

HOW TO APPLY SINCERITY TO DEMOCRACY

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The chief danger to democracy in Anglo - Saxon countries, apart from the fact that it is very seldom functioning in a democratic manner, -- is the isolation of the individual.

Naturally, the cut-offness of the single unit is more noticeable in a country the size of the United States. Nor is it only size that separates the citizens of this great republic; there is undoubtedly, in spite of the same speech, great diversity of peoples. (New Englanders are no more like Southerners than Hungarians are like Czechs.)

Physical or racial isolation in America is, however, the least part of the danger. What is far more noticeable and far more dangerous in Anglo - Saxon countries is the mental isolation of each individual. The very independence that is one of the chief prides of democracy fosters this sense of separateness. Yet man is a gregarious animal and his whole development and security depend upon favorable relationships with his fellows.

Alfred Adler always pointed out, "Man has no virtues on a desert island." He depends altogether upon his brothers for cooperation, courage, and generosity.

British and American peoples begin to isolate themselves young -- before their sense of membership in a family has fully developed. The desire for personal success, deeply natural and commendable in itself, is often unduly stressed by education, alike by parents and by teachers, instead of the far more necessary and less obvious instincts of contribution toward the general welfare.

Yet a child should be taught immediately -- Adler used to say, "half an hour after birth" -- that he is a member of society and owes duties to it, in return for his privileges.

This isolation into a personal aim, that of the

child's own pleasure of profit, must soon develop into an inward urge, not to develop himself for the good of the community he lives in, but to beat or, if possible, get the better of the other members of the group.

It is frequently asserted that without a training in competition, the chief agent of man's development would be lost; and perhaps this was true in the pre-social ages where the overwhelming task was for the human being to keep alive at all. Instincts, however, do not need much fostering today, and should never be cultivated at each other's expense. There is enough spirit of competition in every young and undiscouraged child to keep all his powers at concert pitch, and there is a very real danger that by overstimulating this instinct of competition, we may destroy and unbalance the whole human being.

The strip-tease of competition is at least as dangerous to the young as sex excitements -- besides leading straight away from the security of brotherhood into the danger zone of rivalry and hate.

A child brought up to accept as an aim his responsibility to the whole community, either as a member of a family or a school, and trained to contribute daily something towards its welfare, will become unconsciously democratic. Not only will he have a more balanced and responsible way of considering the world he lives in, but he will escape the cruel tension -- so often resulting in neurosis -- that menaces a child whose aim is personal prestige.

The child who is always being urged to make a shining example of himself seldom reaches even the average of a good human being.

There must be a terrible tension and confusion in the mind of anyone who keeps asking himself: "How shall I beat this other person? How shall I be more admired -- more feared -- more liked -- keep at the top of my class -- win this or that prize?" How many young and precious lives have been driven into ill-health and failure -- or into agonizing conflicts, sometimes leading into extreme cases to suicide, simply because their competitive instinct has been unduly stimulated!

The fear of being outstripped in an artificial race for imaginary credits lies at the root of almost all nervous breakdowns.

The moment a child begins to regard his fellow human beings as rivals, rather than as comrades, his democracy is already in danger.

For democracy is founded, as Christianity is founded, upon voluntary cooperation between human beings for the welfare of mankind.

These two great ways of looking at life -- now menaced as they have never before been menaced -- stand or fall by their own sincerity.

If to be a democrat is to be willing to play your part in a state served freely by all its citizens, unhandicapped by special privileges or penalties, if to be a religious person is to love your neighbor as yourself, then whether democracy or religion is preserved or destroyed hangs on our willingness to carry out these responsibilities.

Science has taught us that we must train ourselves in order to understand and obey the laws of life. We cannot jump into being expert surgeons or channel swimmers. Why should we expect to jump into being democrats?

We must train -- and train hard -- to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to serve the state to which we belong, critically and with all our faculties, as if it were a private business by which we expect to earn our living.

The alternative to these ways of accepting our responsibilities as democrats is to be forcibly developed as a mechanical robot in a slave state, ruled by criminal tyrants, where all cooperation is compulsory, and any failure to act in obedience to orders is punishable by concentration camp or death.

There are isolations in democratic countries that must be broken down before the democratic spirit can act freely toward its goal.

In England there is the isolation of class, inculcated in public schools, and bolstered up by money. America, too, has its special isolation -- attacking family life at its source -- in the frequent separation of the sexes. Men isolate themselves in their overstressed and prolonged work lives; women in their homes or club organizations. The young isolate themselves from the old; the rich from the poor.

Subordination or isolation work against democracy wherever they are found. "To each his need; from each his power" is a motto, that, when carried out, rids life alike of dullness and danger.

Man is not dull when he is working with others for a common aim; nor is he in danger when he is not cut off from others, nor absorbed in himself.

There is natural generosity in the young, as well as a real desire to play their part in the great game of life, that should never be ignored nor taken advantage of by their elders.

Parents are often too jealous of control and too anxious to have their own way to delegate tasks and powers to their children in such a way as to reward the child for the effort he is called upon to make. Freedom and encouragement in carrying out a responsibility are rewards enough for any child; but the child should be able to count upon them. No one wants to do a job grudgingly accepted or cruelly criticized; and still less does he wish to do it fussed or hectored over.

These are not democratic methods and should not be used in training a child toward its democratic goal.

Kipling's pleasant idea of Heaven might well be borne in mind in the training of a child:

"Where each in his separate star
Shall paint the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are."

The word "separate" sounds unfortunate as part of an argument against isolation, but in the sense of not being unduly interfered with, "separateness" in car-

rying out a task is essential. Otherwise you check at the source -- as the totalitarian states intend to check -- the creative spirit of man.

Each of us has a right to carry out his own responsibility separately; but the purpose of our contribution to the general welfare of our community belongs to us all alike.

Another danger in the development of true democracy is that all those who train toward personal success are very liable to have their whole confidence in life shaken and undermined by the hint of a failure. Such a failure is not seen as a mere mistake to be rectified by a better understanding of a special job or by discovering an easier way of handling a difficult situation; it is taken as a personal defect and often overwhelms the whole human being in disaster.

These egocentric setbacks, often very unimportant and transitory in themselves, result in their victims becoming so unsure from the loss of their self-esteem that they retreat into fictitious satisfactions such as alcoholic excesses, casual and loose living, or even into crime, in order to make up for their lack of self-confidence, and to forget their inner loneliness. People are not lonely when they are working with others for a common aim.

Democracy supplies such an aim for all its citizens, but we have not yet understood that we must be at least as well trained to carry out our democratic convictions as the Nazis are to carry out their crimes.

Otherwise dictatorships will really overrun the world.

If they succeed in this endeavor, it will be because they have an integrating idea, and have trained themselves toward carrying it out.

That the Nazi aim is the destruction of all that mankind has hitherto learned and prized in art, science, or religion is indisputable; and that this destruction is enforced by criminals is obvious, from the methods employed; but the bringing together of people into one

common purpose (were that purpose a good one and the bringing together a free process) might be the triumph of civilization.

Democracy, while it was fighting aristocratic domination and had in view the freeing of industrial property for all alike, was an ideal, worth keeping alive.

Its partial failure, like the partial failure of religion, was not that either of these great forces lacked an integrating idea but that individuals lacked the scientific training needed to carry these ideas out. They split on the same rock. No one with an egocentric goal, trained to compete with his fellow man, instead of with a socially interested goal and trained to cooperate with him, can become either a democrat or a religious person.

It is impossible to believe in a democratic aim and insist on retaining special privileges for a certain class. We cannot successfully love our neighbors as ourselves while aiming at personal conveniences and triumphs quite incompatible with the love of our neighbor. Devotion is behavior; and democracy is the service of mankind moving toward a common level of prosperity.

What we are confronted with today is a whole aggregation of people who are prepared, for the sake of power, to act consistently. They are training entire countries by terrorism into an abnegation of personal responsibility which will throw all power into the hands of small groups of ruthless criminals. Their methods suit their aims. These men are consistent and vigorous; their weapons are unlimited because the whole common property of the people is spent upon armaments and they are unencumbered by scruples. The Nazis and their followers have made friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness and, from their point of view, with the best possible results.

They have not split their forces by contradictory ideas; and the burning sincerity of their love of power may very well overturn the whole progress of mankind.

The responsibility still lies with those who have the liberty to use creatively the spiritual gifts that the Fascists are throwing away; but we shall have to train ourselves in sincerity and truth; as well as prepare to fight for what we hold in trust.

The goal of mankind is a free brotherhood. The Nazis and Fascists have substituted another goal -- slavery and hate. Free brotherhood is what we are fighting for; and we must train for cooperation -- each of us -- to fight for it, or we shall lose it.

THE FUNCTION OF DREAMS

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Most psychologists agree nowadays that dreams are manifestations of unsolved emotional conflicts. It was Freud who first drew attention to this rich source of psychological research, though his first conception of dream - interpretation has changed a great deal not only with psychologists but also with psychoanalysts as well. It is incontestable that Alfred Adler, the originator of Individual Psychology, has given us a most valuable point of view by emphasizing that dreams must be looked at as parts of the total personality and that we are not entitled to make any classification or schematic interpretation such as, for instance, psychoanalysis has endeavored to make.

As manifold as nature itself are the personality patterns formed by civilized man to meet life's ever-