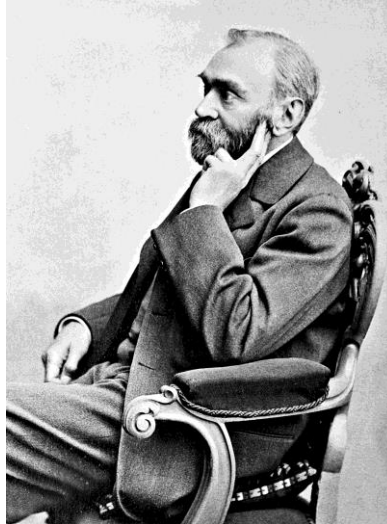


Intermediate 3
Unit 7: Reading
Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur



Alfred Nobel, a Man of Contrasts

contrast = an obvious difference between two or more things

Alfred Nobel, the great Swedish inventor and industrialist, was a man of many contrasts. He was the son of a bankrupt, but became a millionaire; a scientist with a love of literature, an industrialist who managed to remain an idealist. He made a fortune but lived a simple life, and although cheerful in company, he had a tendency to be sad in private. A lover of mankind, he never had a wife or family to love him; a patriotic son of his native land, he died alone on foreign soil. He invented a new explosive, dynamite, to improve the peacetime industries of mining and road building, but saw it used as a weapon of war to kill and injure his fellow men. During his useful life he often felt he was useless. "Alfred Nobel," he once wrote of himself, "ought to have been put to death by a kind doctor as soon as he entered life." World famous for his works, he was never personally well-known, for throughout his life he avoided publicity. "I do not see," he once confessed, "that I have deserved any fame and I have no taste for it." But since his death, his name has brought fame and glory to others.

Swedish = from Sweden

industrialist (noun) = an owner or an employee in a high position in industry

bankrupt (n., adj.) = (a person) who cannot pay back his debts

literature = written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value

idealist = someone who believes that very good things can be achieved, often when this does not seem likely to others \neq **pragmatist**

make a fortune = become very rich

cheerful = very happy

in company \neq in private

in company = with other people; in public

tendency = inclination; what a person usually prefers

mankind = human beings

patriot (noun) = a person who loves his country

patriotic (adjective) showing love for your country and being proud of it

⇒ *patriotic songs, patriotic soldiers*

explosive (n.) = a material that easily explodes

mine (n.) = an excavation in the earth for extracting coal or other minerals ⇒ *a copper mine*

miner (n.) = a person who works at a mine

mining (n.) = the process or industry of obtaining coal or other minerals from a mine

weapon = a thing designed or used for inflicting bodily harm or physical damage

fellow men = other human beings

put to death = kill

throughout = during

for = because

publicity = fame

fame = being famous

confess = to admit that you have done something wrong or something that you feel guilty or bad about

deserve = merit = to have earned or to be given something because of the way you have behaved or the qualities you have

glory = great admiration, honor, and praise that you earn by doing something successfully

He was born in Stockholm on October 12, 1833 but moved to Russia with his parents in 1842, where his father, Immanuel, evidently made a strong position for himself in the engineering industry. Immanuel Nobel invented the land mine and made a lot of money from government orders for it during the Crimean War but went bankrupt soon after. Most of the family returned to Sweden in 1859, where Alfred rejoined them in 1863, beginning his own study of explosives in his father's laboratory. He had never been to school or university but had studied privately and by the time he was twenty, he was a skillful chemist, and an excellent linguist, speaking Swedish, Russian, German, French, and English. Like his father, Alfred Nobel was imaginative and inventive, but differed from him showing more financial sense. He was quick to see industrial openings for his scientific inventions and invested in over 80 companies in 20 different countries. Indeed, his greatness lay in his outstanding ability to combine the qualities of an original scientist with those of a forward-looking industrialist.

evidently = obviously; clearly

mine = a bomb that is buried under the ground

linguist = an expert in the study of language

linguist = polyglot = a person who can speak many languages

imaginative = having a good imagination

inventive = creative

differ = be different

financial sense = knowing what to do with your money

indeed = certainly, of course

lie ⇒ lay, lain

lie = be located

outstanding = excellent

original = creative

forward-looking = favoring innovation and development; progressive

But Nobel's main concern was never with making money or even with making scientific discoveries. Seldom happy, he was always searching for a meaning to life, and from his youth had taken a serious interest in literature and philosophy. Perhaps because he could not find ordinary human love — he never married — he came to care deeply about the whole of mankind. He was always generous to the poor, "I'd rather take care of the stomachs of the living than the glory of the dead in the form of stone memorials," he once said. His greatest wish, however, was to see an end to wars, and thus peace between nations, and he spent much time and money working for this cause until his death in Italy in 1896. His famous will, in which he left the funds from his estate to award prizes for outstanding works in physics, chemistry, physiology, medicine, literature, and peace, is a permanent memorial to his interests and ideals. And so, the man who felt he should have died at birth is remembered and respected long after his death.

youth = the time when you are young

the whole of mankind = all people; all human beings

the living = the people who are alive

the dead = the people who are dead

memorial = a statue or structure established to remind people of a person or event

thus = therefore

cause = ideal = goal

will = a legal document containing instructions as to what should be done with one's money and property after one's death

fund = huge amount of money

estate = everything that a person owns when they die

physiology = the branch of biology that deals with the normal functions of living organisms and their parts

Full Text:

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But Nobel's main concern was never with making money or even with making scientific discoveries. Seldom happy, he was always searching for a meaning to life, and from his youth had taken a serious interest in literature and philosophy. Perhaps because he could not find ordinary human love — he never married — he came to care deeply about the whole of mankind. He was always generous to the poor, "I'd rather take care of the stomachs of the living than the glory of the dead in the form of stone memorials," he once said. His greatest wish, however, was to see an end to wars, and thus peace between nations, and he spent much time and money working for this cause until his death in Italy in 1896. His famous will, in which he left the funds from his estate to award prizes for outstanding works in physics, chemistry, physiology, medicine, literature, and peace, is a permanent memorial to his interests and ideals. And so, the man who felt he should have died at birth is remembered and respected long after his death.

Sample Summary:

Alfred Nobel was a Swedish inventor and industrialist known for his many contrasts. He was born into a poor family but became very rich. Despite his success, he lived simply and was often sad in private. Nobel invented dynamite, which was meant to help in construction but was also used in wars. He never married or had children, and although he was very useful, he often felt useless. Nobel was interested in literature and philosophy and wanted to see world peace. He left his fortune to establish the Nobel Prizes, which honor achievements in various fields. He is remembered for his contributions long after his death.

Source:

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