



THE CULTURAL AND SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS OF MOURNING IN THE ARABO-BERBER MOROCCAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Although the fact that the cultural characteristics of the Moroccan population have been changing, the beliefs and customs concerning grief and bereavement remain fairly constant. This article describes the beliefs and traditions of the Moroccan population and is quite similar to those of the countries of North Africa as Muslim Arab countries. Certainly, the customs, rituals and beliefs of the Moroccan population affect the experience of death, the grief of the bereaved, hence the interest for mental health professionals to be open to learning all this in order to better understand and help the bereaved.

Key words:

Mourning, Culture, Religion, Morocco

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INTRODUCTION

The restricted definition of mourning refers to the biopsychosocial response to the death loss of a significant person, whereas the terms "grief", "mourning" and "loss" are used as synonyms, although in the strict sense, mourning allows the resolution of sorrow; and it is the social expression of behavior and subsequent practices that are more related to mourning. Without taking into account the subtle nuances that differentiate these words, these terms describe a syndrome characterized by signs, symptoms, evolution and resolution [1]. Grief may occur for reasons other than the loss of a loved one, for example, loss of social status, financial bankruptcy, romantic deception, or the loss of a pet or similar event. It is also sometimes losing a fundamental reference around which the individual had emotionally structured his ideas, his rhythm of life, even his body [2]. By metaphorical extension, it is the set of losses and frustrations, real or symbolic.

The expression of mourning is varied, it depends on cultural norms, since some cultures favor the intense expression of emotions, whereas other cultures reject it [2, 3,4], and again the circumstances of the loss. For example, a sudden unexpected death or a planned death.

Clinical reminder

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- The initial phase of impact, shock, or denial and disbelief, then the appearance of behavioral equivalents of the deceased person's research activity.
- The state phase is mourning proper; it is a period of depression ranging from a few weeks to a year. -The recovery phase with the acceptance of loss (cognitive and emotional acceptance) and the resumption of life and re-engagement in the everyday world with new reinvestments and project ideas [1].

The social and the mourning

Mourning is a kind of collective response of the energy mechanism to alleviate the confusion following the event, as well as the cold feeling of death. The irreparable loss of an individual is "magically" repulsed by the entire group through a set of religious and social symbols. However, the disappearance of an individual in the group is only tolerable insofar as the latter integrates death into an endless cycle of life-death where the living replace the dead and where births and deaths are associated. Arsenals of comforting symbols are established in repelling or even annihilate the terrifying aspect of death. These acts and practices of high symbolic value, shared by all, have been applied for millennia, distorted and sometimes shortened. However, their fulfillment reassured both the normality of the event "death", but also a future of the deceased as the community [2].

Mourning is a crossroads that crosses culture and endurance, the cultural part of mourning almost always exists in most

countries of the world [3]. In Morocco for example, the social expression of mourning remains a majority and intimate experience remains hidden in the background. In Moroccan society, death is not only understood as a strictly individual event, but is at the heart of the social group. Death causes a return on oneself, the community measures its vulnerability and defends itself by the cohesion, the crying and the prayers [5]. Death truly has a very strong community dimension in Morocco as in the Maghreb, and it provokes a general mobilization around the mourners, aiming to help them during the first days by relieving them of any worry [5].

This way of mourning is not exclusive to Morocco, but there are similarities with mourning processes practiced in other Berber and Arab-Muslim societies. In Morocco the mourning is characterized by a strong socio-cultural attachment, one can even fulfill it in other societies of religions and the monotheistic religions according to the "Quran". But in modern Western societies, the socio-cultural rites of mourning are becoming scarce and has allowed place for individual mourning.

Funerary rites in Morocco seem to reassure people that mourning is the lowest common denominator of humankind. First and second day meals at the deceased's place of residence are often offered by neighboring families to show their spirit of solidarity, and to concretize the fact that the bereaved are really concerned about the loss of their loved one. The meal devotes the replacement of the deceased to his place within the family and society by his closest representative. He will then thank all those who have joined the family. According to tradition, the neighbors themselves ensure that the home of the deceased is clean, to cook, receive visits so that loved ones are as little as possible disturbed. They thoroughly clean the apartment of the deceased as soon as the funeral procession leaves for the cemetery. A meal for the soul of the deceased is then organized on the 40th day, then on the first anniversary of death. And so the spontaneous social support obtained during the funeral ceremony is prolonged during several reminders (7th day, 40 days, at the birthday).

This mobilization of the social group around the bereaved allows to create a frame where the emotions can express themselves (anger, tears, surprise desire to see the deceased). These emotions are welcomed by the group which protects the mourning of its own splinters and limits the possibilities of acting out. In addition, death is perceived as a social disorder, because it disrupts and starts the organization and coherence of the group. The gregarious conscience causes the community to feel guilty once affected by the disappearance of one of its elements. These rites are therefore fundamental social acts and are intended to serve the group. Yet rites have profound effects on individuals. By belief and the sacred side, the rite acquires a highly soothing and reassuring function. The perception of death is directly framed by religious instruction.

The sacred and the mourning

Faith thus becomes the natural support of the Moroccan citizen for whom everything is summed up in the sacred sentence of the Quran: "It is to God that we belong and it is to Him that we return", and Islam encourages people bereaved to share their experiences and talk about their suffering. In Morocco, the bereaved often entrust themselves to the religious staff of their commune and to the close relatives more than to the personnel of the health [5]. An initial period of mourning for a period of

three days is indicated, this is the "Hidad", during which prayers are recited. For widows who have just lost their husbands, they are forbidden to wear jewelry and make-up and must only wear white clothes for the first forty days. Islam holds the life as sacred and belonging to God, and that all creatures will die one day. Suicide is forbidden. Muslims believe that death is only a transition between two different lives [6, 7, 8]. A deceased Muslim must be quickly buried within twenty-four hours after being ritually washed and wrapped by a white cloth (Shroud). Although there are different schools of Muslim religious thought, they are all united about their views on death and the dying.

According to tradition and as soon as the death has occurred, the family warns friends, virtuous people in the community and close relatives. The house of the deceased is then open to visitors for condolences. Women receive only women and stay at home, while men receive men, most of them from a neighbor. The duration of home visits is independent of the time limits for organizing the funeral itself. Expression of pain is codified, possibly assisted by mourners in some families, especially in low-educated and rural families. Condolences are practiced for three days and not beyond, except in the case of someone traveling from afar [7].

The visitor often borrows the courtesy formula:

- "May God increase your reward, grant you endurance and forgive your regretted" or another formula of prayer and politeness:
- "May Allah replace your feeling of love, attachment with the feeling of patience and endurance to the tragedy that affects you".

And to the family to answer: "Amen, may God reward you and avoid all evil."

The burial must then take place as soon as possible according to the religious texts, because according to these texts, the soul is released from its pain at the moment when the body rests in peace [5].

Before burying the deceased, neighbors prepared for the first day of black coffee, black olives prepared in Greek, butter, honey and olive oil with bread. The food rituals symbolize the grief and loss of the relatives of the deceased who lost them, and their visitors take part in these modest meals; they will be presented at will until the funeral procession leaves for the first mosque to pray and then to the cemetery of the burial. During the burial, the body of the deceased is placed on the right side; the head and the face should be oriented towards Mecca. Interment is a moment of renowned and sacred exclusively. Moroccan tradition openly insists on showing the casket covered with cloth with Koranic verses and passing on the road leading to the cemetery, while the coffin is held on the shoulders of four people closer to the deceased. Neighboring families organize a "feast" after the cemetery. In this meal call "Imam" who presided over the funeral. The meal is for the soul of the deceased. The imam and the son pray for the deceased father, the daughter of the deceased mother, the sister and / or the brother to start the meal in memory of the deceased. As near blood, he or she remembers the deceased symbolically, and this usually creates a moment of emotion. If the deceased neighbor is a Jew or a Christian and Muslim neighbors are satisfied to participate in cleaning and house stains and deal with them and provide cookware and tableware for a festive

meal for non-Muslim families. Since religious recommendations are very different from those of the Islamic religion, the families of the two communities are always trying to help each other socially without interference in funeral rites [9].

Mourning and culture

Cultural differences can be contrasted with many sociologists or psychologists. Kubler-Ross: Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance [1] can be more or less for historical or cultural reasons, and each step can be dominant, long, or completely missed. Negotiating, for example, can be a religious imperative, not just a psychological state. Among the cultural specificities, Hindu mothers or grandmothers are often said to spend long hours in the temple, which negotiates with the Creator for the life of a sick child, exposing their own life and spirit to the life of the child. Trying to do what they have done wrong deserves such punishment. They can promise to hold parties for neighbors, give blankets and clothes to the poor once the child is safe. [10] In another cultural context, anthropologist Peter Ramsden points out that the apparent absence of mourning behavior observed more and more in England can be explained by the fact that the natural death of fathers to old age was simply unacceptable, compared with the recent experience of early death [3]. Some authors [10, 11] emphasize how family and social norms affect mourning. The events constructed on cultural values and based on the social acceptance of suffering, aggression and feelings of vulnerability, as well as the sense of tragedy set by each society, play a large role in expressing mourning. From a social point of view, medical, psychological, religious, and local culture and liturgical discourse are the elements that allow for the development of feelings of loss. [12] These practices, these gestures of high symbolic value for thousands of years, have been applied, distorted and sometimes abbreviated. However, their reassurance assured both the natural state of the "dead" event, but also the future of the deceased and society as well. Beyond the reassuring rehearsal of the weather, it is an opportunity to express feelings, and this group welcomes emotions to protect the mourning of its own fragments. In other words, the function of these rituals is to answer or replace many social requirements and has a profession to serve the group, and has profound effects on the individual [2].

How does culture protect against the medicalization of mourning in Morocco?

The mourning rituals, characterized by the social and cultural foundations practiced in Morocco, prefer mourning, which rarely requires psychological and / or medical interventions [7].

Culture is a set of social structures and artistic, religious and intellectual manifestations that define one group or society in relation to another.

Culture is a vibrant living structure, sculpted by standards. Has an organizational and normative function for the individual [13]. The design is a reduction of mourning for polarity or tension between two models: on one side, rituals and rituals, on the other, survived in their meaning "psychological, individual, simplified and medical." Sadness both disrupts and rearranges and reports a person to "the community and his

environment," specifically in her urgent supplements (family, work, friends, relationships, self) [14]. The traditional model has a social context and the authority of the community of cultural tradition, driven by ritual and socialization as the embodiment of the general and institutional death in this case, and death will be "acceptable."

The "modern" model was built in the opposite direction of the traditional "traditional" concept of "narrow death". Its context is hospital and medicine, characterized by deprivation of death and solitary confinement. Death will be social and no longer fully integrated into social life [15]. Western models have gone past a form of "social and cultural control and regulation" which is characterized by a ritual according to another form that focuses on the feature of mastery of these modern societies; through "medical psychology"? [16].

Social and cultural rituals, through work and interaction, are involved in the social organization of emotions and behaviors. To induce mourning, social and cultural rituals are social spaces hate, where we can "see", the new dead becomes the future ancestor [17]. Will "nationalization" of mourning not be subject to the complementary processes of the individual and rationalization? What seem irrefutable leads to bureaucracy (healing, de-personalization), medicine and belief in science [15] [16].

CONCLUSION

Doctor or psychiatrist is not supposed to be a medical anthropologist to care for the bereaved, but it requires mature self-awareness and adequate empathy. The knowledge and consideration of all that is related to the culture of the bereaved person greatly facilitated the establishment of a doctor-mourning relationship.

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