

## The Suffering Soul in the Scientific Age

**“Our scientific power has overturned our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.” – Martin Luther King, Jr**

There can be no two opinions about the veracity of the statement that the Modern Age is the age of science. Science undoubtedly has revolutionised the world. Everyday there are new inventions, may that be in medicine, electronics, space sciences, nuclear technology and so on. Everything that modern man is using in this contemporary age has been given to him by the scientific advancement. He cannot live without science even for a single day. Science has given eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf and limbs to the crippled. It has made man fly in the sky like birds, swim in the water like fish. It has achieved wonders and thus has brought about irreversible changes in the world. Science, however, is perceived both as a blessing as well as a curse. Apart from bringing uncountable blessings in the lives of human beings, it also has turned out to be course and has resulted into human sufferings which have now assumed horrible proportions and are beyond human control.

It is said that modern civilization is a scientific civilization. It is true as far as the material aspects of civilization are concerned, man lives in great comfort today. He enjoys cinema, radio and television. He can talk with his friends thousands of miles away from by telephone. Science has increased human comfort and lessened human drudgery. He has no longer to travel on foot. He can travel comfortably without any fatigue in cars, air-conditioned trains, buses, etc. he has no longer to bear the hardships of weather. In summer, he can cool his house by electric cooler and in winter, get heat by electric heaters. Day and night make no difference to him, for night can turn into day by electric lights.

He does not work hard like his forefathers. He does not follow barbarous practice of having slaves. Science has given him slaves of a new kind, which do all work for him. Machines are the slaves of modern scientific civilization. These slaves do all the work for him while he himself lives like a lord. They cook his food for him and even serves it to him. They manufacture everything that he uses from morning till night. They plough fields for him, sow seeds and reap crops for him.

Human pain and suffering have been lessened by science. Modern civilized man has not to suffer like his forefathers. Many diseases have been eliminated or have become curable, and surgeries can be performed without inflicting pain to the patients. Many wonderful drugs have been discovered and man's life on this earth has become longer and happier. Man lives in comfort like the lord and master of nature. He has conquered even outer space, mastered weather and all other living creatures.

But there is another side also to this picture. Science affects only the material aspects and makes man materialistic. Radio, television, cinema and costly furniture and dresses are all symbols of this artificial civilization. But civilization has material as well as spiritual elements. Science helps only the growth of the material aspects and has no influence on the spiritual element. Science has made man morally bankrupt. It has degraded him. He is no longer inspired by noble ideas. He thinks only of the body and not the soul. Science has created distance between man and religion. He has lost faith in God. He is no longer truth-loving and self-sacrificing. In order to satisfy his wants and desires, he uses dishonest means. By hook or by crook, he wants to possess the luxuries provided to him by science. No moral considerations influence his actions or his thoughts.

Art and literature are also essential aspects of civilization, but science does nothing to

promote them. Rather it has an adverse effect on the growth of art. There is inherent opposition between art and science. Science is utility, observation and experiment, reason and good sense, while art is the worship of beauty. It is an inspiration. Science has killed the artistic sense of man and has made him a worshipper of worldly wealth. He now dissects and kills objects of nature instead of enjoying their beauty. To quote from poet William Wordsworth, man now murders to dissect, and perhaps he would botanize even on his mother's grave. His emotions and passions have all dried up and he has become a monster guided by reason alone.

No doubt science has given man the powers used to be attributed to the mythological gods alone, but it has not increased his wisdom or his morality. It has given him weapons. It has given him machines, but machines are now becoming his masters. Man today does not know when to save and when to kill. He has got the atomic energy but he does not know how to use it for his own good and wellbeing. In this way, science has brought human civilization to the verge of disaster.

Much has been said and talked about the importance of science and technology. However, as the saying goes, every rose has its thorns. Science also has added to the human sufferings owing to the adverse impacts it has on the environment. Environmental issues are the biggest concerns the planet earth is facing, let that be in the form of global warming, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes etc. Moreover, no doubt, medical science is no less than a blessing to mankind. Medicines produced all over the world are perceived to be a foolproof cure to a person's illness. However, there is some negativity associated with medical science too.

Today, excessive consumption of drugs can lead to death. Moreover, incorrect dosage may lead to fatal maladies. Where medical science has advanced to an unbelievable extent, it carries with itself perils of all kinds, and just a slight ignorance may prove to be a matter of life and death.

Technology has provided ease of all kinds to man. However, it has made us too busy to even see our loved ones in person. Technology might have made our daily life easier, but it has rendered health issues as well. Tremendous reliance and dependence on electronic gadgets, appliances, and most importantly, computer technology has made human life so lethargic that people are experiencing old age much before they actually grow old. With almost zero physical activity, science might have proved its mettle as an amazingly efficient service to its users, but has got the world adversely hooked to it!

There are no qualms in accepting the fact that science is the biggest revolution ever happened to planet Earth. However, a normal human being has no idea to what extent has this field advanced today.

Technology can actually harm society if one chooses to. Competition between companies or even cities can sometimes make our lives even worse. When a city builds more roads to attract tourists, the result is more traffic load. Even things we take for granted such as the automobile have negative effect on us. Because the automobiles cause pollution and that can surely harm us slowly. Technology is making one so busy that he can't even find time to spend with our closed ones. It would be surprising to know that people are in contact through chat and online messaging though they are in same city, because they think it's faster and effective but they forget that meeting personally can never replace online chatting.

Before the advent of television and internet, people had ways of having fun together every day. Many of these traditional methods of fun have almost disappeared in the modern

world. People used to talk with each other, they would play games, but now they play games on computer giving no reaction that people are drifting away from one other.

**Dr Quratul Ain Malik (CSP**