

Boston Community Hevra Kadisha
Tahara Seder – Modifications for 2 person team during COVID (8.30.20)

Team enters directly into Tahara room... Change shoes before coming in and leave everything you don't need in the car, including jewelry. Put car keys in a pocket . Arrange to meet in parking lot if possible. Weather permitting, hold pre-tahara meeting outside before you go in, masks on, social distancing. (Once inside, if necessary to bring things in with you, lay your things on a clean sheet that you've spread out on a gurney in the laundry room or back room.)

Tahara room and upstairs bathrooms will have been sanitized by Brezniak staff. We will be expected to wipe down sink fixtures, door knobs, and surfaces we have used (including bathrooms) before we leave. Rosh/a should arrive a few minutes early to check status of meyt/a in aron and to set up. (see below)

During pre-tahara meeting, decide who will be reader and who will primarily work with Met/ah. Review process for tahara using spray bottles. (Try them out in parking lot.) If a cloth mask is worn to the tahara room, remove it when you get inside and store it in a baggy at the entrance. Put on clean mask right after washing hands, available on the wagon by the sink. Take a moment to get centered together before entering tahara room, kavannah...

1. Thorough soap and water handwashing. (No ritual handwash.)
2. PPE: Includes mask and face shield. (*Rosh puts on faceshield after meets with team-mate outside*). Double glove. (Top gloves will be removed at end of the tahara, gloves underneath to clean and disinfect room.) Booties available although this will be a "dry tahara". Hair nets available for head as well as beards... (can loop over ear.)
3. Prepare room: (Rosh/Rosha does this in advance.)
 - a. Sign tahara sheet now, while gloves clean. Label 2 paper bags with team member names for taking home disinfected faceshields, and leave them on counter near door. Baggies near door to hold cotton masks if needed.
 - b. Hang "do not disturb" signs.
 - c. Place liturgy sheets on cart as needed: Mechila during COVID, Optional English supplement if desired for Rehitza. (Roshot: Ana/Source of Kindness.) (Wipe these down at the end.) -- Put masks on wagon near sink.
 - d. Prepare shebelach (shards) and open packet of earth, leave both on cart.
 - e. Lay out any supplies you anticipate you will need on top of cart while gloves are clean: Partially fill the 2 spray bottles to be used for tahara; fill a small pot with water and get wash cloth ready on cart for Rehitza; cut some cotton batting (webril) to pack Met/ah's mouth in case it is open and has not been tended to yet.
 - f. Cover tahara sink with a sheet or towel. (For Kavod since Aron near it.)
 - g. Lay out tachrichim on aron cover, put emptied pillow case on cart for face.
 - h. Write name on whiteboard.
 - i. Light candle.

Regroup with partner away from Meyt(a) after PPE is on to focus and to set kavannah.

Mechilah:

_____ *ben/bat/mibeit* _____ *v'* _____,

We ask your forgiveness for any distress we may cause you during this tahara, most of all for the ways in which we have had to modify the ritual preparation of your body for its final journey. We are here (women: as your sisters) to lovingly care for you and bring you to sleep with your ancestors in the ancient ways of our people. During this time of plague that besets and endangers all, the changes we make are an affirmation of the life you have lived and the lives of those who care for you now.

May our presence be a source of peace to your neshama and our tears as the flowing of living waters meant to bathe your body, declaring with full hearts that you are pure. Everything we do is for the sake of your honor.

Closing Mechilah

_____ *ben/bat/mibeit* _____ *v'* _____,

We ask your forgiveness for any distress we have caused you, most of all through the ways in which we have had to modify the ritual preparation of your body for its final journey. Everything we have done has been for the sake of your honor. As your body returns to the earth, may your soul come home to the Holy One in peace.

Tahara

Mechila (for COVID: see opposite page,) **Chamol, Ana** standing at either side of aron.

REHITZAH: Inspect face and body(if not wrapped), *pack mouth with webril if needed*, cover face using pillow case, read **Va'yaan Va'yomer** .

Clean/pat with wrung out wash cloth, then recover. Reader reads verses from **Shir Hashirim** (standing at bottom end of aron) while partner continues the ritual by simulating Rehitza or patting down exposed body with washcloth, R side, then L. If English supplement is used, read this during the Ritual Rehitza on the L side as follows:

While head is bathed:

Blessed is the head that housed your thoughts.

While the neck is bathed:

Blessed is the neck that held your head.

While the arm and hand are bathed:

Blessed are the shoulder and arm that labored in your life.

Blessed is the hand that opened in friendship.

While the torso is bathed:

Blessed is the heart, the vessel of feeling.

Blessed are the chest and abdomen that held the organs of breath and life.

While the leg and foot are bathed:

Blessed are the leg and foot that enabled you to journey on your path.¹

--You may wish to repeat the last sentence of the Shir Hashirim selection at this time to complete the Rehitza..

Pause. Do not rewash or change gloves.

TAHARA: **Amar R' Akiva**, spray mist over body bag (?x3), **Tehora hi/hu** x3 after spray.

HALBASHA: Put on Mitznefet. Lay rest of tachrichim over body while saying relevant **p'sukim**. Take turns tying each side of knot to maintain social distancing.

V'lo yavo'u, pottery on eyes, replace *Mitznefet*

Talit made pasul, wrapped as needed; **Sovev:** (wrap feet, right, left, head); **Afar**

V'Chiper

Close Aron, Mechila

¹ Adapted from the New Community Chevra Kadisha of Greater Pittsburgh

Cleanup

Using proper technique, remove top gloves and discard. *Rosh/a should do this only after putting towel covering sink and used washcloth in laundry.* Wipe down sink handles, top of soap dispenser, door knobs, all fixtures that were touched. Wipe down liturgy sheets that were used and replace them on wagon. **NOTE:** If bathroom was used upstairs, wipe down all fixtures, door knobs, and light switches that were touched.

Carefully remove face shield holding elastic and pulling away from face. Clean your own face shield with disinfectant wipe (on counter under AC) and place in paper bag labeled with your name to bring home along with shoes until next time you're on a tahara. Note: easiest to place a towel on an available surface and use this to lean on while wiping face shield.

Weather permitting, remove PPE outside, standing 6'+ apart (after moving garbage pail near tahara room door.) With Rosh/a leading the way, remove gowns and gloves slowly with attention, keeping contaminated surfaces of gloves and gowns away from you and rolling it up/bundling tightly with clean surface on the outside. Leave on facemask for now. Discard gown/gloves carefully in garbage pail near door, then return garbage pail to its place. (Review video of how to remove PPE or see poster on door.)

One person at a time returns to tahara room to wash hands. *Thorough handwash, using paper towel to open faucet, elbow to close.* Remember to pick up face shield on your way out.

Exit to parking lot, change shoes in car, remove mask carefully holding earloops and folding away from you so blue (exposed) surface on the inside and discard. Use hand sanitizer.

Debrief over phone as needed.

PPE Video

(Start video at 55 seconds mark.)

<https://www.nasck.org/donning-and-removing-ppe/>

