**Suffering**

**In World War I, Cardinal Mercier saw his home torn by shells, the cathedral he loved leveled to a pile of debris, his valuable library burned, and some of his students killed. But after all that he said, “Suffering accepted and vanquished will give you a serenity which may well prove the most exquisite fruit of your life.” *(Phil Barnhart, in Seasonings for Sermons, p. 153)***

**A man using a bank's automatic-teller machine received his cash and then sneezed twice. "You must be allergic to money," said the woman behind him. "No," came the quick reply. "I just suffer from withdrawal symptoms." *(Nigel Renton, in Reader's Digest)***

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**I shot my lamb, and I wish my neighbors had shot theirs, too, said Jon Katz. I raise sheep on my upstate New York farm, and last year I gave three lambs to a couple who had just moved up from the suburbs. Over the winter, one of my lambs and one of theirs took sick with the same mysterious infection. Both grew weak and disoriented, their fleece peeling off in patches. Knowing the old farmyard axiom, “Sick Sheep Seldom Survive,” I carried my lamb behind the barn, “told him how sorry I was, and shot him twice in the back of the head with my .22. He died instantly.” My neighbors, though, have a more “contemporary urban sensibility about animals.” Doting on their lamb as if he were a family member, they moved him into a spare bedroom, feeding him fresh hay and nutritional supplements. But months later, he still “looks like a concentration-camp sheep.” I don’t question my neighbors’ motives, but they merely are prolonging the animal’s suffering. I’m afraid their efforts have more to do with “their own emotional gratification” than with what’s truly in the best interests of the lamb. *(The Week magazine, May 18, 2007)***

****Humans aren't the only animals to suffer from emotional thunderstorms. Every animal with a mind likely has the capacity to lose it. *(Laurel Braitman, science historian, in Animal Madness)*****

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**To perceive is to suffer. (Aristotle)**

**You can’t avoid suffering in your life, but you can avoid suffering about the suffering. *(Leonard Wolf, poet)***

How can we be made sufficiently aware of suffering, without being made to suffer ourselves? *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)*

**Losing a loved one, uncertainty about what we are – these are deprivations that give rise to our worst suffering. We may be idealists, but we need what is tangible. It is by the presence of persons and things that we believe we recognize certainty. But does it truly matter what we lack when what we have is not used up? So many things are susceptible of being loved that surely no discouragement can be final. To know how to suffer, to know how to love, and, when everything collapses, to take everything up once more, simply, the richer from suffering, almost happy from the awareness of our misery. (Albert Camus, in Youthful Writings)**

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**Our suffering is caused by holding to how things might have been, should have been, could have been. Grief is part of our daily existence. But we seldom recognize that pain in our heart that one fellow called “a deep weeping, a mourning for everything we have left behind. *(Stephen Levine)***

**Nine-tenths of our suffering is caused by others not thinking so much of us as we think they ought. *(Mary Lyon)***

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**Some people look at the life of constant challenges as being painful and resist putting themselves into such situations because they don’t want to suffer. Suffering is an attitude – it’s a choice. When you put yourself into a new challenging situation, it may indeed be a little scary and uncomfortable – and that can be experienced as painful. Get over it. It’s good to be a little scared and uncomfortable – it makes you reach into yourself and draw out adaptive strategies. It doesn’t require that you linger in a prison of suffering – of your own creation! *(James Van deWalle, in Women’s Edition)***

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**In life, you must choose between boredom and suffering. *(Madame de Stael)***

**Choosing whom to commit ourselves to is merely a case of identifying which particular variety of suffering we would most like to sacrifice ourselves for. (Alain De Botton, British philosopher)**

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**Suffering is conducive to sanctity, for every sorrow, every trial, can be turned into a blessing by the will of the Christian sufferer. *(Father Lasance)***

**Suffering is the swiftest steed that leads towards wholeness. (Meister Eckhart)**

**Suffering from economic arrest: Drops in stock prices don’t hurt just your pocketbook; they may also prompt heart attacks, a new study suggests. Researchers at Duke University tracked the arrival of heart-attack patients at the campus hospital between January 2008 and July 2009, when the recession was in full swing and people were watching their savings melt away. They found that when stock prices dropped, the number of heart attacks rose; rising prices were matched by a lower incidence of heart attacks. “This is an intriguing study,” Jane Wright, of the American College of Cardiology, tells the Associated Press. “Personal stressors – in this case an economic one – can be a trigger for cardiac events.” Since heart-attack incidence rises in winter, researchers said, they can’t be sure their findings were related only to the stock market. They plan a larger study to better explore the relationship between economic and cardiac health. *(The Week magazine, April 2, 2010)***

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**Faith in immortality, like belief in God, leaves unanswered the ancient question: is God unable to prevent suffering, and thus not omnipotent? or is he able and not willing it and thus not merciful? And is he just? *(Walter Kaufmann)***

**Well, where is God in a world of suffering? Look, if we want to be where God is, we must go where God goes. God is with the blindfolded prisoner waiting for execution. God is with the child licking dust for nourishment in East Africa. God is with the senile old woman bed-wetting in some nursing home, and with the AIDS patient who waits with wide-waiting eyes. The God of love is with all who suffer, where every cross is set. God has not forsaken us, good heavens, but perhaps we have failed to follow God into the human world to be with the suffering. So God calls to the church, “People, oh my people, have you forsaken me?” *(Dr. David Buttrick, in Pulpit Digest)***

**There is a story about a man who once stood before God, his heart breaking from the pain and injustice in the world. “Dear God,” he cried out, “look at all the suffering, the anguish and distress in your world. Why don’t you send help?” God responded, “I did send help. I sent you.” *(S.C.U.C.A. Regional Reporter)***

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**Only individuals can suffer and only individuals have a place in tragedy. *(Edith Hamilton)***

**I don’t suffer from insanity. I enjoy every minute of it. *(Tidbits)***

**Suffering isn't ennobling, recovery is. *(Christian N. Barnard)***

**You canhold backfrom the suffering of the world, you have free permission to do so and it is in accordance with your nature, but perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering that you could have avoided. (Franz Kafka)**

**Although the world is very full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it. *(Helen Keller)***

**There is no poor people’s suffering and rich people’s suffering. Don’t envy others, because you can’t know the extent of their suffering just by looking at the externals. *(Sogyal Rinpoche)***

**If you learn from your suffering, and really come to understand the lesson you were taught, you might be able to help someone else who’s now in the phase you may have just completed. Maybe that’s what it’s all about after all… *(Dana Leigh Jordan)***

**We were on our way to church one Sunday morning. This was years ago and we were in a horse-drawn wagon. My young sister-in-law asked her mom for a Bible verse she could recite at Sunday school. Her mom said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me . . .” Later, when the teacher asked my sister-in-law for a verse, she proudly recited, “Supper, little children. Come on to Mom.” *(Charlene Stephens, in Reminisce magazine)***

**The American public is largely indifferent to the genocide in Sudan, said Nicholas Krostof, and I've finally figured out why. Too many people are suffering and dying. Several recent studies have found that people often aren't moved by human suffering on a mass scale, while the plight of one sympathetic child or a big-eyed puppy in distress “causes our hearts to flutter." In one study, for example, people were willing to donate twice as much to help save one child than eight. Real-world examples support those conclusions. A story about a single stranded dog or child will elicit a huge public response, while the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur leave us numbed. So how can we generate the public support needed to get our leaders to intervene in the slaughter in Darfur? Our best hope may be to find a “Darfur puppy,” preferably one “with big eyes and floppy ears.” *(The Week magazine, May 25, 2007)***

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**Suffering does not ennoble, it degrades. *(W. Somerset Maugham)***

****It is not true that suffering ennobles the character; happiness does that sometimes, but suffering, for the most part, makes men petty and vindictive. *(Somerset Maugham)*****

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**The more you try to avoid suffering, the more you suffer, because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you, in proportion to your fear of being hurt. (Thomas Merton)**

**A man who fears suffering is already suffering from what he fears. *(Michel de Montaigne)***

**Mother Teresa tells the poignant story of two men living in a home for homeless alcoholics who get into a fight. One injures the other badly, and the police are called in. The injured man refuses to give the name of his assailant to the police. When Mother Teresa asks him why he did not implicate the man who attacked him, the man replies: “His suffering is not going to lessen my suffering.” *(Hazel Brown, in Unity magazine)***

**Ogden Nash once wrote that most people suffer from "hardening of the oughteries." *(Dr. Alexander Reid Martin, in Reader's Digest)***

**We create our own misery and unhappiness. The purpose of suffering is to make us understand we are the ones who cause it. (Willie Nelson, country music star)**

**Son: “My childhood was incredibly bland. No drama. No heartbreak. No triumph over adversity. Nothing but wall-to-wall middle-class comfort and security!” Dad: “Whoa! The suffering of never having suffered!” Son: “No wonder I’m so cranky. *(Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman, in Zits comic strip)*Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional. *(M. Kathleen Casey)***

## Dean: “I saw this TV show last night about Charles Dickens. When he was a boy, his father was thrown into debtors’ prison, and young Charles had to quit school to work in a bottle-labeling factory to make money for his family. From his hard childhood experiences, Dickens was inspired to write some of the world’s most celebrated novels, like ‘David Copperfield’ and ‘Oliver Twist.’” Heart: “If that’s supposed to make me feel better about three pages of math homework, it doesn’t. Dean: “Out of great suffering comes great art!” *(Mark Tatulli, in Heart of the City comic strip)*

## Time is but a period. It passes like the lightning flash. Suffering passes with time; suffering, then, is very short. *(Venerable Bartholomew of the Martyrs)*

**You don't have to suffer to be a poet. Adolescence is enough suffering for anyone. (John Ciardi)**

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**Nine tenths of the ills from which intelligent people suffer spring from their intellect. *(Marcel Proust)***

**Everything great in the world comes from neurotics. They alone have founded our religions and composed our masterpieces. Never will the world know all it owes to them nor all that they have suffered to enrich us. *(Marcel Proust)***

**We are healed of a suffering only by experiencing it to the full. *(Marcel Proust, French author)***

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**A cold in the head causes less suffering than an idea. *(The Journal of Jules Renard)***

**Let us understand that God is a Physician, and that suffering is a medicine for salvation, not a punishment for damnation. *(St. Augustine)***

As long as I can remember I have suffered because of all the misery I saw in the world. It caused me particular pain that poor animals have to endure so much suffering and cruelty. The sight of a limping old horse being beaten with a stick haunted me for weeks. *(Albert Schweitzer)*

**There are more things likely to frighten us than there are to crush us; we suffer more often in imagination than in reality. (*Seneca)***

**Some will not look on suffering because it creates responsibility. *(Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen)***

**Those who have suffered understand suffering and therefore extend their hand. (Patti Smith)**

**The justification of the neighbor's pain is surely the source of all suffering. (Emmanuel Levinas, philosopher)**

**Once Handel, the great composer, found himself in desperate straits, his right side paralyzed, his money gone and his creditors threatening to jail him. But his suffering spurred him to the mightiest effort of his life. Writing feverishly, almost without stopping, he composed “The Messiah” with its immortal “Hallelujah” chorus in 24 days. If he had relaxed and forgotten his worries, the world would have been poorer, and so would he. *(Ardis Whitman, in Reader’s Digest)***

**It's clear that most American children suffer too much mother and too little father. *(Gloria Steinem)***

**It will be interesting to hear today's teenagers tell their children what they had to do without. *(Charlottesville, Virginia, Progress)***

**Unhappiness is the refusal to suffer. *(George Scott-Moncrieff)***

**Untold suffering seldom is. (Franklin P. Jones, in The Saturday Evening Post)**

**A husband and wife went to the doctor. The husband is hard of hearing. The doctor says to the wife, “You’ve got to do three things to keep your husband well. First, you’ve got to keep everything real clean and smooth. You got to iron everything. Second, you’ve got to fix him fresh meals every day from scratch. No left overs, no fast or frozen foods. Third, you’ve got to give him more loving.” They get home and the husband asks, “Well what did the doctor say?” The wife looks at him and responds, “You’re going to die.” *(Tidbits)***

**Indeed, had there been no suffering in the world, a considerable part of religion, yea, and in some respects, the most excellent part, could have had no place therein: since the very existence of it depends on our suffering: so that had there been no pain it could have had no being. *(John Wesley)***

**During the devastating earthquakes in Kobe, Japan, an American newscaster did a short piece on a Japanese woman who set up a makeshift store out of boxes selling flashlights and batteries. When the commentator asked why she wasn’t selling these essential items for more than the regular price, the woman answered, “Why would I want to profit from someone else’s suffering?” (Bits & Pieces)**

**Don’t look forward to the day you stop suffering, because when it comes you’ll know you’re dead. (Tennessee Williams)**

**Truth is, everybody is going to hurt you. You just gotta find the ones worth suffering for. (Bob Marley)**

**You do not suffer, only the person you imagine yourself to be suffers. You cannot suffer. (Nisargadatta Maharaj)**

**Heart: “Wait, Mrs. Angelina! If you don’t show Mom that progress report, I’ll make you a deal.” Mrs. Angelina: “What kind of deal?” Heart: “I promise, I promise to, I promise to always eat all of my zucchini!” Mrs. Angelina: “It would have to be an awful lot of zucchini, like truckloads.” Heart: “Do you ever get the feeling that some vegetables exist solely for torture purposes.” (Mark Tatulli, in Heart of the Cioty comic strip)**

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