

INFORMATION FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

FOR BAHÁ'Í FUNERALS

“Verily, we are God’s... And unto Him we do return.”

1. The Bahá'í Faith began in Persia in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. It is now established throughout the world, having become the second most widespread religion after Christianity, with Bahá'ís in more than 200 countries. In terms of numbers of adherents, the Faith is now the world's eighth-largest organised religion. The Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh (an Arabic title meaning ‘the Glory of God’) is regarded by Bahá'ís as the Messenger of God for this Age. He taught that there is only one God, one religion and that humanity is one. Bahá'ís believe that God progressively reveals Himself to humanity through various Messengers. All the major religions are regarded as coming from the same source, in their essence espousing the same human virtues, but with social teachings tailored to the age in which they appear.
2. The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy and its affairs are in the hands of elected administrative bodies known as ‘Spiritual Assemblies’. Smaller communities without established Assemblies are known as Bahá'í Groups. They can usually be found by referring to the telephone book under ‘Bahá'í Faith’. If there is no entry, then the address of the nearest Assembly or Group can be obtained from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom at 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PD (telephone 020-7584-2566; email: nsa@bahai.org.uk).

For further background information on the Bahá'í Faith see: www.bahai.org.uk

3. Bahá'ís believe in life after death and that the soul continues to progress after the body dies. The body should be treated with the greatest respect as it was the temple of the soul during this life.
4. The body is usually wrapped in either silk or cotton.
5. A ring may be placed on the finger of Baha'is aged fifteen years or over, which states (in Arabic): “I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”
6. Baha'is believe that the body should be buried, not cremated. They avoid embalming, unless required by law, believing that the process of gradual decomposition should take place naturally.

7. If possible, the coffin should be of hard, fine wood or other durable substance.
8. The body should be interred as close as reasonably possible to the place where it surrendered its soul, and at most within an hour's travelling time from that place.
9. At some point before interment a special prayer is recited for Baha'is aged fifteen or over. The rest of the service is left to the discretion of the family or those organising the funeral.
10. There are no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í community is looked after on a local level by an annually elected Spiritual Assembly. This local Assembly can help the family with funeral arrangements if required. In places where there are no local Spiritual Assemblies (because there are too few Baha'is) a nearby Assembly can assist. If there are any other questions, advice or help needed, the National Spiritual Assembly can be contacted as below.
11. Please feel free to contact the National Spiritual Assembly at the address given below should you have any queries regarding these notes.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom
27 Rutland Gate
London SW7 1PD

tel 020-7584-2566 fax 020-7584-9402

e-mail nsa@bahai.org.uk website www.bahai.org.uk

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