

Handling Grief

By Om Johari

(1) **Death, Love and Sweetness of Life** (from OSHO's: "**COME, FOLLOW ME**" Vol. 4, talks on Jesus) in answer to: *Yesterday I heard that my friend had died. Yet as I wept, I found myself giving thanks for the sweetness of life. Is there a place for mourning?*

If you have loved somebody, really loved, and you didn't miss an opportunity to love, then there is no place for mourning because then there is no repentance. You never postpone anything, death cannot destroy anything... For example: you love somebody but you say, "I will love tomorrow," and that's what you go on saying. You go on imagining tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, you go on postponing: you fight today, you will love tomorrow. You are angry here-now, you will love tomorrow. You go on postponing. Then one day suddenly death comes, and it is always sudden. It gives no hint that it is coming. The foot sounds are never heard, the footsteps can never be guessed. It always comes suddenly, catches you unawares, and the friend is gone, the lover is gone, the beloved is gone; the mother, the father, the brother is gone. Then there is mourning because death destroys tomorrow, and you were depending on tomorrow. Now there will be no tomorrow. Now you cannot postpone, and the person is gone. Now you feel a deep repentance; out of that repentance mourning arises. **You are not weeping for the friend who is gone, you are weeping for yourself, for the wasted opportunity.**

If you really love, and love here-now, death cannot take anything from you. I say to you: death may even become an opportunity, an opening, a new door. You loved the friend when he was visible, and you loved him so deeply that you started feeling, through your love, the invisibleness of him. Then death takes the body. Now in that gross element, body is no more there to hinder. Now love can flow totally. You may even feel thankful to death. You were already discovering the spiritual dimension of your beloved, lover, friend, and now death has taken the last obstacle. Now you can see through and through. **Death has given you an opportunity to see whether you really loved or not, because if love's eyes cannot penetrate that much so that you can see that which is not body, that which is beyond matter, that which is invisible, then it is not love.** Then those eyes may be of something else, but not of love. **Love always reveals the God in the other;** that's the definition of love. If it reveals the God in the other only then it is love, otherwise it is not. **You will be crying and weeping and mourning, and will you be thinking that you are weeping for the friend who has gone? No, you are weeping for yourself, you are crying for yourself.**

I would like to tell a very famous story. King Pyrrhus of Epirus was asked by his friend Cyneas, 'Sir, if you conquer Rome, what will you do next?' Pyrrhus replied, 'Sicily is nearby and will be easy to take.' 'And what will you do after Sicily?' Cyneas asked. 'Then we will pass over to Africa and plunder Carthage.' 'And after Carthage, sir?' 'Greece.' Cyneas enquired, 'And what do you expect as a reward from all these victories?' 'Then,' said Pyrrhus, **'we can sit down and enjoy, ourselves.'** **'Can we not, suggested Cyneas, 'enjoy ourselves now?'**

If you can enjoy yourself now, then there will be no mourning, ever. I am not saying that you will not become sad when a friend departs, but there will be no mourning. And that sadness will have a beauty of its own, a depth, a silence that always comes when you encounter death. That sadness will be very meditative. It will reveal something within you that life could not reveal. **Life remains superficial; just like laughter, it remains superficial.** Death is very deep, like sadness. But sadness is not mourning, sadness has its own delight; sadness is not sorrow, sadness is simply depth, **sadness means that thinking has stopped. How can you think in front of death?** Thinking may be useful in life. Life may need your thinking because cunningness, cleverness is needed; but what is the point of thinking in front of death? **If you are sad that simply means that suddenly, the thinking has stopped; the death has been a shock - you are stripped to your very depth.** You cannot laugh, but there is a subtle delight in it, a silence, a sacred silence. The vulgarity of life is gone, and death has opened a new door; the door

of the beyond. You will feel thankful towards death, but this is possible only if you live now. If this moment is lived in its total intensity, in its utter wholeness, only then is it possible.

Don't go on postponing. Tomorrow, tomorrow - drop that word from your vocabulary! Tomorrow does not exist, it cannot exist; it is not in the nature of things. Only this day exists. That is why Jesus says in his prayer, 'God, give us our daily bread.' The meaning is: today is enough, we don't ask for tomorrow; give us our daily bread. It has nothing to do with bread, **it has something to do with the present and how to live it: give us the capacity to live here and now. Then there is no mourning. Sadness will be there, but that is as it should be. When somebody departs you feel sad, but in that sadness soon, you will discover a door: you have fallen to your own depth.**

This is what has happened. *'Yesterday I heard that my friend had died... Is there a place for mourning?'* **Don't feel guilty. In fact, this is how it should be. If you have loved the friend you will feel deep thankfulness; not any complaint against death but just a gratefulness for life, for its sweetness.** The very possibility is almost impossible that one exists! **Have you ever thought about it, that you exist? It seems so impossible; there is no reason why. But you don't think about it because it has been given to you as a gift.** You have not paid for it. That is why you are unaware, oblivious of it: a tremendous richness, that you are, that this moment you are conscious and alive and you can see the flowers, and you can smell the fragrance, and you can listen to the songs, and you can even encounter a Jesus and a Buddha. The sheer impossibility of it! - just think of it. There is no reason why you are; it is just out of the blue. That is the meaning of the grace of God... If you were not here, you could not complain anywhere; there is no court of appeal. If you are not here; you are simply not here; you cannot do anything about it.

You are; and you are conscious, and you are full of love, and you are wasting it - a great gift will be wasted, You are not using it, you are not using the opportunity to grow. The more you grow, the greater the gifts that can become available to you. This is just the beginning, this is just the alpha; and you don't know what the omega is... But if you go on living now, deeply committed to life, not postponing, going deeper and deeper and deeper every moment, living as wholly as possible, you will reach to the omega point. Even at the alpha point life is tremendously beautiful; what to say about the omega point? And you will never find any point for mourning.

If you live it, life is always a deep gratitude. If you don't live it, things go sour, things become bitter, one mourns, one complains, one loses the capacity for thankfulness. Prayer disappears and then you live an angry life or a sorrowful life - that simply means that you have missed. **Nobody else is responsible only you; only you, nobody else is responsible. The responsibility is totally yours because you are free to choose** - to die or to commit a slow suicide. As I see it, millions of people go on simply committing slow suicide. They go on poisoning themselves. Through postponing, you poison yourself. Then, even that which is given to you will have to be taken away. And Jesus is perfectly true when he says this, and it is one of the most fundamental laws of life: that **if you have, more will be given to you; if you don't have, even that which you have will be taken away.** That is mourning. Use! Be creative! Let life be a great adventure. The only sin there is, is if your life is not an adventure. Then, you are a sinner...

(2) **Some of Om Johari's views relating gratitude to death:** Each moment of gratitude will create a gap in our thinking about the loss and at that moment of surrender, God or existence will send us many new ideas of our OWN to look at the loss. My idea of gratitude is that in the worst of things which are happening to us, whatever has happened, if we can be aware that we are breathing - that the breath is coming, breath is going - and if we can just say a simple prayer of thanks - just a thank You for allowing me to breath. We are able to hear sounds, if we can say a simple thank You that we can hear sounds. One sees many shapes, colors, wind playing with the leaves, clouds, etc., can we give a simple thanks that we are able to see? Can we say a simple thank You when we eat the food: for our ability to taste, and to those who have kindly prepared the food for us? Can we say thanks that we are able to move; we walk, can we say thank You for that? One has a desire to itch or scratch, can we feel thankful that we

have that much sensitivity that we can feel a desire to scratch? We lift our hands, there will come a time when we will not be able to lift our hand, can we feel grateful that we are able to do that and many other little things. Thus, my request is: please come up with your own reasons, using your own creativity, as to what you are thankful for at this moment. If one can do that, if one can **develop an attitude of gratitude for little things**, then if anything undesirable happens, at that time, one will look around and will be able to find something to be grateful for. We are all at a stage in life when we will be losing somebody. A day will come when we will lose ourselves. So, how can we be grateful in such a circumstance? And the basic message of the text (1, above) is that if you look at life, everything is a gift! We go to sleep tonight, there is no reason that we should wake up tomorrow morning. So to answer, How can one be grateful in that situation? Here are a few possible ideas that came to me in the "gaps" of moments of gratitude:

(a) The first point is we are looking at it from the end, a person has passed away and we are naturally sad for that. Can we look at it from the start? The gratitude comes because why did that person come in our life, why did we know each other? It did not make any difference in existence as to why it should be. Can we feel that it is it is sheer grace of God that we came in contact with each other, that we exist, that we are here today, that we can talk to each other, that we can meet different people. That is sheer grace of God and we are grateful for that.

(b) The other, the more serious reason for gratefulness to death, is that each death is a news, a reminder, that my death is coming, that my number can be up any time. Am I prepared for that? So the message of a death is be aware, be prepared! OSHO (in text 4 below) says: "When the knowledge of death dawns, a transformation takes place..." You must have heard these famous lines of John Donne: **'Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls - it tolls for thee.**' In a Christian village, when somebody dies, the church bell rings to inform the farmers around that "somebody has died, come back from the fields." It has a great insight. **Whoever dies shows you one fact that you are also going to die.** Whenever anybody dies anywhere, death knocks at your doors too. And not only a human being: a dog dies, a crow dies, or a leaf becomes pale and dies and drops from the tree - you are dying.

(c) And not only that, each death is the news that today this person has died, tomorrow some one else will die; the time to do something is when you are alive and the other person is alive. Time to do something is when we can communicate with each other. So, in that sense, each death is a great reminder that if you are a relation or friend to somebody, do some thing now, don't wait, don't postpone.

(d) Another aspect of gratitude to death is that it brings us in close contact with our family and near and dear ones, as well as many from whom we hardly hear. Can I become full of gratitude: it is sheer grace of God that so many well-wishers have an interest to see me happy and whole, who are sharing in my sorrow? Can we be grateful to those in front of us?

(3) **Sooner or later, I know, I am going to have to get over this or it will destroy me. I just picked sooner** (From CD 3 of the 6-CD version of Wayne Dyer's audio Book, *There is a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem*): "Most people think of problems in terms of horrible things that do happen to people, to innocent people, and are saying things like, in not so many words, how can you say that there are no problems when these kinds of things happen to people and they do happen. But, I would like you to just keep in mind that **this universe has a guiding force in it and that all of us show up in to the world on time: we never question when we show up. Because we show up when we are called and we also leave when we are called. And one of the hardest things for us to deal with is this whole idea of death and how we die and suffering and so on. And I would like to suggest to you that we leave on time** and that a child dying is a tragedy to most of us, of course. And, I have eight children and I have been blessed that they are all healthy and living, and I am not even saying here that I am certain that I would be able to handle something terrible happening to them, them being murdered or raped or anything like that. I am suggesting that **I have a knowing deep within me, that we are all here for a purpose, that our lives have a heroic mission, and when that mission is fulfilled and we are called back to God, it is not for us to question with our egos.** And that, when we say a child is

supposed to be born and be healthy and die in their sleep in their hundredth year, that's just our egos talking. But, in fact, some children come in only for a week, and some come in for four months, and some come in for six years, have lessons to teach, and leave. And the tragedy is that **we interpret all of that through the eyes of "it shouldn't happen". Hunger and starvation are part of the perfection of the universe, but so is your desire to end it. And that is where you want to place your attention and your energy, not on what is wrong, but on what it is that you feel in your heart that you can do to bring us all closer to God.** And the grieving process is not necessarily the self-actualized way that we have that you handle tragedies in your life."

I remember a book by Ernest Hemingway called "*Islands in the Stream*" and this man finds out that his son has just been killed in the war overseas in Europe. And that night he is at a party and he is dancing. And some one said to him, "how could you possibly be here when you found out what happened to your son this afternoon". And his answer, in that novel, was, **"sooner or later, I know, I am going to have to get over this or it will destroy me. I just picked sooner."** And that sounds cool to some of us who believe that we have to spend a long time suffering..."

(4) Excerpts from Chapter 5 of OSHO's *The True Name*: What has already happened is a closed chapter; there is nothing more to do about it. Life still is, but life is ebbing away every moment: all life ends in death,,, **When the knowledge of death dawns, a transformation takes place.** As you become aware of the end, what you value in life changes. What was meaningful up to now becomes meaningless... Death gives the first knock the very day you are born but we are not aware of it. **If you do become conscious of this fact, the very awareness brings about a conversion within you: you turn back towards... yourself.** Remember death: **there is nothing more certain than death...** How will you stand with regard to death? How will you save yourself? If the breath stops what will you do? All your power, your strength, fails before death. This is why we make such efforts not to remember death. If we do remember death our conceit cannot stand up. It falls limp when we confront ourselves helpless before death. Our arrogance cannot accept it... I, who am so strong, so powerful; how can I be helpless? So it is best to suppress the fact of death, and then the ego is not hurt! **The wise man remembers death.** In the face of death one is always defeated, even the greatest conquerors: not Hitler nor Alexander nor Napoleon has won against death. Therefore we try to hide the fact of death. We hold on to the ego, which is false, and forget death, which is a reality. If you are determined to go towards the One, remember death, for death is a very great truth, and the powerful effect of this truth is that the ego falls away. When death becomes an absolute fact the ego is dissolved. Remembrance of death is like poison to the ego... No sooner does death become visible, the ego breaks, because then you understand that all happens according to His will, that you are not the doer.

Winston Churchill went to America. He spoke at a meeting before a huge crowd; the hall was filled to capacity. After the meeting a woman came up to him and said, "You must be delighted to see so many people come to hear you. Whenever you speak the hall is packed." Churchill replied, "Whenever I see a packed hall I say to myself, 'If it was my execution fifty times more people would have come.' How can one trust these people? They hear me and they clap. If I were being hanged, they would still clap. So whenever I see a hall filled with people I remind myself that these very same people would turn out in large numbers and enjoy the sight if I were executed."

(5) This has to be learned. Slowly, slowly a man has to become so wide that all is accepted, yes, even death! **The moment you have accepted the night totally and there is no seeking and hankering for the morning, the morning has come.** This is how it comes, this is the way of its coming.

(6) When a rose flower is disappearing in the evening, its petals are falling, sit there and meditate. Feel yourself as a flower with your petals falling. **Early in the morning when the sun rises and the stars disappear, feel yourself disappearing with all the stars.** And when the sun has risen and the dewdrops on the grass leaves start disappearing, feel yourself disappearing like the dewdrops. **Feel death in as many ways as possible. Become a great experienter of death.**