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“When you work, you fulfill a part of earth’s furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born”.

Kahlil Gibran

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Nisha Chhabra
To the Wise—A bargain by Charlotte Parkins Gilman

Said the slum child to the wise
To the people of peace and power
Who govern and guide the Hour,
To the people who write and teach,
Ruling our thought and speech,
And all the captains and kings
Who command the making of things;
“Give me the good ye know,
That I, the child, may grow,
Light for the whole day long
Food that is pure and strong
Housing and clothing fair,
Clean water and clean air,
Teaching from day to day
And room for a child to play”.

Then the wise made answer cold,
“The things are not given, but sold,
They shall be yours today
If you can pay”.
“Pay”, said the child, “pay you?
What can I do?
Only in years’ slow length
Shall I have strength,
I have not power nor skill,
Wisdom nor wit nor will –
What service meek and mild
Can you ask of a little child?”

But the Wise made answer cold,
“Goods must be bought and sold
You shall have nothing here
Without paying – paying dear.”
And the Rulers turned away
But the child cried to them; “Stay,
Wait, I will pay
For the foulness where I live
Filth in return I give
For the greed that withholds my right

Greed that shall shake your might
For the sins I live and learn,
Plentiful sin I return
For lack in home and school,
Ignorance come to rule,
From where I sicken and die
Disease in your home shall lie,
My all uncounted death
Shall choke your children’s breath-
Degenerate-crippled-base-
I degrade the human race;
And the people you have made-
These shall make you afraid;

“I ask no more, I take
The terms you make
And steadily, day by day,
I will pay.”