The funeral

The body is taken, from the Hospital, hospice or home where the person died, to the funeral home. In the funeral home, in preparation for the burial, the clothes are removed and the body is washed. This important ritual is called Tahara. Once the Tahara concludes, the deceased is wrapped with a white shroud or Takhrikhim. In the case of a male, in some communities they use to cover the body with the Talit that the deceased used during his lifetime. In other communities, they placed the Talit inside the grave. In these cases, one of the Tzitziot of the Talit must be cut and removed.

After the Tahara, the body is placed inside the coffin.

The customs regarding the funeral varies from community to community. In many communities the body is transferred directly to the cemetery or to a funeral home, before the actual burial takes place. In our community, the body is taken to the Synagogue, before is the taken to the cemetery. There, the family in mourning is greeted with words of consolation and comfort by relatives and friends. Then, everyone enters the Sanctuary and the prayer Patach Elyahu haNabi is recited. Following this prayer, the rabbis pronounce a few words (eulogy or hesped) in honor of the deceased, and brief words of consolation to his or her family members.

At the end of the eulogies, the mourners leave the sanctuary and stand in the social hall, where every person approaches them and salutes them with a gesture of respect and with additional words of comfort and consolation. Then, the body is taken to the cemetery and relatives and friends accompany it to its final destination, the burial place.

Accompanying the deceased to its final resting place is a Mitzva called Levayat haMet. Some people, close relatives and friends, would accompany the body to the cemetery and other

people, would walk behind the coffin for a few steps.