

ON LOVE, GNOSIS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

A New Gnostic Evaluation of Paul's Message and Mission

by
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Love is not a feeling. It is the power of feeling. 'To feel' is a verb. To feel something is to touch or be touched by it. To feel someone is to touch or be touched by them. But many are the means and motives with which we can touch others or be touched by them. Hence the Law of 'Love under Will'. We can touch others outwardly or inwardly or both. We can touch them through our word or with our bodies, or both. We can touch them out of a sense of closeness or distance, warmly or coldly, out of love or out of hate, compassion or contempt - or both. We can touch their bodies or their souls, or both. We can touch them with our bodies or with our souls, or both. There are those who touch others but refuse to be touched by them, outwardly or inwardly. There are those who are touched by others but fear to touch them, outwardly or inwardly. Many are the ways in which we can feel the touch of the other - inwardly or outwardly, as an expression of closeness or distance, compassion or contempt, love or hate.

How then does *love* touch? What indeed is 'love', not as a feeling but as a mode of *feeling*? And what it is about 'love' as a mode of feeling that has the power to touch us so deeply? Love arises out of a feeling awareness of others that takes us out of ourselves, for it is an awareness that knows no fleshly boundaries. Our simple sensory awareness of another person is not something bounded by our own fleshly surface or skin. Simply looking at another person's body in space we can sense ourselves embracing it, like the space and air that surrounds it, in the entire field of our spatial and sensory *awareness*. What we see in that field we also *feel* - as when looking at an object in space we also sense in a tactile way the way it would feel to our touch, and in this way already feel its own surface texture or 'skin'. Feeling what we see in this tactile way, we do indeed *touch* it with our feeling awareness.

Just as we cannot feel the sensory surface of a physical object without touching it, so we cannot feel another person without touching them with our feeling awareness. The way we *feel* another person, and the feelings we have towards them - no matter how much we try and keep them to ourselves - will directly touch the other through the field or 'feel-d' of our *feeling awareness*. This 'feel-d' embraces the entire space around us and every-body within it, enabling us to feel and thereby also *touch* those bodies with our awareness. And yet, the way we feel the other person, like the way we feel a physical object, both depends on and influences the way we touch and handle it. Just as we handle and use an object as a tool with very little attention to the way we feel it in our hands, so we can interact with other people with very little attention to the way we feel them. If in touching an object we find that it is razor sharp, burningly hot, electrically charged or in any way discomfoting, our immediate impulse is to withdraw our hand - and focus only on the sensations it feels. Similarly, when we attend only to the feelings that others evoke in us, it is as if we are withdrawing the

hand of our feeling awareness to focus on the way it feels. In doing so we are, in a most fundamental and important sense, withdrawing 'love'. For 'love' is a sensitive feeling awareness of the *other* rather than a focus on our own feelings or sensations. It is this feeling awareness of others that puts us 'touch' with them, even without physical or 'fleshly' contact.

'Skin' was the root meaning of *sarx* – the Greek word for 'the flesh' that was used in the New Testament and associated with sexual contact. But a sense of intimate *soul-contact* with others does not require sexual contact or even *skin contact*. It only requires loving awareness - a feeling contact with the other through the field of our feeling awareness. That the starting point of such feeling contact is awareness of our own sensory surface or skin does not mean that this contact is fleshly. For our true sensory 'skin' is not our bodily skin but a psychical skin or soul-skin – the outer surface or skin of our sensory *awareness*. By attending to the visible *outer* surface of a person's body and sensing it with the entire surface of our own *inwardly* felt 'skin' – our soul-skin – a type of field-vibration is set up between two bodies in space. It is through this vibration that we can *actively* touch others with love – and do so at a distance – purely through the sensitivity of our own feeling awareness of them.

This feeling awareness allows us to cultivate a sense of literally breathing in our awareness of another person through every pore of our skin. Something like this sense of porosity comes about through skin contact with another, whether sexual or non-sexual (for example the contact of mother and infant). Such contact make us feel as if our skin is fully 'breathing' again, instead of feeling like an impermeable membrane in which we are sealed or 'wrapped' up in ourselves. Our cellular skin is a breathing membrane – a living interface between the air around and outside us (the root meaning of *pneuma* as 'wind') and the air within us (the root meaning of *psyche* as 'vital breath'). Understood in a new way – as a psychic envelope or 'soul-skin' - the flesh or *sarx* is also a breathing membrane uniting two primary fields of awareness. One is the field of our outer sensory awareness (referred to in Christian terms as The Kingdom Without). The other is the field of our inner-bodily self-awareness (The Kingdom Within). The outer field is the realm of the atmospheric spirit around us (*pneuma*). The inner field is the realm of the soul (*psyche*).

The soul-skin, as a field-boundary of awareness, has, like any surface, both an outer and inner surface, and a layer in between which is their interface. This is reflected in the fact that our cellular skin, like our soul-skin, has three layers – an outer layer (*ectoderm*), middle layer (*mesoderm*) and inner layer (*endoderm*). In the anatomy of the soul body, these layers correspond to three layers of our psychic envelope or soul-skin: a verbal ego-skin composed of tissues of thought woven in language, a sensory skin through which we absorb our awareness of the world around us in space, and a 'self-skin' surrounding the sensed inner space of our souls.

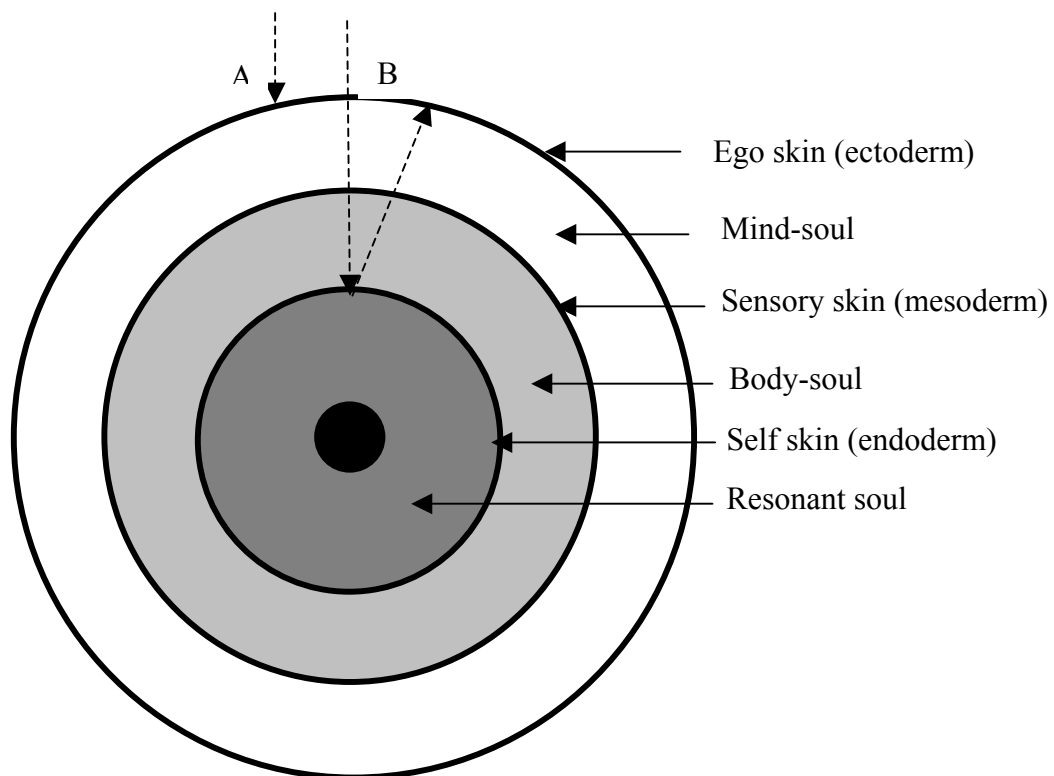
When we speak metaphorically of someone having a 'thin' or 'sensitive' skin, of something or someone 'getting under our skin' these are not mere metaphors but references to the self-skin. When we experience someone as 'thick-skinned' and impenetrable or alternatively as 'piercing' our hearts or souls, it is the self-skin we are referring to. But as we know, the mind and intellect can also serve as defensive barrier or ego-skin, compensating for an irritable or over-sensitive self-skin, and used to prevent things and people from touching or penetrating that skin. The self-skin is the

inner surface of our *sensory skin*, on which at night we project the images of our dreams. The mental ego-skin, on the other hand, is the skin with which we either externally deflect or internally reflect sense impressions received in waking life. But if in waking life, our self-skin is impenetrable or ‘wounded’, then, along with our ego-skin it becomes a mere “mirror of self-reflection” – a narcissistic mirror incapable of reflecting anything but our own feelings.

Diagram 1 shows the three skin-layers of the soul. Unlike our cellular skin, a gap exists between the sensory soul skin and our mental soul skin. This the space of our mind or mind-soul, as opposed to that of our body-soul or resonant soul. The dotted arrows indicate the defensive function of the mental ego-skin - either as an intellectual and linguistic barrier protecting the self-skin from external impingement, or as a “mirror of self-reflection”, narcissistically reflecting impressions bounced off the self-skin, but not penetrating our souls or reaching its spiritual core. Represented as black hole at the centre of the soul, this is not a central self or identity but a centre of spiritual soul-connection with others.

Diagram 1

The Three-Layered Soul-Skin



Constant reflection of - and on – one’s own *feelings* compensates for a narcissistic incapacity to use our sensory awareness and self-skin and to *feel the other*. Though the narcissistic individual may find their emotions constantly aroused by others, it is not the other they feel and reflect in their thought and language, but only their own feelings. What they essentially seek in others is a reflection of their ‘true’ self, of who they ‘really’ are? What confuses them is that what they find is only a reflection of the true nature of the soul – which is a plurality of selves - and not a single, unchanging ‘I’. Narcissism is the essential pathology of all forms of society in which identity is

seen as the *private property* of an imaginary, unchanging 'I' - one that remains untouched and unaltered by what or how it sees and feels. Only by allowing *what* we feel to alter our sense of *who* we are - to transform our very sense of self - can that sense of self be transformed into a sense organ for feeling the others. Only in this way do we discover all those others selves that form part of our soul, a soul that has no fixed identity but a field-identity embracing many selves.

Love is an experience of inner soul-connection that always brings to light and unites a particular aspect of *our-selves* (plural) with a particular 'aspect-self' of the other. That is why the expression 'I love you' is inherently misleading – for it implies a fixed 'I' and a fixed 'you'. But love by its nature transcends any relationship between a fixed and unchanging 'I' and a fixed and unchanging 'you'. The expression 'I love you' therefore denies the essential nature of love as inner soul-connection - a mode of feeling that transforms our sense of both our Self or 'I' and of the Other or 'you'. It rests on a patriarchal understanding of feelings we 'have' as private property of the ego. Just as religious symbolism is the "opiate of the people" so expressions such as 'I love you' have been seen by feminist-Marxist thinkers as the opiate of woman in patriarchal class societies. As indeed they are - if 'love' and 'loving' are not understood and experienced as a feeling power of the *soul* rather than a feeling possessed by the *self* or 'I'.

Only by not reacting to others *from* our own feelings - positive or negative - can we begin to genuinely feel the other. Only by genuinely *feeling* the other can we also *respond* to them in a feeling way, through the active touch of our loving and knowing awareness. To 'love' another is not simply to empathise or show compassion with their 'feelings'. Nor does it necessarily include the experience of pleasurable or romantic or erotic feelings in their company. It is to directly feel the other and in this way to directly know them. The inner connection between loving and *gnosis* lies in the capacity to know others in this authentic way – through direct inner feeling rather than feelings of any sort. Love in the deepest sense can only come from recognising both our own feelings and those of others as the "surface" of a deeper knowing - a direct feeling cognition of the other. Feelings are but the "surface of inner cognitions" (Seth). They are the surface expression of a *feeling awareness* and a *feeling cognition* that directly touches and therefore directly knows its object. This feeling cognition has the character of a direct bodily *proprioception* of the soul of the other.

Love may find outer expression in the romantic feelings, in the 'heat' or 'fire' of passion and in close sexual contact but its source is the inner warmth and light of the feeling soul - in those felt qualities and flows of awareness that are experienced in the "nearness of distance". Love may also find expression in aesthetic creativity and in bodies of intellectual knowledge - but its source is a direct inner knowing that belongs to the feeling soul. It is the feeling soul that is capable of a direct bodily proprioception - not only of our own soul but the souls of others, not only the souls of people, but those of every thing on earth and every cosmic body.

At the heart of soul-science is a recognition that the soul itself has a sensual, bodily character. It exists not only as a cellular and organic body – the physical body as we perceive it from the outside – but as a body of felt inner warmth and light, air and fire, colours and tones. The soul is our body of feeling awareness made up of sensual qualities of awareness. It is these elemental soul qualities that are felt as inner soul warmth and soul light, soul air and soul fire. These soul qualities are the expression of

fundamental *soul tones*, for there is nothing we can feel in our own souls or those of others that does not have its own felt ‘tone’ (Seth). Such “feeling tones” (Seth) are neither subjective feelings *nor* audible sound tones, but unique tonalities of subjectivity or awareness as such – of soul.

Proprioceptive bodily ‘sensing’ of another person’s soul is possible through a principle of “morphic resonance” (Sheldrake). From a soul-scientific perspective, morphic resonance (or dissonance) is a relation between outer form (*morphe*) and inner feeling tone. This finds expression in the relation between (1) the sensory form and qualities of a person’s body on the one hand, and (2) the inner feeling tones and soul qualities these make manifest. When someone smiles or frowns, laughs or cries for example, the sensory form of their facial expression and the sound of their voice gives form to a particular inner feeling tone and its soul qualities. As a result this inner feeling tone is *amplified* through resonance with its outward form or sensory manifestation – and thereby communicates more intensely through them. The same is true of all aspects of a person’s body language. If we are both *outwardly* receptive to the sensory form of another person’s body, and inwardly in *resonance* with the basic feeling tone it embodies, then we can give form to that feeling tone with our own soul, and feel its particular soul qualities within ourselves. When we ourselves smile or frown, laugh or cry in ‘sympathy’ or ‘empathy’ with another, it is because the outer form of their body language has brought us into ‘morphic resonance’ with the inner feeling tones it gives form to – thus impelling us to give outer form to these feeling tones in a similar expressive way.

Our *outer sensitivity* to the surface features of a person’s body sets up a vibration in the bi-personal field which touches them outwardly. Our *inner resonance* with the *feeling tones* that find expression in their outer surface put us inwardly in touch with the inner soul qualities. Sensitivity to the *sensory qualities* of a person’s voice, its warmth or coldness, hardness and softness, brightness or darkness of tone etc., not only allows us to *resonate* with the inner feeling tones that their voice tone communicates. It also allows us to *sense* the inner soul qualities belonging to these feeling tones – the person’s inner warmth or coldness, hardness or softness, brightness or darkness of soul. Inner sensing and resonance with these soul qualities touches the person inwardly in the same way as the vibration of our outer sensing and resonance with their sensory qualities, the resonant inner-soul contact arising from the vibration of outer sensory resonance.

Love is that “inner vibrational touch” (Seth) by which we come to know the other in their essence. It is a touch that *touches us* with the sensual beauty of the other’s soul in all its qualities and with its spiritual essence or quintessence. That quintessence is the essential ‘idea-shape’ or field-pattern of awareness that constitutes each individualised consciousness. Like the formal patterns of a musical score it is what releases into actualisation all those potential tonalities and qualities of awareness that make up our soul, uniting them like the diverse themes of a symphony and giving it its overall ‘spirit’. It is also the ‘virtual’ bodily form or ‘morphic field’ which we grow into and flesh out – transforming patterned tonalities or tissues of awareness into patterns of cellular tissue and sensory awareness.

Feeling ourselves into the body of the other, sensing its awareness inwardness or soul, we fill them with our loving awareness. As a result, we too are filled – filled with all

that our loving awareness feels and embraces as the soul of the other. Touching the spirit-heart of the other, we are inwardly touched by it, and our hearts vibrate in spiritual resonance with it. To love another is to 'know' them from within. Loving is knowing. Loving awareness is also knowing awareness. So why does 'science' – as knowledge - not touch us in the way that love does? Because what today is taken as 'knowledge' is a love-less and soul-less science that only examines and touches the outer surface or 'flesh' of things and people; a science that can explore that inwardness more deeply only by violently penetrating it from the outside. This is a science whose 'touch' is the love-less technological manipulation of nature and mankind as soul-less objects. A science whose explorations serve principally to exploit its own objects - whose sole motive is to tap its objects as soul-less human or natural 'resources'.

Love has always posed a problem for science. The question 'What is love?' is the question it fears the most, bringing it as it does to the interface of science and religion and to the very threshold of soul-spiritual reality – across which it fears to tread. Yet science has already proffered its own soul-less and spirit-less answers to the question - to 'discover' for example that love is but a selfish gene in the service of species procreation and survival. Just as orthodox science is ruled by the ideology of the 'eternal gene', so is New Age pseudo-science ruled by the ideology of 'energy'. But having reduced every form of soul-spiritual experience to an expression of some form of 'energy' why do the New Agers not go the whole hog and do the same for 'love' – declaring it to be nothing but a higher form of energy? Freud after all, had already taken the first step in this direction, reducing 'love' to an expression of 'libidinal energy'. Language itself points in a different direction, through that most common but deep-rooted phrase in which we do not speak of the 'energy' of love but instead speak of its *power*. Of course the power of love can indeed arouse a form of biological or libidinal energy. But this only goes to show that the relationship between love and libido, parallels the relationship between power and energy, and is misunderstood in the same way. Just as we think of energy as a power source, so we think of libido as the source of love. Scientifically, the reverse is the case. Power, as potentiality or potency (Greek *dynamis*) is the source of energy (Greek *energein*) as actuality, activity and interactivity - sexual or otherwise.

What is this power – the 'power of love' – and to whom or what does it belong? Love by its nature is not private property, not 'mine' or 'yours', 'ours' or 'theirs'. Love abhors personal pronouns. It is the power of an awareness with which we can leave behind our limited identity or 'I' and expand it by identifying with a beloved - who thereby ceases to be a mere object or 'You'. Love is 'God' – that divine awareness, loving and knowing, which fills every corner of our soul and gives life to the very soul of our body. This 'power of love' is what Paul referred to as the Holy Spirit – no 'ghost' – but the very real power of a loving awareness that knows and unites all beings from within, binding all things to one another and to God.

The power of love is 'spirit' because spirit is 'inner connection' - inner soul-connection. Inner soul-connection is something that no love-less science can ever get to truly know, as it can never get to know the spiritual essence of love. How can it, since loving is what first constitutes true knowing or *gnosis*, and since 'spirit' - inner soul-connection - is also inner touch. To know things or people we must feel and touch them inwardly - and therefore also allow ourselves to feel their touch and feel

touched by it. In Paul's terms, the 'power of love' is the power of the 'Holy Spirit'. The 'Holy Spirit' in turn, is the power of divine loving awareness to fill us from within - and by filling us to flow into, feel and know other beings from within. In letting it do so, we touch others inwardly and set their spiritual heart into vibration, just as our heart is touched and set into vibration. The Holy Spirit is the vibration of a knowing that touches and unites knower and known through deep inner soul-contact. This was the Gnostic-Pauline message reaffirmed by Martin Heidegger when he wrote: "The relation that constitutes knowing is one in which *we ourselves* are related and in which this relation *vibrates* through our basic posture." Only soul-science - a science based on *inner vibrational touch* and on *inner feeling cognition* can unite science and spirituality, recognising 'love' as the all-feeling, all-filling, all forming and *all-transforming* power of love.

What then, was missing in the original Pauline understanding of the Holy Spirit, of love and its relation to the flesh? What was it that left him, according to Seth, unsatisfied by the success of his spiritual mission - destining him to return in our century as a new incarnation of the Christ entity, bearing a new and trans-Christian message? One implicit part of Paul's original message was indeed that love is not a feeling but rather divine-spiritual power endowed by the divine compassion or grace (*charis*) of the Holy Spirit. This is the power of awareness to sense and touch, feel and fill the soul of another, and to receive it into oneself and feel touched and full-filled by it. But the original Paul also cleverly took the then accepted crucifixion story and turned it into a *mythical metaphor* for a process of spiritual transformation that could and should be undergone by all, through a process of death and resurrection in this life. His message was one of dying to the flesh in order to be reborn, like Christ, in the spirit (*pneuma*). Here it seems that the body is identified with the sensory outwardness of the flesh (*sarx*) rather than with its sensual inwardness of soul (*psyche*). Yet it is the soul which is the source of that idealised experience of *beauty* which, according to Plato, constituted the essence of *eros* and 'erotic' love. Plato too however, denied the innately sensual character of the soul, understanding beauty itself as something seemingly sensory but ultimately supra-sensory. No distinction was made in Platonic philosophy between the sensory qualities and beauty of bodies and sensual qualities and beauty of soul. Failure to affirm this distinction left no place in either Pauline theology or Platonic philosophy for a deeply *sensual* experience of love as inner soul-contact and soul-connection with others. Aristotle, on the other hand, recognised that love involved such inner soul-connection – a sense of one soul uniting two bodies.

Both Paul and Plato therefore, seemed to confuse and lump together the innately *sensual* character of the soul with its *sensory* expression in the flesh and with the sensuousness of the fleshly passions and desires. In particular Paul opposed the flesh to the power of the indwelling Spirit. As a result divine spiritual love (Greek *agape*) was separated from both deep friendship or brotherly love (*philia*) on one hand, and sensual love - *eros*. The fact that the term 'erotic' is now identified only with the sensory arousal of lust is itself testament to the false understanding of *eros* that arises from identifying the sensual with the sensory and separating it from the soul.

The vacuum in what was later taken as Pauline dogma was filled by early romanticism, which like Plato, placed emphasis on the spiritual dimension of love, but also acknowledged its sensual quality as an expression of deep inner soul-connection. Its contemporary counterpart is represented by the commercial sexploitation of

woman, with its exclusive focus on the purely sensory and surface aspects of beauty and bodyhood – on ‘the flesh’. Yet it is to be remembered that Paul spoke too, of a spiritual resurrection of the body. In doing so he used the Greek word *soma* rather than *sarx* – meaning the whole and fully embodied human being and not just its fleshly outwardness or ‘skin’ alone. He also uses the Greek word *soma* when he contrasts the *soma-pneumatikos* to the *soma-psychikos*. There have been many interpretations of these terms. *Soma-psychikos* has been variously translated as the ‘physical body’, the ‘natural body’ or the ‘soulish man’ - as opposed to the ‘spiritual man’ or ‘spiritual body’ (*soma-pneumatikos*).

This contrast was both necessary and unfortunate. It was necessary because the soul was and continues to be thought of – and experienced - as something entirely determined or ‘contaminated’ by in-built biological drives and passions (an identification perpetuated by psychoanalysis). As a result however, the salvation of the soul was identified with its salvation from the flesh and from the entire sensory world – with its *re-spiritualisation* rather than with its *re-sensualisation*. That is how a dangerous misinterpretation of the Holy Spirit came in - seen only as a purifying ‘fire’ or ‘holocaust’ that would save the soul from the physical body and world and allow it to ‘die to the flesh’ – denying both the innate sensuality of the soul and the reality of an entire soul world behind the sensory world of nature.

This cannot be seen as the ‘fault’ of Paul, who as a gnostic initiate also recognised another dimension to ‘the flesh’: “Not all flesh is the same flesh. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. And the glory of the heavenly is one, and of the earthly another.” Then there is the Gospel of John, who understands the Christ as the Word *become* Flesh. Finally, there is the simple fact that among the spiritual gifts or *charismata* so much emphasised by Paul is the gift of *healing* the flesh or earthly body. As for the gift of tongues, of the sort revived in today’s evangelical cults, he expressed outright disapproval for public displays of such gifts, understanding them as an indulgent form of spiritual sensationalism. But by what powers was the gift of spiritual healing practiced by Paul himself, and by Peter and other disciples - if not through the ‘inner vibrational touch’ of the Holy Spirit, understood as a the healing power of love itself?

The healing power of love is the power of feeling itself to touch and make whole the soul, and with it the whole human being as body or *soma*. For it is not healing that makes us ‘feel better’ by curing our ills, but rather *feeling that heals* - by making us whole in body and soul, and by re-linking us with our spiritual essence, the ‘idea-shape’ that in-forms our very flesh. That is why, along with and closely connected with the gift of healing, was the gift of ‘discernment of spirits’ (*diakriseis pneumatôn*). ‘Spiritual healing’ in the truest sense, as a feeling awareness of the soul body of another - is what allows us to discern the multiple ‘spirits’ within it. Unlike the essential spirit or ‘idea-shape’ of the individual, such ‘spirits’ are self-aware sub-groupings or gestalts of soul qualities that are generally referred to as ‘sub-personalities’ and which Jung described as ‘complexes’. Spirits too have their own individualised idea-shapes or ‘forms’. They find expression in both sensory and somatic experience, in dreams and in deep-rooted mythological symbols or ‘archetypes’ (Jung). It is through such symbols that psychoanalysis still attempts to make sense of our self-experience - forgetting that the true meaning of any symbol is what it means to the individual, its felt or sensed significance. That is why attachment to archetypal symbols and their interpretation is no way of ‘discerning spirits’ or

healing the soul - for such spirits can and must also be sensed in a feeling way, and not simply signified and interpreted through archetypal symbols or myths.

Like Paul's attitude to the flesh, Plato's philosophy of 'ideas' as archetypal, immaterial and eternal 'forms' was also distorted over time. For in reality this philosophy was founded on a profound understanding that the sensory form and qualities of material bodies *was not in itself* anything bodily or material. For though we can perceive such sensory qualities as the colour or shape of a body – its redness or roundness as such – this redness or roundness is nothing 'solid' that we can physically touch, pick up or handle. Nor indeed is the very solidity of a body. It is the fact that sensory form as such is nothing essentially physical that is reflected in Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic resonance. In essence this is a neo-Platonic understanding that the *genesis* of all biological and material forms is something scientifically inexplicable in purely genetic, energetic or material terms. Instead it is only explicable through a concept of *non-energetic* or 'formative causation', operating through 'morphic fields' - a notion akin to that of 'idea-shapes'.

Scholastic metaphysics however, not only desensualised the soul but followed Aristotle in seeing sensory form as something inseparable from matter. Only through late nineteenth-century Romanticism did a genuine *felt understanding* revive that the sensory qualities of nature and the human body were an expression of inner *soul qualities* that were no less *sensual* in nature. And that material forms had their source in immaterial or spiritual idea-shapes. This felt understanding however, whilst expressed in Romantic poetry, art and music, was never adequately conceptualised. It constituted a form of wordless inner knowing or *gnosis* but one not transformed into soul-scientific knowledge. Only Rudolf Steiner, drawing on the scientific work of Goethe, took up the momentous challenge of transforming the essence of German Romanticism' - feeling cognition - into a comprehensive *spiritual science* of the *material world*. Today however, both New-Age 'energy' worshippers, Evangelical Christians, Neo-tantric and Sex-Magickal cults still substitute superficial spiritual or sexual-erotic *sensation-seeking* for a genuine *sensuality of soul* and a genuine *science* of soul, spirit and sexuality.

To avoid the danger of our own work degenerating in this fashion, we must *beware* – 'be aware' - of the ways in which love, as a power of *inner soul-connection* and *inner vibrational touch* that is both spiritual *and* sensual can be experientially misinterpreted. Many are the gifts or *charismata* that Paul spoke of through which the grace (*charis*) of the Holy Spirit could be experienced and expressed. Many are the powerful gifts that schooling in soul-body sensing and sensuality can bring to fruition. These include the art of feeling our way into the soul body of another, reforming and transforming it with new qualities of awareness. The soul-contact that is made in this way constitutes a form of deep spiritual intimacy and intercourse, one that can touch the spiritual heart and core of another human being. But instead of being experienced as the innate sensuality and eroticism of *feeling contact* with the souls of others, it may simply be experienced simply as an arousal of 'erotic' sensations and 'romantic' feelings.

The 'touchy-feely' sixties knew nothing of *feeling* as the inner touch of the soul body as a vehicle of the Holy Spirit and its healing power. It knew only of personal 'feelings' and their expression through verbal talk or physical touch. Encounter group like today's multiplicity of soul-less 'therapies' substituted for deep and sensual inner

soul-contact. As for the whole array of pseudo-spiritual touch therapies such as *Shiatsu* and *Reiki* – all these remain bound to the religiously-held dogma that ‘everything is energy’. Indeed the term ‘spiritual energy’ is a contradiction in terms, for it is spirit – inner soul-connection that energises all bodies – not ‘higher energies’ that ‘spiritualise’ them.

Again, love is not a feeling. It is a mode of *feeling* - a form of spiritual touch. But from the sensual character of this touch all sort of *feelings* and fantasies may arise – both sensory and sexual. In Pauline terms, love, as ‘inner vibrational touch’, is the touch of the Holy Spirit - one that puts us in touch with that Spirit as the healing power of divine love within us. In soul-scientific terms it is the inner touch of the soul-body and the sublime experiences of inner soul sensing and resonance, soul-contact and communication, soul intercourse and procreation, that can arise from it. But again, the deepening of inner soul-connection remains open to both *experiential* and *emotional* misinterpretation if the nature of the work is not properly *conceptualised* – spiritually and scientifically. That is why the work of spiritual and scientific conceptualisation - and the study of its results - is integral to ‘the work’. That is also why, in my own work, I have turned to numerous other sources than both official and ‘alternative’ religions and sciences. These other sources include German ‘romantic’ philosophy and mysticism, theosophy and anthroposophy, Jewish ethical philosophy, phenomenological science and psychology, psychoanalytic theories of the ‘psychic envelope’ or ‘ego-skin’, Gendlin’s epistemology of “felt sense” and bodily sensing, and above all the new Sethian *gnosis* ‘channelled’ by Jane Roberts. Last but not least I have drawn on the sublime and divine metaphysics of the great *tantric* adepts of the past. I have done this in the understanding that the mission of the reformed Paul incarnation - which I believe it is our mission to serve - cannot be conveyed to others through a neo-Christian message that denies the sensuality of the soul but only through a new metaphysics of the soul – a New Gnosis and a New Yoga of meditational practices based on it – ‘tantra reborn’.

The true antecedents of this new metaphysics and these new meditational practices are nowhere to be found in archaic mythologies, Western or Eastern, *gnostic* or *tantric*. They can be found only in the profound metaphysical principles and meditational practices that these mythologies gave birth to. In this most crucial century of our new millennium, the century of the second Paul incarnation, it is of the utmost importance to understand these principles and practices anew – to base our ‘New Age’ on a genuinely ‘New Gnosis’. This New Gnosis and The New Yoga to which it is giving birth, not only questions the nature of scientific ‘knowledge’ as we understand it today. It also questions, from a soul-scientific perspective, the very nature of ‘love’ itself – understanding it as a mode of wordless feeling cognition that is the vibrating heart of *gnosis* or *jnana*, and the very medium by which we can learn to directly feel and touch, sense and resonate with the souls of others.

“Think of the inner senses as paths leading to an inner reality. The first sense involves perception of a direct nature – instant cognition through what I can only describe as inner vibrational touch. Imagine a man standing on a typical street of houses and grass and trees. This sense would permit him to feel the basic sensations felt by each of the trees about him. He would feel the experience of being anything he chose within his field of notice: people, insects, blades of grass. He would not lose consciousness of who he was but would perceive these sensations somewhat in the

same way as you now perceive heat and cold. This sense is much like empathy, but far more vital.” (Seth).

“Using it, with practice, you can feel the living emotional element of any living thing, rejoicing in its vitality. It does not diminish individuality, and it does not imply psychic invasion.” (Jane Roberts)

Seth’s comparison of inner vibrational touch to our sense of heat and coldness is significant. For as Rudolf Steiner already recognised, the human body is first and foremost a body of inner warmth – soul warmth. It is warmth of soul that allows our awareness to flow, non-invasively, into the bodies of others. It is inner warmth of soul that melts the fleshly boundaries that seem to separate us as bodies. Conversely, it is only through evoking a sense of inner soul warmth within the boundaries of our own bodies that we begin to once again feel our soul body. Our capacity for feeling proprioception of this soul body, and through it, of the soul bodies of others, is that most basic medium of inner knowing or *gnosis* that can appropriately be called ‘love’.

In *The Nature of the Psyche*, Seth describes love as a natural capacity for identification that includes also a capacity to identify with the elements of nature. From a soul-scientific point of view, it is because the human soul has its own inner nature, composed of sensual qualities of inner warmth and coldness, light and darkness, shape and substantiality, fluidity and solidity, that it can identify with the sensory elements of outer nature. Through the air, water, fire and earthiness *of soul* we can come to know the soul of air, water, fire and earth. According to Seth, early man had a natural capacity to identify with the elements *of nature* - to let his awareness, for example, submerge itself in water and flow with the course of a stream or river. It was this *soul-capacity* that was the basis, in the last century, of Viktor Schauberg’s revolutionary new *scientific* understanding of the nature of water and its flows – stemming as this did from his ability to identify with the *soul of water* simply through letting his awareness be drawn into and carried along by its sensory qualities – a expression of the innate potential fluidity of awareness that constitutes the *water of soul*.

In Seth’s account, the human being’s capacity for identification with outer nature turned it into to a living language of their own inner nature - its elements and emotions. Instead of simply experiencing an emotion such as ‘rage’ as a ‘feeling’ within themselves - and then perhaps raging against external forces of nature or other human beings - the individual could allow his awareness to identify with and become a raging storm, to feel it from within. Human emotions were not simply released and magnified by feeling identification with the elements of nature. They were experienced in their own true nature, not as feelings but as e-motions in the root sense of powerful outward *motions* of awareness itself.

Through the power of loving identification with nature, the latter was experienced as the *larger body* of the human soul and as its *living language*. This was a language requiring no words, since nature and the elements were its living word. Verbal language only became necessary as humanity progressively lost this original “language of love”, becoming less and less able to merge his awareness with that of natural elements and phenomena – thunder and lightning, storms and rivers, rocks and mountains, plants, trees and different animal species. Yet it was out of this primordial

“language of love” that a deep inner *knowledge* of nature arose. It was through loving identification with particular plants or animals, minerals or metals that a knowledge of their specific nature and healing value arose. This knowledge had to do with felt correspondences between inner elements of the human soul and the very soul of those elements themselves. The element that human beings naturally felt as closest to the nature of the human soul itself was *air* - since through their everyday awareness of breathing they recognised the air not only as a vital precondition for awareness itself, but as something that filled them with awareness and could allow it to flow in and out of their bodies as ‘breath’. Quite simply - ‘awareness’ was experienced as ‘airness’. The ‘soul of air’ and ‘air of soul’ were felt as one and the same, just as were the soul of water or fire on the one hand, and water or fire of soul on the other. Hence the arrogant absurdity of regarding early beliefs about the nature of the four elements as unscientific – for it is we who no longer understand what early man and early civilisations *felt* as ‘air’, ‘water’, ‘fire’ and ‘earth’, or what they later *meant* when they first named these elements. Their knowledge arose from the language of love – of direct feeling cognition or ‘inner vibrational touch’.

Long ago then, human beings practiced a type of ‘soul-science’ that combined what Marx termed a *human science of nature* with a *natural science of man*. Freud on the other hand, looked closely at processes of identification and sought a scientific understanding of their connection with ‘love’. He found it in “the transference” - a process of *unconscious identification* that led patients to perceive and relate to their analyst in the same way that they once perceived and related to a parent. The patient would unconsciously identify the love – or lack of it - that they once felt *for or from* the parent with the love, or lack of it, that they felt *for or from* the analyst. At the same time Freud recognised *identity* itself as a product of unconscious identifications with aspects of one or other parent. These came out in the analytic relationship through the transference, via a process that Melanie Klein would later call ‘projective identification’. It is only through what may seem to many to be a quite *esoteric* understanding of love as *identification* that we can indeed get to the heart of so many *everyday* human experiences of love - and the difficulties it raises in human relationships. To do so we must first of all recognise that the central issue in all relationships is the nature of selfhood or identity as such. We must also address the still unrecognised *paradox* implicit in any ‘process’ of identification. The paradox lies in the fact that identification is an *act* quite different from any other – for it is one which by its very nature alters the very identity of the *agent*. That is why in the last analysis, there is no self or ‘I’ that can lovingly identify with another. For any identity we can possibly experience as our ‘self’ or ‘I’ is already the *product of a process of identification* and not an *active agent of identification*. This is where a distinction between *self* and *soul* becomes fundamental to any true ‘psychology’ as a science of the soul or *psyche*.

Identification is the very *selving of the soul* that is most central to the process of *incarnation* – for it is the process by which the soul limits its sense of self to a particular identity, with a particular body, living in a particular time and place. Different incarnations of the soul are generally not ‘recalled’ for a simple reason – namely that doing so would automatically alter and expand the identity of the self doing the recalling. It requires an act of dis-identification from our current sense of self in order to enlarge our awareness sufficiently to embrace other identities or selves. What we call ‘the soul’ is that larger field of awareness, of which each self or

incarnation is but one expression. What we call ‘the self’ is but one self-expression of the soul as this larger *field of awareness*.

As a field awareness, the soul also has a fluid *field-identity* – one that transcends all *fixed identities*, not least all those *focal identities* or “focus personalities” (Jane Roberts) that constitute its multiple incarnations.

‘The question of love’ goes to the heart of a central paradox and takes us to the threshold of a central mystery – the mystery of identity and the paradox of identification. It also raises questions central to our own sense of self and to all our relationships with others. How can we become a self and relate to others without losing our soul? How can we *identify* with different aspects of our own soul or those of others without becoming trapped in a fixed sense of self, a fixed sense of others, and a fixed relation of self and other? Love is both the question and the answer. As the power of feeling identification it is the gateway to heaven and hell, to an unlimited expansion of awareness and identity and to the limiting entrapment of awareness in a fixed identities and specific experiences of self and other.

Love is the very heart and soul of ‘the flesh’ as a field-boundary of awareness and identity between all that we experience as self, from all that we experience as other-than-self - uniting them in the bliss of a sensual soul-contact that transcends all fixed experiences of ‘self’ and ‘other’, or becoming a frozen barrier separating us from others and defending the established boundaries of our identity. The *freezing* of love, and of the flesh, in defence of an unattainably fixed sense of self and other is what we call ‘fear’. Its opposite is that enduring warmth of soul in which all fixed identities are fluidly dissolved, and out of which countless potential and hitherto unknown identities can crystallise. Love is above all that overwhelming *pressure* of potentiality that can both expand or explode our awareness to embrace the entire cosmos or compress and implode it into a black hole. But within this black hole lies the compressed substantiality of the soul, comparable to a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional diamond, whose soul-matter translucently reflects and refracts the immaterial light of awareness in all its exquisite soul-colours. But a diamond, as we know, is not only the brightest and most colourful but also the hardest and most cutting thing of all. The same is true of that diamantine awareness that is the very ‘light’ of love - piercing all ego defences - and at the same time the quintessential idea-shape or structure of our innermost soul-being or “entity” (Seth). The vastly expansive and yet most compact self-awareness and identity of this entity is suggested by that ultimate *mantra* of the Shaivist *tantra*: “I am Shiva, of compact mass of awareness and bliss, and the entire universe is my body.” Its echo and counterpart can be found in the ultimate prayer of the Pauline *gnosis*. “Not I, but the Christ in me.” SHIVA – the supreme *ensoulment of the self* - expanding its body to embrace the entire universe. JESHUA – the supreme *enselvement of the soul* - freeing it from *enslavement* to ego-identity.

Love and Gnosis are intimately related. Loving is intimate inner knowing and thus a source of inner knowledge or *gnosis*. But any true knowledge or ‘science’ must also embrace a true knowledge of love itself. A *true love of inner knowledge* is inseparable from a *true knowledge of love*. Similarly, to *truly know love* we must also learn to *love true knowledge* – not only as ‘self-knowledge’, but as intimate inner knowledge of the world and other people. Shaivist *tantra* was *the birth* of a new knowledge of love – as the embodiment of divine awareness, divine androgyny and a divine intercourse of soul. The Pauline *gnosis* was *born from* a new knowledge of love – as divine inner

soul-connection forged by the Holy Spirit. Any 'New Gnosis', as a true science of the soul, must re-unite a deep knowledge of love with a deep love of knowledge.

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