



## A Confession

*Leo Tolstoy, Aylmer Maude (Translation)*

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# A Confession

*Leo Tolstoy , Aylmer Maude (Translation)*

## **A Confession** Leo Tolstoy , Aylmer Maude (Translation)

Despite having written *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Leo Tolstoy, at the age of 51, looked back on his life and considered it a meaningless, regrettable failure. *A Confession* provides insight into the great Russian writer's movement from the pursuit of aesthetic ideals toward matters of religious and philosophical consequence.

Authentic and genuinely moving, this memoir of midlife spiritual crisis was first distributed in 1872 and marked a turning point in the author's career as a writer: in subsequent years, Tolstoy would write almost exclusively about religious life, especially devotion among the peasantry.

Generations of readers have been inspired by this heartfelt reexamination of Christian orthodoxy and subsequent spiritual awakening. Ranked among the best books on the subject, this timeless work is for anyone who has ever worried about the fleeting nature of life and speculated about the value of existence.

## **A Confession Details**

Date : Published January 5th 2005 by Dover Publications (first published 1882)

ISBN : 9780486438511

Author : Leo Tolstoy , Aylmer Maude (Translation)

Format : Paperback 79 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Nonfiction, Classics, Religion, Literature, Russian Literature, Cultural, Russia, Biography

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## From Reader Review A Confession for online ebook

## **Mohammad says**

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**Zohreh Samiei says**

## Ahmad Sharabiani says

????????? = Meine Beichte = A confession and other religious writings, Leo Tolstoy  
Describing Tolstoy's crisis of depression and estrangement from the world, A Confession (1879) is an autobiographical work of exceptional emotional honesty. By the time he was fifty, Tolstoy had already written the novels that would assure him of literary immortality; he had a wife, a large estate and numerous children; he was "a happy man" and in good health - yet life had lost its meaning. In this poignant confessional fragment, he records a period of his life when he began to turn away from fiction and aesthetics, and to search instead for "a practical religion not promising future bliss, but giving bliss on earth".  
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**Sonya says**

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## **Foad Ansari says**

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### **brian says**

in his 50's, a severely panicked and depressed tolstoy wished for the strength to kill himself, but couldn't do it. instead he wrote this book detailing his discovery that life is 'evil and meaningless'. the first half is simply astonishing: i can't recall reading a more honest description of a life lived under the shadow of the inevitability of death; much less from a man who was, at the time, one of the world's most famous people. tolstoy's *Confession* is staggering in its simplicity, which is partially the point: talk to the scientists, the philosophers, the holy men, and the artists... none can give the answers that a slow eight year old couldn't give regarding the answers to the most basic questions: "why are we here?" "what is the meaning of life?" -- in the second section, the bearded coot describes his movement towards religion and, oops!, discovery that the church was horribly hypocritical...

i may disagree with the conclusions tolstoy arrived at, but that's irrelevant... truth be told, in this lifetime (and this certainly plagued ol' leo) we'll never know if christopher hitchens or jerry falwell holds the secrets of the universe. sigh... a sad state of affairs. as one seriously afflicted with existential panic myself, it eases the pain, if only a little bit, to read this and know that, at the very least, we're all linked by fear and uncertainty and questions...

read this. tolstoy's stunning honesty, his acute powers of observation, and obvious skills as a novelist makes this book a classic of sorts...

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### **Hammad Ali says**

Love Tolstoy but judging by this book Tolstoy would have made a horrible dinner companion (or be really really bad at small talk).

"The fish is really good"

Tolstoy: "It is no good deceiving oneself. It is all vanity."

"So how was your day"

Tolstoy: "Why does everything exist that exists, and why do I exist? Because it exists"

"The weather is pretty nice today"

Tolstoy: "Surely that question has been asked since man began"

Overall good book, it has provided me with enough "DEEP" one liners that I can use to sound smart for the

next few years and be that guy who ruins all conversations in a social gathering. **Seriously though..** I felt he ended up repeating a lot of things and then there were other things that I couldn't really comprehend(probably due to my slow brain). Also he mentions an Eastern fable in the book which is in reality attributed to Ghazali (R). I found it interesting because he uses the fable to highlight how meaningless life essentially is while Ghazali used it to highlight how our efforts and our quest to fulfill all of our desires in this world are ultimately meaningless because it is the next life that matters.

Overall I felt it was the general story of a seeker. And followed the format of what other seekers go through while searching for the truth.

That is

1. Questioning your inner beliefs and the meaning of your existence.
2. Abandoning religion and searching for some meaning in life.
3. Being fed up with everything around you, especially the lives of the people around you and how their minds can be possibly so busy with so many meaningless things.
4. Contemplating suicide (In an extreme case as such in Tolstoy's case)
5. Searching for meaning, any sort of meaning that can end this misery of yours and free your soul.
6. And... lastly if you're lucky and fortunate enough to end up with religion and more specifically to end up with God and the true definition of a moral life.

(Though everyone's journey is different, one example that comes to my mind is of Muhammad Asad. He mentions his journey in Road to Mecca. Definitely not as miserable as this but there were some similarities)

Tolstoy's journey heading towards suicide ends with this realization which ultimately saves him.

"I live, really live, only when I feel Him and seek Him. "What more do you seek?" exclaimed a voice within me. "This is He. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life"

"Live seeking God, and then you will not live without God." And more than ever before, all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me. And I was saved from suicide."

## Banan says

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## **Araz Goran says**

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## Ahmed Ibrahim says

**Joe says**

It shouldn't surprise you when it happens, but it always does: you read someone's thoughts from over a hundred years ago and they mirror yours, exactly, in content if not in eloquence. Tolstoy's struggle extrating a faith he needs from a doctrine he abhors is a nearly universal intellectual journey.

The book is most valuable for two reasons: it explains how the irrational conclusions of fate actually fit into a system of reason, by changing the expectations of reason, and it details how denominations and sects ultimately work against the simple purpose of faith.

"Having looked around further at people in other countries and at my contemporaries and predecessors, I saw the same thing. Where there is life there is faith. Since the day of creating faith has made it possible for

mankind to live, and the essential aspects of that faith are always and everywhere the same." [58:]

Whatever answers faith gives, regardless of which faith, or to whom the answers are given, such answers always give an infinite meaning to the finite existence of man; a meaning that is not destroyed by suffering, deprivation or death. This means that only in faith can we find the meaning and possibility of life... Faith is the force of life. If a man lives, then he must believe in something. If he did not believe that there was something he must live for he would not live." [58:]

"To know God and to live are one in the same thing. God is life. 'Live in search of God and there will be no life without God!' And more powerfully than ever before everything within and around me came to light, and the light has not deserted me since." [75:]

"I shall not seek the explanation of everything. I know that the explanation of all things, like the origin of all things, must remain a secret of eternity. But I want to understand in such a way as to be brought to the inevitably inexplicable. I want to realize that all that is inexplicable is so, not because the demands of my intellect are at fault (they are correct and apart from them I can understand nothing), but because I can recognize the limits of my intellect. I want to understand in such a way that everything inexplicable presents itself to me as being necessarily inexplicable and not as being something I am under an obligation to believe." [94:]

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## **Saleh MoonWalker says**

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**Hesam says**

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## Shaikha Alkhaldi says

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### **Bogdan says**

This book is not for religious persons only. As an Atheist I was quite touched by Tolstoy's struggle with the absurdity of life and the inevitability of death. Tolstoy looks for answers to life's biggest question "Why?" in the fields of science and philosophy but he is dissatisfied. Reason cannot explain the absurdity of life. Because of this, Tolstoy turns his attention towards faith. I was quite impressed by the hardships he suffered in order to reach a truth that has meaning to him. All those years of searching, of meditating. He struggled with depression and he was haunted by suicidal thoughts.

Tolstoy is so often misunderstood from both the religious and the secular perspective, being called by each of them a "heretic" and a "lunatic". Tolstoy is a true christian. A true christian lives only for God, which is love. I think that through the concept of God, Tolstoy was able to love life, by loving God was life. Tolstoy explains that faith enables people to go on with their lives, because the hardships and sorrows of life are shadowed by the perspective of Heaven and eternal life. I don't think Tolstoy tries to justify his faith using reason and scientific arguments. He just believes and if that stopped him from putting a bullet in his brains, I find no harm in it.

The book is a mirror into the soul of one of the greatest writers and thinkers who ever lived.

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