



Eternal Gardens

الطريق الى جنة الخلد



Eternal Gardens

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The Burial Crisis – A return to the traditional approach of faith

This week Eternal Gardens announces a breakthrough on several years of deep exploration for a solution which will significantly contribute to more efficient usage of the current burial space within its grounds, further amplifying the service and commitment it provides to the community.

The conclusion of the Duo Grave Method research marks a major milestone in Eternal Gardens’ development and growth towards its vision of providing comfort and confidence for the Muslim community within its end-of-life practices.

Muftī Amjad M Mohammed, Principal Jurisconsult to Eternal Gardens commented:

“The unique paper thoroughly investigated the Duo Graves Method through the lens of Islamic, legal and social considerations and was commissioned in a bid to alleviate the decade long pressures on private and council run burial grounds across the South of London by allowing Eternal Gardens to extend burial spaces by almost double”.

A report in 2011* identified a major burial space crisis with most provisions already full and forecasting a severe on-going shortage for the future.

“A number of boroughs have no supply of burial space at all, some are reliant wholly on created graves or have only limited supply of new grave space”

With population increase and rising density of the Muslim communities remaining within areas with faith related infrastructure, the issue of burial spaces has only progressed with many Muslim community groups desperately seeking temporary solutions on a yearly basis.

Shifting perspectives

Whilst the community is not accustomed to advanced funeral planning, the review of the Duo Graves Method repeatedly highlighted the benefits of funeral planning as another option to alleviate pressure on families who have lost a loved one. It also addresses other issues such as the level of dignity and care provided to the deceased as planning ahead allows for a more organised and calmer service with less likelihood of family disagreements arising as all arrangements have already been agreed.

Asif Hassanali, Eternal Gardens Group Relationship Manager spoke about his observations of families who have planned ahead:

“Planning ahead plays a significant role in reducing pressure and confusion on the bereaved as they are not required to make difficult and rushed decisions. More importantly, it allows loved ones the opportunity to focus and be present in the final rites of the deceased rather than having to rush around making funeral arrangements”.

Muftī Amjad M Mohammed added:

“The outcomes of the research signify a great need for the Muslim community to shift perspectives around end-of-life practices and expectations”.

Whilst research shows that many families are aware of funeral planning, most have not taken any further action. Unfortunately for most, the matter is left until it is too late resulting in added grief, poor delivery of funeral rites, and regrets following the passing on of a loved one.

For the past several years Eternal Gardens has been delivering educational courses and hosting funeral planning events to support the community in developing awareness of the underlying issues and outcomes of the burial crisis with the hope of reinvigorating the community to become pro-active about their first steps in the hereafter and taking measures to ensure themselves and loved ones are afforded a peaceful, dignified transition which satisfies their religious expectations. The Eternal Gardens provision in Sidcup is one of the few who continue to provide the option to secure burial spaces in advance.

As many of the scholars highlighted during the study, maintaining consciousness of the afterlife, being proactive about preparing for death is highly emphasised within the Islamic faith and the community would be reviving a traditional practice of clarity and open discussions around the realities of life and death.

The Prophet may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him said:

‘The one who remembers death the most and is best in preparing for it. Those are the wisest.’

[Sunan Ibn Majah 4259]

* (Rugg, J. and Pleace, N. (2011) An Audit of London Burial Provision, London: GLA.)