

Science: Blessing or Curse?

Essay No. 01

Introduction: Impact of science on humanity is undeniable. On the face of it, science and its inventions appear to be an unalloyed blessing. However, if we ponder a little, disturbing signs too appear.

How a blessings? Effect on material well-being and mental attitudes; advantages of scientific discoveries in daily life- gadgets to remove drudgery, electricity, communication, transport, entertainment, computers; health-medicine, preventive and curative, control of disease and epidemic; industry, agriculture and economic development. As for mental attitude-scientific perspective banishes obscurantism and superstition; develops questioning spirit, objective outlook.

How a curse? Each of the blessings cited above has a dark side to it- a curse. Material well-being has led to crass materialism and consumer culture; discoveries of science have also produced weapons and means of destruction; use of scientific and technological means of production and comforts has degraded environment, caused pollution; new diseases resistant to drugs keep coming up; technological devices meant for health field misused to kill- foeticide, for instance; spirit of inquiry and positivism, if carried too far, can suppress essential humanity and actually restrict the free range of thought and imagination; gadgets and inventions can make man dependent and , in fact, kill his creativity.

Conclusion: So, is science a blessing or a curse? It would do well to recall what Milton said in a different context- the mind is its own place; it can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell. Science is, in fact, amoral; what man makes of it is man' s responsibility. Man can use it creatively or destructively, turn it into a blessing or get crushed under its curse.

Essay No. 02

Science: A Blessing or Curse

The thirst for knowledge and to penetrate mysteries of nature gave rise to more and more of science. Today man occupies the highest position in the whole of the creation only because of his scientific achievements and developments. The impact of science can be felt in every walk of life and every human activity. It has transformed the entire world. With the help of science man has very well harnessed the forces of nature. He has conquered space, mastered the seven seas and

yoked electricity to his service. The forces of nature, which were regarded as cruel, hostile and worshipped as such, are now at his humble service.

As a result of scientific developments, the distances have been reduced and the world has become more unified and cohesive. Radio, television, telephone, teleprinters, aeroplanes, space-crafts, etc., have given us new and faster means of communication. They have revolutionized the life of men. Man has landed on the moon and the day is not far when he would leave his foot-prints on other planets as well. His achievements in the field of medicine, surgery, education, industry, commerce, agriculture, etc., are no less spectacular. Man has conquered many diseases which were regarded as fatal in the past. He has controlled the rate of mortality, and average life-span has increased considerably. On the whole the standards of living have been improved a lot and life has become so convenient and comfortable. The positive side of science is too dazzling. But science is not an unmixed joy or blessing. Its negative side is too disturbing. No doubt science has bestowed upon us so many wonderful gifts, has vastly widened our horizon of thinking and doing, yet it has created many very serious problems which defy solution.

The question is often asked whether science is a blessing or a curse. The question makes one pause and ponder a little. And in answer one finds that science has both created and annihilated. In one hand it holds bombs and deadly missiles, in the other there is a bouquet of prosperity and development. When one thinks on the question, one is reminded of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two cities of Japan devastated by the bombs. One is reminded of the last Two World Wars and of the third looming large. The ecological and environmental problems bequeathed by scientific and industrial development make man sad and pensive. The neurotic fear of nuclear war has turned man's life into a trauma. He cannot sleep well, nor can he rest in peace because of these and such other threats and problems. It is only the balance of power which is saving the world from an unprecedented disaster and havoc. But who knows when this balance may be upset by a false move. There is no limit to the destructive role being played by science. Now we have nuclear weapons which can destroy the entire earth many times over and in no time. The horrors of destruction are too many to be counted.

But is science really responsible for all these horrors and possible destruction? Can we attribute vicious motives to science? No, certainly we cannot. Science is a systematic knowledge of things. It is an instrument which can be used both for constructive and destructive purposes. The defect does not lie in the instrument itself, but in the user. It is man who is responsible for all the present ills and evils. The devil within is really to be blamed. It is our moral and ethical weakness which is to blame and not science. The scientists are generally good and humane. They want to serve the humanity at large. They are never willing to destroy anything. A

scientist is basically a creator, but the politicians, the men and women at the helm of national affairs force them to make misuse of science. In modern times, a scientist is not an independent person. He has to work under the full control of a head of state and his men. In the ultimate analysis, it is the politician who is wholly responsible for such evils as caused by scientific developments.

Deprived of ethics and morals, science becomes a blind force. Science is fire, it is a great power. Now it can be used both for good and evil purposes. It is upto you whether you use it in generating nuclear power or a bomb. Science is neither good nor bad. It is a pure knowledge. If you misuse it, you are to blame, not the knowledge, but its users. Sans sanity, sans morals and good sense, knowledge is bound to be misused for destruction and for evil purposes. In order that science remains a blessing only, it is necessary that man never loses his balance of mind, that he uses' science and knowledge only for the betterment of humanity. The rich and developed countries should pool their resources for the development and growth of the poor, and not for the creation and development of means of war and destruction. By itself knowledge is a boon, a blessing and bonanza. The evil is not in science but within man himself. Science, in its applied form, delves deep into the mysteries of nature and creation for the benefit of mankind. It harnesses the forces of nature to serve man faithfully like an obedient servant, but the devil in man, when let loose, turns science into a curse by generating weapons of horror and destruction. In fact, science is not responsible at all for any of our dehumanizing results. There is no know and visible limits to the creative activities and aspects of science. It is these that man should confine his knowledge to.