



**BIBLICAL MOTIFS AND THE IMAGE OF THE ANTICHRIST IN
DOSTOEVSKY'S NOVEL "THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV"**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the image of the Antichrist in Dostoevsky's work "The Brothers Karamazov". Also in this work of the author the image of brothers is embodied and the issue of love and help to each other is analyzed. The novel "The Brothers Karamazov" teaches us to be enlightened, to be spiritually open and pure, to believe in something great that helps us cope with life's difficulties. who have moved into a pig.

KEYWORDS

Dostoevsky, Novel "Crime and Punishment", "The Brothers Karamazov", moral, episodes, protagonist, religious views, good and evil..

Introduction

In Dostoevsky's novels, man feels his unity with the whole world, feels his responsibility to the world. Hence the globality of the problems acutely posed by the writer, their universal nature. Hence the writer's appeal to eternal, biblical, themes and ideas.

In his life, Dostoevsky often turned to the Gospel. He found in it answers to vitally important, exciting questions, borrowed from the Gospel parables individual images, symbols, motifs, creatively processing them in his works. Biblical motifs are also clearly traced in Dostoevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment". Thus, the image of the protagonist in the novel resurrects the motif of Cain, the first murderer on earth. When Cain committed murder, he became an eternal wanderer and exile in his native land. The same thing happens with Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky: having committed a murder, the hero feels alienated from the world around him. Raskolnikov has nothing to talk about with people, nothing else, never with anyone, there is no need for him to talk now", he "seems to have cut himself off from everyone with scissors", his relatives seem to be afraid of him. Having confessed to the crime, he ends up in penal servitude, but even there he is looked at with distrust and unfriendliness, he is not loved and avoided, once they even wanted to kill him as an atheist. However, Dostoevsky leaves the hero the possibility of moral rebirth and, consequently, the possibility of overcoming the terrible, impassable abyss that lies between him and the surrounding darkness.

Another biblical motif in the novel is the motif of Egypt. In his dreams, Raskolnikov imagines Egypt, golden sand, a caravan, camels. Meeting a philistine who called him a murderer, the hero again remembers Egypt. "If you look at the hundred-thousandth dash, here is the evidence in the Egyptian pyramid!" - Rodion thinks in fright. Discussing two types of people, he notices that Napoleon forgets the army in Egypt, which for this commander becomes the beginning of his career. Svidrigailov recalls

Egypt in the novel, noting that Avdotya Romanovna has the nature of a great martyr, ready to live in the Egyptian desert.

This motif has several meanings in the novel. First of all, Egypt reminds us of its ruler, Pharaoh, who was overthrown by God for his pride and hardness of heart. Aware of their "proud might," Pharaoh and the Egyptians greatly oppressed the people of Israel who had come to Egypt, not wanting to reckon with their faith. The ten plagues of Egypt, sent by God to the country, could not stop the cruelty and pride of Pharaoh. And then the Lord crushed the "pride of Egypt" with the sword of the king of Babylon, destroying the Egyptian pharaohs, and people, and cattle, turning the land of Egypt into a lifeless desert.

Biblical tradition here reminds us of God's judgment, of punishment for self-will and cruelty. Egypt, which appeared to Raskolnikov in a dream, becomes a warning for the hero. The writer seems to constantly remind the hero how the "proud power" of the rulers, the powerful of this world, ends.

The king of Egypt compared his greatness with the greatness of the cedar of Lebanon, which "showed off the height of its stature, the length of its branches." "The cedars in the garden of God did not darken it, the cypresses were not equal to its branches, and the chestnuts were not the size of its branches, not a single tree in the garden of God was equal to it in its beauty." "Wherefore, as the Lord God hath said, because thou hast grown tall and set thy summit among the thick branches, and his heart hath become proud of his greatness, therefore I have delivered him into the hands of the ruler of the nations, and he has dealt with him as is right. And the foreigners cut it down, and its branches fell on all the valleys, and its branches were broken in all the ravines of the earth," we read in the Bible.

Svidrigailov's mention of the Egyptian desert, where the Great Martyr Mary of Egypt, who was once a great sinner, dwelt for many years, is also a warning. Here the theme of repentance and humility arises, at the same time regret for the past.

But at the same time, Egypt reminds us of other events, it becomes the place where the Mother of God with the baby Jesus takes refuge from the persecution of King Herod (New Testament). And in this aspect, Egypt becomes for Raskolnikov an attempt to awaken humanity, humility, and generosity in his soul. Thus, the motif of Egypt in the novel also emphasizes the duality of the hero's nature, his excessive pride and, scarcely, less natural generosity.

The image of Raskolnikov in the novel is associated with the evangelical magic of death and resurrection. After he committed the crime, Sonya reads to Rodion the Gospel parable about the dead and resurrected Lazarus. The hero tells Porfiry Petrovich about his belief in the resurrection of Lazarus. The same motif of death and resurrection is realized in the plot of the novel itself. This connection between Raskolnikov and the biblical Lazarus was noted by many researchers of the novel. Let us try to trace the development of the Gospel motif in the plot of the novel.

Let us recall the plot of the parable. Not far from Jerusalem was the village of Bethany, where Lazarus lived with his sisters Martha and Mary. One day he fell ill, and his sisters, in great sorrow, came to Jesus to inform him of their brother's illness. However, Jesus answered: "This sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Soon Lazarus died, and he was buried in a cave, blocking the passage with a stone. But four days later, Jesus came to the sisters of Lazarus and told them that their brother would be resurrected. "I am the resurrection, and he who believes in Me, though he die, shall live." Jesus went into the cave and called Lazarus, and he came out, bound hand and foot according to the funerary customs. Since then, many Jews who have seen this miracle have come to believe in Christ.

The motif of Lazarus in the novel is heard throughout the story. After committing the murder, Raskolnikov becomes a spiritual dead, life seems to leave him. Rodion's apartment looks like a coffin. His face is deathly pale, like a dead man's. He cannot communicate with people: those around him, with their care and fuss, cause anger and irritation in him. The deceased Lazarus lies in a cave, the entrance to which is blocked by a stone, while Raskolnikov hides under a stone the loot in Alena Ivanovna's apartment. In the resurrection of Lazarus, his sisters Martha and Mary take an active part. It is they who lead Christ to the cave of Lazarus. In Dostoevsky, Sonya gradually leads Raskolnikov to Christ. Raskolnikov returns to life, having discovered his love for Sonya. This is Dostoevsky's resurrection of the hero. In the novel, we do not see Raskolnikov's remorse, but in the finale he is potentially ready for this.

Other biblical motifs in the novel are associated with the image of Sonya Marmeladova. This heroine in "Crime and Punishment" is associated with the biblical motif of adultery, the motif of suffering for people and forgiveness, the motif of Judas, just as Jesus Christ accepted suffering for people, in the same way Sonya accepts suffering for her loved ones. Moreover, she is aware of all the abomination, sinfulness of her occupation and takes her own situation hard. "After all, it would be fairer," exclaims Raskolnikov, "a thousand times fairer and more reasonable to put your head straight into the water and put an end to it at once!" And what will happen to them," Sonya asked weakly, "looking at him in anguish, but at the same time as if not at all surprised by his proposal."

It contains love collisions, psychological labyrinths, satirical social slices, and sketches from folk life. But there is also, perhaps, standing somewhat apart, but nevertheless organically woven into the plot fabric of the novel, the so-called church theme. At first, it may seem that this theme is peripheral - next to the town where the events unfold, there is a monastery, and as if this is just a kind of background that should be present in any novel, and nothing more. But as the deep meaning of the story is revealed, you understand that no: the church theme is one of the central ones.

Already on the thirtieth page, where the writer finishes the "story of a family", suddenly the elders appear on the stage (the chapter is called "The Elders"). What kind of elders are they? Formally, the author (it should be noted, not without irony) gives a certain history of eldership. But are the elders in the novel like that? Do they resemble at least the famous elders of the then Optina Hermitage or other traditional ascetics of piety? Partly yes, and partly no. Some of the monastics of the early 20th century (among them the philosopher K. N. Leontiev, who became a monk) believed that the monks depicted by F. M. Dostoevsky were not monks at all, and that the writer did not understand anything about monasticism. Such a view has the right to exist. Indeed, the elders and monks of F. M. Dostoevsky are in a certain sense unconventional.

How do they appear to the reader?

First of all, these are not monks who are looking for solitude. The monastery depicted by the writer looks more like a passage courtyard than a place of peace and quiet. Monks do not live separately from society. On the contrary, society is like an extension of the monastery, only its outer courtyard. The hermit shown in the novel is alone. This is the monk Ferapont. He is drawn as a caricature.

Secondly, we almost do not see traditional ascetic practice. Either Fyodor Mikhailovich himself was not familiar with it, or he deliberately glossed it over. In our opinion, the latter is more likely. The fact is that asceticism itself has the goal of restoring the personality through the struggle with the passions, obedience, abstinence, etc. The ascetic emphasizes limitation, evasion from the world, and closing the eyes. In the spiritual life there is a danger of stopping only at asceticism, without entering into the

fullness of life. F. M. Dostoevsky seems to suggest another way - to ascend from asceticism to mysticism. The mystic is ready to face the world, he does not turn away from evil and sin, fearing to be enslaved by them, he has the courage to see. Mysticism is more social, whereas asceticism is more psychological. Therefore, the community of monks headed by Elder Zosima is not so much a refuge for the saved as some kind of new transformed society.

But here, too, Fyodor Dostoevsky goes even further: he completely breaks the boundaries of the monastic community. Elder Zosima's advice to Alexei Karamazov that he should leave the monastery, marry and carry out "great obedience in the world" in this connection looks like the apotheosis of such monastic unconventionality. Needless to say, for traditional monasticism, leaving a monastery is a temptation, and not at all a special feat.

Further, in the second book, which is called "An Inappropriate Meeting," we can observe a rather curious conversation-meeting, where the Karamazov family gathers in the elder's cell, on the one hand, and Zosima himself with some monks on the other. The formal reason for the meeting is property. The eldest son, Dmitry Karamazov, had to resolve a property dispute with his father, Fyodor Pavlovich. Such a meeting would have been more appropriate for the time of, say, some Judaism of the Second Temple (where, indeed, it was customary to resort to spiritual authorities and judge by the Law of Moses to resolve property issues) than for Orthodox Christianity at the end of the 19th century. In the Christian tradition, this practice can hardly be recognized as universal. Therefore, it is not surprising that this meeting itself ends in a scandal. Along the way, at the meeting, in addition to property problems, a whole tangle of other human problems is revealed, starting with the obscene love rivalry of father and son and ending with the spiritual relationship of Ivan Karamazov.

At the same time, as it turns out, the monks are not averse to speculating on global topics of the relationship between church and state, clearly not being satisfied with a typical and traditional phrase from the Gospel for such disputes: "... render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). Their opinion here surprisingly coincides with the opinion of the solitary philosopher Ivan Karamazov. According to the concept presented in the chapter "Be, Be!", it is necessary to move from a worldview in which the church occupies a sectoral position in the state, to the opposite worldview, when the state is already dissolved in the eschatological Church.

Thus, in addition to the primary layer of Christianity, which is actually connected with the monastic tradition, the monastic tradition and, more broadly, with the entire Constantinian era in the history of the Church, in F. M. Dostoevsky's novel "The Brothers Karamazov" a certain other spiritual perspective opens up before us, ascending, so to speak, from the Christianity of Church Tradition (in the sense in which tradition was already denounced by Christ in the Gospel, speaking of it as the tradition of the elders) to the Christianity of the Holy Scriptures. This becomes especially noticeable in the chapter "The Grand Inquisitor", where it is precisely conditionally the Tradition in the form of a harmoniously built church hierarchy headed by the Inquisitor and the Scriptures in the form of Jesus Christ appearing for a dialogue with the Inquisitor that are interbred in an irreconcilable battle. This chapter is not about ascetic practices or any other issues that lose their significance before the height of this topic. We are talking about the temptations of Christ and about the fate of the world connected with these temptations. In the Gospel, Christ, as we know, rejects the three temptations of the evil spirit. But the Church, wandering in history, according to Ivan Karamazov, cannot withstand these three temptations and therefore combines with the devil. Characteristically, the question itself is posed in the context of the primary meanings of the Gospel with all the ensuing comprehensiveness, and not,

say, the secondary meanings of the so-called theology of the Holy Fathers. In this regard, it is curious how F. M. Dostoevsky describes Ivan Karamazov's conversation with the devil.

Traditional Catholic Christianity of the Middle Ages, and after it Orthodox, including monastic Christianity, perhaps delves excessively into the ontology of evil, in many ways demonically spiritualizing human life. In the Holy Scriptures (especially in the Old Testament), the depiction of the devil, Satan, and demons, presented in the mythopoetic genre, is more restrained, despite the vividness of some poetic forms, and does not pretend to be developed in detail.

In F. M. Dostoevsky's apparitions, Ivan's traits are associated with his illness and are largely depicted as stemming from Ivan's own thoughts (temptations), i.e. this is not an objective reality independent of Ivan, but rather a subjective reality, generated by Ivan's own way of thinking, some waking dreams. That is, Ivan's devil is his second, dark "I", a kind of double, a "monkey". It is important that Alexei Karamazov tries to convince Ivan not to believe in a demon, and thus get rid of the disease.

It is curious that the elder Zosima, in the opinion of his opponent, the monk Ferapont, recommends purgen from devils, which leads to extreme indignation of the latter, since the monk Ferapont himself is busy with a special struggle with evil spirits (when he appears with pathos in the cell of the deceased Zosima, he demonstratively crosses the corners in all directions).

For all its outward simplicity, Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* is permeated with hidden polemics, secrets and extremely pointed questions that require answers that could balance the questions themselves in depth and strength. One such question is posed in *The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*. "What can be opposed to the spiritually dead "church" of the Grand Inquisitor? Is there a "different" church?" - perhaps this is how this question can be formulated. What can be the positive answer here? In the author's opinion, only the entire novel with the monastic friendship and life path of Alexei Karamazov depicted in it is such an answer.

Alexei Karamazov is generally quite an interesting character. On the one hand, it is extremely simple, and on the other hand, it is extremely high. He does not live his own life. He lives the life of others, completely and completely sacrificing himself to love. But this life of giving oneself to one's neighbor has its hidden dimension. It does not cease to be different in relation to the world. In the chapter "Cana of Galilee" the writer depicts how a young novice is honored with a mysterious divine visitation and, like the Apostle Paul or Symeon the New Theologian, breaks through into the reality of the encounter with the risen Christ. Now, after this meeting, his entire further path becomes illuminated by an unearthly light, and he, like the Apostle John, can say: "We have seen, and we testify" (1 John 1:2). This is not at all the testimony of faith, when faith, according to Martin Buber's second way of faith, is faith in something objectified. On the contrary, it is faith that draws itself from the immediate reality of communion with God. There is something much more hidden here, almost like in the Gospel, when faith (remember the parable of faith with a mustard seed that moves mountains (Matt. 17:20)) is born through communion with God. It can be said that in the life of Alexei Karamazov there is a liberation from secondary forms of expression of churchliness. Alexei Karamazov does not leave the world, does not "save himself". He again takes upon himself the task of the first Christians: he changes the world, preparing people to receive the Word of God.

In our brief reflection, we have tried to focus on some of the features in the depiction of church life proposed by the author of *The Brothers Karamazov*, and to show that there is a certain discrepancy with the way this church life was usually depicted at that time. In our opinion, the writer brings out this discrepancy deliberately. One can find that Church tradition does not disappear with such a

discrepancy, it only, like old clothes, gives way to something new, but painfully familiar and expected: the Christianity of tradition gives way to the Christianity of Scripture.

Fyodor Dostoevsky seems to want to say that the time has come for Christianity, and with it for the whole of human history, to move into a new phase in the revelation of God's plan for the Church. And the reader must either accommodate this, in fact, prophetic word of the writer (for which he may have to change himself - it is no accident that N. A. Berdyaev divided people into those who "passed" through Dostoevsky, and those who did not), or continue to see in his works only an insufficiently deep acquaintance with the Orthodox tradition.

Raskolnikov's last dream echoes the Gospel of Matthew, where the prophecies of Jesus Christ are revealed that "nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom", that there will be wars, pestilences and earthquakes, that love will grow cold in many, people will hate each other, "they will betray each other".

Here the Egyptian motif of execution also arises. One of the plagues sent by the Lord to Egypt to humble Pharaoh's pride was the invasion of toads.

We often encounter this motif in biblical parables. For example, in the Gospel of Luke we read how the Lord healed a demoniac in Capernaum: "There was a man in the synagogue who had an unclean spirit of demons, and he cried out with a loud voice, 'Leave us to you, Jesus of Nazareth? Thou hast come to destroy us, I know Thee who Thou art The Holy One of God. Jesus rebuked the spirit, saying, "Be silent and come out of it. And the demon turned him in the middle of the synagogue, and went out of him without harming him in the least. In the Gospel of Matthew we read about the healing of a dumb demoniac in Israel. When the demon was cast out of him, he began to speak. There is also a well-known parable about how demons, having come out of a man, entered a herd of pigs, which threw themselves into the lake and drowned. The demoniac was healed and became completely healthy. In Dostoevsky, demonism becomes not a physical disease, but a disease of the spirit, pride, egoism and individualism.

The image of the Church, which the author of "The Brothers Karamazov" draws to us, as if through a dim glass, is mysterious. This image is not exhausted by the usual set of concepts characteristic of scholastic orthodoxy. It opens the way for us to other understandings and other dimensions of churchliness.

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