

Is Suicide a Permanent Solution to a Temporary Problem?
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“My relatives and friends have left me. Now there is no support in my life. To make the matters worse, I have been dismissed from my job!” Recently I met an young man with these problems which he felt both physically and mentally.

In the context of ever increasing suicide not only in Gujarat but also in the whole country, I knew that the problems of that young man were both genuine and real. He was beset with personal and social problems. He was deeply depressed. He could think only of suicide as the solution to all his problems!

Speaking at length with the young man in the context of 21 suicides in Ahmedabad city during that one month in 2004, I felt that one needs to delve deeply into the question of suicide. In comparison with the past, people easily take recourse to suicide for a host of reasons. Then, family or mass suicide has alarmingly increased in the country!

Examining some cases of suicide we can see a few things very clearly. There is a lack of inner strength or mental power to face personal and family problems. A person’s spiritual strength is depleted easily. People take the easy way of suicide instead of exploring all possible avenues to get out of one’s problems and difficulties. In a number of cases people have taken to suicide as the only solution to solve their temporary financial or/and family problems!

The seeds which fell on rocky grounds get dried up with the hot rays of the sun. Similarly the seeds which fell among thorny bushes get choked up when the plants grew up. In the same way in a particular situation people easily take recourse to suicide instead of looking for ways and means to solve the problems of life with one’s intellect and the power of discernment. People are choking themselves like the seedlings among thorny brushes! As a permanent solution to some temporary problems people commit suicide! People commit suicide not only to solve difficulties and problems but also as a way to escape from failures to get the desired achievement!

Today people want to instantly earn money and get rich overnight! They want all luxurious amenities of life. They want to reproduce in their house the dream world which they see in the idiot box of the television! They want to have in their house all the luxurious goods they have seen in their neighbour’s house or in a rich man’s mansion!

The children want their parents to fulfill all their desires. The sons and daughters would want to have in their house all the good things which they have seen in the houses of their friends. The earning member of the house is capable or not, the members of the house want all things of their fancy!

The children and youth desire to have things, which are often beyond the reach of their parents. The parents’ expectations of their children are not the less. They want their children to be the first in their studies. They exert all sorts of pressure on the children to be first. The youth also want to become rich instantly. They want to accumulate great wealth in a short time. The youth are impatient to get the desired things. He/she cannot put up with failures.

In such environment a person cannot easily withstand the cutting remarks of relatives; one's inner tension and financial crisis. The children experience deep pain in failing to succeed in their examinations. The parents are greatly upset when their children do not get the expected high results. The youth have to face not only the lack of jobs inspite of their education but also the pointed remarks of their elders. An young man experiences total failure inspite of having everything in life except the desired woman in his life. An young woman find if difficult to face life after being the victim of other's exploitation. The head of the house finds it extremely difficult to feed his house as he has lost his job or the debt has become enormous or perhaps the crop has failed and all other means of earning have gone astray.

All these situations and the experiences of helplessness lead people to think about suicide or some other ways to put an end to one's life. Sometimes these thinking leads one to actual suicide!

But we all need to understand clearly one things. Suicide is not an instant decision of a person. Suicide is a step taken after thinking about it. It is a deliberate decision. So to solve the problems of suicide we need to examine all our values, our attitudes, our ideals and the goals which we are pursuing.

In the first place we need to understand our values. We need to understand the purpose our precious lives. The French Philosopher Federic Nietzsche has said that the question of 'the why' of human life prompts a person to seek the question of 'the how' of human life. If we know 'the why' we live our lives, then we will certainly be able to discover 'the how' we live our lives. But the person who is committing suicide do not give any value to his/her life! He/She does not know 'the why' to live one's life. If a person knows well in his mind 'the why' he/she should live, what is the purpose of his/her life, then he/she will certainly be persuaded to find out 'the how' to live it.

A person should not form his/her values of life from the dreamy portrayal of television or cinema screens but from the actual life situations lived in a family. Today a person spends a lot of time before television sets or in cinema halls. If we spend half the time in our family sitting with all the members and chatting and sharing everything in a friendly atmosphere to understand one another's views and problems, then in such a cordial atmosphere nobody of the family will ever think about committing suicide.

When there is close relationship and understanding of one-another in a family, then each member will feel secure. Each one will feel that there is some one who understands me. He/she will feel that in my problems and difficulties I am not alone. In such an atmosphere a person is capable of handling his/her personal problems and difficulties. In a family understanding, love, sympathy and forgiveness are like strong links of a chain. Then everyone in the family is with the person facing problems and difficulties. In such a family situation a person will never feel alone. The person will feel that the whole family is with him/her.

Where there are love and dialogue in a family, the parents will share with the children about family problems, social issues and financial difficulties, and the parents will also be aquatinted

with the strengths and weaknesses of their children. Then, every member of the family will try to behave according to the family situation and support one another in every way.

To give a simple example, a teenager who is well acquainted with the financial difficulties of his/her parents will see that he/she will not incur avoidable expenses like joining a class picnic or school excursion. He/She will try to minimize his/her personal expenses in the school.

The children and youth who have grown up in an atmosphere of love and harmony in the family will understand and cherish not only human values but also be able to cultivate inner strength to face one's problems. Here inner strength means one's psychological or mental power and self-confidence. A self-confident person is able to rely on himself/herself and also put his/her confidence in others as well as in God.

When great problems and difficulties of life arise, a self-confident person knows that if he/she is not able to solve or face his/her problems alone, then he/she can depend on others and God to help him/her. So even if the problem is enormous, he/she would never think of escaping from the problem by taking steps like suicide. If the problem or difficulty is not solved in one way, he/she will look for other ways till the problem is satisfactorily solved. If he/she cannot solve the problem all by himself/herself, the person will try to get help without hesitation from the members of the family or find a way to live with it.

Suicide is usually a deliberate step taken by the person as a final solution to his/her problems. All the same the person committing suicide does not inform anybody about the step he/she is contemplating to take. So the suicide is a great surprise to the family members and friends. In fact, the grieving family and friends could have solved or helped the person concerned to face up to the problem. But now there is no meaning or significance to such steps, which could have solved the problems because the person is no more.

The person who has committed suicide has taken the final, irrevocable step to a temporary problem! Now the relatives and friends have to live with the shameful awareness of the unthinkable step of suicide! They have to live their lives with shame and other consequences of the suicide.

So I believe that no thinking and genuinely loving person will ever have recourse to suicide as a final solution to a temporary problem. A discerning and considerate person will never attempt to commit suicide.