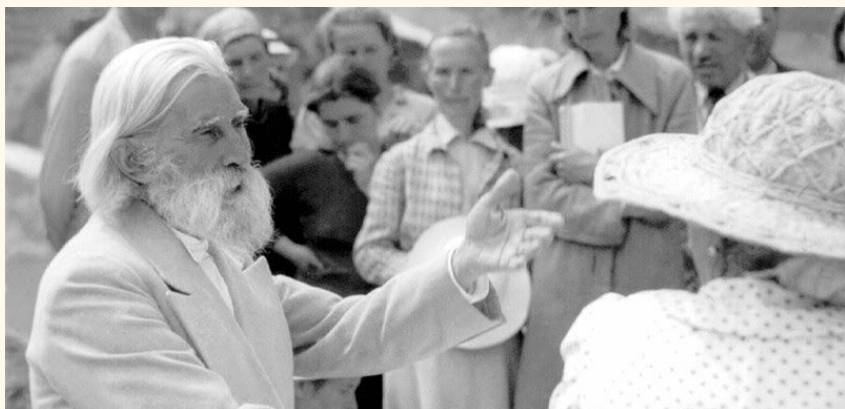


DILIGENCE & LAZINESS

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Activity and rest are two states through which we inevitably pass. Having worked for some time, we need to rest; after resting, we return to work. If we rest intelligently and at the right time, our work is pleasant and bears good results; if we do not rest intelligently and on time, our work is not pleasant and does not bear good fruit. That is why it has been said, ‘Work moderately and rest punctually.’

When we rest more than we should, we become lazy; when we work properly, we become diligent. Therefore, rest that is improperly applied turns into laziness. Activity that is properly performed turns into diligence.

Laziness and diligence are siblings of two different fathers and two different mothers. As activity and diligence always go together, so do laziness and gratification. As is the connection between the former two, so is the connection between the latter. The lazy person loves to gratify himself, while the diligent person loves to work.

Activity and efficiency are two similar states through which the human soul passes. Laziness rules out any culture. The lazy person can be called civilized but not cultured. Lazy people, weak people make no effort for their development and say that evolution, as a natural process of development, will lift them up also. The lazy person does not like to move, to change his position, so he seeks comfort in life and waits on servants for everything. He is surrounded by bells and is constantly ringing these bells, calling this or

that servant to do his bidding. As soon as the bell rings, his wish is magically fulfilled. The lazy person loves to daydream, to transport himself to realms like those depicted in fairy tales.

Laziness is a condition that exists in all three worlds — in the physical, in the spiritual and in the mental. The contradictions that exist in human life are due to laziness, to the lazy states of man, that sometimes grip his mind and heart and hinder his noble aspirations. Those who are looking for the easy way are constantly asking why things are done in this way and not in another way. Such a person is lazy. A Bulgarian proverb says, "Ask a lazy man to work and he will give you a thousand reasons as to why he can't." Therefore, lazy people are clever. Laziness is accompanied by a negative quality – procrastination. If the lazy person has to pay for something, he postpones the payment for better times; if he has to do some work, he postpones it; if he has to pray or study, he procrastinates; if the time of death arrives, again he procrastinates. Whatever work you give him, he'll always find a way to postpone it, or he will ask to be given time to consider whether or not to

accept the job or refuse it. The lazy person does not hasten, he looks through the eyes of eternity; he has no high ideal, no definite ideas. Due to his longing for inner calm, he avoids worries. The lazy man often looks in the mirror, afraid of wrinkles on his face; then touches the skin of his hands to see if they are not rough. He loves to have soft skin, mainly soft hands.

Now I am not talking about the laziness that comes from the atmosphere of the home but about the laziness that comes from the inert matter in man. Sometimes wealth makes a person lazy, but this laziness is temporary. Oftentimes the rich man's son is lazy, he does not study because he relies on his father's wealth. Sometimes laziness is the cause of lies. Therefore, when one takes the true path of life, one has to guard against laziness and lies. In nature the current of laziness is quiet, but if you fall into it, you will encounter major contradictions and begin going after happiness where happiness cannot be achieved. Laziness does not lead to happiness, but to destruction.

What is the opposite quality to laziness? Diligence. Through diligence we develop our virtues. Diligence represents an antidote to save man's life from laziness. Can everyone be diligent? Perhaps. Diligence is a quality of the human soul that it has inherited from the spirit. It has been said of the spirit that it is tireless in its activity, that it works constantly. Only through diligence do we begin new work and finish what we have begun. Diligent students always learn their lessons for the day; diligent employees finish their job; diligent worshipers send their prayer on time. In general, diligent people do their work on time and never procrastinate.

A distinctive quality of the diligent person is that he always starts with small sizes and gradually moves to larger ones. If he starts a job, small or large, he finishes it. In the grandiose and stupendous works, various motives are involved, but not diligence. Wealth gave birth to laziness, while poverty gave birth to diligence. The diligent person understands the meaning of life. He investigates and works, and knows why he

investigates and why he works. The lazy person is idle and doesn't know why he isn't working.

When is laziness born and when is diligence born? When people lose their original ideals, laziness appears on the stage of life. If a person loses the direction of his inner life, he becomes lazy. In this sense, laziness is determined by the result of losing something valuable. When a person finds his path, that is, the direction of his inner life, diligence appears. Therefore, diligence is an indicator of the true path in life. As long as a person is diligent in his work, you will know that he has found the true path of life. If he is lazy, you will know that he is outside the true path of life. For him, life has no purpose and meaning, so his wishes and thoughts are irregular and mistaken.

You may have heard someone say that he does not want to study, does not want to become a scientist, philosopher, poet, or musician, does not want to be a noble person. To support his words, he quotes verses from scripture, which say that knowledge and gain are a burden to the spirit. He continues to convince himself and his neighbors that we should

live calmly, without worries, without knowing why we live. What is the motivating factor that makes this person think this way? Laziness. Only the lazy deny knowledge; only the lazy avoid suffering. Those who run from suffering and deny it, are lazy people. To avoid suffering, they forge a seeming inner calm, but it does not stem from that deep philosophical thought that brings self-control into man.

Many people confuse laziness with rest, but laziness and rest are two different states. Rest is a natural state in which we alter our placement in order to regain our energy, to renew our body. After resting, we feel content and ready to work. Laziness produces a certain slackening of the organism. In laziness, the human condition stays the same throughout the day. For young people, there is no sickness more dangerous than laziness. Lazy people cannot put their ideas into practice. Laziness does not bring an urge, an impulse into man, but halts his development. Whatever noble desire may appear in him, when laziness comes, he postpones everything and says, "I don't need to

hasten so much for this work – its time hasn't come yet; when the time comes, then I will do it.”

People have written and continue to write fables and proverbs with moral conclusions in order to call attention to the consequences of our positive and negative qualities. For example, in the fable of The Grasshopper & The Ant, the grasshopper symbolizes laziness, and the ant, diligence and effort. In fact, the conclusion is not entirely true. The grasshopper is not lazy, nor is the ant a symbol of true diligence and effort. The ant is, indeed, active, busy, but the feeling that makes it manifest itself is not diligence, but greed. The grasshopper is carefree. With its songs it is a harbinger of a new culture. There is a certain resemblance between the grasshopper and the rabbit. The hind legs of the grasshopper are long, like those of a rabbit, so it jumps easily. From a psychological point of view, in order to do a job, one must have the disposition of a grasshopper. In this respect, the grasshopper resembles a scientist who understands life in his own way and uses it to the best of his ability. Ants, on the other hand, symbolize the old culture that lost its way in life.

They represent that culture's deviation from the right path. By following the life of ants, we find the reasons why a culture in the natural world stops developing. If you look for the negative, that is, the evil aspects of a culture, you will find them in the life of ants. There is order and discipline among them, but discipline of violence and cruelty. Ants are beings of utmost materialism; there is no idealism in them.

When a young man says that he needs to work in his youth to rest when he's old, this philosophy has to do with the culture of ants. Led by the principle that man has to work in his youth to rest in his old age, people have created laziness. By the term 'rest' they mean a calming state in which they only relax and indulge. Some religious systems are built on this principle. The Turks, for example, imagine paradise as bliss: in front of them stands a whole mountain of pilaf, drizzled with oil. They have a hookah in their mouth and a spoon in their hand and will periodically smoke and eat pilaf. This state lasts forever. According to them, this is a life of eternal happiness and bliss. Many contemporary people imagine life in the

same way and say to themselves, “I want nothing but a mountain of pilaf in front of me, and with a spoon in my hand to sit down and eat, not thinking about anything nor worrying. This is the meaning of life.” As I see it, this is the distorted Turkish understanding of paradise and bliss. This is a perverted life, without difficulties and suffering. Such a life exists only in the minds of those who look for an easy path, but not in the minds of intelligent people who can handle the difficulties and the suffering. What ideas can be born in such a culture, in such a civilization or in such an understanding of life?

Nowadays, young people are educated in one way and adults in another. Eventually, when faced with difficulties and contradictions, both ask themselves why the world was created like this. Do you think that God, who created the world and thought for ages how and in which best way to create it, would bring so many difficulties, contradictions and sufferings that would hinder you? Do you think that the One who created the whole universe did not take into account the best methods for the development of all living beings?

Do you think that He did not foresee all the conditions for and against the general development of life? All this is foreseen even before the creation and manifestation of life. And if there are some contradictions in people's lives today, they are not God's work, but shadows that appear in the minds of beings still underdeveloped. These shadows are due to the lower minds that penetrate the minds of the people and thus overshadow their initial light. Life itself, as it was originally in the consciousness of God and as it manifested outside His consciousness, is ideal, sublime, and perfect. If you were to instill in your being an absolute belief that everything God has created is good and perfect, you would attain the true, deep meaning of things implanted in all life. Only in this way will you understand the purpose of seeming contradictions; only then will you understand why the difficulties and the sufferings of life occur.

Thus, in order to reach a deep understanding of life, we have to comprehend all the hidden methods through which laziness uncoils its tentacles and grabs us. By discovering the methods

and techniques that laziness uses, we can oppose it. Laziness is a conscious force that targets man to retard his development. When the forces of man are equal, that is, when they reach the limit of indifference, then laziness, immobility appears. This condition occurs when two warriors fight with equal strength. They fought for a while, until finally the fight ended without a winner or a loser. This battle is pointless because it is devoid of movement. That is why we say that the meaning of life is in perpetual movement, not perpetual conflict.

When a state of inertia comes into us, diligence comes to our aid. It is a force, an impulse, a stimulus by the human spirit, which constantly brings one of the forces or abilities in man into activity and keeps him in a constant, conscious movement called 'work'. Therefore, diligence must penetrate every act, thought, and feeling as a fundamental element. Diligence is distinguished by the fact that it overcomes all the difficulties in life, while laziness succumbs to even the smallest obstacles. In order for laziness not to implant itself in the mind, heart or will of man and not to be

transmitted as a painful condition of his soul, he must not succumb to any hardships in life. Every difficulty, no matter how small, represents a stage that one has to enter and depart without stopping there for long. Every difficulty is a barrier in which there is at least one hole through which you can pass. In short, difficulties are formulas similar to those used in mathematics. If you know the formulas, you will solve the problems correctly. Therefore, if you solve your difficulties correctly, you will solve your life's tasks correctly.

When it comes to laziness and diligence, you need to hear and understand well so that you don't fall into contradictions. Sometimes the lazy man thinks that he is a deity who everyone has to work for. He considers himself the center of the universe and thinks that if he works or moves from his place, the world order will be disturbed. In some cases, the lazy man occupies the position of a philosopher or scientist who thinks that only he has the right to teach people how to work and live. If anyone dares to give him any advice, he says, "I have done my work, I have finished learning and praying, I have understood what love is. Now I

have nothing left to do but to sit still in one place, as a point in the universe around which all other points move and work.” This man can lecture people about diligence without applying it himself. He seeks pleasures and a prosperous life. He speaks softly, quietly and calmly, like a philosopher. He does not argue with anyone; outwardly he is kind and calm, he smiles left and right. If someone contradicts him and does not want to do the work assigned, he takes a few dollars from his wallet, hands them over and says, “If you wish to be diligent, do what I advise, and do not make me lose my temper. If I disturb my peace, you will lose your life, because you will cause a change in the balance of the universe.” If you fulfill the wish of the lazy man, he will say about you, “Here is a fool who does not understand the meaning of life.”

The lazy person enjoys giving advice to others. To one person he says, “Go dig in the vineyard!” To another, “Go plow the fields!” To a third, “Read, investigate, do not walk blind!” He just sits, lies down, laughs at people’s weaknesses. Some people call the lazy person an ‘inner aristocrat.’ He moves

slowly, with dignity and self-awareness, pretending to understand everything.

Since when did laziness originate? Since the time of the first man. With nothing else to do, he wanted to outsmart Nature and to impose himself on her. But Conscious Nature does not like lies, nor idleness, nor does she like her laws to be broken. For a long time she was quiet and watched to see how far he would go in his madness. Seeing that the situation was not going to improve by itself, she placed a speck of dust on the man's back each day. Having surrendered to laziness, the man did not shake the dust off his back by himself, but waited for someone else to come and clean it. He waited for a long time, but no one came to help him, until finally so much dust had gathered on his back that it began to penetrate his mind. As a consequence, his life began to be distorted, to lose its meaning. He did not understand that the reason for the overshadowing of his consciousness was in himself. The accumulation of dusty human consciousness finally led him to extreme bodily obesity, in which he became coarse and disfigured and lost his beauty. He was astonished at the

situation he found himself in, and said to himself, “What happened to me that I changed so much? There must be something pointless in life.” Day by day he slackened, until he formed himself into a lazy man and succumbed to stagnation.

Many of the sufferings and anxieties of contemporary people are mainly due to stagnation. We can exhibit laziness in every aspect: in learning, in the acquisition of virtues, in our work, etc. Laziness is also exhibited in Solomon as a quality of human nature. After Solomon gained great knowledge and great wisdom, laziness put its foot in his mind, and finally he said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Much knowledge is a burden to the spirit.” After this philosophy, Solomon gave his life up to eating and drinking. He looked for the cause of laziness in himself, but could not find it.

So, the correct and natural way in life is the way of diligence. As long as diligence is deeply ingrained in the human soul, we are on the right path of life, in which all strengths and abilities develop properly. The diligent person is always joyful.

When he returns from work, he is quiet and calm, happy with himself that he has done something. He has his own assets and liabilities. There is no greater good for man than to become diligent. If someone says that he grieves over his unfulfilled desires, it indicates that he was lazy. Only the lazy person thinks that he cannot achieve his desires and makes no effort. Discontent is a condition that follows laziness. They walk together. In other words, laziness is the mother of discontent, so lazy people feel inner discontent with themselves.

Investigate the properties of laziness and diligence from a psychological point of view to understand the outer aspect of the new life you want to acquire. Diligence acquaints us with the methods and laws with which we can work. Laziness, on the other hand, diverts us from the right path. Up to a certain age, some children are active, diligent, but then go on the path of laziness and lose the meaning of their lives. Remember that laziness is the mother of evil and diligence the mother of good. This is an inner psychological difference between evil and good. So, if you are asked how and where evil was born, you will know that

laziness is its mother. Laziness is a civilization that gave birth to evil. Evil affects the world because it often produces outbursts or explosions in man. One consolation is that the power of evil is not constant. In evil the goad functions. The ox plows in the fields, it works because from time to time the goad pushes it. The horse is racing, serving his master, because the whip is lashing his back. However, neither the ox nor the horse work of their own free will. The goad and the whip are the reason for their activity.

Therefore, if a person has a stimulus like that of a goad or a whip, which makes him work and move forward, this is not the right activity. That's how lazy people work. When people want to make a lazy person work, they force him, however this is not a voluntary act, but violence. The forces of the lazy person are passive. He says to himself, "Who will struggle, who will make a mental effort to grasp this or that knowledge? There is no need to suffer, God did not create man for drudgery." Going out in the sun, the lazy person would warm his back a little, then enter the room, in the shade, and rest. If someone says that he does not want to

study, to pray, to work, the reason for this lies in laziness. If they force you to pray and study, it is not real prayer nor is it studying carried out with love. If they force you to do good, it is not real good. Real good implies a natural healthy act of the human soul. It is done according to the law of diligence. Knowing this, stick to diligence and avoid laziness. If you come across an obstacle in your life, completely throw out laziness from yourself. If your work is not going well, completely give up laziness and apply diligence. It resolves the contradictions in life. It resolves the question of the existence of evil. If laziness visits you, don't be angry with it, just listen to what it will tell you. It will tell you what its origin is, where it came from, how it nested in man, and so on. The story of laziness is interesting. It is a living force that has such subtle techniques and methods that if you do not know how to handle it, it will throw itself onto your back and make you carry it for life. It is not easy to free a person from laziness. It can also creep into the mind of your best and dearest friend who you trust, and thereby trick you and lead you astray.

Imagine that your best friend, whom you have not seen for 20 years, visits you at the exact moment that you have scheduled for prayer. Seeing that you are preparing to pray, your friend says, “Leave your prayer for now, I want to chat with you first, we haven’t seen each other for so long!” If you postpone your prayer and give way to your friend’s suggestion, you are entering the law of laziness. If your friend follows the law of diligence, he should also pray with you, and only after should you chat.

Prayer is a sacred act that everyone must do at all times and urgently. How you will pray depends on the degree of your development. What do people do when they wake up? First they open their eyes, then they raise their hands and get up. In the spiritual sense of the word, opening the eyes means ‘awakening the human soul.’ Opening your eyes is also a prayer. Who opens their eyes early in the morning? The diligent people. Therefore, diligent people are characterized by vigilance of consciousness. For them, every opening of the eyes is a prayer. To pray means to open your eyes, to look at the beautiful world of God and to press

forward, to do the little work that is given to you that day. Those who sit in one place and read prayers constantly are lazy. In the long run, it ends badly. What is the bad ending? In their disappointment in God. After praying for years, they wonder why God does not answer their prayers and ask, “Why did the Lord not satisfy my needs? Can’t he see that I need money, servants to help me?” They wonder how the Lord does not pay attention to such deities as them. God does not dwell upon man’s negative qualities nor does He indulge them.

Where does the human character’s negative traits come from? Laziness. The negative forces in man overshadow his consciousness, and he loses the meaning of his life. This means closing one’s eyes prematurely. When do people close their eyes? Only when they go to sleep. Those who do not sleep but close their eyes, are lazy. Now, if diligent people don’t sleep, their eyes are always open.

We are now looking at the inner nature of laziness and diligence, not as they are understood in life. Rest is not a state of laziness, but a state in which

the mind takes an active part. When you rest, and when you work, you should know the reason why you rest and why you work; when you pray and investigate, you should also know why you are doing it; when you think, you should know the cause of your thought and then think rightly. Someone may say that life has no meaning. How could God, the creator of the world, who put meaning in everything, create a meaningless life? This is the philosophy of lazy people to watch out for. Those who seek a new life and new understandings must be pleasing to God. This means being capable. A diligent student is capable, and a capable one is gifted. The gifted student is a favorite of his teacher and of God. God attends to the diligent student and lets Nature attend to the lazy one. What does Nature do with the lazy student? Whenever she passes by him, she still leaves a speck of dust on his back. Then God passes by him and, seeing him in the dust, says, "This child is reaping the consequences of his laziness, but he will learn his lesson." When will he learn his lesson? When he enters the spiritual world and begins to engage in spiritual works.

When people are told about spiritual works, few are interested in them. Why are people not interested in spiritual works? - For two reasons: either they are not ready to accept them, or the one who speaks about them does not touch on the essence of these works. Both the material and the spiritual worlds have their good aspects, so both are of interest to us. In both worlds there is something real, immutable, which facilitates their study. This reality, exactly, represents an inner connection between all manifestations of life. In this respect, the diligent person is in solidarity with the activities of intelligent beings from all worlds and works with them. The lazy person, however, is an extreme individualist. He separates himself from the beings of other worlds, living only in the physical world, led mainly by his personality. Even so, the life of the individualist does not represent an ideologically sound life. Through laziness we come to a misunderstanding of life, and this diverts us from the right path of that natural activity necessary for every soul. Thus, keep in mind these two ideas of diligence

and laziness — strive for the first, and beware of the second.

Young people must watch out for laziness in order to not grow old prematurely; the elderly have to apply diligence in order to rejuvenate. Youth is an outward expression of diligence, while old age is an outward expression of laziness. Virtues develop in the law of diligence, while weaknesses and vices in the law of laziness. Young people have to apply the law of diligence and make use of the smallest God-given goods in order to solve life's problems. When laziness enters the heart of the young person, it begins to advise him not to love all people, not to open himself to love. Who should young people love then? Themselves. To love only yourself means to cripple your heart. Only he who erects a barrier with a narrow slit in front of his eyes, looking through it every now and then at the wider world, cannot love anyone but himself. What will he see through this slit? Only what is in front of his eyes, and it won't give him an idea as to the vast world that God has created. In this situation, it is natural for a person to love only himself. If you see a person through the narrow slit, it is

natural to love only one person. If I were to remove the barrier in front of his eyes, he would instantly love everyone because he would immediately see everything around him. Laziness erects such barriers in front of people's eyes and leads them to dead ends. They look to one side or the other and ask, "How could a car go this way?" It's not meant for a car. "Then let people come and make a new road." You should follow the path that God set a long time ago, and not wait for others to come and pave a new path.

Today, both the young and the old, the educated and the uneducated, criticize God, thinking that the world was not created as it should be, and that it should have been created differently. People who think and philosophize in this way follow the law of laziness. This is an abnormal state for humanity, because that is how man descends from the step of culture and enters the sphere of civilization – one step downwards. Human idealism resulted in culture; culture resulted in civilization, and civilization resulted in savagery, regression and the decline of humanity. What came next? People started killing each other. What

did the wars bring? Destruction and misfortune. These are the consequences of laziness. This cannot be called evolution, but the degeneration of humanity. Evolution is a law for correcting mistakes. To evolve means to walk the path of diligence. In other words, evolution includes the efforts made by man to enter the law of diligence, that is, the proper manifestations of human activity.

What is contemporary humanity's assignment? To return to the primordial divine life. This is the new life, whose philosophy can be expressed in a few words: to live as God lives; to manifest as God manifests; to work as God works. To be like God and one with God! When you achieve this, all beings become as near to you as they are to God; all disputes are resolved immediately. Only in this way will you hear the still small voice of God, who says, "Diligence!" It leads to the correct development of life.

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