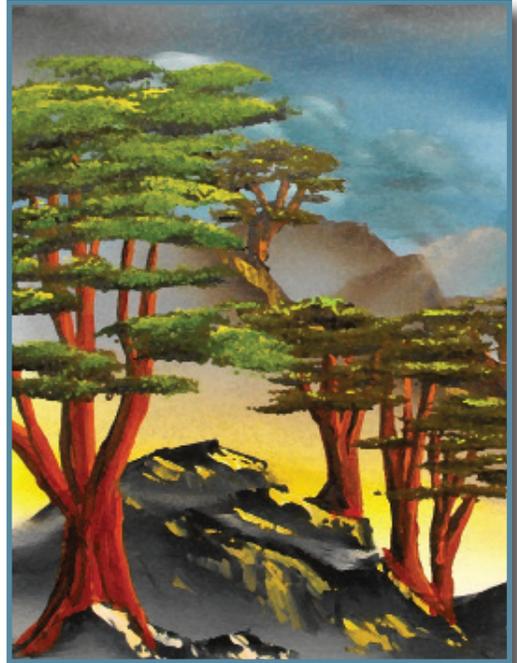
# Preparing the Met: Rechitzah (Ritual Cleansing)

Rosho Ketem Paz: We praise the *neshamah* as we prepare for *tahara*.

Reader, recite:

His head is finest gold;  
his locks are curled and black as a raven.  
His eyes are like doves by watercourses,  
bathed in milk set by a brimming pool.  
His cheeks are like beds of spices, banks of perfumes.  
His lips are like lilies; they drip flowing myrrh.  
His hands are rods of gold, studded with beryl;  
his belly a tablet of ivory adorned with sapphires.  
His legs are like marble pillars set in sockets of fine gold;  
he is majestic as Lebanon, stately as the cedars.  
His mouth is delicious and all of him is delightful.  
Such is my beloved;  
such is my darling, O maidens of Jerusalem.

(Song of Songs 5:11-16)



ראשו כְּתָם פָּז קְנֻצוֹתָיו תְּלַתְלִים שְׁחָרוֹת כְּעוֹרֵב: עֵינָיו כְּיוֹנִים  
עַל-אַפְיָקֵי מַיִם רְחֻצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב יִשְׁבּוֹת עַל-מְלֵאֹת: לְחָיו כְּעֵרוֹנֵת  
הַבָּשָׂם מְגִדְלוֹת מְרַקְחִים שְׁפֹתוֹתָיו שׁוֹשְׁנִים נְטִפּוֹת מִזֵּבֶן עֵבֶר: יָדָיו  
נְלִילֵי זָהָב מְמִלָּאִים בְּתַרְשִׁישׁ מַעֵיו עֲשֵׂת שֵׁן מְעַלְפֹּת סַפִּירִים: שׁוֹקֵיו  
עַמּוּדֵי יֶשֶׁשׁ מִיִּסְדָּיִם עַל-אֲדָנֶי-פָּז מְרֵאָהוּ כְּלִבְנוֹן בְּחֹר כְּאַרְזִים: ט חֲבוֹ  
מִמֶּתְקִים וְכֹל מִחֲמָדִים זֶה דּוּדֵי וְזֶה רְעֵי בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּם:

Kavanah

Leader, recite:

Just as (*Hebrew Name*) or (*English Name followed by "ben Avraham v'Sarah"*) was created in God's image, and beautiful while alive, so may we continue to recognize the beauty of his *neshamah*.

- We may now visualize a clean sheet covering the *met*.

# Preparing the Met: Tahara (Ritual Purification)

## Kavanah

### Leader, recite:

To midwife a soul is the purpose of *Tahara*. As the central element of this ritual, the spiritual cleansing phase is perhaps one of the most simple of tasks, yet also, one of the most important...It is the goal to purify the deceased through the transformative power of water... We simulate the immersion into a flowing mountain stream—*mayim chayim*—living waters [with a continuous pouring of water].

From: To Midwife a Soul by Richard A Light

- Repeat the hand washing in silence while maintaining your focus. Do not dry hands. No blessing is recited.

### Reader, recite:

Rabbi Akiva said, “You are fortunate, Israel. Before whom do you purify yourselves and who purifies you? Our Creator in heaven. As it is said: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean.” (Ezekiel 36:25) And it says: “G-d is the hope of Israel.” (Jeremiah 17:13). Just as the *mikvah* purifies the impure so does the Blessed Holy One purify Israel.

(Yoma 8:9).

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפָנַי מִי אַתֶּם מְטַהְרִין, וּמִי  
מְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם, אֲבִיכֶם שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, (יחזקאל לו) וְנִרְקַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם  
מֵיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטַהֲרֶתֶם. וְאֹמַר, (ירמיה יז) מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ, מַה מִּקְוֵה  
מְטַהֵר אֶת הַטְּמֵאִים, אֵף הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְטַהֵר אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

A fountain for gardens, a well of living waters and flowing streams from Lebanon. (Song of Songs 4:15).

מֵעַיִן גַּזְיִים בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים וְנִזְלִים מִן־לְבָנוֹן:

And The Eternal shall have washed away the soil 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. (Isaiah 4:4).

אֵם | רַחֵץ אֶדְנִי אֶת צֵאֵת בְּנוֹת־צִיּוֹן וְאֶת־דַּמִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם יְדִיחַ מִקְרָבָהּ  
בְּרוּחַ מְשַׁפֵּט וּבְרוּחַ בָּעֵר:

And I will pour upon you pure water and you will be purified of all your impurities, and from all of your idols I will purify you.” (Ezekiel 36:25)

וְנִרְקַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטַהֲרֶתֶם מִכָּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל־גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם  
אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם:



# Preparing the Met: Tahara (Ritual Purification)

- Please take your chosen full vessel of water and prepare to pour in a continuous flow. Even if you pour slowly, with a small amount of water, make sure to pour continuously.
- Choose how you will pour a steady stream. E.g. simulate the manner in which we do so when in person — *right, left, right, left, head to toe, head to toe*.
- When you are ready to begin, say, “ready.”

## Leader:

Once everyone is ready, say, “Tahor hu”.

Now everyone can pour and recite the following Hebrew a minimum of three times to remind everyone, including the *neshamah*, that the soul that remains with the *met* until burial is pure, even though death has rendered the physical body *tamei* (impure).

טָהוֹר הוּא

*Tahor hu*  
(He is pure)

- Once finished with pouring, stop speaking.
- Once everyone is finished, recite below together.



## Together, recite:

- 1 English: You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I, The Eternal, am holy.
- 2 Hebrew: *V'hitkadishtem vih'yitem k'doshim ki kadosh ani Adonai.*  
וְהִתְקַדְּשִׁיתֶם וְהִיְיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה
- 3 English: You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I, The Eternal, am holy.



- Now visualize a clean sheet covering the *met*.

# Preparing the Met: Halbashah (Dressing)

## Kavanah

### Leader, recite:

(Hebrew Name) or (English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sarah”), we stand here having completed the pouring ritual of *tahara*, and we will now assist you in the next step of your journey. We imagine preparing to dress you in plain, white garments, like the simple linens worn by the *Kohen Gadol* to enter the Holy of Holies, garments appropriate for your imminent journey.

Sos Assis: *On behalf of the met...*

### Reader or together, recite:

I will greatly rejoice in The Eternal, my soul shall be joyful in my G-d, for G-d has clothed me with the garments of salvation; G-d has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom puts on priestly glory and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10)

שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בִּיהוָה תִּגְלַל נַפְשִׁי בְּאֱלֹהֵי כִּי הִלְבִּישְׁנִי בְּגָדֵי-יִשְׁע מְעִיל  
צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי כְּחַתָּן יִכְתֹּן פָּאֵר וְכִכְלָה תַעֲבֶדָה כְּלִיָּהּ:

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 The Eternal stood by. (Zechariah 3:5)

וְאָמַר יְשִׁימוּ צְנִיף טְהוֹר עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיְשִׁימוּ הַצְּנִיף הַטְּהוֹר עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ  
וַיִּלְבְּשֵׁהוּ בְּגָדִים וּמְלֶאכֶד יְהוָה עִמָּד:

For as the earth brings forth her growth, and as a garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Eternal G-d will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. (Isaiah 61:11)

כִּי כְּאֶרֶץ תּוֹצֵיאַ צִמְחָהּ וּכְגַנָּה יִרְוַעֶיהָ תִצְמַחַת בָּן | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה יִצְמַחַת  
צְדָקָה וּתְהִלָּה נִגְדַת כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם:

And The Eternal 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)

וְנִחַחְךָ יְהוָה תָּמִיד וְהִשְׂבִּיעַ בְּצִחְצֻחוֹת נַפְשֶׁךָ וְעִצְמוֹתֶיךָ יִחַלְיִן וְהָיִיתְךָ  
כְּגַן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצֵא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזָבוּ מִימּוֹ:



# Preparing the Met: Halbashah (Dressing)



Reader, recite:

They are sacral vestments: bathe the body in water and then put them on. (Leviticus 16:4)

בְּגֵדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרַחֲצֵן בַּמַּיִם אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשָׁם.

*Bigdei kodesh hem, v'rachatz bamayim et b'saro ul'vasham.*

Linen breeches shall be on your flesh

מִכְנֵסֵי־בָד יִהְיוּ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ

*Michn'sei vad yihyu al b'saro*

And you shall be dressed in a holy linen tunic

וּבְתֹנֶת־בָּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ

*Uk'tonet bad kodesh yilbash*

And a linen sash you shall tie

וּבְאַבְנֵט בָּד יַחְגֹּר

*Uv'avnet bad yachgor*

And a linen headdress you shall wear

וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בָּד יִצְנֹף

*Uv'mitznefet bad yitznof*

And may El Shaddai grant you mercy. (Genesis 43:14)

וְאֵל שַׁדַּי יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים

*V'El Shaddai yiten lachem rachamim.*



- You may now sing a quiet, simple niggun as you prepare to assist the *neshamah* on the next step of his journey.

# Preparing the Met: Halanah (Placement in the aron)

## Kavanah

### Leader, recite:

We stand here at this powerful, transitional moment. As no one is so righteous as to have never sinned, we pray for atonement for (*Hebrew Name*) or (*English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sarah”*). We imagine your aron, the earth of Israel gently scattered within. A tallit covers you. A prayer book rests beside you. Within are the prayers that have been with you all the days of your life.



### Reader, recite:

And they shall not come in to see the covering of the holy objects, lest they die. (Numbers 4:20)

וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְרִאֲוֹת כְּבִלְעַתְּ אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ. V'lo yavo'u lirot k'vala et hakodesh vameytu.

And G-d's earth shall atone for G-d's people. (Deuteronomy 32:43)

וּכְפַר אֲדָמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ. V'chiper admato amo.



### Together, recite:

(*Hebrew Name*) or (*English Name followed by “ben Avraham v’Sarah”*), we stand here having completed our work. Please know that we have done our best to lovingly treat you with dignity and care to prepare you for your final journey. We ask your forgiveness for any indignity you may have suffered in our efforts to usher you from this world to the next, in this time of *pikuach nefesh*. We acted in good faith and did this work for the sake of all that is holy.

- We imagine the lid of the aron carefully placed and closed.
- We take a moment together to imagine our hands on the aron, as we offer comfort to the neshamah.

# Concluding Blessings

## Reader, recite:

There is Solomon's couch, encircled by sixty warriors of the warriors of Israel, all of them trained in warfare, skilled in battle, each with sword on thigh because of terror by night. (Song of Songs 3:7-8.)

הַזֶּה מִטַּתוֹ שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹמֹה שְׁשִׁים נְבָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ מִנְּבָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ח בְּלֵם  
אֲחֻזֵי חֶרֶב מְלֻמְדֵי מְלַחְמָה אִישׁ חֶרְבּוֹ עַל-יָרְכּוֹ מִפֶּתַח בַּלְיָלוֹת:



## Together, recite:

May G-d bless you and protect you.  
May G-d deal kindly and graciously with you.  
May G-d bestow favor upon you and grant you peace.  
(Numbers 6: 24-26)

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ:	Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.
יָאֵר יְהוָה   פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנְּדֶךָ:	Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.
יֵשֵׂא יְהוָה   פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּשֵּׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:	Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom.



## Reader, recite:

His branches shall spread out and his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon. (Hosea 14:7).  
Whoever you are, O great mountain in the path of Zerubavel, turn into level ground! For he shall produce the excellent stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of "Beautiful!" (Zechariah 4:7). And now, may the might of G-d be great as you have spoken (Numbers 14:17), saying, "But as truly I live, the glory of G-d shall engulf all the earth." (Numbers 14:21)

יִלְכוּ יוֹנְקוֹתָיו וַיְהִי כְנִיַת הוֹדוֹ וְרִיתָ לוֹ כַּלְבָּנוֹן: מִי־אַתָּה הַר־הַגְּדוֹל  
לִפְנֵי זָרְבָבֶל לְמִישֹׁר וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הָאֶבֶן הַרְאִשָּׁה תְּשֹׂאוֹת תָּן תָּן לָהּ:  
וְעַתָּה יִגְדַל־נָא כַּח אֲדָנִי כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לֵאמֹר: וְאוֹלָם חִי־אַנִּי וַיִּמְלֵא  
כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

## Together, recite:

Creator of the universe, we have just completed our act of *gemilut chesed* for (Hebrew Name) or (English Name followed by "ben Avraham v'Sarah"). We thank you for the strength and courage to perform this *mitzvah* to the best of our abilities during this time of *pikuach nefesh*. We appreciate participating in this sacred fellowship, and cherish the bond that brings us together. As we move from this holy space to our ordinary lives, let us take our strength from our G-d and from each other.

## Kavanah

### Leader, recite:

G-d, we now ask for assurance from You that this *neshamah* will be protected for eternity.

- Everyone now observes a moment of silence for private meditation and reflection.

# In Conclusion

- Repeat the hand washing in silence while maintaining your focus. Do not dry hands. No blessing is recited.

## Suggested Visualization, read slowly by the Leader

We are still at our stream, in awe of the connectedness we feel after completing our work. The spiritual bond that we feel so strongly between each other has pulled us physically closer to one another and we are able to hold hands and embrace. We can imagine the angels leading away the aron, accompanying the neshamah. We feel reassured that he is safe and where he is supposed to be. We have done our best and G-d will care for him. As they fade into the distance, we can hear the return of the forest sounds, the same we heard when we began.

Customarily a team member would stay with the aron in the Tahara room, reading psalms, until the shomer arrives. The psalms may be found on the chevra's website at [www.ChevraKavodhaMet.org/psalms](http://www.ChevraKavodhaMet.org/psalms).

In this time of pikuach nefesh, if so moved, a team member may continue to offer the neshamah the comfort of the psalms. The team member may take as much time as they'd like to recite the psalms.



When the Tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the Tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up; any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death. (Numbers 1:51)

וּבְנִסְעַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם וּבְחִנְתֹּת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקְיֹמוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם  
וְהִזְרָה הַקָּרֵב יוֹמֵת:

When the ark was to set out, Moses would say, “Advance, G-d! May Your enemies be scattered, and may Your foes flee before You!” (Numbers 10:35)

וַיְהִי בְנִסְעַת הָאָרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה א | יְהוָה וַיִּפְצֹל אֱיָבֹיֵךְ וַיִּנָּסוּ  
מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ:

No harm will befall you, no disease touch your tent. For G-d will order the angels to guard you wherever you go. They will carry you in their hands, lest you hurt your foot on a stone. (Psalms 91:10-12)

לֹא-תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְנִנְעָה לֹא-יִקְרַב בְּאִהְלֶךָ: יֵא פִי מִלְּאָכְיוֹ יִצְוֶה-לְךָ  
לְשִׁמְרֹךָ בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: יֵב עַל-פְּפִיִּים יִשְׁאֹנֶךָ פֶּן-תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רִגְלֶךָ:

The Holy One, the warrior—The Eternal is G-d's name. (Exodus 15:3) The Eternal will battle for you, you hold your peace. (Exodus 14:14)

יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ: יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תִּתְּרֶשׁוּן:

# Afterward

Just as we entered the ritual space with *kavanah*, so we leave it. It is often difficult to return to our own lives after standing in the holy spaces between life and death, and we take this time to be with our companions in this journey. This is a good time to debrief on the experience if any members of the team feel the need to share personal thoughts and emotions. We offer these readings for a few quiet moments or reading aloud.



The eyes of all look to You expectantly, and You give them their food when it is due. (Psalms 145:15)

A person may plot out a course, but it is the Eternal who directs one's steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

Indeed, one does not know what it is to happen; even when it is on the point of happening, who can tell that person? (Ecclesiastes 8:7)

What, then, can I count on, Holy One? In You my hope lies. (Psalms 39:8)

We set our hope on The Eternal, G-d is our help and shield. (Psalms 33:20) I look to The Eternal; I look to G-d; I await G-d's word. I am more eager for The Eternal than watchmen for the morning, watchmen for the morning. (Psalms 130:5-6)

I long for Your deliverance; I hope for Your word. My eyes pine away for Your promise; I say, "When will You comfort me?" (Psalms 119:81-82)

My eyes are ever toward The Eternal, For G-d will loose my feet from the net. Turn to me, have mercy on me, for I am alone and afflicted. (Psalms 25:15-16)

Safe and sound, I lie down and sleep, For You alone, O G-d, keep me secure. (Psalms 4:9)

You have made Adam little less than divine, and adorned Adam with glory and majesty; You have made Adam ruler over Your handiwork, laying the world at Adam's feet. (Psalms 8:6-7)

O Holy One, our G-d, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth. What is Adam that You have been mindful of him (us) Mortal being that You have taken note of him (us). (Psalms 8:2, 5)



# Appendix A: Glossary

**Afar:** burial soil from Israel

**Aron:** casket

**Avnet:** waist sash (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Beracha:** blessing

**Dam nefesh:** blood that is directly connected to the cause of death

**Halanah:** placing the met in the aron

**Halbashah:** dressing the met

**K'tonet:** shirt with no collar (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Kavanah:** holy intention

**Kippah** (*pl. kippot*): skullcap

**Kittel:** overshirt with a collar (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Mayim Chayim:** living waters

**M'taharim:** team members

**Mechilah:** prayer of forgiveness

**Meta:** deceased, f.

**Met:** deceased, m.

**Michnasayim:** trousers (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Mikvah:** ritual bath

**Minhag:** local custom

**Mitznefet:** head covering (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Neshamah:** soul

**Niggun:** wordless melody

**Rechitzah:** washing

**Sherbloch:** shards

**Sovev:** wrapping sheet (*part of the tachrichim/shroud*)

**Tachrichim:** shroud

**Tahara:** ritual cleansing

**Tahor hu:** He is pure

**Tallit:** prayer shawl

**Tamei:** impure

**Tzitzit:** ritual fringes of a tallit