



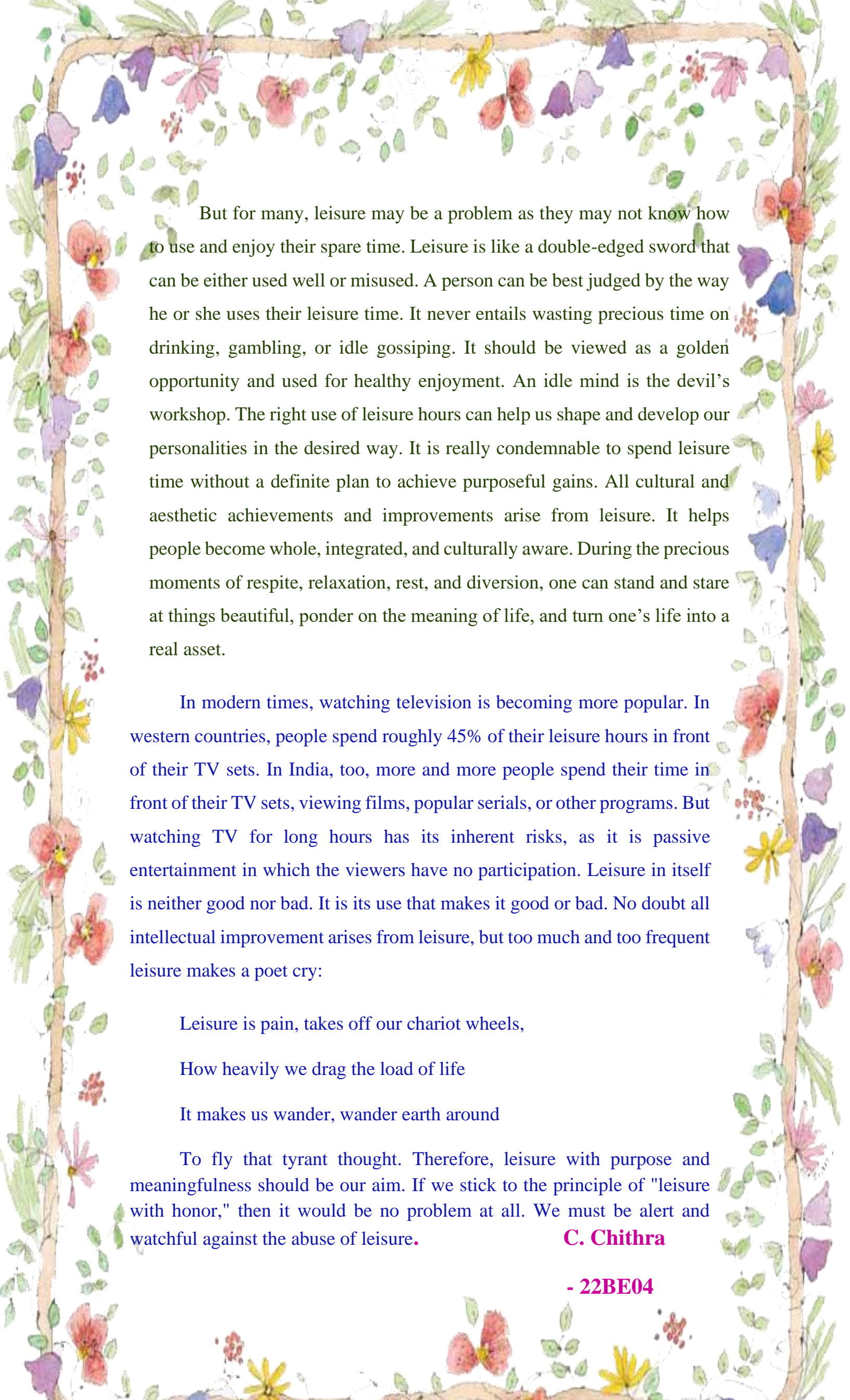
LEISURE TIME

Work and play are inextricably linked. They are like the two sides of the same coin. They are like the two sides of the same coin. The observation that "we must beat the iron when it is hot, but we may polish it at leisure" best explains the proper relation between work and leisure. Leisure is like a margin on a printed or written page. In the absence of work, no leisure can actually be conceived. Leisure never means idleness. Leisure cannot be thought of as a non-activity. It should be seen from a broader perspective as a fulfilling part of life and work. As J. B. Priestley has said, "Any fool can be fussy and rid himself of energy all over the place, but a man has to have something in him before he can settle down to do nothing." "He must have reserves to draw upon. He must be able to plunge into the strange, slow river of dreams and reverie. He must be at heart a poet." Only a very few have reserves to draw upon.

One works hard only to have some leisure because "man does not live by bread alone." So leisure might be called spare time, free from labour and the drudgery of life. The dictionary definition of leisure is "the state of having time at one's disposal; time which one can spend as one pleases; free or unoccupied time."

Leisure is a kind of breathing space or welcome and desirable pause in the long hours of work and labor. Affluence and ease have brought more leisure hours.

The housewife, too, now has more free time as there are many labor-saving devices at her disposal. Consequently, all of us can now enjoy long hours of rest, relaxation, joy, diversion, and entertainment. Leisure is a kind of insurance against dullness, fatigue, boredom, tension, and the cares of life. Leisure helps us keep our body and mind tuned up, healthy, and refreshed.



But for many, leisure may be a problem as they may not know how to use and enjoy their spare time. Leisure is like a double-edged sword that can be either used well or misused. A person can be best judged by the way he or she uses their leisure time. It never entails wasting precious time on drinking, gambling, or idle gossiping. It should be viewed as a golden opportunity and used for healthy enjoyment. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. The right use of leisure hours can help us shape and develop our personalities in the desired way. It is really condemnable to spend leisure time without a definite plan to achieve purposeful gains. All cultural and aesthetic achievements and improvements arise from leisure. It helps people become whole, integrated, and culturally aware. During the precious moments of respite, relaxation, rest, and diversion, one can stand and stare at things beautiful, ponder on the meaning of life, and turn one's life into a real asset.

In modern times, watching television is becoming more popular. In western countries, people spend roughly 45% of their leisure hours in front of their TV sets. In India, too, more and more people spend their time in front of their TV sets, viewing films, popular serials, or other programs. But watching TV for long hours has its inherent risks, as it is passive entertainment in which the viewers have no participation. Leisure in itself is neither good nor bad. It is its use that makes it good or bad. No doubt all intellectual improvement arises from leisure, but too much and too frequent leisure makes a poet cry:

Leisure is pain, takes off our chariot wheels,

How heavily we drag the load of life

It makes us wander, wander earth around

To fly that tyrant thought. Therefore, leisure with purpose and meaningfulness should be our aim. If we stick to the principle of "leisure with honor," then it would be no problem at all. We must be alert and watchful against the abuse of leisure.

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