

# Gurbani - As antidote to suffering

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The spiralling trend of mental illnesses and an increasing suicidal tendency in today's stressful world is a cause of deep concern. Each one of us feels that something should be done to prevent such incidents. Let us seek guidance from Guru Granth Sahib and see if something can be done.

**Psycho-Analysis:** Analysis of the human mind and mental health is necessary to understand the vulnerability of a depressed person. Mental health is the capability of any individual to cope with normal stresses and strains of life. When any person is not able to do that, he may slip into despair. Despair is the most difficult and dangerous situation, which can lead a person into believing that ending life is the only answer to his problems. Answer to our problems may be found if we can somehow prevent despair in the first place. How and why does anybody go into despair? Studying the state of mind in a little detail is required to understand it better.

**Suffering:** Whenever we face adversity (*dukh*) we go through a definite set of mental turmoil. It takes the same sequence of mental events with almost everybody. At the first instance we try to reject the truth and feel that the news is not meant for us but has been wrongly delivered to us. It is nature's way to prepare our mind for the final blow. As soon as the news is confirmed we get into a fit of anger. It's seen that in hard times people blame Fate or even God for being unkind to them. As the anger subsides we start bargaining with God to reverse the damage done. It's very common to see people going to Gurdwara for forty days or performing Akhand Path for fulfillment of their requests, whether just or unjust. We slip from sadness into despair when the almighty Lord turns down all such requests. Every thing looks gloomy and we lose all hope of revival.

The longer we stay in the state of despair, the more we suffer. Even few moments of despair can cause awful mental agony. This torment can carry on for days, weeks, and months or may be for years. One becomes a prisoner of anguish, and is unable to live a normal life. We are finally freed from this torture when acceptance of events takes place. Once the truth is accepted, we are at peace and life comes back to its normal routine. A psychiatrist only helps to move a patient from the stage of despair to the stage of acceptance through counseling.

How can despair be prevented? The ultimate truth is that it cannot be prevented. Guru Nanak declares in his testament that the whole world is suffering.

bwlI rovY nwih Bqwru ] (954-5, rwmkll, mÚ 1)

The young bride cries her heart out because her husband has passed away.

nwnk duKIaw sBu sMswru ] (954-5, rwmkll, mÚ 1)

O Nanak, the whole world is suffering.

Guru Nanak declares that in this world Ram as well as Ravan both experienced sorrow, as sufferings are a part of this world. Rich or poor, good or bad, all have to undergo despair sometime or the other during their lifetime.

The mystic Baba Farid presents this opinion in his shlokas:

Prldw mY jwinAw duKu muJ kU duKu sbwieAY jig ] (1382)

Fareed, I thought that I was in trouble; the whole world is in trouble!

aUcy ciV kY dyiKAw qW Gir Gir eyhw Aig ]81] (Slok, SyK Prld jI -1382 )

When I climbed the hill and looked around, I saw this fire in each and every home. ||81||

Baba Farid even goes a bit further with the sentiment and shows utter disillusionment with

world.

Prldw ij idih nwlw kipAw jy glu kpih cuK ] (Slok, SyK Prld jl -1381 )

Fareed, if on that day when my umbilical cord was cut, my throat had been cut instead,

pvin n ieql mwmlly shW n ieql duK ]76]

I would not have fallen into so many troubles, or undergone so many hardships.

||76||

Though Baba Farid Ji's shalok shows his detachment from this world (*Bairag*), Guru Arjun Dev Ji is well aware of the fact that any of his disciples may be misled by such depressing thoughts and He guides us very well then and there itself.

mhlw 5 ] (Slok, SyK Prld jl-1382)

Prldw BUim rMgwvll mMiJ ivsUlw bwg ]

Fareed, in the midst of this beautiful earth, there is a garden of thorns.

jo jn plir invwijAw iqMn@w AMc n lwg ]82]

Those humble beings who are blessed by their spiritual teacher, do not suffer even a scratch.

||82||

mhlw 5 ] (Slok, SyK Prld jl-1382)

Prldw aumr suhwvVI sMig suvMnVI dyh ]

Fareed, life is blessed and beautiful, along with the beautiful body.

ivrlly kyel pweIAin ijMn@w ipAwry nyh ]83]

Only a rare few are found, who love their Beloved Lord. ||83||

We are repeatedly told to accept the Will of God (*bhana*) by our Guru. If in the first place we accept the events we will not stay in depression for long. Accepting God's will is the only thing that brings peace of mind. Saying it all is easy but practicing is difficult. This can only be achieved if we love God. If we pray to him he will take care of it all. Guru Amar Das Ji clears any doubts, if any, in our minds as he says that God Himself inspires us to surrender to His Will

mwrU mhlw 3 ] (1063-17)

M jo quDu krxw so kir pwieAw ]

Whatever You do, is done.

Bwxy ivic ko ivrlw AwieAw ]

How rare are those who walk in harmony with the Lord's Will.

Bwxw mMny so suKu pwey Bwxy ivic suKu pwiedw ]1]

One who surrenders to the Lord's Will finds peace; he finds peace in the Lord's Will. ||1||

gurmuiK qyrw Bwxw BwvY ]

Your Will is pleasing to the Gurmukh.

shjy hl suKu scu kmwvY ]

Practicing Truth, he intuitively finds peace.

Bwxy no locY bhuqyrl Awpxw Bwxw Awip mnwiedw ]2]

Many long to walk in harmony with the Lord's Will; He Himself inspires us to surrender to His Will. ||2||

qyrw Bwxw mMny su imlY quDu Awey ]

One, who surrenders to Your Will, meets with You, Lord.

**Poise and Harmony:** To reach a stage where one walks in harmony with the lord's will one has to pray every day. We cannot achieve it by our virtues because we don't have any (*nirgun*). If lord is kind enough He can make us do whatever He likes. Thus it is most important to just pray every day so that He keeps us near Him. We must understand this

well that loving God is not through our own efforts but only by his blessings (*nadar*). To achieve this it is most important to quit our own intellectual thoughts and only listen to Guru.

koel jnu hir isau dyvY joir ] (701-16, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

If only someone would unite me with the Lord!

crn ghau bkau suB rsnw dljih pRwn Akoir ]1] rhwau ] (701-16, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

I hold tight to His feet, and utter sweet words with my tongue; I make my breath of life an offering to Him.

This 'someone' is none other than GURU. Guru and only Guru can unite us with LORD. Only constant interaction with Guru can keep us near God. It is just not sufficient to go to gurdwara regularly, one must read, recite, listen to and contemplate on gurbani.

hm AnwQ nwQ hir srxl Apunl ik@pw kryNh ] (702-4, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

I am a helpless orphan - I seek Your Sanctuary, O My Lord and Master; please bless me with Your mercy.

crx kml nwnku AwrwDY iqsu ibnu Awn n kyNh ]2]6]10] (702-5, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

Nanak worships and adores the Lord's lotus feet; without Him, there is no other at all.

When we see none other than Lord, we don't have to fear anything in the world

AwieE srix dln duK BMjn icqvau qum@rl Eir ] (701-18, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

I have come to Your Sanctuary, O Destroyer of the suffering of the innocent; I keep my consciousness focused on You.

ABY pdu dwnu ismrnu suAwml ko pRB nwnk bMDn Coir ]2]5]9] (702-1, jYqsrl, mÚ 5)

Bless me with the gifts of the state of fearlessness, and meditative remembrance, Lord and Master; O Nanak, God is the Breaker of bonds.

**Emancipation:** When this state of fearlessness is achieved there is no danger of anxiety, frustration or depression, the root causes of mental illness. When failures do come our way Guru helps us sail through crisis by his beautiful words and healing touch.

To conclude we must bring our children closer to Guru by making them read Guru Granth Sahib. Keep them away from useless activities. Instead of wasting time on other things they should read at least one page every day from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. If not, then at least the daily hukumnama, relayed from Darbar Sahib, should be read to understand its complete meaning. If we put this much effort Guru will take care of the rest Himself. After all it's His Mercy we have to seek.

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