

## CHAPTER X

### PARENT LOVE

In the serious hour of puberty, the individual passes into his second phase of accomplishment. But there cannot be a perfect transition unless all the activity is in full play in all the first four poles of the psyche. Childhood is a chrysalis from which each must extricate himself. And the struggling youth or maid cannot emerge unless by the energy of all powers; he can never emerge if the whole mass of the world and the tradition of love hold him back.

Now we come to the greater peril of our particular form of idealism. It is the idealism of love and of the spirit: the idealism of yearning, outgoing love, of pure sympathetic communion and "understanding." And this idealism recognizes as the highest earthly love, the love of mother and child.

And what does this mean? It means, for every delicately brought up child, indeed for all the children who matter, a steady and persistent pressure upon the upper sympathetic centers, and a steady and persistent starving of the lower centers, particularly the great voluntary center of the lower body. The center of sensual, manly independence, of exultation in the sturdy, defiant self, willfulness and masterfulness and pride, this center is steadily suppressed. The

warm, swift, sensual self is steadily and persistently denied, damped, weakened, throughout all the period of childhood. And by sensual we do not mean greedy or ugly, we mean the deeper, more impulsive reckless nature. Life must be always refined and superior. Love and happiness must be the watchword. The willful, critical element of the spiritual mode is never absent, the silent, if forbearing disapproval and distaste is always ready. Vile bullying forbearance.

With what result? The center of upper sympathy is abnormally, inflamedly excited; and the centers of will are so deranged that they operate in jerks and spasms. The true polarity of the sympathetic-voluntary system within the child is so disturbed as to be almost deranged. Then we have an exaggerated sensitiveness alternating with a sort of helpless fury: and we have delicate frail children with nerves or with strange whims. And we have the strange cold obstinacy of the spiritual will, cold as hell, fixed in a child.

Then one parent, usually the mother, is the object of blind devotion, whilst the other parent, usually the father, is an object of resistance. The child is taught, however, that both parents should be loved, and only loved: and that love, gentleness, pity, charity, and all "higher" emotions, these alone are genuine feelings, all the rest are false, to be rejected.

With what result? The upper centers are developed to a degree of unnatural acuteness and reaction--or again they fall numbed and

barren. And then between parents and children a painfully false relation grows up: a relation as of two adults, either of two pure lovers, or of two love-appearing people who are really trying to bully one another. Instead of leaving the child with its own limited but deep and incomprehensible feelings, the parent, hopelessly involved in the sympathetic mode of selfless love, and spiritual love-will, stimulates the child into a consciousness which does not belong to it, on the one plane, and robs it of its own spontaneous consciousness and freedom on the other plane.

And this is the fatality. Long before puberty, by an exaggeration and an intensity of spiritual love from the parents, the second centers of sympathy are artificially aroused into response. And there is an irreparable disaster. Instead of seeing as a child should see, through a glass, darkly, the child now opens premature eyes of sympathetic cognition. Instead of knowing in part, as it should know, it begins, at a fearfully small age, to know in full. The cervical plexuses and the cervical ganglia, which should only begin to awake after adolescence, these centers of the higher dynamic sympathy and cognition, are both artificially stimulated, by the adult personal love-emotion and love-will into response, in a quite young child, sometimes even in an infant. This is a holy obscenity.

Our particular mode of idealism causes us to suppress as far as possible the sensual centers, to make them negative. The whole of the activity is concentrated, as far as possible, in the upper or

spiritual centers, the centers of the breast and throat, which we will call the centers of dynamic cognition, in contrast to the centers of sensual comprehension below the diaphragm.

And then a child arrives at puberty, with its upper nature already roused into precocious action. The child nowadays is almost invariably precocious in "understanding." In the north, spiritually precocious, so that by the time it arrives at adolescence it already has experienced the extended sympathetic reactions which should have lain utterly dark. And it has experienced these extended reactions with whom? With the parent or parents.

Which is man devouring his own offspring. For to the parents belongs, once and for all, the dynamic reaction on the first plane of consciousness only, the reaction and relationship at the first four poles of dynamic consciousness. When the second, the farther plane of consciousness rouses into action, the relationship is with strangers. All human instinct and all ethnology will prove this to us. What sex-instinct there is in a child is always adverse to the parents.

But also, the parents are all too quick. They all proceed to swallow their children before the children can get out of their clutches. And even if parents do send away their children at the age of puberty--to school or elsewhere--it is not much good. The mischief has been done before. For the first twelve years the parents and the whole community forcibly insist on the child's living from the upper centers only, and

particularly the upper sympathetic centers, without the balance of the warm, deep sensual self. Parents and community alike insist on rousing an adult sympathetic response, and a mental answer in the child-schools, Sunday-schools, books, home-influence--all works in this one pernicious way. But it is the home, the parents, that work most effectively and intensely. There is the most intimate mesh of love, love-bullying, and "understanding" in which a child is entangled.

So that a child arrives at the age of puberty already stripped of its childhood's darkness, bound, and delivered over. Instead of waking now to a whole new field of consciousness, a whole vast and wonderful new dynamic impulse towards new connections, it finds itself fatally bound. Puberty accomplishes itself. The hour of sex strikes. But there is your child, bound, helpless. You have already aroused in it the dynamic response to your own insatiable love-will. You have already established between your child and yourself the dynamic relation in the further plane of consciousness. You have got your child as sure as if you had woven its flesh again with your own. You have done what it is vicious for any parent to do: you have established between your child and yourself the bond of adult love: the love of man for man, woman for woman, or man for woman. All your tenderness, your cherishing will not excuse you. It only deepens your guilt. You have established between your child and yourself the bond of further sympathy. I do not speak of sex. I speak of pure sympathy, sacred love. The parents establish between themselves and their child the

bond of the higher love, the further spiritual love, the sympathy of the adult soul.

And this is fatal. It is a sort of incest. It is a dynamic spiritual incest, more dangerous than sensual incest, because it is more intangible and less instinctively repugnant. But let psychoanalysis fall into what discredit it may, it has done us this great service of proving to us that the intense upper sympathy, indeed the dynamic relation either of love-will or love-sympathy, between parent and child, upon the upper plane, inevitably involves us in a conclusion of incest.

For although it is our aim to establish a purely spiritual dynamic relation on the upper plane only, yet, because of the inevitable polarity of the human psychic system, we shall arouse at the same time a dynamic sensual activity on the lower plane, the deeper sensual plane. We may be as pure as angels, and yet, being human, this will and must inevitably happen. When Mrs. Ruskin said that John Ruskin should have married his mother she spoke the truth. He was married to his mother. For in spite of all our intention, all our creed, all our purity, all our desire and all our will, once we arouse the dynamic relation in the upper, higher plane of love, we inevitably evoke a dynamic consciousness on the lower, deeper plane of sensual love. And then what?

Of course, parents can reply that their love, however intense, is

pure, and has absolutely no sensual element. Maybe--and maybe not. But admit that it is so. It does not help. The intense excitement of the upper centers of sympathy willy-nilly arouses the lower centers. It arouses them to activity, even if it denies them any expression or any polarized connection. Our psyche is so framed that activity aroused on one plane provokes activity on the corresponding plane, automatically. So the intense pure love-relation between parent and child inevitably arouses the lower centers in the child, the centers of sex. Now the deeper sensual centers, once aroused, should find response from the sensual body of some other, some friend or lover. The response is impossible between parent and child. Myself, I believe that biologically there is radical sex-aversion between parent and child, at the deeper sensual centers. The sensual circuit cannot adjust itself spontaneously between the two.

So what have you? Child and parent intensely linked in adult love-sympathy and love-will, on the upper plane, and in the child, the deeper sensual centers aroused, but finding no correspondent, no objective, no polarized connection with another person. There they are, the powerful centers of sex, acting spasmodically, without balance. They must be polarized somehow. So they are polarized to the active upper centers within the child, and you get an introvert.

This is how introversion begins. The lower sexual centers are aroused. They find no sympathy, no connection, no response from outside, no expression. They are dynamically polarized by the upper centers within

the individual. That is, the whole of the sexual or deeper sensual flow goes on upwards in the individual, to his own upper, from his own lower centers. The upper centers hold the lower in positive polarity. The flow goes on upwards. There must be some reaction. And so you get, first and foremost, self-consciousness, an intense consciousness in the upper self of the lower self. This is the first disaster. Then you get the upper body exploiting the lower body. You get the hands exploiting the sensual body, in feeling, fingering, and in masturbation. You get a pornographic longing with regard to the self. You get the obscene post cards which most youths possess. You get the absolute lust for dirty stories, which so many men have. And you get various mild sex perversions, such as masturbation, and so on.

What does all this mean? It means that the activity of the lower psyche and lower body is polarized by the upper body. Eyes and ears want to gather sexual activity and knowledge. The mind becomes full of sex: and always, in an introvert, of his own sex. If we examine the apparent extroverts, like the flaunting Italian, we shall see the same thing. It is his own sex which obsesses him.

And to-day what have we but this? Almost inevitably we find in a child now an intense, precocious, secret sexual preoccupation. The upper self is rabidly engaged in exploiting the lower self. A child and its own roused, inflamed sex, its own shame and masturbation, its own cruel, secret sexual excitement and sex curiosity, this is the greatest tragedy of our day. The child does not so much want to act



as to know. The thought of actual sex connection is usually repulsive. There is an aversion from the normal coition act. But the craving to feel, to see, to taste, to know, mentally in the head, this is insatiable. Anything, so that the sensation and experience shall come through the upper channels. This is the secret of our introversion and our perversion to-day. Anything rather than spontaneous direct action from the sensual self. Anything rather than the merely normal passion. Introduce any trick, any idea, any mental element you can into sex, but make it an affair of the upper consciousness, the mind and eyes and mouth and fingers. This is our vice, our dirt, our disease.

And the adult, and the ideal are to blame. But the tragedy of our children, in their inflamed, solitary sexual excitement, distresses us beyond any blame.

It is time to drop the word love, and more than time to drop the ideal of love. Every frenzied individual is told to find fulfillment in love. So he tries. Whereas, there is no fulfillment in love. Half of our fulfillment comes through love, through strong, sensual love. But the central fulfillment, for a man, is that he possess his own soul in strength within him, deep and alone. The deep, rich aloneness, reached and perfected through love. And the passing beyond any further quest of love.

This central fullness of self-possession is our goal, if goal there be

any. But there are two great ways of fulfillment. The first, the way of fulfillment through complete love, complete, passionate, deep love. And the second, the greater, the fulfillment through the accomplishment of religious purpose, the soul's earnest purpose. We work the love way falsely, from the upper self, and work it to death. The second way, of active unison in strong purpose, and in faith, this we only sneer at.

But to return to the child and the parent. The coming to the fulfillment of single aloneness, through love, is made impossible for us by the ideal, the monomania of more love. At the very âge dangereuse, when a woman should be accomplishing her own fulfillment into maturity and rich quiescence, she turns rabidly to seek a new lover. At the very crucial time when she should be coming to a state of pure equilibrium and rest with her husband, she turns rabidly against rest or peace or equilibrium or husband in any shape or form, and demands more love, more love, a new sort of lover, one who will "understand" her. And as often as not she turns to her son.

It is true, a woman reaches her goal of fulfillment through feeling. But through being "understood" she reaches nowhere, unless the lover understands what a vice it is for a woman to get herself and her sex into her head. A woman reaches her fulfillment through love, deep sensual love, and exquisite sensitive communion. But once she reaches the point of fulfillment, she should not break off to ask for more excitements. She should take the beauty of maturity and peace and

quiet faithfulness upon her.

This she won't do, however, unless the man, her husband, goes on beyond her. When a man approaches the beginning of maturity and the fulfillment of his individual self, about the age of thirty-five, then is not his time to come to rest. On the contrary. Deeply fulfilled through marriage, and at one with his own soul, he must now undertake the responsibility for the next step into the future. He must now give himself perfectly to some further purpose, some passionate purposive activity. Till a man makes the great resolution of aloneness and singleness of being, till he takes upon himself the silence and central appeasedness of maturity; and then, after this, assumes a sacred responsibility for the next purposive step into the future, there is no rest. The great resolution of aloneness and appeasedness, and the further deep assumption of responsibility in purpose--this is necessary to every parent, every father, every husband, at a certain point. If the resolution is never made, the responsibility never embraced, then the love-craving will run on into frenzy, and lay waste to the family. In the woman particularly the love-craving will run on to frenzy and disaster.

Seeking, seeking the fulfillment in the deep passional self; diseased with self-consciousness and sex in the head, foiled by the very loving weakness of the husband who has not the courage to withdraw into his own stillness and singleness, and put the wife under the spell of his fulfilled decision; the unhappy woman beats about for her insatiable

satisfaction, seeking whom she may devour. And usually, she turns to her child. Here she provokes what she wants. Here, in her own son who belongs to her, she seems to find the last perfect response for which she is craving. He is a medium to her, she provokes from him her own answer. So she throws herself into a last great love for her son, a final and fatal devotion, that which would have been the richness and strength of her husband and is poison to her boy. The husband, irresolute, never accepting his own higher responsibility, bows and accepts. And the fatal round of introversion and "complex" starts once more. If man will never accept his own ultimate being, his final aloneness, and his last responsibility for life, then he must expect woman to dash from disaster to disaster, rootless and uncontrolled.

"On revient toujours à son premier amour." It sounds like a cynicism to-day. As if we really meant: "On ne revient jamais à son premier amour." But as a matter of fact, a man never leaves his first love, once the love is established. He may leave his first attempt at love. Once a man establishes a full dynamic communication at the deeper and the higher centers, with a woman, this can never be broken. But sex in the head breaks down, and half circuits break down. Once the full circuit is established, however, this can never break down.

Nowadays, alas, we start off self-conscious, with sex in the head. We find a woman who is the same. We marry because we are "pals." The sex is a rather nasty fiasco. We keep up a pretense of "pals"--and nice love. Sex spins wilder in the head than ever. There is either a

family of children whom the dissatisfied parents can devote themselves to, thereby perverting the miserable little creatures: or else there is a divorce. And at the great dynamic centers nothing has happened at all. Blank nothing. There has been no vital interchange at all in the whole of this beautiful marriage affair.

Establish between yourself and another individual a dynamic connection at only two of the four further poles, and you will have the devil of a job to break the connection. Especially if it be the first connection you have made. Especially if the other individual be the first in the field.

This is the case of the parents. Parents are first in the field of the child's further consciousness. They are criminal trespassers in that field. But that makes no matter. They are first in the field. They establish a dynamic connection between the two upper centers, the centers of the throat, the centers of the higher dynamic sympathy and cognition. They establish this circuit. And break it if you can. Very often not even death can break it.

And as we see, the establishment of the upper love-and-cognition circuit inevitably provokes the lower sex-sensual centers into action, even though there be no correspondence on the sensual plane between the two individuals concerned. Then see what happens. If you want to see the real desirable wife-spirit, look at a mother with her boy of eighteen. How she serves him, how she stimulates him, how her true

female self is his, is wife-submissive to him as never, never it could be to a husband. This is the quiescent, flowering love of a mature woman. It is the very flower of a woman's love: sexually asking nothing, asking nothing of the beloved, save that he shall be himself, and that for his living he shall accept the gift of her love. This is the perfect flower of married love, which a husband should put in his cap as he goes forward into the future in his supreme activity. For the husband, it is a great pledge, and a blossom. For the son also it seems wonderful. The woman now feels for the first time as a true wife might feel. And her feeling is towards her son.

Or, instead of mother and son, read father and daughter.

And then what? The son gets on swimmingly for a time, till he is faced with the actual fact of sex necessity. He gleefully inherits his adolescence and the world at large, without an obstacle in his way, mother-supported, mother-loved. Everything comes to him in glamour, he feels he sees wondrous much, understands a whole heaven, mother-stimulated. Think of the power which a mature woman thus infuses into her boy. He flares up like a flame in oxygen. No wonder they say geniuses mostly have great mothers. They mostly have sad fates.

And then?--and then, with this glamorous youth? What is he actually to do with his sensual, sexual self? Bury it? Or make an effort with a stranger? For he is taught, even by his mother, that his manhood must

not forego sex. Yet he is linked up in ideal love already, the best he will ever know.

No woman will give to a stranger that which she gives to her son, her father or her brother: that beautiful and glamorous submission which is truly the wife-submission. To a stranger, a husband, a woman insists on being queen, goddess, mistress, the positive, the adored, the first and foremost and the one and only. This she will not ask from her near blood-kin. Of her blood-kin, there is always one she will love devotedly.

And so, the charming young girl who adores her father, or one of her brothers, is sought in marriage by the attractive young man who loves his mother devotedly. And a pretty business the marriage is. We can't think of it. Of course they may be good pals. It's the only thing left.

And there we are. The game is spoilt before it is begun. Within the circle of the family, owing to our creed of insatiable love, intense adult sympathies are provoked in quite young children. In Italy, the Italian stimulates adult sex-consciousness and sex-sympathy in his child, almost deliberately. But with us, it is usually spiritual sympathy and spiritual criticism. The adult experiences are provoked, the adult devotional sympathies are linked up, prematurely, as far as the child is concerned. We have the heart-wringing spectacle of intense parent-child love, a love intense as the love of man and

woman, but not sexual; or else the great brother-sister devotion. And thus, the great love-experience which should lie in the future is forestalled. Within the family, the love-bond forms quickly, without the shocks and ruptures inevitable between strangers. And so, it is easiest, intensest--and seems the best. It seems the highest. You will not easily get a man to believe that his carnal love for the woman he has made his wife is as high a love as that he felt for his mother or sister.

The cream is licked off from life before the boy or the girl is twenty. Afterwards--repetition, disillusion, and barrenness.

And the cause?--always the same. That parents will not make the great resolution to come to rest within themselves, to possess their own souls in quiet and fullness. The man has not the courage to withdraw at last into his own soul's stillness and aloneness, and then, passionately and faithfully, to strive for the living future. The woman has not the courage to give up her hopeless insistence on love and her endless demand for love, demand of being loved. She has not the greatness of soul to relinquish her own self-assertion, and believe in the man who believes in himself and in his own soul's efforts:--if there are any such men nowadays, which is very doubtful.

Alas, alas, the future! Your son, who has tasted the real beauty of wife-response in his mother or sister. Your daughter, who adores her



brother, and who marries some woman's son. They are so charming to look at, such a lovely couple. And at first it is all such a good game, such good sport. Then each one begins to fret for the beauty of the lost, non-sexual, partial relationship. The sexual part of marriage has proved so--so empty. While that other loveliest thing--the poignant touch of devotion felt for mother or father or brother--why, this is missing altogether. The best is missing. The rest isn't worth much. Ah well, such is life. Settle down to it, and bring up the children carefully to more of the same.--The future!--You've had all your good days by the time you're twenty.

And, I ask you, what good will psychoanalysis do you in this state of affairs? Introduce an extra sex-motive to excite you for a bit and make you feel how thrillingly immoral things really are. And then--it all goes flat again. Father complex, mother complex, incest dreams: pah, when we've had the little excitement out of them we shall forget them as we have forgotten so many other catch-words. And we shall be just where we were before: unless we are worse, with more sex in the head, and more introversion, only more brazen.