by telling him about finality so early, but it is felt that avoidance does not help eventual rehabilitation.[3]

Brothers & Sisters

Little written work has been done on this subject. We did find parents are often so preoccupied with their own loss that the remaining children are presented with, in effect, a double loss—loss of a brother, and also parents temporarily unavailable. Younger children do receive attention, but adolescents, especially, do not receive enough validation of their unexpressed feelings. In particular, the dead brother becomes idealised, and normal ambivalent feelings cannot be expressed any more. There is also an unattainable standard to live up to. The parents may often try to over-protect the surviving children, especially when they come of age, to prevent them from going into front-line units, with resulting frustration and even depressive reactions. There will be hesitations about the sudden availability of a bedroom, how to relate to a dead brother's possessions, and how to behave socially.[4] There may also be questioning, with adolescents, as to whether the death has meaning, whether the war was justified, etc., especially in recent years.

Bereaved Parents

This may be the most traumatic situation of all, but bereaved parents receive less attention than a widow and children. Good outcome factors include: a good quality relationship between the parents, the presence of grandchildren, an extended family, and other children. The lack of some of these features and social isolation very frequently produce a poor outcome, and indeed are among the most interminable mourning situations.[5]

The Bereaved Father

He receives less attention, so the underlying severity of his reaction may be overlooked. In Israel he may feel the need to be strong and stoical. The mother may behave thus also. The father may have fought himself, and envisaged dying himself, but not the loss of his own son. The death implies that his value system, his identity role, has failed, and he may question the *raison d'etre* of his life.

The death of a child is always untimely, but for the Jews there is a special aspect because of the emphasis on the expression of continuity, as manifested in the Kaddish prayer which a Jewish son recites when his father dies. If the son dies first, the father has lost this possibility of his own continuation being expressed, which often adds an additional dimension to the trauma.

Holocaust Survivors

The inability to mourn started in the Nazi concentration camps and other holocaust situations during the Second World War. There was the need to maintain the strength and motivation to continue the struggle for survival, often related to the hope that relatives were still alive somewhere. After 1948, most survivors in Israel energetically set themselves to help build the new country, as a creative, constructive substitute for their mourning. Many also continued for years their searching for relatives, usually fruitlessly.

A Holocaust Survivor Family Loses a Child

This situation demonstrates, in the most extreme way possible, the problems of continuity and meaning. Some such families have insisted on interminable mourning, feeling it appropriate in the situation.

Bereavement from Terrorism

Five years ago I was involved in setting up a crisis intervention team after families on a bus outing were attacked by terrorists, decimating the families. However, the special factor that helped these families to recover was that they all belonged to a co-operative on a family outing. That co-operative's whole national network rallied to give a framework of support, then and ever since.[6] They made survival and recovery a community issue, a matter of community support, and took it out of the hands of experts. A most important issue is involved here. Receiving recognition and consensual validation of suffering and loss by a 'significant community' promotes positive coping responses, reduces negative reactions and thus protects against the development of invidious long-term psycho-social phenomena.[7]

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Poetry

THE WIDOW'S COMPLAINT

You left as you so often left before,
Sneaking out on tiptoe,
No slam of door,
Off to drink with enemies of mine,
And of yours—
If you could only see it—
Drunkards and bores
Whose grossest flatteries
You swilled down with the booze
That you never had the gumption to refuse.
You won't come back this time.
No need to prepare
A welcome for you—clamped silence
And belligerent stare—
No need for morning nostrums or to hide
The whisky and car-keys,
Tighten my lips and thighs
Against your pleas,
No need for those old stratagems any more.
But you might have let me know what was in store;
Your last low trick
To leave me with no clue
That you had gone for good,
My last chance lost
To tell you what I've so long wanted to,
How much I hate you and I always have,
You pig, you bastard,
Stinking rat—
Oh, love, my love,
How can I forgive you that?

VERNON SCANNELL

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