

3. WHAT I REQUIRE FROM LIFE

About the Author

John Burdon Sanderson Haldane (1892-1964) was a British Indian scientist known for his work in the study of physiology, genetics, evolutionary biology, and mathematics. His formal schooling was done at Eton College and New College at Oxford. He obtained his M.A. in 1914. Soon after, Haldane enlisted in the British Army and served during World War I. After returning from the war, Haldane began his teaching career at University.

Haldane's first paper in 1915 demonstrated genetic linkage in mammals. Haldane was a professed socialist, Marxist, atheist and humanist. His political dissent led him to renounce his British citizenship in 1956 and live in India, becoming a naturalized Indian citizen. His major works include Daedalus (1924), Animal Biology (with British evolutionist Julian Huxley, 1927), The Inequality of Man (1932), The Causes of Evolution (1932), The Marxist Philosophy and the Sciences (1938), Keeping Cool and Other Essays (1940), Science Advances (1947), and The Biochemistry of Genetics (1954).

The essay 'What I Require from Life' (1940), first published in The Daily Worker, reflects socialistic convictions demanding democratic activities in work places. This essay is written in simple and lucid language

Summary

The essay "What I Require from Life" is written by J.B.S. (John Burdon Sanderson) Haldane. He is a British Indian Scientist. This essay was first published in a newspaper named "The Daily Worker" in the year 1940. It is a personal essay. It has included various political and philosophical views associated to the requirements of the people's life. It reflects socialistic convictions demanding democratic activities in work places. This essay is written in simple and lucid language.

This essay has mainly focused on the basic requirements of human beings. He mentions these four things which are general human needs. They are interesting work, good health, friendship and freedom. He starts with his opinions related to his acceptance of the concept of the world as it is. According to him, he must not require the impossible things in his life.

Except all these basic needs, the writer wishes various things in his life. He wants adventure in his life though there is risk in the adventure. According to him the satisfaction of adventure is something much more solid than a thrill. He desires to have his own room with some books, a motor car, daily bath, a beach or a river within easy reach. He desires all these things but they are not his demands.

According to the writer, he was born in a peaceful age. During his youth, he desired to live his life peacefully but due to the outbreak of devastating World War Ist during 1914, he involved himself in his heroic age. The devastating World War 1st changed his concept of living peacefully. In that critical situation, in which he was living, he desired to make his time best through his basic needs as food, water, clothes and shelter.

The writer is in favour of socialism. He is against capitalism. So, he wishes to see the workers controlling their condition of work. As a socialist, he wants to see a condition where workers enjoy the work and control the industry. He wants to see the end of class subjection and sex subjection. He wants to see equality among people to achieve fraternity. He wants to see the end of fascism due to which the First World War broke out and the peace broke down.

At first the essay seems to be personal but in the latter part of the essay he pours his views on political argument. According to him freedom is universal necessity so society should unite to take full advantage of freedom. The writer wishes to see the spread of education and the application of scientific methods in all branches of life. Finally, he wishes socialism where he lives.