

# *The Brothers Karamazov:* *Part 1*

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## PART 1

### ON MIRACLES AND REALISM

[The narrator, introducing Alyosha at Father Zosima's:] It will, perhaps, be said that red cheeks are no obstacle to either fanaticism or mysticism; but it seems to me that Alyosha was even more of a realist than anyone. Oh, it cannot be denied that in the monastery he believed completely in miracles, but in my experience miracles never bother a realist. It is not miracles that incline a realist towards faith. The true realist, if he is not a believer, will invariably find within himself the strength and the ability not to believe in miracles either, and if a miracle stands before him as an incontrovertible fact, he will sooner disbelieve his senses than admit that fact. And even if he does admit it, it will be as a fact of nature, but one that until now has been obscure to him. In the realist it is not faith that is born of miracles, but miracles of faith. Once the realist believes, his realism inexorably compels him to admit miracles too. The Apostle Thomas declared that he would not believe until he saw, and when he saw, said: 'My Lord and my God.' Was it the miracle that had made him believe? The likeliest explanation is that it was not, and that he came to believe for the sole reason that he wanted to believe and, perhaps, in the inmost corners of his being already fully believed. (Bk 1, Ch 5, The Elders)

### FATHER ZOSIMA'S CLOSE ATTACHMENT TO THE MOST SINFUL

"In this context, however, Alyosha nearly always observed that many, indeed practically all of those who came to the Elder for the first time in order to have a private talk with him made their entrances in fear and trembling, but always came out radiant and joyful, and the blackest of countenances turned to happy ones. Alyosha was also singularly impressed by the fact that the Elder was in no wise stern; on the contrary, there was unfailingly what almost amounted to gaiety in his demeanour. The monks used to say of him that he formed close soul-attachments precisely to those who were more sinful, and that those who were most sinful, those too were most beloved by him." (Bk 1, Ch 5, The Elders)

### THE FATHER TO SOMEONE RACKED WITH GUILT FROM SIN

"Be not afraid, and never be afraid, and do not be in misery. Just as long as repentance does not grow scarce within you – then God will forgive anything. And indeed there is and can be no sin upon all the earth that the Lord will not forgive the truly repentant. And there is no sin that man could commit so great as would ever exhaust God's infinite love. For could there ever be a sin that could exceed God's love?" (Bk 2, Ch 3, Women of Faith)

### CAN WE PROVE THAT THERE IS A NEXT LIFE, FATHER ZOSIMA?

"But here it is not possible to prove anything; it is, however, possible to be convinced."

'How? By what means?'

'By the experience of active love. Try to love your fellow human beings actively and untiringly. In the degree to which you succeed in that love, you will also be convinced of God's existence, and of your soul's immortality. And if you attain complete self-renunciation in your love for your fellow creatures, then you will unflinchingly come to believe, and no form of doubt will ever be able to visit your soul. That has been tested, that is precisely true.' (Bk 2, Ch 4, A Lady of Little Faith)

#### **LOVING MANKIND BUT HATING INDIVIDUAL MEN**

Father Zosima: "That is almost precisely what a certain medical man once told me, long ago now," the Elder observed. "The man was already quite advanced in years, and of unquestionable intelligence. He spoke just as frankly as you have done, though also with humour, a rueful kind of humour; "I love mankind," he said, "but I marvel at myself: the more I love mankind in general, the less I love human beings in particular, separately, that is, as individual persons. In my dreams," he said, "I would often arrive at fervent plans of devotion to mankind and might very possibly have gone to the Cross for human beings, had that been suddenly required of me, and yet I am unable to spend two days in the same room with someone else, and this I know from experience. No sooner is that someone else close to me than his personality crushes my self-esteem and hampers my freedom. In the space of a day and a night I am capable of coming to hate even the best of human beings: one because he takes too long over dinner, another because he has a cold and is perpetually blowing his nose. I become the enemy of others," he said, "very nearly as soon as they come into contact with me." (Bk 2, Ch 4, A Lady of Little Faith)

#### **FATHER ZOSIMA ON LIES**

"The main thing is to shun lies, all forms of lies, lies to yourself in particular. Keep a watch on your lies and study them every hour, every minute." (Bk 2, Ch 4, A Lady of Little Faith)

#### **THE ELDER ON FANCIFUL VS. ACTIVE LOVE**

"I regret I can say nothing more cheerful to you, for in comparison to fanciful love, active love is a cruel and frightening thing. Fanciful love thirsts for a quick deed, swiftly accomplished, and that everyone should gaze upon it. In such cases the point really is reached where people are even willing to give their lives just as long as the whole thing does not last an eternity but is swiftly achieved, as on the stage, and as long as everyone is watching and praising. Active love, on the other hand, involves work and self-mastery, and for some it may even become a whole science. But I prophesy to you that at the very moment you behold with horror that in spite of all your efforts, not only have you failed to move towards your goal, but even seem to have grown more remote from it – at that very moment, I prophesy to you, you will suddenly reach that goal and discern clearly above you the miracle-working power of the Lord, who has loved you all along and has all along been mysteriously guiding you." (Bk 2, Ch 4, A Lady of Little Faith)

## *The Brothers Karamazov:* *Part 2*

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### PART 2

#### AFTER SHOWING HOW HE COULDN'T EVER COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE, IVAN SAYS:

"I meekly confess that I do not possess the faculties needed to solve such questions, the mind I have is a Euclidean, earthbound one, and so how are we to make inferences about that which is not of this world? And indeed I advise you never to think about that, Alyosha, and least of all concerning God and whether He exists or not. Those are all questions unsuited to a mind that has been created with an awareness of only three dimensions. So, I accept God, and not only do I do so willingly, I also accept His supreme wisdom and His purpose, both of which are completely unknown to us, I believe in the order, the meaning of life, I believe in eternal harmony – one in which we shall all as it were fuse together – I believe in the Word towards which the universe strives and which once "was with God" and which is God, well, and so on into infinity. Too many words have been wasted apropos of all that. It looks as though I'm already on the right track, doesn't it? So let me tell you that in the last analysis, this world of God's – I don't accept it, even though I know that it exists, and I don't admit its validity in any way. It isn't God I don't accept, you see; it's the world created by Him, the world of God I don't accept and cannot agree to accept." (Bk 5, Ch 3, *The Brothers Become Acquainted*)

#### IN ORDER TO LOVE A PERSON YOU MUST HIDE YOUR FACE.

[Ivan:] "I have never been able to understand how it is possible to love one's neighbour. In my opinion the people it is impossible to love are precisely those near to one, while one can really love only those who are far away. I once read somewhere concerning "Ioann the Almsgiver"<sup>1</sup> (a certain saint) that when a hungry and frozen itinerant came to him and asked him to warm him, he put him to bed in his own bed, got into it together with him, put his arms around him and began to breathe into his mouth, which was festering and foul with some terrible disease. I'm convinced that he did this in the grip of a hysterical lie, out of a love that was prescribed by duty, and because of the epithymia he had taken upon himself. In order to love a person it is necessary for him to be concealed from view; the moment he shows his face – love disappears."

"The Elder Zosima spoke of that on several occasions," Alyosha observed. "He also said that a person's face often prevents many who are as yet unpractised in love from loving him. But after all, there is much love in mankind, and it almost resembles the love of Christ, I myself know that, Ivan ..."

#### ANIMALS ARE NOT CRUEL.

[Ivan:] "...people sometimes talk about man's "bestial" cruelty, but that is being terribly unjust and offensive to the beasts: a beast can never be as cruel as a human being, so artistically, so picturesquely cruel. The tiger simply gnaws and tears and that is the only thing it knows. It would never enter its head to nail people to fences by their ears and leave them like that all night, even were it able to do such a

thing. Those Turks, by the way, even tormented children with voluptuous relish, from cutting them out of their mother's wombs with a dagger to throwing the babes in the air and catching them on bayonets before their mothers' eyes. The fact of it being before their mothers' eyes constituted the principal delight." (Bk 5, Ch 4, Mutiny)

#### **"I DON'T WANT TO UNDERSTAND."**

"...“I don't understand anything,' Ivan continued in a kind of delirium. 'And I don't want to understand anything now, either. I want to remain with the facts. I decided long ago not to understand. If I understand anything, I shall instantly be untrue to the facts, and I have decided to remain with the facts ...'” (Bk 5, Ch 4, Mutiny)

#### **JUST AND TRUE ART THOU, O LORD.**

“Oh, Alyosha, I do not blaspheme! And I understand what a shaking must rend the universe when all that is in heaven and under the earth flows together in one laudatory voice and all that liveth and hath lived exclaims: “Just and true art Thou, O Lord, for Thy ways are made plain!” And when the mother embraces the torturer who tore her son to pieces with his dogs, and all three of them proclaim in tears: “Just and true art Thou, O Lord,” then, of course, the day of knowledge will have dawned and all will be explained. The only trouble is that it's precisely that I cannot accept.” (Bk5 Ch 4, Mutiny)

#### **THE GRAND INQUISITOR**

“...the secret of human existence does not consist in living, merely, but in what one lives for.”  
“There is nothing more seductive for man than the freedom of his conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting for him, either.”  
“There are three powers, only three powers on the earth that are capable of eternally vanquishing and ensnaring the consciences of those feeble mutineers, for their happiness – those powers are: miracle, mystery and authority.” (Bk 5, Ch 5, The Grand Inquisitor)

#### **ALYOSHA'S KISS**

“And the sticky leaf-buds, and the beloved tombs, and the blue sky, and the woman you love? How are you going to live, what are you going to love them with? Alyosha exclaimed sadly. ‘With a hell like that in your breast and your head, is it possible? No, of course you're going to join them ... and if you don't, you'll kill yourself, you won't be able to endure!’  
‘There is a power that can endure everything!’ Ivan said, with a cold, ironic smile now.  
‘What power?’  
‘The Karamazovian power ... the power of Karamazovian baseness.’  
‘You mean, to drown in depravity, to crush the life from your soul in corruption, is that it, is that it?’  
‘Possibly that too ... Only perhaps when I'm thirty, I shall escape, and then ...’  
‘But how will you escape? With what means will you escape? With your ideas it's impossible.’  
‘Again, the Karamazovian way.’  
‘So that “all things are lawful”? All things are lawful, is that what you mean, is that it?’  
Ivan frowned and suddenly turned strangely pale.  
...“Yes, perhaps: “all things are lawful””  
...“are you going to disown me because of it – eh? eh?”  
Alyosha rose, walked over to him, and without saying anything kissed him quietly on the lips. (Bk 5, Ch 5, The Grand Inquisitor)

#### **ZOSIMA SAYS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF IVAN: LIFE IS A PARADISE NOW.**

“Gentlemen!’ I suddenly exclaimed with all my heart, ‘take a look around you at God's gifts: the sunny sky, the pure air, the gentle grass, the birds, a nature that is beautiful and without sin, while we, we alone, are godless and stupid and do not realize that life is paradise, for all that we have to do is to want to understand, and at once it will begin in all its beauty, and we shall embrace one another and weep ...’  
“Paradise,’ he said, ‘is concealed in each one of us, and now it is contained within myself, and I want it to begin for me tomorrow and to last for the rest of my life.’ I looked: he spoke with tender piety, watching me mysteriously, as though he were questioning me.” (Bk 6, Ch 2, From the Life of the Departed...)

# *The Brothers Karamazov:*

## *Part 3*

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### PART 3

Previously, Ivan's meditation on suffering (especially the suffering of children) led to him mutinying against God and condemning life. In this section, Dimitri ends with a meditation on suffering (especially the suffering of a single child in a dream), but ends affirming life. Why the difference?

#### WHY IS THE PUTRID SMELL SO IMPORTANT?

"I should have omitted it from my tale altogether without mention, had it not in a most powerful and proverbial manner influenced the heart and the soul of the principal, though also future, hero of my tale, Alyosha, constituting within his soul a kind of turning-point and indeed an overturn that shook but definitively fortified his reason, guiding it throughout the rest of his life in the direction of a certain goal." (Bk 7, Ch1, A Putrid Smell)

#### ALYOSHA AND THE SIGN

"Why this 'sign', which they were now in the process of interpreting together with Father Ferapont, and whence did they even derive the right to so interpret it? For where was Providence and its finger? Why had it concealed its finger 'at the most essential moment' (so Alyosha thought), almost as if it itself wished to subordinate itself to blind, dumb and merciless natural laws?" (Bk 7, Ch2, The Right Moment)

#### MITYA'S DREAM

"No, no,' Mitya said, still appearing not to understand. 'What I want you to tell me is: why are those homeless mothers standing there, why is everyone poor, why is the bairn wretched, why is the steppe barren, why do they not embrace one another, kiss one another, why do they not sing songs of joy, why are they blackened so by black misfortune, why is the bairn not fed?'

And he felt to himself that although he was asking these questions wildly, without rhyme or reason, he could not prevent himself asking them in just that form, and that that was the form in which they must be asked. And he also felt rising within his heart a tender piety he had never experienced before, felt that he wanted to weep, that he wanted to do something for them all, so that the bairn should not cry any more, so that the bairn's withered, poverty-blackened mother should not weep, so that no one should have any tears at all from that moment on, and to do this immediately, without delay and without regard to any obstacle, with all the impetuosity of the Karamazovs.

"And I shall come with you, I shall never leave you now, I shall walk with you all my life,' the dear, heartfelt words of Grushenka sounded beside him.

'What is it you say? Walk where?' he exclaimed, opening his eyes and sitting up on his trunk, every bit like someone who has recovered from a swoon, and smiling radiantly. Over him stood Nikolay Parfenovich, inviting him to attend the reading of the protocol, and sign it. Mitya realized that he had slept for an hour or more, but he paid no attention to Nikolay Parfenovich. He was suddenly struck by

the fact that beneath his head there was a pillow that had not been there when he had subsided in exhaustion upon the trunk.

'Who put a pillow under my head? Who was that kind person?' he exclaimed with a kind of ecstatic, grateful emotion and in a voice that almost wept, as though God only knew what boon had been accorded him. The kind person remained unknown even later, though it was possibly one of the muzhiks, or possibly Nikolay Parfenovich's little scribe who had found him a pillow out of compassion, but Mitya's entire soul was as if shaken by sobs and tears. He approached the table and declared that he would sign whatever was required.

'I had a good dream, gentlemen,' he declared somehow strangely, with a face somehow new, as though illumined by joy.' (Bk 8, Ch 8, Delirium)

#### **AFFIRMING LIFE**

'Wait,' Mitya said, interrupting suddenly, and then in an apparent surge of unmasterable emotion pronounced, addressing all in the room: 'Gentlemen, we are all of us cruel, we are all of us monsters of cruelty, we all of us drive men, mothers and babes at the breast to tears, but of us all – so let it be decided now – of us all I am the most villainous reptile! So be it! Each day of my life, beating my breast, I have promised to mend my ways and each day of it I have committed the same loathsome deeds. I understand now that what a man such as I requires is a blow, a blow of fate, that will seize him as in a lasso and bind him by external force. Never, never would I have picked myself up of my own accord! But the thunder has spoken. I accept the torment of the charge and of my disgrace before the nation, I wish to suffer and to purify myself through suffering! For perhaps I may purify myself, gentlemen, how would that be – eh? But listen, for the last time: I am innocent of my father's blood! I accept punishment not for having killed my father, but for having wanted to kill him and for the possible likelihood that I would actually have done so ... All the same, however, I intend to fight you, and I announce that to you now. I shall fight you to the bitter end, and then may God decide! Farewell, gentlemen, please do not take amiss my having shouted at you during the interrogation, oh, I was then as yet so stupid ... In a moment I shall be a prisoner, and now, for the last time, Dmitry Fyodorovich, as a man still free, extends to you his hand. In saying farewell to you, I say farewell to men! ...' (Bk 9, Ch 9, Mitya is Taken Away)

# *The Brothers Karamazov:* *Part 4*

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## PART 4 AND EPILOGUE

### THE HEART OF LIZA

"I felt like telling you a certain wish I have. I wish that some man would torment me, marry me, and then torment me, deceive me and leave me. I do not want to be happy!"

'You have fallen in love with disorder?'

'Oh, disorder is what I want. I keep wanting to set the house on fire.' ...

'Why do you want to do bad things?'

'So that nothing should be left anywhere. Oh, good it would be if nothing were to be left anywhere! You know, Alyosha, I sometimes think of doing a dreadful amount of bad things, really nasty ones, of doing them for a long time on the sly, and then suddenly everyone will find out.' ...

"Do you feel no shame at destroying yourself?'

'I want to destroy myself. There is a boy who lives near here, he lay down under the rails and let the train go by on top of him. Lucky boy! Listen, your brother is to be tried now for having murdered his father, and yet everyone likes the idea that he murdered his father.'

'They like it?'

'Yes, they like it, they all like it! They all say it is dreadful, but secretly they like it very much. And I am first among them.'

'In your words about other people there is a certain amount of truth,' Alyosha said quietly." (Bk 11, Ch 3, A Little Demon)

### DMITRI'S REAL FEAR

"Brother, during these last two months I have felt a new man in myself, a new man has been resurrected within me! He was imprisoned within me, but he would never have appeared had it not been for this lightning bolt. I am afraid! Oh, what do I care if I have to chip out ore in the mines for twenty years with a hammer – of that I am not afraid at all; no, it is something else I am afraid of now: that the resurrected man may leave me! It is possible there, too, in the mines, under the earth, beside one, in another convict and murderer like oneself to find a human heart and to consort with him, for there, too, it is possible to live, and love, and suffer! It is possible to resuscitate and resurrect in that convict the heart that has stopped beating, it is possible to nurse him for years and bring out, at last, from the den of thieves into the light a soul that is lofty now, a consciousness that is that of a martyr, resuscitate an angel, resurrect a hero! And after all, there are many of them now, hundreds and we all bear the guilt for them! Why did I have that dream of the "bairn" at such a moment? "Why is the bairn wretched?" That was a prophecy to me at that moment! It is for the sake of the "bairn" that I shall go. Because all of us are guilty for all the rest. For all the "bairns", for there are little children and grown-up children. All the "bairns". I shall go for all, for it is necessary that someone shall go for them. I did not kill my father, but I must go. I accept! ...Rakitin is wrong: if God is driven from the face of the earth, we shall meet him under the earth! It is impossible for a convict to be without God, even more impossible than for someone who is not a convict!

And then we, the subterranean folk, will sing out of the bowels of the earth a tragic hymn to God, with whom is joy! All hail to God and his joy! I love him!" (Bk 11, Ch 4, A Hymn and a Secret)

#### SMERDYAKOV AND IVAN

"Did you really, really not know until now?" Smerdyakov asked again.

'No, I did not. I thought it was Dmitry. Brother! Brother! Ah!' He suddenly gripped his head with both hands. 'Listen: did you kill him on your own? With my brother, or without him?'

'I did it with you alone, sir; you and I together murdered him, sir, and Dmitry Fyodorovich is innocent, sir.'

'Very well, very well ... Of myself we shall speak later. Why am I trembling all the time ... I cannot get the words out.'

'You were ever the bold one, sir, "all things are lawful", you used to say, and now look how a-feared you are!' Smerdyakov mouthed in wonder.

...

'I have no need of it [the money] whatever, sir,' Smerdyakov said quakily, with a wave of his hand. 'I did have a thought previously, sir, that with that kind of money I could begin a new life, in Moscow or even abroad, that was the dream I had, sir, all the more so because I thought that "all things are lawful". It was true what you taught me, sir, for you told me a lot about that then: for if there is no infinite God, then there is no virtue, either, and there is no need of it whatever. That was true, what you said. And that was how I thought, too.'

'You came to it with your own mind?' Ivan said with a crooked smile.

'With your guidance, sir.'

'And now I suppose you have come to believe in God, if you are returning the money to me?'

'No, sir, I have not, sir,' Smerdyakov whispered.

(Bk 11, Ch 8, The Third, And Final, Visit to Smerdyakov)

#### FINAL WORDS OF THE NOVEL

"So, in the first place, let us remember, gentlemen, all our lives. And even though we may be occupied with the most important matters, attain honours or fall into some great misfortune – all the same let us never forget how good we found it here, all of us in association, united by such good and happy feeling, which for this time of our love for the poor boy has possibly made us better than we are in actual fact. My little doves – allow me to call you little doves, for you resemble them very much, those pretty, warm grey birds, now, at this moment, as I gaze upon your kind, dear faces – my dear young children, it may be that you will not understand what I am about to say to you, because I often speak very incomprehensibly, but you will none the less remember it and later one day will agree with my words.

...

"Oh, young children, oh, dear friends, do not be afraid of life! How good is life, when one does some good and upright thing!"

'Yes, yes,' the boys repeated in ecstasy.

'Karamazov, we love you!' they all caught up. Teardrops flashed in the eyes of many.

'Hurrah for Karamazov!' Kolya proclaimed ecstatically.

'And eternal memory to the dead boy!' Alyosha added once more with emotion.

'Eternal memory!'

'Karamazov!' Kolya cried, 'is it really true what religion says, that we shall all rise up from the dead and come to life and see one another again, and everyone, even Ilyushechka?'

'Without question we shall rise, without question we shall see one another and joyfully tell one another everything that has happened,' half-laughing, half in ecstasy, Alyosha replied.

'Oh, how good that will be!' burst from Kolya."