

DEALING WITH DEATH

By Toni Brasted

It does not matter what our level of spirituality is, or how prepared we think we are to deal with death, when we have to deal with the death of a loved one we panic. We let the emotions take over our senses and our judgment.

The most common reaction is anger. Anger towards God. If God loved me how come he is now hurting me so badly? How can he possibly take away the one I love? The one person who is the reason for me to live? Did I do something wrong to trigger God's anger and punishment? Depending on the situation that has brought about the death of a friend or loved one, many others questions can be added to these lines of thought.

In our normal day to day life we do not give a lot of thought to death. We do not want talk about it. We do not want to deal with it. Death makes us vulnerable and vulnerability is something to be avoided. Death forces us to make changes in our life and change is always frightening. Death breaks our heart, and heartbreak is painful and depressing. The reality of course is that death cannot be avoided; it is the natural cycle of life. Sooner or later we all will have to face it, deal with it and accept it.

It would probably make it easy for us to deal with death, if we would start changing our perception of death. What is death? Is it the end of everything or just a change to another level of the same reality? We are so attached to the material life that we often forget that the body that serves our spirit, like any other material matter, is subject to wear and tear and sooner or later have to be disposed. If we see ourselves and our loved ones only through the material prism, we are diminishing God's creation. If we accept the reality that life and love does not end with the death of the physical body, we will understand that God is not punishing us when he takes away our physical life or that of a loved one. By the contrary, he is showing us his mercy, freeing a special soul from a physical body that no longer serves its purpose. Often what he is taking away is pain and suffering and offering us the opportunity to deeply appreciate the miracle of life.

What about our own death? Do we give any thought to it? Of course not, we are so used to taking for granted this gift we call life, that we live as if it we were immortal. Ironically, we have nine months of preparation for a birth and often times, none to prepare for death. Aren't there two sides to most things? If there is a birth it must have a death. We know the necessary preparation for a birth, but how do we prepare for death if we do not know when it is going to occur? Living each day as if it was the last day of our life might be a good beginning (with responsible thinking of course).

What would you do if today was the last day of your life? Would you show more love, would you take care of unfinished business with which you've been procrastinating? How would you live the last day of your life? It might be a good exercise. We are always so busy and distracted by the material world that we often forget that this is not our reality. Our true life is the life of our immortal spirit that sees no boundaries and no time and space. Can we understand that death can not kill love, can not kill hope? Can we understand that the separation is only momentary? If we believe that sooner or later we will be reunited and that the love we share today will be always available to us, our beliefs will ease our pain and we will have the strength to go through the grief period, even knowing the scar will always be there. Knowing that our lives never will be the same, but at the same time we have grown and changed through the experience of death, as we did with the experience of birth. We will be forced to make changes in our lives. We will have to learn to live without that person. We will fully

understand their importance in our lives. We will have to learn new tasks to fill in their roles in our lives. Although death has changed everything around us, the love capacity of our heart remains unchanged. As spiritual beings, that we are, we are here to learn through experience and it includes the experience of death - or the experience of life - it all depends how you see it.