The Prophet Speaks about Work
by Kahlil Gibran — *The Profit*
(abridged & edited by RPL)

When a ploughman said, speak to us of Work,
the Prophet answered:

You work that you may keep pace
with the Soul of the Earth.

For to be idle is to become a stranger,
out of step out with life's procession that
marches in majesty towards the infinite.

You may have been told that work is a curse, and labour a misfortune.

    If you bake bread with indifference,
    You bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's Hunger.

    And if you grudge the crushing of grapes,
    Your grudge distills a poison in the wine.

    And if you sing though as ANGELS, and LOVE not the singing,
    you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and rhythms of the night.

All work is empty save when there is Love.

And what is it to work with love?

When you work with Love, you are a flute through
Whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.

When you work with Love, you bind yourself to yourself,
And to one another, and to God.

    It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart,
      As if your beloved were to wear that cloth.

    It is to build a house with affection,
      As if your beloved were to dwell in that house.

    It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy,
      As if your beloved were to eat the fruit.

    It is to change all things you fashion with the
      Breath of your own Spirit,

Often I hear it said "He who works in marble, and finds the shape
of his own soul in the stone, is nobler than he who plows the soil.

And he who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of
a man or woman, is more than he who makes the sandals for our feet."

But I say that the wind speaks not more sweetly
To the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;

Nor is he alone great who turns the voice of the wind
Into a song made sweeter by his own Loving.

In keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life.
To love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inner most secret:

Work is Love made visible.