

Man versus Machine

“A man’s best friends are ten fingers.”

— Robert Collyer

Gone are the days of stone age when man used to work hard day and night and used to go on foot or by bullock cart without having any comfort in life. It was difficult for him even to get the basic necessities of life. He had a very tough time working like a machine without any leisure or pleasure.

The twentieth century was the age of science or the age of machines. After Industrial Revolution, man has got a large number of machines at his beck and call. Machines have given him rest, comfort and all the facilities of life. They have saved a lot of man’s time and energy. Long distances are covered in a matter of seconds; mass production of things of daily use with the help of automatic machines has relieved man of a lot of drudgery and labour. The invention of radio, cinema, transistor, television, and video has made man’s life charming and worth-living.

Science has conquered time and space. Telephone, telegram and wireless have made communication easy and smooth. Distance today stands conquered and beaten. Fast moving vehicles like aero planes, superfast trains and jets carry people from one corner of the world to another in no time. Printing has made it easy for man to convey ideas from one generation to another. Man, today, seeks the help of machines for all his activities. He cannot live without machines. In fact, he has become a slave to them.

Early in the morning, an alarm clock wakes him up. An electric kettle gives him a cup of tea. He used a blade, produced in a big factory, for shaving his face. A geyser prepares the hot bath for him. A washing machine washes his clothes. The cooking range, the pressure cooker and several other kitchen appliances prepare his food. A bus, a car, or a train carries him to his office. Even at his office, the type-writer writes for him; he used the telephone and the teleprinter to convey his ideas across long distances. He talks to his colleagues and subordinates over the inter-com. Machines produced his good which are carried in trucks to the market. When he goes back home in the evening, the television relaxes him; the air conditioner cools his room, and the sweet lullabies from a two-in-one lull him to the machines are his masters. He has forgotten the spiritual and moral aspects of life. He has simply chosen to be a machine in this dull materialist’s world. In a way man himself has become handicapped as he has forgotten to use his physical power for working.

Man, today, has become too much money minded. He has no rest, no time and no patience to enjoy Nature. He is a puppet working in the hands of machines. That is what made Wordsworth write:

“The world is too much with us, late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers;
Little do we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”

Life, today, has become so busy that man has neither any leisure nor any real pleasure in life. Machines have made human life so dull, monotonous and boring that it has been reduced to a mechanical routine only. All the time man is busy with one thing or another.

It is this type of busy life that made W.H. Davies write:

We have no time to stand and stare.”

Man must not become a machine himself. He is the noblest and the best creation of God. He must not forget or lose sight of his final destiny or goal. He has to march forward on the road to divinity where he can attain real salvation and free himself from the shackles of life.