

## **BAHÁ'Í BURIAL**

The Las Vegas Bahá'í Assembly has appointed a Community Service Committee to help guide the believers in their moment of bereavement to the procedures for a Bahá'í burial. They are there to provide information about local cemeteries, finding readings for the service and/or acquiring the burial package of a shroud and ring, for \$50, less than the actual cost of the items which is available in the Las Vegas Bahá'í Library. The Committee members do **NOT** wash the deceased.

The Committee can be reached by calling - Kamal Asadi: [702-233-4832](tel:702-233-4832) or Atiyeh Farahbakhsh: [702-341-0724](tel:702-341-0724) or Afsaneh Moradi: [702-423-9600](tel:702-423-9600) or Tahereh Moradi – [702-254-5174](tel:702-254-5174).

\* It is not specified in the Kitab-i-Aqdas as to who should wash and prepare the body for burial. If neither the family nor a member of the community is able or willing to do so, most funeral homes provide this as a usual and customary service. (Guidelines for Local Spiritual Assemblies, Chapter 13, p. 9)

It is important to understand the law of your State so that you can know the difference between what is the law of your State or just a requirement of a particular funeral home or cemetery. For example, there are currently **NO** laws within the United States that require embalming, even if burial is delayed. Most funeral homes have refrigeration so the body does not require embalming. Embalming is not required in most states as long as there is no contagious disease. Refrigerated storage units at morgues and funeral homes allow bodies to be preserved for a longer period of time without embalming should burial arrangements take more than twenty-four hours. If a Local Assembly has been told embalming is required, it can call its State Department of Licensing and Regulation to determine whether that is actually the case, as it may be a misrepresentation.

**The National Spiritual Assembly has specific information about Bahá'í burials on its administrative website:**

[http://www.usbnc.org/dept/funeral\\_required.asp](http://www.usbnc.org/dept/funeral_required.asp)

The Prayer for the Dead is available on the website at:

[http://www.usbnc.org/dept/funeral\\_prayer.asp](http://www.usbnc.org/dept/funeral_prayer.asp)

### **Bahá'í Burial Law**

"Briefly the law for the burial of the dead states that it is forbidden to carry the body for more than one hour's journey from the place of death; that the body should be wrapped in a shroud of silk or cotton, and on its finger should be placed a ring bearing inscription 'I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate'; and that the coffin should be of crystal, stone or hard fine wood. A specific 'prayer for the dead' is ordained to be said before internment (see note 11). It has been explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the guardian that this law **prohibits** cremation of the dead. The formal prayer and the ring are meant to be for those who have attained the age of maturity."

"He feels that, in view of what 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said **against cremation**, the believers should be strongly urged, as an act of faith, to make provisions against their remains being cremated. Bahá'u'lláh has laid down as law, in the Aqdas, the manner of the Bahá'í burial, and it is so beautiful, befitting and dignified, that no believer should deprive himself of it."

". . . 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 text from the sacred writings inscribed on the headstone. The position of the body in the grave should be with the feet pointing toward the Qiblih, which is Bahji in 'Akká'."

### **Bahá'í Funeral**

Prayer for the Dead to be Recited by **One Believer**. "The Prayer for the dead is published in Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh, No. CLXVII. It is the **only** Bahá'í obligatory prayer which is to be recited in congregation; **it is to be recited by one believer while all present stand**. There is no requirement to face the Qiblih when

reciting this prayer."

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*, CLXVII. The prayer for the dead which is obligatory appears on page 260 of 'Prayers and Meditations'. This prayer allows for a change in gender. Other prayers for the dead are optional but if used they are to be used as revealed.