

Beyond Maslow: The Eight Core Needs of CosmoErotic Humanism

From Maslow's Five Needs to the Eight Core Needs of Eros & CosmoErotic
Humanism on Need and Desire

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Evolution Is Love in Action in Response to Need

The Bi-Directional Eros and Ethos of *Your Need Is My Allurement*: Shame, Allurement, Intimacy, Value, Need, and Obligation

In earlier writings, we spoke of the animating principle of evolution, *Your need is my allurement*.¹ When the beloved speaks to us—not necessarily the romantic beloved, but the Outrageous Love beloved—and says, *Your need is my allurement*, we heal the shame of finitude that lives so deeply in us. The shame of finitude, as we have outlined it,² is the shame that comes from the humiliation we experience in meeting our basic needs. Together with the shame of our mortality and the shame of our animal nature, the shame of finitude is connected to an underlying malaise—the shame of powerlessness. It is only in healing the shame of finitude that we step into the fullness of *Homo amor*, the new human and the new humanity. The shame of finitude must be healed by each of us, personally. And collectively, we must heal our planet drenched in shame.

Shame is healed, however, not only when we feel the allurement of the beloved to meet our need. That is but the first step of two steps. In this step, we overcome our original humiliation in meeting our fundamental need for touch, contact, and nourishment. The second step is to also experience *ourselves* saying to the beloved, *Your Need is my allurement*.

We need to be the object of allurement, which elicits the response of *Your Need is my allurement*. And we need to be the one allured, who is speaking, *Your Need is my allurement*.

Allurement is deeply entwined with intimacy. Remember our intimacy articulation:

¹ See for example, in this essay: The “Intimate Universe,” the “Evolution of Intimacy,” & “Evolutionary Intimacy” <https://worldphilosophyandreligion.org/the-evolution-of-love-intimacy-a-new-vision-of-evolutionary-intimacy/>.

² See the sections “Shame: The Double Bind of Need and Desire at the Heart of Culture,” “Transforming the Shame of Need in the Context of Relationship,” and “Your Needs Is My Allurement: Healing the Shame of Finitude” in *The Universe: A Love Story* series. See also Marc Gafni, Kristina Kincaid, *The Abridged Phenomenology of Eros*, the section on Shame, in the subsection on Goodness and Aliveness. See also the section on Goodness and Aliveness, in the Volume on Shame in *The Complete Phenomenology of Eros*.

Intimacy = shared identity in the context of relative otherness x mutuality of recognition x mutuality of pathos x mutuality of value x mutuality of purpose.

Underlying the Eros of intimacy is need: *I love you = I need you.*

To truly say *I love you* is to say *I need you*. It is the mutuality of need that drives the movement towards intimacy. It is in the mutuality of need—often *desperate* need—that we meet and know each other.

Deep in our Anthro-Ontology, we are allured to respond to need. We are allured to respond to the need of the beloved in precisely the same way that we are allured to respond to our own need. The allurement is rooted in a hidden knowing that we are part of the same Field of Consciousness and Desire. We are allured because no one is ultimately a stranger. That allurement creates not only delight but also the *gravitas* of intimacy and joyful obligation.

Remember that intimacy is shared identity. And intimacy itself creates obligation. Intimacy is the allurement that reminds my heart and body that we share identity. Intimacy is the allurement in which we recognize each other, we feel each other, we experience our shared values and shared purpose. But even deeper, intimacy is the depth of naked realization in which we embrace the raw and vulnerable truth that we need each other—desperately.

It is not a coincidence of language that in Hebrew one of the root words for *love* or *intimacy*—*chibah*—is also the root word for *obligation*—*chovah*. Obligation is not imposed from an alienated source, external to us. Obligation is the experience of love itself in response to need.

Rewriting the Intimacy Equation: Intimacy and the Mutuality of Need

In this sense, we would do well to rewrite the Intimacy equation, adding a segment on the *mutuality of need*.

*Intimacy = shared identity in the context of relative otherness x mutuality of recognition x mutuality of pathos, x mutuality of value x **mutuality of need** x mutuality of purpose*

The Deconstruction of Value and Uniqueness—Allurement and Obligation as Values

In Unique Self Theory, we often talk about Unique Self as your unique set of allurements. This, however, is directly and intimately correlated to a second core dimension of Unique Self Theory—the realization of Unique Self Obligation. Unique Self Obligation and your unique set of allurements are, at their core, inseparable from each other.

In Unique Self Theory, we often talk of the fivefold theory of obligation.

One of the ways we talk about it—in part tongue-in-cheek—is by telling the story of a person shipwrecked with an infinitely annoying person on an island. In this trolley-car theoretical scenario that we set up, you know beyond any doubt that you will never be rescued. The person you are with is not just annoying—but infinitely so. Think fingernails on a chalk board. The tongue-in-cheek nature of the presentation, when we do it at public teachings, is in describing the myriad ways that this infinitely annoying person quietly literally—almost—drives you crazy. At some point, this person is injured and unable to feed themselves. The question then is: Are you *obligated* to feed this person?

I (Marc) first formulated a version of this question when I was teaching values at culture clubs throughout New York City and in Long Island public and private schools—and since repeated it in myriad leading high-school and university contexts around the world. I still, however, remember my initial shock, when a room full of intelligent, well-educated western kids almost unanimously said, *No, you cannot formulate this as an obligation*. Of course, they thought you *should* feed her. But *should* was in small-case letters—*not* an obligation.

The reason it could not be formulated as an obligation is because the students—the *best and the brightest*—were raised in a culture in which value itself has been deconstructed.

I sat a few years back with a serious figure at Harvard Divinity School, and she said with utter conviction, *there is no possibility of articulating a binding theory of obligation in the modern or postmodern world. In or world*, she exclaimed with a mixture of horror and relief, *obligation is dead. Because obligation*, she continued not wrongly, *is based on value, and value is forever deconstructed*.

In terms of value, this is simply...wrong.

Of course, the reason this position—that *value has been forever deconstructed*—became the default of the academy is twofold. First, there is an implicit or explicit reductive materialism that dominates much if not most of the academy. Second, the claim was always that *value is pre-ordained and eternal* when this is clearly not the case. But that does not mean that value is not real.

For example, Love evolves, and Love is real. Or, in the language of CosmoErotic Humanism, *the eternal Tao is the evolving Tao*.

Love is real, and love evolves.

We have unpacked this pivotal shift in value theory that is at the very heart of CosmoErotic Humanism in other texts, so we will not expand on it at this juncture.³ Let's simply, for our purposes, work with this realization of an evolving Tao, or what we also refer to as an *evolving perennialism*.

Value is an intrinsic evolving structure of Cosmos itself. Allurement is a value of Cosmos. Clarified allurement yields *gnosis* about the nature of Cosmos and the nature of my place in the larger Cosmic Story. My clarified allurement responds to your clarified need. That is the nature of our intimacy. Intimacy generates obligation. The response of allurement in response to need is not an option but an obligation. And obligation is the inherent nature of the LoveDesire, LoveObligation, and LoveBeauty that animates the CosmoErotic Universe.

Obligation arises from the matrix of value. Value includes uniqueness, allurement, and of course value itself as constitutional to Cosmos. Allurement, as we unpacked earlier and in other writings on CosmoErotic Humanism, is the nature of Reality itself—it is the fabric of the amorous Cosmos, about which the interior sciences wrote, *its insides are lined with Love*. Value itself, the intrinsic structure of Cosmos, in which value, being *real—intrinsic—ontological*, is mediated through the prism of a set of evolving First Principles and First Values. These First Principles and First Values embedded in a story of value are the very plotlines of Cosmos.

³ See David J. Temple, *First Principles & First Values: Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism, the Meta-Crisis, and the World to Come*, and see also the fuller conversation in David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method* (forthcoming). Both by World Philosophy and Religion Press, in Conjunction with Waterside Press and Integral Publishers.

Intimacy and the Reconstruction of Obligation

Uniqueness x Intimacy = Obligation

Let's look for a moment at the structure of Unique Self Obligation, which is rooted in the entwined value of value itself—*ethos*—and the particular value of uniqueness and allurements.

Why, if we are on that island we described above, is there an intrinsic, non-negotiable obligation to feed the infinitely annoying person.

And here we come to the fivefold theory of obligation and need.

Obligation is intimately associated with need.

Remember that obligation itself, in the original Hebrew, is the same word as *Love* or *Eros*.

Evolution is Love in action in response to need.

Or:

Evolution is Eros in action in response to need.

The Fivefold Theory of Eros, Obligation, and Need

So, let's go back to our island. All of us know—anthro-ontologically in our bodies—the place where the mysteries live—that you are indeed obligated to feed the annoying person on the island.

But why?

First, there is a need.

Second, it is an authentic, universal need.

Third, you have the perceptive capacity to recognize the need.

Fourth, you have the action capacity to meet the need.

Fifth, you are the only person in the entire world who can meet that specific need.

This is the fivefold Unique Self Theory of Obligation, which stands at the core of CosmoErotic Humanism and its evocation of the new human and new humanity.

This is the animating reality of Evolutionary Unique Self as *Homo amor*.

In the consciousness of *Homo amor*, this experience of all five dimensions is not aberrant—something that happens in a weird trolley-problem dynamic.

Rather, this is the nature of the *Homo amor* Unique Self Experience of Reality.

At the very core of CosmoErotic Humanism is a realization about human identity: *I am evolution* articulates human nature accurately. In other words, each individual's deepest heart's desire participates in the wider Evolutionary Desire. One's inconsolable longings for goodness, truth, and beauty in all its forms—and even for transcendence itself—must be taken seriously.

In other words, human phenomenology participates in the ontology of Cosmos, which itself is participatory in the ontology of Divinity. And by Divinity, we mean the evolving, creative Divine Ground of Being and Becoming, or what we sometimes call *the eternal Tao, which is the evolving Tao*.

Homo amor experiences herself as the personal face of the evolving LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire of Cosmos.

For *Homo amor* is the Universe: A Love Story in person.

Or said slightly differently: *Homo amor* is the irreducibly unique and personal face of Evolution as love in action in response to need.

Evolution Is Love in Action in Response to Need Reloaded: Outrageous Love, Not Ordinary Love

By Love we mean not ordinary love, as we have distinguished it above, but rather Eros or Evolutionary Love. In other words, the erotic motive of Cosmos is called forth by need. When

we think of need driving evolution, we are reminded of a key sentence that we deployed above, as well as throughout the writings of CosmoErotic Humanism, namely:

Crisis is an evolutionary driver.

Crisis implies need. Need therefore drives evolution.

But a closer look at evolution discloses that evolution has its own inherent motive force, based on a deeper need than any immediate crisis: This is the inherent ceaseless creativity of Cosmos itself. Cosmos has a need to be creative. In other words, Cosmos has a need to generate more and more creativity. But not only creativity. Cosmos has a need to fulfill what we have called the plotlines of Cosmos. This includes ever-increasing levels of complexity, interconnectivity, intimacy, allurements uniqueness, and freedom. Each of these is a need of Cosmos. But of course, when we reflect on this sentence, the word *desire* naturally arises. And the word *desire* naturally arouses, in the self-reflective human mind, the word *value*.

All these plotlines are fairly described—as we have discussed in other writings on CosmoErotic Humanism—as desires of Cosmos. Cosmos desires ever-greater creativity, ever-greater intimacy, ever-greater uniqueness, ever-greater complexity, ever-greater intimacy, ever-greater allurements, ever-greater freedom, ever-greater obligation, and ever-greater consciousness.

This of course raises a crucial inquiry.

Between Desire, Need, and Value

What exactly is the relationship between desire and need and between desire, need, and value? Are they isomorphic, overlapping, or distinct terms describing at least somewhat different interior experiences of Reality?

To respond to this query, it is worth citing a few paragraphs from our work on value, which implicitly engages this key inquiry.⁴

⁴ See David J. Temple, *First Principles & First Values: Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism, the Meta-Crisis, and the World to Come*.

The First Principle and First Value of Desire, Need, and Value

The First Value and First Principle of Desire and Need begins in the first moments of the First Big Bang with elementary particles desiring ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness. Mathematician Alfred North Whitehead referred to this as the *appetite of Cosmos*. Desire and need then continue to transform, ever-deepening and widening, evolving through the multiple evolving levels of matter, life, the human self-reflective mind—and beyond.

This First Principle and First Value becomes even more clear in the desire equation. But before articulating the definition (or formulation), we must first note that desire and need cannot be fruitfully split off from value—and particularly clarified value.

The Desire, Need, and Value Equation

Stated simply:

Clarified Desire and Need = the longing for a future better than the present

Stated slightly more clearly with one additional clause:

*Clarified Desire and Need = the longing for a future better (more valuable)
than the present = the desire for more value as a local expression of the larger
Field of Desire, Need, and Value*

Twenty-Five Orienting Qualities of Desire, Need, and Value in Cosmos

This equation formulates desire throughout the trajectory of what we have called *the Four Big Bangs* from matter to life to the depth of human self-reflective mind to *Homo amor*. Implicit in the formulation are twenty-five inter-included orienting qualities that express the nature of need, desire, and value, which we now briefly adumbrate.

These twenty-five are not meant to be exhaustive or even definitive. Rather there are meant as an orienting map.⁵

1. Reality is Eros. Desire is a quality of Eros.
2. Reality affirms the dignity of desire.
3. There is no purely local desire.
4. All desire participates in the larger Field of Desire.
5. Desire must be clarified to align with the larger Field of Desire.
6. Desire implies need.
7. Reality affirms the dignity of need.
8. Need must be clarified to align the Field of (Evolutionary) Need.
9. At lower levels of consciousness need is more fundamental (like the need for food), while desire (for deeper fulfillment) is more expansive. At the higher levels of consciousness, need and desire align.
10. In other words: Clarified desire and need are value itself.
11. Value connotes an intrinsic property of Reality, whose goodness, truth, or beauty is inherently needed and desired.
12. Cosmos responds to clarified desire and need.
13. Cosmos is driven by its desire and need to evolve value.
14. Evolution is love in action responding to need.
15. Stated more completely: Evolution is Eros and its desire in action responding to need for the sake of generating and evolving ever-more value.

⁵ The twenty-five orienting qualities are of course complimentary to the Tenets of Intimacy. [See Tenets of Intimacy in the forthcoming book by David J. Temple, *The Intimate Universe*.]

16. The evolving Cosmos is a Cosmos in response to ever-evolving desire, need, and value.
17. Desire implies need that implies future tense.
18. Our need is not merely for relation to the past, nor for only the present, but for the future.
19. Need and desire are the voices of the future in the present.
20. Reality affirms the dignity of the future, with all of the desire, need, and value that it demands.
21. Reality affirms equally the dignity of the past with all of its desires and needs and values, receiving all the past into the present.
22. The past includes all of Reality—all the implicit desire and values that are embedded in Reality—from its moment of inception, across matter, life, and mind.
23. Every evolutionary advance from the first nanoseconds of the Big Bang implies meta-values, emergent from clarified desires and needs that are coded into Reality.
24. Reality affirms the dignity of the present, the place in which we reside in every moment, which is full of creative Eros rooted in the dignity of the desire, need, and value that animate the present.
25. At its leading edges, the self-reflective human mind with its present desires, needs, and values has the capacity to re-narrate and thus reconfigure the past and to invoke the best possible future.⁶

⁶ Past present and future as core to the experience of reality are themselves First Principles and First Values of Cosmos, which we engage in our other writings on CosmoErotic Humanism around First Principles and First Values.

To briefly recapitulate:

Reality is the evolution of desire and need, which themselves reach towards ever-more value, as it deepens and transfigures in form and quality through all of the levels of matter, life, and mind.

Reality is the evolution of desire and need, and the value towards which they yearn, as it deepens and transfigures in form and quality through all the levels of matter, life, and mind.

On the human level, the clarification of desire, need, and value takes place when we awaken as evolution in person—Conscious Evolution—with the unique capacity to clarify desire, need, and value.

Homo amor—the Universe: A Love Story in person—the new human and the new humanity in the form of the Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self—is the ground of a new cultural enlightenment. With this realization clearly in mind and heart, we can now go one last step in this writing towards unpacking the core tenets of the Universe: A Love Story.

In this final section, we want to take three major steps:

First, we want to deepen our understanding of desire and need.

Second, we want to deepen our understanding of the relationship between Cosmic Desire and Need and our own personal desire and need.

Third, we want to deepen our understanding of Unique Self and Unique Self Symphony which are the source code structures of the Universe: A Love Story at the human level, which is characterized by the emergence of *Homo amor*.

Fourth, want to understand the intimate relationship between need and Desire on the hand and Unique Self on the other.

In the beginning of our conversation below, we will focus on need. Only then we will turn to correlate more precisely need and desire.

Core Human Needs: Survival, Growth, and Affective (Love) Needs

What are our core needs as human beings? Leading edge theorists have distinguished sharply between three kinds of needs: survival needs, developmental needs, and affective needs (or what are sometimes referred to as love needs). These ostensibly distinct sets of needs are deeply entwined with each other.

Survival Needs

We all recognize survival needs. They are primal and elemental. It is where it all starts. But even survival needs are an expression of self-love.

Our drive to survive is in no sense a given of materialist Reality. Rather, the inherent drive to survive has a purpose; it is a telos built into the structure of Reality. Of course, such a carefully documented and pervasive telos contradicts any ultimate claim made by the sciences (or what we call scientism) that Reality is without direction. Reality is self-evidently guided by telos, with but one telos being survival. The desire for the survival of the self is simply an expression of self-love. Self-love is the interior of which survival is the exterior. Our intense desire to give massive attention to our survival needs is one example of telerotic intelligence being wired into the structure of our bodies, minds, and hearts.

Growth Needs

We have growth or, what are sometimes called, developmental needs. These are needs not only to survive but to thrive. We might also refer to these as transformational needs. We have a need to transform. The caterpillar *needs* to become a butterfly.

Growth is an expression of self-love no less than survival. Growth has many expressions in each of the different lines of human development, from motor to moral, to musical, to cognitive, etc. But in its deepest expression, which transcends and includes all of the other lines,

growth is the commitment to develop—to transform—into the most stunning, unique version of ourselves that we can possibly be. To grow is to transform into our own deepest identity, to realize our true nature.

Our need to grow is our need to transform into our own deepest identity; it is our need for Unique Self Realization. We have a core need to grow into the unique contours of our Unique Self, to give our unique gifts as the leading edge of evolution lived through us, and to be recognized and loved for it. We want to transform from a skin-encapsulated, grasping separate self—always competing in win/lose games for scarce resources—into our Evolutionary Unique Self—*Homo amor*, a unique expression of LoveIntelligence.

At each level of our growth or development, we have a new set of needs and a new set of gifts. Our new needs are to be supported, recognized, met, and loved at each new level of growth.

Affective (Love) Needs

The final type of need—*affective need*—is a need to be loved and held by others, and to love and hold others. Stated simply, we need to be both lover and beloved.

In the modern and postmodern era, our early affective needs to be held, touched, and loved are primarily met by our parents or early caretakers. When, often unintentionally, we are humiliated in getting those early needs met, modern and postmodern psychology offers therapeutic strategies to learn to meet those needs with our beloved or beloveds in later stages of life—by doing the work of healing and transformation. Attachment theory and other leading-edge frameworks in psychology tell us that it is only by meeting our early affective needs that we have the capacity to meet our deeper transformational needs for self-actualization and even self-transcendence.⁷

⁷ In addition to attachment theory, Kurt Fischer's Dynamic Skill Theory reveals how healthy sensorimotor and interpersonal development in children is foundational to later adult development. See Fischer, K. W., & Bidell, T. R. (2006). "Dynamic development of action and thought." In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology. Vol 1: Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed., pp. 313-399). New York: Wiley.

This deeper set of needs is born in the recognition that our core need is to give our unique gifts, which are a function of our unique quality of intimacy and our unique perspective. **We realize that our gifts are needed by All-That-Is—that is part of our joy.**

We realize that those gifts directly emerge from our Unique Self—our unique expression of LoveIntelligence. That is the source of our self-realization as *Homo amor*. If those needs were not met early on, we must learn to meet them ourselves. That is self-love.

Premodern, Modern, and Postmodern Contexts of Core Needs: The Evolution of Core Needs

At the core of this essay is a post-postmodern, or what some have labeled *metamodern* (and still others have called *integral*⁸) vision of core needs, what we will call later the Eight Core Eros Needs. This vision includes survival, growth, and affective needs while extending the framework of core needs well beyond these three. These Eight Core Eros Needs stand at the center of our vision of CosmoErotic Humanism, with its core elements of *Homo amor*, the Universe: A Love Story, the Intimate Universe, and Unique Self Theory, among others. As we have already alluded to, this new vision of needs emerges directly from the new Universe Story and a new narrative of identity. We will contextualize this new vision of human needs in relationship to Maslow’s classic hierarchy of needs. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. First, we will very briefly sketch the premodern, modern, and postmodern attempts to meet the human growth and affective needs.

⁸ Our friend and close collaborator Zak Stein has proposed that Integral Theory is actually a specific instance of a metamodern or post-postmodern metatheory. It is important to understand that postmodernism, metamodernism, or any of these ‘isms that we speak of are not specific philosophies but rather refer to broader social movements, which include major patterns of change across philosophy, art, science, architecture, etc. That being said, Integral Theory was particularly prescient developing and pointing toward a coming age of integration across the spheres of science, aesthetics, and ethics, which modernism separated (a separation that postmodernism critiqued).

Premodernity

The old traditions did not quite grasp the nuances of attachment theory, but they did understand that our early affective needs cannot and should not be met exclusively by our parents or early caretakers. Premodernity understood that a deep understanding of the interior nature of Reality itself gives us an experience of meeting our core affective needs to be held, adored, and loved. Premodern cultures contained compelling universe stories to help their children understand that they were held and loved by Reality.

Whether Reality expressed itself as the Goddess, Christ, Shakti, the Beloved, the Tao, Atman is Brahman, or any other of the various designations, the burden of feeling profoundly loved did not rest exclusively in the nuclear family. It is not that premodernity did not recognize how vital it is that we have individuals along the way who love, touch, hold, recognize, intend, desire, adore, and need us. But rather it is that premodernity understood that these individuals are not the ultimate source of our self-experience. Those individuals, be they family or caretakers or beloveds, are like a rock reflecting the sunlight. But they are not the sunlight itself. As such, if they go away, we are not ultimately devastated, because Reality itself discloses our true nature as being recognized, loved, and held by All-That-Is. This was the great gift of the premodern period.⁹

Modernity and Postmodernity

Modernity and postmodernity ignored these critical gifts of premodernity, focusing instead on rightly critiquing and disbanding from the ethnocentric, anti-sexual, anti-science, and anti-human rights distortions in the premodern story. But they did so in a way that they also threw the baby out with the bathwater. Both modernity and postmodernity correctly rejected the

⁹ Because premodernity is “everything before industrialization [modernity],” it would be impossible to recommend a series of books, let alone a single book, that covers all of premodernity. However, we highly recommend, for a review of medieval cosmology, Lewis, C.S. *The Discarded Image*. Cambridge University Press, 1964.

misleading surface structures of the great traditions,¹⁰ as well as their ethnocentric racism, homophobia, and myriad forms of social oppression and cruelty. But they also threw out the best of the traditional period—its interior sciences, derived from the Eye of the Spirit, that granted access to the stunning wisdom of Reality’s inner core. It was from this inner core that human beings met at least some dimension of their true nature, being located in a larger web of communion and meaning.

Two Modern and Postmodern Strategies to Meet Core Affective (Love) Needs

Modernity tried to meet all of the human being’s core affective needs through two major strategies, both of which assumed that there was no larger context.

Ordinary Love Stories: Nuclear Family and Romance

The first strategy was ordinary love stories, specifically two forms of ordinary love stories. By ordinary love we mean the love that lives between separate selves as a local human experience. This form of love all-too-often devolves into an egoic strategy for survival and comfort. We contrast ordinary love with what we call *Outrageous Love* or, alternatively, *Evolutionary Love*. This is the Love that is the Heart of Cosmos itself. This Outrageous Love animates the interiors of *being*, even as it is the evolutionary Eros that drives the process of *becoming*. When Outrageous Love awakens in and between human beings, the experience of interpersonal love is utterly different than when it is animated by ordinary love.

One form of ordinary love is the love we receive in our nuclear families from our parents and early caretakers.

¹⁰ For instance, the Great Chain of Being depicts a static Universe, which modernity departed from through formal evolutionary thought.

A second form of ordinary love is in the form of what we call *romantic love*. It is in romantic love that we seek to recover all that love that we might not have received from our parents—one ordinary love story (romantic love) trying to heal the damage caused by the first ordinary love story (familial love). We look to our romantic partners to meet all of our affective needs that we did not receive in our early years.

It is clear that both these forms of love, romantic love and nuclear family love, while both necessary and beautiful, are woefully insufficient to meet all of our affective needs. However, both of these experiences of love can potentially deepen into expressions of Evolutionary or Outrageous Love. But for that to happen, one needs these forms of personal love to show up as expressions within a much wider context, including a new Universe Story—*The Universe: A Love Story*—and a new narrative of identity—the human being as a unique incarnation of Evolutionary or Outrageous Love, what we have termed *Homo amor*.

Success Stories

The second strategy of modernity was to try to meet our affective needs through reason—in particular, political and moral reason which articulated a vision of the good citizen who would feel met and recognized for their success. Modern success was defined as being a productive and good member of society, both in the workplace and as a husband or wife, mother or father. This was supposed to earn one the love and affection that are the basic needs of every human being. Notice that good and productive are linked. Goodness, in the capitalist ethos, is implicitly linked to monetized productivity.

But modern success and achievement, participation in the nuclear family, and romantic love have all shown themselves to be woefully insufficient—and sometimes contra-indicators—to whether our core affective needs are being met.

Classical success, as articulated by western reason, says that we are separate selves who compete with other separate selves for status and recognition. Win/lose metrics run both the drive for success and the drive for partnering with a romantic partner. Both western romantic love and the western model of success are based on a brutal model in which the separate self

competes for success and love as a way to achieve some measure of comfort and success before death.

In this model, the individual who has not achieved success—most often measured in financial terms or in terms of public recognition—or the individual who has not achieved the idealized western vision of romantic, marital love (which is just about everyone), is devoid of essential value. Our entire social structure is built on these premises. Similarly, the love we receive in early childhood is insufficient to hold us if we do not meet our deepest needs for love and affection, sourced from the true nature of our identity.

The New Royal Road for Meeting Affective (Love) Needs: First Glimmerings of the CosmoErotic Humanist Vision of Core Needs

The premodern, modern, and even postmodern structures of identity can no longer meet our core need for love and recognition. But that does not mean we cannot access our true identity and meet our core affective needs for love, holding, and recognition through insight into the nature of Reality itself. We can. But we need to deepen and evolve our structures of identity beyond premodern, modern, and postmodern structures of identity to access such insight.

When we awaken to our true nature as *Homo amor* and Evolutionary Unique Selves, we recognize that all our core needs are met by Reality itself.

Our basic affective (love) need is intertwined with our identity. If a person does not meet their core need to realize their true identity as an Evolutionary Unique Self and *Homo amor*, then healthy early attachment—the personal love we get from parents and early caretakers—is entirely insufficient to meet our core needs for love and affection. Moreover, neither romantic love nor success as a separate self is sufficient to give us a genuine sense of being loved—to meet our core affective needs—if we do not realize our deeper identity as Evolutionary Unique Self, or *Homo amor*.

We cannot meet our primal, affective needs for touch, love, and holding through any of the structures of modernity without meeting our need to realize our true identity and nature.

Both sets of needs are fundamentally entwined. Our primal need for recognition and love must be met by realizing the true nature of our identity. But how can we do this when the structures of identity that connect us to the larger context of existence itself, which came from premodernity, have been blown up by modernity and postmodernity?

The answer in this post-postmodern moment is that we need to bring the best of the traditional period back online but at a higher level of consciousness. We need to articulate a deeper narrative of Reality, in which we are able to locate our deeper identity, where we are recognized, held, and loved not by the God of a particular religion, but by the interior face of Cosmos—the Infinity of Intimacy that knows our name, loves us madly, reveals our identity, and seeks our love. Our primary affective need must be directly met by this new narrative of identity. We call this new narrative of identity the *Eight Core Needs of Eros*.

From Maslow’s Five Needs to the Eight Core Needs of Eros

In the larger teaching of *Homo amor* and Unique Self Theory¹¹—both expressions of the metatheory and meta-vision of CosmoErotic Humanism—we speak of Eight Core Needs of Eros. These are at the center of Unique Self Theory. This is not a hierarchy in the sense that one need must be fulfilled before another comes online. We might rather refer to them as a spectrum of

¹¹ On Unique Self Theory, see Gafni, Marc, *Your Unique Self*, Integral Publishing, 2012. See also *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6(1), a special issue on “Integral Spirituality: Unique Self.” In particular, see from that issue Gafni, Marc. “The Evolutionary Emergent of Unique Self: A New Chapter in Integral Theory.” See also *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6(1), 2011: P 1-36. See also Gafni, Marc, *Self in Integral Evolutionary Mysticism: Two Models and Why They Matter*, Integral Publishers, 2014. For a more complete bibliography and intellectual history of Unique Self, see <https://www.uniqueselfinstitute.com/>.

needs. The eight needs are also not meant to be exhaustive. Indeed, in some sense, the eight needs pick up where Abraham Maslow's insightful hierarchy of needs left off.¹²

Maslow speaks of five core needs, starting with the most fundamental:

1. physiological needs
2. safety needs
3. love and belonging needs
4. esteem needs
5. self-actualization needs

Maslow presented his needs as a hierarchy. In Maslow's view, an earlier need (physiological, safety) must be met before the next level of needs (belonging, esteem) can be met.¹³ The failure to meet one prevents the other from coming online.

¹² The Unique Self Theory of Needs is complementary, not entirely opposed, to Maslow's classic Hierarchy of Needs. On the impact and limits of Maslow's theory of needs, see: Baumeister, Roy F., and Mark R. Leary. "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation." *Psychological Bulletin* 117.3 (1995): P 97-529. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7777651>; Kremer, William, and Claudia Hammond. "Abraham Maslow and the Pyramid That Beguiled Business." *BBC* (2013, Sep. 1). <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23902918>; Maslow, Abraham Harold. "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review* 50.4 (1943): P 370-396. <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1943-03751-001>; Ryff, Carol D., and Burton H. Singer. "Know Thyself and Become What You Are: A Eudaimonic Approach to Psychological Well-Being." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9.1 (2008): P 13-39. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0>; Tay, Louis, and Ed Diener. "Needs and Subjective Well-Being Around the World." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101.2 (2011): P 354-365. <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-12249-001>.

¹³ To be fair to Maslow, who is oft misunderstood thanks in large part to the co-opting and popularization of his ideas in management textbooks (particularly the famous pyramid, which Maslow never sketched), Maslow understood that humans are constantly cycling back and forth into higher and lower needs based on environmental pressures, that is to say, the specific needs of their specific life situation or dynamic. It is not that once a need is fulfilled, it need not be maintained or revisited. Life is far more fluid than that. However, Maslow was clear that a need could not be fulfilled before first learning to master prior needs. See Bridgman, Todd, Stephen Cummings, and John Ballard. "Who built Maslow's pyramid? A history of the creation of management studies' most famous symbol and its implications for management education." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 18.1 (2019): 81-98.

The first set of needs—physiological—relates to survival and expresses itself as the need for air, water, food, shelter, etc.¹⁴

The second set of needs—for safety—includes personal security, health, and even property.

The third set of needs—love and belonging—might include romantic relationship, family, friendship, and a sense of connection and intimacy with a larger community.

The fourth set—esteem needs—might include respect, or recognition, self-esteem, or status.

Finally, self-actualization, which according to Maslow is relatively rare, is about actualizing one’s moral, creative, or intellectual potential.¹⁵

There is elegance in the explanatory power of Maslow’s model; we emerge out of it as part of the axiomatic architecture of the Eight Core Needs. Maslow’s popularized model and its contemporary interpretations,¹⁶ however, have four main weaknesses, three of which we will sketch here in the main body of the text, and the fourth we will mention briefly in a footnote when we present the third flaw.

¹⁴ This is where Maslow’s notion of a hierarchy has some obvious validity. If you are hungry or thirsty, the need for food or water will outweigh and virtually take precedence to every other need.

¹⁵ Maslow spoke of a 6th level (in actuality, it was more a general, orienting dialectic for all the levels) later in his career, which is generally not included in the iconic hierarchy: self-transcendence. See following footnotes for more.

¹⁶ Again, Maslow’s conception of a hierarchy was not a rigid sequence, as it is generally misunderstood to be by management and self-help texts in the famous pyramid model. Maslow was actually quite critical of his original hierarchy later in his life; Maslow was consumed by the paradoxical relationship between self-actualization and self-transcendence (how could it be that the most self-actualized people also experienced the most self-transcendence in Maslow’s research?) and the dialectic of defense-driven vs. growth-driven needs. Most of Maslow’s more advanced thought can be found in Maslow, Abraham Harold. *The farther reaches of human nature*, Viking Press, 1971. For more on Maslow’s inquiry into the paradoxical relationship between self-actualization and self-transcendence, see Maslow, Abraham H. “Peak experiences as acute identity experiences.” *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 21.2 (1961): 254-262.

The First Two Flaws in Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

The first flaw of the popularized version of Maslow's model is that it leaves out our most essential needs. Addressing this most fundamental flaw is the core topic of this essay.

The second flaw is that it suggests that needs unfold in a particular, static order. As we have already noted, clearly there is some truth in there being a hierarchy of needs. When you are super-hungry, the need for food seems to outweigh all other needs, including even the need for safety (if you are hungry enough, you will break into a store at night to get food, risking your safety, belonging and love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs). But both social science research and the anthro-ontological, interior science of our own deepest experiences belie the claim that the needs unfold in a static order.

Often, a look at the extremes of life tells us something about our deeper nature in ways that ordinary life covers over. To understand this insight into ourselves and illustrate the first two crucial critiques of Maslow's model—that he leaves out our most fundamental needs and that needs do not emerge in a hierarchical path, where one need has to be first met before you turn to meet the next need—let's turn for a moment to an extreme and, in this case, tragic moment.

In 1945, the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen was liberated by a group of allied soldiers. A concentration camp meant gas chambers, where humanity appeared at its most horrific. The survivors were barely hanging on to the last wisps of life. British Lieutenant Colonel Mervyn Willet Gonin, who was with the liberation force, wrote in his diary,

I can give no adequate description of the Horror Camp in which my men and myself were to spend the next month of our lives... Corpses lay everywhere, some in huge piles, sometimes they lay singly or in pairs where they had fallen... ...five hundred a day were going on dying... ...a child choking to death from diphtheria... ...women drowning in their own vomit because they were too weak to turn over...

Piles of corpses, naked and obscene, with a woman too weak to stand propping herself against them... men and women crouching down just anywhere in the open relieving themselves of the dysentery which was scouring their bowels, a

*woman standing stark naked washing herself with some issue soap in water from a tank in which the remains of a child floated.*¹⁷

It is beyond banal to even say that clearly, Maslow's basic needs of survival and safety had not been met in Bergen-Belsen. But this is not the end of Colonel Gonin's diary:

It was shortly after the ... [British Red Cross] teams arrived, though it may have no connection, that a very large quantity of lipstick arrived. This was not at all what we men wanted, we were screaming for hundreds and thousands of other things and I don't know who asked for lipstick. I wish so much that I could discover who did it, it was the action of genius, sheer unadulterated brilliance. I believe nothing did more for those internees than the lipstick. Women lay in bed with no sheets and no nightie but with scarlet lips, you saw them wandering about with nothing but a blanket over their shoulders, but with scarlet lips. I saw a woman dead on the post mortem table and clutched in her hand was a piece of lipstick.

Lipstick is not a survival or a safety need. And yet, it was an overwhelming need in that moment in Bergen-Belsen. At the very least, lipstick was out of order in terms of Maslow's pyramid. But not only was lipstick out of order, but it was also clearly not connected to level three (belonging) in the classic sense that Maslow described it. Nor was lipstick connected to level four (esteem) or even self-actualization¹⁸ as he describes them.

¹⁷ See "Babel: First Witnesses" by Jo Glanville: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03064229808536344>. From the account of Lieutenant Colonel Mervin Willett Gonin DSO, TD. "This account appears to have been delivered as a talk." "Jo Glanville is a freelance journalist living in London. She selected and edited the excerpts."

¹⁸ Maslow did, however, describe—as a kind of intermediary stage on the way beyond esteem and toward self-actualization—aesthetic needs: The fact that humans desire beauty and aesthetically pleasing experiences. This need requires connecting with nature, resulting in a kind of intimacy with nature and its enduring beauty. But the need for lipstick in the hell hole of Bergen-Belsen, even as women lay dying, speaks to something even more primal than the level of aesthetic needs, which appear after self-esteem has been met and before self-actualization. Maslow's original five-stage model (Maslow, A. H. (1943). "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370- 96 and Maslow, A. H. (1954) *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row.) has been expanded to include cognitive and aesthetic needs: Maslow, A. H. (1970a). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row—and self-transcendence needs: Maslow, A. H. (1970b). *Religions, values, and peak experiences*. New York: Penguin (Original work published 1964).

Rather, lipstick points to a different quality of need altogether. We might call it *a need for aliveness* or, more directly, *a need for Eros*. The eight core needs, which we will now cover in depth, are indeed what we have called *Eros needs*.

Moving from Maslow to the Eight Core Needs of Eros: A Deeper Cut

We have a core need for Eros, which, in its most minimal formulation, is the experience of radical aliveness. But Eros is something more than aliveness.

Eros is aliveness in the context of dynamic movement. It is aliveness with *telos*.

In CosmoErotic Humanism, we have articulated a definition that defines Eros as *the experience of radical aliveness seeking, desiring, moving towards ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness*.

Or, in a different formulation of the same essential understanding, we speak of Eros as having four faces or primary qualities: interiority, fullness of presence, participation in the larger yearning Desire of Reality, and finally the fourth face being wholeness, or what we might call *the lived realization of interconnectivity of All-That-Is or Wholeness*.¹⁹ The yearning of Eros, the authentically erotic yearning, is for ever-deeper presence, interiority, and wholeness.

But Eros can be articulated most simply as *the experience of radical aliveness in purposeful motion*. Or said slightly differently, relating back to our initial formulation above, in Eros we experience not only our aliveness, but the self-evident goodness of our aliveness.²⁰ And

¹⁹ These are four primary qualities, which are part of a larger list of qualities, the four major faces of Eros that we discuss in *A Return to Eros*. The twelve faces are: The First Face: Interiority: Living on the Inside, the Second Face: Fullness of Presence, the Third Face: Yearning and Desire, the Fourth Face: Wholeness and Interconnectivity, the Fifth Face: Uniqueness and Identity, the Sixth Face: Imagination, the Seventh Face: Perception, the Eighth Face: Giving and Receiving, the Ninth Face: Surrender, the Tenth Face: Play, the Eleventh Face: Creativity, and the Twelfth Face: Pleasure and Delight.

²⁰ On the virtual identity between goodness and aliveness that is self-evident in our early lives, see Marc Gafni, Kristina Kincaid, *The Abridged Phenomenology of Eros*, the section on Shame, in the subsection on Goodness and Aliveness. See also the section on Goodness and Aliveness, in the Volume on Shame in *The Complete Phenomenology of Eros*.

goodness includes all the aforementioned qualities of Eros—interiority, fullness of presence, wholeness, and participation in the larger yearning Desire of Reality.

Eros Discloses the Self-Evident Goodness, Truth, and Beauty—Value—of Reality

Eros does not provide a cognitive or social answer to questions we have about the meaning of our lives. Rather, in Eros we can access the intrinsic wonder and self-evident value of our lives. When we are in Eros (in its myriad forms), we stop searching for meaning because our very aliveness and its feeling tone, as well as the implicit *telos* of the desire that animates it, is so very good in and of itself. Eros points to a deeper set of needs that are only very partially addressed, if at all, in the popularized management and pop-psychology texts' version of Maslow's hierarchy. Eros is the inter-animating Force of Reality—the unified Field—always sourcing existence in its myriad manifestations.

At the end of his life, Maslow himself was dissatisfied and even disturbed by the insufficiency of his own model, which he had put forth in 1943 (amidst World War II, as the Bergen-Belsen death camps were in full operation). Maslow, in his classic model, was convinced that a normal, peacetime existence of what we have come to term the *successful middle class* could achieve some true measure of happiness by realizing his hierarchy of needs. And, indeed, from the perspective of 1943 and its horrors, the relief brought by the relative safety of the newly emergent, modern bourgeois life must have seemed promising.

Only Eros Responds to Pain: The Only Response to Outrageous Pain Is Outrageous Love

But, at the time, Maslow overlooked the forces within us that generate outrageous pain (of the kind that actually defined 1943). Outrageous pain, however, is not only evident when it bursts into the open in atrocity. There is a dimension of outrageous pain that limns ordinary life. It is the pain of being systematically mis-recognized, unmet, incapacitated to give one's unique gifts, to live the dignity of one's unique story, in a way that is witnessed, received, and honored.

Such pain can only be met with Outrageous Love. Outrageous Love is Eros—not the local, separate-self kind of love of Maslow’s level three belonging needs. This is what we have called in other writings *ordinary love* and what is all-too-often a separate-self shell game seeking some degree of security and comfort. Outrageous Love is *more than ordinary human sentiment*, it is the Heart of Existence itself. Outrageous Love, as it flows between human beings and in all other configurations of encounter, participates in a deeper Eros—*the Love that moves the Sun and other stars*.

Genuine pain can only be overcome by a deeper Eros.

But Eros is not only the necessary response to outrageous pain.

Whenever we are on our knees, we are always on our knees before Eros.

We will always reach for Eros.

Eros does not appear in Maslow’s hierarchy. But if it did, it would *not* belong at the top of the pyramid. Eros is both our first primal need, even as it underlies all the other needs. All needs, at their core, are needs for Eros. Eros expresses the most elemental or core human need.

In some sense, we might say that Eros, not entirely unlike physiological needs, is a survival need. The difference is that, with the absence of Eros, there is a prolonged death agony (which is the result of a failure of Eros), whereas with physiology, there is immediate physical death (which results from a failure of oxygen).²¹

²¹ That death agony may well result in physical death. For example, there is a seminal book by Ashley Montagu (Harper and Row publishers, 1971), *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, in which the author shares the following story: “During the 19th century more than half the infants in their first year of life regularly died from a disease called marasmus, a Greek word meaning ‘wasting away.’ The disease was also known as infantile atrophy or debility. As late as the second decade of the 20th century, the death rate for infants under one year of age in various founding institutions throughout the United States was nearly one hundred percent. It was in 1915 Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin, the distinguished New York pediatrician, in a report on children’s institutions in 10 different cities made the staggering disclosure that in all but one institution every infant under two years of age died. The various discussants of Dr. Chapin’s report, at the Philadelphia meeting of the American pediatric Society, fully corroborated his findings from their experience.” (p. 77) In another report, he writes about 200 infants who were admitted to various institutions in Baltimore. 90% of these children died within a year and the 10% that survived “did so apparently because they were taken from the institutions for short times and placed in care of foster parents or relatives.” (p. 78)

There were a number of key studies performed by John Bowlby after World War Two—replicated many times since—about attachment dynamics between mothers and their children.²²

Disconnect a baby or child from source—the energy of mother, whether it be the physical mother or some form of motherly energy—and the child either dies prematurely or its life derails, even if all the other needs are met.

Mother energy, like lipstick, is an expression of Eros. It is in Eros that the intrinsic goodness and significance of our lives is made self-evident.

But again, Eros is not only a subtle survival need. Eros inter-animates all of Maslow's basic needs. This core realization of the interior sciences is mirrored in the exterior sciences. Much as Eros inter-animates all developmental needs, Eros, as opposed to being a distinct fifth force, is rather the interanimating force that suffuses the strong and the weak nuclear, the gravitational, and the electromagnetic—the classic four forces of the physical sciences.²³

But if we are to meet our core needs for Eros, they must move from being unconscious to conscious. We need to understand that lipstick matters, that it has ultimate significance, or we will dismiss it as *unnecessary*, *frivolous*, or label it as *pernicious*, even *evil*. In order to meet our core needs of Eros—in its myriad forms—we must internalize the New Universe Story—the

²² See the three-volume set by John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss (Volume One: Attachment, Volume Two: Separation, Anxiety and Anger* [Basic Books, 1969], *Volume Three: Loss, Sadness and Depression* [The Hogarth press and the institute of psychoanalysis, 1980]).

²³ See, for example, our colleague Howard Bloom, who, in alignment with our articulation of Eros as a First Principle and First Value of Cosmos, unpacks the physics of the first nanoseconds of the Big Bang in terms of the Eros that emerges from the original dialectic between attraction and repulsion. See Howard Bloom, *BAKING THE BIG BAGEL: HOW TO START AND END A UNIVERSE*, in *The God Problem: How a Godless Cosmos Creates*, Prometheus Books, 2012. See also Marc Gafni and Barbara Marx Hubbard with Zachary Stein, *The Universe: A Love Story* series, for an initial unpacking of the intercluded exterior and interior First Principles and First Values of Cosmos as reflected in what we have called the *Tenets of Intimacy*. On First Principles and First Values, see David J. Temple, *First Principles & First Values: Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism, the Meta-Crisis, and the World to Come*, and see also the fuller conversation in David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method* (forthcoming). We are of course aware that the new-age fundamentalism as well as classic religious fundamentalism has sought to de-mystify Cosmos by paradoxically claiming all sort of nonsensical symmetries between the world of Spirit and the world of matter, seeking to collapse one into the other. Instead, we must first recognize how fundamentally distinct these worlds are—by recognizing the fundamental discontinuity between physics and spirit, for example, which we have pointed to many times above. It is only once we have affirmed the discontinuities that we can begin to reach for the significant continuities.

realization that our personal Eros pulses and participates in the very Eros of Cosmos itself. Our Eros is ultimately significant.

Or said slightly differently, Eros is the core value of Cosmos, from which all other values flow. This is the core realization of Reality is Eros, and Reality is evolving Eros, that is at the very core of CosmoErotic Humanism.²⁴

We have talked in our earlier writings on CosmoErotic Humanism, in this volume and others, of Eros as the animating Force of the CosmoErotic Universe. In this writing, we will focus on Eros in the context of human need and development.

Eros Needs: A Deeper Cut—Ecstasy and Meaning

To get a deeper sense of the Eros needs and how they undermine the bourgeois order of Maslow's hierarchy (the first two flaws in the popularized Maslow models), let's turn to another example—*ecstasy*.

Ecstasy is not a luxury but a core human need.

One pivotal ecstatic experience of mine (Marc) is the ecstasy of prayer, in which we align with source, ask for our clarified needs, and see our own deepest transformation of identity. I think of the Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) services that I both participated in and led for so many years. Yom Kippur, considered the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar, is a day of fasting—no food or liquid for approximately twenty-five hours. It lasts from about twenty minutes before sundown on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* (which falls in late September or early October) until nightfall the following day.

Somewhere around 4 pm, when there are only some three hours left in the fast, the afternoon prayer—known as *Mincha*—is recited. Prayer notwithstanding, virtually everyone is thinking about food and when the fast will finally end. However, about an hour later (with only two hours remaining to the fast), the *Neilah*—an ecstatic prayer of closure for the day—is recited. Virtually no one is thinking about food. The ecstasy is so intense, the need for alignment

²⁴ Ibid.

with source so compelling, the invitation for transformation of identity so alluring, that all thought of food disappears. In those moments, the Eros need for ecstasy—contrary to the static views of Maslow’s hierarchy—overpowers the hunger.

The Eros need for ecstasy is overwhelming. Ecstasy in Greek (*ekstasis*) literally means to step outside of oneself. The self we step out of is precisely the small and ultimately unsatisfying experience of being a separate self.

Eros locates us in the larger, seamless Field of Existence—seamless but not featureless—of which we are an intrinsic and essential part. Eros is the experience of belonging, not only in the narrow sense of romantic love, or familial or social connection, but in a larger, more elegant order and *telos* of existence.

This last dimension of Eros, the more elegant order and *telos* of existence, speaks to the Eros need for meaning, which suffuses all of the core Eros needs that we will unpack below. Meaning is not one of the many Eros needs. Meaning, or what has also been called *consciousness*, *value*, or even *information*, is the core nature of Eros itself. Eros speaks to the larger orders of *telos* and value that are the deeper dimensions of Cosmos. Eros is always about the depth of being, which animates the direction of becoming, the movement of Reality’s Desire, which aggregates separate parts into larger wholes.

It was Viktor Frankl, in his school of *logotherapy*, famously expressed in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, who understood that what we might call *the Eros of larger meaning* overrides all other needs. Frankl’s book, originally called *Death Camps and Existentialism*,²⁵ suggests that the Eros of meaning is not just any need, but a survival need.

Another less known (but in many ways even more powerful) book, *With God in Hell: Judaism in the Ghettos and Deathcamps* by Eliezer Berkovits, similarly speaks to the experience of the concentration camps. He tells of *ordinary* men and women, young and old, willing to risk or even sacrifice their lives for a moment of Cosmic Eros, expressed either by an act of kindness

²⁵ The original German book has the title ... *trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen. Ein Psychologe erlebt das Konzentrationslager*, which translates into English as ...*Nevertheless Saying Yes to Life. A Psychologist Experiences the Concentration Camp*.

for a fellow inmate or the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* (a ritual act of devotion to Spirit, or what we might call the Field of Value).

It is in extreme circumstance, when we transcend the torpor of banal routine, that we learn what we truly value, what we truly need, and who we truly are—all three expressions of one essential *gnosis*.

What all of these stories point to is the need to move beyond a sense of alienated separation to express connection and even commitment to a larger Field of Eros, whether that Field manifests as the Eros of meaning, kindness, or devotion. In all of these senses, ecstasy and meaning are not separate forces. Rather, we might say that ecstasy and meaning are both expressions of the *Telerotic* Nature of Reality, suffused with inherent and intrinsic value, at all of its levels and lines of development.²⁶

The Third Flaw in Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

All of this brings us to the third weakness in the popularized Maslow structure of needs. Maslow, in the overwhelming majority of his work, spoke about a separate self or ego self.²⁷ All

²⁶ By levels, we mean classic levels of development, both exterior and interior, and by lines of development, we refer to various capacities of Reality—for example, in human development, from sensorimotor capacities to musical capacities to the development of our mind.

²⁷ However, as we have noted, Maslow himself later took on the empirical paradox of self-actualized people having more self-transcendent experiences, and he criticized his earlier theories of self-actualization that were based on the separate self. This aspect of Maslow's thought and framework did not survive into the popularized forms of his work we largely see today.

his needs show up within that very limited context of identity.²⁸ The separate self has survival, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs.

But the separate self, even in its higher expressions, is profoundly non-erotic. Eros is about contact and intimate connection. Eros, by definition, is about the radical aliveness inherent

²⁸The third major flaw of Maslow vision is that the major stages, for example, self-actualization, show up completely differently based on what self we are talking about, specifically, separate self, false self, True Self, Unique Self, and Evolutionary Unique Self. (See Gafni, *Your Unique Self*.) Maslow's model, as we point towards in the main body of the text, is primarily an expression of separate-self needs. The third flaw itself points also to the fourth flaw of the popularized versions of Maslow's hierarchy: The five stages in Maslow's hierarchy are often referred to as deficiency and growth needs. Deficiency arises due to deprivation and are said to motivate people when they are unmet. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs, and the top level is known as growth needs. Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. [Growth needs should not be confused however with, what Maslow began to formulate at the end of this life but did not include in his model, self-transcendence needs (referring to forms of ego dissolution), to which we shall return and critique below in the body of the text—critique in the sense that they are reaching towards True Self but have no sense of Unique Self or Evolutionary Unique Self.] Even what are called Maslow's *growth needs* (as opposed to deficiency needs) are portrayed within a particular structural stage of developmental consciousness. We see this in particular through Clare W. Graves' (Maslow's colleague and friend) model of values hierarchy and through Jane Loevinger's or Robert Kegan's models of ego development. Maslow's model is portrayed to peak at what Graves' values hierarchy identifies as *level five* (which values rationality, individuality, and self-reliance), and what ego development models refer to as *the autonomous or self-authoring stage* (an ego which identifies with ambition, self-efficacy, charting one's own course, self-mastery). This was a particularly alluring level of consciousness in post-war America and in the management and popular psychology texts that adopted Maslow's hierarchy. *Orange consciousness*, as this level-five consciousness is described by Graves's student Don Beck, is rooted in the machine-driven model of the Industrial Revolution, the Western enlightenment, and modern science, all of which understood Reality to be made up of distinct, separate parts, which were considered *successful* when they realized their distinct functions. Maslow's model, however, appears completely differently if it shows up at earlier or later developmental stages. Self-actualization means something entirely different at Graves' level-four (conformist) or Graves' level-six (pluralistic) values lines. In effect, every level co-opts the meaning of self-actualization and interprets it according to its value contours. The same phenomenon of co-opting Maslow's self-actualization pinnacle can be seen from the pluralist perspective, for instance, as self-actualization = finding your *authentic self* (a postmodern, pluralist values totem). Similarly, as we have noted, self-actualization means something entirely different as Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self, which are post-metaphysical spiritual lines of development that are distinct from ego development. But as we have noted, Maslow himself (not his popularized models) was well aware of the dynamic relationship between self-actualization and self-transcendence and did not view the *self* in self-actualization as only the pinnacle of the autonomous ego, as some of Maslow's detractors (who have not read his work) often contest. And many of these conflation of the autonomous self and self-actualization miss that many of the characterizations of orange values (as named by Clare Graves's students Don Beck and Christopher Cowan in their *Spiral Dynamics* based on the original work of Maslow's colleague Clare Graves in his *Emergent Cyclic Double-Helix Model of Adult Biopsychosocial Systems Development*) or the self-authoring/autonomous ego are represented better in Maslow's level of self-esteem needs.

in the desire to transcend separation in the creative movement toward higher unions. In Eros, there is no *ultimately* separate self.²⁹

The implication for human experience is shattering. It means that even when all of the separate self needs, the deficiency and the growth needs are met, the human being will be left painfully unsatisfied. This is so because the experience of being a skin-encapsulated ego, even if one seems to have climbed Maslow's hierarchy, flagrantly violates one's core Eros needs.

The dissatisfaction will express itself differently in different people and within each person. Sometimes, that dissatisfaction will express itself as a gnawing hunger. At other times, it will feel like a hidden inexplicable dis-ease. The pain of such dis-ease is that it feels inexplicable. We live in a society that valorizes the separate self and the core achievements on Maslow's hierarchy. *Why then*, the person asks her or himself, *do I feel so pained, so unfulfilled, or so desperate for something more?* Generally, the person interprets this dis-ease as some personal failing or pathology. They might leave a relationship, change locations or jobs or lifestyles—desperate to feel resonant with their own lives.

But what the person does not understand is that the core pathology is not personal but collective. The issue is not personal pain but a pain at the very center of culture. This is the pain of mistaken identity, in which the separate self, disassociated from any larger ontological context is inculcated from early childhood with one story, the success story—rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics. The value of the individual is measured by their ability to self-commodify within this system. And self-actualization—in Maslow's hierarchy, for example—often takes place within this narrow frame.³⁰ Thus, the satisfaction of Maslow's five levels of needs can never be truly satisfying.

²⁹ The paradox of individuation and union are however always present in Eros. In the Eros formulation, we define Eros as the experience of radical aliveness seeking, desiring, moving towards ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness. But this desire for union is because union is our essential nature. Otherness is always *relative* otherness. But relative otherness is ontologically real. It is not only an illusion as mystical paths are often too quick to suggest. On the other hand, otherness is not an expression of ontological separation but of uniqueness—distinction. In Eros, mature individuality always lives in the context of larger union. On the distinction between separateness and uniqueness, see Marc Gafni, *Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, with Introduction and Afterword by Ken Wilber, Integral Publishers, 2012, Chapters 1-5 and particularly chapter 5.

³⁰ Even if new interests in personal and spiritual development come online or even take center stage at this level, that whole world of self-development and spirituality has become commodified as part of the win/lose metrics. And self-actualization all-too-often becomes a path to become better and more successful as a person or on our career paths.

It is not that the needs of the separate self, as expressed in Maslow's hierarchy, are not real. Of course, they are. Indeed, separate self, from a non-dual perspective is real. In the language of the interior sciences, we might say, *separate self exists in the Mind of God*.³¹ But it is no ultimate separation, no ultimate separate self. Albert Einstein was referring to this ultimate sense of things when he wrote that separate self is *an optical delusion* of consciousness. In Eros, mature individuality always lives in the dialectical context of larger union.

It is in this sense that we might say that Maslow's hierarchy itself is a failure of Eros—for separate self itself is a failure of Eros. It does not realize the larger Field of Intimate Union, in which it lives and breathes. It is in this very precise sense that separate self by definition is de-eroticized.

And as we just noted, the very context of Maslow's hierarchy is separate self. Even his growth needs take place in the limited context of ego or separate self. Maslow does not address what we have called True Self, Unique Self, or Evolutionary Unique Self.³² We have written about these three higher levels of Self in depth in other contexts.

To briefly recapitulate:

True Self, in its core interior expression, is the experience of identity with the larger Field of Value and Consciousness. True Self expresses itself in exteriors as the realization that we are an emergent of the entire Field of Evolution and that the entire Field lives within us in some

³¹ On the one hand, we can be distinct and even unique without being separate—like our hands are distinct but not separate from our bodies. So, while we are distinct features of the One, we are not really separate at all. On the other hand, I do not really feel pain when you do—and vice versa—even though we can empathize with each other. And while you may have fallen into a crevasse, I have not, so I walk around and can get help. In that sense, not only distinction but also separation is real and even a blessing.

³² As we will turn to below, even though Maslow understood self-transcendence to be essential to the basic dynamic of seeking to meet needs over the lifespan, at the end of his life, Maslow was not able to integrate the wisdom tradition's notion of True Self into his model, and he was completely unaware of Unique Self or Evolutionary Unique Self. Maslow becomes aware of True Self in a more serious way towards the end of his life, living at Esalen in the late sixties. The True Self teachers who surrounded Maslow during his time at Esalen, when he addressed self-transcendence needs in his last writings, were not aware of the model of Unique Self Enlightenment or self-transcendence with its post-True-Self crucial levels that we have call *Unique Self* and *Evolutionary Unique Self*. This new model of enlightenment, which transcends and includes True Self, was first formulated and published in 2011. See Gafni, Marc. *Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, with Introduction and Afterword by Ken Wilber, Integral Publishers, 2012, and the scholarly journal Gafni, Marc [Guest Ed.]. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6:1, Special Issue on Unique Self, Ed. Sean Esbjörn-Hargens.

essential sense, even as we are interdependent with the whole Field, quite literally for our own survival, in every second.

Unique Self is the realization that we are not only part of the seamless coat of the Universe, but we are also an irreducibly unique feature in that Field. That Field however is not neutral. It is as a Field of Value. It is you as an irreducibly unique expression of the LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire that is the initiating and animating Eros and Value of All-That-Is living in you, as you, and through you.

Here Is One Formulation of the Unique Self Equation

True Self + Unique Perspective + Unique Quality of Eros, Desire, and Intimacy = Unique Self

When the Unique Self locates him or herself in the larger evolutionary context, realizing that *I am evolution, I am a unique configuration of Evolutionary Eros, and my gifts are utterly needed by the larger Field of Eros*, then, the Evolutionary Unique Self is born.

It is from this location in the spectrum of identity and consciousness that the deeper identity of a human being, as *Homo amor*, is realized. It is Evolutionary Unique Self who appears as *Homo amor*—who steps forth to play his or her unique instrument in the Unique Self Symphony. Unique Self Symphony is the new structure of Evolutionary Intimacy, which is the We-Space naturally emergent from Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self.

All of these—from True Self to Unique Self, to Evolutionary Unique Self, to Unique Self Symphony—are expressions of an evolving Eros. All of these are expressions of the self-organizing Universe, reaching for and desiring ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholes—i.e., ever-deeper intimacies.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs exhausts itself in separate self,³³ but ultimately fails to reach for a deeper Eros of Self. Only the first two of the five selves of CosmoErotic Humanism appear in Maslow's hierarchy—separate self and its distorted version as false self. There is no True Self, Unique Self, and Evolutionary Unique Self—no glimmering of *Homo amor*.

First Glimmerings of a Larger Eros in Maslow, Right Before His Death

At the end of his life, Maslow felt the insufficiency of his self-actualization model. He wrote in his diary shortly before his death,

...I realized I'd rather leave [the self-actualization model] behind me. Just too sloppy & too easily criticizable. Going thru my notes brought this unease to consciousness. It's been with me for years. Meant to write & publish a self-actualization critique, but somehow never did. Now I think I know why.³⁴

It is then, in the final years of his life, between his first heart attack in 1967 and his ultimately fatal heart attack in 1970, that he (in a series of articles that were mostly posthumously published) formulated a set of critiques against self-actualization and a set of principles and descriptions of what he called *self-transcendence needs*. These are beyond both the first four stages in his hierarchy, *deficiency needs*, and the fifth stage, generally termed *growth needs*. These needs never got included into the popularized forms of his model. Or if they did, they just got stacked on top of the self-actualization needs without mentioning any of Maslow's own critiques of the latter. They were first steps towards recognizing the need for a larger Eros, rooted in a wider sense of human identity. Maslow never completed this work, but

³³ As we noted above and will deepen below, at the end of his life, he intimated a transcendent self, what we have called *True Self*, but it is not integrated into the model and fails to move to Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self but instead functions as more of a No-Self in the classic language of the teachings that inspired Maslow at that last stage.

³⁴ This journal entry may be a bit misleading, however, as Maslow was able to publish some of his critique and theory of transcendence in 1969, prior to his death, in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. The quote comes from Maslow, A.H. *The Journals of Abraham Maslow*. Penguin Books, 1982. Edited by Richard Lowry. On Maslow's published critique of self-actualization and theory of self-transcendence (*theory z*), published prior to his death in 1970, see Maslow, A. H. "Theory Z." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1(2), 1969: P 31–47.

he prefigured at least a glimmer of what we are here calling *Eros needs*, the larger vision of human needs and the wider and deeper discernment of human identity.

Part of what pointed Maslow towards self-transcendence is that he noticed not only that some self-actualizers were more prone than other self-actualizers to what he called *peak experiences*—or what we frame as *peek* experiences—but also that some people sought to stabilize peak experiences (rather than ceaselessly chase them).³⁵ *Peak* experiences are a *peek* at the larger Eros of Reality and our place in it.

Peak experiences, in Maslow's earlier descriptions of them, are marked by *feelings of limitless horizons opening up to the vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than one ever was before, the feeling of great ecstasy and wonder and awe, and the loss of placing in time and space with, finally, the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened, so that the subject is to some extent transformed and strengthened even in his daily life by such experiences.*³⁶

Maslow saw a higher Eros that was a step beyond self-actualization. The limiting fetters of separate self are loosened. A wider sense of self is gradually emerging in Maslow's own interior understanding.

As [a self-actualized individual] gets to be more purely and singly himself he is more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self, e.g., the lovers come closer to forming a unit rather than two people, the I-Thou monism becomes more possible, the creator becomes one with his work being created, the mother feels one with her child, the appreciator becomes the music (and it becomes him) or the painting, or the dance, the astronomer is

³⁵ Maslow recognized with those he called the *transcenders* that they were increasingly motivated not just by peak experiences but by what he called *plateau experiences*—or the stabilization of the peak experiences they were so prone towards into enduring, everyday experiences.

³⁶ Maslow, A. "Religious Aspects of Peak-Experiences." In *Personality and Religion*. Harper & Row, 1970: P 164.

“out there” with the stars (rather than a separateness peering across an abyss at another separateness through a telescope-keyhole).³⁷

Maslow struggled between the apparent Western goal of self-actualization and what he identified as the Eastern goal of ego-transcendence.³⁸ In his attempt to resolve the two, he sees the achievement of a strong, self-actualized ego identity as intrinsically valid and a necessary first step—a *rite of passage*—prior to the step of ego-transcendence.

The goal of identity (self-actualization, autonomy, individuation, Horney’s real self, authenticity, etc.) seems to be simultaneously an end-goal in itself, and also a transitional goal, a rite of passage, a step along the path to the transcendence of identity ... If our goal is the Eastern one of ego-transcendence and obliteration, of leaving behind self-consciousness and self-observation... then it looks as if the best path to this goal for most people is via achieving identity, a strong real self, and via basic-need-gratification rather than via asceticism.³⁹

Maslow is reaching here for a larger Eros, which lives beyond the limiting structures of a separate self. Maslow’s sense of this larger Eros is highly colored, of course, by the domination of the Eastern paradigm of ego-transcendence that defined the alternative spirituality landscape of the Esalen community, which Maslow breathed and lived in his last years. These alternative teachings rooted in Eastern models of Spirit, posit a fundamental contradiction between the ego, or separate self, and the True Self. In their understanding, the realization of True Self is a kind of developmental step beyond ego or separate self; in essence, one must first develop an ego in order to then transcend the ego.

³⁷ Maslow, A. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. Wilder Publications, Inc., 2014, Kindle-Version: p. 93. Here Maslow is aware of the demarcating feature of uniqueness that we have pointed towards in the Unique Self writings within CosmoErotic Humanism, that actualized uniqueness itself is the currency of intimate communion. See Gafni, Marc. *Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, with Introduction and Afterword by Ken Wilber, Integral Publishers, 2012, pp. 148, 161, 363. See also the chapter on uniqueness in Gafni and Kincaid, *A Return to Eros*, see also Gafni and Stein with Bloom, “An Idiosyncratic History of Uniqueness.”

³⁸ Self-transcendence is in fact a mystical goal that is strong in many strains of western mysticism as well.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 100.

But some Western teachers like Maslow go a step further, trying to integrate Eastern *no-self* teachings with ego-based Western psychology by positing that ego-transcendence can only happen after healthy individuation has peaked.⁴⁰ However, as we have unpacked with depth and delight in Unique Self Theory, the entire point of Unique Self is to transcend that false completion of individuation altogether. Unique Self is an expression of individuation *after* ego; individuation does not reach *omega* and then stop.

Maslow recognized the deeper need for Eros, as it expressed itself in the move beyond the narrow identity of separate self,⁴¹ as a demarcating characteristic of peak experiences. But Maslow died before he could integrate all of his insights into a complete framework for psychology.

Below we will articulate the eight core Eros needs, which, while they will include Maslow's hierarchy, embrace a much wider and deeper vision of Eros and identity.

The Growth Into the Deeper Levels of Self, Which Maslow Does Not Map, Is Itself a Core Human Need

In other words, True Self, Unique Self, Evolutionary Unique Self, and Unique Self Symphony—all expressions of the emergent *Homo amor*—are not a luxury. These new levels of self and new expressions of community, both emergent from the New Universe Story, are core human needs.

The clarification of our self-identity, deepening our responses to the great questions of *Who am I?* and *Who are We?* and *Where are We?*—the questions of our true nature in the context of a larger Universe Story—are themselves core human needs.

⁴⁰ Maslow even called self-actualization *full humanness*, implying a kind of completion.

⁴¹ Maslow was very aware of the limits of the language of *self* and how his ideas of self-actualization were misconstrued to imply selfishness and a neglect for self-transcendence. But even in his earlier works on self-actualization (*Motivation and Personality* (1954) and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962)), Maslow was careful to portray self-actualizers as those more prone to altruism, self-transcendence, citizenship and stewardship, and receptivity. Maslow was also sketching a much larger role for psychology, to grapple with being- and becoming-based psychologies (what he called *B-Psychology*) as opposed to exclusively deficiency-based psychologies (*D-Psychology*).

Reclaiming the Dignity and Divinity of Need

Before we go any further, a key word is in order on the nature of need and its relationship to desire, and then to rights.

First let's turn to need. Need is a hidden yet fundamental category in both the interior and exterior sciences. Central to our work in CosmoErotic Humanism is what we have called *the dignity of need*. But not only the dignity of need, also the Divinity of need.

Moreover, we have understood desire and need in their most clarified expressions—at the higher levels of developmental consciousness—to be virtually isomorphic. In that sense, as we have said above, we affirm not only the dignity and Divinity of need but the dignity and Divinity of desire. We will return to the apparent distinction and deeper identity between desire and need in even greater depth below.

First, however, it bears mention that neither the dignity nor the Divinity of need or desire are self-evident or even obvious. Indeed, quite the opposite is generally assumed.

This affirmation of the dignity and Divinity of need and desire are not only not obvious, but—as we just noted and have elaborated elsewhere in the writings of Cosmo Erotic Humanism, for example, in *The Phenomenology of Eros* and *The Universe: A Love Story* volumes—such a claim is a scandalous idea in the interior sciences. As such, a brief recapitulation on need (and desire) seems in order before we proceed to articulate a new vision of needs (and desire) beyond Maslow.

The classical Eastern idea of the enlightened Buddha, as expressed in many popular texts, is the one who has liberated himself from needs. And certainly, from desires. In Eastern enlightenment, desire and need are what keep you enslaved to *samsara*, the wheel of suffering, that is seen to be this world. As long as there is desire, you are to experience life, to be born and reborn, and therefore, you suffer. To get off the wheel and be re-united with *Source*, whatever that might mean, you need to free yourself from need and desire.

The Eastern teaching paradoxically and, in some real sense, correctly understood that our humanity is identified with desire. But from the medieval Eastern perspective—as well as the

medieval Western mystical perspective—both our desire and our humanity are obstacles to overcome on the way to Infinity—and not finitude to be celebrated because it already participates in Infinity.

From this perspective of course, we must liberate ourselves from desire and need. To do so we must get off *the wheel of suffering*, which is the wheel of desire and need—for desire attracts you—desire forces you to experience its fruits—indeed, whatever you desire badly enough will come to you—whatever you desire, you will draw towards you. This is true because the human being is condensed *Shakti*, which has the creative power of desire. But the Eastern model uses this correct identification of humanity desire to indict desire as that which keeps the human being bound to the base reality of *samsara*.

In the Western cannon, the paragon of the perfected One, the typology of the *Homo religious*, is the one who fulfills the great injunction of *imatatio dei*—the imitation of God. God, as described in the texts and as realized in in the human heart and mind, is to be imitated. But that understanding of God degrades the status of human need and desire. For in the Western cannon, realizers and texts go to enormous lengths (think Maimonides or Aquinas) to demonstrate that God, by definition, has no needs or desires whatsoever. Indeed, the very Essence of the Divine is to be utterly devoid of need or desire. For need or desire would indicate that there was something that was not yet fulfilled God. God would be said to contain emptiness, deficiency, imperfection or lack. There would be something outside of God—namely the unfulfilled need or desire. And since God is Infinite Perfection, ultimately full, deficiency in the Divine is, by the very nature of the Divine, impossible.

In Western enlightenment, needs and desire are seen not as sacred but as expressions of the narrow separate self, who is alienated from the will of God, who is the Source of all that is good, true, and beautiful.

In sum, we can simply say that in both the West and the East, need and desire are degraded in the very dramatic sense that they are set in opposition to the Divine.

CosmoErotic Humanism on Need and Desire

Both the Eastern mystical position and the Western religious position are diametrically distinct from CosmoErotic Humanism.

On the one hand, CosmoErotic Humanism identifies with the dominant teachings of Eastern and Western religion and identifies our humanity with need and desire. For the religions, both classical and mystical, however, our humanity in that very precise sense—in its sense of need and desire—is opposed to our Divinity.

On the other hand, CosmoErotic Humanism—as the very name implies—affirms the ultimate dignity of both of our desire and our need as the core of both our humanity and our Divinity. CosmoErotic Humanism includes but transcends the realization of consciousness that characterizes both Eastern and Western mystical positions—in that it integrates modernity and postmodernity—with its humanistic, embodied, and evolutionary cast—in a New Story of Value.

In other words, CosmoErotic Humanism recognizes that these purported understandings of need and desire—demanding their discipline—in Eastern enlightenment⁴² are true but partial. In fact, these views generally ascribed to mystical enlightenment are the public stand of the traditions, but they obfuscate the deeper view of the interior sciences that live within both the Eastern and Western traditions.

In this deeper view, we understand that the Infinite manifests finitude—Reality—because She *desires*—because She *needs*—Reality. In this more subtle read of Reality, we begin to recognize, as the Kashmir Shaivite sages declared, that Reality arises because there is a *stirring of desire in the Infinite*. Or as the Western interior sciences say, *Divinity lusts to make His indwelling in the manifest human world*.

Indeed, as we have unpacked in great depth in *The Phenomenology of Eros* and in *The Universe: A Love Story* volumes,⁴³ Reality is desire, all the way down and all the way up the

⁴² And many mystical western enlightenment teachings.

⁴³ See the volumes by Marc Gafni and Barbara Marx Hubbard with Zachary Stein, *The Universe: A Love Story* series. See also *The Abridged Phenomenology of Eros*, and *The Complete Phenomenology of Eros*, by Drs. Marc Gafni and Kristina Kincaid—all forthcoming by World Philosophy and Religion Press, in Conjunction with Waterside Press and Integral Publishers.

evolutionary chain. And it is moreover Divine Desire—Divine Need—that incepts Reality. Indeed, for Infinity to manifest finitude, *She* must be prepared to limit Herself, to withdraw Her own power, and step into the experience of Divine Need and Divine Desire. This is the place where, exploded by Infinities of Love—in the language of the Hebrew mystics—the Infinite turns to finitude and says, *I love you, I need you*.

Or, as sixteenth-century renaissance mystic Meir Ibn Gabbai declares of the Infinite, *Avodah Tzorech Gavoha—God needs your service*.⁴⁴ The same lineage strain in Hebrew wisdom, from which Ibn Gabbai draws, albeit a thousand years earlier, described Divinity as *filled with passionate desire to make his dwelling place in the human world*.⁴⁵ The realization of Divine Desire—called *Teshuka*—is a central dimension of the interior sciences, some of whose sources we have adduced in some depth in the early writings on CosmoErotic Humanism.⁴⁶

God needs and God desires.

This is a deeper sense of Reality—a cross-cultural anthro-ontological knowing at the leading edge of realization—veiled in the codes and texts of the interior sciences world over—hidden because of its explosive nature.

Divinity too has needs and desires. There is not only Divine Potency but also Divine *Pathos*. And they cannot be split.

Moreover, our needs and desires participate in divine Need and Desire. Our deepest heart's desire is, at Source, Divine Need and Desire. This view of a participatory Cosmos, from the interior sciences, is, of course, profoundly resonant with the evolutionary view of the exterior sciences.

⁴⁴ From Meir ben Ezekiel ibn Gabbai's *Avodat Hakodesh*, Section One, Chapter 27.

⁴⁵ *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshat Bechukosai*, sec. 3; See Chasidic master Schneur Zalman of Liadi in his *Tanya*, chs. 33 and 36.

⁴⁶ See Gafni, *Radical Kabbalah*, Vol. 1, Integral Publishers, 2010, chapter 11 on "The Way of *Teshuka*." pp. 219-226. All of Volume 2 similarly revolves around the ontological dignity—that is to say Divinity—of *teshuka*.

Evolution Is Driven by Desire and Need

With this recapitulation of the *interior sciences* in relation to desire and need in mind, we can now turn to a recapitulation of the *exterior sciences* in relation to need and desire, with two seemingly simple sentences—but not first-simplicity sentences, but second-simplicity sentences, the kind of simplicity that comes *after* integrating very much complexity and not before. We have spent some decades formulating and showing the accuracy of these two simple sentences that succinctly but accurately articulate the view of need and desire from the perspective of the exterior sciences—and, as already noted, also in the interior sciences.

Evolution is driven by need.

Evolution is driven by desire.

We have addressed each of these sentences in other writings of CosmoErotic Humanism, but for now, the most direct and simple—second simplicity—unpacking of them will suffice. Particularly we are interested here in the vital relationship between desire and need.

Between Need and Desire

We have already spoken above of what we refer to as word clusters.⁴⁷ For example, Eros, intimacy, and desire are distinct words, each reflecting distinct qualities of consciousness, but are also intercluded, inseparable, and—to at least some extent—overlapping.

Each of the words in this cluster are what we might call *primary words*—that is that each evokes a certain quality of Reality—which cannot easily be reduced to other ostensibly synonymous words. Thus, a word cluster is required to embrace different dimensions of depth and quality in the phenomenological reality being evoked.

In some sense, this is also the case regarding desire and need. Although the word *need* is, upon first inspection, not quite as tightly correlated to desire as words like *Eros* and *desire*, upon

⁴⁷ See the section above, “Need, Intimacy, Desire, and Allurement: An Erotic Word Cluster.”

only slightly closer phenomenological investigation, it turns out to be part of the same word cluster.

With this context in mind, let's turn briefly to the words *need* and *desire* and their intimate relationship, and let's articulate two complimentary relationships between desire and need.

A First Look at the Relationship Between Desire and Need: Desire Is the Motivational Architecture of Evolution

To unpack the first relationship between desire and need, let's first turn towards the cosmic ontology of desire. Desire is the ceaseless creative force of evolution that is always seeking—moving towards—ever-greater contact, fullness, and wholeness.⁴⁸

Alfred North Whitehead understood the evolutionary force of desire as being cause for what he called the *creative advance into novelty*.

Desire *is* the Eros of evolution.

Desire is the motivational architecture⁴⁹ in the Evolutionary Love Story, and it follows the thread of what we have called *Reality's plotlines*. The plotlines of Reality as are precisely the

⁴⁸ This is, of course, almost the Eros equation. And yet, desire is part of the Eros equation as well. This is exactly what we mean by word clusters that are both distinct and inter-included. At the same time, all these words are primary, which is why we end up defining one through the other and vice versa. Mathematically, that doesn't make much sense. We are faced with a virtual impossibility that can only point to the underlying ontological reality of what we are pointing toward.

⁴⁹ We have used this term before, referring to different aspects of our word cluster, e.g., allurement, desire for transformation, Your need is my allurement, Outrageous Love, and the dual experience of allurement and autonomy—see the following sections: “Desire, Need, and Allurement as First Principles and First Values of Cosmos and Fundamental Plotlines in Reality's Great Story of Evolving Value,” “The Love Story of the Universe Must Recall—and Be Called by—a Memory of the Future,” “Desire: Reaching for Future, Grounded in the Present, Animated by the Past,” “Eros and Unique Self: Aliveness and Allurement as an Affront To Shame,” “Allurement vs. Narcissism,” “Outrageous Love in Action: From Amoebae to Dogs to Humans Revisited,” as well as in a footnote to “Split Off from Our Aliveness: The Failure of Desire.” Again, this shows how deeply related all these terms are, even while each carries a distinct quality of the whole Field of Eros and Values. Said differently, *all* the plotlines of Reality are part of the motivational architecture of Cosmos.

First Principles and First Values of Reality.⁵⁰ In this sense, desire is a force that arises in the now moment reaching not only for a new present but for a new future, in which more and more of the First Principles and First Values of Cosmos are met.

Or said slightly differently, deploying different forms of language, desire is well understood in the interior sciences of Hebrew wisdom as *the future entering the now and inseminating it with a longing for a better future.*

It is in this precise sense that the Name of God is read by the lineage sources as the four-letter word, *Yod Hei Vav Hei*. The last three letters spell the Hebrew word for the present. The first letter, *Yod*, represents the call of the future. In this sense, the Name of God is the impossible conjugation of the future in the present. The essence of the Divine Name is the realization that the future enters and potentiates the present.

Crisis in the Motivational Architecture of Evolution

But there is a second drive in evolution, which operates in tandem with the core desires of evolution.

Crisis is an evolutionary driver.

Emergency drives emergence.

The immediate unmet need of the present is called *crisis*. Crisis—the pressing authentic need of the moment—generates new emergence.

⁵⁰ We originally outlined the plotlines of reality in earlier writings of CosmoErotic humanism as more and more complexity, consciousness, creativity, uniqueness, and Eros, with its subsets of em-pathos, which translated into active care and concern. See Gafni, Marc and Kincaid, Kristina. *A Return to Eros: The Radical Experience of Being Fully Alive*. BenBella Books, Inc, 2017. See also Stein, Zak. Love in a Time Between Worlds, On the MetaModern “Return” to a Metaphysics of Eros, *Integral Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan. 2019. As our work around values deepened and we began to formally articulate a new theory of value at the center of Cosmo Erotic humanism, what we termed Evolving Perennialism, and then to articulate a more formal set of equations for what we termed eighteen First Principles and First Values that are the very architecture of Cosmos, we realized that in fact – of course – that what we called the evolving plotlines of Cosmos are its evolving First Principles and First Values.

In other words, desire and need—brought into bold relief through crisis—are the twin forces driving evolution. In this first-level view, desire and need are both inter-included, yet not redundant—they are, in some real sense, apparently distinct.

Need wells directly out of the pressing crisis of the present moment.

Desire is the future reaching into the now and alluring it to a future with more value.

But desire and need remain related to each other in a kind of dialectical dance, where they arise and fall into each other.

Desire Is for the Range of First Principles and First Values

Let's recapitulate for a moment. The desire for ever-more life, love, creativity, complexity, interconnectivity, and uniqueness drive evolution forward.

As we just pointed towards above, these are the First Principles and First Values of Cosmos that Reality seeks to implicitly increase through desire. In effect, desires are memories of the future that are the creative siren songs of evolutionary desire.

Needs are what must to be met in the present to fulfill the desires of evolution calling from the future. In one way of articulating this distinction between desire and need, we might discern between the desire for creativity and the need for food. If the need for food is not met, then the desire to fulfill the Cosmic Value of Creativity can also not be met.⁵¹

Crisis emerges when the core needs required to fulfill the desires of evolution for its inherent values of ever-more love, creativity, uniqueness, contact, fullness, and wholeness are not met. In this sense, crisis is the thwarting of evolutionary desire for a better future because of a failure to meet present core needs.

An example of this distinction—of a crisis revealing a need that *must* be filled to meet the evolutionary desire—might be as follows:

⁵¹ There are of course also developmental needs—needs that need to be fulfilled for a subject reaching their next level of development—or their full potential. Here, the relationship between needs and desires gets even closer.

When single-celled prokaryotes are dying all over planet Earth, poisoned by oxygen, they don't just die off. Instead, their desire for life causes their evolution to a new configuration of intimate coherence—namely prokaryotes able to breathe oxygen, then eukaryotes, and later multicellular life. Through this evolutionary leap, organisms have the capacity to use the oxygen that used to poison them before to fulfill their need for nourishment and thereby also fulfill their desire for ever deeper and wider life.

This is the two-step process of evolution. Evolution is driven by Eros and its desire for ever-more contact and wholeness. This is the call of the future. Eros, desire, contact, wholeness—these are all values of evolution, or in other words, that which is desired by evolution.

When there is a failure of present capacities to meet present needs, the entrepreneurial universe meets present need in emergent ways. That is what we mean when we say that *emergency generates emergence. Or crisis is an evolutionary driver.*

Evolving Need, Desire, and Value

But the evolutionary driver often meets need in a way that not only solves the present and immediate problem or crisis, but rather solves it in a way that creates new possibility for the future.

In other words, crisis generates new—emergent—forms, which have the capacity to meet not only the immediate need—for example the single cells' need for life-sustaining nourishment and protection against poison, but also necessary to fulfill the greater desire of evolution, not simply for ever-more complexity, but for the fulfillment of all the First Principles and First Values of evolution—which as we have unpacked⁵²—are themselves the core plotlines of evolution. These values plotlines include ever-greater communion, ever-more uniqueness, ever-

⁵² See “First Notes on First Principles and First Values” in *The Universe: A Love Story* series. On First Principles and First Values as core plotlines of evolution, see also David J. Temple, *First Principles & First Values: Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism, the Meta-Crisis, and the World to Come*, and see also the fuller conversation in David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method* (forthcoming)—both books by World Philosophy and Religion Press, in Conjunction with Waterside Press and Integral Publishers.

more creativity, ever-more consciousness, and ever-more care and concern, or what we might simply call *love*.

All of these are realized in the movement from single-celled to multicellular life.

A Second and Deeper Look at the Relationship Between Need and Desire

In the first look at the relationship between need and desire, we have seen need as addressing the present and desire as responding to the call of the future. However, a second and—we think—deeper look at needs and desire, as well as at present and future, presents a more fluid relationship between both, in which need and desire, as well as present and future, merge into each other in a deeper identity.

Here is the core of it in terms of present and future: The more attuned Reality is with its own nature, the more attuned Reality is with the future desire entering the present, the more the fulfillment of that desire becomes not merely optional—a choice to be made—but rather a virtually inexorable needs, a necessity. It is in this meta-sense as well that the lineage sources speak of a dialectical identity between *ratzon*—will—a source word that describes *will* as *desire that calls to the future*, and *hechre'ach*—a source word that evokes the absolute necessity or need of the present.⁵³

This is also precisely the impossible conjugation of future and present, which is implicit in the interior sciences and expressed in the four-letter name of God. We invoke again our sentences above:

It is in this precise sense that the Name of God is read by the lineage sources as the four-letter word, *Yod Hei Vav Hei*. The last three letters spell the Hebrew word for *the present*. The first letter, *Yod*, represents the call of the future. In this sense, the Name of God is the impossible conjugation of the future in the

⁵³ The need of the present is formed by the constitutional nature of the present moment—formed either on the human level by the prior causation of the past, or in the interior sciences, on the Divine Level by the intrinsic nature of Eternity. On the relationship between desire and need in the garb of *ratzon* and *hechre'ach*, see Abraham Kook, *Lights of Holiness*, volume two.

present. The essence of the Divine Name is the realization that the future enters and potentiates the present.

The Evolving Relationship Between Desire and Need

In this second and, we think, more fundamental outlining of the relationship between desire and need, let's turn to what we will refer to as the *evolutionary fluidity* in the relationship between desire and need. The fluidity in the relationship between desire and need is based on the evolution of one's identity, value, and level of consciousness.

At one level of identity, let's say classical separate self, addressing Maslow's core deficiency needs—survival, safety, belonging, self-esteem—to which we return in more depth below, desire and need are inseparable and inter-included, even as they are distinct and non-redundant.

At this level of identity, value, and consciousness, *need* often refers to an *immediate, pressing, and non-negotiable need*, which is a present demand that cannot be ignored. Maslow's point, in his hierarchy of needs, is to point to ever-deeper and wider levels, within the classical structure of separate self, as one's separate-self-identity deepens. *Desire*, at the level of separate self, generally refers to a *call of the future*, which may express itself across a range of possible intensities.

One simple example of the distinction:

I need food.

I desire to live in a particular city.

Or I desire to write a book.

Now, this last desire, the desire to write a book, as one's separate-self-identity deepens, may turn into a need. For example, deploying Maslow's model, as one turns from deficiency needs to what Maslow calls *being or growth needs*, which, according to many readers of Maslow begins at the fifth level of his hierarchy—self-actualization—then, what, at an earlier level, may have been a desire, might then—in Maslow's language—turn into a need. Maslow's whole point

was that, as I move up the hierarchy, what might have been a desire at earlier levels becomes a need at the new and higher level.

So, for example, I want to live in a particular city with a certain kind of (intellectual) community that will help me write great books. When I am at level two of Maslow's hierarchy—core safety needs—then, my will to live in that city is a desire but not yet a need, as there are probably other ways to make money that would fulfill the safety needs at that level. But when I get to self-actualization—Maslow's being or growth needs—then moving to that city, perhaps even in a particular neighborhood, actually becomes a core need. In other words, the whole notion that writing a book is a core need only makes full sense, when I evolve from deficiency to being or growth needs.

Said slightly differently, we realize that evolution itself is the evolution of need. A different way of articulating the evolution of need is the conversion of what used to be a future desire into a present and even pressing need. There is therefore an evolutionary fluidity in the relationship between desire and need. At the human level that is true both within the development and consciousness of separate self and as we evolve from separate self to deeper levels of identity.

This same process of *desire turning into needs* continues as identity deepens beyond separate self and consciousness evolves. For examples, as one evolves from separate self to the realization of True Self—and then of Unique Self and even Evolutionary Unique Self—the relationship between desire and need changes.

In a word, as desire is clarified, in direct proportion to the clarification of one's essential nature or identity, one gains access to one's deepest heart desire. This deepest heart's desire is no longer a surface expression of pseudo-Eros but rather a profound expression of one's own essential unique Eros. The desire for the realization of that unique Eros is transformed from a distant desire—calling from the future—to a pressing, immediate need, without which one can hardly live.

For example, what might have been a desire—calling from the future—to write a book, with some moderate force of demand, is now transmuted into a pressing and immediate vital need. But this need—to write a book—participates at the level of Unique Self in a different

quality of intensity, delight, joy, and urgency than the same need at the level of separate self—self-actualization.

Once I have moved from separate self to True Self, I begin to experience myself as inseparable from the larger Field of Consciousness, Value, and Desire. As I then deepen the evolution of my identity and realize my nature as Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self, the quality of my desire to write a book—which is now transmuted into a core need—deepens immeasurably. I now experience all of Reality *needing through me*.

The basic formula in the relationship between need and desire is simple and elegant: The more our identity evolves, the more our *clarified desires* are converted into needs.

Two Forms of Desire: Unclarified and Clarified Desire

It is helpful, at this point, to deepen our meditation by distinguishing, as we have unpacked in multiple writings on CosmoErotic Humanism, between two core forms of desire. There is what we might call *surface desire* and *depth desire*, or what is also referred to as *clarified desire*—desire aligned with the motive force of desire in Cosmos.⁵⁴

Clarified desire is always reaching for a better future, a future where there is *more value to come*. Or again said somewhat differently, the future is always reaching into the present to allure it towards more value to come.

Evolution as the Parallel Evolution of Love and Need

We have written before—a core sentence in CosmoErotic Humanism—that *evolution is love in action in response to need*. It would actually be more accurate to say that: *Evolution is love in action in response to evolving need*. And if we want to be even more precise, there is a direct parallel in vectors between the evolution of love and the evolution of need.

⁵⁴ On the distinction between surface and depth desire—*omek* and *gavan*—in the interior sciences of Hebrew wisdom, see Gafni, *Radical Kabbalah*, volume 1, Chapter 8 (pp. 129-166), “The Will of God and Radical Freedom.” See also Chapter 11 (pp. 219-226), “The Way of *Teshuka*,” on desire. On the clarification of desire, see Chapter 10 (pp. 215-218), “The Nature of *Berur*” in *Radical Kabbalah* volume 1.

In other words, the evolution of need and love takes place not only in the microcosms of the human world—within the separate self—or in the evolution between selves, but it also takes place in the macrocosm of evolution as well. The conversion of desire to need takes place over evolutionary time.

For example, consider the way a lion raises its cubs in contrast to the way a human mother raises her babies. Pretty much all prehuman child rearing, and even forms of child rearing in societies prior to ours, would appear to us as child abuse. The baby lion cub gets what it needs from its mother, and basically undergoes a whole bunch of stuff that, for a human being, would be traumatic and dramatically traumatize its future growth making it a non-successful being.

Sometimes, for example, the mom or dad⁵⁵ will literally kill and eat a cub, and the other cubs will watch. And yet, those other cubs, to the best of our discernment, aren't traumatized in the way a human child would be if it watched its mother kill and eat a brother or sister infant. But the other cubs turn out to be successful lions and are not traumatized by these forms of child raising. The need for love of a cub and a human baby are very different. Needs and love evolve.⁵⁶

The realm of need keeps growing into what previously was the realm of desire. The realm of need keeps growing, deepening, and expanding. The core process of history itself is the ever-

⁵⁵ Lion mothers (and other mammals) are often reported to kill when a cub either doesn't respond like an infant should do (so that the maternal instincts don't kick in) or when it is ill. If the cub is unlikely to survive to adulthood, the mother might dispose of the unhealthy child to conserve her resources for those in better health. Also, a lack of resources (when only her or the infant can survive) might lead to her improving her own chances of surviving and wait for a time when the breeding circumstances are more favorable. The mother may also choose to eat the infant, in order to stop the rotting cadaver from drawing the attention of nearby predators. Male lions (and other mammals) also take part in infanticide, but for different reasons. When a new coalition of males takes over a pride, they almost always boost their own chances of reproductive success by killing the children born from different fathers—as female lions will not be receptive while they are nursing, and males have, on average, only a two-year window to pass on their genes.

⁵⁶ The need for self-actualization means something entirely different for a lion and a human. In order for lions to fulfill their full potential as lions, they mainly need to survive and be able to pass on their genes—as most of their potential is hardwired by instinct. The human being however has a much higher potential, which doesn't automatically come online. A human child is born when it is still very immature. It needs a long time to fully grow up, and really, in terms of their interior development, human beings never stop growing. That is why different developmental needs come online in different developmental stages. That way humans can easily adapt to different environments. That includes however also surviving in a less-than-ideal environments while sacrificing realizing their full potential. Most of our trauma-mechanisms as well as our pseudo-erotic pursuits are basically strategies to survive in a less-than-ideal environment by sacrificing our full self-actualization—or postponing it until the circumstances are more favorable.

evolving clarification of desire, in which old desires become new needs, as evolution continues its deepening. And this very clarification of desire that drives human development is already present much earlier in Cosmos driving biological development.

If we understand Reality in terms of pan-interiority, with the realization that there is proto-interiority and desire very far down the evolutionary chain, then, we begin to understand the evolution of desire and need as being one of the core plotlines of Cosmos. And the evolution of need and desire is virtually synonymous with what the interior sciences refer to as *berur*—the clarification of need and desire.

Indeed, this is the core point we made earlier, First Principles and First Values themselves are the plotlines of Cosmos. Or said more precisely, evolving First Principles and First Values are the evolving First Principles and First Values of Cosmos.

Role Mate to Soul Mate to Whole Mate

A second example of evolving needs is in the realm of human communication itself.

All through human, cultural, and civilizational evolution, we are continuing to expand the realm of what counts as a need. Indeed, the entire notion of human rights, which only becomes the center of gravity for huge swaths of humanity in the Renaissance, is essentially the assertion of a much broader circle of concern about what humans actually need.

We have devoted an entire book in the CosmoErotic Humanism library to the evolution of need within human relationships, which takes place over several hundred years but crystalizes potently in the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. The book, entitled *The Future of Relationships*, charts the evolution of relationship from role mate to soul mate to whole mate. Or said differently, the book charts precisely this process of the evolution of need, which is the evolution of love. And more particularly, it charts how what had previously been desire is transformed into need.

At the first level of relationship that we chart, the partners—which at that time were virtually always man and woman—are *role mates*. She runs the nourishing home, as well as births and primarily raises the children. He is the protector, breadwinner. He is a good man if he brings home the bacon and is providing and protecting his family. At this level of relationship,

however, great communication and a deep capacity to communicate around wounds, earlier trauma, and a host of other vulnerabilities is at best a desire and certainly not a core need.

However, as culture and consciousness evolve to a new level of relationship, what is commonly called *soul mate relationship* emerges. Three books at the end of the twentieth century emerged to define soul mate relationships. Two of them were by Marc's dear friends Harville Hendrix and John Gray. The first, by Harville Hendrix, titled *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*, and the second, by John Gray, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex*. A third book, at around the same time, was *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love* by Gary Chapman.

Notice that all of the titles point towards love, understanding, and language—or said differently, communication. The soul mate level of relationship was an evolution of love, which caused an evolution of need. Looking deeply into our partner's eyes and truly communicating became not a desire, but a basic need of relationship, and the failure to achieve it was grounds for divorce. It would have been virtually unimageable that similar models of insufficiently sensitive communication would be grounds for divorce at the role mate level of consciousness.

There is however yet a third level of relationship, which is beginning to come online at the beginning of the twenty-first century. That is what we are terming *whole mate*. At this level of relationship, a new need comes online. The need for the love partners to participate together in contributing to the whole. In other words, there is a need not only to look deeply into each other eyes but to begin looking at a shared horizon. A shared horizon of value, vision, and action for the sake of a vista that is larger than the nuclear family unit. That might have been a desire [even though inarticulate or even unattainable] in a soul mate relationship, but in whole mate relationship, it becomes a core need.

In other words, evolution itself clarifies desire and transmutes it into need. This is a core mechanism in the evolution of love.

And so, at a level of a lion, the need for love of a particular kind isn't yet clarified in evolution. And in that sense, that need doesn't yet exist, at least not in a way that's necessary to raise a successful lion. But when human beings emerge as we know them, and then human beings evolve, ever-deeper, wider, and newer needs for love come online.

The Three Great Questions of CosmoErotic Humanism

From the perspective of this deeper view, let's integrate the interior and exterior sciences and understand how need and desire express themselves in relation to the great questions of our lives, what we have called the *three great questions of CosmoErotic Humanism*—*Who am I*, *Where am I*, and *What do I want?*

The first two are twin faces of the same simple yet ultimate questions of identity. Our response to these great questions is directly related to our experience of self and the universe. *Who am I?* and *Where am I?* are inextricably related. The question of *Who am I*, as we have noted in other writings, can only be responded to in the context of the second question of *Where am I?* In other words, we can only articulate a narrative of identity in the context of a larger Universe Story. We have articulated the New Universe Story, integrating exterior and interior sciences in our writings on CosmoErotic Humanism.

If we understand *self* as being a skin-encapsulated ego in an ultimately meaningless Universe, then, we will have one experience of desire and need. If, however, we respond to these questions based on a deeper view of Self and Universe, then, our need and desire will clarify and uplevel. In other words, we then locate the response to these ostensibly personal questions in a larger cosmic context.

What emerges from this new Evolutionary Story of CosmoErotic Humanism with its new model—at the human level—of ever-deeper and wider identities, is the startling and elegant relationship between desire and value, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the answer to *Who am I?* and *Where am I?* is stunningly clarified. There is a direct proportion between the clarification of Self—the clarification of identity and the clarification of the Universe Story—and the clarification of desire.

In other words, when you clarify your answers to the first two of the three great questions of CosmoErotic Humanism—*Who are you?* and *Where are you?*—then, you also clarify your response to the third question—*What do you want?* or *What do you desire?*

So, the first two questions clarify the third question. As one realizes the deeper nature of human identity, what were previously desires become essential human needs. For example, the

need to contribute one's gift for the sake of the whole becomes not a fleeting desire but a burning need.

Three Levels of Relationship Between Need and Desire Across Evolutionary History

Level One: Desire and Need are Identical

At all the levels of evolution that are apparently driven more by instinct or nature than by conscious choice, from the molecular world all the way through the plant world, and into much of the animal (and even mammalian) world, desire and need are virtually isomorphic.

For an atom, there is no split between need and desire.

When Whitehead talks about *appetite*, and we talk about Reality as Desire all the way down the evolutionary chain, we are describing the process of evolution driven by need. It is only quite high up on the evolutionary chain—science might argue about precisely where—that living beings experience a split between need and desire. And while there is a sense of proto-I-ness and even freedom that lives even at the level of matter—as has been asserted by the likes of Richard Feynman and argued closely by Stuart Kauffman and others—there seems to be virtually no split between need and desire.

It is only much higher up the chain, as more sophisticated forms of life emerge, that we begin to discern a sense of desire that is distinguished, and even occasionally disassociated, from need. We of course do not have a direct access to the first-person interiors of the plant, animal, or mammalian world, but we witness behavior—mating behavior, for example—that seems to characterize desire rather than need, even as the two remain tightly interlinked.

Level Two: The Apparent Split Between Desire and Need

It is, however, only with the emergence of the depth of the human self-reflective mind, that we begin to proliferate scenarios, where there are authentic needs in the present, with varying levels of desire calling from the future. Indeed, the ability to feel into the future, what

one groups of leading researchers call *prospection*⁵⁷ or *Homo Prospectus*⁵⁸ seems to be one of the demarcating characteristics of humanity.

Humans experience a memory of the future.

Level Three: The High-Level Identity of Need and Desire at the Leading Edge of Identity and Consciousness

But when the human experience of desire is itself clarified, because of an ever-deeper clarification of one's identity—true nature and context—then, desire and need once again virtually blur with each other. In other words, as we unpacked it earlier, the most accurate answer to the first two questions of CosmoErotic Humanism catalyzes the most accurate answer to the third question of CosmoErotic Humanism. More specifically when your identity evolves, certain desires intensify and deepen—transmuting themselves into present-moment, visceral need.

At these higher reaches of human identity, it is sufficient to say that there is an inherent evolutionary need and desire—and here need and desire blur together—for the values of ever-more wholeness, uniqueness, creativity, and Eros. This evolutionary need and desire for these First Values of Cosmos is incepted in the first nanoseconds of the Big Bang in matter, the ostensibly inanimate worlds, and continues to unfold through the biological life worlds. This is level one.

But when they enter the human world, or somewhat earlier, there is, at least for most of the trajectory of development along particular vectors of human identity and the Universe Story, a split between desire and need. This is level two.

But at the leading-edge depth of human self-reflective consciousness and culture, desire and need again fold into each other in virtually isomorphic ways. This is level three.

⁵⁷ Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2007). *Prospection: Experiencing the future*. *Science*, 317(5843), 1351–1354. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1144161>.

⁵⁸ Martin E. P. Seligman, Peter Railton, Roy F. Baumeister, and Chandra Sripada, *Homo Prospectus*, Oxford University Press Inc, 2016.

The goal of human living is to overcome the split between need and desire. This requires the evolution of identity. At the human level, the evolution of identity is precisely the movement from separate self to True Self—and then to Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self—and finally to our participation in Unique Self Symphony. This movement is not merely a form of personal transformation. The movement of desire and need is rather the evolutionary movement of Cosmos—the individuated expression of need and desire that participates directly in the throb of the larger evolutionary impulse. This movement of Cosmic Eros towards greater value—which includes greater wholeness, uniqueness, creativity, and Eros—manifests in Unique Self, Evolutionary Unique Self, and the participation in Unique Self Symphony in ways that transcend the natural limitations of separate self.

Said simply, there is more Eros, uniqueness, creativity, and wholeness in True Self than in separate self, and then even more of all of the above in Unique Self, and even more in Evolutionary Unique Self—playing her instrument in the Unique Self Symphony.

Indeed, the transformation from separate self to Unique Self to Evolutionary Unique Self to the participation in Unique Self Symphony is precisely the realization that your Unique Self is *an irreducibly unique response to inherent evolutionary need and the expression of evolutionary desire* for growth and transformation to one's widest and fullest and most accurate self-identity.

Speaking in second person: You are not merely a separate self. You are a Unique Self. And your Unique Self lives in an evolutionary context—Evolutionary Unique Self. Reality's needs and desires show up uniquely in you, as you, and through you. Your deepest desires are Reality's Desires. Your deepest needs are Reality's Needs. Not your surface needs but your clarified needs—your deepest needs.

As such, just as Reality shows up uniquely as you, you need to show up uniquely in Reality. There are unique desires for you to fulfill and unique needs for you to meet in the world. Or said slightly differently, adducing Ibn Gabbai, whom we cited above, *God—Reality—needs your service*. Or in the same lineage, *God desires your service*.

In other words, you are uniquely desired and needed by Reality, and you express a unique dimension of Reality's Desire. You live in a Cosmos dripping with Eros, which lives in you.

These are part of the core response to the first two great questions of CosmoErotic Humanism. *Who am I?* and *Who are we?* and *Where am I?* From here flows the response to the third question, *What do you want or desire?* The response lays in the realization that your own deepest need and desire is to meet the needs and desires that you are uniquely yours to meet and fulfill.

This is the recognition that your deepest heart's desire is the deepest heart's desire of Reality, that Reality needs you, and that your own deepest needs—to live your unique life and give your unique gifts in your unique circle of intimacy and influence—are the Needs of Reality.

These realizations meet your core Eros need of aliveness—together with your core Eros need to transform—to grow to the highest and deepest version of yourself—which is the core Need of Reality living in you, as you, and through you. These needs transform your consciousness in wondrous ways, from which you will never recover.

This kind of—what we might call—*participatory mutuality* between cosmic and personal need and desire is what evolutionary mystic of desire Abraham Kook was referring to when he wrote,

*Cosmic nature and the nature of every particular creature, human history, and the life story of every unique person and her deeds must be surveyed in one encompassing glance, as one content with different parts; then will the light of wisdom which leads to Teshuva speedily arrive.*⁵⁹

Submission, Separation, and Sweetness: Pre-Tragic, Tragic, and Post-Tragic

We have written in other contexts of the three stations of love. They are articulated in allusive form by Israel Baal Shem Tov, and as we pointed out in our writings, they overlap in part with levels of developmental consciousness as described in developmental psychology. The three stations apply across domains, but let's apply them for a moment to the human experience of love. The first station, *hakna'ah*, translated as *submission*, refers to the first phase in a

⁵⁹ *Light of Penitence* 4:4.

relationship of *falling in love*. The two sides are in submission to one another. Their distinct wills virtually disappear in the ecstasy of that submission. Another name for this first station is what we call, in *CosmoErotic Humanism*, *pre-tragic*. The beloveds are in the ecstasies of love's wonder, before having experienced the pain of the tragic with all of its agonies.

The second station, *havdalah*, translated as *separation*, refers to the moment when the relationship shifts into more of a power struggle. The early collapse of will and submission is overcome by a reassertion of individuality with all the competing needs, clashes, and power drives. There is a dimension of tragic separation between the beloveds, even as they continue to love each other. This station is indeed also referred to by us as the *tragic*, which inevitably comes in every relationship.

The third dimension, *hamtaka*, translated as *sweetness*, refers to the moment, in the most profound of loves, where the beloveds fall in love once again, but this time at an ever-deeper level of consciousness. They include and transcended station one—falling in love—and station two—separation—into a depth of union, in which they become as two instruments resonating a single tune of music, while not losing their distinction. At this station, their wills are not collapsed but merged in higher intimate communion.

This third station of love, or relationship, is what we have also called the *post-tragic*. While, when viewed from the exterior, it appears similar to the pre-tragic—the couple is wondrously and even ecstatically in love—its interior contours are profoundly distinct. The post-tragic has faced the tragic and realized that it was not the end of the story—that there was more and deeper love to come. Love reappears at the station of the post-tragic in the fullness of its radiance, not only as personal love, but as an expression of the Eros that animates all of Reality, disclosed in personal form. It is the move from the finite game of love to the Infinite Game of Love—what we have called *the move from ordinary love to Outrageous Love or Evolutionary Love*—that is often one of the pivoting points into the post-tragic.

Let's apply these three stations to the relationship of need and desire through evolutionary history, as we just described it.

The first station is pre-tragic, the level of submission. Need and desire are identical and must be fulfilled.

At the second station, somewhere in mammalian and crystalizing at the human level, there is a separation of need and desire as we described it above. The split between need and desire, when we desire one thing and need something else entirely, is the root of the tragic. Much of religion, both of the mystical and exoteric form, demonized desire precisely because it was viewed as frivolous or even base—the enemy of true human need.

The third station is the reweaving—reintegration—of need and desire. It takes place at the leading edges of human identity and consciousness. One can access one's own clarified desire—what we call *deepest heart's desire*—and realize that this is identical with one's core needs—and both are in fact the very desire and need of evolution itself. It is this third station, where the split between desire and need is healed, as their higher identity is disclosed, which lies at the core of CosmoErotic Humanism and its practical vision of human potential.

Between Need and Desire: Recapitulation

In conventional parlance, need is often regarded by us as related to our survival, whether physical, psychological, or emotional. Desire is often understood to be either in reference to a less immediate and less essential need—or to a more primal life force underling any particular need. An example of the former: *I need food. I desire gourmet food.* Or an example of the latter: *I need insulin. I desire life.*

But as already noted above, the more aware, the more evolved our identity—the more we realize the more profound and accurate answers to the questions of *Who am I* and *Where am I*—the more we transcend the grasping of the skin-encapsulated ego into the accurate radiance of Unique Self, the more we close the gap between need and desire.

We accomplish this clarification, as we unpacked above, by allowing the future to enter the present. We tilt our ear to the future, and particularly, to the voice of our future self, calling us forth. In CosmoErotic Humanism, we call it *recovering the memory of the future*. When the future enters the present, desire is widened and deepened—clarified.

This, as we noted, has been extensively documented in leading edge trends in academic psychology as *prospection*.⁶⁰ The image is that of the human being as the *prospector*, who refuses to be satisfied by repeating the present and is instead allured forward by the call of the future. To clarify our *prospection* is to clarify the objects and subjects of our specific desires. It is to this third station of desire that Buddha alluded—at least in the original Pali cannon—where he is reported to have said, *have few desires but have great ones*.

The clarification of desire moves us from surface desire to depth desire, what we might also call *true desire*—or even *sacred desire* or *divine desire*. We begin to desire what we truly need and need what we truly desire. This does not mean that we need less or desire less. It is not an issue of how much we need or desire but what we need or desire and how deeply we feel our need and desire.

We might realize, for example, that our need for truth, beauty, love, aliveness, adventure, or goodness far exceeded what we thought we could scrape by on. We often need and desire more than we thought not less. But our needs and desires are exponentially more clarified, precise, and therefore potent. Our personal desire and need—in the precision of its individuated personhood—discloses itself as the Need and Desire of Cosmos itself.

Three Selves: Psychological, Mystical, and Evolutionary—Past, Present, and Future

The core of this third station, where need and desire meet, is the experience of the call of the future entering the present moment.

⁶⁰ See for example, Martin E. P. Seligman, Peter Railton, Roy F. Baumeister, and Chandra Sripada, *Homo Prospectus*, Oxford University Press Inc, 2016. We have integrated the extensive research on *prospection*, gathered by leading thinkers in neuroscience, cognition, learning theory, education, psychology, and philosophy, into CosmoErotic Humanism. Our notion of *the memory of the future* was developed independently of *prospection*. The research on *prospection*, however, filled in major areas of research, confirming our own core notion of the memory of the future as being essential to human well-being, both from a psychological and even what we might call a *transpersonal or spiritual perspective*. In general, as we unpacked in our original note on the same, CosmoErotic Humanism synergized multiple meta-theories from a wider range of disciplines into a larger mood and worldview. When we encounter excellent research around a core realization of CosmoErotic Humanism, namely the crucial nature of the memory of the future to human wholeness and health, we integrate it with very great joy and recognition.

It is perhaps important in this context to recall a second model of self, which we have integrated into the core model of CosmoErotic Humanism, which crosspollinates with its classical five selves. We engage them because they illuminate the core topic we are discussing here—the call of value from the future reaching into the present, which itself is what creates desire and, by implication, need as well.

The classical five selves of CosmoErotic Humanism are drawn from Unique Self Theory. It is those five selves that we have at the center of CosmoErotic Humanism. The five selves are separate self, false self, True Self, Unique Self, and Evolutionary Unique Self. False self, which we have not engaged in this writing, is simply a particular form of distorted separate self in contradistinction to a healthy separate self. But that is beyond the purview of this conversation.

Let's look at the complimentary model of self in relationship to the classic five-self-model—and particularly the thread of separate self, True Self, Unique Self, and Evolutionary Unique Self. We call that complimentary model the three selves—psychological self, mystical self, and evolutionary or future self.⁶¹

Psychological Self: The Need, Desire, and Value of the Past

The first of the three selves, in the new model, is psychological self. Psychological self focuses on the past, sees liberation in our capacity to recover our memory of the past, or to re-experience past trauma in a healthy way, so that our psychological self can heal.

Psychological self is a form of separate self. Like separate self, its view of the real is true but partial. What is key here, however, is that there is both *a desire and a need* to reconfigure our relationship to the past, and in some sense, to reconfigure the past itself. Moreover, it is fair to say that this model locates value in the past and the need to recover the past is connected to an immensity of that value in the past that we need, in order to live a happy life NOW.

⁶¹ For a more detailed description of this three-selves model, see our essay “The Three Selves: A Memory of the Future” on our website: <https://worldphilosophyandreligion.org/the-three-selves-a-memory-of-the-future/>.

Mystical Self: The Liberation from Need, Desire, and Finite Value in the Present

The second of the three selves, in the new model, is the Mystical Self. Mystical Self sees liberation in moving beyond the stories of the past. Mystical Self sees human wholeness and liberation from suffering in the fullness of the present moment, or what is often called *the Now moment*. Mystical Self is congruent with True Self in the core model of five selves. Mystical Self sees authentic (or absolute) Value in the Ground of the Eternal Present, which in many classical teachings, serves to liberate us from need, desire, and finite, inauthentic (or relative) value, at least in their more classical forms.

Evolutionary Self or Future Self: Needs, Desires, and Values Calling from the Future

The third of the three selves, in the new model, is Evolutionary Self. Evolutionary Self is all about the future. Evolutionary Self, or what we sometimes call *future self*, is filled with desire for the future, called by future, committed to recovering the memory of the future. Evolutionary Self naturally maps on Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self in the core model.

Again, let us reiterate:

It is not that only Evolutionary Self has a relationship to need, desire, or value. All the selves engage need, desire, and value, but in very distinct ways.

Mystical Self has a fundamentally negative relationship to need and desire, generally identifying both desire and need with what we have called their *surface forms* and understanding—correctly—that surface desire is a formidable obstacle to entering the Eternity—the Eternal Ground of Value—that resides in the moment.

Psychological self generally thinks of desire as the healthy expression of the separate self in the present. For the psychological self, our unhealed relationship to the past is viewed as being a formidable obstacle to our capacity to know and enact our appropriate desire in the present. But there is also a genuine need and desire to revisit the past and heal its trauma. In this sense, there is precious value in the past.

But for Evolutionary Self, desire—specifically clarified desire—is central. It is clarified desire that holds the call of the future. And once desire is clarified it merges with need—clarified need—as the fundamental compass of a human life well lived, reaching for ever-deeper and wider value—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful—and being omni-considerate for the Value of the Whole.

Needs, Desires, and Rights

This brings us to our last two points, which will set the stage for our conversation on the eight core Eros needs.

First, we want to explicate an equation that has been implicit in this writing:

Needs = Desires = Rights.

Your clarified need is your deepest heart’s desire, which is Evolutionary Desire—Divine Desire—uniquely awake and alive in you.⁶² Evolutionary Desire, or Divine Desire, is your Divine Right, or Evolutionary Right. Desire is, as we have seen, tightly linked with need and not to be dismissed as superfluous, lest we risk our core wholeness and health, both personally and collectively.

⁶² Clearly, we are not talking about the right to fulfill one’s desire for sexual contact with a random person that happens to catch your eye or with a relational partner that has refused you. That desire is neither clarified nor authentic. In a shocking example of what Walter Kaufman once called *intellectual gerrymandering*, Amia Srinivasan, in her acclaimed early-twenty-first-century book, *The Right to Sex*, identifies *the right to desire* precisely in this way, with its most twisted forms. Particularly, she cites treatises from the darkest corners of the incel community, particularly the writings of one incel (involuntary celibate), who became a mass murderer, as caricatured evidence for the ugliness of the right to desire. But of course, the right to desire is innate and essential. Desire is a right and not an elite privilege reserved to those who are thought to be aesthetically attractive by whatever standards ruling at a particular moment in time. Rather, the right to desire is a democratic right which refers to your clarified desire. That clarified may have a sexual expression in a context that is radically mutual. Even as it also applies to the wider Field of Desire.

The Emergence of New Evolutionary Identities Generates New Growth Needs and Desires

This leads us to the last crucial point, which sets the stage for our articulation of a new set of core human needs and desires, which include but transcend what we might call *Maslow's Separate Self Hierarchy of Needs*. We will refer to these below as *Eros Needs* or *Eros Needs and Desires*.

One of the core human Eros Needs and Desires is to transform and grow.

Another core human need and desire is to be sane. Sanity is, stated simply, to know your identity, or said slightly differently, to know your true nature.

Now let's put these two core needs and desires together in one flow of simple insight. Perhaps the most profound human growth and transformation is to move from ignorance to wisdom, particularly about one's own true nature. That is the greatest area of human growth. To grow, or transform, from the limited and delusional identity of separate self, to realize that one participates in True Self, the Singular that has no Plural—and then to awaken more deeply into Unique Self, the individuated expression of True Self—and then from there to emerge into Evolutionary Unique Self—and finally to pick up one's unique instrument and begin to play in the Unique Self Symphony—is the greatest need and deepest heart's desire of every realized human being.

In other words, it is a two-step process. First, the *need and desire* to move from separate self to the higher levels of identity is itself a core human *need and desire*. Second, it is paradoxically true that one cannot identify one's own deepest needs and desires from the identity level of separate self. It is only as Unique Self—the unique expression of True Self that lives in you, as you, and through—and then from the realization that your Unique Self that lives in an evolutionary context—Evolutionary Unique Self—that you can turn inwards and identify your clarified needs and deepest heart's desires. And those clarified needs and deepest heart's desires will always be omni-considerate of the whole. This is the nature of the new human and the new humanity, which we have called *Homo amor*.

This, of course, emerges directly from our conversation around need and desire just above. There, we saw that the evolutionary trajectory itself might be well understood as the

evolution of need and desire. Moreover, we saw that, on the human level, it is precisely the evolution of need and desire—in intimate congruence with the evolution of identity—that discloses the ultimate ontic identity between need and desire.

What we are adding here is that, at this level of identity and consciousness, what we are referring to as *Homo amor*—Evolutionary Unique Self playing her instrument in Unique Self Symphony—we need a new map of human need and desire. *Homo amor* is not exhausted by Maslow’s separate-self needs, but rather includes and transcends Maslow’s needs, aligning ever-more profoundly with a deeper and perhaps more primal set of needs and desires.

A New Cultural Enlightenment as the Response to Existential Risk Based on Emergent New Identities and Their Consequent New Needs and Desires

An emergent new sense of identity, both for the I and the We, and a consequent new articulation of human needs and desires has the capacity to usher in a new global cultural enlightenment. A new cultural enlightenment can only be emergent from a New Shared Global Story of Value rooted in First Principles and First Values. This New Story of Value rooted in First Principles and First Values must begin with a new sense of human identity and a consequent remapping of human needs and desires.

Without such a remapping, we lack the capacity to respond to the reigning narratives of identity and their senses of desire and need—namely separate self, engaged in rivalrous conflict, governed by win/lose metrics—in other words, the modern success story. It is precisely *this* story that is cause for our global intimacy disorder, which itself is the generator function for catastrophic and existential risk.

It is this failed story, and the failure to articulate a new story of identity rooted in a larger new Universe Story, rooted in a larger Story of Value, that is cause for our global action paralysis and global action confusion. This Eros of deeper identity beyond separate self is therefore not only a core need of the individual human, but also an essential need of humanity.

The New Story in Response to the Second Shock of Existence

As we have written about, extensively in other contexts, the urgently pressing second shock of existence.

The first shock of existence is the realization that we each individually die. The second shock of existence is the realization that humanity itself could go extinct through any one-off a host of looming existential risks.

The only genuine response to existential risk, whose generator function is the broken source-code story driving Reality, is the articulation of a New Story that catalyzes—as only a new story can—the emergence of a new human and a new humanity. It is catalyzed by a collective transformation of identity through the democratization of enlightenment, which is an essential need of humanity.

Linguistically Merging Need and Desire in the Eight Core Eros Needs

With this in mind, let's introduce the eight core Eros Needs and Desires.

But we will turn to these needs and desires not as expressions of separate self but rather as core evolutionary needs and desires inherent in Cosmos that live uniquely in every human being, as an expression of Unique Self Identity. And remember that Unique Self is the unique expression of the Field, with the Field being True Self. Thus, Unique Self, when located in an evolutionary context, becomes Evolutionary Unique Self.

In calling them Eros Needs we are—with intention—integrating need and desire into one phrase, *Eros Needs*. We could just as easily call them the *eight core Desires*—or the *eight core Needs and Desires*. We chose to simply call them the eight core *Eros Needs*, blurring needs and desires into one phrase, for all of the reasons we have adduced above, which points to—at the higher levels of consciousness—their inter-inclusion and even identity.

We chose to call them *needs* instead of *desires* for aesthetic reasons, as this conversation takes place in the larger frame of the Maslow *needs* conversation. Since Maslow's needs are the context in which we are presenting the eight core Eros Needs, it was easier to just refer to them as *Eros Needs*, instead of, what would have been more confusing, *needs and desires*.

The eight core Eros Needs are a crucial evolutionary step, existentially urgent at this moment in culture, to honor and evolve beyond Maslow's old hierarchy of needs, which—in at least the way it has been adopted by culture, even if that was not Maslow's intention—focus on the classical separate self. The presentation of a new set of universal Eros Needs is part of the movement from the old skin-encapsulated, separate-self *Homo sapiens* to the new human and the new humanity—the Evolutionary Unique self—*Homo amor*.

Introducing the Eight Core Eros Needs

The eight core Eros Needs are:

- 1) The Need for Eros
- 2) The Need to be Intended
- 3) The Need to be Recognized
- 4) The Need to be Chosen
- 5) The Need to be Adored/Loved Madly
- 6) The Need to be Desired
- 7) The Need to be Needed
- 8) The Need to Transform

Need One of the Eight Core Eros Needs: The Meta-Need for a Wider Eros

The first of the eight core Eros Needs is a meta-need that suffuses all the other seven needs, even as it has its own distinct contours. The first need is simply the need for Eros.

The litmus test for Eros is the experience of radical aliveness, in which life is self-evidently good and worthwhile. *Eros*, as we have formulated in the writing of CosmoErotic Humanism, *is the experience of radical aliveness yearning for ever-deeper contact and ever-*

greater wholeness. It is both a quality of being—radical aliveness—and a quality of becoming—transformation or growth—the move towards ever-deeper contact and greater wholeness.

Therefore, the experience of Eros, if it is to be sustained, must include both a deep participation in the interiority of being, as well as participation in the pulsating *telos* of becoming.

The Eros of Value

In Eros, we do not *answer* the question of the meaning of life. It simply falls away.

One dimension of this first Eros Need is the need to feel the elegant order of things. This is what we refer to as *the Eros of Value*. We need to feel the Eros of the larger goodness, truth, and beauty of existence. We need to experience ourselves inside of the larger order of things.

When we have a direct experience of being on the Inside of the Inside, we get a glimpse of the magic and mystery of existence, which lives *beyond* our separate selves and which we also participate *in* directly.

In these moments of Eros, we do not *answer* the question of meaning; the question itself simply becomes meaningless. The meaningful nature of Reality becomes self-evident.

We might call this first Eros Need *the need for the Eros of Value*, the knowing that my life has intrinsic value, that my life is significant, that it matters in some intrinsic and real ontological fashion.

A First Anthro-Ontological Note

One anthro-ontological data point is in order at this juncture; it is a point of enormous significance. In all our years of counseling and teaching, we have met many separate-self-actualized individuals. Virtually none of them felt at home, satisfied, or content with their lives. Indeed, a perpetually looming *dis-ease*—often manifesting as acute disease—with their apparently successful, self-actualized lives was itself a source of enormous anxiety and confusion. Virtually all these individuals had an unrealized core need for a larger Eros, for what we might term an *erotic experience of life*.

This data point is the Anthro-Ontological Method in full bloom. We realize that *the mysteries are within us*. The need for a larger Eros, for a wider and deeper sense of identity, is not trivial.

The ubiquity and universality of the Eros Needs points *not* towards psychological disorder, grandiosity, or Eros—and its meaning as *fiction, figment of our imagination* or mere *social construct*.⁶³ Rather, the core need for this wider Eros reflects a more fundamental ontology of identity. We need a wider Eros and deeper identity because *that* is our true nature.

This is the very heart of Anthro-Ontology.

***In Unique Self, Longing and Fulfillment—Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction—
Blur into the Larger Whole of a Life Well Lived***

Let's elaborate on this anthro-ontological data point.

We have just noted that it is a truism of our anthro-ontological experience that even the successful person, who seems to have satisfied their separate self needs as expressed in Maslow's hierarchy, remains deeply dis-satisfied. This point requires crucial clarification. We are not implying here that satisfaction achieved in the deeper Unique Self contexts of identity ends all experience of longing or even dis-ease. That is self-evidently not the case—for two distinct reasons.

First, a person can be realizing their Unique Self Identity and still needing to engage an entire range of psychological shadow issues, which cause dis-ease of various forms. There is no point at which this interior work of clarification is ever complete or achieved.

But second, even if we are talking about—in terms of shadow issues and personal, psychological wholeness—the most integrated person imaginable, longing and disease still do not disappear. There is an inconsolable longing for home that is part of human existence. And

⁶³ These are the classical terms deployed by the modern and postmodern mainstream establishment, which rejects the notion of inherent value in Cosmos. See for example, Yuval Harari, *Sapiens*, chapter two. Harari is significant as he is not a philosopher but rather somewhat of a parrot for neo-Buddhist postmodern deconstruction of Eros and meaning.

that longing itself points towards a deeper Reality beyond separate self, beyond the valley of tears, which is so often this world.

But in the context of a larger Universe Story, and wider and deeper frames of identity, we begin to both locate ourselves *in* our longing, and to feel something of the fulfillment of that deeper *world to come* within the contexts of our lived lives in this world, in this dimension of our existence. When we liberate ourselves from the illusion of being but a skin-encapsulated ego, locked in rivalrous conflict for successful self-commodification, we begin to align with the larger life current of Reality.

Our desires deepen in their nature, as they participate in the larger Field of Desire and Eros.

Our values deepen and evolve, as we participate in the wider Field of always evolving yet intrinsic Value.

Our self deepens as we participate uniquely in the larger Field of Selfhood.

Our sense of personal distinction and our unique qualities of intimacy—our unique perspectives—become an expression of the Field of Personhood, instead of a talisman of separateness and alienation.

The infinitely deepened desires, values, and longings of Unique Self, who has evolved beyond exclusive identification with her limited separate-self-identity, are satisfied and not satisfied in the same moment. The chasm between the longing and fulfillment—path and destination—are for the first time not a yawning abyss of despair. Rather, we begin to live in the dialectical dance, where longing and fulfillment—path and destination—begin to blur into a larger whole that makes sense of our lives.

To recapitulate:

This inexorable need for a larger Eros is the first of the eight core human needs.⁶⁴ The first of the eight needs is the meta-need for Eros—the sense of aliveness and location within the

⁶⁴ It is worth reasserting that we are not suggesting the eight core needs as a hierarchy of needs. They do not necessarily show up in a particular order. Rather, these might more accurately be seen as a spectrum of needs. However, the meta-need of Eros sources the other seven needs.

larger order of things. As we connect ourselves to this larger Eros, to the Field of Value, we begin to locate ourselves in the larger order of things. We see the world differently. Something larger than ourselves begins to live us, to animate and even direct our lives. In the ultimate expression of this need, we begin to be lived as love. This is *Homo amor*.

Essential to *Homo amor* is, however, not a sense of being merely absorbed in the larger order of things, but a sense of unique significance in the larger order of things. Essential to unique significance is being personally addressed. *Homo amor* means having the direct recognition—the anthro-ontological realization—of needing to feel personally addressed in the larger order of things. I need to know that I am valued in the Field of Value. That is essential to my capacity to be at home in the larger order of things. It is this sense that is addressed in the next seven core needs, all of which are, in some sense, unique distinctions of the first need.

Notes on the Contours of Next Seven of the Eight Core Eros Needs

Each of the next seven core needs are expressions of the first core meta-need for Eros. They are each an expression of the first Eros Need for significance (or meaning within the larger order of things). The need for significance itself is not a social, psychological, or cultural construction. Rather, the fundamental need for significance is itself an anthro-ontological expression of significance.

Before unpacking the needs, themselves, which we will do below, we will now turn, in the next sections, to clarifying the contours and characteristics of the seven needs of Eros.

Personal Significance Needs: From Personal to Supra-Personal

All seven needs might be fairly called personal significance needs. Like the first need, these are all Eros Needs. But these personal significance needs are not simply separate self needs. For we are not referring to the personal before what is often called *the impersonal*. That is what we have called, in Unique Self theory, level-one personal, or in later writings of CosmoErotic Humanism, station one of the personal. There is a higher level of the personal

beyond the impersonal: This is the station-three personal. We might also refer to this as *the supra-personal*.

Let's clarify this critical idea for a second. The word *personal* is almost exclusively, used in the classical and contemporary literature of the interior sciences, to refer to aspects of the separate self or the ego self. Beyond the personal is said to live what is alternatively called the *impersonal*, or sometimes also the *transpersonal*. This is the realm beyond personality which we, in Unique Self Theory (along with many other theorists) refer to as *True Self*. So far so good.

For classical enlightenment theorists, this is the summum bonum of realization. We have realized in Unique Self theory and enlightenment practice that while the realization of True Self—I am inseparable from the larger Field of Consciousness, the total number of True Selves is One, the singular that has no plural—is a crucial station of waking up. It is, however, NOT the penultimate realization. It is rather a pivotal station on the path to our full emergence as human beings.

For beyond True Self, there is a level of higher individuation. There is a higher individuation of the personal beyond the *ostensibly* impersonal Field of True Self.⁶⁵ This is the emergence of Unique Self, the irreducibly unique eyes, intimacy, and personhood of True Self—personally individuated beyond ego. In other words, the personal of the ego self or separate self is just the first station of the personal.

In other words, neither the healthy differentiation of the first-station personal self or what we also call *separate self* [western rational psychology] or the apparent transcendence of the personality in the realization of True Self [eastern, and occasionally western, mystical realization] are the end of the story.

One of the core principles of CosmoErotic Humanism is the rejection of this relegation of the personal to the separate self. There is a level of the personal before the impersonal and a level

⁶⁵ Indeed, and this is crucial and a major dimension of the new chapters of Unique Self theory, True Self itself is NOT an impersonal Field of Awareness. Rather, it is an Infinitely Personal Field of Awareness and Allurement—of Personhood beyond personality. True Self is a Field of what we have called *ErosValue*, not yet distinguished—at the human level—into the irreducibly unique expression of the Personal that we are calling Unique Self.

beyond the impersonal. That is the supra-personal, to which we have just referred. Unique Self is supra-personal. Unique Self is the personal Face of True Self.

The seven core Eros Needs—the personal significance needs—are not the personal needs of the ego or separate self, but rather the supra-personal needs of Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self, of *Homo amor*.

Again, all seven of these needs are expressions of the first core need—the need for a wider and deeper Eros, particularly the need for a deeper, wider Eros of identity, of value and purpose, in the context of the larger order of things.

Personal Significance Needs: The Search for a Life that Matters—I Matter— and the Mattering of Self

Another way to talk about personal significance needs, which we noted in a passing phrase above, is in terms of the need to matter. We are all searching for personal significance. Or said differently, we are all searching for a life that matters. But what the personal significance needs point towards is that it is not enough to matter personally in a narrow sense of personal ego. Seeking is not, as has been suggested by myriad mystical paths, merely a pathology of the separate self.

Rather, the unrest that drives us towards personal significance, towards a life that matters, is an expression of the Eros of Cosmos seeking-ever deeper contact and larger wholes. We might say that our most profound unrest is Divine Unrest (however you understand the term *Divine*). We need to be able to say not only *I am*, but *I matter*.

What *I matter* means is directly dependent on the Universe Story, in which one lives, and on the narrative of identity, which defines one's sense of self. *I matter* has different meanings at each structural stage of consciousness. New Universe stories and narratives of identity arise with new levels of consciousness.

We will focus on the evolution of the statement *I matter* along two distinct transformational or growth lines—or what are often called *developmental lines* in developmental psychology. Two such lines are the identity line and the moral line of development.

To say it simply, *I matter* means one thing at separate self, something deeper at True Self, something even wider and richer at Unique Self, and something almost infinitely more profound and powerful at Evolutionary Unique Self. That is the progression of *I matter* along the growth trajectory of identity.

Along the moral line of development, *I matter* means one thing at egocentric consciousness and intimacy, something wider at ethnocentric consciousness and intimacy, something wider still at worldcentric consciousness and intimacy, and something almost infinitely more encompassing at cosmocentric consciousness and intimacy.

I Matter: The Truth of Embodiment

Before we continue unpacking the seven core personal significance needs, it is worth noting for a moment something of the experience of *I matter*. *Matter* is a word that, in English (as well as in other languages), connotes both dense physicality and profound interiority.

Matter incarnates as our bodies are filled with energy. In Hebrew, for example, the word for *matter* is *davar*, which means both *thing* in the sense of matter and *word* in the sense of Divine Logos.

When Julie Andrews sings, *The hills are alive with the sound of music*, our bodies thrill with the inchoate truth that we knew but could not speak. *Matter is alive*. Reality is sentience all the way down and all the way up the evolutionary chain. That is the core nature of the self-actualizing Cosmos. It is what we refer to, in CosmoErotic Humanism, as *pan-interiority*. The Universe is animated by the energy of what physicist David Bohm suggestively referred to as *in-formation*.

It is for that reason that sinking deeply into the purity of the body—the state of embodiment—has been articulated as a coming home to oneself. It is this that the interior scientists, the erotic mystics of the Solomonic lineage, referred to when they said, *through my body I vision God*.⁶⁶ The vessel of the body is not, as was thought for two millennia, merely a

⁶⁶ Paraphrased from Job 19:26: “*And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.*” (NIV)

temple for the soul. Rather, the body is the enfleshment of Spirit itself. The body is a self-organizing field of allured energy, made of subatomic particles and atoms, which themselves are probability waves of relationship, or what we have called *configurations of intimacy*.

So many people come to our office and present issues that point to not being fully in their bodies. This expresses itself as feelings of not belonging, of feelings of not being seen or heard. Often, they have experienced early trauma, which has interfered with the process of embodiment. A hidden belief that *it is dangerous to be here* in-forms their physical process. Or, said slightly differently, the in-formation that *it is dangerous to be here* creates a de-formation in the physical body.⁶⁷ They do not come fully into their body because a primal inner fear whispers, *if I incarnate, I will be killed*. The hidden, foundational belief *if I live, I die*⁶⁸ becomes the distorted organizing principle of consciousness and matter. As one of Wilhelm Reich's key students, and the innovator of Core Energetics, John Pierrakos, used to say, *the issue is the tissue*,⁶⁹ meaning the emotional issue is literally engrained deeply in the tissues of the body.

As we just noted, the trauma is often related to the danger of being fully seen and heard. As a result of that, the traumatized person often starts to hide, and then, as a consequence, they suffer the wound of *not* being seen and heard. The sense of personal significance is wounded. As a result, those with this wounding feel they do not belong. They cannot locate themselves in the larger order. Their core experience of mattering is, at least in large part, deconstructed. Such people often conclude that it is not safe to be in their body.

As we go through the process of individuation beyond True Self, we reclaim our unique personal needs. We claim the truth that our lives matter. In doing so, we literally *re-matter* our bodies. We reclaim our *matter*, so that we can be seen and heard and feel like we finally belong.

⁶⁷ Wilhelm Reich was pointing to precisely this nexus in his classical statement on the five core character structures. See Reich, Wilhelm. *Character analysis*. Macmillan, 1980.

⁶⁸ See also the section in this book "The Double Bind of Desire and Need: If I Live, I Die."

⁶⁹ This was one of the core teachings of Pierrakos in thousands of talks, which has been adopted by multiple students of his, often without attribution. Pierrakos was a seminal figure in the emergence of body-centered therapies in the second half of the twentieth century. He co-founded, together with his close friend and collaborator Alexander Lowen, bioenergetics. Both were students of Wilhelm Reich. John ultimately split from Lowen, and together with his wife Eva, founded Core Energetics. Eva's body of work, integrated into Core Energetics, is called *Pathwork*. See *The Pathwork of Self-Transformation* by Eva Pierrakos, Bantam 1990. See also, John Pierrakos, *Core Energetics, LifeRhythm*, 1998.

When we lose the thread of mattering, then, we become disembodied. We cannot live in our body. If we feel like we don't matter, we lose connection to all the *in-forma-tion* that is available to us through the body. We don't know what we need, what others need, and what the planet needs. When we are not fully in our bodies, claiming our Unique Self, we are not fully *mattered*, and people literally don't see us. When we begin to clarify and fulfill our authentic needs—our own and those beyond us—we begin to matter to ourselves and to others. The full statement of our deepest embodied being is, *I am here! I MATTER!*

That *I matter* expresses itself in part in the material body seems strange only if we disassociate from the nature of the body itself. The body looks solid but is actually a spacious, self-organizing field of allured energy and consciousness. Remember that the body is physically constituted by quarks, subatomic particles, atoms, molecules, complex molecules, and cells, which are all held together in a web of Eros and allurement. Allurement between quarks, muons, hadrons, and leptons creates subatomic particles. It is Eros—an interior drive towards coherent intimacy and wholeness—coupled with communication between all parts of the body, which constitutes the physical body. Naturally then, the interior experience of *I matter* is inextricably entwined with one's incarnation as matter—as mattering in the world.

If we don't feel we matter spiritually or psychologically, it shows up in our physical body. Conversely, the more our statement of *I matter!* evolves to higher and deeper levels of consciousness, the more our body opens. It is not an accident of language that, in Hebrew, the word for *development* is *hitpath'ut*, which literally means *opening*—because the body is a physical embodiment of consciousness.

Embodiment means *becoming whole*—to have all of your parts online—to feel deeply and fully—to matter on all levels of consciousness and on all levels of identity, from egocentric to cosmocentric, from separate self to Evolutionary Unique Self.

The Personal Significance Needs Are Bi-Directional

The yearning for all of these personal significance needs moves in two directions. Allow us to explain what this means.

One of the seven personal significance needs is the need to be desired. This expresses itself bi-directionally: *I both need to be desired, and I need to desire.*

A second of the seven needs is love and adoration: *I need to be loved and adored, and I need to love and adore.*

In each of the seven core needs, we need to both give and receive whatever the core need might be.

I need to intend and be intended.

I need to recognize and be recognized.

I need to choose and be chosen.

I need to be love-adored and to love-adore.

I need to desire and be desired.

I need to need and to be needed.

Needs Are Rights: A Second Anthro-Ontological Note

Earlier, we unpacked a core equation of CosmoErotic Humanism:

Needs = Desires = Rights

We saw that, as consciousness evolves, both needs and desires are clarified, and although the distinction does not entirely disappear—the two words do not collapse into an isomorphism—they do blur into a larger dance of synchrony and syntony. In what the interior sciences call *the process of Berur*, to which we referred above as the deeper *clarification of need*, needs become desires, and desires become needs.

We noted above that each of these core needs and desires is also a core human right. That is the point of the Anthro-Ontological Method. These needs, which we experience in our deepest, and most clarified, healthy selves, are not artificial psychological or social constructions, but rather disclosures of the very nature of Reality. When English poet William Blake wrote, “*If the*

*doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite,*⁷⁰ he was making an anthro-ontological observation. Our deepest and most clarified interior experience discloses the Infinite. In both, the interior and exterior sciences, human beings are microcosms of the entire evolutionary process.

Between Need, Desire, Values and Rights: The Right To Intimacy

At the foundational level of existence in the manifest world, interior need and desire are identical. Three quarks need each other and desire each other. Protons, 380,000 years after the Big Bang, desire and need electrons. It is from that primal need and desire that the atom—a new configuration of intimate coherence—a new Value of Cosmos—is formed. Reality is the ever-deepening need and desire, which in turn generates the evolution of value.

At the aspirational levels of Cosmos, the further reaches of human development, clarified need and clarified desire are once again virtually identical. The desire to act in integrity and the need to act in integrity, the desire to create goodness, to disclose truth, and to manifest beauty, and the need for the same are the virtually identical.

Need and desire, in their clarified forms, foundationally and aspirationally,⁷¹ disclose value. Value discloses rights.

For example, intimacy is a fundamental need and desire of Cosmos, foundationally and aspirationally. Desire and need disclose value. We realize that intimacy is a First Principle and First Value of Cosmos. As such, intimacy is a right. The right to intimacy, in all its manifold guises, must therefore be embedded in law, economics, education, governance, psychology, and spirituality.

⁷⁰ From Blake, William. *The marriage of heaven and hell*. Vol. 321. American Chemical Society, 1975.

⁷¹ We are happy to invent this word.

We must read the sciences *not* in a reductionistic materialistic fashion. Science constantly describes immaterial forces acting on the material.⁷² We must take the interiors of the science seriously—reading the sciences in the full implicational fabric of their empirical disclosures.

By doing so, we can articulate a new shared Story of Value, which then becomes the ground for a shared vision of universal human rights, of the kind that was first attempted in modernity but has since broken down under the onslaught of the postmodern deconstruction of rights and values.⁷³

Infinity Garbed in Finitude

We could fairly summarize the sciences as saying, *Infinity garbs itself in finitude*. Or *Infinity discloses itself in the singularity of the Big Bang*. In the great flaring forth of evolutionary explosion, finitude emerges from the Infinite. Evolution then unfolds—driven by Eros, the desire for ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness (ever-deeper intimacy)—and ultimately incarnates as humanity. Humanity continues to evolve, until we awaken from unconscious to Conscious Evolution—the realization of *Homo amor*. In this evolutionary unfolding, our interiors are clarified as we move through structural stages of consciousness—in Jean Gebser’s description⁷⁴ from archaic to magic, to mythic, to rational, to integral. The last level—Gebser’s *integral*, which received a profound articulation in contemporary Integral Theory and in our own CosmoErotic Humanism, which is coming online increasingly in our time—transcends, and yet ideally seeks to include, the validated insights of all the preceding levels of evolution—exterior and interior.

⁷² See for example, Howard Bloom’s writings for an extensive description of this phenomenology of Reality that is described by science and yet obfuscated in its jargon. See also, *Evolutionary Science Dialogues*, Marc Gafni, Howard Bloom, and Barbara Marx Hubbard, forthcoming, for an extensive discussion of this theme, which is implicit in Bloom’s work and is provocatively brought forward by Gafni and Hubbard in their multiyear dialogue series with Bloom.

⁷³ For an in-depth analysis and critique of these themes in Harari, see the Aubrey Marcus Podcast with Dr. Marc Gafni “Yuval Harari Gets DISMANTLED—Marc Gafni Exposes The Faults In His Logic,” <https://worldphilosophyandreligion.org/yuval-harari-gets-dismantled-marc-gafni-exposes-the-faults-in-his-logic/>. See also our forthcoming books, *ErosValue: Love Stories Are the Fabric of the Real: On Value, Pseudo-Value, and Anti-Value—The Great Reconstructive Project* (Volume 1 and 2) and *Harari’s Bedtime Stories and Why They Cause Nightmares for Children and Adults*.

⁷⁴ See Gebser, Jean. *The ever-present origin*. Ohio University Press, 2020.

Mysteries of interiors and exteriors—of Infinity and finitude—eternity and evolution—unfold in the clarified interior of *Homo amor*. *Gnosis* lives inside of our clarified desire. As the interior scientists of Eros write again and again, the *razei ha'torah*—*the mysteries that animate Reality*—live within the *omek penimi*—*the deepest interiority*—of the *nefesh muar u-mevurar*—the awakened and clarified heart, body, and mind.⁷⁵

That is Anthro-Ontology.

The Eight Core Needs of Eros Are Emergent from the New Universe Story and the New Narrative of Identity

As we noted above, all the eight core Eros Needs are central to the new narrative of identity, which itself is a corollary of the New Universe Story. The new human is *Homo amor*. To be *Homo amor* is to be a Unique Self in an evolutionary context—or Evolutionary Unique Self. To be a Unique Self is to be a unique configuration of the evolutionary Eros that is needed by All-That-Is.

It is worthwhile, then, to pause for a moment and briefly recapitulate the New Universe Story, its derivative narrative of identity, and the core definition of Eros, and from that place return to the eight core needs.⁷⁶

The crucial developmental truth is that the Eros Needs, both the need for Eros, the personal significance needs, and the final Eros Need—the need for transformation and growth—resonate and mean something entirely different in the context of a skin-encapsulated separate-self ego—*Homo sapiens*—than they do in the context of an Evolutionary Unique Self—*Homo amor*—who locates her story as chapter and verse in the larger Love Story of the Universe.

⁷⁵ This is the major motif of Mordechai Lainer and one of the key mystics whom he greatly influenced, Abraham Kook. The Hebrew terms that appear in this sentence, and the meaning we have attributed to them, are part of the combined core lexicon of Lainer and Kook. See Gafni's *Radical Kabbalah*, volumes one and two, for a deeper dive.

⁷⁶ We are of course aware that we sketched some of this material in the section above, and of course earlier in this volume. But we feel the need to recapitulate briefly here not for purely informational purposes but for avocational purposes, as practice, as part of the Eros of pedagogy. We trust that it will be easier for you, dear reader, just as it is for us, to sense the deeper Eros Needs, when you are emerging directly from this brief meditation recapitulating the New Universe Story and narrative of identity.

The needs to be intended recognized, chosen, love-adored, desired, and needed simply mean something entirely different at the separate-self, materialist level of self than they do at the Unique Self, Amorous Cosmos level of self.

Here are the bare bones of the New Universe Story of Value that is the core of CosmoErotic Humanism. Reality is Eros all the way up and all the way down the evolutionary chain. We live in a CosmoErotic Universe, and the CosmoErotic Universe lives in us. The CosmoErotic Universe means that the Universe is not merely a fact but a story, an evolving story, in which we participate. Eros is the inter-animating Eros of both being and becoming. Eros is not only the interior, experiential quality of eternal presence but of evolutionary unfolding. Evolution implies *telos*, direction, plotline, and story. The Eros of evolution is going somewhere. That is the implication of evolution, disclosing that Reality is a story. To realize that Reality is animated by Eros is to understand that the Universe is not an ordinary story but a love story, a tale of Evolutionary Eros, an Evolutionary Love story, an Outrageous Love Story.

Remember our equation of Eros:

Eros = the experience of radical aliveness seeking, desiring, ever-deeper contact (read: intimacy) and ever-larger wholes or wholeness.

This transformative movement of Eros is the growth trajectory of Cosmos and of every individual expression of Cosmos, including human beings. In human beings, this erotic vector moves from unconscious to Conscious Evolution.

This takes us to the next step, which is the narrative of identity, the heart of which is Unique Self Theory. Again, the new narrative of identity itself is a direct corollary of our New Universe Story.

So here is our recapitulation of the narrative of identity:

Who Are You?

You are *Homo amor*. To be *Homo amor* means to be the Universe: A Love Story in person.

To be the Universe: A Love Story in person means that:

You are an irreducibly unique expression of the LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire that is the initiating and animating Eros and energy of All-That-Is, which lives in you, as you, and through you, that never was, is, or will be ever again other than through you.

You are a unique configuration of the evolutionary Eros. The evolutionary Eros awakens personally and consciously in you, as you, and through you. As such, you have an irreducibly unique perspective; you have an irreducibly unique quality of intimacy as well as an irreducibly unique configuration of desire. This trinity of Eros—unique perspective, desire, and intimacy—comes together to activate your unique gift, which in turn empowers you to address a unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence that can be addressed by you and you alone—in the particular way that you are uniquely able to address it. To address that unique need is your unique calling—it is the erotic joy and responsibility of your life. In giving your unique gift, you awaken as the leading edge of evolution; you incarnate a unique quality of the evolutionary Eros, or what we often term Evolutionary Love. You become the personal face of Conscious Evolution.

You are the personal face of evolutionary Eros. As such, your personal story is a love story. And your personal love story is an ultimately significant chapter and verse in the Universe: A Love Story. Your transformation is the leading growth edge of Reality's transformation. Your transformation is the transformation of the whole.⁷⁷ Your transformation participates in transforming the whole. You are the personal incarnation of the leading edge of evolution.

When we wake up to the realization that we are *personally implicated* in the Love Story of Reality, that our unique personal Eros is the Eros of evolution seeking deeper contact and greater wholeness through us, we awaken as chapter and verse in the Universe: A Love Story.

⁷⁷ From the perspective of True Self, you are not only indivisible from the whole, in some sense, you contain the whole within yourself.

We realize that our Eros is implicit in, and in no way separate from, the Eros of Reality. Our sacred autobiography, which is our unique personal love story, is part of the narrative arc of the Universe: A Love Story. This is the realization of *Homo amor*.

In this precise and potent sense, the New Universe Story and its corollary narrative of identity are essential keys to the evolutionary emergence of a new human and a new humanity, or *Homo amor*, the next evolutionary leap after *Homo sapiens*.

Personal Significance Needs Are Not Dependent on Specific Relationships

Remember that personal significance needs themselves are a form of the meta-need for Eros. These personal significance needs cannot be met by the narrow fulfillment of a structurally isolated, and therefore non-erotic, separate-self relationship. It is only when the separate-self relationship participates in the larger Eros of Reality that personal significance is addressed.

But it is even deeper than that. Personal significance must ultimately be met by the inherent realities of Cosmos, rooted in the most accurate Universe Story and narrative of identity, and not dependent on any single relationship. In other words, what is absolutely key to understand is that these seven needs are not met only, or even primarily, in a particular intersubjective context; their fulfillment is not dependent on a particular person, or group, or community. Rather, all the seven core needs are met in the essential self-recognition of Evolutionary Unique Self: *Homo amor*. Paradoxically, it is the fulfillment of these core Eros Needs outside of a particular relationship that directly and positively enacts our capacity for intensely beautiful, committed, specific, personal love relationships.

With this larger context in heart, mind, and body, let's now turn to the personal significance needs.

Turning to the First Six of the Seven Personal Significance Needs

Let's look at each one of the core needs. The complete list of eight post-Maslow Eros Needs is:

1. the meta need for Eros,

followed by the seven personal significance needs,

2. the need to be intended and to intend,
3. the need to be chosen and to choose,
4. the need to be recognized and to recognize,
5. the need to be love-adored to love-adore,
6. the need to be desired and to desire,
7. the need to be needed and to need,
8. the need to transform.

Let's now turn to needs two through seven. These are the first six of the seven personal significance needs. The seventh is the need to transform—to grow—is also a personal significance need, which we will treat separately because it has unique qualities not shared by the other six.

The First Six Personal Significance Needs Must Be Mediated by Eros: Not by Ordinary Love But by Evolutionary Love—Outrageous Love

All these needs, however, need to be met not merely through a romantic separate-self beloved but by Cosmos itself. Let's take but one of the personal significance needs, *to recognize and be recognized*, and play out the implications of this previous sentence. In other words, it is structurally insufficient to merely be recognized, in some limited psychological fashion, by one's romantic separate-self beloved, or even by a group of separate-self beloveds, whether romantic or platonic.

We need to be personally recognized by Cosmos itself. The recognition by Cosmos can and should, however, be mediated, at least in part, through the recognition of the beloved. But not merely the beloved—whose love is mediated by what we have called *ordinary love*. Rather, the beloved who addresses the need to be recognized, which is core to our deepest selves, must be a transparent prism for Eros or Outrageous Love—or what we have also called *Evolutionary Love*.

In this very precise sense, spoken in more religion language, the eyes of the beloved become the Eyes of God. And just like we need to be recognized through the eyes of Outrageous Love, we need to recognize the other through the same Eyes. In effect, to be an Outrageous Lover is to see through God's Eyes—or said slightly defiantly, to let God see through our eyes. When we invoke the *Eros of Cosmos* in each of the six personal significance needs below:

to be intended by Cosmos,

to be chosen by Cosmos,

to be recognized by Cosmos,

to be love-adored by Cosmos,

to be desired by Cosmos,

to be needed by Cosmos

or in the other direction,

to intend as Cosmos,

to choose as Cosmos,

to recognize as Cosmos,

to love-adore as Cosmos,

to desire as Cosmos,

to need as Cosmos,

we are referring to the human being acting and being met, as an expression of the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself—that which is ultimately Real—in all six personal significance needs.

The Need to Be Intended and to Intend

Every human being needs to be intended—personally intended.

We do not want to be an afterthought.

We do not want to be a result of chance attraction.

On the personal human level, for example, the more intention that goes into a present chosen for us, the more moved we are by the present. The more the present seems to be a careless gesture lacking specific intention, the less moving it is to us.

But we need to be personally intended not only on the human level, but by Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself. And the Eros of Cosmos is mediated, at least in part, through the beloved.

At the same time, we have a need to intend, to be intentional in relationship to ourselves, to others, and to Reality, all of which are our intended beloveds. And we need that our personal intention towards others be not just an expression of our separate selves, but rather our intention towards others must participate in the intentional Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself. And in this precise sense, all others are the intended beloved.

The Need to Be Chosen and to Choose

Every human being needs to be chosen—personally chosen.

But not only to be chosen; we need to be chosen *first*. For example, I (Marc) was not a great athlete in elementary school. I was generally chosen last or second-to-last for every sport. I can still access that experience in my body today. My unfulfilled fantasy was to be chosen number one. We all have a fundamental need to be chosen.

But our need is to be personally chosen, and chosen first, not just by our beloved other, but by the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself. And the Eros of Cosmos is mediated, at least in part through the beloved.

At the same time, we have a need to choose and to choose first. We need to feel the power of our choosing and the gift and delight that it bestows. We choose ourselves, we choose others, and we choose Reality, each in specific and unique ways. And we need to know that our choice for the beloved in our lives participates in the choice for the beloved made by the Eros of Cosmos itself. And the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself—is mediated, at least in part, through the beloved. And in that precise sense, all others are the chosen beloved.

The Need to Be Recognized

Every human being has a need to be recognized as their Unique Self—personally recognized.

We need to know that we are irreducibly special. We need to feel like we are seen and heard in our specialness. There is little as painful as our Unique Self being invisible or systematically mis-recognized. But it is structurally insufficient to merely be recognized, in some limited psychological fashion, by one romantic separate-self beloved, or even by a group of separate-self beloveds, were they romantic or platonic. We need to be personally recognized by the Eros of Cosmos—by Reality itself. The recognition by Cosmos can and should however be mediated, at least in part, through the recognition of the beloved. In religious language, as we evoked just above, to be a lover is to see through God's Eyes.

We also have a need to exercise our capacity to recognize ourselves, others, and the world, and to liberate all three through the force of our recognition. And we need to know that our recognition of the beloved participates in Reality's recognition of the beloved. Just like we need to be recognized through the Eyes of Outrageous Love, we need to recognize the other through the same Eyes. In effect, to be an Outrageous Lover is to see through God's Eyes. Or said slightly differently, to let God see through your eyes. In that precise sense, all others are the recognized beloved.

The Need to Be Desired

Every human being needs to be desired—personally desired.

The experience of being desired arouses our Eros and awakens our aliveness at the core. We need to be desired, not only on the human level, by one or multiple human beings—we need to know we are desired by the Eros of Cosmos itself. And the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself—is mediated, at least in part, through the desire of our beloved.

At the same time, we have a need to desire. We need to desire ourselves, our beloveds, and life itself. And we need to know that our desire for others participates in the Desire of the very Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself—for others. And in this precise sense, all others are the desired beloved.

The Need to Be Loved and Adored and to Love-Adore

Every human being needs to be loved and adored—personally loved and adored.

Love is the feeling tone of delight that arises from being intended, recognized, chosen, desired, and needed. Adoration is an intensification of love. We need to know that we are loved and adored—not only by one or more human beloveds—we need to know that we are loved and adored by the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself.

At the same time, we need to love and adore ourselves, our beloveds, and life itself, and that our love and adoration of others participates in the love and adoration of Cosmos—of Reality itself—for others. And in this precise sense, all others are the adored beloved.

The Need to Be Needed

Every human being needs to be needed—personally needed.

The feeling that we are an extra on the set robs our existence of its potency, passion, and poignancy. We need to be needed in ways that matter. But we need to be needed, not only by the separate-self beloved. We need to know that we are needed by the Eros of Cosmos itself—of Reality itself.

At the same time, we need to feel that our authentic needs will be honored and met, not humiliated and shamed—but not only by the personal beloved. We need to experience the dignity and even Divinity of our needs as sourced in the Eros of Cosmos—of Reality itself.

All of these personal significance needs are both distinct and yet inter-included with each other. When all these human needs are met, we feel radically alive and profoundly valuable, two of the most wondrous feelings in the world. When these needs are not met, we experience a fundamental deadening and devaluation of self.

The Last Personal Significance Need: The Need to Transform—to Grow

We now turn to the final personal significance need—the eighth of the eight core Eros needs. This need is different in quality, in that it is not intersubjective. It is not about being intended, recognized, chosen, desired, adored, or needed (by others). It is rather about a need for movement from within.

This is the movement of growth, or what we sometimes refer to as *transformation*. When we stagnate, we lose our sense of value. We feel like we do not matter in the same way. Our experience of growth and personal transformation is essential to our innate sense of personal significance.

In growing and transforming we become more. We might run faster, become more loving, become kinder, or more attentive, or more skillful. But as we will see, to transform is not merely to become *more* but to transform in a way that an entirely new sense of self—a new identity—emerges. For example, you might not only love more deeply, but your deepening and expanding love literally makes you a different person than you were before.

At every stage of life, every human being *needs* to grow. It is an absolute human need that cannot be denied without the essential degradation of the person. That we *need* to grow both physically and psychologically has been long recognized. But the underlying need is to constantly transform and uplevel our identity. For a period, this takes place physically. But the core trajectory of human growth is the Eros of interior transformation.

It is not, however, enough to grow personally as a separate-self human being. We must know that the most accurate description of Cosmos itself is as *a series of transformations*.

In other words,

Evolution is a series of transformations.

Human transformation is but an expression of the trajectory of Cosmos itself towards ever-deeper transformation.

In this sense, we can say with full scientific accuracy that human transformation participates in Cosmic transformation. In its penultimate expression, this means that human transformation participates in the transformation of God.

This is the realization of our ontic identity with the Divine. This ontic identity lives both as the realization of True Self and as the realization of Evolutionary Unique Self. This is an expression of the transformation of the Divine through the self-line of development. It might also be expressed, in the moral line of development, as cosmocentric consciousness and intimacy. Remember that intimacy means shared identity. Shared identity, and consciousness, with Cosmos *is* a quality of Divinity.

The Growth of Interior Transformation

The growth of interior transformation includes three major dimensions, modes, or vectors of ever-increasing Eros. The three dimensions are the ever-deepening and widening of

- 1) Identity,
- 2) *Gnosis* (Knowledge), and
- 3) Capacity.

Three Forms of the Growth of Identity

It is super valuable to be able to identify each of these three dimensions or modes of transformational growth—identity, *gnosis*, and capacity.

We will first turn to the first mode—growth of identity expresses itself in three core vectors:

- 1) The transformation of identity,
- 2) The widening of identity, and
- 3) The intensification of Eros.

Before we go any further, however, it is crucial to understand that all three modes, dimensions, and vectors of transformational growth, and each of their specific dimensions, all interanimate each other. They are all inter-included.

For example, two dimensions of growth in identity include the widening of identity and the intensification of identity, which are also transformations of identity in some very real sense. However, by cultivating discernment around each of the dimensions we get a much clearer realization of the depth and breadth of the Eros of growth.

One: The Eros of the Transformation of Identity

The transformation of identity expresses itself in multiple transformational growth vectors. We will name but three of them here:

- 1) False Self,
- 2) Shadow Qualities Work, and
- 3) Unique Shadow Work.

False Self

First, we grow by straightening out the parts of ourselves that are crooked. This often includes stepping out of our false core, which we might express as a sentence. That sentence could be:

I am not worthy.

I am not enough.

I am not safe.

I will always be alone.

I am too much.

By stepping out of the false core sentence, we align with a more accurate sense of our identity.⁷⁸ This is the work of moving beyond the false-self version of our selves. The false-self

⁷⁸ On this form of growth, see Gafni, “Identifying & Transforming Your False Self” here <https://www.marcgafni.com/identifying-transforming-your-false-self/>.

work, in this classical form, takes place at the level of separate self. We can inhabit a healthy separate self or a broken separate self. The latter is what we are calling the *False Self*.⁷⁹

Shadow Qualities Work

Second, we grow by including and integrating the split-off parts of ourselves that we would rather not see. This is what we refer to— in other writings, as shadow qualities work. Shadow qualities are not actual shadow. Shadow itself is the process by which we take our light and place it into shadow. Our light is, in multiple traditions, understood as our unique configuration of Eros, our unique frequency of light. In the Hebrew wisdom lineage, for example, light is *sapir* (which is the source for the English word *sapphire*). *Sapir* is the blue light that, in multiple lineages, incarnates or symbolizes Unique Self. *Sapir* is intimately related to or participatory with two other core Hebrew roots.

The first is *sefer*—book—as in our *book of life*, and *sippur*—story—as in our unique life story. Shadow at its core is when we take the luminosity of our unique light and place it into darkness. It can only do so when we claim our split-off unique luminosity.

That light, or luminosity—our Unique Self—is desperate to emerge from the shadows. The light of our split-off Unique Self struggles to attract our attention. It does so by acting out in myriad forms, from addiction to abuse, to jealousies, to pettiness, to contraction, to entitlement, to victimhood, to rage, and the list goes on.

Our shadow qualities are of course exasperated by lies we tell ourselves (and everyone else) about ourselves. We split off parts of our behaviors, motivations, and actions that we disown or simply fail to be aware of. To grow, we need to tell the truth about ourselves.

The truth about us, however, is not a noun but a verb. It is in the de-nominalization of self—in the realization that we are verbs—Divinity in motion—yearning to scream the Name of God that is the foundation of any authentic shadow work. Our mistaken identity as being static

⁷⁹ There is a second usage of the term *False Self*, which we have also deployed in other writing, in which the separate self itself is the false self—simply because it gives us false information about our true identity, limiting that identity to be a skin-encapsulated ego.

nouns is, however, not only a psychological fallacy but an ontological fallacy as well. We are not merely facts. We are—quite literally—stories, evolving stories, of Divinity in motion, in constant states of transformation. Our story-like nature, our lives as a series of transformation, is the truth of our exterior and interior realities.

That we make mistakes is a given. Life does not present a path of no mistakes as a genuine option. But there are two things that we can do.

First, we can direct our hearts to make mistakes in the right direction, constantly spiraling towards wholeness. The spiral image is crucial because it is neither line nor circle. The spiral is the arc of the love story, circling around again and again, and yet pointing towards wholeness.

Second, we can make new mistakes. In the interior science of the Hebrew wisdom, there is an aphorism:

The righteous one is the one who makes new mistakes.

Meaning, we turn our circles into spirals, healing one mistake, and making new ones.

It is only from this Ground of Being and Becoming that we can be open to receiving what are often emotionally difficult truths about ourselves about our current way of being. This is the shadow work, which is crucial to the second transformation of identity.

Unique Self Shadow Work: Luminous Shadow

Third, we embrace the split-off parts of ourselves that are too wondrous to believe, until we check the facts of the interior and exterior sciences. This is not the classical shadow but what might be called the *luminous shadow*.

This begins, as we noted above with debunking the lie of being a merely separate self or skin-encapsulated ego. We explode the lie of the ego's contraction and recognize our fundamental identity with All-That-Is. This is the momentous leap of growth from separate self to True Self.

We *need* to recognize that we are an emergent of the larger Field of Existence, including all its exterior and interior dimensions. But that is not all. We are not merely True Self.

We *need* to transform into our realization of Unique Self. We are an irreducibly unique emergent of the entire Field of Existence. But that is also not all.

We *need* to transform ever-more deeply and locate our Unique Selves in a larger evolutionary context. This is the momentous leap of growth from Unique Self to Evolutionary Unique Self. But even this is not the end of our growth.

We *need*, as Evolutionary Unique Selves, to take our place in the Unique Self Symphony. This means that we are called—we *need*—to give our unique gifts in our unique circles of intimacy and influence. We are called—we *need*—to awaken as the personal face of the evolutionary impulse. We are called—we *need*—to realize that *I* and the evolutionary impulse are uniquely one; and we are called to live from that activated realization.

All of this is integral to the human *need* to grow into the Eros of our core identity.

Two: The Eros of the Widening of Identity

The transformative movement from separate self to True Self to Unique Self to Evolutionary Unique Self, participating in Unique Self Symphony, is one essential trajectory in the growth vector of the transformation from *Homo sapiens* to *Homo amor*. But to be *Homo amor*, participating in the Planetary Awakening in Love through Unique Self Symphonies and synergies, always requires a second trajectory of growth: the *widening of identity* and the *intensification of love*, both of which generate their own transformations of identity.

The widening of identity is also a developmental trajectory, but in an entirely different sense—a growth through structural stages of consciousness. One of myriad expressions of this kind of growth takes place in the ethical line of development. For example, the human being moves from a felt sense of love, care, and concern for themselves, family, and perhaps a very small circle of friends or partners (egocentric intimacy) to a wider circle of felt love, care, and concern for their entire community or tribe (ethnocentric intimacy) or society as a whole (sociocentric intimacy), to an even wider circle of felt love, care, and concern, which includes every human being on the planet (worldcentric intimacy), to an even wider circle of felt love, care, and concern which includes every sentient being on the planet and all of manifest and unmanifest Reality in the process of evolution (cosmocentric intimacy). This is a growth in love

through distinct structural stages of intimacy and consciousness, from egocentric all the way to cosmocentric.

Notice we use intimacy and consciousness together, for intimacy and the desire for ever-deepening intimacy is the interior feeling of consciousness. The evolution, as a person or collective, into ever-wider circles of felt love, care, and concern (until the evolutionary process itself is included in the circle) is a core growth need of the human being.

The widening of identity and the transformation of identity are not separate from each other. Remember our equation of intimacy:

$$\textit{Intimacy} = \textit{Shared Identity} \times \textit{Mutuality of Recognition} \times \textit{Mutuality of Pathos} \times \textit{Mutuality of Purpose}$$

At this juncture, we are focusing on the first part of the equation—intimacy as the level of shared identity. The widening of identity—from ego- to ethno- to world- to cosmocentric—is, in effect, a transformation of identity. Widening the circle of love and intimacy co-arises with the transformation of identity.⁸⁰

Three: The Eros of the Intensification of Love

The intensification of identity takes place at whatever level of identity one inhabits. That may be the identity of separate self, Unique Self, or Evolutionary Unique Self. Within that level of identity, the quality of love and intimacy intensifies. That intensification is a growth of love.

This growth through intensification, like the growth of identity through widening and transformation, is a core human need. When we profoundly intensify our capacity as a lover or beloved, people tend to remark that we seem like a different person. And they are not wrong. In the true intensification of love, we literally transform our identity as well.

⁸⁰ This is a way of talking about the widening of identity through the prism of the moral line of development. We can also talk about the widening of identity through the prism of the self-line of development. This is the widening of identity from separate self to True Self to Unique Self to Evolutionary Unique Self.

Apotheosis: The Ontic Identity of Wills—The Ultimate Transformation

In all three of these forms of identity transformation, from separate self to Evolutionary Unique Self, and the widening and deepening of identity, which we just described, the circle of human identity expands to include Spirit. This is what has been termed *apotheosis*—the human being is revealed to be participatory in the Divine. The human being is transformed into embodied Spirit—a spirit being whose Essence is Outrageous Love having a human experience.

Growing New Capacities

The second dimension or mode of growth expresses itself as the deepening or development of all kinds of skills, whether that be exterior skill development in engineering or body building, for instance, or the interior growth of meditative capacity or interpersonal awareness.

Growth in any capacity, along any of the myriad lines of human development, is a core human need.

Gnosis: To Grow Is to Know and to Know More Deeply

The third mode or form of growth is not in terms of a specific capacity or skill but a growth in *gnosis* itself. This might mean growth along the intellectual, psychological, spiritual, or existential lines of *gnosis*. This includes knowing, in the deepest way possible, the nature of Reality and Self even as we honor the depths of the mystery—the unknowable.

To know is to know your true nature:

Who are you and what do you desire?

And the nature of your true function:

What is it and how does it work?

This is true, whether we speak of the true nature of Self, relationship, a technological creation, society, or any other of Reality's myriad expressions.

All three of these dimensions or modes of growth—in identity, in skill or capacity, and in *gnosis*—in all their expressions are part of the eighth core human need: *the need to grow*. All these needs, however, are part of the larger set of core needs, which we have called *Eros Needs*.

***Your Need Is My Allurement: From Egocentric to Cosmocentric and from
Separate Self to Evolutionary Unique Self as Expressions of Homo amor—The
New Narrative of Identity***

At this point, the new post-Maslow theory of needs emerges directly from the New Universe Story and the new narrative of identity. It is clear that the widening and deepening of identity takes place in a fundamental way through two growth lines: self and moral. By moral, we mean love, care, concern, and commitment.

But it is also the case that these two growth trajectories overlap at certain key nexus points, particularly at their apex (*apotheosis*). At the apex of both vectors, moral growth meets the growth of self;⁸¹ Evolutionary Unique Self is animated by cosmocentric intimacy.

This growth trajectory is a fundamental human need—the need for a human being to transcend the narrow identity of separate self into Evolutionary Unique Self—or *Homo sapiens* transforming into *Homo amor*.

The Evolution of the Need to Be Needed

Here is the elegant beauty of the divine human heart; the experience of the sixth personal significance need—the need to be needed—changes in a fundamental way as well.

At the level of egocentric, separate self, the need to be needed extends to our egocentric circle of relationship, i.e., when the people in our egocentric circle need us, we fulfill this core need to be needed.

⁸¹ See Miller, Melvin E., and Susanne R. Cook-Greuter, eds., *Transcendence and mature thought in adulthood: The further reaches of adult development*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1994.

But in the evolution of consciousness along the self-trajectory and the moral trajectory, our need to be needed deepens and expands. We need to be needed by ever-wider circles of people until, at the level of cosmocentric consciousness and intimacy, we have a need to be needed by evolution itself. We need to identify with the evolutionary impulse awakening in us personally and realize, as a core human need, that Reality itself needs our service.

All Eight Core Eros Needs Are Inter-Animated

As one would expect in a Universe constructed from systems of interconnected and intimate coherence, all human Eros Needs are inter-animated.

They are different facets of the same diamond. They are all distinct, even as they are inter-included with each other. At the same time, the first six core needs for personal significance are prerequisites for the seventh personal significance need (and capacity) to grow. And yet, the need to grow animates and drives the other personal significance needs, as each personal significance need has a need to grow and transform in its depth and clarity.

And all seven of the personal significance needs are an expression of the core need for Eros, for radical aliveness, which is always, in all ways, seeking and desiring ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness.⁸²

⁸² We have also distinguished between three kinds of needs: survival needs, affective needs, and developmental or growth needs—even though, at least in their extremes, these three are all survival needs. If a child does not receive any affection at all, it dies. And there is reason to believe that, if a human being doesn't have any hope to fulfill their growth needs in the future, they die as well. But needs can also be understood as physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, psychological, and existential [growth] needs. We have a core need to grow in the unique contours of our Unique Self and to give our unique gifts. In their most evolved expression, however, all of these needs are but different faces of the same core need—the need for Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self Realization. This is the realization of *Homo amor*. To grow into *Homo amor* is our core need both personally and collectively.

The Exile of the Eight Core Eros Needs

When all eight of these human needs are met, we have two experiences: we feel radically alive, and we feel profoundly valuable. When these needs are not met, we experience a fundamental deadening and devaluation of self.

Now, here is the problem. In the premodern and even to some extent in the modern world, these needs were provided, at least in part, by a host of experiences. We were part of Universe Stories, systems of meaning, narratives of identity and community, which provided multiple paths to having those significance needs met in some form, albeit within the limitations of pre-democratic, pre- universal human rights, ethnocentric, and often body-rejecting consciousness.

Given the context of these limitations, premodernity abounds in texts of revelation, which speak, even eloquently, to some of these needs. Modernity abounds in texts of romance and reason, which address these needs in other ways. Between the traditional texts of revelation (premodernity) and the modern texts of romance and reason, we were able to fulfill the core human needs for a larger Eros. There were growth trajectories that were not *merely subjective*, but rather, the subject, the human being, was aligned, participating in, or in relationship to the larger Force of Cosmos beyond the skin-encapsulated, separate, ego self.

While each of these needs is addressed imperfectly in the texts of revelation, romance, and reason, there is at least some sense of these core needs being addressed. By imperfectly, we mean, for example, you are loved by God but only if you accept a premodern religious doctrine. The fully potentiated feeling of being individually intended was hard to access for the commoner in a world in which plague, dire poverty, and powerlessness were so intrinsic to life. But there was at least an intrinsic sense that what you did mattered in an ultimate sense.

You mattered in an ontological sense—your existence was located in the larger order of things (for example, in the Great Chain of Being). Your growth was in response to demands or forces larger than yourself. Your heroism was intrinsically noted by Reality, which enshrined (in the sense of ultimate Truth) the values for which you sacrificed. Your ethical expression was either aligned or misaligned with the larger ethic of Cosmos. You were not an isolated monad seeking to make meaning up out of the whole cloth. In short, you were not merely a separate self, stuck in a disqualified Universe.

But all of this becomes but a *discarded image*,⁸³ as the wonders of evolutionary science, enthralled by their necessary rejection of the degraded images of Spirit that dominated so much of public religion, themselves degrade into various strands of *scientism*, whose common thread was a reductive materialism that emptied Reality of value, Eros, meaning, and purpose.

The sense of there being a larger Eros (and therefore of being intended, recognized, chosen, love-adored, desired, or needed) is wiped out not by evolutionary science but by social neo-Darwinist dogma (which has little to do with Darwin). Growth is reduced to exterior skills and the win/lose success metrics. In the course of a lifetime, very little transformation of identity is genuinely possible outside of social roles, which are not—like in premodern times—predetermined and rigid anymore. Instead, we grow up with the idea that we can freely choose our roles, that anything is possible, and that we are (ultimate) failures if we don't manage to do so. And yet, genuine transformation of identity is given any emphasis in our education systems, nor is it even known by most people. Moreover, your growth is not aligned with, is not responding to, nor participating in any ontological groove of Cosmos.

Sister to the neo-Darwinist dogma that suffused the twentieth century is postmodernity, which kills all sense of a larger premodern or modern narrative. All gods and goddesses—all values and worldviews—of premodernity and modernity—with which the eight core Eros needs might have been addressed—were systematically deconstructed. The only goddess left alive was Aphrodite, the goddess of romance, love, and desire.

At the same time, the cultural texts of both modernity and postmodernity exiled love and desire to a very narrow script. Aphrodite was imprisoned in a separate-self cell, which could not sustain her; hence, she began to wither as well. Moreover, love and sexual desire were limited to the context of a romance or marriage that is supposed to look and feel a very particular way.

The implications of this exile, with the one remaining goddess (read, the larger context of Eros) coupled with the radical deconstruction of all other ultimate orienting frameworks, is shocking, when you but stop to consider it. It means that one's core experience of these core

⁸³ For an account of the traditional world in this regard for example C.S. Lewis in his *Discarded Image*.

needs must be met in an idealized version of love and desire that, for most people, simply does not exist.

The Phenomenology of the Eight Core Eros Needs in Exile

At this moment in history, the highest fulfillment of our genuine Eros Needs must be rooted in the individuated current of unique aliveness that is the experience of our authentic identity as Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self, or what we have called *Homo amor*. That experience, however, does not need to be formulated, or formally identified, with the words or even the very precise structure in consciousness that it signifies.

The larger context of Eros can be accessed through various versions of this structure of consciousness both within and beyond the great traditions. But these core Eros Needs cannot be met in the place where a large percentage of the educated global population lives—in a reductionist, separate-self model, combined with win/lose success stories, in which there is no larger context and no larger narrative of identity. For this very large percentage of the global community, the eight core human Eros Needs are in exile.

Where do the core human needs go when they are exiled? Or to put it slightly differently, where are the core human needs fulfilled in their exile?

The core human Eros Needs need to be liberated from their exile. But before we can accomplish that liberation, we need to more precisely locate where we exiled these eight core Eros Needs.

The Exile of the First Eros Need: The Meta-Need for Eros Itself—For a Larger Context of Eros

Exile means we seek to fulfill each of these needs in a context far too narrow to meet the fullness of their urgent demand. As such, we are left feeling empty, desiccated, and needy. We seek to cover that emptiness with pseudo-eros.

In other words, we exile our core need for Eros into myriad forms of pseudo-eros. This includes, for example, the attempt to fulfill all of Maslow's hierarchy of needs at the level of separate self.

The Exiled Need to Be Intended

We exile our need to be intended to separate-self versions of romantic and parental love.

Needing to feel intended by our particular partner or parent is good, true, and beautiful. But making our ultimate experience of intention dependent on one or two people is both ontologically wrong and psychologically disastrous. What then happens is that it is *only* through our partner's intending us that we feel personally addressed by Reality. That is why birthdays and anniversaries mean so much to us. We exile all our need to be intended to the intention of our romantic partner in planning a birthday or anniversary date for us. And when our partner's or parents' intention feels diffuse—when our birthday or anniversary is forgotten or remembered casually in the last moment—or exponentially more painful—we are beyond devastated—when their intention is diverted to another.

Conversely, it is only by us intending our partner or child that we fulfill our need to intend. If that relationship fails, we are bad and broken. Our need to intend has no subject to receive it. So, we must replace the relationship with another version of the same pattern. And the cycle continues.

We must liberate the burden of meeting the entirety of our need to be intended from the shoulders of any single relationship. At the same time, the more our relationships participate in the quality of Outrageous Love that courses through Reality, the more the intentionality of our beloved, be it an Outrageous Love beloved⁸⁴ or a romantic beloved, participates in and expresses the quality of Cosmos that intends us personally.

⁸⁴ By Outrageous Love beloved we mean a beloved who is not a romantic partner but whom we love and are loved by—and specifically when there is a consciousness that the love participates in the deeper currency of Eros—Outrageous Love—that animates and drives Cosmos.

The same is true of all the personal significance needs. They cannot be adequately fulfilled by a separate-self, romantic beloved. We need to feel personally addressed not only by a separate-self, romantic beloved. We need to feel personally addressed by Cosmos itself.

And yet, the more the beloved—whether a romantic or Outrageous Love beloved—participates in the currency of Outrageous Love that animates Reality, the more they can be an expression of the Cosmos itself personally addressing us and meeting our personal significance need, including being chosen, recognized, love-adored, desired, and needed.

The Exiled Need to Be Recognized

We exile the possibility of being recognized to parents, romantic partners, and those who admire our success.

But we are all systematically misrecognized. In particular, we need to be seen in our irreducible uniqueness. Society values our functional roles and our talents; our uniqueness or specialness is honored only to the extent that it is productive or generative.

Imagine, then, the existential pain of being misrecognized by family, romantic partners, or our communities.

Conversely, imagine if it is only by recognizing our partner that we fulfill our need to recognize. If that relationship fails, then we are broken. So, we must replace that relationship with another. And on it goes.

The Exiled Need to Be Chosen

When being chosen is exiled, the only reliable place we can feel fully chosen is by others, be they lovers or family, colleagues, or friends. This is particularly the case in our romantic partnerships. In those relationships, the only place we will feel exclusively chosen is often sexually. Our monogamous partner must choose only us sexually. If your monogamous partner, for instance, steps outside of the exclusivity of that choice, we are crushed.

On the other hand, if we fulfill our need to choose exclusively through the monogamy of our sexual relationships, when those relationships get difficult or fail, which is all-too-often

inevitable, then we will feel empty and broken. So, we replace the relationship with another, and another, and another.

Or we live lives empty of Eros, and we lose access to the experience of being chosen. And in the vacuum of Eros, pseudo-eros always rears its head and demands its pound of flesh.

The Exiled Need to Be Love-Adored

Adoration—intense love—has been exiled four times over:

- 1) Love has been exiled from Outrageous Love —the Evolutionary Love that animates and drives the Cosmos—to ordinary love—the love that lives between skin-encapsulated egos.
- 2) Love is then exiled a second time to a particular form of human love, which we call romantic love.
- 3) Love is then exiled a third time to a very particular form of romantic love—the experience of falling in love.
- 4) Finally, Love is exiled to the romantic experience of being *in love* in the civil, social, or religious context of a monogamous marriage.

The Exiled Need to Be Desired

Desire is similarly exiled four times over:

- 1) We first exile our need to be desired to the narrow field of being desired by humans—we need to be desired by another human being.
- 2) We exile that desire to sexual desire—we want to be desired sexually by another human being.
- 3) We exile that sexual desire to a form of very hot and raw desire, like the kind a twenty-two-year-old lover has for his/her nineteen-year-old beloved the first time they see each other naked.

- 4) We exile the possibility of meeting that raw desire to one person only, i.e., we exile our need to be desired to hot sex in monogamous marriage with one person for our entire lives, or one person at a time, and demand that that person constantly fulfill the full range and depth of that need.

The Exiled Need to Be Needed

In its shadow form, we call the experience of needing and being needed *codependency*. However, in its conscious form, needing and being needed is a core source of human dignity.

We exile our need to be needed to our familial, romantic, and collegial relationships. For most people, the only reliable place that they have a long-term sustained experience of feeling ultimately needed is by their romantic partner, child, or (less frequently) in work contexts.

But we need to feel ultimately needed beyond these contexts, because kids grow up, many people either don't marry or don't feel fulfilled in marriage, and meaningful work where we are genuinely needed is rare.

We need to be needed in a cosmic context. And that is our true nature and not our grandiosity. In the language of the interior sciences, *da ma le'maleh mimka*. The simple translation is *Know that which is above you*, an invocation to piety and ethics, rooted in our humility before the omniscient and omnipotent Power of Reality. But the interior scientist audaciously repunctuates and retranslates the text as follows:

Know that which is above comes from you [is dependent on you].

Or in another version of this same lineage strand, written by Meir Ibn Gabbai, at the same time as the Renaissance:

*God needs your service.*⁸⁵

When the need to be needed is exiled from its cosmic context to more narrow personal contexts—and those personal contexts break down, a failing marriage, getting fired, or having a child who cuts us off all implicitly or explicitly say, *I don't need you anymore*—we are

⁸⁵ From Meir ben Ezekiel ibn Gabbai's *Avodat Hakodesh*, Section One, Chapter 27.

devastated. If these relationships fail, we are both no longer needed, and our willingness to be vulnerable and openly share our needs is fundamentally humiliated.

To the degree that we identify with our key relationships as the primary source of meeting these core Eros Needs—and particularly personal significance needs—we will feel that there is something fundamentally broken and devastated when those relationships falter.

We are alienated from the fundamental ontology of our being essentially needed by Reality. That sense of being needed finds expression in a particular set of relationships—but with two key caveats:

First, it is not dependent on any specific relationship.

Second, the more I experience my personal relationships as part of the larger currencies of Eros that are Cosmos, the more those personal relationships participate in meeting our need to need and to be needed.

The Exiled Need to Grow and Transform

We have exiled our need to grow four times over:

- 1) We have exiled the need to grow to the human realm when in fact, the movement towards growth and transformation is the ecstatically urgent movement of Cosmos all the way up and all the way down the chain of being and becoming.
- 2) We have exiled the need to grow and transform to a dimension of the human realm that we call *surface growth*, which includes growth in physical, psychological, and mental capacities. This is where most transformation is thought to take place in the human realm.
- 3) We then exile these surface forms of growth to a relatively short time in our lives—most growth takes place before we are twenty-five (at the latest).
- 4) The fourth (and most significant) exile is when we exile our capacities for deep transformation of identity, of widening and deepening our capacity to love, and to give our gifts fully as expressions of the leading edge of Conscious Evolution to a miniscule elite of teachers, thought leaders, spiritual adepts, freaks, and the like. We look for other people or contexts in which to catalyze growth.

To be clear once again, to personally experience a partial fulfillment of all these core Eros Needs in the context of personal relationship is appropriate, good, and even blessed. But if separate-self relationship-exchange is the sole source of Eros or Love, then it cannot sustain itself. Such forms of Eros—what we sometimes call *ordinary love*—when (mis)understood as being the sum total of Love, lack the depth and fire to explode open our pain into joy or to hold us in the most difficult times. Our relationship-seeking becomes just another form of addiction. We seek pseudo-eros to cover up the pain of our failure to find true Eros.

When personal relationship participates in the Outrageous Love Current of Cosmos, then the partial meeting of the eight core Eros Needs in those relationships is natural and good. For those personal relationships are no longer separate-self disassociations from the larger context of Cosmos. Rather, they are naturally individuated expressions—unique but not separate from the larger cosmic context.

Revisioning Human Needs

But what if we approach our core Eros Needs from an entirely different level of consciousness?

What if we sought to fulfill our core need for Eros, in all of its eight permutations, directly from the deeper sources of Eros that are intrinsic to our identity?

What if, from this new level of consciousness, the human being could fulfill all their core Eros Needs through their most fundamental identity?

This is the change that changes everything. It changes everything because, for the first time, the eight core needs are met internally, which is to say, through the interior Eros of identity—a natural derivative of the larger Universe Story. *Moreover, the transformation of identity through access to an intrinsic sense of wholeness fundamentally changes what is possible in relationship.*

How does this transformation happen? The essence of the response to this question lies in what Unique Self Theory refers to as *the eight noble truths of Unique Self*.

The Eight Noble Truths of Unique Self Address the Eight Core Needs

These eight noble truths of Unique Self unsurprisingly address the eight core human needs. All of the eight core Eros Needs, which are fundamental to every human being, are met in the realization of identity as Unique Self and Evolutionary Unique Self, or *Homo amor*.

In other words, all of the eight core Eros Needs are met in the very structure of Cosmos and personal identity themselves.

At the core of this realization is the sense of being personally addressed and held, which is implicit in the core realization of Unique Self. In reclaiming our capacity to meet our core needs in the Eros of our own identity, we reclaim our life energy and fully take responsibility for our own needs. But at the same time, we open to a relationship that is far more powerful than the commodified exchange of ego security that demarcates most separate-self love-relationships. We liberate Eros—both our own and our partner’s.

We are then able to meet each other in the place of radically alive Love. When some dimension of the eight core needs is met within the truth of our own interiors, then, the intrinsic aliveness and joy of relationship deepens exponentially. From that new place of erotic depth, we are able to surrender to each other in interdependent rapture rather than codependent anxiety.

The First Noble Truth: The Erotic Aliveness of Unique Self

An easy way to access this first noble truth is through a simple image of Unique Self.

Imagine an electrical cable that plugs into a wall or computer port. The cable and the plug represent the ways that we are all the same. It is the enormous amount that we share in common. The myriad of different machines that we use the electricity for by plugging in are the specialized contours of your Unique Self. It is through the plug that you access the Eros, the lipstick of your life, represented by the electricity and the electrical network behind the wall, for your unique purpose and way of being and becoming.

It is only your Unique Self—the unique configuration of your *machine*—your body-mind system—that is the portal to your radical but unique aliveness. Your Unique Self plugs into the

interior Face of Cosmos to access the electricity—the power of your own radically particular aliveness. Unique Self is the conduit for the currency of Eros.

The Second Noble Truth: You Are Intended by Reality

The fact of your dazzlingly irreducible uniqueness tells you that you were intended by all of Reality. It required synchronicity after synchronicity, for millions of years before your birth, for Reality to manifest your Unique Self. At the very end of that long process of Reality's intention were several hundred years of generations, uniquely joined in genes, by a self-evidently intelligent Reality.

Just think about it for a moment. All the supercomputers in the world cannot recreate *mitosis* and *meiosis*, the chlorophyll molecule, or anything of that sort. All of this is prior to there being even a human neocortex. Reality did not stop being intelligent when it ultimately produced you. Reality carefully formed your atomic, molecular, and cellular structure in a way that is irreducibly unique. Your very uniqueness itself is a pointing-out instruction—it points out Reality's intention in manifesting you. In the interior experience of your unique quality, you can directly feel Reality intending you.

But, as the interior sciences realized, and the exterior sciences poetically point towards in quantum physics, you are being uniquely recreated, regenerated, and reproduced by Reality in every second. Both the interior sciences and the exterior sciences realized that the great flaring forth, the creative moment that generates Cosmos, is not a one-time event but is constantly being re-enacted in every moment in time.

You are being uniquely intended by Reality again and again in every second.

The Third Noble Truth: You Are Chosen by Reality

Your uniqueness points out that you have been chosen by Reality. You are not a copycat. You are not an accident. You are an original that Reality went to creative efforts to form. You are a deliberate and delightful singular choice of Reality.

You are being uniquely chosen by Reality, again and again, in every second.

The Fourth Noble Truth: You Are Recognized by Reality

Your uniqueness implies distinct recognition by an intelligent Reality. Just as the process of photosynthesis—or *mitosis* and *meiosis*—could only take place through the radically mutual recognition of uniqueness that takes place between all the cells in an organism, so too does this principle of Reality—radical recognition of uniqueness—continue to operate all the way up and all the way down the evolutionary chain.

Such recognition of uniqueness, at least from the perspective of the individual cell, appears to be what we human beings would call *unconscious recognition*.⁸⁶ We cannot confirm that cells do or do not write poetry to each other—although the DNA and RNA chains communicate through codes that are pretty similar to what we might call *language*. But we do know that they are not publishing on platforms or in languages that we can read. But while individual cells might not have a conscious experience of unique recognition—at least not in the human sense of the term—the Field itself is self-evidently conscious and intelligent.

Unconscious recognition of uniqueness at the cellular level becomes fully conscious recognition of uniqueness at the human level. Your Unique Self is an indivisible part of the greater organism of Reality. But you are also a configuration of uniqueness intentionally participating in generating the Field of LoveIntelligence that is Reality.

At the human level, our capacity to recognize each other via our uniqueness is part of a larger Field of Erotic Intelligence. Our erotic intelligence is not separate from the Field of Reality. Our personhood, which recognizes the personhood of another, participates in the larger Personhood of Cosmos.

At the human level, we recognize people by their uniqueness, usually by the uniqueness of their faces. Personhood is connected to the unique experience of the face of the other. Facial

⁸⁶ Even the collapsing of the wavefunction of quanta that happens when they interact (and are intimate) with each other, which leads to them appearing as manifest particles, is a form of the quanta recognizing (and feeling) each other. Mutual recognition is part of our intimacy equation, which works all the way up and down the evolutionary chain, even though that recognition means something different on each level of consciousness. So, rather than speaking of a sharp split between the conscious recognition on the human level and unconscious recognition on all the lower levels, it makes more sense to speak of a continuum of ever-growing consciousness.

recognition software, however, is *not* what we mean by the personhood of unique recognition. Your face is a quality which, although potentially expressible in an algorithm, is not reducible to an algorithm. Your face is an expression of the unique taste of your Unique Self.

Indeed, unlike facial recognition software, we do not need the actual face to recall its unique taste. Just by mentioning a person's name, we can taste their unique essence. We do not get confused between the different tastes of people. That unique recognition is an expression of our intelligence. Our intelligence participates in the living Field of Intelligence that is recognizing us in every second.

You are being uniquely recognized by Reality again and again, in every second.

The Fifth Noble Truth: You Are Desired by Reality

Reality only manifests what it desires. Reality has no motive to motion without desire. Of course, we are not swallowed into oblivion by desire; allurements and autonomy live together. We are called not to disappear into fusion but to activate ever-higher unions.

Desire starts very early in cosmic history. For example, the positively charged nucleus of an atom is allured or attracted to the negatively charged electron (and vice versa). The nucleus desires the electron. The Conscious Field of Intelligent Reality desires the atom that emerges.

Reality manifested your Unique Self through a unique set of allurements that desired your existence. Each allurement was following the path of its own unique desire. Intelligent Reality acted through these allurements to manifest you, the fantasy child of its desire.

Reality sustains your existence by the constant operation of desire in binding your cells and tissues together. Reality desired your initial and original manifestation, and Reality is constantly desiring your continued aliveness. This constant desire, pouring through you in every second, is in part recognized in exteriors, through the attractive forces of electromagnetism, through the strong nuclear force, which binds protons and neutrons together, and through gravity, which binds all mass and energy together.

You are being uniquely desired by Reality, again and again, in every second.

The Sixth Noble Truth: Reality Loves and Adores You

Love, at the human level,⁸⁷ is not merely an emotion but a Unique Self Perception that births emotion. Love is therefore both a perception and a feeling.

Just as you love, see, perceive, and feel the goodness of the beloved in a way that generates erotic delight, so too does Reality love you, see you, perceive you, and feel your goodness in a way that generates erotic delight. This is not a one-time event, but a constant process realized by the interior and exterior sciences.

You are being loved and adored by Reality, again and again, in every second.

The Seventh Noble Truth: Reality Needs You

Reality needs your unique gifts. Your unique perspective and unique quality of presence and intimacy generate your unique capacity to give your unique gift, which addresses a unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence.

Reality needs your unique gifts again and again in every second.

Every one of these needs are being enacted by Reality's engagement with you in every moment. The interior sciences have long recognized that Reality is not the product of a one-time creative event, but rather there is constant creation, or what we might call *constant creativity*. Reality is breathing you, living you, holding you, and sustaining you in every moment.

You deepen this original *gnosis* of the interior sciences through the datum of Unique Self. It is through the prism of your irreducible uniqueness that you experience Reality not only breathing and sustaining you but needing you, again and again, in every moment.

⁸⁷ Remember however that mutual recognition is part of intimacy at every level of Reality. And recognition is always unique. So, Love, at its source, could be said to be based on unique recognition, or unique perception, that brings forth shared *pathos*—or feeling.

The Eighth Noble Truth: You Are Evolution

You are the leading edge of evolution itself. Evolution yearns for its next stage of transformation through you. You are evolution awakened as itself. As Conscious Evolution, your transformation is the transformation of the whole.

You do not necessarily need to transform anyone else. You need no public or audience. The joy of your transformation is the joy of Cosmos itself. Your interior transformation transforms Reality itself.

It is precisely this realization that liberates you from the tyranny of measuring your value by your capacity to transform or grow others. Of course, you may and should pour all of your love energy and intelligence into causing growth and transformation wherever and however you can. But you are not tyrannized by a need to succeed, because your failure would signify your failure as a good human.

You are evolution.

Recapitulation: No Detail Unconnected with Cosmic Magnificence Allows the Mind Ease

When our core Eros Needs are alienated from being addressed by the innate structure of Reality—of Cosmos itself—then we exile them to very narrow personal contexts—that are themselves understood to be separate-self contexts—alienated from the larger nature of Reality.

The human need to participate the larger current of Eros that is Reality, the human need for personal significance—to be intended, chosen, recognized, intensely loved and adored, desired, and needed—must then be met in this highly constricted context, alienated and even disassociated from the larger context of Reality.

In the context of this exile, if the separate-self relationship—from which we are demeaning the utter fulfillment of these larger Eros Needs—fails for any reason, and we are broken and devastated and left unmoored, utterly humiliated in the attempt to meet our core needs, it is beyond devastating.

Abraham Kook, in the text we already adduced above, writes that the core pathologies, both personal and cultural, in this time of meta-crisis, are rooted in precisely this alienation of the details of the human experience from the larger context of Eros and value.⁸⁸

...come because the world is already ready to claim the explanation of how all particular details weave together into the All: and no detail unconnected with the cosmic magnificence allows the mind ease...only the fitting connectedness of the particular of existence with universal principles will cause...the healing of the world.

⁸⁸ Kook, of course, writing in the early part of the twentieth century, does not use the term *meta-crisis*. Instead, he talks about the “shameless behavior in the era of the Messiah’s approach.” We already noted in other writings that *Messiah* is a particular lineage term for what we are calling *the emergence of the new human and the new humanity*. Tragically, the lineage often hijacks this phenomenology into its ethnocentric project. Kook, however, uses the term both in its narrow sense but also in a more expanded universal sense. By *shameless behaviors*, he refers to the fundamental collapse of value that is the inevitable result of the breakdown—necessary as it was in both our view and his own—of the outmoded religious world order—before what we would call, in the language of CosmoErotic Humanism, *a new universal grammar of value as a context for our diversity* finds its path to emergence.