Chapter V

Relevance of Dostoevskian Concept of Crime and Punishment in the Modern World

The brief analysis of the concept of crime and punishment in the works of Dostoevsky, as depicted in the last two chapters, reveal the fact that he is not just a chronicler of the exact physical surroundings, but also a writer of about subjects of modern concern. There are many striking similarities between the nineteenth century fictional world of Dostoevsky and the modern world. The moral, political, psychological, intellectual and religious questions probed in his works are, in fact the greatest questions of our own time.

After reading Dostoevsky it is quite evident that he presents his characters, who indulge in criminal activities, as educated youths who alienate themselves from the society attracted by the Western ideologies that advocate socialism, individualism, and materialism. These aspects of his writings are so prophetic in their vision that they recur quite often in twentieth century life and literature. Several modern thinkers and philosophers of twentieth century express their concern over man’s inner criminality and spiritual bankruptcy.

Similarly S. Radhakrishnan also writes in his book Religion in a Changing World “We are the children of our age, skeptics, unbelievers, and, nihilists. There is a schism in the human heart, an inner disorder, a profound fissure in our make-up. Deep down we share the religious instincts which we deny on the plane of reason. The will to believe is resisted by the pleas of reason. We need to find our way back to the living spirit which reconciles opposites. We are on the threshold of a new age of
spirit. The widespread mental unhappiness is traceable to the neurosis of emptiness which is tearing asunder the world not only politically but emotionally.”

Dostoevsky anticipates spiritual bankruptcy of the people in all ages. His works establish the fact that man’s basic physical structure, his mental make-up, his moral needs and his spiritual aspirations are same the world over. “The rational and spiritual” writes Radhakrishnan “are two strands inextricably woven in human nature, though in varied patterns. One or the other may be more prominent in different periods of human history. The nature of man has changed for the worse in recent year, not because he is worse morally or religiously, but because he is ceasing to be an individual. The power, with which a mechanized society endows him collectively, diminishes his individual reality. Most of us are groping, nervous, spiritually disinherited, and passionately hungry for we know not what. Unless the mechanized society itself is under spiritual control, the future is full of peril. Man’s failure to master the machine is the root cause of his self-division and distress.”

The tales of hatred and murder that Dostoevsky presents in his fictions are in fact the greatest events in the life of the modern man. We can notice in our daily life several people like Svidrigailoff (Crime and Punishment), Stavrogin (The Possessed), and Fyodor Karamazov (The Brothers Karamazov), and other such men of pleasure of Rousseau, who abuse children and indulge in extra marital affair to satisfy their carnal desire. We see many Rascolnikoffs and Sonias of Crime and Punishment, whose stories are replayed in our day-to-day life.

Dostoevsky depicts Svidrigailoff in Crime and Punishment as a lecherous person who indulges in criminal activities for pleasure. He tries to seduce Dounia, Rascolnikoff’s sister. Rascolnikoff’s mother writes in her letter, “Mr. Svidrigailoff,
who had acquired the habit of drinking in the army, was under the influence. Under his apparent rudeness and contempt the wretch concealed a passion for Dounia. At length he threw off the mask by making dishonorable proposals, trying by various promises, to seduce her, and declaring himself prepared to leave his house and family and take her to live in some other village or even country.  

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He also rapes a young deaf and dumb girl of fourteen, who later commits suicide. Dostoevsky writes, “He is the most vicious, the most depraved of men. By the dint of skill and sacrifice, she (his wife) hushed up a criminal affair which could have sent Mr. Svidrigailoff to Siberia. An intricate and mysterious connection existed for a long time between this woman and Mr. Svidrigailoff. She had living with her distant relative, a niece – a girl of fourteen who was deaf and dumb. One day this unfortunate girl was found hanging in the garret the customary inquest ended in a verdict of suicide, when the police received information that the girl has been violated by Mr. Svidrigailoff.”  

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Then in The Possessed Stavrogin, who is introduced as an elegant young man of twenty five, known as the prince, is presented as a wealthy supercilious aristocrat. He is characterized as a paragon of beauty with a criminal zeal who had apparently been a terrible bully and went around insulting people for the sheer joy of it. The narrator says, “I saw the most elegant gentleman I’d ever met. I was struck by his looks. His handsome head of black hair was somehow a bit too black; his light eyes were perhaps too steady, his complexion too smooth and delicate, and his cheeks too rosy and his lips like coral. This sounds like a strikingly beautiful face, but in reality it was repulsive rather than beautiful. His face reminded some people of a mask. He was dressed in the best of taste and behaved as only those accustomed to the most refined
surroundings. The new arrival immediately captured the attention of our local ladies. Some were attracted because they felt there was some mystery about him; others were positively thrilled by the thought that he was a killer.”

He pushes Metryosha, the young girl he had raped to suicide, with a sadist pleasure. After the rape, his first intention was to kill her fearing that the girl would report the incident to her mother. He writes in his letter of confession to bishop Tikhon, “That night, sitting in my tenement, I felt great hatred for her and decided to kill her. I was thinking how I’d insult her and then kill her. What made me hate her most was the thought of her smile; it generated scorn combined with a feeling of morbid disgust in me.”

Then at the end of the story in his confession to the retired bishop Tikhon, he writes that he is a womanizer and wanted to commit another crime by bigamy. He shows his sadist pleasure by arranging a meeting of the two women he loves. He writes, “I lived in St. Petersburg wallowing in vice from which I derived no pleasure. For some time I rented three lodgings. The one I actually lived in was a furnished room with service and board. Maria Lebyatkin, who is now my lawful wife, lived in the same house. The other two lodgings were rented by the month, and I used them for my love affairs. In one of them I used to receive a certain lady who happened to be in love with me and, in the other, her maid. For some time, I toyed with the notion of making the two run into each other. I wanted the lady and the girl to meet at my place. Knowing them both, I anticipated deriving great fun from playing such a stupid trick on them.”

There is another description in The Possessed in which Dostoevsky brings out the most relevant chapter of human history. A certain cavalcade which was passing
through a local inn, heard someone suddenly announcing that ‘a man had just been found shot in one of the rooms of the inn and that the police had been sent for’. It was at once proposed that the company which was moving to visit a monk should have a look at the suicide. The suicide was quite a young fellow of about nineteen who must have been very good looking.

The suicide note said that no one should be blamed; he had shot himself because he had “squandered” four hundred rubles. “When he had arrived in town three days before, the boy had never even gone to his cousin’s. He had stayed at the inn, and the first thing he had done was to go to the club, seeking some back-room card game with high stake. But it so happened that there was no game going that night. So the boy returned to the inn – it was already past midnight – and ordered champagne and Havana cigars and later a supper of six or seven courses. But the champagne made him drunk and the cigars made him sick, so he didn’t even touch the supper; instead, he went to bed almost unconscious. Next morning he woke up fresh as a rosy apple and immediately drove to a gypsy caravan that had pitched camp across the river and that he heard about the night before in the club. He hadn’t returned to the inn for two days, in fact, until the day before.”

It was later learnt that the boy had been sent by his family, his widowed mother, sisters and aunts, from the country to the town to make purchases for the trousseau of his eldest sister, who is going to be married. He was entrusted with four hundred rubles saved up for the marriage of his sister in the course of many years. The boy has squandered that hard earned money and commits suicide out of guilty conscience. This incident clearly states the predicament of the youth (in general) who
get attracted by the luxuries of life which ultimately lead them to their self-destruction.

Much later in The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov is also presented as an abject and vicious man. He was one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after only their worldly affairs, and, apparently, after nothing else. He is presented as a sensualist debauchee, who is vicious and an unhappy, unbridled old man. “Fyodor Pavlovitch” writes Dostoevsky “is as one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after only their worldly affairs. Ran to dine at other men’s tables, and fastened on them as a toady, yet at his death it appeared that he had a hundred thousand rubles in hard cash. At the same time, he was all his life one of the most senseless, fanatical fellows in the whole district. I repeat, it was not stupidity – the majority of these fantastical fellows are shrewd and intelligent enough – but just senselessness, and a peculiar national form of it.”

Fyodor Karamazov married Adelaida Ivanovna, a young girl who belonged to a fairly rich and distinguished noble family. Soon after the marriage, the greedy Fyodor got hold of all her money which was up to twenty five thousand rubles. Fortunately Adelaida’s family intervened in the matter and circumvented his greediness. Unfortunately, Adelaida after giving birth to a son (Dmitri), left Fyodor and runs away with a destitute divinity student. When Fyodor received the news of the death of his first wife he was so happy that, he ran out into the street and starts shouting with joy raising his hands to heaven, and says, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’
Shortly after the death of his first wife, Fyodor was allured by another woman of remarkable beauty Sofya Ivanovna. She is the daughter of an obscure deacon who was left from childhood an orphan without relations. As she is poor and Fyodor has not taken any dowry from her, he takes advantage of her meekness and submissiveness to trample on the elementary decencies of marriage. Dostoevsky writes, “In a man so depraved this might, of course, mean no more than sensual attraction. As he received no dowry with his wife, and had, so to speak, taken her ‘from the halter’ he did not stand on ceremony with her. Making her feel that she had ‘wronged’ him, he took advantage of her phenomenal meekness and submissiveness to trample on the elementary decencies of marriage. He gathered loose woman into his house, and carried on orgies of debauchery in his wife’s presence.”

Soon, Sofya Ivanovna, the unhappy young woman who has been kept in terror from her childhood, falls into some kind of nervous disease. She too dies, after giving birth to two children – Ivan and Alyosha. Here, Fyodor is presented as a father who forgets his responsibility, and indulges in nothing but sensual pleasure. Consequently the children were looked after by servants and distant relatives, which affect his children, especially Dmitri.

Later Fyodor seduces Lizevita, a dwarfish, deaf and dumb idiot. She is a destitute who wandered around the place, wearing nothing but a hempen smock, and slept wherever she wanted on the dirty ground. Once on a clear, warm, moonlight night, five or six drunken revelers were returning from the club at a very late hour saw Lizevita asleep. They stopped to look at her, laughing, and began jesting with unbridled licentiousness. A young gentle man asked whether it is possible to look upon such an animal as a woman. Fyodor Pavlovich, who was among them, sprang
forward and declared that it was by no means impossible, and that, indeed, there was
certain piquancy about it. But five or six months later, all the town was talking about,
with indignation, of Lizevita’s condition. They tried to find out who was the
miscreant who had wronged her. Then suddenly there was a terrible rumor all over the
town that the miscreant was no other than Fyodor Pavlovich.

These descriptions show that man has become a slave to the habit of satisfying
the innumerable desires he has created for himself. It effectively brings out the
predicament of each and every man, and shows that man’s defect is his perpetual
moral obliquity. It shows that man is isolated and has no concern for the rest of
humanity. He has succeeded in accumulating a greater mass of objects, but the joy in
the world has grown less. In his aspiration to satisfy his desires man has taken the
wrong route. It is this type of crimes that Dostoevsky condemns in his works. As
zossima says in *The Brothers Karamazov*, “You have desires and so satisfy them, for
you have the rights as the most rich and powerful. Don’t be afraid of satisfying them
and even multiply your desires. That is the modern doctrine of the world, and what
follows from this right of multiplication of desires? In the rich, isolation and spiritual
suicide; in the poor, envy and murder; for they have been given rights, but have not
been shown the means of satisfying their wants”380

All these characters and description appears to be so real, that even today, we
find such people among us. According to a recent report by the Crimes against
Children Research Center (2013), the number of children who suffer from
conventional crime victimization like rape, robbery and assault are substantially
higher than the general adult population. David Finkelhor writes, “They (children)
also suffer a considerable burden of victimizations that are specific to being children –
child maltreatment, neglect and emotional abuse. Unfortunately, crimes against children are considerably less likely to come to police attention than crimes against adults. Even so, the police see more children in the role of crime victim than in the role of crime offender. It is thus ironic that crimes committed by children - juvenile delinquency – receive considerably more official attention than crimes committed against children.”

Dostoevsky describes the idea of such inhumanity and the torment caused to the children in *The Brothers Karamazov* in the anecdote entitled *The Rebellion* narrated by Ivan to Alyosha. He says, “It was in the darkest days of serfdom at the beginning of the century. … There was in those days a general of aristocratic connections, the owner of great estates. He has kennels of hundreds of hounds and nearly a hundred dog boys – all mounted, and in uniform. One day a serf boy, a little child of eight, threw a stone in play and hurt the paw of the general’s favorite hound. ‘Why is my favorite dog lame?’ he is told that the boy threw a stone that hurt the dog’s paw. ‘So you did it.’ The general looked the child up and down. ‘Take him,’ he was taken-from his mother and kept shut up all night.

Next day, early in the morning, the general comes out on horseback, with the hounds, his dependents, dog boys, and huntsmen, all mounted around him in full hunting parade. The servants are summoned for their edification, and in front of them all stands the mother of the child. The child is brought from the lockup. It’s a gloomy, cold, foggy autumn day, a capital day for hunting. The general orders the child to be undressed; the child is stripped naked. He shivers, numb with terror, not daring to cry… ‘Make him run,’ commands the general. ‘Run! Run!’ shout the dog boys. The
boy runs....’at him!’ yells the general, and he sets the whole pack of hounds on the child. The hounds catch him, and tear him to pieces before his mother’s eyes.”

As the child was chased and hunted down by the dogs, people gathered around, including the mother, watch the scene with terrorized enthusiasm. This incident clearly shows that in general there is always something exhilarating in another man’s misfortune – and that is true whoever it may be. Hence, Dostoevsky says, “I recognize in all humanity that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men are themselves to blame. When the mother embraces the fiend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears, ‘Thou art just, O Lord!’ then of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and all will be made clear.”

Here, the question is not whether the general who let the dogs on the little boy to be shot or not; but that of moral and of humanity. This story exemplifies that the reason of man, his conscience cannot bow to insult, humiliation or the torment that little children undergo. Ivan says, “For the hundredth time I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I have only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is also unanswerably clear. Listen! If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It’s beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why should they, too, furnish material to enrich the soil for the harmony of the future? I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for their father’s crimes, such a truth is not of this world and is beyond my comprehension.”

Here, Dostoevsky raises the question of not just of the inhuman treatment of the child but the moral responsibility of the humanity. As Gandhiji says, “He, who
volunteers to serve a band of dacoits, by working as their carrier, or their watchman while they are wounded, is as guiltier of dacoity as the dacoits themselves. In the same way these who confine themselves to attending the wounded in the battle cannot be absolved from the guilty of war.”

This story also explains the exploitation of the poor by the rich with their unlimited powers, which has been condemned by Christianity. It also brings out the social disparities which lead frustrated people to rebel against the established social order. It is such social inequality that is questioned by Rascolnikoff in *Crime and Punishment*. In his article ‘on crime’, he divides mankind into two groups of ordinary and extraordinary people. These two categories, according to Rascolnikoff, contain distinctively marked characteristics. The first group comprises of ordinary inferior people that includes conservatives, men of order, who live in a state of obedience and love. They help obeying, because it is their destiny, and such an act has nothing humiliating for them. The second group, the superior ones consist exclusively those people who break the law, or strive, according to their capacity or power to do so. They are the people who have the gift or power to make a word, thought or deed.

In his aspiration to become a Napoleon, Rascolnikoff takes the route of protest against the society to show his sense of bitterness, injury, humiliation, scorned dignity and despair. He writes, “In my article, I remember insisting on the idea that all legislators and rulers of, commencing with the earliest down to All legislators and rules of men, commencing with the earliest down to Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, etc. etc., … These men most certainly never hesitated to shed blood, as soon as they saw the advantage of doing so. It may even be remarked that nearly all
these benefactors and teachers of humanity have been terribly bloodthirsty. Consequently, not only all great men, but all those who, by hook or crook, have raised themselves above the common herd, men who are capable of evolving something new, must, in virtue of their innate power, be undoubtedly criminals. … Most of these insist upon destruction of what exists in the name of what ought to exist. And if, in the execution of idea, they should be obliged to shed blood, step over corpses, they can conscientiously do both in the interest of their idea. It is in so far that my article gives them a right to commit crime.”

Later the theory of Shigalov in The Possessed also deals with the concept of minority and majority of the people. He too divides mankind into two uneven categories, and draws our attention to the social inequalities. According to Shigalov one tenth of the population will be granted individual freedom and have full rights over the remaining who will love their individuality and become something like a herd of cattle. “The procedure Mr. Shigalov suggests which would deprive nine-tenths of mankind of their free will and transform them into a herd through re-education of entire generations, is very interesting; it is based on data gathered from the natural sciences and is very logical.”

Much later in The Brothers Karamazov, The Legend of Grand Inquisitor also high lights the social disparities as depicted in the articles of Rascolnikoff and Shigalov. As the Grand Inquisitor says, “Man is puny, vicious, paltry, and rebellious. Freedom, untrammelled thinking and science will lead them into such quandaries and comfort them with such portents and irresolvable mysteries that, some of them – the stiff-necked, and the defiant – will destroy themselves: others – defiant but puny – will destroy one another, while yet others – the rest: the weak and
unfortunate, will come crawling to our feet and may cry out, ‘yes’ you were right: you alone possess his mystery, and we are returning to you to beseech you to save us from ourselves”388

It explains, once again, the unlimited power of the select over the mass of depersonalized slaves. The ideal and the program brought forward by the Grand Inquisitor would create millions of servile slaves supervised by hundreds of thousands of the elite, who would deprive them of all will and understanding, leaving them only the rights to unquestioning obedience. In other words everything is permitted only to the select who should rule their underlings on absolutely authoritarian principles.

It is this social disparity, as Dostoevsky asserts, lead to social revolution. These descriptions of social discriminations can be seen in the recent revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka. The frustrated Sri Lankan minority people rebelled against the ill-treatment of the majority Sinhalese. The Sri Lankan minority people angered by the discrimination against them by successive Sri Lankan governments, sought to create an independent state for themselves. One can notice how the post-colonial political direction of the country, especially the Standardization program sparked the anger of these militant groups.

These revolutionaries explicitly believed that an armed struggle is the only way to resist asymmetric warfare, in which one side, that of Sri Lankan government is armed and the other, that is the minority revolutionary group, is comparatively unarmed. They argued that they chose military means only after observing that non-violent means have been ineffectual and obsolete, especially after the death of one of their leaders. He was a colonel rank officer who adopted Gandhian means to protest
against the killings by staging a fast unto death, abstaining from food or water for eleven days, and died in front of thousands of people who had come there to fast along with him. This incident strengthened the revolutionaries to resolve that peaceful protests would either be ignored or crushed but never heard. It supports the view that, “Creating political unrest in the name of war is bad. We should fight the immorality and unreasonableness which still govern the world.”

By rejecting the **Gandhian** philosophy, which preaches **religious tolerance** and understanding, peace and good-will of humanity and recognition, the revolutionaries were consequently influenced by the **Marxist** theory. As S. **Radhakrishnan** writes, “If the communist faith has won the allegiance of millions of people it is not because of their acceptance of **Marxist** theory but because of the sense of hope it gives to millions of its adherents by the advocacy of the overthrow of reactionary governments, and the end of exploitation, racial, economic and political. It pleads for the economic progress of the common people, equality of economic opportunities. It attempts to abolish the distinction of rich nations and poor ones. It promises a rational allocation of resources and the establishment of world brotherhood. Those whose privileges and positions are challenged, are tempted to withdraw, immigrate inwardly to another state where they find security. The spread of communism has led to modification in the capitalist system and what was forecast as the inevitable collapse of capitalism did not happen.”

Here, it should be noticed that these revolutionaries fail to understand that at this extremely dangerous moment of human history; the only hope for mankind is **Gandhiji**’s principles of **Truth** and **Non-Violence**. As **Gandhiji** writes, “Ahimsa is a comprehensible principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of
The saying that ‘life lives on life’ has a deep meaning in it. Man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward himsa. … A votary of ahimsa therefore remains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it, and thus incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of himsa. He will be constantly growing in self-resistant and compassion, but he can never become entirely free from outward himsa.”

Gandhiji as a deeply religious person stood for the maximum possible distance between religious concerns of individuals and states’ obligations towards its citizen. He asserts that since we have no power to create, we have no power to destroy. The most important aspect of Gandhiji’s religious philosophy is the inviolable sacredness of life and the consequent sinfulness of the bloodshed. He is deeply concerned with the spiritual development, which is marked by the obsolescence of the materialistic world.

On the other hand Nelson Mandela, the South African president, who believed in the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence and religious tolerance, provides proof for Dostoevsky’s conviction that revenge is not good, and retribution leads to self destruction. Nelson Mandela who fought for the majority Africans against the oppression of the minority white government was imprisoned for his revolutionary activities. He led the emancipation of the South Africans from the white minority rule. Though he was imprisoned for 27 years, he was evidently free from spite and never speaks of retribution. Like Dostoevsky, his prison experience steeled his self-control and to be sympathetic to the world around him.
When in prison he always spoke in the collective ‘we’ as against the individual I. When he walked out of jail, after 27 years of imprisonment, many believed that he will take revenge against the people who imprisoned him. People thought that long years of imprisonment would have made him bitter and angry with his oppressors and he would seek retribution. But he showed the world that there is another way to deal with oppression. He showed to the world that one should forgive one’s tormentors. In fact when he became the president, he invited one of the warders to the inauguration. He also set precedent by including many of his former oppressors in the government.

As Dostoevsky writes in the *Diary of a Writer* that equality is not getting square with others. He writes, “In Russia different convictions should be propagated, especially relative to the conceptions of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. In the present aspect of the world, liberty is conceived as license, whereas genuine liberty is only in the mastering of one’s self; of one’s own will in order that the one may eventually attain a moral condition where, at any given moment, one is a real master of himself. License of desires leads only to your enslavement.”

We have many such instances in our day-to-day life where youths are carried away by certain ideologies. The two world wars bring out this anti-human ideology of modern man. It is not an incidental occurrence, not an unfortunate coincidence that a few brutal dictators happened to rise to power as technological advances made mass killing more efficient. “It is not a question of who the world’s strongest military power is or who has the lead in inter-continental missiles. Whoever may be the mightier power, no one will survive a nuclear war. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that the use of these weapons will result in a decisive advantage to those who possess
them. There is no such thing as military invincibility. The fate of all nations is inseparably tied up. Either we live together or die together. It is either one society or no society. ”

It was the direct outcome of the cold scientific rationalism of modernity. It is this fact that separates the horrors of the twentieth century from those of the rest of human history. And it was precisely this inevitable conclusion that Dostoevsky foretold with such insight and precision in his novels. It shows that man is irrational by nature and he can be curbed only by a higher power not by his reasons. Dostoevsky views human destiny from the stand point of anti-rationalism.

Dostoevsky clearly rejects the reason of his underground man who believes in the stone wall constituted of the laws of nature, of the destruction of learning, and of science of mathematics. He writes, “Consequently we have only to discover these laws of nature, and man will no longer have to answer for his actions and life will become exceedingly easy for him. all human actions will then, of course, be tabulated according to these laws, mathematically, like tables of logarithms up to 108,000, and entered in an index; or, better still, there would be published certain edifying works of the nature of encyclopedic lexicons, in which everything will be so clearly calculated and explained that there will be no more incidents or adventures in the world. …

Reason is nothing but reason, and satisfies only the rational side of man’s nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and all impulses. ”

Later he writes in The Possessed, “Reason has never yet managed to define good and evil or even distinguished between them, if only approximately. On the contrary, reason has always mixed them up shamefully and miserably. As for science,
its answers have always been based on brute force. This has been the special knack of pseudoscience, that terrible scourge of mankind, a scourge worse than plague, famine, and war, an evil that didn’t exist until this century. Half-knowledge is a tyrant without precedent, one that has its own priests and slaves; a tyrant that is worshipped with unprecedented awe and adulation and before which science itself fawns and cringes.”

This can be retraced in the words of Radhakrishnan, who writes, “We have achieved sufficient knowledge to create a great civilization but not sufficient wisdom to control and preserve it. The Greek City-States, for example, more than two thousand years ago gave mankind some of its greatest philosophers, artists and dramatists. They are still a part of our heritage but all the brilliance of the Greeks could not save them, since they could not maintain peace among themselves. … We need courage and discipline now more than brilliance.” He believes that the individual has to be renewed if human society is to be preserved. “We have to affirm the doubts and insecurities of modern men and point them to the ground of hope. Ruin is a consequence of human criminality so outrageous that even the highest art cannot do justice to it.”

He believes that only two types of people are happy today in the world. The utter fool who is tension free, and the one who has attained the state of wisdom, surpassed himself, has gone beyond his mind.

According to the Grand Inquisitor, “No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, Make us your slaves, but feed us on. … And if for the sake of the bread of heaven thousands and ten thousands shall follow thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to forego the earthly bread
for the sake of the heavenly? Or dost thou care only for the tens of thousands of the
great and strong, while the millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, who are weak
but love the, must exist only for the sake of the great and strong? … We shall deceive
them again, for, we will not let thee come to us again. That deception will be our
suffering for we shall be forced to lie.”

The **prophetic** insights of **Dostoevsky** in *The Possessed* about the future
**Russian** political scene can be noticed in the **twentieth century Russian**
communism. The strategies adopted by **Stavrogin** in *The Possessed* to eliminate his
enemies have close resemblance to the diplomatic tactics adopted by **Joseph Stalin**
during his rule in **Russia**. When **Stavrogin** realizes that there is a threat to his secret
marriage to the cripple Mary Lebyatkin he plans for the murder of both, his legal wife
and her brother captain Lebyatkin. He arranges the murder of these two through
Fedka, an escaped convict. Fedka says, “Your Honor, will you be kind enough to let
me have those three rubles? You’d set my mind at rest, sir, by giving me an answer,
sir, because in my position, as I told you, one can’t do without a helping hand.” Later
we understand that Fedka kills them by setting fire on their home. “It has been
established beyond doubt now that Fedka and two factory hands were involved in
starting a fire that broke out three days later in our town. Three other workers were
captured in the district three months afterward and convicted of arson.”

**Peter Verkhovensky** seeks the help of **Stavrogin** because he was thoroughly
contemptuous of the world around him. He is a ruthless, monstrous cunning character
who says that he is a **crook** and not a **socialist**. We are told that soon after his birth,
Peter was packed off to **Russia** and his education was entrusted to some distant
relative residing in a remote place. He is distorted by his unloved childhood and
detested his father for the indifference showed when he was a motherless child. Stavrogin says, “His brain is a real filing cabinet, and when he tells something I always have the feeling that he is reading it off from his records. Note that, being a realist, he cannot lie since truth is more important to him than success – except for some rare instances when success is more important than truth.”

Peter came to town with the intention to create unrest in the society with the help of a group, whom he calls as the fives. He says, “We must have one or two generations of debauchery, of unheard of, degrading vice that turns a man into a repulsive, abject, cruel, selfish bug! Yes, that’s what we need now! And we must have nice, fresh blood handy, to get them accustomed to it. … We shall proclaim destruction because – because, once again, the idea is too attractive for some reason! And, anyway, we need some exercise. We shall set towns on fire, we shall create myths, and for that, any lousy cell will be useful to us. In these Fives I’ll find you volunteers who’ll be prepared to assassinate anyone and will thank you for sending them to do it. So we’ll start unrest, and there’ll be havoc everywhere – havoc such as the world has never before witnessed.”

As there was an inherent quality of leadership in Stavrogin, Peter reveals his plan to him. He says, “We’ll start unrest; we are penetrating deep into the masses themselves. We are terribly strong. We have people other than those who cut throats, set places on fire, go in for classical assassinations, and go around biting people. We have the teacher who makes the children entrusted to his care laugh at their god and at their families; we have the lawyer defending the well-educated murderer because he has reached a higher stage of development than his victims and couldn’t get hold of
their money without killing them. … We have many high government officials with us. Have you any idea how much we can do with ready-made ideas alone?”

Peter wants Stavrogin to act as his ‘fairy tale prince’ and to join Shigalov’s system to help him. Peter says, “The fairy – tale prince – you. … We shall say that he’s in hiding. It means that he’ll appear one day. We shall launch a legend that is even better than the one the sect of the Castrates has; he exists, but no one has ever seen him. The main point is that a new authority is coming and that’s just what they’ll be longing and crying for. What use can we have for socialism? It destroys the old authority without replacing it. But we will have authority - authority such as the world has never before heard of. All we’ll need then will be a lever to lift the earth, and since we have it, we’ll lift it.”

This description of the activities of the revolutionary group has a close resemblance with several revolutionary activities of twentieth century. Like Stavrogin – ‘the paragon of beauty’, Stalin also became a ‘beast of prey’ with ‘ungovernable wildness’ who arranged like Stavrogin murders most of the Bolsheviks who had seized power in 1917. Stalin’s rule, after the death of Lenin – his political mentor, in Russia, clearly reveals the demonic and most notorious purges of Russia of the 1930s. “Lenin’s political attitude and outlook is the tragic consummation of the attitude and outlook of Peter Verkhovensky in the novel. The debatable aspect of Marxism, which is nothing more than a curious mixture of German philosophy, French politics and British political economy, became an instrument of the devil. Lenin implemented his demonic ideas as the beast that came up from the earth. Stalin’s further implementation of Lenin’s demonic ideas is the tragic consummation of the attitude and outlook of Nikolai Stavrogin in
Dostoevsky’s *Demons*. As the beast that came up from the sea Stalin shaped Russian communist outlooks and attitudes in ways that lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russian communism in 1991.

Lenin, Stalin and Russian communism provide an insightful case-study in how the demonic infects the political atmosphere. The beast that rises out of the earth and the beast that rises out of the sea can be compared to the three evil beings formed a demonic trinity in opposition to God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Marx the father wrote the foundational texts for his son, Lenin and his spirit Joseph Stalin. This latter unholy trinity attempted to overthrow both the church and civilization. However, the new historical evidence that has recently become available makes it clear that they have been thrown into history’s lake of fire and sulfur like the beasts in the book of Revelation.⁴⁰³

These examples show, as Dostoevsky prophesized, that revolution is not the answer. He believes that world peace is a necessity, an essential condition for the survival of human race. “Belief in co-existence is not the outcome of expediency or of weakness. It is the only way to rid the world of exclusiveness, intolerance and misunderstanding. There are no more closed societies. The new order we seek is not either national or continental. It is neither eastern nor western. It is universal.”⁴⁰⁴ It clearly sends the message that revenge is not good, and retribution leads to self-destruction.

As zossima says in *The Brothers Karamazov*, “For every one strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; but meantime all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but self-destruction, for instead of self-realization he ends by arriving at complete
solitude. All mankind in our age have split up into units, they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them. He heaps up riches by himself and thinks, ‘how strong I am now and how secure’, and in his madness he does not understand that the more he heaps up, the more he sinks into self-destruction of impotence. For he is accustomed to rely upon himself alone and cut himself off from the whole; he has trained himself not to believe in the help of others, in men and in humanity.”

It is this realization of crime that is the most important thing in a criminal. As zossima says in The Brothers Karamazov, “Remember particularly that you cannot be a judge of anyone. No one can judge a criminal until he recognizes that he is just such a criminal as the man standing before him, and that he is perhaps is more than all men to blame for that crime. When he understands that, he will be able to be a judge. Though that sounds absurd, it is true. If I had been righteous myself, perhaps there would have been no criminal standing before me. If you can take upon yourself the crime of the criminal your heart is judging, take it at once, suffer for him yourself, and let him go without reproach. And even if the law itself makes you his judge, act in the same spirit so for as possible, for he will go away and condemn himself more bitterly that you have done. If, after your kiss, he goes away untouched, mocking at you, do not let that be a stumbling block to you. It shows his time has not yet come, but it will come in due course. And if it come not, no matter; if not he, then another in his place will understand and suffer, and judge and condemn himself, and the truth will be fulfilled. Believe that, believe it without doubt; for in that lies all the hope and faith of the saints.”
It is the **moral principles** of man that are shattered to their foundation. Man always worships materialism resulting in the decline of brotherhood. Dostoevsky writes in the *Diary of a Writer*, “The people have to labor much upon **self** – **betterment** in order to be worthy of being called a great people. Individual and social morality do not constitute one and the same thing. From this it follows that no ‘social’ improvement can do achieved ‘only’ through the betterment of the personal qualities of men constitute a society.”

Hence, in all his works **Dostoevsky** opposes such selfishness and self centered attitude of the educated. He presents his characters not just as educated people but men of remarkable intelligence. In *The Landlady*, he presents Ordynov as a man who is devoured by the deepest and the most insatiable passion for science. The Underground man is a collegiate assessor who is well educated enough not to be superstitious. He says, “Man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny the evidence of his senses only to justify his logic.” Rascolnikoff was studying law before he left the university. Stavrogin, Peter Verkhovensky, and Kirilov have been to abroad. Kirilov is presented as a structural engineer. Ivan Karamazov is introduced as a great scholar who has shown from his infancy a brilliant and unusual aptitude for learning.

As Murin says in *The Landlady* **wit has overstepped the wisdom of these educated men.** As a result throughout in his fictional works we can notice a rift between the two **ideologies** – the **individualism** and **materialism** of the **Westerners**; and the social spirit and brotherhood for the harmonious growth of the individual and society, in these characters. Hence, Dostoevsky sought for ways and means to
eradicate these qualities from the soul of man and believed that truth always conquers and triumphs over vice and evil. He asserts that rational selfishness is the cruelest and negative symptom of individual nature.

These ideologists of Dostoevsky, who deviate from the nature, indulge in evil things. According to Dostoevsky it is these alienated intellectuals who feel free to commit the most monstrous act to quench their vanity. He writes, “Everywhere in these days men have, in their mockery, ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. Everyone strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; but meantime all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but self-destruction, for instead of self-realization he ends by arriving at complete solitude.”

Dostoevsky, who was conditioned by Christian teachings, effectively explores in these characters how they are carried away by the existing ideologies without properly understanding them. He writes, “The root cause of all evil lies in their conviction and in the succession of ideas. They fail to understand the meaning of liberty, equality and fraternity. According to Dostoevsky equality is not getting square with others. It is to love all, to become brotherly not for mere sake of economic gain, but for the fullness of joyous life and fullness of life.”

These false Westernizers who are too proud of their intelligence fail to realize that they have to deal with reality, with nature. Because, “They took everything they read literally, and not at a hint from progressive circles in the capital, they’d have tossed out of their windows everything they were advised to throw out… There was a time when it was said that our circle was a hot bed of free thinking, vice and atheism
and this notion always lingered about us. But in actual fact we were just enjoying a pleasant, innocent Russian pastime—liberal blather. Liberal idealism and liberal idealists are possible only in Russia." Here, Dostoevsky seems to analyze whether it is cynicism or the premature exhaustion of intellect and imagination in a society that is sinking into decay. He insists on the moral that the atheist and the doubter in the church of Christ must end up as criminal.

Shatov, in The Possessed, who argues that the problem of revolution is essentially god and religion, and man’s place in the universe, eventually becomes a victim of the crime. The force, which he believes as god, is the force incessant and unwavering affirmation of life and denial of death. So the objective of any nationalist movement in any people, at any time is actually a search for god. Shatov says, “The objective of any nationalist movement in any people at any time is actually a search for God, for their own, national God – and it must, above all, be their own God – and belief in Him as the only true God. God’s personality is a synthesis of the entire nation from the beginning of its existence to its end.”

He conceives God as purely transcendent, purely infinite and only to be approached by an absolute denial of the sensible. He is a master of all explorers of physical and spiritual order. He argues that the very essence of socialism is godlessness that proclaimed in its very first statement that it aims at an organization that does not presuppose God. It is an organization based on the principles of reason and science exclusively. But man fails to understand that reason and science have always performed and still performing an auxiliary function in the life of man. In his death Dostoevsky introduces the true spirit of the conflict between the Slavophil and Westernized Russians.
Thus, Shatov effectively brings in the Dostoevskian concept of God. Shatov who questioned the activities of the Western educated revolutionaries was murdered by them. These false Westernizers murder Shatov because they think that he is a threat to their conspiracy- not materially but ideologically. This incident provides proof that how people are suppressed if they question the existing order of life in a society.

It was the rejection of the Christian God, and desecration of everything that is sacred is what Dostoevsky condemns in his works. As Radhakrishan writes, “We are now in one of those great periods of history when humanity is taking a leap into the future and shifting its axis of conduct, national and international. We are a transitional figures involved in a new stage of history. The sudden widening of intellectual perspectives, the increasing secularization of life, the rapid dissolution of accepted values, are preparing men’s minds and hearts for a new conception of human solidarity based on the equal rights of all human beings, whatever be their caste or class, color or community, race or religion. The challenge posed by the breakup of traditional concepts in philosophy, politics and arts has to be met, understood and controlled.”

Further, the anecdote on the desecration of a church in The Possessed brings out the most relevant aspects of the human life. Dostoevsky writes, “One morning the news of an infamous and outrageous sacrilege spread like wild fire through the town. The old Church of the Nativity of Our Lady, a well – known historic building in our ancient town stands near the entrance to the vast market place. At the gates of the enclosure surrounding the church, a large icon of the Blessed virgin had for many years been displayed behind a grating in the wall. One night this icon had
been robbed the glass of the icon case broken, the grating smashed, and a few stones and pearls removed from the crown and the setting. But the chief thing was that besides the robbery a senseless and mocking sacrilege had been perpetrated: behind the broken glass of the firm a live mouse was said to have been found.” We can find such incidents happening again and again in our surroundings.

This description brings out the similarity in the destruction of holy places and suggests the perverted mind behind the crime which deeply affects the sensitive mind. It also tells us that no matter whether it is the nineteenth century or the twentieth century man is the same. Everywhere it is the same mentality of man, violation of what is sacred. Such scenes and perhaps still more awful ones have existed in the past and at all times and not only among us but everywhere and will occur again and again for a very long time. But it seems as though these instances were a recent phenomenon.

This widespread mental unhappiness can be traced to the neurosis of emptiness which is tearing asunder the world not only politically but as well as emotionally. As Radhakrishnan writes, “Human beings are fundamentally the same and hold the same deep values. The differences among them which are, no doubt, significant, are related to external, temporary and social conditions and are alterable with them. The cycle of birth, growth, childhood and youth, of sickness, old age and death, of love and friendship, of sorrow and joy is the same for all men. We share a common origin and a common destiny.”

Dostoevsky writes that Christianity without Christ is impossible to understand anything. Ivan, who is presented as a curious mysterious creature, says that all he cares about is his intelligence. It is this quality of man which by itself is the
source of all evil and ultimately leads to despair. Ivan fails because he accepts God but he doesn’t and cannot accept the world created by Him. He argues that everything is possible and rebels against the religion become the worst criminal. He says, “I accept God and am glad to, and what’s more, I accept His wisdom, His purpose—which is utterly beyond our ken; I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life; I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended. I believe in the Word to which the universe is striving, and which itself was ‘with God’. Yet in the final result I don’t accept this world of God’s; although I know it exists, I don’t accept it at all. It’s not that I don’t accept God, you must understand, it’s the world created by Him I don’t and cannot accept.”

Ivan solemnly declares that “There is nothing in the whole world to make men love their neighbors. That there was no law of nature that man should love mankind, and that, if there had been any love on earth hitherto, it was now owing to a natural law, but simply because men have believed in immorality.” He added in parenthesis, “That the whole natural law lies in that faith and that if you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love but every living force maintaining the life of the world would at once be dried up. Moreover, nothing then would be immoral, everything would be lawful, even cannibalism. That’s not all. He ended by asserting that every individual, like ourselves, who does not believe in God or immortality, the moral law of nature must immediately be changed into the exact contrary of the former religious law, and that egoism, even to crime, must become not only lawful but even recognized as the inevitable, the most rational, even honorable outcome of this position.”
Ivan, who is ruled by reason and stands very far away from sinful passions and crime, inevitably ends up as a criminal, as he rises against the religion and church, although crime is foreign to him. He kills through Smerdyakov whom he taught godlessness. It is Ivan’s liberal ideas that provoked Smerdyakov to commit parricide. Ivan neither had a motive like Rascolnikoff nor hatred against his father like Dmitri, but still he instigates Smerdyakov to kill their father, only out of an abstract idealism. The killing of Fyodor by Smerdyakov clearly depicts what will happen if liberal ideas are preached to such a person as Smerdyakov. Unfortunately Ivan the rationalist fails to utilize his ideas and his visit to sick Smerdyakov brings out the fact what he really is. It clearly shows if you have no belief in god, you will surely murder your father, even if you do so through the agency of a servant you have tempted.

Man can be happy as long as he lives together with the humanity. He contends that god is necessary, and so must exist. This imaginative anticipation of the spiritual and moral development of the civilized world assures the powerful and lasting effect of his works. All his works summarize the moral of the Christian philosophy that through love of Christ eternal life can be achieved. We should abide by the law of Christ’s gospel. He believed that sin is a transient matter, whereas Christ is eternal. According to Dostoevsky every position in the lot of man is ordained by the Almighty. Man cannot live without something sacred and precious. Suffering endured in one’s life may subsequently transform itself into a sanctuary of the soul. There is no greater happiness than to acquire faith in man’s kindness and their love for one another.

Like Dostoevsky, Radhakrishanan also believes that “Religion has a great force for disciplining of man’s nature, but unfortunately, to-day, it has lost its value
and validity for many people. It is the difficulty of religious beliefs that is responsible for the present distemper of the world. We need a faith that is reasonable, a faith that we can adopt with intellectual integrity and ethical conviction, a large, flexible faith for the whole human race.”

According to Dostoevsky the fundamental spiritual treasure is not dependant on economic assets. Universality is acquired not by the sword but by the force of brotherhood and our brotherly longing for fellowship of man. Hence, Dmitri says, “We are all responsible for all. For all the ‘babes’, for there are big children as well as little children. All are ‘babes’. I go for all, because someone must go for all. I didn’t kill father, but I’ve got to go. I accept it. … In our great sorrow, we shall not rise again to joy, without which man cannot live nor God exist, for God gives joy.”

Dostoevsky hopes that though man is driven by a beast their Christ is still with them. “There is much bestiality in man and is the mire of centuries, it should be cleansed. The trouble is not in the fact that there is still bestiality, but in a condition where bestiality would be extolled as virtue.” There is exploitation of the poor by the rich which had been condemned by Christianity. But this exploitation is regarded as a virtue in the current century. He believed that religion and faith in God are pre requisite for the triumph of good over evil. But all his heroes who are detached from the society lose faith in god. They fail to realize that science would not increase happiness in the world; but it would lead to more and more suffering. He felt that freedom without conscience will lead to tyranny and individual freedom is always accompanied by evil. Hence, he advocates in his works the need for faith and trust in god.
Again and again Dostoevsky emphasizes the process of violation of the natural law. It is this violation of natural law that leads to trauma, there by self knowledge and finally peace. He believed that God is the custodian of all moral values guarding the individual consciousness. He proves that irrational and evil beings having exhausted themselves became bankrupt of both good and evil.

The epilogue of Crime and Punishment clearly shows how the world is today desolated by an unknown and terrible plague. Parasites of a new character, microscopic beings fixed their home in the human body. Persons affected became immediately mad. The entire population became tainted, and lost their reason. They were incapable of understanding each other because they thought that they were the sole possessors of truth. This description hints at a gradually emerging new society.

Rascolnikoff writes, “The whole world was desolated by an unknown and terrible plague. Parasite of a new character, microscopial beings fixed their home in the human body. But these animalculae were breathing creatures, endued with intellect and will. Persons affected became immediately mad. … Whole villages and towns, the entire population became tainted, and lost their reason. They were incapable of understanding one another, because each believed himself the sole possessor of truth. They could not agree upon any point, knew not what to consider evil, what good, and they fell upon one another in anger and killed, they formed great armies, but, once in motion, they tore each other to pieces. … People gathered together in crowds, agreed upon a common action, swearing never to abandon one another, then immediately rushed to something else, forgot their agreement, and ended in rushing upon and murdering each other.”

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Similarly Radhakrishnan writes in his *Religion in the Changing World*, “A new world society is gradually emerging. It is growing quietly, imperceptibly in the minds and hearts of men. The tumult and the excitement, the anger and the violence, the perplexities of spirit and the ambiguities of expression are the pangs of the birth of something new.” Later he writes, “A nuclear arms race indicates the possibility, if not the probability, of putting an end in a war to the human species. It is not a question of who the world’s strongest military power is or who has the lead in inter-continental missiles. Whoever may be the mightier power, no one will survive a nuclear war. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that the use of these weapons will result in a decisive advantage to those who possess them. There is no such thing as military invincibility. Nuclear war will mean the ruin of all. The fate of all nations is inseparably tied up. Either we live together or die together. It is either the society or no society.”

This is what Dostoevsky repeatedly asserts in his works, and it is not just the commission of crime that is bad, but the very thought of crime is against the will of God. Hence, he makes his characters to understand their crime and suffer for their guilty conscience. So while analyzing the various aspects and circumstances of crime Dostoevsky draws our attention to the effects of punishment on the criminal. He asks is it possible that men so differently situated can feel in an equal degree the punishment inflicted. He feels that even among the worst there may be something good. He writes, “Degrees of punishment, however, are not very numerous, whereas different kinds of crimes may be reckoned by thousands. There are as many crimes as the charges are, so it is impossible to get rid of inequality of punishment. The crime problems are so insoluble in the sphere of penal law that it is like trying to square the circle.”
He also feels that it is not only the inequality in punishment that matters but the consequences of the punishment have to be considered. He feels that there is the possibility of youth – fruitful strength was lost and buried in those walls in the name of punishment. Hence he writes, “Alas! How much joyless youth, how much fruitless strength was lost and buried in those walls! – Youth and strength of which the world might surely have made some use. I cannot help expressing my conviction that amongst that hapless throng there were perhaps the strongest and, in some respects, the most gifted of our people. There was all that strength of body and of mind lost, hopelessly lost, whose fault is that?”

Hence, he argues that in virtue of a natural law the criminal won’t escape punishment. The criminal with a guilty conscience will definitely surrender to the judicial law by virtue of a natural law, to expiate his crime. So he advocates punishment not that of legal variety, but the internal guilt. He says that self inflicted punishment is the best punishment. He writes, “To a person who is sensitive, cultured and of delicate conscience, what he feels after the crime kills him more surely than the material punishment. The judgment which he himself pronounces on his crime is more pitiless than the most severe tribunal. He expresses his feeling that the human heart and the quality of a man’s soul are more important than the endured humiliation. Self imposed punishment is like as one touching a wound to better feel its pain.”

Similarly Gandhiji also feels that self-purification is the greatest punishment. He writes in his autobiography, “My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. A perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa. To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a
man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all walks of life. Purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one’s surroundings.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder than the physical conquest of the world by the force of the arms. The knowledge of dormant passions lying hidden within me has made me feel humiliated though not defeated. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility.”

Dostoevsky argues that capital punishment is immeasurably more terrible than murder by brigands. If a man is attacked there is still hope for escape. He can runaway or beg for mercy. But in legal punishment there is no hope, and life is taken for certain. Hence, a criminal should be punished in such a way that he must realize that he is not a convict rather a captive in the love of society. Dostoevsky writes, “All these sentences to exile with hard labor, and formerly with flogging also, reform no one, and what’s more, deter hardly a single criminal, and the number of crimes does not diminish but is continually on the increase. You must admit that. Consequently the security of a society is not preserved, for, although the obnoxious member is
mechanically cut off and sent far away out of sight, another criminal always comes to
take his place at once and often two of them."

‘A secured society can be established only by recognizing his wrong doings’
is what Dostoevsky said in nineteenth century, and is supported by Gandhiji,
Radhakrishnan, and Nelson Mandela in twentieth century. They strongly up held
the views that the conscience of a criminal will force him to recognize his crime and
thereby accept his punishment.

They all feel that a criminal, whom they address as the sinner must make
atonement, so that he will be redeemed of his crimes. They all believe that by offering
to expiate his crime, the criminal will be washing out half of his crime. Dostoevsky
writes, “There is only one means of salvation, take yourself and make yourself
responsible for all men’s sins, that is the truth, you know, for as soon as you
sincerely make yourself responsible for everything and for all men, you will see at
once that it is really so, and that you are to blame for everyone and for all things.”

Similarly Gandhiji also writes, “Underlying ahimsa is the unity of life, the
error of one man cannot but affect all, and hence man cannot be wholly free from
himsa. So long as he continues to be a social being, he cannot but participate in the
himsa that the very existence of society involves.” The virtues of self-discipline,
self restraint and self-development which are the main-stay of Gandhi culture and
Dharma are the most important aspect of man’s life today. “Dharma in Indian
thought means a gathering in, a binding together, integration; adharma, its opposite,
is a scattering out, a falling away, disintegration. The world has to be bound together;
alienation from society causes evil thinking.”
They feel that though the criminal was severely punished by the legal code, he can be transformed by sympathizing with him. The grand inquisitor speaks of Dostoevsky’s ultimate philosophy. According to him the worst deed a man can do is to beating to bleed a fellow creature. The feeling of shame - his self realization of torturing another man - made in the likeness and image of God. Dostoevsky strongly emphasized that nature is beautiful and sinless, only man is sinful and foolish who does not understand that life is heaven and if we understand this we will embrace each other and weep. If man understands the significance of his responsibility, then heaven on earth will not be a dream. Man can achieve salvation from his faith and meekness.

Only through such qualities like pity and mercy an offender can be punished. If he is isolated from society for a few days, in the form of imprisonment, he will realize the value of the love and sympathy of the people. Give him time to understand the virtue of self-discipline, and self-restraint; and grow into a responsible citizen. If anything does preserve society, even in our time, and does regenerate and transform the criminal, it is only the law of Christ speaking in his conscience. “We need a faith which demands loyalty to the whole of mankind and not to this or that fraction of it, a faith to which the secular and emancipated mind might cling even in the face of disaster.”

As Radhakrishnan writes unless man grows in his spiritual character, in proportion to his gigantic technological stature, the future will be in danger. He writes, “Gandhi required us to be faithful to the inner voice of conscience, the divine law not written by the hand of man but inflexible none the less, the eternal fountain of source of all the codes that have ever been written in the course of ages. It is this moral law that binds the members of the human family together, and gives
them a new sense of responsibility for the safety and happiness of the whole human family. By being ourselves, we best serve the interests of others. The interdependence of nations has become so close that no nation can be hurt without injury to the rest."

This is what Dostoevsky expresses in his works and shows his fear for the alienated rationalists and believes that rational thinking kills that something existing within man. He doubts whether it is the cynicism or the premature exhaustion of intellect and imagination of man in a society that is sinking into decay. He argues that man himself is responsible for his actions, and that crime is a personal-moral responsibility and believes in collective guilt. He saw a connection between criminality and the dominance of self will in human nature. He constantly reminds man to love his brethren, and not to kill.

In this regard Zossima’s speech on universal brotherhood can be considered as the need of the day. Through Zossima, Dostoevsky proclaims that the idea of brotherly love and the union of humanity have fallen in favor of dissension and isolation. He supplies the answer in his doctrine of the spiritualization and the role of suffering as a necessary condition to the forgiveness of sin. Zossima says, “Brothers, have no fear of men’s sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of divine love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, and love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of

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thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don’t harass them, don’t deprive them of their happiness, and don’t work against God’s intent. Man, do not pride yourself on superiority to the animals; they are without sin, and you, with your greatness, defile the earth by your appearance on it, and leave the traces of your foulness after you – alas, it is true of almost every one of us! Love children especially, for they too are sinless like the angels; they live to soften and purify our hearts and, as it were, to guide us.”

Dostoevsky wanted to transform the world into one single society, until one actually feels a brother to everyone. He anticipates a society where there should be no rich and the poor; no exalted and humbled. But all should be the children of God, and the true kingdom of Christ will come. As far as everyone thinks that his share in the society is too small and will be always envying, complaining and attacking one another, universal brotherhood will not be achieved. “And that we are all responsible to all for all, apart from our own sins, if man understands the significance of his responsibility to his society then the kingdom of heaven will not be a dream, it will be a reality.”

Dostoevsky advocates that there is no sublime happiness than to acquire faith in man’s kindness and their love for one another. He asserts that God is the ultimate judge and we should abide by the laws of God.

Dostoevsky hopes, as analyzed in the previous chapters that though man is driven by a beast their Christ is still with them. He believes that religion and faith in God are pre requisite for the triumph of good over evil. He writes in the Diary of A Writer, “Self betterment in a religious sense, in the life of the people is the foundation of everything, since self-betterment is the confession of the acquired
religion, whereas the ‘civic ideals’ devoid of this longing for self betterment never do appear, and never can come into being.”

Similarly Radhakrishnan also asserts that, “Betterment must begin with the individual. We must show our preparedness to live together in confidence and friendship. We must uphold the conviction that there are no chosen races, creeds or nations, and that we all have the blessing of God, if we behave properly. What we need is a change of heart which religion can effect. The human individual has to be renewed if human society is to be preserved.”

No social improvement can be achieved only through the betterment of the personal qualities of men constituting a society. There is no greater happiness than to acquire faith in men’s kindness and their love of one another. He gives a call for universal brotherhood and that is the need of the day. The Christian doctrine of “We all are responsible for all” is his conclusion. Ivan’s out cry at the trial – “Who of us does not desire his father’s death?” is rather the recognition of universal guilt. “The sight of an unworthy father involuntarily suggests tormenting questions to a young creature especially when he compares him with the excellent fathers of his companions.” Parricide for Dostoevsky is the highest symptom of social decay, a description of human ties that contradicts the obligation to universal forgiveness and the promise of resurrection.

As Radhakrishnan writes, “A society becomes cohesive if its members share large hopes, ideals and desires. It is a new spirit that is awakened, revived and nourished by seemingly helpless but convinced and committed solitary individuals, to adapt the words of Albert Camus, whose deeds and works negate frontiers and breathe the oneness of humanity. As the result of their sufferings and sacrifices the
vision of the threatened truth that each one of us belongs to the whole and should build for all becomes manifest.”

In this regard the characters that Dostoevsky presents can be understood as spiritual and mental self-division and self-contradiction of every man. A true Christian will accept the responsibility whatever the environment is. It is an urge for negation in man, negation of everything, of the most sacred thing in one’s heart, of one’s loftiest ideal in its totality. As Professor W.E. Hocking says, “Religion is the forerunner of international law because it alone can create the international spirit, the international obligation. We require a world religion just because we do not require, nor wish, a world state. Our aim is to establish a world community based on a universal moral order. In spite of our earnest desire to get rid of wars, the fear of them, the baseness and savagery which that fear engenders are there raising question, whether there is any hope for this perverted and criminal generation.”

Thus, Dostoevsky raises the problems of universal significance, of origin of evil and the possibility for redemption. His characters clearly depict that in everyman there is a demon- the demon of rage, of lawlessness and diseases. He provides proof in his works that though man is weaker and baser by nature but he can be won by love. At a time when obedience, fasting and prayer are laughed at, he daringly declared that only through them that man can achieve true freedom. He supported the Christian sympathy and love as the solution to man’s debased state. It is only through the law of Christ speaking in man, his conscience can be transformed. His novels clearly show that the path of peace lies in man’s humility and reconciliation not in his arrogance and conflict.
Hence, his characters are not just fictional creations rather they are people who detach themselves from the society and lose faith in God. They fail to realize that science would not increase happiness in the world; rather it leads to more and more suffering. It is his passion for science that made man to react by an instinctive impulse rather than by a logical motive. As Radhakrishnan writes, science and religion are the two important aspects of every culture. “There is a deeper ethic, which calls every human being to eliminate the sources of conflict, the causes of war, to join with others to reform the institutions and relationships which lead to wars. Human reason and creative imagination should evolve the kind of education, mutual aid and collective security by which the nations be able to resolve their differences peacefully. We should use cultural and ideological differences to enrich our wisdom and produce a higher international ethics.”

It proves that for Dostoevsky unbelief in human reason and the ultimate victory of the toiling majority over the exploiters and oppressors, the negation of the very necessity of a struggle against evil and untruth in life – all these are profoundly hostile to genuine humanism. As the underground man says, “Reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man’s nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and all the impulses. … but that is not all that is not his worst defect; his worst defect is his perpetual moral obliquity.” He tries to convince that there is a clash between men’s suffering and acting powers. Freedom without conscience will lead to tyranny. He believed that God is the custodian of moral values guarding the individual consciousness.
From the beginning of human history litterateurs, prophets and philosophers have advised mankind to grow equal to his destiny, to regenerate and transform his self by religious devotion, spiritual contemplation and moral courage. In this context the works of Dostoevsky have wider recognition today than ever before in history. Dostoevsky is much relevant to-day, in an age, when people think cloaking ill-will and insincerity, beneath a thin veil of self-righteousness.

This analysis of Dostoevskian concept of crime and punishment reveals the fact that shedding blood in the name of revolution will lead to self destruction. It shows that revolution never turns out to be a humane and civilized affair. Hence, Dostoevsky remains a contemporary writer, as we have, by no means outlived the problems he takes up in his works. We find in his fictional characters our very self. The passion of men of pleasure of Rousseau like Murin of The Landlady, Svidrigailoff of Crime and Punishment, Rogozhin of The Idiot, Stavrogin, Fedka, and Captain Lebyatkin of The Possessed, and Dmitri Karamazov, and Fyodor Karamazov of The Brothers Karamazov. The moral responsibility of people like Katerina of The Landlady, the nameless underground man of Notes From Underground, the nameless pawn broker of The Meek One, Nastasya Fillipovna of The Idiot, and Katerina Ivanovna of The brothers Karamazov; and the Western educated youths like Ordynov, Rascolnikoff, Ippolit, Stephan Verkhovensky, Stavrogin, Peter Verkhovensky, Kirilov, Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov intoxicated with certain ideologies can be noticed within every human being.

This study brings out Dostoevsky’s boundless love of people who have been crushed by a society based on exploitation. It provides proof that the intention of Dostoevsky is to high light the struggle between negation of life and its affirmation,
between the corruption of the human conscience and its flouring. It leads to the conclusion that though Dostoevsky as man was powerless to guide man out of his intolerable conditions, as a writer he tried to lead man away from the path of revolutionary struggle and salvation.

His social ideal was supported by Christian ideal of love and self sacrifice. The main intention of the writer, here, is to create awareness among the youth from the ruinous path of indignation and rebellion. He asserts that to recreate the world anew men should themselves undergo a change of heart. As Zossima says in The Brothers Karamazov, “It’s a spiritual, psychological process. To transform the world, to create it afresh, men must turn into another path psychologically. Until you have become really, in actual fact, a brother to everyone, brotherhood will not come to pass. No sort of scientific teaching, no kind of common interest, will ever teach men to share property and privileges with equal consideration for all.”

This study brings out the fact that Dostoevsky did not merely present in his works the effects of vice but also the effects of disbelief. It traces the effect of vice, pride, and hatred on the disintegration of man’s personality as depicted in his works. It shows how men who do not believe in God but in their own omnipotence will bring their own destruction. It also brings out Dostoevsky’s views on life which asserts that life not built on love is not human, and a world without God is like a world filled with Demons. He created men whose destiny and inner life, whose conflicts and interrelations with other characters, whose attraction and rejection of men and ideas illuminated all the deepest questions of humanity. The anticipation of spiritual and moral development of the civilized world assures the powerful and lasting effect of his works.
All his works summarize the moral of the Christian philosophy that we should abide by the law of Christ’s gospel, and through love of Christ comes eternal life. According to him Sin is a transient matter, whereas Christ is eternal. Man cannot live without something sacred and precious. Suffering endured in one’s life may subsequently transform itself into a sanctuary of the soul. There is no greater happiness than to acquire faith in man’s kindness and their love for one another. Universality is acquired not by the sword but by the force of brotherhood and our brotherly longing for fellow beings.

He contends that the tower of Bable should be built not to mount to heaven but to set up heaven on earth. He writes, “For socialism is not merely the labor question, it is before all things the atheistic question, the question of the form taken by atheism today., the question of the tower of Babel built without God, not to mount to heaven from earth but to set up heaven on earth.” Hence, in his works he emphasizes the spiritual transformation of the individual than social revolution. He epitomizes the traditional Christian conflict between the body and the spirit. His novels illustrate the universal human struggle to understand god and self.

After reading Dostoevsky it is quite evident that, the human psychology in the socio-political and spiritual context of nineteenth century Russian society that he explores in his works becomes relevant to human life. His works clearly bring out the moral fissure and the spiritual bankruptcy he finds in all men. He raises the problems of universal significance such as the conflict between good and evil within the individual and society. He contends that conscience is guarded by the moral values rooted in religion and faith in God.
Dostoevsky as a writer who is spiritual in content, scientific in approach, and universal in appeal, proves that in everyman there is a demon – the demon of all diseases – the vice and the temptation for material happiness, the demon of rage, and of lawlessness. He predicts the future of everyman through his characters, and poses the eternal question ‘Why men quarrel and try to outshine each other? Why do they keep grudges against each other?’ He feels sorry for man who never realizes that life is heaven and one should walk in the garden of life embracing each other with love. Heaven lies hidden within all of us, and if we realize the significance of our responsibility to the society then we can create heaven on earth.

Thus, Dostoevsky can be considered as a modern writer as his works reflect the eternal realities of the life of the entire world. The problems that are dealt in his work are to be reckoned with seriously as they reflect every human kind. He proves that the solution to man’s social problem lies in the tradition and values associated with the Christian teaching of love, compassion, and self-sacrifice. He proves in his fictions that both good and evil are inevitable parts of human condition. Unless man grows morally and spiritually, no social reforms will eliminate tragedy or suffering from life. Without spiritual peace no peace is possible, and fundamental spiritual treasures are not dependent on economic assets. For him the best man is one who is not tempted by the material attractions.

Thus, in his works Dostoevsky demonstrates the problems of life and philosophy, and the importance of the acts of love and service, that are much needed in this world, than conflicts and quarrels. His characters are individual as well as universal. He proves how through the ages man has indulged in cruel pleasure, in gluttony, fornication, boasting and rivalry. He declares how, in the end, blood cries for blood; and who takes up sword will be perished by the sword. Dostoevsky thus predicts in his works how the idea of the service to humanity, of brotherly love and solidarity of mankind is dying in the world, and salvation will come for people from their faith and their humility.
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