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### *Something About Loyalty*

LOYALTY IS THE NOBLEST WORD IN THE CATALOGUE OF SOCIAL VIRTUE. So wrote John Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, a book that is as appropriate a guide to building a life as to building a cathedral.

Loyalty represents something vital, a concept, a way of life. Everyone has a desire, an instinct, to be loyal. The man or woman who has nothing to be loyal to is an unhappy person.

The simplest form of loyalty may be summarized like this: "Here is my appointed station: this is my group. I must work in and with it: if need be I must fight for it."

Education, travel, television, radio and reading broaden our horizons, and in our enlarged contact with people we find loyalty becoming a complex matter.

Anyone seeking to think seriously about loyalty should understand that loyalty is not a decorative grace note added to the score of life. Handel permitted singers to employ grace notes in the arias of his oratorios, but he insisted that they should not be mere embellishments serving simply for outward display. They must possess musical meaning and value.

Loyalty is intelligent devotion to an idea, a cause, a person, or a government. It is symbolized in the vow of the marriage ceremony: "For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health."

The loyalty of friendship is a precious quality. It means that one does not fade out of the picture when troubles assail one's friend. It includes sympathy, mutual aid and a warm appreciation of personality. There is little virtue in loyalty if it is to be dispensed with at the first sign of any flaw in the human or institutional object of that loyalty.

To be loyal is to be involved, to be a participant, to belong. It confirms one's personal significance. Even in a primitive kraal a savage knows that he is a member of a community and is obliged to be loyal to it.

On the other hand, the responsibility of those in whom loyalty is placed cannot be over-emphasized, and the greater the loyalty the greater the responsibility.

People and institutions must *deserve* loyalty; they cannot hope to win and retain it unless they themselves are loyal. We say that children should be loyal to their parents: it is equally necessary that parents be loyal to their children. We expect loyalty of employees to their firms: it is equally obligatory that the firms be loyal to them. Dutifulness is a two-way street.

#### *What loyalty is*

Loyalty is not servility, but a factor contributing to human dignity. A loyal person may be a poet or a tradesman, a formalist or an eccentric, a prime minister or a humble voter. He is one who is steadfast to an honourable obligation; one who does what he ought to do in his relations with other people.

Loyalty is linked in our minds with honour. It is faithfulness and devotion to duty, and doing an hour's work in an hour. It is one of the responsibilities of citizenship; an enthusiastic love of one's country and pride in its ideals.

A person is sailing close to a rocky shore if he depends upon appearances to guide him in deciding where he shall bestow his loyalties. Labels do not always accurately describe the goods to which they are attached. People seeking to avoid paying customs duty have been known to remove the English and French labels from the clothes they bought on vacation and replace them with labels bearing the names of their home-town tailors.

Being loyal is not simply having an idea of allegiance filled with emotion. It imposes ethical requirements. Whether to be loyal to this person or that, to prefer this to that of two possible objects, involves choice, and to choose is to have a distinction of good and evil, or at least of better or worse.

It is helpful to test one's loyalties by answering two questions: (1) What do I believe? (2) To what ideas, causes and principles do I pledge my allegiance?

This means walking all around the matters that are subject to loyalty and evaluating the data we pick up. The person who does that is his own man, making up his mind carefully, intelligently and honestly.

The old authoritarian systems provided a clear set of rules, but people today do not give their loyalty blindly. Their research provides them with additional or stronger reasons for being loyal, or it disabuses their minds of the worthiness of the person or group to be given loyalty.

Loyalty to a cause should not prevent a person from thinking for himself. One of the evidences of being educated is loyalty to truth, and what is true may be found by examining the subject, discounting prejudices and judging fairly. Confucius said once when someone asked him about something to which he could not give an answer: "I merely discussed the two sides of the question."

Some men and women are troubled by the idea that being loyal somehow abridges their freedom, but in fact loyalty is part of the tapestry of liberty. Free people pin their faith to liberty democratically arrived at and loyally maintained. Parliaments and employers can compel people under their jurisdiction to obey or to submit, but if they desire loyalty from free people they have to inspire it and merit it.

### *There are many loyalties*

There are several loyalties beckoning to every person: loyalty to his group, his firm, his family, and his country.

Loyalty is the cement that holds a group together. It may be a small group like the family or a baseball team, or a big group like that in a production plant or a nation. Loyalty to a group is not only a desirable attribute: it is a practical necessity and the only way to make and keep the friendships everyone must have.

In its simplest form it may be illustrated by the needs of the production line. Slipshod work at one work station will have to be made good at the next, so part of the worker's creed is to do his job so as not to let the gang down.

Every worker and executive has an obligation to be loyal to the company for which he works. He should be proud of the firm and feel a reflected glory when he reads reports of its activities. These may range from a game played by its softball team to its annual report to shareholders. The goodwill and loyalty of the working force is one of the essentials of a successfully conducted enterprise, and the company should and must show that it deserves this loyalty.

To attain his highest development as a human being, a man needs to think well of his work. He must be proud to be a vital part of a team. He wants to be able to brag about his firm. The valuation he places upon his services is likely to be mirrored in the reaction which others have to him, so the worker who speaks slightingly of his company belittles himself.

Loyalty is fitting in kings and company presidents as well as in commoners and workmen. Membership in the management group implies an intense loyalty to the company and the ability to win and hold the respect of the workers.

A salesman said in Robert E. Moore's *The Human Side of Selling* (Harper & Bros., New York, 1951): "I am the sort of guy who wouldn't work for a boss if I didn't believe in him, and I wouldn't work for a company if I could not be proud to represent it. How in the world could I sell with confidence otherwise — and how could I have any self-respect?"

Anyone who is connected with a business in which he has not faith, or is working under a person he does not think highly of, cannot do his best work and will find it difficult to give his loyalty. He should look for another connection, in fairness both to himself and the company.

### *Patriotism*

What is patriotism? A nineteenth century orator described it in this way: "This almost universal instinct for which more men have given their lives than for any other cause, and which counts more martyrs than even religion itself. It has produced great and splendid deeds of heroic bravery and of unselfish devotion; inspired art and stimulated literature and furthered science; fostered liberty and advanced civilization."

The word "patriot" comes from the French, where it was used as early as the fifteenth century in the sense of "citizen". By-and-by it came to imply a *good* citizen and a lover of his country. Patriotism is a belief in and a desire for the national good, a lively sense of collective responsibility.

Patriotism is nothing to be ashamed of. It is founded on valid principles and supported by great virtues. It stands for the good objectives of one's country and inspires the individual to sacrifice his selfish interests when the broader interests of his fellow citizens make it desirable. He knows that his own welfare is best served by that which he knows to be most advantageous for the others.

Patriotism exists in normal times as well as in times of crisis. It does not need a hate object like an enemy to keep it alive. Those who are truly patriotic do not lapse into disinterest between wars, but are diligent in carrying out their peace-time duties and responsibilities.

Some, of course, exalt what they think of as being patriotism and enshrine it as an absolute and unconditional virtue to which even their conscience must bow. Such a spirit stirs up national vanity and people who have it will seek to enhance the greatness of their country at the expense of ill to its neighbours.

"Chauvinism", a word coming into general use in the language used by organizations promoting new ideas, means zealous and belligerent national spirit. It was named after N. Chauvin, a soldier in Napoleon's army noted for his loud-mouthed patriotism. It is patriotic feeling isolated from other moral values. It starts with the firm belief that your country is superior to all other countries because you were born in it, and it tends toward the making of blind zealots.

Far above this in virtue and value is true patriotism, which is a sense of public duty. We give proof of patriotism when we take our full share of public service and responsibility within our communities. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his *Journals*: "I have generally found the gravest and most useful citizens are not the easiest provoked to swell the noise, though they may be punctual at the polls."

### *The government's duty*

Men and women in many countries and over many centuries have drafted charters setting forth what they believe governments should be and should do. The nearer governments come to meeting these requirements, the more loyal support they receive from citizens. Loyalty is given to a political system because people have hope and confidence that their aspirations can be met within that system.

A government may derive its *power* from words printed in statute books, but its *principles* come from much farther back. The *Bible* and Greek and Latin classics constitute the bed-rock of the civilization in which democratic governments exist. Some of the watchwords of the ethical environment are truth, liberty, justice, humaneness, religious freedom, and respect for the worth and dignity of the individual. The state that has these virtues as its guide is the state to which intelligent citizens can give unstinted loyalty.

### *Patriotism sets standards*

We demand of the government to which we are loyal that it maintain certain standards. We ask that it shall be inflexibly open and truthful. We require that it manage the life of the country so as to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number of its citizens, and an adequate minimum standard of living for all.

Rebecca West, author of many books of criticism and biography as well as novels, wrote: "A nation that deserves loyalty is one where all talents are generously recognized, all forgivable oddities forgiven, all viciousness quietly frustrated, and those who lack talent honoured for equivalent contributions of graciousness."

Governments must deal with a great complexity of affairs, and must be entrusted with great powers. They need to hold the imagination of the people, to show a sense of national purpose, to give everyone something tangible to be loyal to. Most people have a need to be needed. If individuals feel "lost" or not part of the picture they will be driven to shoddy substitutes to bolster their ego.

People's desires are not wholly materialistic. Governments have made available much that contributes to improved living conditions: health services, pensions, minimum wages, short working hours, and so forth.

Having reached this plateau, far above the level of

fifty years ago, people have new desires. They value material security, to be sure, but they have developed psychological needs: recognition and respect as individuals and appreciation for their contribution to the well-being of the country. They are looking to government to answer their earnest wish for the opportunity to do something, to join in something, that will fill their lives interestingly.

Sometimes the spirit of loyalty suffers by the emphasis placed upon "rights". There are natural rights and civil rights. Every person has the right to exist, and to live his life in the best way he can. Civil rights are those which belong to a person by virtue of the society in which he lives. He wants that society to justify his loyalty by the opportunities it gives him to realize his hopes and fulfil his ambitions.

In return, he owes duty to the state. The ultimate in its patriotic conception of duty is seen in the death of Socrates. When he was offered a way of escape from drinking the hemlock, Socrates said: "A voice within me is telling me that I must not disobey my country's laws and do what is wrong in order to save my life."

### *Patriotism in Canada*

A country is not judged only by its political and economic affairs, but also by the spirit of its people.

Canadian patriotism has been of a sober kind, little given to such commemorations as have been the custom in other countries. It has, nevertheless, burned with a steady flame in all times of stress and danger. In the words of a Theban play: "It is not such a place as is famed in song and story, But its name is great in the hearts of those that live here."

Loyalty to our country means that we feel we have a stake in it, that it embodies our great democratic traditions in education, religion, philosophy, science and government, and that without it we should be lesser people.

We have, in our 107 years of history as a nation, advocated far-reaching changes in our governmental form and have carried through many of them successfully. It is well to remind ourselves of the high purpose of the nation's founders. Frank Underhill said at the Couchiching Conference ten years ago: [Canada's] "first government, composed of French as well as of English cabinet ministers, in the speech from the throne in the first session of the first parliament, proclaimed that 'a new nationality' had come into being. Nationality was taken by everyone in those days to be the final form in which a people consolidated themselves in order to live the good life."

Today's effort might well be to renew the sense of great purpose and high destiny that inspired our early years as a nation. We are richer, more numerous, and more powerful than our ancestors were when they laid the foundation of Canada. In recent years we have, in the face of grave national danger, shown that patriotism is not simply sentiment, but an opportunity for stern effort and sacrifice.

People of many national strains form our population, living on terms of personal civility while working out ways of living together in perfect harmony, loyal to the same principles. The streams of all the local patriotisms will come together, some day, to form one river.

### *World citizenship*

Love of our own land does not imply despising other lands, any more than love of one's mother implies despising other mothers.

There are 150 different nationalities on the earth, some large and some impracticably small. All of them have ideals, desires and fears, just as Canada has. Every serious problem is global, affecting all nations. Consider pollution, trade, peace, health, population, energy, food, and human rights: everyone on earth has a stake in solving these problems. As H. G. Wells expressed it, "The affairs and interests of every modern community extend to the uttermost parts of the earth."

A person who wishes his country to prosper, not only within its own geographical boundaries but as part of the world, is both an intelligent patriot and a citizen of the world.

In an address at Harvard University, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., said: "What I would suggest is that everyone in the world would be allowed to hold dual citizenship — to be a citizen of the nation in which he or she happens to be born, and, in addition, to be able to qualify for world citizenship."

Eighteen hundred years before that address, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus declared: "My city and my country, so far as I am Antoninus, is Rome, but so far as I am a man, it is the world."

A vague notion of attachment to the whole human race is ineffective, but feeling that we are world citizens would be a declaration of interdependence. It would give us a feeling of our common humanity, shared hope for our spaceship earth, and a sense of brotherhood as members of the crew.

### *Divided loyalty*

One loyalty does not exclude others. People have many biases — in favour of their political party, their church, their school, their firm, their family.

John Galsworthy, author of *The Forsyte Saga*, wrote a play entitled *Loyalties*. It presented for consideration, in form of the drama, the confusion sometimes worked in the human mind by the cross purposes of conflicting loyalties of various sorts. Galsworthy showed these being stimulated or repressed by such factors as instinct, desire, racial prejudice, class feeling, professional caste and family ties.

Different loyalties, none of them unworthy in itself, need to be appraised as to their relative worth in relation to the others. There are such things as priorities.

Should a conflict of loyalties occur, the remedy is to

step a little aside, out of the bustle of affairs, and calmly take a prospect of things.

Everything in the world is changing so rapidly that long-accustomed loyalties become strained. Every age has held many opinions which subsequent ages have deemed not only false but absurd. There never was a harder time to know where truth may be found than now.

Young people are undergoing an acute crisis of identification. They have, as no preceding generation had, freedom of choice. They can decide to play by old rules or to formulate new rules, to be loyal to the things to which their fathers were loyal or to seek new loyalties.

It is not disloyal to raise questions about the conduct of government or business or education or any other function carried on in society. It is only by broadening our minds that we can learn where, precisely, our loyalty should be given.

Loyalty must leave a person room to dissent, but it is dead set against those who do not distinguish between dissent and obstruction, and lack the self-control and the love of the democratic process that keeps criticism within the bounds of reason and decency.

Loyalty can ruin itself by excess of loyalty; by being everlastingly talked about. It is sometimes best served by silence. Aldous Huxley made the need for restraint clear in *Music at Night*, where he wrote: "Silence is an integral part of all good music. Compared with Beethoven's or Mozart's, the ceaseless torrent of Wagner's music is very poor in silence. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why it seems to much less significant than theirs. It 'says' less because it is always speaking."

### *Let your loyalties show*

Loyalty is not a fugitive memory for grandmothers and grandfathers to tell about. It is an urgent need in all life situations here and now, essential in every worthy relationship between human beings.

We should not be laggard or timid about proclaiming our loyalties upon proper occasions, or we may turn out to be insignificant, like the point in Euclid's definition: "A point is that which has position, but no magnitude." Being loyal includes being men and women who show resolution in following a path that they sense is the right path.

It is bestowing a wealth of praise when it is said of a person that he is loyal — loyal to great causes, to his friends, to his firm, to his family and to his country.

Professor Josiah Royce, of Harvard University, used to say that there are two kinds of loyalty. One is devotion to great causes. The other is not exciting, but it is the more important because it is with us every day. It is inherent in the hundreds of duties that we must do. It is the life-blood of team-work. It embraces adherence to duty, keeping promises, and faithfulness to ideals.