

A dark, misty forest path with the text "A Journey Into Suffering" overlaid. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The atmosphere is somber and mysterious, with a soft light filtering through the mist.

A Journey Into Suffering

Course Outline

Aim: Help participants explore the nature of suffering while being exposed to the universal reality of suffering.

Strategy:

I. Biblical

a. Investigate what the Bible has to say about personal and communal suffering.

II. Religious Traditions

a. Explore what religious traditions have to say about suffering and outcomes from suffering.

b. Mystics – Over the centuries the mystics have explored and even embraced the idea of personal suffering.

III. Personal Experiences/Lessons learned from suffering.

Measurable outcomes:

I. Empirical data will be collected through: General Feedback and Discussion.

A Journey Into Suffering

suf·fer·ing

/'səf(ə)riŋg/

noun: **suffering**; plural noun: **sufferings**

1. the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship.

suf·fer

/'səfər/

verb

gerund or present participle: **suffering**

1. experience or be subjected to (something bad or unpleasant).

The Death of Ivan Ilyich

1. The Illusion of a “Proper” Life
2. Denial of Death Increases Suffering
3. Authenticity Over Convention
4. Compassion Transcends Suffering
5. Death Gives Life Meaning
6. Suffering as a Path to Self-Realization

Reflections from Tolstoy

Tolstoy's message is clear: suffering is not just a curse—it is a mirror, a teacher, and potentially a path to grace. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* urges readers to live authentically, love deeply, and face death not with fear, but with courage and truth.

Tolstoy, L. (2006). *The death of Ivan Ilyich* (L. Maude & A. Maude, Trans.). Bantam Classics. (Original work published 1886)

Your Thoughts on Suffering

What is a time in your life that you experienced or witnessed suffering?

How has that experience shaped who you are today and in what ways did you grow?

As we journey together over the next few weeks what might you be looking forward to or not?