## **ITEMS TO PREPARE FOR THE TAHARA**

In order to streamline the rechitza and tahara, the following items should be prepared prior to uncovering the *meis* (deceased).

- **⊘** A lit candle
- The Hebrew name of the *meis* and his/her father. If unobtainable, use English names. If the meis's father's name is unknown, "Avraham" should be used instead.
- **♂** Tachrichim (shrouds), a tallis, and a kittel. It is preferable to use the meis's personal tallis and
- **⊘** 3 sherblach (earthenware shards) to cover the eyes and mouth.
- **⊘** Afar (dirt) from Israel.
- **⊘** Egg white and white wine or vinegar for the z'rika.
- ✓ A large washing basin, smaller containers for pouring, wash cloths, towels for drying, and flat toothpicks.
- Three buckets of water for the final tahara.

The leader of the group assigns who will perform each task.

# THE RECHITZA

While the meis is being washed, one of the volunteers recites the pesukim below. Although these pesukim correspond to specific areas of the body, it is not necessary that they be recited precisely when those areas are being washed.

רֹאשׁוֹ בֵּתֵם פַּז, קוָצוֹתִיו תַּלְתַּלִּים שָׁחֹרוֹת בָּעוֹרַב. צֵינִיו כְּיוֹנִים עַל־אֲפִיקִי מְיִם, רֹחֲצוֹת בֶּחְלָב ישבות על־מִלֵּאֹת. לְחָיָו כַּעֲרוּגַת הַבּשִׁם מִגְּדָלוֹת מֵרְקָחִים, שִׂפְתוֹתִיו שׁוֹשַׁנִּים נִשְׁפּוֹת מוֹר עֹבֵר. יַדַיו גִּלִילֵי זָהָב מִמִלְאָים בַּתַּרְשִׁישׁ, מֵעַיו עֵשֵׁת שֵׁן מִעָלֵפֵת סַפִּירִים. שׁוֹקַיו עַמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מִיָּפָדִים עַל־אַדְגִי־פָז, מַרְאָהוּ כַּלְּבָנוֹן בָחוּר בָאָרָזִים. חִכּוֹ מַמְתַקִּים וְכָלּוֹ מַחֲמַדִּים, זֶה דוֹדִי ווה רעי בנות ירושלם.

The meis is placed on the washboard and the following areas are washed in the following order:

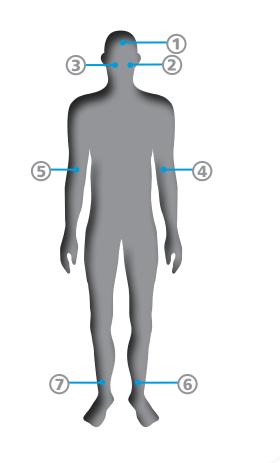
- The head and neck.
- The right arm, hand, and nails.
- The right front half of the body, including the genitals.
- The front of the right leg and the right foot and toenails.
- The left front half of body.
- The front of the left leg, including the foot and toenails.
- The meis is rolled onto his left side and the right side of the back, including the back of the right leg is washed. He is then rolled onto his right side and the left side of his back, including the back of the left leg is now washed.
- The meis is then once again checked again for any chatzitza.

#### **RECHITZA NOTES:**

- \* The right and left sides may be washed simultaneously as long as the right side is elevated higher than the left side and is washed slightly
- ahead of the left.
- \* No water is poured into the mouth or nose. \* Stubborn spots can be scrubbed with warm water and soap (or other safe cleaning solutions).
- \* Care should be taken not to break skin or cause bleeding, especially when bedsores and cuts are present.
- \* Bleeding areas should be sealed and bandaged.
- \* Anything that has absorbed blood that issued from the meis post- mortem should be gathered in a bag and placed in the casket at the feet of the meis.

## THE DRYING **AND THE Z'RIKA**

- The washboard from the *rechitza* is dried, and the *meis* is placed upon it face up if the tahara is done in a standing
- The meis is immediately covered with a sheet and dried thoroughly from head to toe.
- The sheets and towels are inspected for any signs of blood or other bodily issues.
- ✓ Some of the mixture is poured on the forehead, cheeks, arms, body, and legs (see diagram).



## **DRESSING**

The following pesukim are recited by one of the misaskim before dressing the meis:

שוש אָשִׁישׁ בַּיְיָ תָגַל נַפְשִׁי בֵא-לֹהַי כִּי הַלְבִּישַׁנִי בִּגְדִי יֶשַׁע מְעִיל צְדָקָה יְעָטָנִי, כֶּחָתָן יְכַהֵן פְּאֵר וְכַכַּלְּה תַּעְדֶה כֵלֶיהָ. וָאֹמֵר יָשִׁימוּ צָנִיף טָהוֹר עַל רֹאשׁוֹ, וַיָּשִׁימוּ הַצָּנִיף הַשָּהוֹר עַל רֹאשׁוֹ וַיַּלְבִּשָׁהוּ בְּגָּדִים וּמַלְאַךְ יִי עֹמֵד. כִּי כָאָרֶץ תּוֹצִיא צִמְּחָה וּכְגַנָּה זֵרוּעֶיהָ תַצְמִיחַ, כֵּן אֲ־דֹנִי אֶ-לֹהִים יַצְמִיחַ צְדָקָה וּתְהִלָּה נָגֶּד כָּלִ־ הגוֹים. וְנְחַך יִי תָּמִיד, וְהִשְׂבִּיעַ בְּצַחְצָחוֹת גַפְשֶׁך וְעַצְמֹתֵיך יַחֲלִיץ, וְהָיִיתָ כְּגַן רָנֶה וּכְמוֹצָא מֵים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יכובו מימיו.

The following phrases are recited when dressing the meis with the tachrichim (shrouds):

For the kutones (shirt) – צֹלְבִשׁ יִלְבָשׁ יִלְבָשׁ יִלְבָשׁ

For the michnasayim (pants) – וֹלְנְבֶּי בֶּד יִהִיוּ עֵל־בְּעַרוֹ

For the gartel (belt) – コネロ! Ta いこれに

- **⊘** The *mitznefes* is placed on the head (women receive a bonnet).
- The michnasayim (pants) are placed on the meis, right side first, and the bands on the feet are tied.
- The k'sones (shirt) is placed on the meis, by placing the right arm into the sleeve, and then the left arm into its sleeve. The shirt is then pulled over the head and drawn over the body.
- The kittel is placed on the meis in the same manner as was done for the shirt.
- The gartel (belt) is wrapped around the meis and tied.
- The tying of the bands and *gartel* should be done as follows:
  - One *misasek* stands on the right side of the *meis* and one stands on the left.
  - The misaskim twist the bands by passing them back and forth four times, and they count, "Aleph Beis Gimmel Daled." • The band is tied with three slip knots.
- The middle bow is the largest, and all three loops should be point towards the head, forming the the letter shin. If necessary, the meis should be rolled in order to be dressed. It is better to repeat this process rather than to pull the tachrichim which may cause them to tear.
- ♂ On a man, two bands are then tied above each ankle the same way as before (right ankle first). On a woman, the bands are tied below the knees.
- The kutones is put on by first placing the right hand into the sleeve, and then the left hand into its sleeve, and then slipping the rest over the head and drawing it over body.
- The neckband is tied in the manner described for the other bands, above.
- The kittel is put on in a manner similar to that of the kutones, and the gartel is tied around the waist like one of the bands.
- ✓ Women are also dressed in an apron and veil.

Once the *meis* is fully dressed, the *misaskim* sprinkle *afar* (dirt from Israel) over his heart and say:

וֹאָ-ל שַׁ-דַי יִתֵּן לַכֶם רַחַמִים.

### **PREPARATION FOR RECHITZA**

The misaskim wash their hands three times alternately as is done upon arising in the morning. The hands should only be dried if it is necessary to do so in order to put on gloves. One of the *misaskim* then says the following prayer:

(פלוני ב' פלוני)

(הַמֵּת הַלַּז שָהוּא בֵּן / הַמֵּתָה הַלַּזוֹ שָהִיא בַת) אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וִיַצֵקֹב עֲבָדִיהְ וְתָנוּח (נַפְשׁוֹ ונשמתוֹ / נפשה ונשמתה) עם הצדיקים, כי אתה מחיה המתים וממית חיים. ברוך אתה, מוחל וסולח לחטאים ולעונות ממתי עמד ישראל בתחנונים. ובכן יהיירצון מי אַ-לֹהֵינוּ וַא-לֹהֵי אַבוֹתֵינוּ שֵׁתִּסַבֶּב מַלְאַכֵי רַחֲמִים לְפָנֵי (הַמֵּת שֵׁהוּא עַבִּדְּךְ בֵּן / הַמֵּתַה שָׁהִיא אֲמֶתְדְּ בַּת) אֲמֶתֶדָּ וְאַתָּה יִי אֵ-לֹהֵינוּ וַא-לֹהֵי אַבוֹתֵינוּ מַשִּׂכִּיל אֵל־דַל, (מַלְּטֵהוּ ' ַמַלְטָה) מָכַל־צַרָה וּמִיוֹם רַעָה וּמִדִינָה שֵל־גֵּיהִנֹם. בַרוּדְ אַתַה, גְּדוֹל הַחֶסֶד וּבַעַל הַרַחַמִים. בַרוּך אַתַה, הַעֹשֵׁה שַׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמֵיו לַעֲבַדִיו וּלְיִראֵי שִׁמוֹ. בַרוּך פּוֹדֵה עַמוֹ יִשִּׁרָאֵל מִמִינֵי פָּרְעָנִיּוֹת בִּרַחֲמִים. (לגברים: וּבָבֵן יִהִי־רָצוֹן מִלְפַנֵיך יִיָ אֵ-לֹהֵינוּ וַא-לֹהֵי אֵבוֹתֵינוּ, שֵׁתִּוְכֹּר זכות ברית קדש שַבִּבְשָׁרוֹ וִיהִיה פִדִיוֹן לוֹ מִשִּׂרַפַת גֵּיהִנֹם וְתַחֵלִיצֵהוּ. בַּרוּךְ אַתָּה, כּוֹרֵת הברית ברחמים.) ברחמים הסתר והעלם פשעי (המת הזה עבדד / המתה הזאת אמתד). מִשֹּׁרַפַת אֵשׁ (תַּחֲלִיצָהוּ שֶׁהוּא צָרִידְ / תַּחֲלִיצֶה שֶׁהִיא צְרִיכָה) לְרַחֲמֶיךְ הָרַבִּים. וְאַתָּה יִי אֶ-להינו טוֹב וְסַלָּח לְכָל־קוֹרְאֵיהָ בָרוּדְ אַתָּה, וֹּדוֹל הָעֵצָה וִרַב הַעֵּלִילִיָה בַּרַחַמִים. עם רַגְלֵי צַדִּיקִים בְּגַן צֵדֶן (יִדְרֹך / תִּדְרֹך) כִּי מְקוֹם יְשָׁרִים הוּא רַגְלֵי חֲסִידִיו יִשְׁמֹר. ברוך אַתַה, הַגוֹתֶן רַחֲמִים גִּדוֹלִים וְרוֹב תַחֲנוּנִים לְמֶתֵי עַמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. אַמֶן, כֵּן יָהִי רַצוֹן.

The meis should be placed on the table face up with his feet facing the door (when possible).

- The meis's clothing or other coverings, including eye and mouth coverings, should be completely removed (these need not be buried).
- **♂** Chatzitzos (obstructions such as bandages, adhesives or creams) should be removed, unless it is determined that it may cause
- **⊘** Jewelry is removed and returned to the family.
- The eyes and mouth should be closed, and the face and genitalia should remain covered with towels while they are not being washed. **⊘** One of the *misaskim* then says the following:

וַיַּצֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעֹמְדִים לְפָנִיו לֵאמֹר, הָסִירוּ הַבְּגָדִים הַצֹּאִים מֵעָלִיוּ. ויאמר אַלִיו, רָאֵה הֶעֶבַרְתִּי מֵעְלֵיך עֲוֹנֶךְ וְהַלְבֵּשׁ אֹתְךְ מַחֲלְצוֹת.

#### THE TAHARA

The *misaskim* wash their hands in preparation for the *tahara* in the same manner as they did for the rechitza. The *tachrichim* and towels are prepared, and "*Amar Rabbi Akiva*" is recited. The *tahara* should be performed with the *meis* in a standing position, supported by the misaskim. If this is too difficult, or detracts from kavod ha'meis (to be decided by the group leader), the tahara can be done with the *meis* in a lying position.

#### **STANDING TAHARA**

The wooden slats should first be purified with water from the tahara

buckets (or from the sink). Two misaskim support the meis in a standing position with the meis's feet

on slats, while the others pour water on him.

Three buckets of water are successively poured over the meis's head. The pouring of the second bucket should begin before finishing the first, and likewise the third bucket should begin before finishing the second. If possible, the water should be thrown, not poured.

**TAHARA** 

LYING

The *meis* should be gently rolled onto his right side and then onto his left, while each slat is cleaned and doused with water from the tahara buckets.

The buckets are refilled and poured over the meis. Starting from his head, the first bucket down the center, the second bearing right, and the third bearing left.

The third bucket should be the last one to be completely emptied.

During the pouring, all *misaskim* say three times "Tahor Hu מָהוֹר הִיא (Women say: "Tehora Hee

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אַשְׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹפְנֵי מִי אַתֶּם מִשַּהְרִין וּמִי מְשַהֵּר אָתְכֶם? אָבִיכֶם שֶׁבַשְּׁמַיִם, שֶׁנֶאֱמֶר וְזָרַקְתִּי צֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם טְהוֹרִים וּטְהַרְתֶם מִכֹּל טְמְאוֹתִיכֶם וּמִבָּל גִּלוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהַר אֶתְכֶם. וְאוֹמֵר מִקְוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ. מַה מִקְוָה מְטַהַר אֶת־ הַטְּמֵאִים, אַף הַקָּדוֹשׁ בַּרוּךְ הוּא מִטַהֵר אֵת־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

### PLACING THE MEIS IN THE ARON

- **⊘** A bag of straw and earth is placed in the top of the *aron*, and some earth is placed in the center of the *aron*.
- The sovev (wrapping sheet) is spread in the aron overlapping the sides
- **⊘** One of the *tzitzis* is cut off of the *tallis*, which is then placed over the *sovev*.
- The meis is placed gently into the aron, and the misaskim say:

ולא יָבֹאוּ לְרָאוֹת כְּבַלֵּע אֶת־הַקֹּדֵשׁ וְמֵתוּ.

Some earth is placed on the eyes, and the *sherblach* (earthenware shards) are placed on the mouth and eyes while the *misaskim* say:

### וִכְפֵּר אַדְמָתוֹ עַמוֹּ.

- (If the aron is not present, this should be done before placing the meis in the cooler.)
- The tallis is wrapped right over left, and over the head of the meis.
- The sovev is wrapped around the meis's feet, then over his left side, then over his right side, and then over his head.
- **Solution** Earth is sprinkled around the edges of the *aron*.
- The aron is closed and the following is recited:

מִלְחַמָה אִישׁ חַרְבּוֹ עַל יָרֵכוֹ מִפַּחַד בַּלֵּילוֹת. יְבָרֶכְךּ יְיָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶה. יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנְיו ְאֵלֶיךְ יִשָּׂא יִי פָנִיו אֵלֶיך וְיִשֵּׁם לְדִּ שָׁלוֹם. יֵלְכוּ יֹנְקוֹתִיו וִיהִי כַזַּיִת הוֹדוֹ וְרֵיחַ לוֹ כַּלְּבְנוֹן. רָאִיתִי וְהְגֵּה מְנוֹרַת זָהָב כָּלָה וְגָלָה עַל־רֹאשָׁה וִשִׁבְעָה גֵרֹתֵיהָ עָלִיהַ שִׁבְעָה וִשִּׁבְעָה מוּצַקוֹת לַגַּרוֹת אַשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשַה. וּשְׁנַיִם זֵיתִים עַלֵּיהַ אָחַד מִימִין הַגִּּלַה וָאָחַד עַל־שְׁמֹאלַה. מִי־ אַתָּה הַריהַגָּדוֹל לִפְנֵי זְרָבָּבֶל לְמִישֹׁר וְהוֹצִיא אֵת־הָאֵבֵן הַרֹאשָׁה תִּשְׁאוֹת חֵן חֵן לַה. ועתה יגדל־נָא כֹחַ אַ-דֹנָי כַּאֲשֵׁר דִבַּרָתָ לֵאמֹר. וְאוּלָם חַי־אָנִי וְיִמְלֵא כְבוֹד־יִיְ אֶת־כָּל־ רַאָרֶץ.

The aron is removed from the tahara room feet first, and the following is recited:

וּבְנִסֹעַ הַמִּשָׁבָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִים וּבַחֵנֹת הַמִּשָׁבַן יַקִימוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִים, וְהַזַּר הַקָּרֵב יוּמַת. וַיָהִי בּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה יִי וְיָפָצוּ אֹיָבֶיךּ וְיַנָסוּ מְשַׂנְאֶיךּ מִפְּנֶיה. כִּי מַלְאָבֶיו יָצַנֶּה־לָדְ לִשְׁמָרָדְ בִּכָּל־דְּרָכֶיהָ עַל־כַּפַּיִם יִשְּׂאוּנְדְ פֶּן תִּגֹּף בָּאֶבֶן רַגְּלֶהְ לֹא־תִאָנֶה אֵלֶיךְ ַרָעָה וְגָגַע לֹא־יִקְרַב בְּאָהֶלֶה. יְיָ אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְי שְׁמוֹ. יְיִ יִּלְחֵם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תַּחֲרִישׁוּן.

- The misaskim ask forgiveness from the meis in case they may have acted disrespectfully in his presence.
- The misaskim take leave by walking backwards, and wash their hands outside the building in the manner described above.

