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## MAN IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING. PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE\*\*

**Abstract:** Suffering, in its broad sense, is present in every person's life. Suffering accompanies each individual human being at every degree of longitude and latitude and it can, therefore, be considered a universal theme. Suffering coexists with man, and thus it belongs to those areas of human activity and reflection that are constantly undertaken anew. Even though suffering can be discerned in the animal world, the concept of "suffering" seems to affect man in a particular way, and it is an inherent part of human existence. Suffering may reveal to man his own depth and layers of his personality, which he might otherwise often remain unaware of. Human earthly life begins and is fulfilled between immanence and transcendence. For a believer, suffering belongs to the latter. Suffering may reveal itself in many different forms and degrees of intensity. In spite of many attempts to seek an answer to the question "why", suffering still remains the great mystery. Therefore, a suffering man should always evoke in us the feeling of compassion and respect. As far as possible one should offer him help, comfort and hope. The process of education should sensitize young people to the presence of suffering both in their life as well as in that of others around them.

**Keywords:** person, physical and spiritual suffering, suffering in the Bible, the mystery of suffering, help to the suffering man.

### Introduction

Suffering, in its broad sense, is present in every person's life. Suffering accompanies each individual human being at every degree of longitude and latitude and it can, therefore, be considered a universal theme. Suffering coexists with man, and thus it belongs to those areas of human activity and reflection that are constantly

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undertaken anew. Saint Paul writes: “the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now”<sup>2</sup> (Rom. 8:22). Even though suffering can be discerned in the animal world, the concept of “suffering” seems to affect man in a particular way, and it is an inherent part of human existence. Suffering may reveal to man his own depth and layers of his personality, which he might otherwise often remain unaware of. Human earthly life begins and is fulfilled between immanence and transcendence. For a believer, suffering belongs to the latter. Man is in a way “doomed” to coexist with it, but also to outgrow and overcome himself (Bujak 1985).

Suffering may reveal itself in many different forms and degrees of intensity. It is an inseparable element of human earthly existence. The suffering of another person should always evoke in us the feeling of compassion and respect because it contains in itself the greatness of a specific mystery, and man in his suffering “remains an intangible mystery” (Jan Paweł II 1984, p. 4).

### **The existence of suffering**

Suffering is a fact. It is enclosed in the concrete and unique interior of the human person. It is often inexpressible and non-transferable. That is why, man makes attempts to reflect on the problem, define it, pose a radical question “why” and seek an answer. The aim here goes beyond the mere description of suffering. This role befalls medicine which deals directly with this problem, constantly looking for new methods of counteracting diseases. Human suffering, however, is more extensive, varied and often multidimensional. Man suffers in various ways that sometimes escape the scientific methods of medical examination. It seems thus that suffering is something deeply embedded in the humanity of a person. In general, we distinguish between physical and moral suffering, which points to the dual dimension of human existence, to its bodily and spiritual elements. There is pain in the body and pain in the soul. Due to the possible scale of moral suffering, it is not less significant than physical suffering, while being certainly less definable and less often subject of therapy (Jan Paweł II 1984).

How did the Old Testament view suffering? In its pages, we notice numerous examples of suffering, especially moral: the danger of death, the death of a child, childlessness, longing for the homeland, persecution, mockery, ridicule of the sufferer, loneliness, abandonment, infidelity, ingratitude. For the Jews, man constituted a psycho-physical whole, therefore they linked moral suffering with pain affecting specific parts of the body: kidneys, bones, liver, heart. The achievements of today’s medicine allow us to ascertain that moral (mental, spiritual) suffering may affect our soma. Very interesting in this respect is the language used in the Old Testament. Man suffered when he was affected by any form of evil. Suffering and evil were thus perceived as one. A distinction between the two concepts was introduced

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2 All scriptural quotations in the present article are based on the New American Standard Bible.

by the New Testament. Suffering there is no longer straightforwardly identified with evil, but it is presented as a certain situation in which man experiences evil. Thus, suffering gives rise to the question of the essence of evil. What is evil? Why does evil exist? The above questions are inseparable from the concept of suffering (Bujak 1985).

Some cultural or religious currents claim that the very fact of being (existence, life) is evil in itself and that man should free himself, deliver himself from it. Christianity, contrarily, declares that life is good and that everything that exists is likewise good. Consequently, the evil that man suffers from can be defined as the lack or limitation of good. Man suffers from the lack of good in which he cannot partake, from which he has been excluded by other people or of which he deprived himself. Suffering occurs when a person is entitled to possess some good and is divested of it.

Suffering constitutes a specific reality that coexists with man. It often appears and passes (thanks to medicine), but sometimes it ingrains itself permanently in man. Suffering afflicts not only one person, but it exists in many subjects in certain dispersion. Each suffering person constitutes a part of this "world", and at the same time this "world" exists in him as "a finite and unrepeatable entity" (Jan Paweł II 1984). Suffering has not only an individual but also a social dimension. The world of suffering is united by a kind of connecting tissue. The element linking suffering people is the similarity of their condition, the experience of human fate, the need for understanding and care, as well as the question "why". There is a kind of community and solidarity that is created between those affected by suffering. Looking at the world of suffering in the social dimension, it is easy to notice that in certain moments and places this world becomes markedly concentrated. This refers to natural disasters, epidemics, catastrophes, cataclysms, and famines. John Paul II lists all armed conflicts, especially World Wars I and II, among such areas of suffering. The Pope warns against the accumulation of suffering which can be caused by a nuclear war. Such an accumulation can lead even to self-destruction of humanity.

### **The perennial question: does suffering make sense?**

From the depths of suffering experienced by an afflicted person, sooner or later, there arises the invariably relevant question: why? This question is about the purpose, reason and meaning of suffering. Only man is aware of his suffering and only he wonders why he should suffer. This question is very difficult to answer. The question of evil is closely related to it. Why does evil exist? For, when we ask about evil, we at the same time ask about suffering (Jan Paweł II, 1984). Man addresses the question about the sense of his suffering not to only other people, but most frequently to God. It seems incomprehensible that man does not direct this question to the world which, as a rule, is the cause and source of suffering (e.g., Auschwitz).

Instead, it is God who is the primary recipient of the question about the sense of suffering. History teaches us that this question led to breakdowns, sharp disputes, and conflicts with God, or even to the denial of God. We know God as a wise, good, and wonderful Being. Suffering and evil cast a decided shadow on the Creator in the face of so much innocent suffering. What is God doing? God hears that question and even awaits it, as we learn, for example, from the history of Job (Stachowiak 1985).

Job, one of the great heroes of the Old Testament, is a just man. He finds himself in terrible distress through no fault of his own. Suffering comes upon him in three stages: first, he is deprived of his fortune, then, his children die, and finally, he falls ill with the most terrible disease of that time, i.e., leprosy. In this unenviable situation, he is visited by three friends. Their stance is clear. Job must be guilty of some grave offence. His suffering is a punishment for a crime, a sin. His afflictions may therefore be regarded as an act of justice, good for good, evil for evil. Job rejects such an interpretation. He is aware of his own righteousness and still believes that he does not deserve such a punishment. Finally, God reacts. I agree with Job. In other words, it is true that his terrible suffering is the suffering of an innocent man. This whole story should be read as a mystery, one that human reason cannot explain. If we accept the assumption that suffering is not a form of punishment, then Job's tragedy was faultless, and he was only put to a severe trial. The above constation may find its confirmation in a dialogue between God and Satan. Afflict him, says Satan, deprive him of everything and he will curse you. God agreed to this trial to show Job's righteousness. So, suffering can be a trial (Grabska 1985).

Job's experience sheds some light on the problem of the suffering of an innocent man, although it does not provide a full answer to it. In the Old Testament, we can find some attempts to undermine the belief that suffering is a punishment for sins. As regards punishments inflicted on the Chosen People, the Authors emphasize their educational value. God punishes the Israelites to bring about their conversion. "These punishments were meant not for the ruin but for the correction of our nation" (2 Macc. 6:12). In this view, punishment did not mean that the suffering was inflicted in return for the wrongs that had been committed, but it was meant to stimulate man and the entire nation of Israel to rebuild good in themselves. In other words, suffering served the purpose of leading the Jews to conversion (Jan Paweł II 1984).

The New Testament and, more specifically, the person of Christ shed a new light on suffering. Saint John says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Salvation means liberation of man from evil and thus from suffering. This is the way in which God's love for man and for the whole world is expressed. From that moment, the meaning of suffering is searched for beyond the limits of justice. The work of the Cross redeemed man but did not completely remove suffering from human life or from the historical dimension of human existence. Observing Christ's activities, we can easily see that He was always close to the sick and the

suffering. He healed the sick, comforted the afflicted, fed the hungry, restored hearing, sight, and healed leprosy. He was sensitive to any kind of suffering. It is remarkable that he made the so-called "Eight blessings" the pivotal point of His public teaching. Christ calls blessed or happy all those who suffer hunger, poverty, persecution, and denigration (Rosłon 1982).

There is one more important detail that should be accentuated in Christ's public ministry. Christ not only saw the suffering man and helped him, but He took the suffering upon himself as He recurrently reminded his disciples: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him; and three days later He will rise from the dead" (Mk 10:33-34). Christ consciously and voluntarily goes to face His own passion and death. He considers it His mission. The Cross of Christ touches the roots of evil that lie in the heart and human soul. Through His suffering and the Cross, Christ wanted "everyone who believes in Him not to perish, but to have eternal life". Peter tries to dissuade Him from it. Christ reacts very sharply, "Get away from me, Satan." And in Gethsemane, seeing Peter's sword, He says: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me" (Jn 18:11). Many years later, Saint Paul wrote about the Son of God who: "has loved me and given himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20), calling the whole work of Christ "the preaching of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18). In order to understand it more fully, it is necessary to look at its culmination, namely, to Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39), and, as we read further in St. Matthew's gospel: "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done" (Mt. 26:42). Every suffering is a touch of evil that one fears and tries to escape from it. The words of Christ, allow us to gain a better understanding of man who, faced with suffering, constantly asks: "why?" (Rosłon 1982).

### **Human participation in suffering. St. Paul's stance**

Among all witnesses of the New Testament, St. Paul is the one who especially emphasizes in his letters the greatness of the Redemption that was accomplished through the sufferings of Christ. By elevating suffering to the level of redemption, Christ raised the rank of human suffering. In the Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul states: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body... because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself" (2 Cor. 4:8-11, 14). Christ

was the cause of the suffering of the first disciples. Saint Paul saw them not only in the perspective of the Cross and death, but first and foremost in that of the Resurrection. The early Christians find the light in the resurrection that helps them suffer through humiliation, doubts, despair, and persecution. “For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ” (2 Cor. 1:5). According to St. Paul, a man driven by faith discovers a new meaning of Christ’s suffering, and in it, his own suffering. Therefore, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he states: “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:19–20). A few lines later, the Apostle of the Nations writes even more emphatically: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. 6:14), (Romaniuk 1985).

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, St. Paul refers to the sufferings of his addressees and points out to them their ultimate goal, namely, the Kingdom of God. “As a result, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you indeed are suffering” (2 Thess. 1:4–5). This problem is also addressed in the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle states: “if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:17–18). According to St. Paul, man matures to heaven through suffering. Paul refers the constant theme of suffering and glory to the Cross and the Resurrection. In the same letter, St. Paul draws attention to yet another dimension of suffering. It can be a source of spiritual strengthening of man amidst the suffering he experiences. “And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom. 5:3–5). Suffering understood and accepted builds the strength of perseverance in a man and the hope that the attempt will not break him, will not deprive him of dignity and meaning in life (Jan Paweł II 1984).

Saint Paul himself, greatly experienced by trials, goes further in the interpretation of suffering. The Epistle to the Colossians is the final stage in his spiritual journey towards understanding suffering. He expresses it in the words: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am supplementing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions in behalf of His body, which is the Church” (Col. 1:24). Following St. Paul, the tradition will soon call the Church the Body of Christ. Through His Body, Christ unites himself with all people, and in a special way with those who

suffer. Whoever suffers with Christ completes His deficiencies in the Church. “And for this reason, suffering also has a special value in the eyes of the Church. It is something good, before which the Church bows down in reverence with all the depth of her faith in the Redemption. She likewise bows down with all the depth of that faith with which she embraces within herself the inexpressible mystery of the Body of Christ” (Jan Paweł II 24).

### **Suffering in the life of the believer**

In his public teaching, Christ did not hide the problem of suffering from his listeners. “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luk 9:23). The Master of Nazareth often foretold the Disciples that they would face various persecutions. Looking back at history, this proved to be true not only in the first three centuries of Christianity, but also today in various parts of the globe. Here is one of Christ’s statements on this subject: “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So, make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will provide you eloquence and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to oppose or refute. But you will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, other relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all people because of My name. And yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luk 21:12–19). The Master does not promise an easy path, on the contrary, He speaks openly about suffering. However, He adds that amid this persecution and suffering, we will be accompanied by transcendental powers. “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me” (Jn 15:18–21). The above words of the Master will be confirmed by St. Paul in the Epistle to Timothy: “Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12).

The history of mankind confirms the presence of suffering in human life. Numerous generations have repeatedly asked the question “why” but have also discovered that suffering is a source of special strength and power that brings us closer to faith. So, suffering is accompanied by some special grace. It is to this grace, that many people owe their “metanoia”, or change of life. It suffices to mention St. Ignatius of Loyola here. People affected by suffering discovered its

salvific meaning and became a new man. One can speak here about the greatness of the human spirit, which transcends the body with its physical limitations, thus becoming a powerful lesson for normal and healthy people. Suffering is evil in itself, but Christ made it the basis of the ultimate good, namely, of eternal salvation. Through suffering, Christ opens up to man the horizons of the Kingdom of God and slowly introduces him to its realm. This process takes place inside a man, and only he is able to notice certain changes taking place in his mind and heart. However, this process takes various courses. Very often, it begins with a rebellion. The points of departure may differ. It seems that almost every man goes into the experience of suffering with the question “why” and looks for answers on the human level. When he fails to find such an answer, he begins to ask God. Sometimes it takes a very long time for a person to hear the inner response. Christ responds from the Cross. His answer is often indirect. Man can only hear it on the condition that he will link his suffering with that of Christ. This answer is contained in the words: Follow me! Take part in the salvation of the world through your suffering. Do this through your cross. A man accepting his own suffering finds in it his inner peace, and very often spiritual joy (Kozakiewicz 2007). The words of St. Paul: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake” (Col. 1:24) provide evidence here. What is the source of this joy? According to John Paul II, it is “the overcoming of the sense of the uselessness of suffering, a feeling that is sometimes very strongly rooted in human suffering” (John Paul II 1984, 27). Suffering as such destroys man, makes him a burden for the surrounding people. A suffering man is doomed to the care and help of others. Moreover, he himself feels useless.

A man looking at his own suffering through the prism of faith transforms the feeling of uselessness. He knows that he participates in the sufferings of Christ and that he “completes Christ’s sufferings”, i.e., that of the Church. Through his suffering, he can contribute to the salvation of his neighbours. It is an irreplaceable and most effective act. Human suffering has greatest power of transforming and changing the souls and hearts of other people. It also contributes to the victory in the cosmic struggle of two forces, good and evil (Dziewiecki 2018).

The Church has always viewed suffering as a source of supernatural strength, as from human weakness flows the power of God, which is a part of a great treasure. Those who suffer can share this treasure with others, especially with those who are in danger of evil. The suffering of the righteous also permeates the complicated structures of evil in this world, contributing to its salvation (Jan Paweł II 1985).

### **The parable of the Good Samaritan and its message in the pedagogical aspect**

The parable of the Good Samaritan, quoted by Luke, is organically inscribed in the problem of suffering. Its main goal is to answer the question “who is my neighbour?” For the believer, this parable constitutes one of the most essential images used by Christ. A robbed and wounded man lies on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

He is an Israelite. He is in such a state that he needs the help of other people. This help is the matter of life or death. The priest and the Levite walked the same way. Each of them “saw him and passed him by”. Their behavior can be understood and justified to some extent. After the ritual cleansing, they rushed to the synagogue for the service. Touching a lying person would greatly complicate the order of the day. They would have to go home and do time-consuming cleansing rituals again. The third person to appear is the Samaritan. “When he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn and took care of him”. After dressing his wounds, he “brought him to an inn and took care of him” (Luk 10:33–34). After some time, we do not know the details, when he was leaving, he asked the innkeeper to take care of the wounded, at the same time obliging himself to cover any costs of treatment and care, which he was to do on the way back. The innkeeper accepted the conditions, which is a proof of the Samaritan’s credibility (Piwowar 2008).

The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates to people of every epoch and time the right attitude towards their suffering neighbours. One must not “pass by” and go on indifferently. Whoever stops and comes to the aid of the suffering himself becomes a Good Samaritan. In this kind of “stopping”, there is no room for curiosity. Instead, there is room here for “readiness” to help. Such an attitude is “the need of the heart”, says John Paul II (Jan Paweł II 1984). A Good Samaritan is every person who is sensitive to someone else’s misfortune. Christ emphasizes the word “compassion”, which points to its importance when we approach a person in need. The sensitivity of the heart needs to be constantly nurtured and developed. It is not a thing given once and for all. The compassion shown to the suffering is very often the only expression of our solidarity with such a person. The Good Samaritan from the parable not only “sees and feels compassion”. A wounded person in need becomes a stimulus for further actions aimed at providing practical help. In this help, he engages not only his heart and time, but also material resources. This is the essence of Christian anthropology. The Second Vatican Council states that “man (...) cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (Przybył 2002, p. 24). The Good Samaritan fully epitomizes this thought.

The above parable reminds us about the suffering present in today’s world, which takes various forms and constantly accompanies man. Its role is to trigger in us an urge to make a selfless gift of ourselves for the sake of suffering people (Dylus, Łydka 1985). John Paul II writes: “The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions” (Jan Paweł II 1984, p. 29). Man, in the name of fundamental human solidarity, should never indifferently pass by his suffering neighbour. The parable of the Good Samaritan conveys a deeply Christian, but also a universal, truth. That is why, in the Polish language we have the term “Samaritan activity”. Over the centuries,

it has been used with reference to institutional forms of activity, such as that of hospitals, doctors, or nurses. Due to the evangelical character of such work, it is called a vocation, rather than only a profession. The parable of the Good Samaritan has been well established in the universal human culture and has become its main indicator. In many communities there are numerous people who spare no time, efforts and resources in their commitment to bringing help to those in need. We call such activity social, charitable or apostolic (Jan Paweł II 1985). Thanks to those attitudes, such values as human solidarity and Christian love for one's neighbour permeate social life and interpersonal relationships.

In this context, it is imperative to mention the problem of shaping the right attitudes in young people. The family, school, and the Church environment as well as all other educational institutions should awaken, deepen and sensitize every young person to his or her neighbours and their suffering in all its manifestations. The process of education should make people aware that each of us is called in the first person to respond to the needs of our neighbours. Institutions, while important and indispensable, will never replace human love, sensitivity, compassion, or initiative. In the face of suffering, one cannot be indifferent or passive. The parable of the Good Samaritan is an example here. Its message fits perfectly in the parable of the final judgment from the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'" (Mt. 25:34–36). To the Samaritans who stopped and offered their help, Christ will answer: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Mt. 25:40). And those who have acted differently, will hear: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me" (Mt. 25:45). Suffering is inscribed in the program of our faith. As John Paul II writes: "suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a 'civilization of love' (...) Christ has taught man to do good by his suffering and to do good to those who suffer" (Jan Paweł II 1984, p. 30).

### **Conclusion**

Suffering is an omnipresent fact. It constitutes a reality in human life that falls into the category of its mystery. Notwithstanding recurrently made attempts at explaining its essence, it still remains an impenetrable and inexplicable mystery. Thanks to the achievements of modern medicine, we often manage to free ourselves from suffering, only to be faced with its new, different, and sometimes intensified forms. From the point of view of the Christian faith, suffering has both a human

and a transcendental dimension. By adopting such a perspective on suffering, every human being may certainly find it easier, at least to some extent, to accept it.

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### CZŁOWIEK WOBEC CIERPIENIA. PERSPEKTYWA PEDAGOGICZNA

**Streszczenie:** Cierpienie jest obecne w życiu każdego człowieka. Towarzyszy ono osobie zamieszkałej w każdym zakątku świata. Jest to temat ogólnoludzki. Problem cierpienia współistnieje z człowiekiem. Dlatego należy do obszarów refleksji człowieka, które są ciągle i na nowo podejmowane. Chociaż zauważamy cierpienie w świecie zwierząt, to jednak dotyka ono szczególnie człowieka. Doświadczenie cierpienia często odsłania człowiekowi jego głębię i bogate pokłady jego człowieczeństwa. Bez niego człowiek nie zdawałby sobie sprawy z własnego istnienia. Nasze życie ziemskie realizuje się pomiędzy immanencją i transcendencją. Dla człowieka wierzącego cierpienie przynależy do transcendencji.

Rzeczywistość cierpienia przybiera liczne i różne postacie. Pomimo wielu prób poszukiwania odpowiedzi na pytanie, „dlaczego”, cierpienie nadal pozostaje wielką tajemnicą. Stąd człowiek cierpiący zawsze powinien budzić nasz szacunek i współczucie. W miarę możliwości należy nieść mu pomoc, otuchę i nadzieję. W procesie wychowania należy uwrażliwiać młodego człowieka na obecność cierpienia w jego życiu i w życiu innych ludzi.

**Słowa kluczowe:** osoba, cierpienie fizyczne i duchowe, cierpienie w Biblii, tajemnica cierpienia, pomoc człowiekowi cierpiącemu.