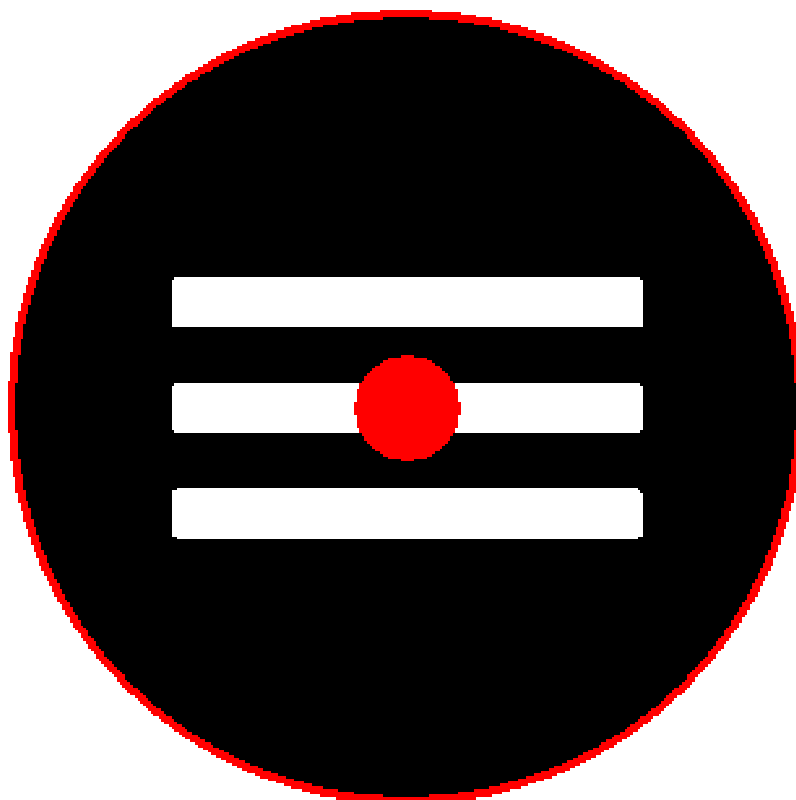


THE NEW YOGA AND THE NEW GNOSIS

**Extract from Peter Wilberg's book
'From NEW AGE to New GNOSIS'**



Yoga, Old and New

The word 'yoga' shares a common Indo-European root (*ieu* or *iu*) with the English word 'to join', 'conjoin', 'con-jug-ate' or 'yoke'. This root is echoed in the Latin *iungere* or *jungere*, the Greek *zugos* or *zygos* and the Sanskrit *yugan*. 'Yoga' as a philosophical tradition based on a range of meditative disciplines had its roots in the cultural heritage of the earliest known Indo-European civilisation - the Indus Valley civilisation of the Sarasvata river. This heritage took the form of the sacred scriptures known as the *Vedas*. They constitute not only the earliest texts of Indo-European civilisation but the cultural fount of Hinduism and thereby also of Buddhism. In view of the fact that the Sarasvata river dried up around 2000 BC, the sacrificial, ritual and incantatory practices of ancient *Vedic Yoga* must be considered to pre-date those that arose from the *Upanishad* scriptures, the post-Vedic philosophies or *Vedanta* and the famous *Yoga-sutras* of Patanjali – the foundation of classical yoga.

The drying up of the Sarasvata river is a metaphor for the drying up of the source of one of mankind's most ancient spiritual traditions – that of the *Vedas* and of *Veda* (knowledge). From this stream arose the multiple spiritual philosophies and meditative disciplines that constitute traditional yoga in all its many forms: *raja yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *mantra yoga*, *prana yoga*, *tantra yoga*, *nada yoga* and *hatha yoga* – to name but a tiny few. Modern yoga is based on these many variants of traditional yoga. Together they constitute what I call 'Old Yoga'. For what they all share in common is inner union or 'yoking' with a divine transcendental self within us. The gnostic dimension of the yogic tradition found its deepest philosophical expression in Kashmir Shaivism. Here the cosmos is understood not as something 'made' or formally 'caused' to exist by a creator God or demiurge, but rather as the energetic expansion (*Shakti*) of divine consciousness (*Shiva*). Both objective energies and individualised subjectivities or consciousnesses (*Jiva*) are seen as localised expressions of the universal *light of awareness* belonging to the divine consciousness. *Shiva* (the light of divine consciousness), *Jiva* (individualised consciousness) and *Shakti* (their energetic expression of consciousness), constitute the foundational trinity of Kashmir Shaivism. Knowledge as consciousness is understood as the foundation of all worlds, all energies and all beings. Spiritual ignorance is not absence of knowledge but its limitation within individual consciousness. This limitation results from subjective consciousness losing itself in its own objects of perception and forgetting

its source in the divine self of the individual. It is only through individual consciousnesses that the divine consciousness comes to *know itself*. Conversely, it is only by knowing themselves as a *self-expression* of the divine consciousness that the individual comes to know their true *self* - and to know the world too, as an energetic expression of the divine light of consciousness.

The Old Yoga is the highest expression of what I have called the *First Paradigm*, the understanding of the ultimate aim of human life as the completion of an inward movement of awareness from the outer world to our innermost self - an immanent or divine self that is our link to transcendental divinity.

What I call 'The New Yoga' is founded not on this First Paradigm but on what I have termed the Fourth Paradigm. This is the understanding of life as an inward movement of awareness through which we achieve a deeper sense of *inner connectedness* with the outer world, with both nature and other human beings. Chief amongst the Vedanta philosophies was that of 'non-dualism'. But just as without duality there can be no *re-linking* or 'religion', so there can be no *con-jugation* or 'yoga'. With the total *surrender* of egohood and our everyday self to a deeper, divine self goes the loss of duality and with it a loss of dynamic relationality – the very essence of 'oneness' or 'union'. The one-sided focus on union with our innermost self - the paradigm of the Old Yoga - left one of the most fundamental relational dimensions of human life unaddressed. This is not the realm of the individual self or transcendent divinities but a third realm – the realm of direct inner connectedness between two or more individuals. The New Yoga is a *relational* yoga – cultivating a sense of inner connectedness not only to our own divine self but to the innermost selves of others.

In a culture in which knowledge is identified with science and technology, vast sums of money need investing to prove 'objectively' what ordinary human beings have known subjectively and intuitively for centuries or even millennia. Thus the qualitative sense of well-being that springs from meditation, for example, counts for nothing unless this can be 'proved' to be a result of measurable quantitative changes in some localised part of the brain. Human notions of divinity are themselves seen as figments of our brains designed to serve some evolutionary functions. In our contemporary technological culture, complex and specialised bodies of theoretical knowledge have replaced the sensuous subtleties of the body's own inner knowing. At the same time theoretical knowledge is regarded as the foundation of human practical

activity. Marx recognised that theoretical knowledge was not the starting point but the product of human practical activity and social interaction. And the ancient spiritual tradition known as *yoga* was founded on the understanding that inner knowing or *gnosis* is something that can only be re-awakened and deepened on the basis of specific meditative practices – practices involving not only the mind but the body of the yoga practitioner.

The Old Yoga aimed at achieving spiritual transcendence of the mind and body, through the exercise of disciplined control *over* mind and body. The aim – a total surrender of individual ego-identity to the divine or transcendental self. Whether practiced by individuals alone or in a group, the yogic tradition has led to a misunderstanding of meditation as a *solo* activity focused exclusively on the self. This self is understood as a *higher* self on a *higher* vibrational level. The *tantric* adept or *Siddha* is one who is able to *raise* cosmic energy or *kundalini* from its root centre at the base of the spine or even levitate their bodies *above* the ground.

The New Yoga differs fundamentally from the Old Yoga in *all* these respects.

Its aim is not the *total spiritual transcendence of the human body*, but the fullest possible *embodiment of the human spirit*.

Its aim is not the *levitation of the human body from its earthly ground*, but the *grounding of the human being in their innermost spiritual depths*.

Its aim is not to facilitate an ascent of cosmic energy from a root centre at the base of the spine but to facilitate the descent of human awareness into these depths.

Its aim is not the surrender of ego-identity to a higher transcendental self, but its re-yoking or re-linking with a ‘lower’ and deeper self that is immanent within us. In this way ego-identity can itself *expand* to embrace, express and embody the richness of our inner identity.

The basic meditational practices of The New Yoga are not forms of solo meditation but of *pair meditation*. They are not conducted alone, at the foot of a *guru* or seated together with others in group, but *sitting face to face* with a meditational partner. That is because the most fundamental aim of The New Yoga is to regain a deep sense of inner connectedness not just with our inner self but with the inner selves of others. Only through this relational yoga - this ‘joining’ or ‘conjugation’, ‘union’ and ‘communion’ with a specific other or others – can each individual’s innate spiritual desire for *relational* fulfilment be satisfied.

The most important forms of meditation in The New Yoga are conducted for the most part with the *eyes open* and in eye-contact with others. For the aim of this Yoga is not to close our eyes off to the world or concentrate our gaze on some fixed point on a *mandala* representing our innermost self. Instead its aim is to learn to look out at the world and other people with the eyes of our innermost self.

Just as the New Gnosis understands ‘inner knowing’ as an awareness of direct inner connectedness with the things and people around us, so does The New Yoga aim at the re-awakening of inner knowing through this awareness of inner connectedness.

Yoga, Religion and Gnostic Dualism

The root meaning of ‘yoga’ is to join or con-jugate. The root meaning of ‘religion’ is to re-link or re-connect (*re-ligare*). Without duality there can be no relationality and no re-ligion, for there would be no *other* to relate or re-link to. How can we renew our link with our inner selves and with others, with God and with other human beings, unless we recognise them in their otherness – as something distinct from the self we ordinarily identify with? *Gnosis* as religious experience is founded on the principle that only through a knowing relation to another deeper self within us can we make a deep connection with the inner selves of others.

The human being not only has relationships but is a relationship. The relation that constitutes the human being is a dynamic relation between the outer and inner human being, what Seth calls the ‘outer ego’ and ‘inner ego’. The outer ego is the outer ‘eye’ and “I” of the inner ego – looking outwards into physical reality. The inner ego is the “I” and inner eye of the outer ego - looking inwards into non-physical dimensions of reality. The outer ego experiences itself as an identity separate and *apart from* the world it looks out onto. The inner ego knows itself as *a part of* all other beings, inwardly connected to them through the inner world of soul. The inner ego is not a part of the outer ego. Instead it is the other way round, the outer ego is just a part of the inner ego – one expression of its own larger awareness and identity. The inner ego is not an ‘unconscious’ part of the self. It is experienced as unconscious only to the extent that the outer ego remains unconscious of it, and does not know it as that other, inner self that is its own source. Yet, as Seth reminds us:

The outer ego does not want to meet the inner ego. The outer ego does not want to admit the existence of the inner ego. As the eye cannot see its own pupil without a mirror, so the outer ego could not even see itself, were it not that the inner ego hides in the depths of all reflections.

Seth

The gaze of the outer ego is one which reduces the world to an 'It' - a world of external objects. It applies this same objectifying gaze to its inner world, which then appears to it as a world of 'internal objects' such as sensations, emotions and thoughts. Its fundamental relation to both its outer and inner world is what Martin Buber called the 'I-It' relation rather than an 'I-You' relation - a relation to *things* or objects of consciousness rather than to other *beings* or subjects of consciousness.

The child that calls to his mother and the child that watches his mother - or to give a more exact example, the child that silently speaks to his mother through nothing other than looking into her eyes, and the same child that looks at something on the mother as at any other object - show the twofoldness in which man stands and remains standing.

The character of a person's gaze is strongly influenced by their experience, as infants, of the mother's face and the maternal gaze. The psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott recognised that when the mother looks into the baby's eyes, "what she looks like is related to what she sees there." In infancy the baby's outer ego is undeveloped, but its inner being is *not*. If the mother looks at the baby either as an appendage to her own being or as a mere bodily object the baby's own inner being will find no reflection in the mother's gaze. Nor will it experience the *mutual gaze* as a potential medium of deep inner connectedness to its mother - or to any other.

...perception takes the place of apperception...of that which might have been the beginning of a significant exchange with the world, a two-way exchange in which self-enrichment alternates with the discovering of meaning in the world of seen things.

It is in this way that the face of the other, like that of the mother for the baby, is a mere object or ‘It’ - something that needs to be studied and analysed in order to predict *a pattern of behaviour*. Before the baby or child even knows the meaning of the word science, the baby has become a precocious *scientist* – studying the face of the mother in order to gauge her mood and predict her behaviour and discover its pattern. The adult will be forced to rely on traditional religious beliefs to secure its *faith that it is not alone* – to feel a sense of inner connectedness with other beings. Or else it will look for some ‘scientific’ proof that as human beings “we are not alone” in the universe – that there is ‘something out there’. But what or who? It is with our inner eye and inner ‘I’ that we look into an inner universe composed of trans-physical planes and spheres of awareness, just as our outer eye and outer ‘I’ looks outward on our physical planet and the astral cosmos beyond. Science-fiction images of “first contact” with extra-terrestrial beings are a metaphor of our capacity to re-connect with the *alien within* - our own innermost being and the inner being of others. The eyes figure large in images of extra-terrestrials as does the delicacy of their hand and touch. The alien body, eye and hand symbolise our capacity for inner connectedness with others, a connectedness achieved through the inner body, inner gaze and inner touch.

The New Yoga of the Inner Body

The eyes are indeed windows of the soul. They are also a microcosm of our inner body. That is why in The New Yoga, the *mutual gaze* is employed as the principal powerful medium of inner connection – of spiritual intimacy and intercourse. For it allows two people to see and be seen, feel and be felt, not just as the selves they ordinarily identify with, but in all the richness of their inner being. It is not just their everyday self or ‘I’ that can be seen to look out through their eyes, but a wealth of selves. These include selves of different ages and genders, actual and potential selves, past and future selves, physical and trans-physical selves, animal, human and trans-human selves. The inner body, being ageless and androgynous, has many faces. It can allow many ‘I’s to look out through our eyes. If we can learn to let what we feel fully show itself in our eyes, we surrender our singular ego or ‘I’. Our ‘feelings’ can no longer be turned into something we ‘have’ - into mental objects for that ‘I’. Instead,

by letting feelings into our eyes we begin to feel and reveal different selves or 'I's. At the same time we know again what it feels to look out through *their* eyes. It is the shape and tone of *their* inner bodies that we feel, and it may even be through their voice and their language, one quite foreign to our own, that we hear ourselves inwardly speaking. It may be their worlds we behold in our mind's eye.

Hindu polytheism reveals in its sacred art the polymorphous nature of the individual's divine inner self, showing it as something with countless faces and distinguishing between the incarnate or mortal forms of the different divinities and their radiant 'inner body' – their eternal and universal form.

In the Old Yoga it was understood that divinities have their consorts with whom they conjoin as gods and goddesses, *devas* and *devis* - like Krishna and Radha, Shiva and Pavrati. It was also understood that mortals are *dual beings*, blessed with their own divine inner selves and their own eternal inner bodies. The New Yoga simply puts these two truths together. Puts 'two and two' together. Through our own divine selves and inner bodies we can experience inward union or conjugation with the inner selves and inner bodies of others.

The aim of the Old Yoga was re-unite the individual with their own deeper self - their divine inner self. The aim of The New Yoga is to re-unite our own inner self and inner body with the inner selves and inner bodies of others. That way we experience the true nature of divinity itself.

Divine consciousness is not a being. It is the very dimension of inner connectedness or 'union' (*yoga*) linking the inner self and inner bodies of all beings, human and trans-human.

Divine knowledge or '*gnosis*' (*veda*) is direct knowledge of this 5th dimension – a divine field-continuum of awareness transcending space, time, matter and energy.

The body is an awareness.

Carlos Castaneda

The doorway to this dimension is our inner body. For, inner awareness of our bodies is at the same time an awareness of our inner body – a body which is not an 'energy body' but an *awareness body*.

The inner body is our inwardly felt body. But this inwardly felt body is not merely our physical body as we feel it from within. Instead the very opposite is the case - our outer physical body is but the outwardly perceived form of our own inwardly felt body, its materialised body image.

The inner body is not only our *felt body*. It is also our *feeling body* the body with which we feel ourselves and feel others. This feeling body is also a field-body - the felt shape and substantiality of a larger field of awareness.

That larger awareness field embraces not only all that we experience within ourselves but all that we experience in the world around us.

It is our link to our inner self or inner identity, a *field-self* and *field-identity* that includes not only the self we know but countless other selves, each with their own unique field-qualities of awareness.

As a *field body* our inner body has no fleshly boundaries. It is our true and eternal inner form, the ever-shifting shape and boundary of our larger field of awareness.

The meditational practices of the Old Yoga were focused on *awareness of our outer body*, its breathing and posture, its energy flows and centres. The meditational practices of The New Yoga are focused on our *inner body of awareness* - that body with which we can most fully feel ourselves and others, and feel also those *centres and flows of awareness* that link us with others. They break with the age-old understanding of meditation as a solo activity focused on the self alone, and lacking any deep inter-personal or relational dimension.

The most important meditational practices of The New Yoga are conducted with a partner and in pairs – each seeking not only to feel themselves but to feel the other in themselves and feel themselves in the other. This new form of *pair meditation* is not conducted with the eyes closed but with the eyes open. For the eyes are not only windows of the soul. They are also a microcosm of our inner body, a revelation of our inner identity, and a medium of *divine inner connectedness* with others.

The art of mutual gazing or ‘resonant eye-contact’ that is the central form of pair meditation in The New Yoga is no mere staring or scrutinising. It opens the door to a type of deep spiritual intercourse of ‘self and other’ in which *other selves* can rise to the surface. Looking out through their eyes reveals new faces of the other, and brings other selves of theirs to the surface. But beneath all our ‘I’s is a singular self or ‘I’ of a quite different character to the ego. The singularity of this self is that it is not one of many but the oneness of those selves – their singular source and essence.

The outer ego is the counter-pole to this inner self – our innermost essence.

The ego is the outer eye and outer ‘I’ of the inner self – looking out on physical reality. The inner self is the inner ‘I’ and inner eye of the outer ego, looking into the spiritual world. This is where we approach again the mystery and truth of the Fourth Paradigm. For when the outer gaze of the ego is turned inward towards the self, then the inner gaze of that self can itself be turned ‘outward’ – connecting with the inwardness of the things and people around us.

Devachan and the Fifth Dimension

The ‘formality’ that The New Yoga is a form of pair meditation requiring two people has deep spiritual significance for our times - helping people to establish a deeper level of connectedness to others in all their everyday relationships. Inner connection between one human being and another is also a doorway into an entire *world* of beings, both human and trans-human - a doorway into the ‘Spiritual World’ (*Devachan*) and into an entire *dimension* of inner connectedness (the 5th Dimension). Inner connection allows us to gain direct spiritual knowledge of this dimension, one that links our life on this planet to the countless planes of awareness that make up the Spiritual World, and that are all expressions of that realm of unbounded potentiality that the gnostics called the *pleroma*. In essence the Spiritual World is this ‘Fifth Dimension’ beyond the known cosmos - the space-time continuum of matter and energy. For it is an inner continuum of *awareness* connecting our own inner being to the inwardness of every other being - linking our ‘being in the world’ (Heidegger) to an entire world of beings.

The meditational practices of The New Yoga allow any two people to experience a richness and depth of inner connectedness and communication with others of a sort that only normally becomes available to us in the bodies and world we inhabit in the life between lives. Rudolf Steiner – the most significant gnostic teacher of the twentieth century, both a guardian of the Old Gnosis and vanguard of the New Gnosis - describes this ‘after-life’ and ‘between-lives’ experience of deep spiritual communication as follows:

...at the first stage after death the human being moves among the spirit-physiognomies of those who are connected with him by destiny: he beholds these physiognomies. Human beings learn to know each other in the spirit-form, they learn to know each other's moral and spiritual qualities. But at this first state it is a beholding only, a seeing; although it means that the souls come into intimate connection. Then begins the period I described as the growth of mutual understanding. The one begins to understand the other; he gazes deeply upon him and looks into his inner nature, knowing the while that the sure working of destiny will link the future to the past. Then the great process of transformation begins, where the one is able to work upon the other out of a profound knowledge and understanding, and the plastic moulding of the spirit is taken up and changed to music and to speech. And here we come to something that is more than understanding; the one human being is able to speak to the other his own warmth-filled creative work. On Earth we speak with our organs of speech; by means of these we tell each other what we know. Our words live in the physical body as something fleeting and transient; and when we express what we want to say by means of our speech-organs, in that moment we completely shut off that which lives behind the merely material. But now imagine that what a man thus utters, what goes over into the fleeting word, were an expression of himself, were not alone a manifestation of him but was at the same time his very being...The human souls are themselves words, their symphony is the symphony of the spoken Cosmic Word in its very being – communion. There, men live in and with one another; there is no such thing as impenetrability. The word which is one human being merges into the word which is the other human being.

Getting to know this depth of inner, spiritual connectedness and communication in our earthly lives breaks the *ultimate taboo*. For it not only lifts the psychological veils that separate us spiritually from other human beings in *this* life. It also lifts the *ultimate veil* – that which separates our being in the world from the spiritual world of

beings to which we return after death. The essential message of *gnosis* has always been that this other world is one in which our innermost spiritual self *never ceases to dwell*, even after birth. The outer human being or ‘personal’ self is but one embodiment or incarnation of another ‘trans-personal’ or spiritual self - the inner human being. That is why we are ‘in’ the world but not ‘of’ it. It is also why, even whilst being ‘here’ in this world, we are also already ‘there’ in that other world to which we most truly belong. This other world is not some other place in cosmic space – it invisibly permeates physical space and the physical world, just as our innermost being also invisibly permeates our physical body. The spiritual relationships we enter into in the life between lives also set the stage for our human relationships in this life – and can be re-experienced through the spiritual deepening of those relationships.

Intimacy and the Inner Body

‘Yoga’ means to join or conjoin. ‘*Gnosis*’ means ‘knowledge’. But in the language of the Old Testament – to ‘know’ someone meant to be intimate with them – to experience a sense of deep inner connection through conjugal intercourse.

The age-old identification of deep spiritual intimacy and intercourse with sexual intimacy and intercourse, arises from the failure to distinguish inner contact and connectedness with others through the inner body with outer contact and connectedness. In the global culture of capitalism however, the *taboo* against deep spiritual intimacy and intercourse with other human beings is greater than any taboos that once held sway regarding sexual intimacy and intercourse. Why else do people shrink from sustained eye-contact with others – the intimacy of the mutual gaze? For through such forms of silent communication we recall an inner language of the soul which is the very medium of intercourse between beings in the life between lives. And yet in our culture deep eye-contact is associated only with ‘making eyes’ and sexual seduction.

We do not see because we have eyes. We have eyes because we are seeing beings. As Heidegger put it: “*We* hear, not the ear.” Similarly “*We* see, not the eye”. When lovers gaze into each other’s eyes, it is not just with their eyes but with their whole being that they see and feel the other. And it is not just the eyes of the other but their whole being that they behold – that they see and feel.

Seeing does not mean merely focussing our eyes on some object or person in front of us. Seeing is something we do when we are “all eyes”, when we feel the entire space within and around us, and when we also feel the objects we look at in that space. Feeling has no visible bodily sense organ but is the foundation of all our body’s senses. It is the very essence of the senses - that which gives them felt meaning or sense. Feeling, as “felt sense” (Gendlin) precedes all sensing. It is the ‘sixth sense’ that underlies our five senses.

Feeling precedes seeing. It is from feelings that we form images in our dreams. How we feel the outer form of an object or person in waking life also *in-forms* our visual image of it, and can quite literally transform that image. But whereas feelings are something we ‘have’, *feeling* is something we *do* – as when we stroke a cat and feel its fur with our hands or as when the blind feel the face of another and in this way ‘see’ them. The focus of psychotherapy is on exploring the feelings that we or others ‘have’. The focus of The New Yoga is on fully *feeling* ourselves and others. It is through feeling *in this sense* that we really sense others as beings and not just as bodies, really seeing and hearing them.

Feeling senses. But feeling also touches. Physical touch and intimacy, even the stroking of a cat, is the outer embodiment of ‘inner touch’ - the way in which, through feeling another being, we both touch and are touched by them inwardly. The New Yoga is the yoga of the inner body or felt body - the body with which we inwardly feel ourselves and feel others. Its senses are what quite literally in-form our bodily sense organs, including the eye.

The inner body has had many names: *subtle body*, *astral body*, *dreambody*, *energy body*, *soul body*, *spiritual body* etc. It is understood as a body that survives death, as the body that many people have experienced in ‘near-death’ and ‘out of body’ experiences. And yet its essential nature has so far been misunderstood. It is not a ‘second’ body somehow contained ‘within’ the physical body. It is composed neither of energy nor of a finer material substantiality invisible to the human eye. We do not ‘enter’ this body only in after-death, near-death or in out-of-body experiences. It is an ‘inner’ body because it is the body *in* which we never cease to *dwell* as beings – ‘dwelling’ being one of the root meanings of the word ‘being’.

The inner body is the inner essence of our bodyhood as such. A better name for it is the lived, sensed or felt body - for it is our body as we live, sense and feel it from

within. Better still would be the 'feeling body', for it is the body with which we feel. In the Vedic tradition it was known and named as the *bliss body*.

This bliss body is our inner feeling body – the true medium not only of inner feeling *connection* but of inner feeling *cognition* or *gnosis*. When we look at an object in space we not only see its visual form but also feel what it would be like to touch with our hands. The inner body needs no hands or skin contact to feel another person's body. Through its entire inwardly felt surface it can directly feel every body in its *field* of awareness.

The inner body is a body of sensual awareness - awareness being itself the very inwardness of what we call 'energy'. The inner body does not 'desire' others sexually. It is not impelled by conscious or unconscious sexual 'drives' or 'energies'. Sexual energy is the surface skin charge or 'electricity' we experience when the *field* of sensuous awareness that constitutes our feeling body cannot be fully contained by its fleshly surface or skin. Orgasm is the natural release or 'overspill' of this outward surface charge or energy, and its transubstantiation into bodily fluids.

The blissful sensuousness of inner-bodily intercourse is something quite distinct from the sensations of sexual intercourse. Yet through the former, we can get to 'know' another person in a manner more inwardly sensuous and sublime than fleshly intercourse alone allows. This understanding however, was distorted in the traditions and practices of *tantric yoga*, which confused divine energy (*Shakti*) with divine consciousness (*Shiva*), the awareness body with an energy body, the sensuality of inner body intimacy with that of sexual energies. That is why its focus is on the *ascent* of coiled up energy or *kundalini* from the 'root chakra' at the base of the spine – rather than on the spiritual potency of an incoiling *descent* of awareness into the very roots of our being.

People naturally seek a bodily sense of inner connection with themselves and others through sexuality and love. The experience of romantic 'love' or 'falling in love' is essentially the sensual bliss of inner connection experienced through the inner body – the bliss body. Sexual pleasure is the transformation of this sensual bliss into blissful libidinal sensations. Sensual qualities of awareness arising from deep within our awareness body - our bliss body – are transformed into sensations of surface sexual energy seeking release through bodily contact and intimacy.

Libidinal sensation, surface charge and sexual desire can arise precisely because individuals lack a sense of soul-spiritual connectedness with others and seek to

compensate for this lack through sexual contact and intimacy. Alternatively, sex can be the *consummation* of a sense of soul-spiritual intimacy that is already felt in a bodily way – through the bliss body. Finally, sex can also be the “sublimation” of a sense of soul-spiritual intimacy that is *not* felt in a bodily way - through the inner body - and which therefore seeks its primary expression through the outer body.

From this point of view the Freudian notion of creativity as a sublimation of a basic biological life drive is the very opposite of the truth. It is the procreative biological expression of a dimension of inner connectedness that is the very source of all creativity and all of creation. How can artistic or other forms of creativity be seen as the “sublimation” of a basic life drive or ‘life energy’, when the vital and driving essence of both ‘life’ and ‘energy’ is formative and creative activity (*energein*) – a creativity sparked by inner connectedness and accessed through the inner body and inner knowing?

Unlike Freud, Wilhelm Reich believed that neuroses sprang not merely from the mental repression of libidinal drives but rather from the bodily repression of an independent biological life energy which he called ‘orgone’. He identified psychological health with sexual health - the free flow of orgone from the energetic core of the human organism to its surface periphery. For in his own words, he had ‘discovered’ that:

‘Sexuality’ could be nothing other than the biological function of expansion ‘out of the self’, from the centre toward the periphery. In turn, anxiety could be nothing but the reversed direction, i.e., from the periphery to the centre.

The Function of the Orgasm

Reich claimed that muscular armouring - chronic patterns of muscular contraction - was the principle means by which individuals use their own body ego to block the outward movement of libidinal energy from core to periphery and thereby inhibit the build up of libidinal charge and sensation. His concept of an organismic core composed of nerve ganglia has been compared to the Eastern *tantric* notion of *kundalini* as a source of coiled up sexual energy at the base of the spine. Reich’s thinking was thoroughly permeated by what I have called the 1st Paradigm – a

Western understanding of life as an outward movement from self to world. Reich understood this movement solely as a movement of biological energy. He, like so many others before and after him, failed to distinguish an inward flow of energy from an inward movement of awareness. As a result, he identified the inward movement as such with 'contraction' or 'withdrawal' and 'anxiety' rather than with meditative calm and centredness. He was quite unable to see that the inner movement of awareness is no mere withdrawal from outer contact with others but the gateway to a deeper inner contact with them. Nor did he recognise that the inward movement of awareness toward the inner core of the self is the very condition for the release of creative energy *from* that core and its outward expression in the world.

Neither Freud, Jung nor Reich however, recognised that our inwardly felt body is a distinct inner body in its own right – a body not composed of sensible fields and flows of energy (the model of the Old Yoga) but of sensual fields and flows of awareness. Nor did they recognise any fundamental distinction between bodily sensations that we are *aware of* and those sensual qualities *of awareness* that make up our *awareness body*. The inward movement of awareness is not a movement towards a notional 'energetic' core of our physical organism but towards a centre deep within this inner body or *psychical organism*. That centre is not a biological nerve centre or energy centre but a centre of awareness linking us with our innermost being or 'core self'. Without an inward flow of awareness toward the core of our psychical organism we cannot make deep inner contact with others from that organismic core. Nor can we liberate any outward flow of creative energy from this core of our *psychical organism* towards its expressive periphery - our *physical organism*. The outer body or physical organism has no 'core' in the Reichian sense. For this organism as a whole - both its outer skin and internal organs - is no more and no less than the outwardly perceived surface or *periphery* of our inner body or psychical organism.

That physical body periphery is an expressive surface – a language. Being a *language*, bodily acts and interaction can serve as many functions as speech acts and verbal interaction. Body speech can offer the gratificatory release of self-expression or the oral venting and evacuation of emotions. It can facilitate a deeper intimacy with oneself through self-disclosure, or provide a medium of authentic communication with others – a communication in which it is the other that is meant.

Two people can both derive pleasure from a verbal intercourse in which there is self-expression but no communication - for both parties are merely speaking about

themselves rather than conveying a message that is really meant for the other – for *this* person and no other. Similarly, two people can derive self-satisfaction and mutual pleasure from sexual intercourse - irrespective of the depth of communication involved and whether or not their body speech really responds to and means the other.

Sex can be simple self-gratification, conscious mutual pleasuring or communication on any number of levels, conveying any number of messages. Like a verbal conversation, sexual conjugation can also fulfill countless different communicative functions – serving as a manipulative tool, a means of reward or punishment, an assertion of power, an exercise of dominance or submission. It can be an expression of love - or, as in the case of rape - of hate.

Both words and body language, speech acts and sex acts, can be an expression of the fullness of feeling that arises from love and *gnosis* - from intimate inner connectedness. Alternatively they can be the expression not of a desirable fullness of feeling but of a *deficiency need*. Out of this need people seek both verbal and sexual contact with others precisely because they are out of touch with their inwardly sensed body - because they lack a felt bodily sense of intimate inner connectedness with others. The fullness of feeling that love and *gnosis* bring is desirable. At the same time this fullness is needless – for it is the very essence of ‘ful-filment’. In this sense both love and *gnosis* are themselves essentially needless.

In a culture full of sexual imagery, it is a paradox that the very *words* with which we seek to understand human sexual ‘needs’ and ‘desire’ - whether they derive from Freud or Reich, psychoanalysis or science, New Age spirituality or the disciplines of the Old Yoga - have become hollow terminologies *emptied* of felt inner meaning. That is no accident. The emptiness of the word is a reflection of a felt emptiness of the flesh in a culture in which there is no longer any feeling understanding or cognition of the inner body as the resonant inwardness of both Word and Flesh.

Beyond 'Mind, Body and Spirit'

Today the term 'mind, body and spirit' has become a catchphrase for the whole New Age trade. Notwithstanding all the repetitive talk of ‘holistic’ approaches to medicine, 'body', 'mind' and 'spirit' are still thought of as referring to three separable ‘parts’ of the ‘whole’ human being. Mind and body are understood without reference to soul and spirit. The soul is identified with the mind, rather than with the felt inwardness of

our bodies. The body is identified with the flesh – the perceived outwardness of the physical body, not with the inner shape of its resonant inwardness. The meditational practices of the Old Yoga aiming at spiritual transcendence of the physical body through disciplines of mental concentration, are now well and truly ‘yoked’ to the degenerate *gnosis* of New Age spirituality. Neither the Old Yoga nor the New Age philosophies that draw from it offer any true knowledge of the *relational* dimension of spirituality. The Old Yoga did not provide any meditational practices by which to explore, embody and express this dimension. New Age philosophies offer no true knowledge of the *inner body* as the very medium of our inner soul-spiritual *relatedness* to others. The New Yoga is a *relational yoga* of the inner body through which we achieve a New Gnosis – a deepened *relational knowledge* of ourselves and others.

Viewed from the outside, self and body are both seen as something bounded by our own skins, and separated from others by an empty space filled only by air. But there is a deep reason why the root meaning of the Greek word *psyche* was ‘life-breath’, and why the words ‘spirit’, ‘inspiration’, ‘aspiration’ and ‘respiration’ have a common derivation from the Latin *spirare* – to breathe. *Psyche*, the Greek word for soul meant ‘life breath’. *Pneuma*, the Greek word for spirit, meant also wind – the air around us. At what point does the air around us, the air we breathe in or ‘inspire’, become part of us – of who we are? At what point does the air we expire cease to be a part of us, becoming simply ‘air’? The question cannot be answered except by suspending our ordinary notions of self and bodyhood. Our inner ‘spiritual’ body has no physical boundaries but is composed of *spiritus* – the tangible substantiality of awareness that, like air around us, flows both *within* us and *between* us and the world. That is why both Western gnostic and Eastern yogic traditions have long connected ‘spirit’ with respiration, and spiritual awareness with *awareness of breathing*. Neither have yet understood that the essential nature of inner respiration is a *breathing of awareness*. *Psyche* and *pneuma*, and their Eastern equivalents - *prana* and *chi* - consist of sensual flows of awareness. Meditational breathing therefore, has nothing to do with mental control of our physical breathing, but rather with our capacity to experience our bodily breathing process in a deeper more spiritual way - as a breathing of awareness and as a way of consciously directing flows of awareness.

Long before ‘body’ and ‘soul’, ‘mind’ and ‘spirit’ were conceived as separate ‘things’, there was a felt understanding of the intimate inner relation between the flow

and circulation of *air, wind and breath* and the flow and circulation of *awareness*. Flows of awareness were felt to possess their own *spiritual substantiality* flowing like air between the inner spaces of our bodies into which we draw breath and the sensory world around us, a world in which this air circulates as wind or *pneuma*. There was therefore a felt sense of 'spirit' as a medium of meaningful interconnectedness between the bodily inwardness of all beings – their vital breath or *psyche*. This understanding was and is confirmed by the fact that all living beings *breathe*, and that the soul or psyche finds expression through those inwardly shaped and toned flows of breath that constitute *speech*. It was in this way too, that the human body or *soma* could be understood as the fleshly 'word' or 'speech' (*logos*) of the spirit, ensouled and vitalised with its life-breath.

In Homeric Greek the word *soma* originally referred simply to a lifeless corpse, one devoid of the life-breath called *psyche*. Only later did the word *soma* come to refer to the living body of the human being, and the word *psyche* to its sensed interiority or 'soul-space'. Today however, the very term *psychology* has become a contradiction in terms, referring to a 'science' in which soul or *psyche* has no place, or in which it is identified with the mind or brain. Its connection with the individual's inwardly sensed body is completely ignored. This inner body is not a sense-perceptible object but also a *body of sensuously experienced meaning* - composed of tissues, tonalities and textures of awareness with their own felt meaning or sense.

As we know however, huge numbers of people today suffer from a type of *meaning loss* which they experience as anxiety or depression or express through a whole variety of 'disorders' or 'diseases'. Medicine and psychiatry classify these as either 'mental', 'physical' or 'psychosomatic'. But the essential nature of human *dis-ease* has nothing to do with 'mind and body', 'psyche' and 'soma' as these words are ordinarily understood. Paradoxically, what is thought of as 'psychosomatic' illness is in essence the expression of a complete loss of contact with the *somatic* and *psychical* dimensions of both 'mind' and 'body' – a type of soul-spiritual amnesia in which we no longer experience our own inwardly sensed body – the *soma* - as the resonant inner *soul space* in which we dwell as beings, a soul-space through which we can experience deep spiritual connectedness with other beings. As a result of this amnesia, we no longer experience our own inwardly felt body as a distinct inner body in its own right – a body of soul and spirit.

New Testament Greek distinguishes between the flesh or *sarx* and the body or *soma*. The literal meaning of *sarx* is ‘skin’ – related to the outer form or aspect (*eidōs*) under which any body appeared. But as the New Testament states: “Life is more than meat and the *soma* more than its raiment” Luke 12.23. *Psyche* or soul is the very inwardness of *soma* - an inwardness not to be understood in an ordinary spatial sense but as something akin to the inwardness of the *word* – its felt inner sense or ‘resonance’. The Old Yoga had its source in a deep understanding of the soul as the *resonant inwardness* of mind and body, an understanding that *resonates* in the musical traditions of India. This understanding became distorted in practices of *mantra yoga* – which confused inner sound and resonance with something that can be evoked by external sounds and vocal chanting or by purely *mental* repetition of *mantra*. The flesh, like the word, is a surface *skin* of meaning with its own resonant interiority. The soul is the *resonant inwardness* of the word *and* the flesh, linking us *spiritually* with the world and with other beings. The inner body is this resonant inwardness of soul given its own inner shape through inner sound and the inner word, through the deep *logos* of the *psyche*.

The Mystery of Bodyhood

What ‘body’ is it with which we breathe in, digest and metabolise our own awareness of the world? What ‘body’ is it with which we experience, express and embody different inner *states of being*? What body is it with which we feel ‘warmth’ or ‘coolness’, ‘closeness’ or more ‘distance’ to another *being* – and do so quite independently of our physical temperature and physical distance from them? What ‘body’ are we referring to when we speak of being ‘touched’ by someone without any physical contact, of moving ‘closer’ to them or ‘distancing’ ourselves from them, of feeling ‘uplifted’ or ‘carried away’? Are these phrases merely emotional metaphors derived from motions in physical space, or are the emotions themselves expressions of basic *motions* of awareness belonging to an inner body of awareness – that body which Winnicott referred to as the *psyche-soma*, and Jung as the ‘subtle body’? What body and what organs are we referring to when we speak of someone being ‘warm-hearted’ or ‘heartless’, ‘thick-skinned’ or ‘thin-skinned’, ‘balanced’ or ‘imbalanced’, ‘solid’ or ‘mercurial’, ‘stable’ or ‘volatile’? Are we simply using bodily ‘metaphors’

to describe disembodied mental or emotional states? Or are we describing felt states of a distinct inner body – a ‘higher’ soul-spiritual body with its own spiritual shape and substantiality; a body composed not of flesh and blood but of *tissues of thought and flows of awareness* that are no less tangible?

...perhaps the entire evolution of the spirit is a question of the body; it is the history of the emergence of a higher body that emerges into our sensibility.

These words of Nietzsche, that self-proclaimed philosophical ‘anti-Christ’, mirror the mystical essence of gnostic Christianity – the resurrection of an inner spiritual body (*soma-pneumatikos*) that can bring fresh life to our body-soul (*soma-psychikos*), the ‘life breath’ or ‘vitalising awareness’ of the molecules, cells and organs that make up our physical body.

As Julian Jaynes has shown, in the language of Homer there was no word for either the ‘body’ or the ‘self’ *as a whole* - something separate from the world around it. Selfhood was experienced as an ever-changing assemblage of different *qualities of psychological awareness* such as clarity, courage or quivering anticipation – qualities personified in the gods and manifest in the sensory world. Bodyhood was experienced as an assemblage of different *qualities of somatic awareness* that allowed the individual to literally *embody* different psychological qualities – to sense and personify the will of the gods. In Greek tradition, the seat of consciousness is not the brain (*encephalos*) but the heart or *kradie*. Here however, we need to be cautious with regard to language. Though the Greek *kradie* is translated as ‘heart’ and is the word from which we derive such medical terms as ‘cardiac’, in its original sense it did not merely denote a sense-perceptible organ of the body. Instead, as Julian Jaynes has shown, like other Greek words such as *thumos*, *phrenes* and *etor*, the word *kradie* referred originally only to a specific *quality* of bodily sensation. *Thumos* did not mean ‘thymus gland’ but denoted a bodily sense of vigour. *Etor* did not refer to the intestines but meant something like the *gut feeling* or any sensation felt in the belly or abdomen – a sinking feeling for example. *Phrenes* referred to the way in which we feel events affect our breathing – for example the sense of catching our breath with excitement, holding our breath in fear, or letting it mount up and release itself in sounds of grief and anger. “Why has grief come upon your *phrenes*? Speak, conceal

not in *nous*, so that we may both know.” (Thetis to a sobbing Achilles). *Kradia*, then, did not mean ‘heart’, but a felt sense of one’s heartbeat. More essentially, it meant a felt sense of oscillation or *quivering*. All these forms of inner bodily *sensation*, however, were experienced not only as something intimately related to the body’s senses but as something imbued with an inwardly felt meaning or *sense*.

The New Yoga as Soma-Sensitivity

The New Yoga is essentially the cultivation of *soma-sensitivity*, the capacity to inwardly sense and resonate with another person’s mental, emotional or physical states and to feel them as the expression of *inner-body states*. Again it must be emphasised that when we speak of someone feeling ‘fragmented’, ‘frozen’ in panic, ‘hollow’ or ‘empty’ inside, ‘volatile’ or about to ‘burst’ etc. these are not simply emotional metaphors but literal expressions of such *inner body* states. In The New Yoga, spiritual healing transcends the artificial separation of physical and ‘mental’ illness in somatic medicine and psychotherapy. Physical body functions such as respiration, digestion and metabolism are understood as the expression of basic functions of our inner soul-spiritual body – for example our capacity to inhale, digest and metabolise our *awareness* of the world and other people. Both physical and mental illness are the expression of inner body states. Physical illness is the expression of disturbed inner-body functions – the respiration, circulation, digestion and metabolism of awareness. So-called ‘mental’ illness is an expression of a disturbed relation to the inwardly sensed body and self. This disturbed relation however, is invariably felt both as a self state and as an *inner body* state. States of anxiety, depression, dissociation or depersonalisation for example are all felt in a bodily way and in this way affect the individual’s bodily sense of self.

Different forms of somatic medicine and psychotherapy which attempt to ‘make sense’ of people’s emotions or symptoms by labelling or verbalising them are simply attaching symbols to them - in this way attempting to *signify* their sense. Signifying the meaning or sense of something in words or symbols is one thing. Directly *sensing* its significance is quite another. The distinction between signified sense and sensed significance is completely ignored in medicine and psychotherapy. Thus a physician ‘makes sense’ of a patient’s symptoms for example only by interpreting them as *signs*

within an already established pattern of significance represented by a specific disease pathology. He or she makes no attempt to directly sense the significance of these signs. Such medical ‘diagnosis’ belies the essential meaning of the word. Physicians working ‘through *gnosis*’ (*dia-gnosis*) would not seek to make sense of their patients’ symptoms by merely incorporating them into their own body of medical knowledge – assigning them a place in an already established pattern of medical significance. Instead they would be trained to use their own inner bodies to directly *sense* the significance of the patient’s disease symptoms, thus get to know them as the expression of an inwardly felt dis-ease – an inner body state.

The experiential psychology and therapeutic practice of ‘focusing’ developed by Eugene Gendlin emphasises the importance of attending to our felt bodily sense of different states of being, noting where and how we feel them in our bodies.

As Gendlin puts it:

A felt sense is not just an emotion. Fear, anger, joy, sadness – these are emotions. A felt sense is different...It is a bodily quality like heavy, sticky, jumpy, fluttery, tight...A felt sense is unmistakably meaningful and yet we don’t know what it is.

What it is that Gendlin is referring to are not simply felt qualities of bodily *sensations* but something far deeper – the felt meaning or *sense* of those qualitative sensations. The *gnostic* dimension of Gendlin’s work lies in affirming that meaning or sense is not a property of words or symbols alone but is something that can be directly felt or sensed in a bodily way. What Gendlin calls ‘bodily sensing’ is inner bodily *knowing*. For it is our inner body that is our felt and feeling body. Our surface sensations and symptoms, emotions and thoughts, on the other hand, are more or less distorted interpretations of these inner body states and of our own wordless inner-bodily knowing.

From New Gnosis to The New Yoga

New Gnosis challenges the most fundamental and *fundamentalistic* of linguistic and religious delusions – the delusion that the meaning of words lies in the ‘things’ or

‘beings’ they name, and that scientific or religious bodies of knowledge are representations of those things or beings. The very opposite is the case. The essential meaning of a word does not lie in any things or beings they name – their *signified sense* - but in the *sensed significance* that those things and beings have for us. For it is they that mean something to us.

Perception is itself a type of language, and perceptual objects, including both things and people, are themselves the basic ‘words’ of our perceptual vocabulary. Perceptual objects take shape and form in our field of awareness in the same way that words do – through patterns of inner sound. Our pre-linguistic or wordless sense of meaning corresponds to a pre-perceptual awareness of the world in which things speak to us even without our having words with which to name them. Meaning is something we feel, above all when we lack words to say what we mean.

Meaning is no word and no thing. Sense is not merely something signified by words but has to do with our sensual awareness of things. The subtle mood colours belonging to our sensual *awareness* of a sunset for example, are intrinsically meaningful. They possess intrinsic sense. It is such sensual qualities of awareness that we *feel* as the meaning of the sunset. They are *sensual field-qualities of awareness* that we cannot pin down or reduce to some *localised sensory qualities of things*. Our inner body is a field body - the body with which we sense these sensual field qualities of awareness.

What Gendlin calls “bodily sensing” or “felt sense” is a function of this inner body, our inwardly felt or sensed body. It is through this that we can follow our psychological life, thoughts and emotions, perceptions and sensations back to their spiritual source in a wordless inner knowing or *gnosis*. *Gnosis* as inner bodily knowing is a knowing which puts us in touch with our innermost potentialities of being. None of us can fully *embody* these potentials in any one life. That is why the gnostics of East and West believed in the truth of reincarnation or re-embodiment rather than the physical resurrection of the dead.

Yet when St. Paul spoke of a *soma-pneumatikos* or ‘spiritual body’, he was echoing the *gnostic* understanding that in any given life we can each ‘rise in the flesh’, using our inner body to both feel and *embody* the potentials of our innermost spiritual being or self.

Behind your thoughts and feelings my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – whose name is Self. In your body he dwells. He is your body.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The meditational practices of The New Yoga are the cultivation of a new *soma-spirituality* – a spirituality of the inner body. The guiding principle of soma-spirituality is very simple. The less we feel our *body as a whole* the less we feel *our self as a whole*. The less we feel our self as a whole the less we ‘feel ourselves’ and the more prone we are to sicknesses which give expression to this sense of ‘not feeling ourselves’. And the less we feel our own bodies and selves as a whole, the less able we are to feel the bodies and selves of others – and to feel our inner bodily connectedness with them.

The New Gnosis like the Old, requires its own meditational disciplines – it requires a New Yoga. Conversely, that New Yoga needs to be guided by inner knowledge, by a New Gnosis. But since inner knowledge is itself an *inner bodily knowing*, what unites the New Gnosis with The New Yoga is direct *knowledge of the inner body*. Such knowledge cannot come from some traditional *body of inner knowledge*, however old and venerable.

The meditational practices of the Old Yoga were focused on awareness of our outer physical body, its breathing and posture, its energy flows and centres. The meditational practices of The New Yoga are focused on our inner *awareness body* as such – that inner body through which we can most fully feel ourselves and others, and feel those centres and flows and dimensions of awareness that link us with others. The New Yoga, like the old, combines countless different meditational disciplines or *yogas*, each of which serve to awaken our experience of specific dimensions of our awareness body – its breathing or respiration, its spatiality and substantiality, its movements of inward expansion and contraction, its sensuality and sexuality, its inner shape and inner sound. The adept or *siddha* of this New Yoga is one who has mastered its different yogas and thereby become adept in a new *relational art* – that of allowing their inner body to shift-shape in *resonance* with new and deeper aspects of themselves and others. The New *Gnosis* finds expression in a new science of *inner resonance*. The New Yoga finds expression in a new art – the healing art of inner-bodily *resonation*.

The sicknesses of the soul are sicknesses of relation.

Martin Buber

What Buber says of sicknesses of the soul can also be said of sicknesses of the body. Both sicknesses are expressions of a fundamental sickness of human social relations. And only a fundamentally sick society makes a fad or fetish of 'health'. The generalised sickness of the soul in contemporary society is a sickness of human relations - the incapacity to feel a deep sense of inner connectedness with self and other. This has its roots in the identification of the soul with the mind or brain, rather than with the *felt inwardness* of the body. This generalised sickness was first identified by the independent thinking British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. It was Winnicott who recognised that health is dependent on a secure sense of *somatic indwelling*, a capacity to feel at home in our own skins.

Freud had already understood the ego as a bodily ego, something "ultimately derived from bodily sensations, particularly those springing from the surface of the body." But this skin surface, the flesh or *sarx*, has a felt inwardness as well as a sensory outwardness. The felt inwardness of the flesh is the *peripheral boundary* of the inner body - a "limiting membrane" (Winnicott) within which we can feel our own insideness and dwell comfortably within the inner 'soul-space' of our bodies. Without a sense of this inner-bodily ego boundary there can be no sense of *somatic indwelling* and vice versa. Layers of fat, muscular armouring or body building, skin disorders or a closed mind and mental ego defences, may each provide a physical or mental substitute for a felt inner bodily ego-boundary and ego-skin.

According to Winnicott, in the process of ego-maturation, the infant requires a "holding environment" to protect its sense of "going on being" from external impingements, enabling it to go on feeling its own being in a bodily way. Lacking such an environment it develops a different type of boundary or "ego-skin" (Anzieu). This is what Winnicott called the *mind-psyche* as opposed to the *psyche-soma*.

The function of the *mind-psyche* according to Winnicott is purely reparative - to compensate for a lacking *bodily* sense of inner boundedness. But identification with the *mind-psyche* leads to the creation of a "false self" in place "true self" - the bodily self experienced through somatic indwelling. *That* self can only be experienced if the

individual learns to once again experience their own ego as a *bodily ego* – not simply a projection of the body’s surface or a protective mental shell or ego skin but a felt inner boundary of their body surface as a whole. For it is only within this inner boundary of the flesh or *sarx* that they can healthily ‘dwell’ within the *psychic* inwardness of their own body or *soma* – identifying with what Winnicott called the *psyche-soma*.

What a contrast we see here to the cynical commercial marketing of ‘inner’ health as something to be achieved through probiotic yoghurts, vitamin supplements, skin-creams and exercise regimes. What a contrast also to the spiritual marketing of those old ‘yogas’ which use the mind and mental ego to discipline and ultimately transcend the physical body. In contrast to commercial and spiritual health faddism we have Winnicott’s understanding that sickness and depression have themselves an important *healing* role to play in our lives – that of putting us back in touch with our bodies, helping us to feel ourselves again in a bodily way, regain a sense of somatic indwelling and re-identify with our *psyche-soma* rather than with our *mind-psyche*.

The spiritual aim and meaning of ‘meditation’ in The New Yoga is the same - to regain a healthy sense of somatic indwelling. This means learning to once again experience both our outer ego and inner self in a bodily way - as an inner bodily ego and inner bodily self. The inner bodily *ego* is the inwardly felt boundary or surface of our body as whole. The *psyche-soma* is the sense of our own insideness that opens up within this boundary. The *inner bodily self* is the ‘core self’ we can sense at the centre of this spacious insideness. This is a centre of awareness located deep within our lower abdomen, our spiritual and physical centre of gravity.

The anatomy of the inner body is a relation between this inner bodily ego-boundary, its inner bodily soul space, and the inner bodily self that dwells within it. The infant first gains a sense of its peripheral ego boundary through its fleshly skin surface - through physical skin contact with its mother, and through being held by its parents. What is no less important is what Winnicott called the mindful provision of a “holding environment”, one that protects the infant from having to react motorically to external sensory impingements. The holding environment allows the infant to continue “going on being” instead of reacting – to dwell and come to rest in the soul space of its own inner body or *psyche-soma*.

Meditation is the *self-recreation* of this holding environment through *mindfulness of our own inwardly felt body and self*. ‘Mindfulness’ here does not mean some sort of

purely mental concentration. Instead - and paradoxically - it means cultivating a tangible *bodily* sense of one's mind itself as a second skin - a containing 'ego-skin' of thought and language. Just as the physical body of the foetus grows down from its head, so can this type of mindfulness lead down from the inner mind-space of our heads into the soul depths and spiritual centre of our inwardly felt body. As it does so we renew our sense of our own ego as an inner-bodily ego - as the inwardly felt surface or boundary of our soul.

Feeling deep down inside our bodies from the inner mind space of our heads, we *reunite* this inner mind space with the inner soul-space of our bodies. We begin to experience the inwardly felt surface of this space as an *inner-bodily ego boundary* - within which we can begin to feel again our *inner-bodily self*.

If we then move our awareness to the *fleshly outer surface* of this bodily ego-boundary, we can begin again to sense and feel *others* in a tangible bodily way. We no longer merely observe or perceive their bodies as objects. We *feel* the physical body of the other as the visible outwardness of their own inner bodily boundary, inner bodily soul and inner bodily self. Through sensing the other with our whole body surface we begin to know the other from within - to feel and 'see' their inner body as a whole. What we also sense and 'see' is how in touch they are with their own inner bodily soul and self - or how enclosed and entrapped they are in the mind space of their heads and mental ego-skin. In this way we do not only feel or 'see' how someone is but also 'hear' how they are. For in the sound of a person's voice, no less than in the look in their eyes and the whole feel of their bodily presence, we hear whether their health is truly 'sound'. Someone in truly sound health is not merely physically fit and capable of functioning. Someone in sound health is someone whose resonant inwardness and depths of soul is echoed in their voice tone and in the whole inner tone of their body. This then is the deep meaning of *diagnosis* - not simply to ask how someone is, but to inwardly *know* how they are through sensing the inner tone of their whole bodily presence. To know *how* someone is also means sensing *how much* they are - the degree to which, as a being, this person is truly 'there', truly present in a bodily way and in this way inwardly connected to themselves and others.

A question - any question - is a *felt lack of connectedness* - whether between thoughts or between things, between emotions or events, or between beings. Illness is no mere lack of well-being. Nor does it merely present us with questions. Illness too *is* a question - a *felt question seeking a felt answer*, not a *health problem seeking a*

medical or spiritual solution. As a felt question, illness is essentially a felt lack of inner connectedness to aspects of oneself or others. This may express itself in a lack or 'blockage' of the necessary energy for vital functioning and everyday living. In no way however, does this validate the New Age concept of 'energy medicine', ignoring as it does the essential truth of both New Gnosis and The New Yoga: *it is not energy that connects but connectedness that energises.* Fields and flows of energy are only what connect things and people *outwardly*. Energy itself has its source in what connects them *inwardly* – in the fields and flows of awareness that make up our inner body. An idea or insight that inwardly connects or conjoins two experiences, emotions or events *releases energy*, just as does an inner connection between two people. Such an *idea or insight* is no mere abstract mental concept but an *inner conception*. *Inner connections* give rise to *inner conceptions* and vice versa. And inner connections bring with them a release of energy.

New Gnosis and The New Yoga are both based on entirely new *inner conceptions* of reality, including new conceptions not only of our inner being but of our bodyhood as such. These potent *inner conceptions* point to deep inner connections - connections whose potential energy has only just begun to be released as formative, informative and transformative activity of the most revolutionary spiritual and political nature. But in and of itself this potential energy is a healing power *in* the world. For it is a power that is not *of* this world at all - the power of inner knowing and inner connection, experienced through the inner body.

The New Yoga of the inner body cannot be reduced to some new or modified form of Old Yoga. It is not 'a' new yoga but THE New Yoga – yoga inwardly reconceived and reborn. Instead of being handed down through any age-old spiritual lineage or tradition, The New Yoga has its source in the very well-springs of direct inner knowing from which all such lineages and traditions are first born - and from which alone they can be truly renewed and reborn.

THE INNER BODY

**Feelings are something we 'have'.
Feeling is something we *do*.**

**Do not seek to label your 'feelings'.
Learn to feel yourself and feel others.**

**Learn to breathe your bodily awareness,
Of yourself and of others.**

**This way you will discover your awareness body.
Your felt body. Your feeling body. Your field body.**

**That body has no eyes and ears.
It is all eye and all ear.**

**That body is not bounded by your flesh.
For whatever it feels, hears and sees, it also touches.**

**It is your eternal and divine inner form,
In-forming your flesh, and forever transforming.**

**The well of your inner knowing.
The embodiment of your inner being.
The medium of inner connection.**