

Crying in Love is to Grow in Love

To be in love is to check one's mortality and start with the quiver of optimism



'Composition' Artwork by Lakesh B H



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A career diplomat traverses the world. The nature of his job takes him to places. He returns to his home country once in a while. Otherwise, he attends the parties and hosts the delegation in a foreign country. He is married and has a toddler. His wife also works for the government looking after the flora of the country.

They are located thousands of miles away. Yet, they are married and are raising a child. The life of the diplomat is emblematic of a marine or a vessel operator who is listed in faraway lands sailing the oceans for months altogether. They get to see their significant others or parents once or twice a year. The military regime is not different either.

Yet, when I asked the diplomat about maintaining this difficult schedule and still looking after the family, he was Zen. Prior to taking up the assignment in the diplomatic core, he had a fulfilling career. He felt he could do better and so that was his choice. Meeting someone, falling in love and then making a family was their choice—his wife, parents and of course, himself.

Now that they are tied in knots for many years, their relationship works primarily through phones and media interfaces. He cannot go to his luxurious bungalow in a foreign country to be greeted by his growing toddler.

In an age where distance seems like fiction but also desperate and urgent, the possibility of loving someone seems like a struggle. With several social media posts ostensibly arguing against the long-distance schedule, some anomalies talk about the sweetness of being together yet far away. Modern technology as a crucial tool makes one's itinerary of intimacy a farcical plot.

Many cannot tolerate long distances. Thus, they move together. In such a scenario, one of the partners has to initiate sacrifices. They do it because they find value in the beauty of a relationship and commitment to a designated future.

The buzzword among the younger generation is clouded with the insecurity of owning the future that makes relationships co-dependent rather than one exercising the free spirit of being an individuated person with a singular

personality rather than being clouded into another person's persona as a plus one.

The distance between people makes intimacy desirable, and light. It can take turns to become the cauldron of argument and suspicion. If one can make it work then it's a story for the books. If it doesn't, then it is street wisdom—everybody warned against it.

How to then love without the complete package—sex, reproduction, responsibility, chores, financial in/dependency, and imagined collective futures?

Much of the poetry that advocates blame and circulates grief tantalises a desire hidden under the heavy words of being strong, independent, and wise. Do we find that in a world that requires our emotional response quickly rather than a well-crafted, choreographed trait of thought?

The diplomat says by being away from his family, he gets the chance to practice non-attachment. His distance is to cultivate the inner self, guided by the Buddha who gave a path to freedom from suffering—of all kinds.

One of the five basic tenets of the Buddha's doctrine is the Panchasheela—the five ornamental truths that make you a better person. Once, this morality is achieved then the next step becomes natural—which is the stability of the mind. A stable, poised mind explores dimensions not clouded by disturbance and dopamine culture. It seeks more than the surface can offer. This stage is a process of self-discovery—isolating and imperative to follow. It is one's own path.

Loneliness—Fondliness

Loneliness is a feature of this sojourn. It is not condemned nor is it devalued. It is celebrated in the tradition of those seeking *nibbanna* (or nirvana). It is different from isolation as an imposed social boycott determined by human-haters.

It is said that love should make one free and let the person find their path. It is not codependency but a shared value. In moments of suspicion and clouded judgements is it possible to love someone? Especially when distance makes the articulation of faith in others an excess on the part of one or both.

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The stories of cross-cultural couples, especially the ones who are in an inter-caste relationship, have an uncertain, disfigured social trait. The inter-caste marriages are class marriages. Most often, the Dalit in the relationship is a higher achieving person with an extraordinary feat of surpassing qualifications. The spouses in such relationships who have grown up within a casteist or a-caste household have to process their existential vulnerability with that of their partner.

There are treatises on love, the lores of affection, the psychological need to love/be loved, and the throes of separation, falling apart. Almost everyone has a love story. It may be with a person, in one's imagination, or a constructed fiction. The appreciation of the person by a deep and sincere embrace marks the quality of one's existence in the company of others.

Invoking the Graeco-Roman philosophy, Cornel West asks his students what is a life lived if you are unable to shed a tear. Crying is an emotion that makes one stronger. The king cries, the plebeian cries—they cry for the same reason—the loss and pain endured in the valley of mind.

If you cannot shed a tear looking at the lifeless body of your mama, what is it the life that you claim to have lived? For the longest time monks, philosophers, prophets, and gurus have advocated for a position of departing from the axiom of love. Love has been a fluid metaphor as well as a dutiful programme that has a moral anchorage. To be in love is to check one's mortality and start with the quiver of optimism.

Is Codependency a Threat?

Love transcending into a codependency puts one above the other. The one who needs care acts in an uprising revolt against the loved caregiver. My father was an arthritis patient and had undergone a major kidney operation in his youth. His body was fragile, but his hope and desire were audacious. A physically challenged man, an ex-Panther, and a BAMCEF-BSP social activist who sought Buddhist doctrine, was bedridden. He was frustrated but took that out by engaging in propulsive reading and exercising fatherly generosity with the world. Everyone remained touched by his saintliness—innocence and forgiveness.


We were his shadows, but pigmy aspirants, aiming for a kindred shot of the mighty. Having arrested to the searing pain running throughout the body, he would need attention

throughout the night with an interval of every hour. My mother would wake up and massage his legs and hands, and unload his urinal jug. We witnessed this and were occasional participants, but my father did not like this. Our school was most important to him. Also, perhaps he loved the touch of his love.

Yet, despite this intimate codependency between my father and mother, there was not an expressive dosage of love that we could feel. Father was mentally insecure as he felt vulnerable to protect his family and his beautiful wife surrounded by the slums. He was suspicious and being within the family structure he felt responsible. Thus, he would not articulate his feelings—anyway, who has the luxury to set aside a civil time to express one's emotions when the emotions are high and unpalatable? There is always a problem with the other and we are capable of finding many.

When there is hurt involved with an unwarranted suspicion directed against you, both suffer. They undergo the suffering knowing well that they're having this experience which is not healthy. But the moment of ego is suspended to irrationality. All the advice of holy books are put aside and the person's hurt, most often resulting from confusion, gives rise to a gulf of misunderstanding. By the time repair comes, the boat of comprehension and dialogue is long gone and all that remains is two bodies struggling to confide in their insecurities.

What one feels in the moment is not reciprocated by the other. The other knows well that the person needs that attention, sensitive care, but they do not extend that courtesy because the thin line between any relationship—fear and rejection—gets triggered. No one likes to be discarded and set aside like a bygone thought. Especially, from the one who one has invested in, loved admirably and planned the future.

The mystery of lone life is sheathed with the layers of love. One can love strongly or have a weak love, but the thread between love is volatile. That is why love becomes an act of intimate politics. It is maintained by strategic choices one makes and adjusts accordingly. It teaches us many things that we may not appreciate in the time being, but they come to us as visitors from the past in the sombre rendezvous of memory. Can hurt built on suspicion resolve to create a more intimate, resolved and emotionally bonded new story? Or does it end the story? 

(Views expressed are personal)