5: Spoon Feeding

1) At the season when the British paterfamilias is sending his children on their Christmas visit to the dentist it must occur to him to wonder why the noble savage never has any trouble with his teeth.

**Introduction:** These lines are taken from the essay ‘Spoon Feeding’ written by W. R. Inge, a British scholar and social critic.

**Context:** That we are spoon fed in our daily activities is well explained by the writer in his essay ‘Spoon Feeding’ which makes us unchallenging and inert.

**Explanation:** Too much dependence on technology leads to the sterility of natural faculties. Excessive use of machines makes us lose our skills. For example, typewriters or computers may render hand writing obsolete. The habit of reading, walking or riding a horse is hardly practised. Thus they become extinct. Healthy activities of day to day life are now shunned. The modern man often visits a doctor. Modern implementations like knife and fork have made our teeth weaker to tear the meat which was torn easily in the past by the noble savage with his strongest teeth.

**Comment:** The writer exhorts the man not to be over dependent on machines.

2) But they got on without them fairly well, though were a long-lived race.

**Introduction:** These lines are taken from the essay ‘Spoon Feeding’ written by W. R. Inge, a British scholar and social critic.

**Context:** Modern man has become a slave to technology which made us lose our skills to perform a number of tasks in our daily life.

**Explanation:** The abilities of the people of the past are well referred here. The ancient manuscripts are very minute to be read by the modern man, who certainly needs spectacles or reading glasses. The people of the past had a lot of patience, concentration and good eye sight. Then there were no spectacles that started being used only in the 14th century. Ancient Greeks did not have spectacles or false teeth. They lived full lives. Sophocles the immortal, ancient Playwright wrote his last play, without spectacles, when he was ninety.

**Comment:** Since we have become greatly dependent on machines and technology, our senses have lost their common sense.
3) Our journey-man fiction is evidently a means of getting away from real life a mild anodyne, or a stimulus to day-dreaming.

**Introduction:** These lines are taken from the essay ‘Spoon Feeding’ written by W. R. Inge, a British scholar and social critic.

**Context:** Modern man has become a slave to technology which made us lose our skills to perform a number of tasks in our daily life.

**Explanation:** A journey-man is an average skilled worker without any creativity. Figuratively, it is used for unimaginative writer here. Naturally he produces useless novels that have no literary values and quality. Anodyne is a pain killing drug. The writer laments that reading has become greatly simplified in the modern age. A journey-man fiction doesn’t need effort. The writers of the books, like journey men, may be qualified and experienced but without creativity. Their literature, without any literary quality, is an escape from the real life problems. They are like pain killing drugs temporarily.

**Comment:** The writer thus argues that reading has become a pleasure rather than an intellectual exercise with no need to use the brain.

4) Nature will make us pay for it.

**Introduction:** These lines are taken from the essay ‘Spoon Feeding’ written by W. R. Inge, a British scholar and social critic.

**Context:** Modern man has become a slave to technology which made us lose our skills to perform a number of tasks in our daily life.

**Explanation:** If the faculties bestowed upon us by nature are not used, Nature will make us pay for it. It takes away any faculty that is not used. Let us not deceive ourselves. The author is afraid that power of struggling with difficulties and finding our way out of labyrinths will soon be lost, if we no longer need it. He questions wonderfully if we would look at the completed product of civilization modern man, who is unable to chew, write, read or to walk but a mere parasite on technology.

**Comment:** The writer predicts that we will have to pay a heavy price if we lead cocoon-like existence or the life of a glass doll.