

## PHILOSOPHY OF NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL L.N.TOLSTOY

**A. K. Rashidov**

*Associate professor of the department, Russian language and literature, Kokand SPI, Uzbekistan*

### ARTICLE INFO.

**Keywords:** non-resistance, tenets of Christianity, love against evil, biblical truths, evolution of consciousness, denial of some canons of Christianity, excommunication, salvation through forgiveness.

### Abstract

This article discusses issues related to the philosophy of “non-resistance to evil” and issues raised by L.N. Tolstoy in this area. The issues of formation of the worldview of the famous writer are considered, as well as the evolution of the worldview of the great writer in this matter, which ultimately led Tolstoy to excommunication from Orthodoxy.

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Spiritual renewal of personality is one of the central themes of Tolstoy’s last novel, “Resurrection” (1899), written by him at a time when he had fully become a Christian and non-resistance. The main character, Prince Nekhlyudov, finds himself as a juror in the case of a girl accused of murder, in whom he recognizes Katyusha Maslova, the maid of his aunts who was once seduced by him and abandoned. This fact turned Nekhlyudov’s life upside down. He saw his personal guilt in the fall of Katyusha Maslova and the guilt of his class in the fall of millions of such Katyushas. The God who lived in him awoke in his mind, and Nekhlyudov found that point of view that allowed him to take a fresh look at his life and those around him and reveal its complete inner falsity. Shocked, Nekhlyudov broke with his environment and followed Maslova to hard labor. Nekhlyudov’s abrupt transformation from a gentleman, a frivolous waster of life into a sincere Christian began in the form of deep repentance, an awakened conscience and was accompanied by intense mental work. In addition, in Nekhlyudov’s personality, Tolstoy identifies at least two prerequisites that were conducive to such a transformation - a sharp, inquisitive mind, sensitive to lies and hypocrisy in human relationships, as well as a pronounced tendency to change. The second is especially important: every person carries within himself the rudiments of all human properties and sometimes displays some, sometimes others, and is often completely different from himself, remaining at the same time one and himself. For some people these changes are especially dramatic. And Nekhlyudov belonged to such people. If we transfer Tolstoy’s analysis of Nekhlyudov’s spiritual revolution to Tolstoy himself, we see many similarities. Tolstoy was also extremely prone to sudden changes; he tried himself in various fields. Through the experience of his own life, he experienced all the basic motives associated with worldly ideas about happiness, and came to the conclusion that they did not bring peace of mind. It was this completeness of experience, which left no illusions that something new could give meaning to life, that became an important prerequisite for the spiritual revolution.

In order for a life choice to receive a worthy status, in Tolstoy’s eyes it had to be justified before reason. With such constant vigilance of the mind, there were few loopholes left for deception and self-deception, covering up the original immorality and inhumanity of the so-called civilized forms of life. In exposing them, Tolstoy was merciless.

There is an analogy with Nekhlyudov's model in how Tolstoy's spiritual crisis proceeded. It began with involuntary internal reactions, indicating problems in the structure of life, "something very strange began to happen to me," Tolstoy writes: "something very strange began to happen to me: at first, moments of bewilderment, a stop in life, began to come over me, as if I did not know how to live, what should I do, and I was lost and depressed. But it passed, and I continued to live as before. Then these moments of bewilderment began to repeat more and more often and all in the same form. These stops in life were always expressed by the same questions: why? Well, what then?"

Also, the 50-year mark of Tolstoy's life could have served as an external impetus for Tolstoy's spiritual transformation. The 50th anniversary is a special age in the life of every person, a reminder that life has an end. And it reminded Tolstoy of the same thing. The problem of death worried Tolstoy before. Death, especially death in the form of legal murder, always baffled Tolstoy. In 1866, he unsuccessfully defended in court a soldier who hit his commander and was doomed to death. The death penalty by guillotine, which he witnessed in Paris in 1857, and later the death of his beloved older brother Nicholas at the age of 37 in 1860 had a particularly strong effect on Tolstoy. Tolstoy began to think long ago about the general meaning of life, the relationship between life and death. However, before this was a side topic, now it has become the main one, and now death is perceived as a quick and inevitable end. Faced with the need to clarify his personal attitude towards death, Tolstoy discovered that his life and his values did not stand the test of death. "I could not attach any rational meaning to any action or to my entire life. I was only surprised at how I could not understand this at the very beginning. All this has been known to everyone for so long. Not today, tomorrow, illness and death will come (and have already come) to my loved ones, to me, and there will be nothing left but stench and worms. My affairs, whatever they may be, will all be forgotten - sooner, later, and I won't be there either. So why bother?" These words of Tolstoy from "Confession" reveal both the nature and the immediate source of his spiritual illness, which could be described as panic before death. He clearly understood that only such a life can be considered meaningful, one that is able to assert itself in the face of inevitable death, to withstand the test of the question: "Why bother, why live at all, if everything is swallowed up by death?" Tolstoy set a goal for himself - to find something that is not subject to death.

What is hidden behind the question about the meaning of life?

According to Tolstoy, a person is in disagreement, discord with himself. It is as if two people live in it - an internal one and an external one, of which the first is dissatisfied with what the second is doing, and the second does not do what the first wants. This inconsistency, self-destruction is found in different people with varying degrees of severity, but it is inherent in all of them. Contradictory in himself, torn apart by mutually denying aspirations, a person is doomed to suffer and be dissatisfied with himself. A person constantly strives to overcome himself, to become different.

According to L.N. Tolstoy, the essence of the moral ideal is most fully expressed in the teachings of Jesus Christ. At the same time, for Tolstoy, Jesus Christ is not God or the son of God; he considers him a reformer, destroying the old and giving new foundations of life. Tolstoy, further, sees a fundamental difference between the authentic views of Jesus as set out in the Gospels, and their distortion in the dogmas of Orthodoxy and other Christian churches.

The fact that love is a necessary and good condition of human life was recognized by all religious teachings of antiquity. In all teachings: Egyptian sages, Brahmins, Stoics, Buddhists, Taoists, etc., friendliness, pity, mercy, charity and love in general were recognized as one of the main virtues. However, only Christ elevated love to the level of the fundamental, highest law of life.

As the highest, fundamental law of life, love is the only moral law. The law of love is not a commandment, but an expression of the very essence of Christianity. This is an eternal ideal to which people will endlessly strive. Jesus Christ is not limited to the proclamation of an ideal. Along with this, he gives commandments.

In Tolstoy's interpretation there are five such commandments. Here they are:

- 1) Don't be angry;
- 2) Don't leave your wife;
- 3) Never swear to anyone or anything;
- 4) Do not resist evil with force;
- 5) Do not consider people of other nations as your enemies.

Non-resistance as a manifestation of the law of love

According to Tolstoy, the main of the five commandments is the fourth: "Do not resist evil," which prohibits violence. The ancient law, which condemned evil and violence in general, allowed that in certain cases they could be used for good - as fair retribution according to the formula "an eye for an eye." Jesus Christ abolishes this law. He believes that violence can never be good, under any circumstances. The prohibition against violence is absolute. It is not only good that must be answered with good. And we must respond to evil with good.

Violence is the opposite of love. Tolstoy has at least three related definitions of violence. First, he equates violence with murder or the threat of murder. The need to use bayonets, prisons, gallows and other means of physical destruction arises when the task is to externally force a person to do something. Hence the second definition of violence as external influence. The need for external influence, in turn, appears when there is no internal agreement between people. This is how we come to the third, most important definition of violence: to rape means to do something that the one being violated does not want. In this understanding, violence coincides with evil and it is directly opposite to love. To love means to do as the other wants, to subordinate your will to the will of the other. To rape means to subordinate someone else's will to your own.

Non-resistance is more than rejection of the law of violence. Recognition of the life of every person as sacred is the first and only basis of all morality. Non-resistance to evil precisely means recognition of the original, unconditional holiness of human life.

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