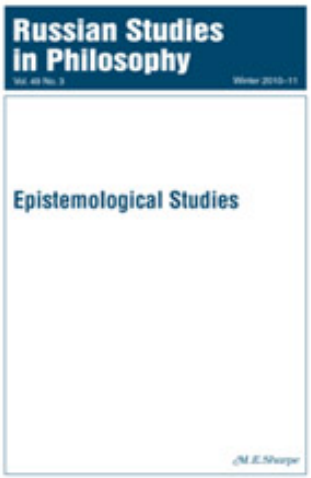

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Faith, God, and Nonviolence in the Teachings of Lev Tolstoy

L.N. Tolstoy produced an original religious-moral doctrine that became known as Tolstoyism. It was left on the periphery of the spiritual processes in the twentieth century and, undeservedly, was forgotten. This becomes particularly obvious in the context of contemporary discussions about the dialogue of cultures and the interrelation between universalism and particularism. Tolstoy sought only the transcultural foundations of human existence. The basic questions that he examines as a thinker and wrestles with as a human being is the following: what can religion and morality mean to contemporary men for whom reason is the basis of knowledge and individual responsibility is the basis of behavior?

Concretely, I shall analyze three concepts—faith, God, and nonviolence—which, of course, do not exhaust Tolstoy's doctrine of life, but give some idea of its essential content.

Faith

Tolstoy's concept of faith differs in content from the commonly accepted one. For Tolstoy faith is consciousness of life. It is inseparable from man's existence. The correspondence of faith and life is close enough to say that if there is human life then there is faith. If faith disappears then human life becomes impossible. Faith is the

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knowledge of the meaning of human life, as a result of which men live. "Faith is the power of life. If a man lives, then he believes in something. If he did not believe that one has to live for something, then he would not live" (*23*, p. 35).[1]

Faith does not exist apart from actions that constitute the matter of life, its body. Similarly, there are no actions apart from faith. The object of faith cannot be separated from faith itself. It cannot be examined separately. Generally speaking, it cannot be approached in any way except faith. Faith is manifest only in how one in fact lives. Faith is what precedes the gnoseological division of reality into subject and object. Faith itself is not a gnoseological category. Even the expression "I believe," which is used by Tolstoy himself, is unacceptable in its strict sense. It is tautological, for the "I" is identified through faith. Faith is what establishes the "I" as a concrete life. What we can say is: one believes in that which one actually does.

Tolstoy begins with the conception of man as a moral being. On this he agrees with the spiritual tradition that, in his opinion, predominates among all nations except those of modern Europe. According to this tradition it is impossible to say what is man without first answering the question what is his duty and purpose. Hence, the first and most important question that can and must interest a human being is the question how to live, at what to direct one's reason. It is precisely faith that expresses the moral determination and directedness of life, its meaning. As we read in Tolstoy, "faith is the evaluation of all the events of life" (*23*, p. 406). Faith as consciousness of life means that life is a good. Tolstoyan faith, as I just noted, cannot be considered to be a gnoseological category, although he calls it consciousness—consciousness of life. Nor is it an ethical category, although Tolstoy describes it as an evaluation. Faith is identical with the good (goodness), but this is the kind of good (goodness) that is given prior to the opposition of good and evil and makes it possible to rise above this opposition. When Tolstoy began to draw close to poor, simple, and uneducated people, to peasants and wanderers, he was impressed most of all by their revering, wise attitude to life. "These people," he testified, "accepted sickness and misfortune without any bewilderment or resistance but with a peaceful and firm conviction that everything had to be thus and could not be otherwise, that all this was good." They even approached death "with

joy, usually" (*23*, p. 40). Faith affirms life itself as a good. This means that faith leaves no room for evil and recognizes it only as an absence, as death. Faith annihilates evil. Human life as an evil, in the form of evil, is impossible: by becoming evil it destroys itself and ceases to exist. As Tolstoy says, it is impossible to live without faith.

Life without faith is life that has lost all meaning. It is no longer life at a human level. It cannot be sanctioned by reason and is impossible in a rational form. It is impossible not in the imperative, but in the factual, sense. Tolstoy examines particularly intellectual positions that assert the meaninglessness of life and shows that they cannot stand up to criticism both from the logical and the moral standpoints. He raises the question whence comes reason, which considers life senseless? Is it not itself a fact of that same life that it recognizes as senseless? "If there were no reason, there would also be no life for me. How does this reason renounce life when it itself is the creator of life?" (*23*, p. 29). Reason's assertion of the senselessness of life is an assertion of its own senselessness or irrationality. But a reason that asserts its own irrationality can be trusted no more than the liar who, according to the ancient paradox, asserts that he is a liar. This is the logical aspect of the idea of life's senselessness. From the moral aspect, it proves to be even more false and ambiguous. To recognize life as nonsense is to recognize it as evil. This is what many philosophers, starting with all-wise Solomon, have asserted. If one accepts this conclusion as rational in the morally binding sense, then the demand to put an end to evil and above all to put an end to the evil in oneself follows by necessity. If philosophers really took life to be evil, vain nonsense, they would not be alive and, hence, would not be able to judge whether life is evil. "No one prevents us from renouncing life along with Schopenhauer," writes Tolstoy, identifying himself with Schopenhauer in whom he sought support at one period of his moral search. "But then kill yourself, and you will no longer argue. If you don't like living, kill yourself. But if you are living and cannot understand the meaning of life, then put an end to it and stop going on and on, talking and writing, about how you do not understand life. If you have joined a merry company in which everyone is enjoying himself and knows what he is doing while you are bored and miserable, then leave" (*23,* p. 30).

Faith as consciousness of life, its meaning, as the affirmation of life as good, precedes learned philosophical judgments about life. It is impossible to find the direction in which one must move by means of any kind of motion, argues Tolstoy, since the direction of motion is given already with the motion. In the same way, it is impossible to determine by means of thought the direction in which one should think, since thinking is always directed. Its direction is determined by faith. Human thinking is bound by the axiological hoop of faith. Tolstoy's assertion that one can think only for the sake of life, for the sake of the good, must not be taken as a metaphor or imperative. It would also be wrong to interpret this assertion merely as the axiomatic foundation of Tolstoy's doctrine. It claims to be a logical truth. Tolstoy proves it indirectly by holding that actions that are directed against life cannot be rationally defended. As for capital punishment—experimentally an almost "pure" action that rejects life and in this capacity claims to agree with the laws of human reason—it belongs, Tolstoy said, to human acts such that testimony about their performance does not really undermine his "consciousness of the impossibility of their performance" (*37*, p. 19).

Faith as the goodness of life is the foundation and limit of reason. This does not at all mean that faith is antirational. On the contrary, it is that which bestows rationality on reason. Faith in itself is rational. "Rational actions are always defined by faith" (*23*, p. 445). In this respect Tolstoy goes so far as to claim that only faith is rational. Reason exists above all to support faith or, what amounts to the same thing, to make proper use of the goodness of life. If it were not for faith, for the question of why and how one should live, and for the necessity to answer this question according to concrete conditions in the constantly changing world, then the general purpose of reason would be incomprehensible. True, European reason has been too absorbed in mathematical and scientific truths, in writing operas and comedies, in heraldry and Roman history, in anything you like, and has excluded from its sphere of interest only the doctrine of life—"that which all nations prior to our European society always took to be the most important thing" (*23*, p. 412). And here, according to Tolstoy, lies the basic reason for the decline of European civilization.

The cognitive capacities of man in contrast to those of animals are not limited by his instincts. They are based on reason. Knowl-

edge extends from reason into the infinity of the surrounding universe. A bee, for example, gathering honey for winter cannot have any doubts whether it is doing the right thing. But men who are making a living cannot but think about various questions that go far beyond the framework of what they are doing; for example, are they damaging the natural environment too much, are they depriving others of food, what will happen to the children they have to feed, and so forth. And the more important the questions that men consider, the more different and contradictory the consequences that reason compels them to take into consideration. It is impossible to examine all of them systematically. Hence, human rationality manifests itself in the fact that men integrate the phenomena that may influence their actions and, besides relating to proximate and calculable causes and effects, they relate to the world as a whole in its infinite spatial and temporal dimensions.

To see oneself from the perspective of infinity or, to be more exact, to bring one's life into agreement with its purpose which follows from its place in infinite life is what Tolstoy calls religion.[2] Here is his definition: "True religion is a relation one establishes, in accord with human reason and knowledge, to the infinite life surrounding one, a relation that links one's life with that infinity and guides one's actions" (*35*, p. 163). Religion, according to Tolstoy, is the answer to the question of the meaning of life, if one understands this question in the right way, of course, as a question about the relation of the finite to the infinite, and formulates it in the following way: is there anything immortal or infinite in perishable and finite life, is there any meaning to life that would not be annihilated along with life itself? Thus reason, taken in its most basic sense as a force commensurable with the world as a whole, becomes religion. In this capacity, reason becomes the basis of faith as the consciousness of life. Faith is always religious. Religion itself is nothing but a doctrine of life that is expressed concretely in this or that faith. "Faith is the same as religion except for this difference: that by the word 'religion' we mean an externally observed phenomenon, while we call faith the very same phenomenon experienced by man within himself." Religion, like faith, denotes that on the basis of which men live as they do. The following expression points to the distinctive, essentially non-religious content of the Tolstoyan concept of religion: "The religion of people who do not recog-

nize religion is the religion of submission to everything that the powerful majority does, in a word, the religion of obedience to the powers that be" (*23*, pp. 212, 445).

Kant's words to the effect that he had to limit (*aufheben*) knowledge to make way for faith are well known. Paraphrasing this expression, one could say Tolstoy limited faith to make way for knowledge or reason. Faith as consciousness of life and expressed only in terms of life has nothing to do with miracles, empty hopes, illusory expectations, absurd fantasies, and other verbally formulated psychological speculations that do not fit the framework of experience and logic. In general, it cannot be a special, intellectual, psychological, or somatic state of man. It is man himself in his everyday determinateness. To say "I believe" is to make a very serious assertion and its truth is measured only by its unconditional moral bindingness on the speaker. In fact, how can we distinguish one's "I believe" from "I think," "I wish," "I assume," "I hope," and so on? There is only one criterion for this, says Tolstoy. We must look not at these or those things, these or those actions, but at how one lives, at the meaning, the inner wholeness of one's life.

In justifying his conception of faith, Tolstoy protests against the deformation of the concept in the experience of Christian churches, particularly the Orthodox church. This church perverted the concept of faith by divorcing faith from action, from the flesh of life, and by transforming it into some kind of special task—the task of Sunday prayers and charitable acts. The Sermon on the Mount has been replaced by the confession of faith.[3] Faith became identified with trusting somebody and having trust in something. It came to be interpreted as some kind of inner relation to life that is given prior to life. By means of churchly faith, one divests oneself of responsibility for one's own life and transfers this responsibility to someone else. The guilty party proves to be Adam, the Savior is Jesus, but not I, not my efforts, not my good deeds. And, according to Tolstoy, it is absolutely inadmissible to associate faith with absurdities that conflict with the laws of nature and reason. The churchly version of faith, Tolstoy claims, is not faith but its image, a counterfeit faith that radically contradicts the essence of faith as it was understood by Jesus. When Jesus was asked to confirm faith by some kind of external sign by a miracle or a promise of reward, for example, he replied that this is impossible. The request itself shows a misconcep-

tion about the nature of faith. It shows that the petitioner for a miracle or reward professes a faith other than Jesus's and thinks that he can accept Jesus's faith without renouncing his own. Tolstoy analyzes an episode in which a woman, the mother of the Zabedee brothers, asks Jesus to grant them places next to him in the future kingdom, one on his left and the other on his right side. Jesus replied: you know not what you are asking for. The request arises from a faith that directs life at a personal good, at being first, at winning a greater glory. Jesus's faith is different at its core; it is embodied in deeds that are their own reward and are not done for future reward. Again and again Jesus shows that faith is inseparable from action and that no one can have faith in his teachings prior to and without following him. The rich youth cannot believe in Jesus in any way except by selling all his possessions and giving everything to the poor.

Tolstoy's faith is a strange faith. There is nothing mystical in it except that it itself is the limit of reason and in that sense can be interpreted as something mystical. One can even formulate this paradox: faith teaches that nothing must be taken on faith except faith itself. And this faith can be taken on faith not against but thanks to and with the aid of reason. In this train of thought one can detect a tautology, not a contradiction, in Tolstoy. In fact, if faith is the limit of reason then reason cannot but lead to faith. Here is Tolstoy's exceptionally important and absolutely clear statement of the uniqueness of the knowledge of faith: "I shall not seek an explanation of everything, I know that the explanation of everything must be concealed, as the principle of everything, in infinity. But I want to understand in such a way as to be led to what is necessarily inexplicable; I want everything that is inexplicable to be such not because the demands of my mind are invalid (they are valid and I cannot understand anything beyond them), but because I see the limits of my mind. I want to understand in such a way as to have any inexplicable assertion appear to me as a necessity of reason, not as an obligation to believe" (*23*, p. 57).

God

There can be three answers to the basic question of religion and faith—what should one live for? (1) For oneself, (2) for others, and (3) for whomever is the principle of life, for God.

All the different doctrines of life can be reduced to these typical answers. The historical religions taught one of three things: "The world exists for you, so take from this life all you can"; or "you are a member of God's favorite people, serve this people, carry out all my assignments, and you along with your people shall receive the greatest good attainable by you"; or "you are the instrument of a higher will, which sent you into the world to carry out an assigned task, learn what the task is and fulfill it, and you will have done for yourself the best thing possible" (*39*, p. 13).

Since religion compares the finite with the infinite, it inevitably leads to the concept of God. A doctrine that connects the meaning of life with God is more adequate than doctrines that see the meaning of life in serving oneself or others, because it appeals directly to the infinite, while they take the finite as the infinite. Faith inevitably leads to God. Faith in God is the true form of faith, not in the sense that other faiths are untrue, for this never happens (every faith is true), but in the sense that more than any other it fits the mental horizon, the intellectual and moral interests of contemporary man. (I should point out that Tolstoy speaks of religious epochs and measures them not in centuries but at least in millennia and, in particular, by the contemporary religious period of European nations he means the epoch inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth.)

What does he mean by God and in what sense is the faith of contemporary man a faith in God? First, according to Tolstoy, we must distinguish two questions: (1) Does God exist, and (2) what is God? To the first question we can and must, because of the demands of reason, give an affirmative answer. To the second question we cannot give any answer precisely because we have answered the first question affirmatively.

One arrives at the concept of God not through definition but in another way. God is attained not as empirical knowledge but as a condition of experience, and a condition that follows from experience and without which experience would be impossible. The certainty of the knowledge of God is the same as the certainty of the knowledge of infinity. "What leads me to indubitable knowledge of infinity is addition: what leads me to indubitable knowledge of God is the question: whence do I come?" (*23*, p. 132). Starting from one's own existence and thinking logically, one inevitably arrives at

some kind of origin of all things or, as Kant (who, in general, had a strong influence on Tolstoy, particularly on his doctrine of God) says, at the existence of an unconditionally necessary essence. This beginning of all beginnings, this cause of all causes is denoted by the concept of God. God is the limit of reason. Reason leads to God when it tries to grasp itself. It inevitably leads to the conclusion that God is, because otherwise it cannot explain itself. Tolstoy's train of thought could be expressed in this way: my conviction that I am is based on my conviction that God is. Without the second belief that God is my first belief that I am cannot be sanctioned by reason, cannot become a logically grounded conclusion. In other words, if we want to construct a system of syllogisms concluding with the final statement "I am," then we must necessarily adopt the statement "God is" as a general premise.

God is the principle of reason, and in this capacity, its limit. This is the final, highest point reason can reach and where its jurisdiction ends. Reason, by definition, cannot and has no right to make any substantive statements about God Himself. It is precisely because God is that we cannot say what He is. Reason cannot define God, since this concept denotes what is not definable, where reason's capacity to define comes to an end. Hence, no physical characteristics can be attributed to God. It is wrong to attribute to Him even the category of number. We have as much reason to assert that "there are seventeen gods as that God is one. God is the principle of all things. God is God" (*23,* p. 76). On the basis of this argument, Tolstoy rejects all theological judgments about God, according to which God is one in three persons, says something to someone, sets down His commandments, sends His son into the world, and so forth. For Tolstoy all these contradict the definition. He exposes the logical incoherence of the assertion that God is partly knowable (this presupposes that we know something prior to knowing), that God reveals Himself to men and does so to the degree He finds necessary (how do we know that it is God who revealed Himself and that some prophets are true and others false).

To say anything definite about God is like asking whether an infinite number is odd or even. The rules of cognitive reason allow us to say only that God is spirit insofar as spirit means everything that what is opposed to the physical, sensibly perceivable, and positively knowable world that is on this side of space and

time. "God is not matter but spirit. This follows from the concept of God" (*23*, p. 90).

All these arguments, which are designed to rationalize the concept of God, were used by Tolstoy and were known before him. He adds another argument to them, one that, as far as I know, is original with him. Tolstoy says that men not only cannot know what God is but, for this reason, should not even want to know. Whatever God might do, men will not understand this. And if they could understand, then God would not be God, and man would not be man. Why should men in general care about what God said or did and how He did it. Let them worry about what they say and do and how they do it. "Even if I saw," writes Tolstoy, "that everything theology tells me is rational, clear and proved, I would not be interested in it. God does His business, which I, obviously, shall never be able to understand, and I must do mine" (*23*, p. 159).

One can reach God, according to Tolstoy, only by the path of rational thought, at its final limit and, having arrived at the concept, reason becomes powerless. God cannot be known by reason precisely because He is the principle of reason, its directing ground. God is known by faith. "He is that without which it is impossible to live. To know God and to live is the same. God is life" (*23*, p. 46). God becomes real in faith, in the consciousness of life, in the rationality of life. The recognition of God's existence imposes no obligations except one on knowing reason: the awareness that God is at its basis and that the direction of reason is determined by faith. In other words, the relation to God acquires content only in the doctrine of life, in the moral fulfillment of life. Although no epistemological demands follow from the acknowledgment of God's existence, it is only from here that moral demands on man, demands as to how he should live, follow. One of the basic and most fundamental charges Tolstoy makes against the church and theology, which serves the church, is that they substituted the cognitive relation for the practical relation to God. The church replaced the basic, decisive question for man, which is linked with the existence of God,—how should I live—with another question: why do I live badly? Thus it committed a fraud and instead of deriving knowledge from morality it tries to derive morality from knowledge.

God is the principle, the foundation of life and He is known only by life. What does it mean to know God by means of life, to live by

faith? The answers to this question vary in their concrete implementation but agree in essence. The fullest and most precise among them is the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Tolstoy views Jesus as a reformer, mankind's greatest teacher, and rejects claims that Jesus is God. Tolstoy's position on this question is formulated very concisely: "For anyone who believes in God Christ cannot be God" (*23*, p. 174). And what does Jesus Christ teach?

Nonviolence

To live by faith (and this is the same as to life morally, rationally) means to live oriented towards God as the principle of life, to live for God. To make this claim more concrete Tolstoy uses the imagery in the Gospel. Man is related to God in the way a son is related to his father or a worker to his employer. Just as filial virtue consists in obeying the father, since the father knows the son's good better than the son himself, and the worker's virtue—in carrying out the will of his employer, since his employer knows the general purpose of his task better than the worker himself, so man's virtue consists in entrusting himself to God and fulfilling His will.

Not as I will but as you will—this is the general formula of man's relation to God, which at the same time is the formula of love. Love means nothing but placing oneself at the service of another, favoring his will and good above one's own. The relation to God is love in its pure form, for there is nothing in it but unqualified trust, which is expressed in one's readiness to fulfil His will. Love is recognized in all ancient religions as one of the chief virtues and a necessary condition and expression of the moral meaning of life. But only Jesus Christ, according to Tolstoy, raised love to a fundamental principle or, more precisely, to a law without any exceptions.

But what does it mean to act as God wills if we do not know what He wills? No substantive assertion about God is possible. Love of God can be a restriction on man's activity but certainly not its positive meaning. Accordingly, the stress in the formula of love falls on its first half: "not as I will." We have no other way of manifesting love of God and obedience to Him except by refusing to act as though we were gods, by refusing to assert our will in questions which come under God's competence—questions of life and death.

Love of God, expressed in the negative form as a restriction on

activity, is nonviolence. And only this! What is nonviolence? According to Tolstoy's ingenuous and precise definition, to commit violence is "to do what he to whom violence is done does not will" (*28*, pp. 190–91). It is easy to see that the formula of violence is completely opposed to the formula of love. It follows from this that by renouncing violence we demonstrate love in the only form that is accessible to man. The man who first proclaimed this truth and followed it with complete consistency was Jesus Christ.

Nonviolence in the strict sense of the word as the renunciation of violence means that one is not prepared to act as judge over other people, for this is God's prerogative. It should be pointed out at once that what we are talking about is not a general refusal to evaluate (judge) the actions of other people but refraining from evaluating (judging) people as persons so as not to encroach upon their freedom, on their moral dignity, their very right to define their own life. In this way one relates to other people as brothers. A brother does not judge a brother. This is done by the father. Cain, who slew Abel, did not act as a brother. He exceeded his prerogative and took upon himself the father's function.

Insofar as religion views men's lives from the perspective of infinity, it recognizes the equality of men according to this criterion. All bear the same relation to infinity, since all are equally perishable and insignificant. It does not matter what is taken as God—lightning, a dead hero, a living king, or the indefinable principle of life. People are equal before what they consider to be God. For this reason the acceptance of the equality of men (their brotherhood, in the Christian version, since they are God's children) is the first and most important religious-moral imperative. The demand to treat others as you would have them treat you is characteristic of all religions, according to Tolstoy. Nonviolence is merely a consequence of this, although it is the most important consequence. Religions degenerated and declined when, contrary to their basic pathos of equality, they tried to justify inequality. Nonviolence, according to Tolstoy, is the kind of concretization of the idea of Christian brotherhood that makes it impossible to pervert this idea.

Having reached the conclusion about nonviolence as true love, Tolstoy decisively attacks state violence. However one may assess Tolstoy's anarchism, one cannot deny his consistency. Taken to its logical conclusion, nonviolence not only leads to the rejection of

state violence but rejects it in the first place, since what is at issue here is more than the facts of violence, it is the right to violence. Tolstoy saw the difference between various manifestations of violence, for example, between the violence of a highwayman and the violence of state officials (kings, presidents, generals, etc.). No violence can be justified. But, while the violence of a robber is at least somehow understandable, the violence of a state official cannot be understood, never mind justified. It is much worse because it claims legitimacy, including moral legitimacy. A highwayman as a rule understands that what he is doing is wrong. He does not make a display of his murders or mobilize reason to justify them. A murderer on the throne is proud of his violence and presents it as a good and as a demand of reason. This makes him doubly repulsive.

Thus we see that all the basic assertions of Tolstoy's doctrine of nonviolence are arrived at by analysis alone, by the logical dissection of the concept of God as the absolute, immortal principle of life. Tolstoy proclaims only one thing—that violence is incompatible with Christian ideas. It can be justified within a cannibalist consciousness or within an Old Testament framework, but it cannot be justified within a consciousness that recognizes all men as brothers and God as their common father. If we accept the thesis that men are brothers, that they are equal in their moral worth, then mere logic and simple consistency, not emotional, moral or any other considerations, demand the categorical and absolute rejection of violence. Tolstoy's intellectual position of nonviolence can be summed up in one simple syllogism: All men are brothers. "Enemies" (those we consider to be enemies) are men. "Enemies" are brothers.

Nonviolence as the final conclusion of Tolstoy's teachings returns us to the first premise that life is a good. To assert nonresistance to evil means to recognize the original good as a morally obligatory principle that determines our relations with other people. Nonviolence is the answer to a conflict situation in which "some people take to be evil what others take to be good and vice versa" (*28*, p. 38). And the answer is this: one should not act as though one knew what is evil.

By removing from people's beliefs everything that cannot be rationally justified and is incompatible with existence based on indi-

vidual responsibility, we can isolate in all actual religions, Tolstoy claims, the common content that people share and consider necessary for salvation. Existing religions differ in external forms, but are one in their basic principles. These principles are simple and consist of the following: (a) God as the principle of all things exists, (b) there is a particle of this principle in every man and by his life he can increase or decrease it, (c) to increase it one has to suppress the passions and increase love, and (d) the practical means to this is the golden rule of morality. Together these statements amount to the true religion and constitute the common core of Brahmanism, Judaism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

In anticipation of the reaction that might have followed from church circles and universities, Tolstoy wrote: " 'But this is not religion,' our contemporaries who are used to accept the supernatural, that is, the meaningless, as the chief mark of religion, will say. 'It is anything you want—philosophy, ethics and argumentation—but not religion.' Religion, in their opinion, must be absurd, incomprehensible (*credo quia absurdum*). And it is from these assumptions or, rather, as a result of their being propagated as religious doctrine, that all these absurdities about miracles and supernatural occurrences, which are taken to be the chief marks of religion, arose. To claim that the supernatural and unintelligibility are the main attributes of religion is like asserting, having eaten only rotten apples, that a soft bitterness and a harmful effect on the stomach are the main attributes of apples" (*35*, p. 191).

Tolstoy saw that the different streams of human cultures and civilizations flow into one. He tried to detect in them the common religious-moral core that could withstand the test of reason and become the foundation of the rational life informed by individual responsibility.

Notes

1. L.N. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90-a tt.* (Moscow, 1928–58). The italicized numeral refers to the volume in this set.

2. Tolstoy reduces the accepted interpretations of the concept of religion to three elements: (1) religion as something given by God and, therefore, accepted as true revelation and worship following from the revelation, (2) religion as a set of superstitions and superstitious worship, and (3) religion as a set

of artificially constructed claims designed to comfort the common masses, restrain and control them. In all these definitions, according to Tolstoy, the essence of religion is replaced by ideas, by people's belief in what they consider to be religion (see his article "Religiia i nravstvennost'" [Religion and Morality], *39*, pp. 3–5).

3. The perversion of faith is the necessary condition of the transformations that affect all aging religions and, according to Tolstoy's classification in his *What Is Religion and What Is Its Essence?* (Chto takoe religiia i v chem sushchnost' ee? 1901–2), are based on three conditions: (1) that the existence of special people who are intermediaries between men and God (gods) is recognized, (2) that miracles, which are used to support the truth of what the intermediaries say, are accepted, and (3) that certain words are acknowledged to express the will of God and are seen as sacred (*35*, p.167).