

## TEXT 6:

### Why Work?

I have two propositions to make concerning the purpose and value of work. My first proposition is that work is not a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is , or it should be , the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfaction, and the medium through which he serves God.

If we believe this, we should have a new attitude toward pay and wages. We should believe that as long as the workers received enough pay to enable him to go on with his work, he had his reward. His satisfaction would be found in the fulfillment of his own nature and the contemplation of the perfection of his work. That in practice there is this satisfaction is shown by the fact that a man will put loving labour into a hobby that will never earn him any money.

A second consequence is that every man should do the work for which he is best fitted by nature. At present, the employer thinks only of getting cheap labour, and the worker only of getting high wages. This results in many people getting, or pushing themselves into jobs that could be better done by others, and is very wasteful.

A third consequence is that, if we really believe this proposition, and arranged our work and standard of values accordingly, we should no longer think of work as something that we hastened to get through in order to enjoy our leisure. We should look on our leisure as the period of changed rhythm that refreshes us for the delightful purpose of getting on with our work. We should all find ourselves fighting for precious time in which to get on with the job- instead of fighting for precious hours saved from the job.

A fourth consequence is that we should fight both tooth and nail not for mere employment, but for the quality of the work that we had to do. We should clamor to be engaged in work that was worth doing, and in which we could take pride. The worker would demand that the stuff he helped

to turn out should be good stuff- he would no longer be content to take the cash and let the credit go. He would feel a sense of personal responsibility, and demand to know what went into the work that he produced. There would be strikes and protests not about pay, but about the quality of the work demanded and the honesty, beauty, and usefulness of the goods produced.

My second proposition is that the worker's first duty is to serve the work. There is much well-meaning talk nowadays about serving the community, but service to the community is usually thought of as a sort of sparetime activity, which mostly consists of talking. Real service to the community consists in doing good honest work. The best service a carpenter can render to the community is to make good tables and chairs. The right way to serve the community is to forget about the community and serve the work.

There are three good reasons for this. The first is that you cannot do good work if you take your mind off your work to see whether the community is appreciating it, anymore than you can score a goal if you take your eye off the ball. If your heart is not wholly in the work, the work will not be good, and work that is not good serves neither God nor the community.

The second reason is that the minute you begin to think of serving other people, you begin to have a notion that other people owe you something for your pains; you begin to think that you have a claim on the community. You will begin to bargain for a reward, to seek for applause, and to feel a grievance if you are not appreciated. But if your mind is set upon serving the work, then you know that you have nothing to look for; the only reward the work can give you is the satisfaction of seeing that it is good. The work takes all and gives nothing in return, and to serve the work is a labour of pure love.

Thirdly: if you set out to serve the community, you will probably end up by merely fulfilling a public demand. For example, nine-tenths of the bad films we see owe their badness to the fact that the maker has aimed at pleasing the audience, instead of producing a good and satisfactory film. It is the work that serves the community; the business of the worker is to serve the work.

(Adapted from Why Work?, by Sayers, D. 1949).

***Reading Assignment: Reading Strategies***

- **Read the text then do the following:**
  - A. Skim the text and ask six questions about its main points.
  - B. Try to answer the already asked questions.
  - C. Scan the text then spot the key words that reflect the title.
  - D. Reread the last part of the text and state your opinion in comparison to the writer's own opinion.
  - E. Fill in the book report sheet (Form 1).