

Patriotism
Or
Patriotism—Its Merits and Limitations
Or
Patriotism Versus Internationalism
Or
Patriotism Alone is not Enough

Essay No. 01

“Who is here so vile that will not love his country?”

“You’ll never have a quiet world till you knock the patriotism out of the human race.”

Patriotism means love of one’s native land. Just as we love our father and mother, so we love land of our birth. This feeling is called patriotism.

Water Scott has rightly said:

Breather there the man with soul so dead,

Who to himself hath never said:

“This is my own, my native land.”

But we find some people who love themselves more than they love their parents. They think of their own happiness and comforts before the comforts and happiness of their father and mother. Similarly, some people love their country less and love themselves more. Such people are selfish.

This should not be the case. It shows an unfeeling heart and a selfish nature. Just as it is the first duty of a child to love his home, so also it is the first duty of every one to love the land of his birth. A man owes much to the land of his birth. Just as he grows up in the lap of his mother, he is brought from making

any sacrifice for his mother land when he is called upon to do so. Who can forget the great sacrifices of Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chander Bose, Lala Lajpat Rai, Gandhi, Nehru and other freedom fighters who sacrificed their all for the freedom of their motherland? Such patriots are honoured very where in all ages.

Patriotism is of two kinds: the first is a healthy one and should be encouraged while the second one is of an undesirable kind and should be condemned. Healthy patriotism teaches us to love our country with all our heart and to do everything in our power to make our country happy, great and glorious. It tells us to build our glory on the ruins and suffering of other nations. The first kind of patriotism is good for our country and for the world the second kind of patriotism is bad for the world and will, sooner or later, be bad for the country that oppresses others.

It is our duty to love the land of our birth. It is also our duty not to hate other nations. We must try to cultivate a healthy type of patriotism and to devote ourselves whole heartedly to the uplift and prosperity of our own country. We must not have the perverted notion of patriotism that believes in the dictum: "My country, right or wrong." Most of the crimes against humanity have been committed by people having this type of fanatic patriotism. Patriotism must go hand in hand with internationalism. One should never forget one's duty towards humanity in general. Such patriotism as encourages narrow, parochial fanaticism is a bad type of patriotism which has no place in a fastly progressing civilization of today.

Essay No. 02

Patriotism

Patriotism means intense love and support to one's own country. Patriotism and nationalism is one and the same thing for both believe in putting national interests above other international considerations. Patriotism is one of the strongest human sentiments. It is expected from every citizen of a country that he or she would cherish a deep and abiding love and concern for the country, yet there can be found many traitors and spurious patriots. They are a real danger to a country. They are more dangerous than real enemies. A nation can guard well against external and known enemy, but it is not so easy to deal with internal enemy in the guise of false and spurious patriots. They are just like wolves in sheep's skin. They never hesitate to betray their country for personal gains. In India such people are called Jai Chand and Vibhishana for the former invited Mohammed Gori to attack Prithviraj, a patriotic ruler and the latter betrayed Lanka and Ravana, its ruler, who was also Vibhishana's elder brother. It was altogether a different matter that demon king Ravana was a tyrant and embodiment of evil.

True patriots are the real strength of a nation. A nation is not only a physical entity of land, rivers, mountains, industries, etc. but also an intense feeling and love of the masses. The citizen of a nation are always ready to make any sacrifice for the unity, integrity, safety and progress of their country. They consider no sacrifice too great to be made for their beloved mother or fatherland. India has produced many great patriots like Shivaji, Rana Pratap, Maharani Lakshmi Bai, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bose, to name only a few. The sacrifices made by them are written in golden words in the history of our country. Many of them died for the sake of our motherland, and thus became martyrs.

Patriotism is a must for the success of a country both in peace and war. But it is war which tests the real patriotism. A patriot in crisis is a patriot indeed. One who fails to come forward to offer his valuable services during crisis is not a patriot, but a traitor. In such a vast country as India it is not surprising if there are a few traitors. It is with every country, but we should always be on our guard against such elements. Sometimes we hear of such people as passing on vital secrets to foreigners and enemies for money and other gains. They should be condemned in no uncertain terms. Narrow self-interests and self-aggrandizement is the guiding principle of the life of such abominable people. Such selfish people should be exposed and suitably punished.

It is the duty and obligation of every citizen to be faithful to his or her country. Complete allegiance to one's own country is a great virtue. In the words of famous German philosopher Schlegell, "The highest bliss of the human soul is love and the noblest love is devotion to our fatherland". Patriotism means intellectual, emotional and sentimental involvement into the affairs of a nation. There are many occasions to show one's patriotism, but during external aggression or internal subversion it can be most suitably expressed. The patriotic fervor satisfies some of our deepest urges. The common man's patriotism finds expression in being honest, sincere, and upright in the discharge of their duties and obligations towards the society and the country they belong to. One should be a patriot both in letter and spirit. Mere singing national songs and praising one's country are not enough. They should be well matched with true patriotic actions.

According to Edith Cavell, "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." In the similar voice Dr. Johnson said, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel". These comments draw our attention to the dangers of jingoism which propagates narrow chauvinism and aggressive patriotism. There is no denying the fact that in the name of patriotism the peace and progress of the world have been jeopardized many a time. The last two world wars are a living example of this danger. The Nazis under Hitler in Germany made mass killings, particularly of the Jews, in the name of patriotism and German nationalism. In this

context patriotism is not really enough. It should ultimately merge into internationalism. We should always sacrifice lesser good for the sake of greater good. Narrow fanatic and jingoistic love of one's own country is certainly undesirable. Such undesirable patriotism has given rise to fascism and Nazism which have been a real danger, for the world.

With the rapid advancement of science and technology, the countries of the world have come closer, and the distances have shrunk. This has ushered in a closer world cooperation and understanding. Gone are the days when countries lived in isolation. Today the nations are interlinked and interdependent. Our patriotism should be tempered with the thoughts of world cooperation, understanding, peace and prosperity of others. In this age of speed, enlightenment education and world cooperation patriotism does not mean blind faith and alone. The words said by Thomas allegiance to one's country Paine, "The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion", should act as our guiding light. All men are equal and essentially one. All people laugh, weep and feel in the same fashion. Their requirements are the same. The differences are not real but apparent, and the divisions men-made. It does not mean there is no room for patriotism. It only means that patriotism should be understood and practiced in its proper perspective and that it should merge into internationalism as do the various rivers into the sea.

Essay No. 03

Patriotism

Patriotism is the love of one's own country. It is a divine spark in the human breast. It teaches a man to love his own native land more than anything else. A patriot thinks no sacrifice too great for his country; he is ever prepared to die for his motherland. Cowper says, "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still".

Patriotism is a noble virtue. The Sanskrit proverb says that your mother and motherland are greater even than heaven. In our country's distress or danger, we should be ready to stand by her, to work for her, to lay down our lives for her if need be. Has she not nursed us on her lap, nourished us of her plenty and sheltered us in her warmth? Not to love one's country is ingratitude indeed.

But this should not bind us to the fact that patriotism is everything, it may not always be the highest duty of a man. A narrow-minded exclusive patriotism is a positive danger. Nothing is more criminal than the senseless cry of the English poet, "My country, right or wrong". It is this sort of foolish thing that the Englishmen constantly applaud in themselves and condemn in others. "Patriotism has become", says H.G. Wells, "a mere national self-assertion, a sentimentality of flag cheering with no

constructive duties". This is the brand of patriotism that Rabindranath denounced in his lectures on Nationalism.

A bigoted patriotism is a perpetual cause of war. And this patriotism flourishes whenever there is war. Therefore, the wise Chinese philosopher, Lao-tze, called it a bad and harmful feeling, and 'a stupid doctrine'. World War II began with Hitler's boastful and aggressive patriotism. All wars are born of similar sentiments. George Washington, then whom there cannot be a greater patriot, once wrote to a friend, "A great and lasting war can never be supported on this principle (patriotism) alone". Bernard Shaw said, "You will not have a quit world till you knock this patriotism out of the human race".

Patriotism often makes us unjust, unfair and ungenerous in our estimate of other people. Every nation, every race, has something definite and distinctive to contribute to the cultural heritage of the world. It is foolish to say that any one nation has all the monopoly of God's good gifts. There was a time when our leader spoke of India's mission of spiritualizing the world and the sentiment was applauded because it appealed to the patriot in each one of us. But all missionary zeal that draws its inspiration from national self-love is wrong. No nation has a monopoly of the virtue. Patriotism must be sobered by a proper respect for other people's culture.

Above all, whenever we are ready to launch forth in a career of national boastfulness, let us remember Edith Cavell's noble words: "I must have no hatred or bitterness towards any one". It is what Mahatma Gandhi declared from behind the bars, Patriotism is good, but it must not supersede the feeling of universal love for all humanity. It must not make us indifferent to the growing concept of "One World".

The fact is that we often mix up patriotism with mere nationalism. If we could keep this distinction clear, patriotism will never mislead us into vain glorious boastfulness. A writer once said that while "patriotism was lively sense of collective responsibility; nationalism was a silly cock crowing on its own dunghill". Nationalism is a kind of geographic parochialism that shuts the door on the rest of mankind. We know the brand and should keep clear of its evils.

Patriotism does not lie in thinking that one's own country is the best. We must love our country, but we must not have any other country or people. The true patriot must respect other countries because he respects his own. He must be prepared to learn from them, to help them, to co-operate with them. Then gradually patriotism will be superseded by the cult of universal brotherhood.

Patriotism

Patriotism is a very complex and powerful sentiment which all of us have. It evolves from a necessary sense of belonging and fraternity, which, as social beings, we cannot do without. As a combination of several facets of character, like loyalty, sincerity, devotion, courage and love, patriotism serves as an important source of discipline and stability in modern living concepts. Though modern lifestyles are very sophisticated, and their priorities quite varied, the conflicts that such sophistication and variety create, may be resolved if people are made to realize the importance of cooperation and solidarity among themselves. It is common in a society that is threatened, to see its people ignore their differences and unite to defeat the threats. Such instances amply illustrate, that despite the selfishness in our actions, we do let an undercurrent of consideration for causes beyond our own, to flow within our minds. Patriotism is the net result of such a consideration.

From its early linkage with loyalty towards things beyond one's own, patriotism, in modern times has come to mean loyalty to the distinctly organized nation state into which a person is born. Alternatively, patriotism is the expression of pride in nativity and a declaration of responsibility and obligation towards one's nation. In the modern context, therefore, patriotism is a highly exalted and sacred sentiment, which may be stirred to galvanize a society into action.

The sentiment of patriotism, by virtue of its volatility, has created lasting effects on social behaviour, both acceptable and despicable. In India, patriotism and self-respect were the ideals on which the edifice of the freedom struggle was founded. The vigor of those ideals was tried and tested against the vices of imperialism for over a century, before imperialism was forced to give itself up. Despite the crises of conflicts and deprivation, and threats of secession that have been plaguing us ever since Independence, the flame of patriotism continues to flicker in our minds; serving as a girdling wreath, protecting our nation's integrity as well as helping to keep off threats of foreign domination. Patriotism, in our context, functions as a tonic of reinvigoration and a deterrent against foreign mischief.

But not always or everywhere has patriotism been a blessing. Being a vibrant emotion, patriotism, in order to be useful, should be maneuvered by safe and sane counsel; it will otherwise be a monstrous proposition. History cites numerous instances when patriotic feeling and loyalty towards causes have been manipulated to venomous proportions to victimize societies. Hitler and his Nazi party inheriting a defeated and demoralized Germany, played on the German people's patriotism and yearning for self-respect, in his quest to consolidate power. He skillfully appealed to German society, in the name of patriotism and dignity, for support to his preferences; which most Germans, unaware of the consequences, provided. Hitler's aim of transforming patriotic feelings into a fuel for worldwide

conquest, and using it as a venom for subjugation and exploitation, could ultimately succeed only to the extent of widespread destruction and loss of lives in the order of millions.

Taking a cue from Hitler's tactics, many tyrants since him have wreaked havoc on society as much as, if not to a greater measure than he did. Patriotism has, owing to such adventures, been suffering a loss of credibility. The erosion of its exalted status is evident from the quote: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" ! But such loss of credibility, hopefully, will not affect the importance of patriotism in national stability and welfare. Despite the misuse it often suffers, patriotism continues to have the ability to stir people into realizing seemingly impossible tasks. It was more the feeling of patriotism than anything else that motivated a hopelessly impoverished and disgracefully armed Russian society to withstand, and eventually to defeat, a superior, more powerful and better organized German army during the Second World War. Hence, to the extent of its ability to motivate and discipline people, patriotism is a vital sentiment that deserves to be cherished, and more importantly, to be nourished.