

DISCOURSE ON DRUGS, AND HOW TO AVOID IT

PATH OF AVOIDANCE AS PER GURBANI

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Addiction to drugs is a social discontent and its use should be scorned. On a religiously spiritual basis man is prompted to renounce this habit by influence of social and moral control. It is an honor to be present amongst you today to acquaint you about the way Gurbani teaches us the disciplined way of renouncing the addiction to drugs. For me to just talk about the moral issues will not suffice. Agreeably, it is important to know why to save us from exposure to drugs; what are the benefits of abstaining from drug consumption; the risks of consumption; especially from the beautiful vision of our religious and spiritual scriptures.

Fore mostly, I would like to comment from the Gurbani that Man does not understand the value of his life and especially the human form he has been gifted with.

“ਇਸ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਕਿਨੇ ਨਾ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਮੇਰੈ ਠਾਕੁਰਿ ਇਹ ਬਣਤ ਬਣਾਇ ॥”

This human form is functional due to a combination of numerous chemicals. This combination has been and will be a part and parcel of our life and this is the truth of life that we have to live with. Whenever we have a religious discourse regarding drugs and abuse, we leave out the important information that drugs are also chemicals. Drugs are chemicals that are sometimes needed by the body in very minute quantities. Chemicals like opium, cocaine and marijuana are used in various forms for pain relief.

On a religious basis: Is the use of these chemicals prohibited? Should we be abstaining from their use?

Gurbani on the other hand has a very practical approach rather than other hardcore radical thoughts.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਿਮੀਏ ਤਿਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਓ ਪਾਲ”

“Hey Lord, your name can only be enchanted if this human form we exist in is taken care of”

It is very evident from this sacred writing that our first and foremost duty is to take care of this human body and to take all precautions to prevent it from going worn-out (rotten). Let us now go to the right definition of drugs through Gurbani. According to our sacred Gurbani, any substance can be considered an addictive drug that will lead the human body to become dreadful and lead the mind astray, one that will make man lose control over his will power (cognitive abilities).

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਖੁਆਰ, ਜਿਤ ਥਾਪੈ ਤਨ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲੈ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥”

All those substances that once consumed lead to a deprived body and sinful thoughts are to be avoided at all costs.

Furthermore, it is very clearly written in Gurbani to abstain from all those substances that lead you to cognitive debilities.

“ਜਿਤ ਪਿਤੈ ਸਤ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਵੈ ਬਰਲ ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ॥ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਜਿਤ ਪੀਤੈ ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਝੂਠਾ ਮਦੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥”

“Man can only reveal true benevolence if he recognizes his true self.”

Even in medical language the true definition of “drugs” is that they alter, distract and destroy the human mind. The consumption of which (for experimentation or enjoyment) alters the perception, consciousness, cognition and behavior of the human being and eventually destroys the body chemistry. Furthermore, these chemicals lead to dependency are illicit and illegal to use. Because use of these substances brings about a subjective change in ones consciousness and mood, over time man becomes dominated by his habits and loses his independence.

Gurbani says

“ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ” ॥

Man fails to live up to this philosophy of life – Man was supposed to uplift his life, his society and wellbeing rather he is left weakened by his addiction to behavior controlling chemicals.

The question arises now that how can we save our selves from this unnecessary evil?

A. Education: As mentioned before that Gurbani teaches us to have an extreme sense of awareness before adopting anything new. We need to be aware of the short term and long term side effects and becomes our moral and ethical responsibility to educate our kith and kin. People are now aware and look at the labels even before drinking a soft drink. It should become our new routine to be aware of what goes into our body our temple that we live in.

B. Enjoyment: (other creative activities like games, volunteer work etc.): it is a strong belief that we should not abuse the name “enjoyment” as under its garb we serve or tend to create avenues to serve poison. There is a choice we can make, the choice of adopting the path of morality and right way of living. The choice of choosing certain creative activities, which help relieve the mind of our day-to-day stresses, is a way taught by Gurbani.

C. Spiritual Bankruptcy: How to save ourselves from this scenario? Man is neither body alone nor alone is a mind. It is a complete package of Mind, Body and Soul. It thus becomes a responsibility to manage this triad effectively and completely. Being aware spiritually or at the soul level, man can face all hardships of life and keep himself aloof of any sicknesses or bad habits.

It is important to now talk about the Sikh Doctrines of life and their applicability in our lives as of today. According to the Sikh School of thought, this human form is a "Temple". We have been trained to see only the Man made or Constructed Temples especially in Sikh Temples, where it is usually written "Consumption of drugs and carrying of drugs around the premises are strongly prohibited". Let us assume for a moment that our human form or body is a temple. It becomes very clear that we should not feed or serve this temple with any dreadful substances. We are socially bound to keep the man-made temples clean and tidy because God resides there, but Gurbani teaches us that God resides in all forms of existence and even our human form, therefore, the holiness of our body our human form must be preserved at all times.

In Sikhism, the worst kind of addiction is consumption of Tobacco. We are to completely desist from its intake. The abstinence of tobacco was decided about 550 years ago. 300 years ago it was made a big social taboo if it were consumed, it was completely outlawed in Sikhism. Now when the whole world is up and against consumption of Tobacco, we as Sikhs should be proud that we had an early start to prohibit Tobacco and there is no room for its existence.

In the end it would be practical to mention that the Sikh Tenets preach a spiritual life style and if adopted will lead to extermination over all worldly dissatisfactions. As a Sikh, we have a greater responsibility to be the forerunners in adoption of our gifted lifestyle so that today's society can be motivated to shun away weak-minded approach and become a strong man physically, mentally and above all spiritually.

May God bless everyone who believes in the true path of honesty and rightful living.