

A Service to Honor the Dead

This is an initial attempt, it is open to suggestion and change. As we find our way in this difficult time, volunteers are invited to bring of their own *kavanah*.

GENERAL GUIDANCE for *tahara* service online (via ZOOM)

1. One Reader
2. Each participant should have the following on hand:
3. Small pitcher with water
4. Empty bowl

READER: This service exemplifies what can be accomplished when we cannot be physically present to serve _____ (name of *metah* in English and Hebrew) _____.

Do not mistake our physical separation for a lack of love. May our verbal presence be a source of comfort to her *neshama*.

ALL: **We pray for the time when once again we are able to offer full *tahara*. May today's act of kindness help to bring wholeness to the dead and be an element of healing for the living.**

READER: Technology and Imagination enable us today. It is 2020. We are living during during a challenging and puzzling time filled with more questions than answers.

For centuries, small groups of community members have come together to prepare a body for burial and help set the soul on its journey to Forever. But It is 2020 and we cannot be present to perform a standard *tahara*.

The Manual of Practice for our Women's Chevra has been modeled to fit the needs of our community and through repetition it has become our custom. Commitment to our ancient tradition mandates us to create a ritual that is meaningful and thoughtful and reflective of actions we take during *tahara*.

Technology and Imagination enable us today. Let us begin.

ALL: **Today we are linked with _____ name of *metah* _____ and with her soul who stands by until her burial. _____ name of *metah* _____, we ask forgiveness for any distress that has been caused by those who have prepared you in our stead. All that has been done is for the sake of your honor.**

Compassionate One, remember _____ who is returning to the realm from which she originally came. May she be joined with the spirits of her ancestors.

READER: The honor of the dead is our primary concern. During *tahara*, the body is first gently washed to remove dirt and foreign matter. The ritual purification consists of pouring a continuous stream of water over her body to metaphorically cleanse her of sin.

Imagine that we are gathered around the covered *metah* about to begin the ritual purification.

When you pass through water, I will be with you and streams shall not overwhelm you. (Isaiah 43:2)

כִּי־תַעֲבֹר בַּמַּיִם אֲנִי־בְנֵי־הַרְרֹת לֹא־וַיִּטְפוּךָ לֹא־וַיִּשְׁתַּפְּחֶיךָ
Ki ta-avor ba-mayim it'chah ani, u-va-n'harot lo yishtafucha.

Adonai is the mikveh of Israel. (Jeremiah 17:13)

יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְוֵה
Mikveh Yisrael Adonai.

And I shall pour pure water upon you and you will be transformed. (Ezekiel 36:25)

וַיִּזְרַקְתִּי מֵעַל לִיְכֶם וַיְהִי מַיִם טְהוֹרִים וַיִּטְהַרְתֶּם
Vzarakti aleichem mayim tehorim u-tehartem.

READER: To represent a CONTINUOUS flow on one side then the other, pour a steady stream of water from your pitcher into the bowl, first with the right hand, then with the left, then with the right.

While the last of the water is being poured let us ALL say: ◊

הִיא טְהוֹרָה ◊ הִיא טְהוֹרָה ◊ הִיא טְהוֹרָה

Tehorah hee...tehorah hee...tehorah hee

She is pure....she is pure....she is pure

ALL: Though not by our hands, the sacred garments have been placed and the knots have been tied. Jerusalem soil has been sprinkled beneath and upon you. You are prepared for the journey.

May you be blessed and protected.

May you be filled with light and grace.

May you be filled with divine presence and peace.

Y'varcheich Adonai v'yishm'reich:

*Ya'eir Adonai panav eilayich vichuneich:
Yisa Adonai panav eilayich v'yaseim lach shalom.*

נְיָשׁוּ מֶרַךְ יְהוָה יִבְרַכְךָ:
נְיִחַגְרָא לִיךָ פְּנֵי יְהוָה יֵאָר:
שְׁלוֹם לִךְ וְיִשְׁמֵם אֱלֵיךָ פְּנֵי יְהוָה יֵשׁוּ אֵל

Hashkiveinu Adonai, Eloheinu leshalom, - Lay us down to sleep in peace Adonai, our God.

Veha'amideinu, Malkeinu, Lekhayim, lekhayim. - Raise us up, our King, to Life, to Life.

As your body returns to the earth, may your soul come home to the Holy One in peace.

Lech B'shalom....Go in peace...

***Oseh shalom bimromav
Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu
Val kol Yisrael
Vimru Amen.***

**He who makes peace in high places,
He will make peace for us
And for all Israel
And let us say, Amen.
(translation by the composer, Michael Schachter**

ALL: Before taking our leave, once again we ask your forgiveness for any indignity we have caused.

READER: The service is now complete

This service is a distillation of Anshe Emet's Manual of Practice for Women with inspiration from the Community Hevra Kadisha of Greater Boston