

Messengers of God represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society.

..... The purpose of human life for Bahá'ís is to know and love God, to acquire virtues and spiritual qualities, and to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. Bahá'ís view life in this world as a preparation for life in the next world. The soul comes into existence at conception and is immortal.

..... Bahá'í teachings describe life and death as parts of an eternal process of growth. In this world and after death an individual's soul develops and evolves as it draws nearer to God. Heaven is described as nearness to God; hell is separation from God. The soul is not reborn in a different body. Bahá'u'lláh said that death is reunion with God.

..... Bahá'í Office of Public Information, Wilmette, IL., Dec. 1989
[.//.] [.]

For those unfamiliar with the Bahá'í Faith, here are some helpful links to assist you in exploring the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh:
www.bahai.org www.us.bahai.org www.bahaiworldnews.org Introduction

Just as we prepare for the birth of a new baby, it is equally important to pay a lot of attention to the preparation of those passing to the spiritual worlds of God. Many of us are unprepared and suddenly we are faced with the need to render this service for a beloved soul.

There is much information about Bahá'í Funerals and Burial Practices scattered in many different publications. This booklet is not meant to replace these resources. Rather, it is an attempt to provide a handy guide to assist individuals and institutions to extend this sacred service to the Baha'is. A partial list of publications appears at the end of this booklet.

Included herein are some practical things to consider when assisting a believer who is passing to the next world. They are by no means definitive or exhaustive, but may act as an aid to awareness of various details that may apply in individual cases.

Suggestions are included for ways to help with the care of those with terminal illness. Those believers who wish to make it easier for those left behind will find this booklet useful, as well.

Finally, it is hoped that this booklet will serve as a valuable aid without having to search many places for the answers one needs in arranging a befitting farewell to a soul whose earthly journey has ended.- - -

Responsibilities of Local Spiritual Assemblies

The burial of the dead is an occasion of great solemnity and importance, and while the conduct of the funeral service and the arrangements for the interment may be left to the relatives of the deceased, the Local Spiritual Assembly has the responsibility for educating the believers in the essential requirements of the Bahá'í law of burial as at present applied, and in courteously and tactfully drawing these requirements to the attention of the relatives if there is any indication that they may fail to observe them. These requirements are: that the body not be cremated; that it not be transported more than an hour's journey from the place of death to the place of burial; that the Prayer for the Dead be recited if the deceased is a Bahá'í of fifteen years (of age) or more; and that the funeral be carried out in a simple and dignified manner that would be a credit to the community. (Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies [Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities: Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies], 18.1)

Assemblies might wish to appoint someone to contact local funeral homes to talk with the Director about available facilities and services. This is an opportunity to present them with a copy of this booklet and to introduce the Faith. A Press Kit could be given them at this time. Directors can provide information about cemeteries in the area that would be within the burial requirement of no more than a one hour journey from place of death. Many have a list of them. Some cemeteries require a vault at the gravesite, others do not, especially those outside city limits. There can be cost savings in having the funeral home open and close the grave, where this is permitted. Some country cemeteries may be owned by churches and one would have to ask if non church members may be buried there.

Larger communities could also purchase a casket to have on hand for emergency situations. It may not always be possible to obtain one fast enough if needed for a rapid burial.- - -

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Arrangements to store it at a funeral parlor would be an option if permitted. Embalming and refrigeration requirements may differ from place to place. Assemblies should be aware of the laws in the area in order to be of service to the believers. It is also a good idea to have burial rings and shroud materials available for community members.

A seminar for the believers about this very important topic is another way of educating community members about advance and responsible preparation for our transition to the next world. Although many do not wish to face the prospect of death, we all will die sometime—some by accident or illness; others by the aging process. Included in the instruction could be information about avoiding excessive funeral and burial costs. Among the many low cost options are direct burial with a

graveside service. A memorial service may be held at a later date. Each state has different laws requiring embalming and these should be checked out in advance. It is a good idea to request itemization of all the services the funeral home may offer. The Federal Trade Commission has many laws regarding funeral costs and can be called upon to assist with disputes about unfair charges.

In some states burial is permitted on private property. And preparation of the body need not always be at a mortuary. It can be done at home if one so desires. If no one is available to render this service, mortuary staff can perform it. Arrangements may be possible to allow someone to be present to say prayers as the body is prepared. Community members may be reminded of the importance of preparing Advance Health Care Directives to specify what, if any, revival methods are to be used. Information about this can easily be obtained from the Internet and in the case of low income individuals and the elderly, from available free legal services. An attorney may be needed to assure conformity with State requirements.

Individuals can feel confident in seeking assistance from their Assembly, or from a nearby Assembly if they do not reside- - -

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in a community that has an Assembly. The Assembly can often help to assure that a proper Bahá'í funeral takes place if relatives of the deceased are not Baha'is. The Assembly may offer to help notify next of kin and aid in the preparation of readings for the service, if desired. Prayers offered on behalf of those bereaved can be of great help in easing the trauma associated with parting with a loved one. A community effort to provide meals for family and friends and to prepare food and assist with a reception following the service is a warm and loving way to provide for support for bereaved ones. A committee could also help those bereaved with finding the necessary resources to conclude the business of the deceased and with sending acknowledgments of condolences, flowers and contributions. It is very difficult for the one suffering the loss to attend to all these details, so help with these and other details would most likely be welcome.

Some Assemblies may already have cemeteries. Others may wish to consider acquiring one. It usually is a simple matter and involves getting a suitable property and the necessary permits. Some guidance was provided to the Bahá'ís of Brazil: "At the present time there are no definite regulations for preparing Bahá'í cemeteries. However, in a Tablet of the Master's He emphasizes the need for the cemetery to have a beautiful outward appearance and states that the graves should not be joined together but that each one should have a flower bed around its four sides. He also indicates that it would be pleasing if a pool were located in the center of the cemetery and beautiful trees were planted

around it as well as around the cemetery itself.” Of course the care and maintenance of the cemetery would have to be provided for. A Baha’i-owned cemetery could provide the believers a considerable savings in burial expense. Having a Bahá’í cemetery would add to the Community’s prestige and promote recognition of the nobility with which we regard the human soul.- - -

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Responsibilities of Individuals

Bahá’u’lláh states that it is “incumbent upon everyone” to make a will. A booklet titled, {The Writing of a Will}, on how to prepare a will is available from the Office of the Treasurer, Bahá’í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091. It can also be downloaded from the national Bahá’í website at www.usbnc.org. This document will provide you with some guidelines for your preparation prior to consulting an attorney. It is acceptable place the Greatest Name symbol (Arabic calligraphy) on the top of one’s Will and Testament. You are encouraged to write your testimony and give it to your attorney for inclusion in your Will.

The will should state, among other things, that the believer wishes to be buried according to Bahá’í law and can specify the details of these laws if he or she wishes. It should also include instructions for the payment of any unpaid Huququ’llah. Because wills are usually not located or read until after the funeral, it is important to make family members and/or one’s Assembly aware of one’s wishes in this regard. A copy of the will may be given to one’s local Spiritual Assembly, as well as to family members and/or the executor of the estate. It is important to request trusted persons to plan the funeral exactly as one wishes, since burial instructions usually are not legally binding.

There are other things that individuals can do, although they are not required to do so. It is especially helpful to survivors if adequate funds are accumulated to pay for the funeral. This could be insurance proceeds or savings designated for this purpose. Sometimes an undue hardship is imposed on loved one who are not in a position to assume this cost. A burial kit is also a loving way to eliminate unnecessary stress on those charged with final arrangements.- - -

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A list of helpful suggestions to ease the cares of loved ones can be found in the section “Preparing for Life’s End Stage’ [.] Laws Currently Binding in the West * The body must be buried, not cremated.

’Abdu’l-Bahá explained the law prohibiting cremation:

..... “Thy letter has been received. Due to the scarcity of time, I write the answer briefly: The body of man, which has been formed gradually, must similarly be decomposed gradually. This is according to

the real and natural order and Divine Law. If it had been better for it to be burned after death, in its very creation it would have been so planned that the body would automatically become ignited after death, be consumed and turned into ashes. But the divine order formulated by the heavenly ordinance is that after death, this body shall be transferred from one stage to another different from the preceding one, so that according to the relations which exist in the world, it may gradually combine and mix with other elements, thus going through stages until it arrives in the 3 vegetable kingdom, there turning into plants and flowers, developing into trees of the highest paradise, becoming perfumed and attaining the beauty of color.

..... “‘Cremation suppresses it speedily from attainment to these transformations, the elements becoming so quickly decomposed that transformation to these various stages is checked.’

“When we realize that our physical bodies are composed of elements placed in the earth by their Creator, and which through the orderly processes of His Law are continually being used in the formation of beings, we can better understand the necessity for our physical bodies to be subjected to the gradual process of decomposition. As at the time of death, the real and eternal self of man, his soul, abandons its physical garment to soar in the realms of God, we may compare the body to a vehicle which has been used for the journey through- - -

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earthly life and no longer needed once the destination has been reached.”

..... [Letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated June 6, 1971, to an individual believer, in Lights of Guidance, no. 669] [.]

..... “Whereas believers should be informed of the Bahá’í law of burial and urged to ensure that their remains are not cremated this is a matter of education and not one involving the imposition of sanctions. Obviously a Spiritual Assembly cannot itself arrange for the cremation of remains of a Bahá’í even if it was that person’s wish that his remains be disposed of in this way. Also, whenever a Spiritual Assembly learns that the non-Bahá’í relations of a deceased Bahá’í are proposing to cremate the remains, the Assembly should do all it can to explain the Bahá’í attitude to the relations in an effort to prevent the cremation.

..... ({Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, dated December 9, 1984, Australian Local Spiritual Assembly Handbook, p. 342, par. 12.5.3}) [.]

The Prayer for the Dead is to be recited for a believer age 15 or older. This prayer is found in all the prayer books and on page 40 of this booklet. The gender of this prayer may be changed for a woman. The

prayer is congregational; that is, all must stand [in silence] while one person reads the prayer. If those attending are not Baha'is, they should stand during the reading. There is no requirement to face the Qiblih (Bahji) when reciting this prayer. [.] Correct Way of Reading the Prayer for the Dead

(If the dead be a woman, let him say: This is Thy handmaiden and the daughter of Thy handmaiden, etc...) [From Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 102]- - - -

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The correct way of reciting the Prayer for the Dead is as follows:
Allah-u-Abha (once) We all, verily, worship God (19 times) Allah-u-Abha (once) We all, verily, bow down before God (19 times) Allah-u-Abha (once) We all, verily, are devoted unto God (19 times) Allah-u-Abha (once) We all, verily, give praise unto God (19 times) [.]

The body is not to be transported more than one hour's journey from the place of death. No method of transport is specified, but the journey must not take longer than an hour. The time may be calculated from the city limits to the site of burial. [.] Laws Not Presently Binding in the West

The body should be washed and wrapped in a shroud of [white] silk or cotton (See Section on Body Preparation.)

A burial ring is to be placed on the finger. The ring bears the inscription, {"I come forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate."} The burial ring is used for adults only (those age 15 and older). These rings are available from Bahá'í Distribution Service and other Bahá'í distribution sources.

When buried, the feet should face the Qiblih, which is Bahji.

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The coffin should be of crystal, stone or hard fine wood. There is no objection at present to the use of concrete. [.] Other Considerations

Burial should take place as soon after death as possible.

The body is not to be embalmed. It can be refrigerated for a short time if needed to allow additional time for distant relatives to arrive and for preparation of the body. Check with your state or a local funeral director to determine how long a body may be held without embalming. There may be a charge for this service. When circumstances do not permit prompt burial or if embalming is a requirement of civil law where you reside, ask that a process be used that will only temporarily

regard the disintegration.

It is not permissible to allow injection of any chemical to speed the rate of decomposition.

Bahá'ís may donate their bodies or organs to medical science, but provisions must be made to treat the remains with dignity and bury the remains within one hour's travel from the place of death. (See Section on Organ Donation.) [*] Related Topics

Believers who have been deprived of administrative rights may be buried according to Bahá'í Law and in Bahá'í cemeteries.

Relatives who are not Bahá'í may be buried in Bahá'í cemeteries, but may not have an official Bahá'í funeral. (The Prayer for the Dead would not be read.)- - -

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A naturally aborted fetus is not to be cremated. Since the soul exists at conception, it would be perfectly proper to have a simple Bahá'í burial. If abortion takes place at a hospital the staff needs to be made aware that the fetus must not be cremated. (See Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies [Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities] 18.5)

Bahá'ís in military service should take all necessary measures to see that Bahá'í laws regarding burial are observed. All military personnel should also notify their families or next of kin about the laws and of their wish to be buried accordingly.

If death occurs at sea, the friends should be guided by whatever civil or maritime law is applicable under the circumstances until the Universal House of Justice legislates on this matter. There is no provision in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas concerning this.

Although suicide is forbidden in the Sacred Scriptures, victims of suicide are permitted to have a Bahá'í funeral.

Regarding euthanasia, nothing has been found in the Sacred Text on this matter. Decisions must be left to the patient and those responsible for the patient via a Living Will or other document.

The word "Baha'i" may be inscribed in the center of a nine-pointed star on the gravestone. Quotations from the Writings also may be used. Any one of the three samples below [not in this text] may be used. The gravestone should reflect the dignity and sacredness of the Faith.- - -

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Memorial services may be held but should not become ritualistic.

Prayers on behalf of the departed are conducive to the progress of the soul in the world beyond. Gifts and good deeds in memory of those who have passed on are most helpful to the development of their souls in the realms beyond and will give them great joy. [.] The Funeral Service

It is extremely simple and consists of a congregational prayer [the Prayer for the Dead] to be read before burial. (See page 30.) There is no objection whatever to people who are not Bahá'ís being present when the prescribed prayer is read, as long as they respect our manner of reading it and stand while it is being read. No rituals should be developed in conducting a service and the believers may select readings from the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures and from other sources, if desired. Music may be used and the utmost flexibility and simplicity observed. It is a sacred occasion and should be treated accordingly. The choice of an open or closed casket is a matter of individual preference. [.]

If the family of a Bahá'í Declines a Bahá'í Funeral

Bahá'ís may attend the funeral service of a Bahá'í whose non-Bahá'í relatives have prevented the Bahá'í funeral from taking place. The Bahá'ís should offer Bahá'í prayers for the progress of the soul of their departed friend, if circumstances permit. If they cannot be offered on the occasion of the funeral they should be offered at another time. However, if possible, every effort should be made to persuade the family to allow a Bahá'í funeral. - - -

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Selection of a Coffin

There is quite a range of prices for coffins. When you buy one from the funeral home you may or may not get the lowest price available. There are places on the internet that will deliver within 2 days. There prices are quite reasonable, ranging from around \$1200 to \$2000 for a fine hard wood casket. Check out exactly what is offered. Is the interior lined or is it extra? It might be wise to have a trusted friend help with this at a time when one may be too stressed to make a good decision. Be careful of extra items the mortuary may try to sell you that are unnecessary for a Bahá'í funeral and that can increase the cost of burial considerably.

Be aware that only in some cases it is required to purchase the coffin from the funeral home handling arrangements. Some pressure may be applied to drive up the price, but one should feel free to ask for the most economical coffin available from the supplier. If you state the amount you can afford, the funeral home may work within your budget.

To combat many abuses in the industry, the Federal Trade Commission enacted legislation to protect consumers from unfair and deceptive practices. One can call on that body to assist with any problems you may

encounter regarding negotiations for fair prices.

..... [NOTE: California is one of the states where you may purchase a casket from a source other than the funeral home, and, if so purchased, the following rules apply: The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires funeral homes to accept any casket purchased from an outside source. The casket company you choose will deliver during normal business hours, and you do not have to be present to accept the delivery. A funeral provider's refusal to use third party merchandise until the consumer has inspected it may place an unreasonable burden on consumer choice, in violation of Section 453.4(b)(1) of the FTC Funeral Rule; therefore they cannot refuse to accept the casket delivery. State and Federal laws prohibit any additional fees from being assessed to your casket purchase. Funeral or other service fees are to be negotiated between the member and their funeral home.] [*] Selection of a Cemetery

Frequently a cemetery a little distant from the city or town where death occurs can be a less expensive alternative and can be a lovely site as well. Some cemeteries may have a list of places that would be within an hour's journey. Depending on the time of year various conditions can affect the time it takes to arrive at a cemetery, such as rain, fog, snow, road repairs, etc. These need to be taken into consideration when selecting a burial site. It seems a good idea to have a list of cemetery locations on file for easy reference. It is also beneficial to know that veterans are entitled to free- - -

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burial in a veteran's cemetery and a spouse can obtain an adjoining plot at a nominal charge. If there is one close to the place of death, it would be worth exploring.

Many individuals take the time to explore the various locations that could be considered for distance and indicate their choice of a burial site. Sometimes it is advantageous to pre-pay a site, if one does not plan to travel at any time and has a permanent residence. [.] Graveside Services

In lieu of a service at a mortuary, one may elect to have a graveside service, and a memorial in a home or other chosen site. Considerable savings are possible in choosing this option. It is also possible to plan a very simple and beautiful combined memorial and burial service at the site of interment. [.] Grave Markers

Here again there is considerable price variation. Since the marker needn't be placed immediately, there is time to shop around. That way the quotation and/or inscription desired can be carefully thought out and would prevent possible future regrets. Normally, the building of structures or headstones on graves should be left to the family of the deceased, and all expenses should be covered by them. The use of the

Most Great Name or the ringstone symbol on the gravestone is not appropriate. In a letter dated September 17, 1971 to an individual believer we wrote the following: “Concerning the question you ask in your postscript, there is no specific ruling regarding the type of headstone that may be used at a grave site. However, regarding the inscription on a headstone, the beloved Guardian asked the believers not to use any form of the Greatest Name but a nine pointed star may be used. Or, you may wish to have an appropriate- - -

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writing inscribed on the headstone. The position of the body in the grave should be with the feet pointing toward the Qiblah, which is Bahji in 'Akka.” (Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda, May 4, 1972 - Lights of Guidance, p. 198.)
[.] [./]

..... “As regards your question: there is no reason why the word ‘Bahá’í’ should not appear in the centre of a nine-pointed star on the tombstone of dear Elsa Vento, but the ring-stone emblem should not be used, nor the Greatest Name.” (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, September 30, 1955 - Lights of Guidance, p. 202)

..... “The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 22 August 1975, about the marking of Bahá’í graves. We have been asked to tell you that nothing has been found in the Writings making this a requirement. However, in Bahá’í cemeteries in 'Akká and Haifa, the graves are marked and some of the words on the headstones are those of Bahá’u’lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. As you know, Shoghi Effendi indicated that the Most Great Name would not be appropriate for gravestones and has suggested that such inscriptions as a nine-pointed star and extracts from the Writings would be suitable.

..... [Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, dated November 13, 1975, to a in Australian Local Spiritual Assembly Handbook, p. 345, par. 12.6.4 and Compilations, National Spiritual Assembly USA {Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities}, 19:13) [./]
[.] - - -

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Burial of Infants and Children

The funeral and burial of Bahá’í babies and children follow the same procedures as those over the age of 15. Of course, the shrouding material required would be much less and would need to be estimated for each one. The Prayer for the Dead would not be read. But other readings, prayers and music can be used. These occasions are particularly difficult as a young life is taken before it has the opportunity to fully develop.

The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer solace to the bereaved: "The inscrutable divine wisdom underlieth such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transferreth a fresh and tender shrub from a confined place to a wide open area. This transfer is not the cause of the withering, the lessening or the destruction of that shrub; nay, on the contrary, it maketh it to grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy, become green and bear fruit. This hidden secret is well known to the gardener, but those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener, in his anger and wrath, hath uprooted the shrub. Yet to those who are aware, this concealed fact is manifest, and this predestined decree is considered a bounty. Do not feel grieved or disconsolate..." (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 199-200)

[.] Body Preparation

When the deceased passes away in a hospital, the staff usually washes and disinfects the body. It can be washed again using the procedure outlined.

Bahá'u'lláh confirmed the Báb's provision that the body of the deceased should be wrapped in five sheets of silk or cotton, and added, "for those whose means are limited a single sheet of either fabric will suffice." He also states that by "five sheets" is meant "five cloths."

Concerning the way to wrap the body, the Bahá'í Writings do not define this and, at present, the Bahá'ís are free to use their judgment in the matter. (See Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Notes pp. 229-230.)- - -

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There is a type of cotton shroud outfit (pants, top, head covering) available from Jewish funeral homes and perhaps others. It might be easier to manage for some folks. If people wish, they can clad the body in these garments and then wrap a single piece of fabric over all. This method has been used by some Bahá'ís and Assemblies and seems in keeping with the spirit of the laws.

As we begin this loving service for our loved one or someone else's dear departed, keep in mind that the law itself is quite simple. We are told what kind of cloth to use and what kind of casket to use. The rest is up to us, much like a Bahá'í marriage ceremony. The family may have made special requests: the picture of a loved one tucked into the folds of cloth; petals from the Shrines in the hand; a favorite fragrance to be used in anointing the body. Families from the Middle East are accustomed to leaving the face of the deceased uncovered, but it is acceptable to cover it. This is a saying good-bye, a leave-taking and each one is different and personal.

In the United States, funeral directors will offer ready assistance when one has questions or needs help. They are accustomed to requests of this nature because the Muslims, people of the Jewish Faith and some

Christian sects also prepare the body for burial. The body may be prepared at home, but it could be easier to use the facilities at the funeral home. They have a room for this purpose equipped with all the necessary items. Call ahead to arrange a convenient time to prepare the body. If it has been refrigerated, ask that it be kept at room temperature for an hour or two prior to your arrival.

Some places require the use of a gown and mask to comply with governmental regulations. You will need to use a plastic apron and gloves. Check with the funeral director to find out what items are supplied. Two or three persons should be there to help and say prayers.

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Items to take with you: * mild soap * shampoo * wash cloth and towels * paper towels

2-3 clean disposable cloths for covering body parts

Attar of Roses or some other fragrance, if desired

the burial ring

6 to 9 yards of white silk or cotton for wrapping, depending on the person's size

scissors

ribbons or small fabric strips to secure the wraps

a prayer book

tape or CD player and some beautiful music

water or other beverage for participants [.]

Preparation of the wrapping cloth is best done beforehand. It is easier to cut the cloth in smaller pieces. Fold the entire piece in half, then take one of the halves and fold it in half, and [then] cut the fold. Then fold each cut half in half again, and cut at the fold. You will then have four pieces for the arms and legs. The longer piece will cover the torso and head. Some people leave the face uncovered; others cover it. There is no prescribed method.

Before moving the covering [that has been used by the funeral parlor] from the body, you may wish to say prayers and prepare yourselves spiritually. The body, in all likelihood, will not appear as you may expect. Blood, which is no longer being pumped through the body, pools in the lowest part. Some parts may appear bruised, mottled or purplish, but this is natural. Rigor mortis sets in from 4-8 hours after death; usually no longer than 12 hours. It leaves- - -

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24-36 hours after death, but can be broken by moving body parts prior

to that time. Be aware that body wastes may be eliminated, perhaps resulting in some unpleasant odors. These must be cleaned away and you can request help with this from the facility's personnel. There could be unexpected noise or movement of the body, which is perfectly normal and doesn't mean the person is still alive.

Using the hose provided, shampoo the hair and comb it. Then continue to wash the rest of the body with mild soap, rinsing and drying carefully. Keep the private parts of the body covered before and after washing. The body can then be anointed, if desired.

Two, three or more persons are needed to assist with wrapping. There is no specific way to do this. Some begin with covering the entire body with one piece of cloth. Others start with the limbs first, beginning with the fingers and working toward the shoulder; then each leg starting at the toes. Beginning with the end of the cloth at the feet, they roll the body to one side, place the cloth under it, lift the other side to pull the cloth under the body then move it up over the head, depending on whether or not you want to cover the face. It could be wrapped just around the torso and then brought up just to cover the head. Use the ribbons or fabric strips to tie where necessary to keep the wrap in place.

Funeral personnel will transfer the body to the casket and remove it to where it will be transported or to the parlor in which the service will be held. (See Section on Actual Examples of Body Preparation.) Funeral staff will also transport the body directly to the gravesite if a service will be held there instead of in the mortuary. - - -

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Obtaining the Death Certificate

The death certificate is obtained through the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the County Health Department in most cases. Usually this same department issues a burial permit which must be obtained before burial can take place. It is a good idea to get several certified copies of the death certificate at the same time because copies will be needed for insurance purposes, probate when required, closing accounts of the deceased, etc. [.] Special Circumstances

In cases of sudden, accidental death, homicide or suicide, the coroner always performs an autopsy. This is also true in the case of younger persons experiencing sudden unexplained death. The office does not necessarily embalm the victim, but the family needs to make it clear that they do not wish the body to be embalmed. The Coroner's Office can refrigerate the body for a day or two, which is long enough to perform the autopsy and release the body for burial. (The results of the autopsy may not be available for some time afterward.) Bahá'ís may then prepare the body for the funeral services.

When elderly people pass away at home an autopsy is usually not required whether or not they have been under a doctor's care. The procedure is to call Law Enforcement officials (the Police Department in a City, or the Sheriff's Office in the County) and if they do not see anything suspicious in their investigation of the death, the Coroner is asked to come and issue a death certificate. When Hospice has been involved with a terminally ill patient there is usually no autopsy performed.

If a patient dies in the hospital, the doctor will usually issue the death certificate based upon his/her knowledge of- - -

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the patient's condition. It is not possible to prepare a body for burial in the hospital as there are no facilities for this. The staff washes and disinfects the body prior to its removal. If a deceased person dies alone and is not found for two or more days, body preparation by the believers is not recommended because decomposition has already begun. This might also apply in case of accident victims or any kind of violent death where there is disfigurement of the body. Morticians are more prepared to perform this service but must be informed of our requirement not to embalm. Perhaps observers would be allowed to offer prayers during this procedure. [.] Organ Donation

"We have not come across anything specific in the writings on transplants of hearts and other organs or regarding the time of death, and the Universal House of Justice does not wish to make any statements on these points at this time." (From a Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, September 18, 1968.)

The Guardian, in a letter dated September 6, 1946 written on his behalf states, "There is nothing in the teachings which would forbid a Bahá'í to bequeath his eyes to another person or for a hospital; on the contrary it seems a noble thing to do." Of course any transplanted organ then belongs to the recipient and the stipulation about cremation and an hour's journey are not applicable to that individual, unless they are a Baha'i.

In {Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies} [Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities], page 18.10, a letter written on behalf of the Guardian addresses the possibility of using one's body in service to mankind after death and states clearly that Bahá'ís who do this should stipulate that their remains not be cremated or taken more than an hour's journey from the place of death for burial. When organs (heart, lung, kidneys, etc.) are donated, removal must be done by a surgeon under supervision in a hospital. If a person dies elsewhere- - -

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the cost of transport to the hospital for this person is borne by the

estate of the deceased. The costs of removal and transport to the recipient are borne by the recipient.

Eyes, tissues and inner ear may be removed at the mortuary by the Transplant Bank. Arrangements must be made directly with the institution involved.

If the whole body is donated for medical research, arrangements must be made ahead with the institution to which it will go, with the stipulation that the remains not be cremated nor transported more than an hour from the place of death. Immediate refrigeration must be requested at the funeral home pending completion of the death certificate, which is required prior to transport. Telephone numbers where one can get information: 1-800-355-SHARE (355-7427) and 1-800-55-DONOR (553-6667)

Regional Donor Organizations exist throughout the country. One of the above references should be able to put you in touch with one in your area. There may be some age considerations, as well, so it is important to explore this subject in advance.- - -

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Loving Care for the
Bereaved

The Assembly may wish to compile a list of support services to assist the grieving individual(s). Such services are provided through the Dept. of Aging, hospitals, and some mortuaries, etc. Of course, the help offered must be acceptable to the bereaved. Showing loving friendship in a number of ways is very helpful. One may suggest just talking, going to a movie, going out to dinner, or some other activity, not necessarily a Bahá'í event. The respect and care shown to a grieving person is a very important aspect of service at the time of death. This support is even more critical in the event of sudden, unexpected death.

An individual trained to provide this support is highly recommended for Assemblies. Such training is available through AARP, (The American Association of Retired Persons) and through the other agencies mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Many times people are reluctant to offer assistance to the bereaved because they don't know what to say. And many times unthinking comments are made, such as "Oh, he/she is much better off now." The grieving person is faced with the ensuing loneliness that follows a separation, so comments should be sincere and show concern for the welfare of the person. Offers to help with needed chores are usually welcome.

Many individuals do not know what to say to a grief-stricken person. But the person needs support at this moment and for a time to come. The worst thing is to say nothing and to stay away from the bereaved one for fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. Being there physically is very

helpful, as is a kind note sent with expressions of sympathy. A simple gesture of placing your hand over your heart expresses more than words can say. Offers of help are welcome, or even looking around to see what needs doing and pitching in to do it.- - -

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Answering phone calls is a considerate way of helping. Be sure to include children in loving actions. While the very young child may not completely understand what has happened, he or she is very much aware that something really serious is going on and they need to be assured and loved. They will have questions about death and it is important to listen to them and answer them honestly in a way that is appropriate for the age of the child.

During the months following the death, the Assembly might wish to designate a committee or individuals to provide continuous support. Grieving is a process that must take place, even though we are all aware that the parting is temporary and the person has gone to a more wonderful place. Too frequently those who lose loved ones are left to their own devices to grieve and are sometimes expected to be over it quickly and resume a normal life. This doesn't usually happen right away and each individual has his/her own timeline for dealing with grief.

When visiting, one needs to help the griever remember the loved one. Listen to whatever he/she wants to talk about and be completely non-judgmental. Above all, don't say things like, "It's better this way," in the case of someone who has suffered a long time before dying, or in other cases, "Don't worry, you'll find someone else" or "I know how you feel" (because you really don't!). There are some fine books on this subject that can be very helpful.

One can feel abandoned during the grieving process. An invitation to lunch, dinner, or a movie can help lift the person out of a depression that sometimes follows bereavement. Offer loving support and be understanding of the fact that everyone grieves in their own way and at their own pace. While some may recover quickly, others take more time. There is no set rule on how long each individual should take to grieve and each should be helped to feel that it's all right to take whatever span of time is needed.- - -

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A Compassionate Service for the
Terminally Ill

The Chalice of Repose Project, Inc. is a unique end-of-life patient care program begun in Denver, Colorado in 1992 and is now based at St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, Montana.

The service they provide was featured on a Dateline Program in

December, 1998. Soothing, beautiful harp music is played to help ease the loneliness and fear of dying.

..... “In wintry Montana, where the mountains meet the big sky, the idea of these people with harps and heavenly voices guiding the dying more gently into that great good night ... a little too sweet and the notion of music as good medicine, too good to be true ... consider this: the hospital has made a place for this program ... because they’ve seen it work...

..... “I can watch this kind of change that begins to occur after the music is being played,” says Dr. Speckert, “and have a very strong sense that the anguish and discomfort they’re having which includes pain, is relaxed and softened.... We have shown in several cases where the amount of medicine that is required after is significantly less than what it was.”

You can access information and purchase harp music from their web site at <http://www.saintpatrick.org/chalice.html>

Many similar services are available in other areas of the country. Having a music CD of beautiful harp music on hand for persons who are ill is a beautiful way of providing comfort. Saying prayers with the music in the background frequently results in a very peaceful and beautiful passing from this earthly life.- - -

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Advance
Directives

Instructions about the medical care one wants if unable to speak for oneself are in two main types. A **LIVING WILL** is used to provide instructions for medical care if you become terminally ill and are unable to express your wishes, such as which life-sustaining treatment you would or would not want. A **HEALTH CARE POWER OF ATTORNEY** is a document that appoints an agent or proxy to make decisions about your medical care if you become unable to make decisions about your medical care if you become unable to make those decisions. A **DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY** appoints a person to take charge of all of your affairs. It would be a good idea to consult an attorney when you wish to execute these documents.

Make your wishes known. There have been some cases where Living Wills have been disregarded and fights to enforce them have ensued. Here are some tips:

Discuss your wishes with family members, doctors and caregivers.

Avoid generic advance directive forms; complete and update documents with doctor’s input.

Pick a health-care agent or proxy who will act aggressively on your behalf; the person closest to you may not always be the best choice.

Sign and date each directive and have it witnessed according to the laws in your state.

Put copies of your directives with your medical records and make them available to family and care providers.

Chose a new doctor if yours is not willing to abide by your wishes.- - -

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Preparing for Life's End Stage

It may seem a formidable task to organize our personal and financial information, but it is an act of loving service for our loved ones. It not only can be a great help in our own planning, and be invaluable for family members or care givers in the event of death or disability. As we age or if other unforeseen circumstances occur at any age it may be necessary for someone to assist us with managing our affairs. Having vital information already organized makes the task so much simpler. Two separate files will suffice to provide the needed information: one for Personal Records, the other for Financial Records. Suggested contents for each one follow: . PERSONAL RECORDS (1) Full legal name (2) Date and place of birth (3) Mother's legal name (4) Father's legal name (5) Address of my legal residence (6) Social Security number

Location of birth certificate, certificate of marriage, citizenship, adoption, divorce, etc.

Marital status (married, separated, divorced, widow/er, remarried, never married)

Health insurance information

Education and military records

Name and addresses of spouse and children (or location of death certificates is they are deceased)

Name of pet and veterinarian

List of medications you take

Name and phone number of your primary care physician- - -

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Name and phone number of nearest Spiritual Assembly and/or Auxiliary Board Member

Names and addresses of relatives and close friends

Volunteer commitments

List of employers and dates of employment (a copy of resume may suffice)

Membership in organizations and awards received

Location of Will or Trust, Living Will, Power of Attorney and/or Health-Care Durable Power of Attorney

Location of Safe Deposit Box, number, key and contents

Organ and Tissue Donation arrangements

Location of a Burial Kit if you have one

Requests, preferences or prearrangements for burial

Where I would like memorial gifts to be made . FINANCIAL RECORDS:

Sources of all income and assets (pensions, interest, etc.)

Debts owed to me

Social Security and Medicare information

Retirement plans and who to contact, name(s) of 401K beneficiary(ies)

Mortgage information, deeds, payment records

Property Tax information

Liabilities—approximate amounts owed to whom and list of credit card numbers, account numbers and 800 numbers

Utility and other monthly payments

Investment income (stocks, bonds, property) and stockbroker's contact information

Insurance information (auto, life, health and property) with policy numbers, name(s) of beneficiary(ies)- - -

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Bank accounts (checking, savings, credit union with account numbers)

Location of Car Title

List and location of all valuables and personal items

Location, number(s) and contents of safe deposit box(es); location of key(s)

Copy of Will or Trust

Copy of most recent income tax return with name and phone number of your accountant or person who prepares your taxes

Location of previous income tax records)

A record of previous payments of Huququ'llah so that additional liability can be determined

some people, especially the elderly or those with disabilities, may find it a good strategy to have a joint checking account with a trusted close relative. Funds are quickly frozen upon the death of the account holder and will not be available until a certain period of time elapses, depending upon the size of the estate and individual state laws regarding probate. The joint account holder can access required funds by going immediately to the financial institution without delay prior to the time the funds become inaccessible. In some cases this could prevent unnecessary financial hardship for survivors. [.]

Note: The priority of payments from the estate is: (1) First: Burial Expense

Second: Debts (credit card balances are not required to be paid by survivors)

Third: Unpaid Huququ'llah- - -

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Suggested Checklist for Survivors

Decide place and time of funeral service

Submit obituary with time and place of service

Name a suitable charity for memorial gifts

Notify all relatives and friends of deceased

Arrange hospitality for visiting relatives

Arrange childcare if needed

Keep a record of all phone calls, visits, food, offers of help (have someone assist with this)

Coordinate food needed for family members and reception following burial

Coordinate household chores

Notify executor and/or attorney

Send acknowledgements of remembrances

Check debts and payments due

If deceased was living alone, protect valuables and take

precautions against intruders

Provide for care of pets and houseplants

Cancel subscriptions, newspapers, magazines, e-mail, internet accounts, cable TV, credit cards if needed

Deal with utilities, landlord, post office, yard or household help

Arrange for disposition of medical devices, prescriptions, etc.

Find someone to assist spouse or other close relatives as the need arises to take care of any remaining details and errands

Notify National Spiritual Assembly of the death and submit biography of the deceased if desired- - -

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Excerpted from a Poem for

Shoghi Effendi by Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum "Poems for the Passing," pp. 2-3 . I gazed upon his blessed face And never saw a beauty so sublime – It was my last look for all time – In agony and joy. I laid him in his second shroud And carpeted his sleeping form with flowers From Holy Places inmost bowers A cloak of love. I tucked the petals in his hands And laid the soft white silk so warm Over all his treasured form – Across his face. My love, I tucked you in for aye And on your breast a crimson rose With what prayer and kiss God knows – I gently laid.- - -

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Actual Examples of Body Preparation

..... This first account is of the funeral of Dr. Esslemont, the author of {Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era}, as written on page 41 in {Unfolding Destiny}, by Shoghi Effendi [a compilation of letters written by Shoghi Effendi and letters written on his behalf, compiled by the Bahá'ís of the British Isles] [.]

“Hard as it was for everyone who had known Dr. Esslemont to see him pass away and to realise what a great loss it means to the friends the world over, we can find no greater consolation than in the happy thought that he now lies in peace and his soul where it so loved to be. Beyond all earthly cares, all pains and sorrows his soul dwells forever.

“The funeral service was both simple and touching. His body was washed by two of the friends, dressed and wrapped in white silk cloth and perfumed by attar of roses. On his finger Shoghi Effendi placed his own Bahá'í ring which he had worn for a good many years. Laid in a simple casket of walnut and placed in the hall of the Pilgrim House, the friends gathered together and said their funeral prayer over him. The

casket was carried for a short distance by Shoghi Effendi and then placed in the Master's carriage and accompanied by the sons-in-law of the Master it slowly wound its way, followed by eleven other cabs carrying the friends, to the foot of Mt. Carmel. There it was laid to rest in that beautifully-situated cemetery, and flowers from the garden of the Master's home were scattered over his grave. Simple as he was in his life and character, equally simple was his funeral service. And yet just as in the simplicity of his character lay his many virtues, in like manner did the simplicity of that service sink into every heart and fill every eye with tears."- - - -

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..... This account is from an experience shared by Karin Ferguson, Montreal, Canada [.]

"We were pioneering in Barbados at the time when one of our dear pioneers was hit by a bus while she was on her motor scooter. Her body was quite badly damaged, God bless her. Her name was Sandy Lee, single, age 29. She died 13 years ago this month during the Fast. She had two Masters degrees ... and indeed was such a darling soul and very dedicated to the Faith.

"We started with a round of prayers. There were three women preparing the body. Each of us had clean sponges and a small tub of clean warm water. One started at the top of her face at the hair line, working down. One started at her midriff working down and the other started at the top of her legs, working down, and we cleaned her body from top to bottom. We didn't roll the body over to wash her but sort of lifted a bit as we were washing and washed"around" so to speak. So, we had the body all cleaned up. (This, by the way, was at the funeral parlor and the Mortician was absolutely enthralled that we would do this and loved the idea of it all.) Then one of us brushed her hair backwards.

"We than had about 7 or 9 yards of pure white cotton and we started to wrap it around her body like a Sari. We even wrapped it around her head, leaving her face bare like the East Indian women do. We had a whole small bottle of Attar of Ruses, which we sprinkled all over from top to bottom - - on her neck, her arms, her body, her feet, her hair, so this body smelled of heaven. Between her lips, someone put rose petals which had been at the Shrine of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh. On the little finger of her right hand, we put on the ring that says"From God we have come and to Him we shall return." You can buy them written in English or Arabic.- - - -

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"After that, the mortician came in with his helper. The got right up on the slab where Sandi's (sic) body lay, and slid two large canvas straps, one at her feet and one up around her shoulders. Then they both

lifted the body at the same time into the coffin which was beside the slab.

“Half way through all this, Sandi’s (sic) mother came in to watch what we were doing, and she was very touched by the respect and prayerful attitude of those who were loving preparing the body. When we finished, we had another prayer for Sandi (sic) and the family she left behind.

“After the body was put into the coffin, it was wheeled into the Chapel of the Funeral Home and the Service was held there.”- - -

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..... The next experience is related by Cindy Adlparvar [.]

“The act that has been most important to me as a loving friend and/or family member has been in cleaning the body. One imagines that the normal undertaker will treat the body with a business like disdain, with little humanity and love. When family or friends perform the task, it is with love, gentleness and prayer.

“I have always asked the funeral home personnel for permission to be alone with the body (usually with one or two others to help). Practical tip: If the body has been in the cooler for a day or more, ask the funeral home personnel to ‘warm’ the body a bit - - leaving it out for a couple of hours before you arrive. Before pulling back the covering sheet, we say prayers together. You may be expecting the translucent pale color of the skin, which we already associate with death. You may not be aware that the blood in the body, no longer being pumped around, pools in the lowest part of the body. This means that the back and back of the legs will have all the blood and its color. It makes a bruise-like mark, mottled and purplish in color. Don’t think that they were abused! It is natural.

“The first job is to wash the face and hair, and then wash the body. To wash, you have two options. Firstly you can use the hose (most funeral homes have this available.) You can work on the job one small part at a time. Wet a part of the body,, use a liquid soap on a wash cloth (usually provided by the funeral home along with some form of sanitary disposal) and rinse with the hose, gently. The other way is to use damp disposable cloths. We always clean part by part, covering the private parts out of respect until they are worked on, then recovered. I had a tip from a kind person in a mortuary once – use cotton (they usually will supply you with rolls of cotton wadding like long strips of cotton balls) to cover all openings of the body after they are cleaned. There are still fluids- - -

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in the body that may drain out. Depending on the condition of the

body at death, there may be the need to deal with feces or blood.

“Remember that you need to observe strict hygiene during these procedures. Gloves must be worn, disposable or professionally washed towels used, and you will likely want your hair back and an apron on, as it is common that there is splashing of water and fluids during the cleaning process, and there is a bacterial danger in handling any body fluids improperly.

“When the body is clean, you will perfume it. I have used rose water - - we had to rub it over the entire body, and still we found that because the body was so cold, the smell was not what we had hoped for. We have had better success with oil of rose - - available at health food/alternative or aromatherapy type stores, which held a wonderful scent and it was not necessary to use too much. I have also used commercial scent, but was not as happy with that as I was with the oil of rose. Oil of Rose made me think of the holy Shrines, which was for me the best memory to have at that time ... of course you may experiment as you see fit; however it is in the instructions to perfume the body. At this point make sure that you have put cotton over the eyes in preparation for the cloth.

“The Aqdas states that one needs to use either pure white cotton or silk, in either one or 5 pieces. In all cases, I have used 5 pieces, and in most cases I have used cotton. On one occasion, I chose to use cotton for the 4 shorter pieces with silk for the final outer cover. I feel that this is a family decision, based on cost and family desires. Silk, even at a discount, may become prohibitive, while even cotton will be quite expensive. I measure them according to the person we are burying. Now, this part is based on personal assumption, for I have never seen anywhere (and believe me I have searched through all kinds of things and had other who were well acquainted with- - -

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the Writings in Arabic and Persian look, too) any explanation of how to wrap these pieces.

“Based on the following explanation, you will need to estimate the lengths of the cloth needed, adding an allowance for tie pieces. We have used 15 yards for my diminutive grandmother and as much as 30 yards for my brother-in-law, who was 6’ 4”. The process that we use is as follows: We have always taken one piece and lain it under the person’s right arm, the beginning part of the cloth overlapping the shoulder partially. Then we bring the cloth up over the fingers and back to the shoulder along the top of the arm. Then I fold the excess cloth from the bottom up and over the top of the arm, tucking it in under the top piece, similarly to the way you might wrap a package. I then take the top cloth and bring it round towards the bottom, wrapping first one side, then the other around. We use cut strips of the cloth as ties to gently tie around the

top part of the arm and the forearm. The arm now looks like it is wrapped up, open ended onto the shoulder area. Complete the left arm as the first with the second length of cloth. Using the third and fourth, wrap each leg likewise. Now you have used 4 of the pieces.

“The final piece wraps the entire body. At this point you have a body with all 4 limbs wrapped, the torso open. By rolling the body to one side and placing the cloth under it, then switching to lifting the other side and pulling the cloth over to the other side, bring the final piece of cloth from the feet to the head under the body, then wrap around the top of the head and over the top of the body to the bottom. The head should be closed, with the ends of the lot at the feet.

“Starting at the head and neck, as you did with the other pieces, bring the bottom fabric up and tuck it under the top fabric. You will find that as you do the shoulders, the fabric will have the tendency to slip apart and that you have to place a tie at the neck. Do this gently and tie a bow tie, not a knot. Continue to wrap down the length (sic) of the body, tying off- - -

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at the hips or top of the legs and at the ankles. Place the bottom end of the cloth up, over the feet, then the top down and over it. Make sure that there is enough cloth to bring that length over the feet and past the ankles so the final tie closes the feet cleanly. The body is now fully wrapped. [.]

“It is of utmost importance to estimate the length of the cloth generously. Include the ties in your estimation. A wide width of fabric also helps for the final process. There would be nothing worse than not being able to finish because of inadequate fabric! At this point, we clean up and say prayers together. This is a powerful time, as the body is now respectfully and lovingly prepared to go to the earth. There is such a sense of joy. Throughout the process we have had loving conversations with and about our friend/loved one. Now is a time to say a final good-bye and to know that never again will anyone offer and service to them in this form. There is a wonderful feeling of closure and service in this act.”- - -

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Note: In this last example you will see that the yardage used is quite a bit more than is mentioned in earlier examples. Since there is no specific mention of the amount of cloth used for shrouding, it is left to the individual(s) to decide what is required in each instance. [.] Sources of Fabric Here are possible sources for fabrics: Thai Silks, 1-800-722-7455 Super Silk, 1-800-432-7455

Explore your local fabric stores and the Internet for more sources.

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Quotations on the Nature of the Soul

..... “The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation.” (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 157) [.]

..... “The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe. Blessed is the soul which, at the hour of its separation from the body, is sanctified from the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. Such a soul liveth and moveth in accordance with the Will of its Creator, and entereth the all-highest Paradise. The Maids of Heaven, inmates of the loftiest mansions, will circle around it, and the Prophets of God and His chosen ones will seek its companionship. With them that soul will freely converse, and will recount unto them that which it hath been made to endure in the path of God, the Lord of all worlds. If any man be told that which hath been ordained for such a soul in the worlds of God, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, his whole being will instantly blaze out in his great longing to attain that most exalted, that sanctified and resplendent station.... The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men.”
Bahá’u’lláh [Gleanings, 156] [.]

..... “Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving-kindness and bounty. The movement of My Pen is- - -

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stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe.” (Bahá’u’lláh: Gleanings, 155-156)- - -

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PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED [Obligatory Prayer for the Dead] [For Bahá’ís 15 years or older]

O my God! This is Thy servant and the son of Thy servant who hath believed in Thee and in Thy signs, and set his face towards Thee, wholly

detached from all except Thee. Thou art, verily, of those who show mercy the most merciful.

Deal with him, O Thou Who forgivest the sins of men and concealest their faults, as beseemeth the heaven of Thy bounty and the ocean of Thy grace. Grant him admission within the precincts of Thy transcendent mercy that was before the foundation of earth and heaven. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

..... (Let him, then, repeat six times[1] the greeting “Allah-u-Abha,” and then repeat nineteen times each of the following verses:)

..... [1. That is, say “Allah-u-Abha” once, followed by the first verse below being said 19 times. Then say “Allah-u-Abha” again (the second time), followed by the second verse below being said 19 times, etc., until the six verses have all been said 19 times, each preceded by the invocation, “Allah-u-Abha.”] We all, verily, worship God. We all, verily, bow down before God. We all, verily, are devoted unto God. We all, verily, give praise unto God. We all, verily, yield thanks unto God. We all, verily, are patient in God.

.....If the dead be a woman, let him say: This is Thy handmaiden and the daughter of Thy handmaiden, etc. ...)

..... Bahá'u'lláh (Prayers and Meditations, pp. 260-261) [- - -]

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(In addition to the prayer on the preceding page, which is part of the Bahá'í funeral service [graveside – before interment], these are among the other prayers for the departed that are frequently used in remembering the deceased. They may be used at any time.) [.]

.....O my God! O Thou forgiver of sins, bestower of gifts, dispeller of afflictions!

..... Verily, I beseech Thee to forgive the sins of such as have abandoned the physical garment and have ascended to the spiritual world.

..... O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendors on the loftiest mount.

..... 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Prayers (US edition), pp. 45-46) [.]

..... O my God! O my God! Verily Thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath

been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon Thee, hath turned his face to Thee, hath offered his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favour of meeting Thee.

..... O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

..... Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

.....'Abdu'l-Bahá (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 196-197) [.]

..... O Thou peerless Lord! Let this suckling babe be nursed from the breast of Thy loving-kindness, guard it within the cradle of Thy safety and protection and grant that it be reared in the arms of Thy tender affection.'Abdu'l-Bahá- - -

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..... O God! Rear this little babe in the bosom of Thy love, and give it milk from the breast of Thy Providence. Cultivate this fresh plant in the rose garden of Thy love and aid it to grow through the showers of Thy bounty. Make it a child of the kingdom, and lead it to Thy heavenly realm. Thou art powerful and kind, and Thou art the Bestower, the Generous, the Lord of surpassing bounty.

.....'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Prayers, p. 34) [.]

..... O Thou kind Lord! I am a little child, exalt me by admitting me to the kingdom. I am earthly, make me heavenly; I am of the world below, let me belong to the realm above; gloomy, suffer me to become radiant; material, make me spiritual, and grant that I may manifest Thine infinite bounties. Thou art the Powerful, the All-Loving.

..... 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Prayers, p. 35) [.]

..... Lord! I bear witness that in Thy servant Thou hast reposed Thy Trust, and that is the Spirit wherewith Thou hast given life to the world.

..... I ask of Thee by the splendor of the Orb of Thy Revelation, mercifully to accept from him that which he hath achieved in Thy days. Grant then that he may be invested with the glory of Thy good-pleasure and adorned with Thine acceptance.

..... O my Lord! I myself and all created things bear witness unto Thy

might, and I pray Thee not to turn away from Thyself this spirit that hath ascended unto Thee, unto Thy heavenly place, Thine exalted Paradise and Thy retreats of nearness, O Thou who art the Lord of all men!

..... Grant, then, O my God, that Thy servant may consort with Thy chosen ones, Thy saints and Thy Messengers in heavenly places that the pen cannot tell nor the tongue recount.

..... O My Lord, the poor one hath verily hastened unto the Kingdom of Thy wealth, the stranger unto his home within Thy precincts, he that is sore athirst to the heavenly river of Thy bounty. Deprive him not, O Lord, from his share of the banquet of Thy grace and from the favor of Thy bounty. Thou art in truth the Almighty, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.

.....Bahá'u'lláh, (Bahá'í Prayers, p. 42)- - - -

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Glossary- - - -

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