



## TOLSTOY AND ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

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### Annotation

The author in this article describes the moral, aesthetic and philosophical origins of the teachings of Tolstoy, which was formed, in part, under the influence of the ideas of Islamic dogma. The author, using the example of some of the author's works, shows a close connection with Tolstoy's worldview and Islamic teachings.

**Keywords:** Orthodox Christianity, Sufi Islam, the Chechen people, the Sufi sheikh, "The Sayings of Mohammed", "Imitation of the Koran", Turkish poetry and literature, "the great Muscovite sage"

In 1844, the young Count Tolstoy entered the Faculty of Philosophy of His Imperial Majesty Kazan University, choosing the specialty "Arabic-Turkish literature". In preparation for admission, Leo Tolstoy has been studying Arabic and Turkish for two years, and receives excellent marks in the entrance examinations in both languages.

Four years later, he comes to the Caucasus and again finds himself between two worlds - Orthodox Christianity and Sufi Islam. At the time when the young fireworksman of the 4th grade, Count Tolstoy, gets acquainted with the Caucasus, writes his first story and learns through the Kunaks the language, customs and culture of the Chechen people, not far from the place where he (Tolstoy) is, shakes the hearts of his co-religionists with a fiery preaching goodness, peace and non-resistance to evil, a young Sufi sheikh, a follower of the QadiriyyaKunta-Haji Kishiev tariqa.

Could they have met, Lev and Kunta-Hadji? Yes, they could. Have you met? Unknown. But what is very likely, the young aristocrat from his Chechen kunak learned in detail about the unusual sheikh and his amazing sermon:

«Defeat the evil one with kindness and love. Conquer the greedy with generosity. Defeat the treacherous with sincerity. Conquer the unbeliever by faith. Be merciful and willing to sacrifice yourself. You are responsible for many, if your whole life is the path to the Almighty».

Subsequently, the world-famous writer Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy many times in his work will refer to the wisdom of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad. Back in the very



beginning of the 60s, on behalf of Lev Nikolaevich, his wife's sister, E. A. Bers, compiled a book for children's reading called "Magomed". Tolstoy wrote a preface to it and published it as an appendix to the pedagogical journal *Yasnaya Polyana*. The purpose of the publication was to introduce peasant children to the Prophet Muhammad, as well as to the culture, customs and beliefs of the peoples of the Middle East. The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad will be included in the publications collected and published by L. N. Tolstoy: "Reading circle", "For every day", "Sayings of thinkers from different countries and different centuries".

In 1909, the «Mediator» publishing house published the book "Mahomet's sayings that were not included in the Koran. Elected by L. N. Tolstoy. The reason and material for this work was the book of Abdullah Al Surawardi, "The Sayings of Mohammed", published in India in English, which he read. Correcting the text, Tolstoy tries to make it accessible to people of different classes and levels of education.

Tolstoy is not the first Russian writer to address the topic of Islam. Back in the 18th century, the leading Russian poets Gavriil Derzhavin, Vasily Kapnist and Nikolai Karamzin referred to these sources in their poems. Alexander Pushkin writes a cycle of poems "Imitation of the Koran". Without referring to Muslim culture, it is impossible to imagine the work of Mikhail Lermontov. This is a whole layer in the history of Russian literature and poetry, reflected in the book by M. I. Sinelnikov "Invisible blessing. Islamic motifs in Russian poetry. But unlike his predecessors, who wrote for the "enlightened public", Leo Tolstoy was the first to introduce Islamic culture to the common Russian people. The books of the «Mediator» publishing house were published in large circulations for that time and were sold at affordable prices.

An important part of Tolstoy's life spent at the border of the worlds allowed him to turn to grains of divine wisdom present in different religions. This approach also gave his readers, who profess different religious views, to see the great things that make people the children of one Creator and brothers not only in appearance, but also in spiritual needs for righteous love, heartfelt understanding, sincere compassion and mercy.

Knowing and highly appreciating Turkish poetry and literature, Tolstoy was very worried about the difficult Russian-Turkish relations and always opposed conflicts. In 1889–1890 with the assistance of the famous Turkish writer and literary critic Ahmed Midhad, the first translations of Tolstoy's works were published in Turkey: "Family Happiness", "Ilyas", "Two Old Men" and "How People Live". In a short



period of time, the publication, which included works by other Russian writers, sold 40,000 copies. Unprecedented success at the time.

By the 1900s, Lev Nikolayevich was establishing correspondence with prominent figures of Turkish culture. A young doctor and journalist from Istanbul A. Cevdet calls the Russian writer "the sun that illuminated and warmed those who are drawn to beauty and truth." Warm letters to Tolstoy come from the editor of the Turkish magazine *Levant Herald* A. Rashid Saffetbey, from the writers Clanupi and Mahas. After the death of Leo Tolstoy, many of his works were published in translations by the best Turkish writers of that time - Bach Tevfik, Raif Nacdet, Sakhir Celal, Sadyk Naji, Emin Lyami and others.

In 1901, a native of Palestine, Selim Cobain, published in Cairo the book "The Teachings of Count Leo Tolstoy." Subsequently, S. Cobain became the author of translations and publisher of *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1904) (published under the title "Consent and Divorce, or Kreutzer's Melody"), "A Brief Statement of the Gospel" (1904) ("Tolstoy's Gospel and His Creed"), "The Destruction of Hell and its Restoration" (1909), "The Powers of Darkness" (1909) and "Sayings of Mohammed not included in the Koran" (1912).

Khalil Beydas, the translator of Tolstoy's works, wrote: "... I am firmly convinced that for an Arab, Leo Tolstoy is the most understandable Russian writer. Leo Tolstoy often expresses his thoughts in the form of a parable - this is close to an Arab.

The Arab press responded to Tolstoy's death with unprecedented unanimity. The correspondent of the *Ruskiye Vedomosti* newspaper wrote from Beirut: "The entire Arab press, without distinction of political views and religious beliefs, Christian and Muslim, Masonic and cleric, moderate and radical, all magazines and newspapers, not excluding small papers, all mourn fervently" great Muscovite sage", "one of the few", "the only philosopher and preacher in the whole world". The late writer was devoted to articles outlining his biography, religious and political views "Al-Muraqib", "Al-Hadara", "Al-Ahram", "Al-Zuhur", "Lisan al-Khal", "Al-Bek" and numerous other publications.

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