

# Beware the Barrenness of a Busy Life! (2018)

## OUTLINE

1

### Introduction

Thesis Statement: Being occupied by forsaking individual nourishment, personal life and familial bonds traps man in a vicious enigma of barrenness. Therefore, one should learn the art of balancing both personal and professional life to attain solace and fulfillment.

2

### How one should not conform to the busy life.

3

### Utterly immersed in a busy life must be neglected owing to its threatening impacts

- a. Destroys nurturing of individuality
- b. Leads to less familial bonds
- c. Stress and psychological impact
- d. No time to connect with nature
- e. detrimental impact on one's creativity and productivity

4

### Theoretical Perspectives to reveal the drastic consequences of a busy life.

- a. Critique of American Dream
- b. Robert Merton's theory of Anomie
- c. Concept of Absurdism

5

### Literary Depictions to reveal the sterile and unfruitful result of a barren



Life

- a- Depiction to prioritize life before it is too late
  - (i) Metamorphosis by Kafka
- b- Failure to replace the inherent need of love with accumulation of wealth
  - (i) The Great Gatsby by Scott Fitzgerald
- c- Being busy does not satisfy familial love
  - (i) Death of a salesman by Arthur Miller
- d- Busy at the expense of personal bonds throws one into pits of guilt
  - (i) The Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
- e- Indulging oneself in work does not fulfill personal growth
  - (i) War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy

6 For its dire impacts, waywards must be prioritized

- a- Buddha's philosophy of wantlessness
- b- Wordsworth emphasis on nature
- c- Transcendentalism by Emerson
- d- Swift balance between quality and quantity

7 Conclusion



"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." (Martin Luther King Jr.)

In this quote, darkness and hate can be referred to the looming gloomy cloud of a barren life which has engulfed the people of modern world.

Amidst this, balancing between personal and professional life - represented by light and love - can take people out from the pits of an unhappy life.

Being occupied by forsaking individual nourishment, personal life and familial bonds traps man in a vicious enigma of barrenness. Therefore, one should learn the art of balancing both personal and professional life to attain solace and fulfillment. Busy life must be discouraged because it destroys the nurturing of individuality and leads to the lack of less familial bonds. It results in dire psychological impacts and destroys one's creativity and intellectuality. Also, it cuts off one's bond with nature. Moreover, theoretical perspectives to reveal the dire consequences of barren life include critique of American Dream, concept of Absurdism and Merton's theory of Anomie. Further, literary depictions of Kafka, Fitzgerald, Miller, Dickens and Tolstoy reiterate



the unfruitful result of a barren busy life. Thus, to tackle the detrimental impact of a sterile life, one must take influence from Buddha's philosophy of wantlessness, Wordsworth theory of nature and Transcendentalism theory by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Also, one must know the art of balancing quantity with quality. Therefore, one must not conform to the typical barren busy lifestyle of 21st century and embrace fulfillment.

Greeks were considered as genius and because of their efforts, science and philosophy stood the test of times and reached us. Socrates, considered as wisest man, warned man to stay clear of a busy life. However, after industrial revolution and invention of machines, man immersed himself in work at the expense of his personal life. This led development of Modernism and postmodernism which revolved around the themes of isolation and depression. Mental health which was overlooked for years has become crucial topic of today's debate. Therefore, Socrates rightly was named a wise man who predicted the aftermath of a barren life and advised to stay clear of it.



Among a number of threatening impacts of being immersed in a busy life, destruction of individuality remains the crucial one. Human beings are called supreme beings for they possess minds to think which makes them different from others. This quality of an individual being distinct from other people is called individuality. To illustrate, if an individual is constantly immersed in work and does not have time to nurture his individuality which is the essence of a human being, he would never find solace within himself. Therefore, busy life of an individual snatches from him the chance of nurturing individuality.

Second, another devastating impact of leading a busy life is reduction of familial bonds. Human being is a social animal who lives within other human beings. He cannot afford to get isolated from other people. However, if people are busy in their works and do not have time to spend quality time with one another, it would lead them to have less and less familial bonds, and this would create a void in their heart. This would be a void which would



never be filled. To conclude, a busy life leads one to have no time to maintain familial bonds.

Another, busy life leads an individual to have stress and detrimentally affects his mental and psychological health. People who do not have time for their personal growth and cannot differentiate between personal and professional lives often suffer from poor mental health. For example, Research shows that people who feel stressed, or like there is not enough time in the day, report poor mental and physical health. (Reid Health, The connection between stress, busyness, and mental health, 2020) Therefore, one of the detrimental impacts of a busy life is poor mental health.

Along with devastating effects on mental health, individuality, and familial bonds, a busy life also cuts off man's link with nature. Nature, the gift of God to human beings, plays the role of giving joy to human heart, of purifying human mind and of healing influence on sorrowful hearts. For example, William Wordsworth says, "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her".



(William Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey)  
To sum up, one of the dire consequences of a busy life is that it cuts off the relationship of man with nature.

Last but not the least, one of the most important consequence of a busy life is the butchery of one's creativity and productivity. Being busy and conforming to what other people are doing hits hard to the creative and productive faculty of an individual. To explain, if a person is busy and does not take out time to make use of his critical faculty, it impacts his productive and creative level. Therefore, a busy life bars one from being creative and eventually but gradually lessens his productive potential.

Among a number of theoretical perspectives to reveal the diastic consequences of a busy life, critique of American Dream remains the crucial one. American Dream, the driving motto behind the concept of earning more and more, is a curse which makes the worth of man connected with the money he makes. American dream dehumanized human



beings whose sole worth was being a commodity. To illustrate, Tennessee Williams, famous American author, said "American Dream to be nothing more than a myth." Therefore, American Dreams which makes man strive to do more and more is actually itself a critique of a busy life.

In addition to the critique of an American Dream, Robert Merton's Theory of Anomie also explains the behavioural aspects of a busy life. Merton categorizes people on the basis of their behaviour to society. He explains behaviour of 'Ritualist'. To illustrate, ritualist is a person who does not heartily accept the accepted cultural goal such as earning money but lives with conventional means such as earning money day and night. But that person would never be satisfied. To conclude, Robert Merton theory of Anomie makes the foundation that following the conventional mean of a busy life does not satisfy an individual's personal growth.



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In the last, the concept of Absurdism, given by Albert Camus, focuses on the meaninglessness and absurdity of life. The concept of absurdism can be applied to the barrenness of a busy life for it focuses on the state of mind of human beings that are trapped in illogical and incomprehensible situations. They cannot make out the situation leading them to consider their life absurd and meaningless. For example, in the absurdist play of Samuel Beckett, a character Estrogen says, "Nothing happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes. It's awful." (Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot) Therefore, the concept of Absurdism explains the state of mind of a busy person who starts to perceive his life absurd and meaningless.

Literature is the reflection of life. It depicts the social, political, economic, psychological and prevalent beliefs belonging to that era. Similarly, literature has been used to depict the negative impacts of a busy life which bars him from his emancipation.



To begin with, literature to depict the bareness of a busy life has represented that one should take out time for himself before it is too late. Franz Kafka, in her masterpiece novella Metamorphosis, sketches the character of Gregor Samsa who spends his whole life earning and got no time to actually live his life. This paints the grim picture that one realizes this when it is too late as Samsa did when he turned into a cockroach. He says, "He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone" (Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis). Thus, through the character of Samsa, Kafka warns others about the bareness of a busy life.

In addition to this, literature has also served a lesson that accumulation of wealth can never replace the inherent need of love. Scott Fitzgerald in his play, The Great Gatsby, draws the protagonist Gatsby who indulges himself in work all his life to achieve his American Dream. However, he accumulated wealth by earning all his life, but could not satisfy the void created by the lack of love in his life. He says, "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired," (Scott Fitzgerald, The Great



Cratsby) To sum up, Scott Fitzgerald explained through his play that one should never satisfy his ego by forsaking his inherent need of love.

Moreover, literature has also touched upon the theme that earning for family and being busy all the time does not compensate for the familial love. Arthur Miller in his play Death of a Salesman draws the character of Willy Loman who runs his whole life for the pursuit of American Dream which remained unattainable to him. To illustrate, he spent his whole life to earn for his two sons who at the end of play showed their dissatisfaction for Willy because he was physically not present in their little moments. Thus, Miller represented the dark side of a barren life by painting the character of Willy Loman.

Furthermore, literature explains that busy at the expense of personal bonds throws one into the pits of guilt. Charles Dickens, the renowned realist novelist, sketches the character of Pip in his novel The Great Expectations. Pip for the pursuit of material wealth and attainment of social mobility forsake all his



relationships. Pip in the endeavor of social mobility misbehaves with his fatherly figure brother To Cravey and suffers from guilt at the end of the novel. To illustrate, Pip says, "In a word, I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong" (Charles Dickens, The Great Expectations). Therefore, Dickens shows that one remains in guilt if one keeps himself <sup>too</sup> busy to enjoy the perks of life.

Additionally, one of the most important things portrayed in literature is that indulging oneself in work does not fulfill personal growth. Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian realist novelist, draws the character of Pierre in his novel War and Peace. Pierre was respected only because of his wealth and his social status. However, to attain personal fulfillment, he kept himself busy only to realize that he only felt void. To illustrate, Pierre cut himself off from the world by joining organizations and being busy but realized only love and pure bonds could heal him. Thus, Tolstoy made people realize that being busy interrupts the attainment of personal



growth.

Owing to the number of dire impacts of busy life on an individual and multiple literary depictions illustrating the need to shun the idea of immensely busy life, instilling of few intellectual philosophies would be helpful to avoid the bareness of a busy life.

To start with, the Buddhism's philosophy of wantlessness illustrates a view to shun the idea of sterile life. In Buddhism, desire and wants lie at the root of suffering. To illustrate, Buddhists refer to the craving pleasure, material goods, immortality for which man remain busy as unattainable desires. Man would never be content with what he have and desiring them would only bring suffering. For example, Socrates says, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." Therefore, the philosophy of wantlessness of Buddhism provides an individual with a way to nourish and nurture inner-self.



Second, Wordsworth's philosophy of nature as rekindling relation with God provides man with a view that connecting with nature soothes the hearts. Wordsworth repeatedly emphasizes the importance of nature to an individual's intellectual and spiritual development. A good relationship with nature helps individuals connect to both the spiritual and social worlds. For Wordsworth says, "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her." (William Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey)

To conclude, connecting with nature would help an individual to avoid the baneness of a busy life.

Furthermore, the concept of Transcendentalism presented by Ralph Waldo Emerson presents a view to connect with inner-self and to never fall victim of barrenness. Transcendentalism believes in person's intuition and natural spirituality and condemns traditional empirical thinking. He advises to transcend the bounds of the physical world to rekindle relationship with inner self. Emerson says, "What lies behind us, and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." To sum up, the concept of Transcendentalism by



Emerson explains to connect with inner-self and avoid being victim of barrenness which would haunt all aspects of life.

In the last, one of the most important steps to be prioritize by people to maintain both personal and professional lives is the swift balance between quality and quantity. There is not dire need to be focusing on how much hours an individuals works. Only if an individual focuses on the quality of the work one is doing, it would make him relevant, creative and productive at the same time. For example, to attempt a paper, concepts need to be clear rather than the quantity of pages that is being written. Therefore, one must instill the art of maintaining swift balance between quality and quantity to avoid being a victim of sterile life.

In conclusion, one must never be occupied or busy at the expense of nourishment of individuality, personal growth and familial bonds. It leads an individual to develop a void in their life which would never stop pining and causing pain. Thus,



maintaining a balance between personal as well as professional life is a must. Starting with the detrimental consequences of a busy barren life, it destroys individual's nourishment of identity and leads to less familial bonds. It affects one's mental health and creativity along with an individual separation from nature. Moreover, the theoretical concepts of absurdism, critique of American dream, and Merton's theory of Anomie further reiterates the dire repercussions of leading a voidful life. Additionally, literary depictions of Kafka, Fitzgerald, Miller, Dickens and Tolstoy further places the hook on the concept of a barren life. Also, the fact that it creates uncountable hurdles in one's life, one can avoid falling its victim by following Buddha's philosophy of wantlessness, Wordsworth concept of nature and theory of Transcendentalism by Emerson. In the last, it is of utmost importance to create a balance between quality and quantity. Therefore, it is never too late to take the reigns of life and drive **Good** to the right direction.

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