

TEACHINGS OF THE HEROES

by
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I. POLITICAL ¹

1. *Love of country*—Love your country next to your God and your honor, and above yourself, because she is the only Paradise that God has given you in this life, the only patrimony of your race, the only inheritance from your forefathers, and the only hope of your posterity; because of her, you have life, love, and property, happiness, honor and God. I love my native land, the Philippines, because to her I owe life and happiness, and because every man should love the land of his birth. Love of country will be a sin only in tyrannical countries, because then even rapine will be given a beautiful name. Always bear in mind that the true love for God is the love of country, the love which is also the true love of fellowmen. So, you who have desires that have withered within your souls, you whose hearts ache to see your fond hopes fall one by one like the plants in Otoño devoid of flowers and leaves, if you still want to love and cannot find one suited to you, look at your native land; love her with all your heart. You who have lost a father, a son, a brother, a wife, or a beloved one, if in your heart you can feel gloom and dreadful solitude, turn to the land of your birth; give her the love that she deserves.

Whatever may be our fate, we should love our native land and never advocate anything other than what will benefit her. *Think* of the motherland before anything else. Strive for the happiness of your country before your own, and seek that she be governed with jus-

^{*} Awarded first prize, contest on compilation of teachings of national heroes, 1931.

¹ This work is composed of extracts from the writings of our national heroes, like Jose Rizal, Apolinario Mabini, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Lopez, Jaena, Andres Banifacio, Emilio Jacinto, Antonio Luna, and others. The extracts are coordinated and organized under different topics to form a single composition. In the body of the composition, the words in italics are insertions by the author.

tice, reason, and industry, because when she is happy necessarily you and your family will also be happy. We have no worth when alone; so conform yourself to the country's desire, identify yourself with the country, hear her call heedless of others, and uphold the glory of the native land.

2. *Freedom of country*—Each nation has its own destiny. The nation that loves its traditions cannot ask another nation to teach it to accept oppression and stain its name. It is the unavoidable law of nations to obtain their liberties and, therefore, their welfare and progress, at the cost of tears and blood. It is necessary to teach the people to die—this is their duty. To escape is cowardice and will set a bad example. Without struggle there is no liberty.

Strive for the freedom of your country, for you are the only one who can have a true interest in her renown and dignity; because her independence is your own freedom and happiness, her renown your perfection and dignity, your glory and immortality. Let us not ask of the foreigners who come that they seek the welfare of our country, for they will get here what will enrich them and leave after satisfying their desire. They come in search of wealth; *on your part*, go to their land and seek other wealth that we will need. *But remember*, while a country has its own language it has its freedom, just as a man retains his liberty as long as he has his own judgment, for he who does not love his native tongue is worse than a beast or slimy fish; so what is right is to honor it properly like a mother that has truly cared for you.

To wait is the same as to suffer. Reason teaches that we should no longer wait. Reason teaches that we should not waste time waiting vainly for promises of a happiness that will never come. Reason teaches that we have to trust only to ourselves, and never to anyone else, our right to life. Reason teaches that we be one in feeling, in thought, and in purpose, in order to unify the course that will overthrow

the bad administrator in our country. *Therefore*, let us disperse the clouds of our intelligence, with unbreakable and absolute faith in success, in the realization of the desired prosperity of the land of our birth.

3. *Revolution*—It is already axiomatic that nobody can look out for a person as well as that person himself. *So that*, if you want to measure oppression or the good done by one country to another, you have only to determine whether it is hated or loved.

Whenever the government succeeds in stagnating the people, whether for its own gain or that of a particular class, or for any other end, revolution is inevitable. When a people is denied enlightenment, home, freedom, and reason, inherent gifts without which nations cannot live, such people has a right to consider him who denies them as a highway robber. *As a result*, revolution always occurs in subject countries, in those countries where human thought and feelings are suppressed to prevent expression. Revolution is just whenever it aims to overthrow a foreign usurping government. Revolution is also just against a national government, or one composed of the elements of the country, if said government, abusing the power which the people has placed at its disposal to help them in the sacred mission of administering justice, employs this same power to stifle the public voice and governed according to its caprice and convenience. He who imposes upon others by his own will and command, without the consent of the governed, usurps the right of God, the only one who can dispose of His creatures by His sole will. He who imposes fines and punishments without hearing those prejudiced usurps the powers and rights of his equals for his own gain. *Therefore*, he who resist the tyrant and usurper, dragging him from power so that he may not insult heaven and earth, performs a task pleasing to both God and men.

When the conceived child has reached the right age of birth, woe to the mother

who attempts to prevent such birth. *And* when a people rises as one man, with armed hand, against a policy of oppression and injustice, it manifests a vitality sufficient for a free existence. *Therefore*, let us unite so that each and everyone should learn to defend, until death if need be, the independence of the Philippines.

4. *Patriotism*—It is not sufficient that the revolutionist renounces his life and abandon the enjoyment of the family and the home in order to be truly such; it is necessary, besides, that he renounces temporarily his liberty, like the honest laborer who has to sacrifice his hours of rest and leisure for his work if he wants to have economy and to dedicate the rest of his life to ease. He alone possesses true patriotism who, whatever the positions he fills, be it high or low, strive to do for his country the most good possible. A little good done in a humble position gives title to honor and glory, while a little done in an elevated position is a sign of negligence and ineptitude.

There is nothing worth having the patriot

Will not give for his native land:
Blood and wealth, and knowledge and effort,

Even life, to be crushed and taken.

Engrave in your heart that the symbol of honor is to die in saving one's country. It does not matter whether we die in the end or in the middle of the taxing struggle: succeeding generations, on praying over our tombs, will dedicate to us tears of love and gratitude, and not of bitter reproach. *Therefore*,

Into her holocaust loving
The last drop of your blood you must offer;

If to free her your life you have given,
Yours is glory then and redemption.

If our country with danger is threatened

And help must be quickly forthcoming,

Children, wife, and parents, and brothers

At her first call we must abandon.

The father *should abandon* his children, and the son his parents, so that all may unite to defend the common motherland. *For*, what is death when one dies for the beloved, for the native land, and for the people that he adores?

5. *Government*—What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow? As the master is, so is the servant; as the government is, so is the people. *Therefore*, independence alone is not sufficient; it is furthermore indispensable to have a moral government, that is to say, one which governs with truth, and not with deception, complying sincerely with the laws and with what have been promised to the people: a government conveniently progressive, that is to say, neither behind nor too far advanced, but suited to the grade of culture and to the growing needs of the people, because both extremes are vicious; finally, a government that is truly very patriotic, that is to say, one which procures the general welfare and not that of an individual or a privileged class. Only in this way can we make our country great, and being great, it can fulfill the mission which Providence has decreed for it.

Seek for your country a republic, that in which the men in authority are selected by the people, and never permit a monarchy or that of a king; because a king bestows favor only to a few relatives to raise his own family from which will come succeeding kings; unlike this is a republic which gives consideration and right to all, according to the ability, honesty, and industry of each. Tyranny is possible only in a few because of the cowardice and negligence of others. In your country, do not recognize the authority of any person not elected by the people, because all authority emanates from God, and as God speaks through the conscience, therefore, whoever may be elected by the conscience of all the people is the only one who can bear the true authority. To have bad and weak leaders is not only useless but even harmful, because those who could be the source of love and gratitude are able to create bitterness and regret.

He who obeys the power conferred by the people obeys the people and identifies himself with the will of all the citizens who compose the people, which identification or accord is necessary for the very life of the people. Let us wipe out the habit of thinking that the ruler is the lord of the people and whatever he thinks and does is good. Let us accustom ourselves to thinking and saying that the happiness of all is the duty of the ruler, in order that he may bear it in mind. A people who abhors the administrators has nothing to ask but that the latter leave the reins of government. *And*, if by the proper means a people asks anything of the government, it is because they believe that the government is good and is ready to give them what will be beneficial to them; such an act should not offend, rather it should gladden, *because* the people asks from a mother and not from any other. *Besides*, all power, in order to be reasonable and genuine, must be exercised for the benefit of the people from which it emanates. The government is instituted for the good of the people, and to fully attain its purpose it should follow the wishes of the citizens who know best what they need. The welfare of the people, and nothing else, is the real reason and object, the beginning and the end, of all the duties of those who govern.

We do not want to be a semi-feudal people; we *should have* a free press so that truth may shine in all its splendor; we *should have* the privileges of commerce so that we may know until where the manifestations of our activity reach; we *should have* suffrage and representation so that our aspirations may be faithfully known.

6. *Liberty*—Liberty is the attribute of man from the moment he is born; thanks to it, he does and thinks as he pleases provided he does no harm to another. Liberty comes from heaven and no power on earth is entitled to appropriate it, nor have we a right to consent to its being so appropriated. Liberty is the column that sustains the edifice, and the audacious one who brings it down in order to

bring down the building must be annihilated. Liberty is only for good, and never for evil. It runs always in accordance with reason and righteousness and with the honest conscience of the individual. The thief, when he steals, is not free, because he is the slave of his own passions; and when we imprison him, we punish him precisely because he does not like to use true liberty. Liberty does not mean that we must not obey anyone; precisely it requires us to adjust our conduct according to reason and justice. Liberty does not order that we obey any person: but it dictates that we always obey those whom we have elected and recognized as most capable of directing us, because in this manner we would be obeying our own reason.

II. SOCIAL

1. *Fellowship*—Love your fellowmen as you love yourself, because he, as well as you, was given by God the duty to help you and not to do to you what he would not want you to do to him; but when your fellowman, failing in his sacred duty, attempts against your life, liberty, and property, then you must destroy and annihilate him, because in that case the law will be the foremost command of God: to help yourself because He is helping you, or that of self-preservation. It is righteous to defend oneself.

Of all human sentiments nothing is more sublime than love—love for the fellowman. Without it, the peoples would disappear from the earth, and the communities and associations and life itself would resemble the dry leaves of the trees swept away by the wind. It is rational to be charitable and love one's fellowmen, and to adjust one's actions, deeds, and words to what is reasonable. *But*, always consider your countryman above all other fellowmen, regarding him as a true friend and brother, or as a comrade with whom you are bound by a common fortune, by the same joys and sorrows, and by identical aspirations and interests. Therefore, as long as the frontiers of nations, which are raised by the egoism of the race and the family, subsist, you must unite

with him with perfect solidarity of purpose and interests so that you may have strength to fight the common enemy and to realize all the ends of human life. *If you* want to protect *yourself*, you should help protect others, because if you leave your fellowmen alone, they will also leave you alone. A single stick is easy to break; but it is hard to break a whole bundle of them. It is incumbent upon all to free and help, with their own riches and lives, him who runs grave risks in the fulfillment of his duties. Defend the oppressed and fight the oppressor, before the law or in the field. The person who does not side with the offended helps the offender and stains his own conscience.

Share as much as you can of your resources with every needy and unfortunate. *But* consideration for others is not always kindness; it is an evil when used to prepare for coercion. *For*, to do good for personal gain and not for its sake is not virtue. Any gift given, to be recognized with gratitude, must be made without the least desire for personal gain in the end. He who has noble sentiments prefers honor to personal gain; he who has perverted sentiments prefers personal gain to honor.

2. *Equality*—All men are equal; the origin of all is the same. Poor, rich, ignorant, wise; all are equal and true brethren. Whether the skin be black or white, all men are equal; it may happen that one is superior to another in knowledge, wealth or beauty, but he cannot be superior as a man. All men are born equal, naked, without subjection. God did not create man to be a slave, nor endowed him with intelligence to be blinded, nor adorned him with reason to be deceived by another. It is not stupidity to refuse venerating a fellow-creature, to illumine the intelligence, and to make use of reason in all things. The stupid is he who defies himself, who reduces others to stupidity, and covets the submission of all the reasonable and just to his caprice. *But* there is no oppressor where none consents to be oppressed. If there are teachers who

insult, it is because there are pupils who tolerate. What makes one despicable is his lack of dignity and his servile fear of the despiser. It is inherent in man to shun those whom he oppresses. Man has inborn bad qualities which will always go to excess when they meet people who will tolerate them. *However*, do not let anyone believe that the equality proclaimed is contrary to the respect due all authority governing the people; no, this pre-eminence created by the people, the people respect; but the representative of authority, as a man, is a man just like the rest.

3. *Industry*—Knowledge and wealth signify strength: only the poor and ignorant man is weak. *But*, it is not necessary that all Filipinos should have academic degrees to credit them with aptitude; it is enough that they have the firm will, the resolute desire, which is the generative cause of all human capacity. *However*, train and improve the inherent natural knowledge and keenness of mind with which God has endowed you by means of your efforts, without straying at any moment from the road of the good and the just, so that you may procure your protection, and by this means contribute to the progress of humanity. In that way, you will fulfill the mission entrusted to you by God in this life; realizing this, you will have honor; having honor, you will glorify your God.

From serenity, constancy, reason, and faith in all your actions and deeds is derived the success of every good desire. The school of suffering hardens men; the field of battle strengthens souls that love their honor. Diligence in work to procure the means of subsistence is the true cause, love, and affection for yourself, your wife, your children, your brother, and your countrymen. So, do not waste time; wealth that is lost may be recovered, but time that has passed will never return. To enjoy does not mean to make foolishness.

He who toils keep away from a life of disorderly and bad habits and from boredom, finds diversion in labor, and becomes strong, prosperous, and cheerful. *Therefore*, if homage is paid to

the mirage of presumption and the hambug of wealth, with much more reason should homage be paid to the tiller of the soil, who, under the open skies, allows himself to be soaked to the skin and scorched by the sun in order to make the soil produce by his labor.

4. *Women*—This virtue (respect for women) was not only a necessity in the legendary period of romanticism, but it is as well one of the greatest necessities in the life of a people, since when woman within the sphere in which she customarily moves meets with respect and consideration, she will at once acquire that sense of dignity which, transmitted to her sons, will inspire them with courage and fortitude for great enterprises, for heroic acts. During maidenhood, which is the flower that will ripen into the fruit, woman must gather the wealth that should be transmitted to the son. *And*, if a people, in obtaining their freedom, cannot offer to their chaste maidens a peaceful home; if the only inheritance of a man is shame for his widow, tears for his mother, and slavery for his children, it is indeed better for you, *women*, to voluntarily crush in your wombs the seeds of cursed children.

It is necessary to change the race. Cowardly fathers will bring forth nothing but slaves, and there is no use of demolishing only to build again with defective materials. In the thorny road of life the husband is the guide of his wife and children; and if the guide goes to evil, necessarily those who are guided will go to evil. So awake and prepare the heart of your son for every good and commendable purpose, love for his honor, rectitude and firmness of desire, clearness of thought, purity of conduct, love for his fellowmen, and glorification of God—teach these to your son. *But* what will be the fruit of a woman who has no saintliness but to murmur prayers, no knowledge but of songs, *novenas*, and miracles, no recreations except "*pang-gingue*"² or to confess often so that she may sin more frequently? What will be her child but the sexton or slave of the priest, or a gambler? Nothing can

be drunk from the dirty and bitter spring; no sweet fruit comes from a sour seed.

That which you do not want done to your wife, daughter, or sister, do not do unto the wife, daughter or sister of another. Do not look upon woman as a mere plaything only, but as a helper and comrade in the difficulties of life; respect her in her weakness and think of the mother who gave you birth and nursed you in your childhood. When *women* are married, they should help their husbands, imbue them with courage, share with them half of the dangers without annoying them, and lighten their pains. They should teach their children to prefer dying with honor to living with shame. . . . Upon you, adorable Filipino women, depend the regeneration, the progress, the improvement of our great Archipelago. With the riches that you prodigally give to sisterhoods and brotherhoods for the maintenance of magnificent cults, you have more than enough to make of the Philippines a civilized, prosperous and happy country. Let us ponder a little and open our eyes, especially you, my countrywomen, because you open the life of men. Know that the good mother is different from the creation of the friar. Rear your children near the true picture of God, a God that cannot be bribed, a God who is not avaricious, a God who is the father of all and needs nothing, a God who does not fatten on the blood of the poor and who does not seek to suppress alert intelligence. What I want of you, my countrywomen, is that you become women with free minds, with steady hearts that will inspire weakening or despairing men or evoke brilliant thoughts; women of whom the country can be proud, admired by others; because it is common for Spaniards and priests to speak of the weakness and ignorance of the Filipino women.

5. *Greatness*—The welfare of one cannot be equal to the welfare of all; one man is worthless when compared to a nation. So, abandon that desire for exclusive personal gain which covers you; that envy and self-conceit which oppresses you; and that boastfulness and gossip which harm you. The greatness of a man is not in being

a king, nor in having an aquiline nose or white skin; it is not in being a priest, a representative of God, it is not in holding high positions on this earth. The great and truly noble man is he who, even though born in the forest and knowing nothing but his native language, does good, keeps his word, is worthy and honest; he who never oppresses nor permits himself to be oppressed; he who loves and cherishes his native land. The ecclesiastical garment does not add anything to the knowledge of a man; even if the ecclesiastical garments be piled one over another on a man from the mountains (taga bundok), he remains a mountain-man and cannot fool anyone but the ignorant and weak-hearted.

True honor is gained by cultivating the intellect in order to learn the truth, and by educating our hearts to accustom them to love it. It is not God's desire that man, his image, be blinded and deceived; the jewel of intelligence, with which we are adorned, should be used and made brighter. Ignorance is servitude, because as his thought is, so is the man; the man without his own judgment is a man without personality. *Although* some are born to command and others to obey, the person who blindly follows the judgment of another is like an animal following the chain. A man should die for his own convictions.

The life which is not consecrated to a lofty and reasonable purpose is a tree without a shadow, if not a poisonous herb. Don't you know that a life which is not dedicated to a high purpose is useless? It is a small stone thrown into the fields and not utilized in the construction of an edifice. Your own character is the sole strong and everlasting foundation of your habits, and so is industry the strongest support for your own development.

III. RELIGIOUS

1. *Worship of God*—Love God with your heart. Love God and your honor above all things; God is the source of all truth, justice, and activity; honor is the only incentive to make you truthful, just, and industrious. Only a few worship the good God; attention is attracted to the many saints. Worship God in the manner that your con-

science deems reasonable and dignified; because in your conscience, which reproves your bad acts and praises the good, speaks your God. Know that the will of God is distinct from the will of the priest; that saintliness does not consist in devoting much time on your knees, nor in long prayers, big rosaries, and dirty scapularies, but in immaculate conduct, in clean intentions, and in rectitude of criterion. Know also that prudence does not consist in blindly obeying whatever caprice of those who pretend to be gods (diosdiosan), but in following only what is just and what is reasonable, happen what may happen. God is the father of humanity, and what a father requires of his children is not constant protestations of respect, fear, and love for him, but the performance of his mandates, which are the mandates of reason; hence, the true respect and obedience to God consists in respect, love, and obedience to the dictates of reason, and to them we must adjust all our deeds, thoughts, and actions, because reason originates from God himself.

2. *Minister of God*—The representative of Christ is not recognized by the kissing of hands. The true minister of God is not he who wears the ecclesiastical garment, but he who proclaims His glory by means of good work useful to the greatest possible number of his creatures. *Therefore*, he who wishes to call himself a disciple and man of Christ must imitate Him in His humility, kindness, and love for his fellowmen.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

It is never good for any one to take something not belonging to him. Only by the wide and easy way of violence and robbery will we find our own dishonor, which is the dishonor of our country as well as its ruin and death. We need as an indispensable requisite union and discipline in order to raise the edifice of our social regeneration. But that is not all. We need, besides, to march by the narrow path of honor and virtue, because there, and only there, will we find true liberty, which is only for good and never for evil. So let us seek the light and let us not be deceived by the false glitter of the

wicked. All that glitters is not gold. Treason and perversity seek glitter in order to conceal their falseness to the eyes of the spectator; but honesty and sincere love go naked confidently, allowing themselves to be seen by the light of day.

Believe in punishment for all the wicked and the traitors, and in recompense for all good labor. He who voluntarily confesses his sins at least displays a praiseworthy and honorable desire for amendment and improvement. Evil is not cured by another evil.

Surely, we must not trust in ourselves alone, but we should consult others and hear them, and then proceed to that which we believe is right. The intelligent man is cautious in his speech and is faithful in guarding the secrets he should keep. It is not courage but imprudence for anyone to challenge all those who are here; nobody scorns a pilot who seeks shelter in a harbor at the first rising of the wind. To bow before a bullet to let it pass is not cowardice; what is bad is to expose oneself to it and fall, never to rise again. Pride, which the recognition of power always creates, oftentimes considers as a weakness what prudence suggests. Besides, it is necessary not to lose sight of the fact that pride, although sometimes it has infused valor and perseverance for hazardous undertakings, is always a bad counsellor when the question is one of deciding whether or not a proposed end is proper.

To the man with shame, his word is sacred.

When the grass in a field has been eaten up, the locusts will fly to another.

Always bear in mind that with new life come new customs.

(From PRIZE SELECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL HEROES—by *Arturo M. Tolentino*)

2 A common gambling game by use of cards.