

## WORK

- Russell and his style
- The theme of the essay, Work
- Reasons to find work, even if uninteresting, useful
- Some other virtues of work
- Exercise of skill and construction make work interesting
- The commonest cause of unhappiness among intellectuals

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) is a famous philosopher of the 20th century. He held his view honestly and boldly about peace, pacifism and atom free world. He was a sceptic and forwarded scientific outlook. He fought against ancient and modern superstitions, political oppression, intolerance, narrow mindedness and worship of power. Intellectual honesty, logical exposition, pervasive communication and forthright mode of statement are salient features of his prose. His style is never involved or obscure. It is always meant to explain and convince.

Work is an extract from 'The Conquest of happiness'. It highlights the value of work for self fulfilment. Russell regards work as a source of happiness and his comments on this subject take into consideration all aspects of this theme. Idleness is a source of boredom and dullness. Only constructive work can give us pleasure and happiness.

Bertrand Russell divides work into two categories. One is interesting and the other is uninteresting work. Interesting work is source of great pleasure but uninteresting work is also desirable. Uninteresting work creates many problems but is less painful than idleness. It might be troublesome but it is less agonizing than being without a job. It keeps us busy and active. It provides us relief from boredom. It makes holidays enjoyable. More work brings more income and hence enhances our standard of life. It makes us to enjoy holidays. If there had been no work we would not have differentiated between work and rest. Uninteresting work becomes bearable when it gives us fame and money. How much uninteresting the work is, it is better than idleness because it saves us from dullness and tediousness. Most of the idle rich suffer unspeakable boredom as the price of their freedom from drudgery.

Interesting work is a source of greater joy. It has its own value. It provides pleasure and satisfaction of higher order. Russell enumerates two things especially that make work more interesting. These are the exercise of skill and constructiveness. Exercise of skill gives us joy until it reaches perfection. It keeps the man busy in improving himself in his skill. The work of a lawyer and a politician is as interesting as the game of bridge. There is element of competition and which keeps them enjoying their work. They are always using their skill to beat the opponent. Moreover performance of difficult work also gives immense pleasure. The pilot of an aeroplane risks his life for the performance of wonderful feats. He enjoys his work until it becomes his routine. The element of constructiveness is also source of joy. Construction means creating something new. A man feels pleasure and elevated when others praises and appreciate his work. The work of artists, scientists and musicians always gives them fame and fortune. Its joy is everlasting. The destructive work does not last long.

Work is a source of happiness but sometimes it becomes irksome. It may cause dissatisfaction. One of the causes of unhappiness among intellectuals in the present day is compulsion. The people whose skill is literary find no opportunity for the independent exercise of their talent. They have to hire themselves

out to rich corporations directed by philistines. They are forced to work against their conscience. They have to do this for the sake of livelihood. If they do not do they have to starve. It makes them cynical and in the course of time they cannot derive wholehearted satisfaction from anything. If they have an alternative to do this they should leave such dissatisfying work. They should maintain their self respect because without self respect genuine happiness is hardly possible.