

# ON LOVE

FREELY ADAPTED FROM THE TIBETAN

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First published in *The New Republic* (New York) in December 1924, then as a 24 page book by The Unicorn Press in 1932, this has become Orage's most anthologised essay. It is said that Orage wrote On Love after a late night conversation with Gurdjieff.

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You must learn to distinguish among at least three kinds of love (though there are seven in all): instinctive love, emotional love, and conscious love. There is not much fear that you cannot learn the first two, but the third is rare and depends upon effort as well as intelligence. Instinctive love has chemistry as its base. All biology is chemistry, or perhaps we should say al-chemistry; and the affinities of instinctive love, manifesting in the attractions, repulsions, mechanical and chemical combinations we call love, courtship, marriage, children and family, are only the human equivalents of a chemist's laboratory. But who is the chemist here? We call it Nature. But who is Nature? As little do we suspect as the camphor which is married to the banyan suspects a gardener. Yet there is a gardener. Instinctive love, being chemical, is as strong, and lasts as long, as the substances and qualities of which it is the manifestation. . . . These can be known and measured only by one who understands the alchemical progression we call heredity. Many have remarked that happy or unhappy marriages are hereditary. So, too, are the number of children, their sex, longevity, etc. The so-called science of astrology is only the science (when it is) of heredity over long periods.

Emotional love is not rooted in biology. It is, in fact, as often anti-biological in its character and direction. Instinctive love obeys the laws of biology, that is to say, chemistry, and proceeds by affinities. But emotional

love is often the mutual attraction of disaffinities and biological incongruities. Emotional love, when not accompanied by instinctive love (as it seldom is), rarely results in offspring; and when it does, biology is not served. Strange creatures arise from the embraces of emotional love, mermen and mermaids, Bluebeards and *des belles dames sans merci*. Emotional love is not only short-lived, but it evokes its slayer. Such love creates hate in its object, if hatred is not already there. The emotional lover soon becomes an object of indifference and quickly thereafter of hatred. These are the tragedies of love emotional.

Conscious love rarely obtains between humans; but it can be illustrated in the relations of man to his favourites in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The development of the horse and the dog from their original state of nature; the cultivation of flowers and fruit—these are examples of a *primitive* form of conscious love, primitive because the motive is still egoistic and utilitarian. In short, Man has a personal use for the domesticated horse and the cultivated fruit; and his labour upon them cannot be said to be for love alone. The conscious love motive, in its developed state, is the wish that the object should arrive at its own native perfection, regardless of the consequences to the lover. 'So she become perfectly herself, what matter I?' says the conscious lover. 'I will go to hell if only she may go to heaven'. And the paradox of the attitude is that such love always evokes a similar attitude in its object. Conscious love begets conscious love. It is rare among humans because, in the first place, the vast majority are children who look to be loved but not to love; secondly, because perfection is seldom conceived as the proper end of human love—though it alone distinguishes adult human from infantile and animal love; thirdly, because humans do not know, even if they wish, what is good for those they love; and fourthly, because it never occurs by chance, but must be the subject of resolve, effort, self-conscious choice. As little as Bushido or the Order of Chivalry grew up accidentally does conscious love arise by nature. As these were works of art, so must conscious love be a work of art. Such a lover enrolls himself, goes through his apprenticeship, and perhaps one day attains to mastery. He perfects himself in order that he may purely wish and aid the perfection of his beloved.

Would one enrol in this service of conscious love? Let him forswear personal desire and preconception. He contemplates his beloved. What manner of woman (or man) is she (or he)? A mystery is here: a scent of

perfection the nascent air of which is adorable. How may this perfection be actualised—to the glory of the beloved and of God her Creator? Let him think, is he fit? He can only conclude that he is not. Who cannot cultivate flowers, or properly treat dogs and horses, how shall he learn to reveal the perfection still seedling in the beloved? Humility is necessary, and then deliberate tolerance. If I am not sure what is proper to her perfection, let her at least have free way to follow her own bent. Meanwhile to study—what she is, and may become; what she needs, what her soul craves and cannot find a name, still less a thing, for. To anticipate today her needs of tomorrow. And without a thought all the while of what her needs may mean to me. You will see, sons and daughters, what self-discipline and self-education are demanded here. Enter these enchanted woods, ye who dare. The gods love each other consciously. Conscious lovers become gods.

Without shame people will boast that they have loved, do love or hope to love. As if love were enough, or could cover any multitude of sins. But love, as we have seen, when it is not conscious love—that is to say, love that aims to be both wise and able in the service of its object—is either an affinity or a disaffinity, and in both cases equally unconscious, that is, uncontrolled. To be in such a state of love is to be dangerous either to oneself or to the other or to both. We are then polarised to a natural force (which has its own objects to serve regardless of ours) and charged with its force; and events are fortunate if we do not damage somebody in consequence of carrying dynamite carelessly. Love without knowledge and power is demoniac. Without knowledge it may destroy the beloved. Who has not seen many a beloved made wretched and ill by her or his 'lover' ? Without power the lover must become wretched, since he cannot do for his beloved what he wishes and knows to be for her delight. Men should pray to be spared the experience of love without wisdom and strength. Or, finding themselves in love, they should pray for knowledge and power to guide their love. Love is *not* enough.

'I love you', said the man. 'Strange that I feel none the better for it', said the woman.

The truth about love is shown in the order in which religion has been introduced into the world. First came the religion of Power, then came the religion of Knowledge, and last came the religion of Love. Why this

order? Because Love without the former qualities is dangerous. But this is not to say that the succession has been anything more than discretion: since Power alone, like Knowledge alone, is only less dangerous than Love alone. Perfection demands simultaneity in place of succession. The order is only evidence that since succession was imperative (man being subject to the dimension of Time which is succession), it was better to begin with the less dangerous dictators and leave Love to the last. A certain prudent man, when he felt himself to be in love, hung a little bell round his neck to caution women that he was dangerous. Unfortunately for themselves they took too much notice of it; and he suffered accordingly.

Until you have wisdom and power equal to your love, be ashamed, my sons and daughters, to avow that you are in love. Or, since you cannot conceal it, love humbly and study to be wise and strong. Aim to be worthy to be in love.

All true lovers are invulnerable to everybody but their beloved. This comes about not by wish or effort but by the fact of true, i.e. whole, love alone. Temptation has not to be overcome: it is not experienced. The invulnerability is magical. Moreover, it occurs more often than is usually supposed. Because 'unfaithfulness' is manifested, the conclusion is drawn that invulnerability does not exist. But 'infidelity' is not necessarily due to temptation, but possibly and often to indifference; and there is no Fall where there is no Temptation. Men should learn to discriminate in themselves and in women real and assumed invulnerability. The latter, however eloquent, is due to fear. Only the former is the fruit of love. Another prudent man, desiring, as all men and women do in their hearts, invulnerability in himself and in the woman he loved, set about it in the following way. He tasted of many women and urged his beloved to taste of many men. After a few years he was satisfied that nothing now could tempt him. She, on the other hand, had had no doubt of herself from the beginning. She had been born invulnerable; he had attained it.

The state of being in love is not always defined in relation to one object. One person has the talisman of raising another to the plane of love (that is, of polarising him or her with the natural energy of love); but he or she may not be then either the sole beloved or, indeed, the beloved at all. There are, among people as among chemical substances, agents of catalysis which make possible interchanges and combinations into which

the catalyts themselves do not enter. Frequently they are unrecognised by the parties affected, and usually by themselves as well. In the village of Borna, not far from Lhasa, there once lived a man who was such a catalyts. People who spoke to him instantly fell in love, but not with him, or, indeed, immediately with anybody in particular. All that they were aware of was that they had, after conversation with him, an active spirit of love which was ready to pour itself out in loving service. The European troubadours were perhaps such people.

There is no necessary relation between love and children; but there is a necessary relation between love and creation. Love is for creation; and if creation is not possible, then for procreation; and if even that is not possible, then for creations of which, perhaps fortunately, we are unconscious. Take it, however, as the fundamental truth about Love: that it always creates. Love created the world: and not all its works are beautiful! The procreation of children is the particular function of instinctive love: that is its plane. But above and below this plane, other kinds of love have other functions. Emotional love is usually instinctive love out of place; and its procreations are in consequence misfits in the world. The higher forms of love, on the other hand, either exclude procreation, not artificially but naturally, or include it only as a by-product. Neither the purpose nor the function of conscious love is children; unless we take the word in the mystic sense of becoming as little children. For briefly, the aim of conscious love is to bring about rebirth, or spiritual childhood. Everybody with perceptions beyond those of male and female must be aware of the change that comes over the man or woman, however old in years, who loves. It is usually instinctive; yet it symbolises the still more marvellous change occurring when a man or woman loves consciously or is aware of being consciously loved. The youth in such cases has all the air of eternity; and it is, indeed, the divine youth. The creations of such a spiritual child in each of the two lovers is the peculiar function of conscious love; and it depends neither upon marriage nor upon children. There are other creations proper to still higher degrees of love; but they must remain until we have become as little children.

We are not one but three in one; and the fact is represented in our physiological make-up. The three main systems, cerebral, nervous, and instinctive, exist side by side, sometimes appearing to co-operate, but more often failing, and usually at cross-purposes. In relation to the external

world it depends upon the system in charge of the organism at the moment what the response to any given stimulus will be. If the cerebral system is on duty—that is temporarily in charge of the organism—the response will be one. If the nervous or instinctive system is alone awake, the replies will be different. Three quite different people, each with his own ideas of how his organism should act, exist in us at once: and usually they refuse to cooperate with each other, and, in fact, get in each other's way. Now imagine such an organism, tenanted by three squabbling persons, to 'fall in love'. *What* has fallen in love; or, rather, which of the three? It seldom happens that all three are in love at the same time or with the same object. One is in love, the others are not; and either they resist, or, when the lover is off guard, make his organism unfaithful (driving the poor lover to lies and deceit or self-reproach); or they are forced into submission, battered into acquiescence. In such circumstances, which every candid reader will recognise, what is a lover?

You imagine that you are continent because you have refrained from sex-relations; but continence is of the senses as well as of the organs, and of the eyes chiefly. From each of the senses there streams energy—energy as various as the man himself. It is not only possible but it is certain that we can expend ourselves intellectually, emotionally or sexually through any one of the senses. To look with lust is much more than simply to look: it is to expend one of the finer substances of which complete sex-energy is composed: something passes in the act of vision which is irrecoverable; and for the want of it the subsequent sex-life is incomplete. It is the same with the other senses, though less easily realised. In short, it is possible to become completely impotent by means of the senses alone—yes, by the eyes alone—while remaining continent in the ordinary meaning of the word.

The chastity of the senses is natural in a few people; but by the many it must be acquired if it is to become common. Under the greatest civilisation human history has yet known, the capital of which was the city whose poor remains are Bagdad, the chastity of the senses was taught from early childhood. Each sense was carefully trained; and exercises were devised to enable pupils to discriminate the different emanations arriving from the sense perceptions intellectually, emotionally, instinctively or erotically motivated. From this education people acquired the power of directing their senses, with the result that chastity was at least possible,

since it was under control. Eroticism thereby became an art, in the highest form the world has seen. Its faint echoes are to be found in Persian and Sufi literature today. Bluebeard and La Belle Dame are the male and female types respectively of the same psychology—inspirers of hopeless because unrequitable passion. The decapitated ladies who hung about Bluebeard's chamber were really about his neck; and they had only to let go to be free. Similarly the pale warriors and princes in the cave of La Belle Dame were there by choice; if an irresistible attraction can be called choice. The legends present Bluebeard and La Belle Dame from the point of view of their escaped victims, that is to say, as monsters delighting in erotic sacrifice. But both were as much victims as their titular victims; and both suffered as much, if not more. In such cases of uncontrolled attraction, power passes through the medium, who thus becomes formidably magnetic; and men and women in sympathetic relation are drawn towards him or her like filings towards a magnet. At first, no doubt, the experiences of a Bluebeard or La Belle Dame are pleasant and fortifying to self-pride and self-vanity. The other sex is at their feet. But when, having realised that the power is neither their own nor under their control, they discover that they too are victims, the early satisfaction is dearly paid for. The cure for all parties is difficult. It consists in the re-education of the body and the senses.

Love without divination is elementary. To be in love demands that the lover shall divine the wishes of the beloved long before they have come into the beloved's own consciousness. He knows her better than she knows herself; and loves her more than she loves herself; so that she becomes her perfect self without her own conscious effort. *Her* conscious effort, when the love is mutual, is for him. Thus each delightfully works perfection in the other.

But this state is not ordinarily attained in nature: it is the fruit of art, of self-training. All people desire it, even the most cynical; but since it seldom occurs by chance, and nobody has published the key to its creation, the vast majority doubt even its possibility. Nevertheless it is possible, provided that the parties can learn and teach humbly. How to begin? Let the lover when he is about to see his beloved think what he should take, do, or say so as to give her a delightful surprise. At first it will probably be a surprise that is not a complete surprise: that is to say, she will have been aware of her wish, and only delighted that her lover had guessed it. Later

the delightful surprise may really surprise her; and her remark will be: 'How did you know I should be pleased, since I should never have guessed it myself?' Constant efforts to anticipate the nascent wishes of the beloved while they are still unconscious are the means to conscious love.

Take hold tightly; let go lightly. This is one of the great secrets of felicity in love. For every Romeo and Juliet tragedy arising from the external circumstances of the two parties, a thousand tragedies arise from the circumstances created by the lovers themselves. As they seldom know the moment or the way to 'take hold' of each other, so they even more rarely know the way or the moment to let go. The ravines of Mount Meru (i.e. Venusberg) are filled with lovers who cannot leave each other. Each wishes to let go, but the other will not permit it. There are various explanations of this unhappy state of affairs. In most instances the approach has been wrong: that is to say, the parties have leapt into union without thought of the way out. Often the first five minutes of the lovers' *first* meeting are decisive of the whole future of the relations. In some instances the original relation has been responsible for the subsequent difficulty of 'letting go': it should never have been; or not have been in the precise circumstances of its occurrence. Mistimed relations always cause trouble. In other cases the difficulty is due to difference in age, education, or 'past'. One is afraid to 'let go' because it appears to be the last hope, or because too much time has already been spent on it, or because it has been the best up to date, or because his 'ideal', created by education, demands eternal fidelity even where it is not possible, because it is not desired by both; or because one is over-sensitive from past experience and cannot face another failure, or because the flesh being willing the spirit is weak, i.e. neither party can use a knife; or because circumstances are unfavourable, i.e. the parties must continue to see each other; or because of imagination, as when one or the other pictures the happiness of the other without him or her. There are a thousand explanations, and every one of them, while sufficient as a cause, is quite inadequate as reason, the fact being that when one of the parties desires to separate, the other's love-duty is to 'let go'. Great love can both let go and take hold.

Jealousy is the dragon in paradise; the hell of heaven; and the most bitter of the emotions because associated with the sweetest. There is a specific against jealousy, namely, conscious love; but this remedy is harder to find than the disease is to endure. But there are palliatives of which the



first therapeutic condition is the recognition of the disease and the second the wish to cure oneself. In these circumstances let the sufferer deliberately experiment. Much may be forgiven him or her during this process. He may, for instance, try to forward the new plans of his former beloved—but this is difficult without obvious hypocrisy. Or he may plunge into new society. Or he may engage himself in a new work that demands all his energy. Or he may cast a spell on his memory and regard his former beloved as dead; or as having become his sister; or as having gone away on a long journey; or as having become enchanted. Best, however, if he 'let go' completely with no lingering hope of ever meeting her again.

Be comforted. Our life is but one day of our Life. If not today, tomorrow ! Let go !

