

## Chapter 9

# The Angels of Freedom

Like Spirit Trust and Spirit Love, Spirit Freedom is one of the three major aspects of our true self – of Spirit Being blowing through the whole of our lives. Spirit Freedom is a family of angels that moves up the ramp of our soul from here to Eternity. Spirit Freedom is an Awe response to the Awesome Otherness that is encountering us.

Spirit Freedom is not an emotional state, a process of thought, nor a program of action. Emotions, thoughts, and actions attend our participation in Spirit Freedom, but Spirit Freedom itself is a deeper aspect of human experience. Spirit Freedom is the opposite of bondage: bondage to our self image, bondage to our conscience about good and evil, and bondage to images of outward fatedness. The Angels of Freedom can be assembled into three families. These three families are distinguished by the form of bondage they overcome.

**Knowing** our Spirit Freedom means overcoming the bondage to our self image: this includes becoming aware of the difference between free will and freedom.

**Being** our Spirit Freedom means overcoming the bondage to our conscience: this includes being creative action rather than obedience to any form of moralism or any pretense of possessing an ultimately valid knowledge of good and evil.

**Doing** our Spirit Freedom means overcoming the bondage to images of outward fatedness: this includes taking charge of the course of history rather than railing against or resigning ourselves to a supposed inevitability or futility.

Here are the names I will give these three families of angels: **The Primal Merging beyond Self Image**, **The Inherent Purity beyond Good and Evil**, and **The Attuned Working beyond Fate**. These families of angels can go by these shorter names: Primal Merging, Inherent Purity, and Attuned Working.

Primal Merging is the knowing pole of Freedom. Inherent Purity is the being pole of Freedom. And Attuned Working is the doing pole of Freedom.

### The Primal Merging Beyond Self Image

Robert Fritz in his book *The Path of Least Resistance* makes a convincing case for the importance of “choice” in our psychological health and in our potential to be creative human beings. He describes three levels of choice: secondary choices, primary choices, and fundamental choices. Secondary choices are the choices we make to carry out our primary choices. Primary choices are the choices we make for their own sake not for the sake of something else. For example, we might choose to be an artist not for the sake of the money it might bring, nor for the sake of winning the heart of some person, but simply for the sake of expressing our lives through painting pictures. Then we might make secondary choices like buying paint, attending painting classes, studying the great painters of the world, and so on.

Fundamental choices are choices that are even more basic to us than our primary choices. Fritz illustrates what he means by fundamental choices by asking us some questions. He asks us to discern if we truly want the following in our lives:

1. To be the predominant creative force in your life?
2. To be true to yourself?
3. Health (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)?
4. Freedom?<sup>1</sup>

1. Perhaps we do not want to be the predominant creative force in our lives. Perhaps we want to take our lives ready-made from our parents, our culture, our religious organizations, our selected teachers, our peers, and so forth.

2. Perhaps we do not want to be true to our selves. Perhaps we prefer to feel safe. Perhaps we consent to be what others want us to be, or what our culture asks us to be, or what we ourselves think we ought to be.

3. Perhaps we want comfort or indulgence more than health.

4. Perhaps we want certainty, justification, and safety more than Freedom, more than the responsibility that Freedom implies.

If we truly want the above four qualities in our lives, we must choose them. Choice not talk brings these qualities into play. Fritz claims that we can significantly alter our lives by consciously choosing these fundamental directions:

1. I choose to be the predominant creative force in my life.
2. I choose to be true to myself.
3. I choose to be healthy.
4. I choose to be free.<sup>2</sup>

The choice to be “the predominant creative force in my life” is an aspect of the choice to be the Spirit Freedom that is the focus of this chapter.

The choice to be “true to myself” is also a choice for Spirit Freedom if we understand that Spirit Freedom is who we essentially are. Freedom is one of the families of angels that comprise our true being.

The choice to be healthy is a choice that undergirds and enables primary choices like: finding the best diet for our particular body, engaging in regular exercise, and learning enough about human health to choose good health care providers. It can also include the choice to be healthy in being our Spirit Being, which includes being our Freedom.

The choice to be free is the most fundamental of all choices, for it means choosing to choose. All fundamental choices, all primary choices, and all secondary choices are reflections of having chosen to be our Freedom. If we don’t choose our Freedom, all our other choices suffer.

In this chapter, I am seeking to express and awaken personal insight into the actuality of this Freedom that we human beings essentially are. Spirit Freedom is not the same thing as the “free will” so often written about. The ego has free will, but the ego’s free will is limited by the ego’s definition of itself. The ego is a construction of the human mind. This construction may allow for the presence of some elements of the essential functioning of freedom. But the ego, being a human construction, also restricts the full expression of our Spirit Freedom.

Freud spoke of the **ego** as a choice maker, as a regulator of the conflicts between the **id** and the **superego**. Most of us can notice these dynamics operating within us. The id

<sup>1</sup> Robert Fritz page 197

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

is our basic biology with all its genetically rooted desires, dreams, and symbol-using capacities. The superego is our internalized social conditioning with all its moralities, definitions of good and evil, guidelines for successful living, customs, taboos, and other teachings on how to live within the society that brought us into our uniquely human lives. The id and the superego conflict with one another. Our biology sometimes desires what our society forbids. Our society sometimes demands what our biology resists. These conflicts can be somewhat resolved by the ego, if the ego is willing to be conscious of these conflicts and make choices about them. One of the factors that makes these resolutions by the ego difficult is that much of our id and much of our superego has always been unconscious or has become unconscious to the conscious ego. So the ego has to find the means and the courage to face these unconscious conflicts in order to make choices about them.

A measure of Freedom in the life of the ego is assumed by this Freudian description. But the Freudian description also calls our attention to the fact that the ego can be unconscious to such a degree that it is not actually free to make many of the available choices. In other words, the ego can be bound as well as free. The ego is bound by its lack of consciousness. It may also be bound by its lack of courage to become conscious. Because of this partly conscious and partly unconscious abdication of full Freedom, the ego is not in control of the overall person. Therefore, our lives are being driven by unconscious conflicts between the id and the superego. Some egos may be more enslaved to their id and thus experience some sort of addiction to sex, love, comfort, escape, food, states of feeling, etc. Some egos may be more enslaved to their superego and thus experience some sort of overriding automatic obedience to specific patterns of politeness, reserve, safety, carefulness, moralism, righteousness, certitude, status, success, or some form of rebellion against these and other norms. The Freudian description of the ego makes clear that the ego can grow in consciousness and thus grow in its freedom.

To see that the ego is both free and unfree is to see a basic issue in the viewing of our full, essential Spirit Freedom. The ego has free will within the boundary of some overarching bondage, and the ego is a slave to that overarching bondage that is restricting full Freedom. To fully experience Spirit Freedom entails the death of our identification with our ego. To experience our Spirit Freedom entails becoming identified with being a self that is far deeper and much more profound than being the ego with which we are comfortable.

The stories about Jesus in the first three books of the New Testament often probe beyond the "free will" of the ego toward the Freedom that Jesus asks of his followers. Here is an example:

But he said to another man, "Follow me." And he replied, "Let me go and bury my father first." But Jesus told him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. You must come away and preach the Kingdom of God."  
*(Luke 9:59-60; J. B. Phillips translation)*

Jesus sees that this man's free will is bounded by his attachment to family obligations. Spirit Freedom for this man means turning loose of that attachment. Here is another example:

Another man said to him, "I am going to follow you, Lord, but first let me bid farewell to my people at home." But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts his hand to the plow and then looks behind him is useless for the kingdom of God."  
*(Luke 9:61-62; J. B. Phillips translation)*

In this case, the man wants to make everybody he loves feel good about his decision to be a Spirit person. But this is not the wholehearted Freedom required in the kingdom of Spirit Realization that Jesus represents. Here is a third example:

And while he was still saying this, a woman in the crowd called out and said, "Oh, what a blessing for a woman to have brought you into the world and nursed you!" But Jesus replied, "Yes, but a far greater blessing to hear the word of God and obey it."

*(Luke 11:27-28; J. B. Phillips translation)*

In this story Jesus does not deny the truth of what the woman says nor reject her enthusiasm. But he cuts through this woman's images of subservience, her contentment with less than full discipleship. He challenges her to be a Spirit woman herself and not simply an enabler of someone else. She sees the greatness of Jesus' Freedom, but she is reluctant to see herself as the very same greatness waiting to be enacted. Her ego has its small measure of "free will," but her ego is also limiting her Freedom.

Full Spirit Freedom is a frightening and demanding challenge. In his play *A Sleep of Prisoners* Christopher Fry has one of his characters pronouncing the word "freedom" as FREE DOOM. The experience of Freedom is DOOM to the comfortable ego. The experience of Freedom is an awakening of the prisoners from their sleep. Free will is something with which we can be comfortable or even proud. We can be proud to be in control of certain outcomes or to be capable of choosing between our current understandings of good and evil. But full Spirit Freedom is a DOOM which we, in our ego identifications, deeply fear. And such FREE DOOM never becomes something of which we can be proud. Spirit Freedom is not an accomplishment but a response to the Total Demand to surrender who we think we are and thus let loose who we truly are. Freedom is a DOOM that is freely given to us. Indeed, we are determined to be Free and there is nothing we can do about it. Even though we try in every possible way to escape our Freedom, it is inescapable. It tags along on all our attempts at escape and mocks us for choosing to be a slave of our own self-constructed ego.

We might say that this inescapable Freedom laughs at us as we persist in using our Freedom to escape a Freedom that we cannot escape. This Freedom is experienced as DOOM only because we are so intent on escaping it. And toward what alternative are we trying to escape? We are trying to escape to an identification with our fragile self-constructed ego that is content with being a little bit of free will but is resistant to being the vast Freedom that we essentially are.

Freedom may also enter our lives as an experience of judgment, shame, or guilt. The arrival of Freedom confronts the ego with the need to admit that it is not free, that its petty little free will is living within a larger context of slavery. When Freedom appears in our lives, we begin to realize that we do not do what we say. We say one thing and do another. We say we want to lose weight, but our hands open the refrigerator door looking for some more ice cream. We say we want to have more friends in our lives, but our bodies sit in our solitary rooms doing busywork to forget that we are lonely. We say we want to be a musician, but we do not do the study and practice required to make that dream a reality.

The arrival of Freedom may also reveal to us that we have allowed our minds and bodies to buy into some cruelly addictive pattern of temporary exhilaration. Rather

than experiencing the quiet joy, wonder, and strength of true Freedom, we have opted for an artificial pleasantness that is leading us into an ever deeper pit of shame and despair. The arrival of Freedom will disclose to us how we are inventing excuses with our lying mind. When we are identifying with our ego, the arrival of Freedom is the very last gift we want to see.

Yet Spirit Freedom is not in itself gloomy. Freedom is jocular, light, and fun. Freedom laughs at us and invites us to laugh too. In our ego identifications we create seriousness by clinging to our bondage. As ego we experience Freedom's demands as no laughing matter. When we are not identifying with Freedom, Freedom looks like DOOM to our limited image of self.

Truly knowing Freedom by direct experience, means dying to the ego. And it means merging with our primal actuality. We do not have to struggle to be free. We only have to merge with the Freedom we already are. The cost of this merger is giving up the person we think we are. In fact, the cost of being Free is giving up thinking altogether. Thinking will be returned to us later. But initially, our Freedom is infinitely beyond thinking. Only after Freedom is the established residence of our self identification can thinking be given back to us as a useful tool in the hands of Freedom. Freedom in and of itself is entirely irrational, entirely transrational, entirely prior to all reasoning. We cannot think our way to Freedom. We have to unthink our way to Freedom. Freedom does not make sense. Freedom is just an irrational, inescapable part of the nonsense of overall Reality. As we learn to know the absolute nonsense of Freedom, we can also learn the usefulness of the mind to aid us in making whatever fragile sense we can of our experience for the practical living of the life of Freedom.

The gigantic capacities of the human mind provide a subtle trap that leads us again and again into bondage. We create some sense for our lives and then forget that we have created it and let that self-created sense create us. But Reality is always more, and we are always more, infinitely more, than the petty little sense that we have created. We are Freedom and with that Freedom we have created our own personality, a personality that we often mistake for our true person. As we merge with our Spirit Freedom, we no longer know who we are, for we are experiencing ourselves as pure responsibility to create our fundamental choices, the choices that will determine how our life will be manifest in the situations we are given.

Here is a poem that points to the strange wonder of this Primal Merging:

I am an alert deer.  
Dread gets my attention  
and I can move quickly  
in many directions.  
I am a surprise  
and hard to predict.

A fear of real enemies  
is the alertness of a deer,  
While my alertness is  
dread of a mysteriousness  
no deer can know.

And I am unpredictable  
in a manner  
no deer can match.

Dread of the Unfathomable  
is my essence.

Surprise  
is my being.

## **The Inherent Purity beyond Good and Evil**

The story of Adam and Eve is not about the first upright walking primates, nor is it about the first ensouled humans. This story is just a story. It is poetry, poetry about humanity's inherent purity and humanity's fall into the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve are not the first humans in some literal sense. They are first in the sense of being symbolic of us all. We are all Adam and Eve. We eat every day from the tree of which humanity in this story was forbidden to eat. We destroy our authentic lives by eating this fruit, by eating the knowledge of good and evil.

Why is the knowledge of good and evil forbidden? It might seem that knowing good and evil is a very good thing. Our parents taught us good and evil. Our religious community taught us good and evil. Our public school taught us good and evil. Our whole culture is filled with ideas of right and wrong and good and evil. What is wrong with that? How can knowing good and evil be viewed as the most basic violation of human authenticity?

Having ethical guidelines to follow is not a problem if we are using those guidelines creatively – if we are employing our natural Freedom, if we are lord over our guidelines and not letting our guidelines be lord over us.

The evil fruit is the illusion that we can know good and evil in some absolute sense. We crave certainty. We want to know that we are doing the right thing. Knowing good and evil in that way has to do with making sense out of life – of knowing with certainty what to do and what not to do. But this is not our real situation. We don't know anything for sure. Life does not make sense. Life has never made sense. And life will never make sense.

REALITY is Mystery. We humans know a lot, but in the final analysis Reality is nonsense to human intelligence. As the good scientist says, "The more we know about nature the more we know we don't know." Theology does not have absolute answers either. Good theology bears witness to the Mysteriousness of Reality.

We theologians sometimes say that life "makes sense only to God." But to say that life "makes sense only to God" is saying that it does not make sense to us. Life is beyond conception by the human mind.

Clearly we have partial knowledge. We need some knowledge to survive. A dog needs some knowledge to survive. But in the final analysis Reality is Mysterious to the human being as well as to the dog. And Reality is not less Mysterious to twenty-first century human beings than it was to those who lived three thousand years ago.

According to the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis, ignorance of good and evil is our true state; it is life as it should be. Indeed, an ultimate valid knowledge of good and evil is forbidden the human species. It was always forbidden; it is still forbidden; it always will be forbidden.

But you and I don't believe this. We have already eaten off the tree. We believe

that cuddly kittens are good and the wild wolf packs are evil. We believe that gentle breezes are good and that hurricanes and tornadoes are evil. We believe that capitalism is good and communism is evil. Or we believe that communism is good and capitalism is evil. We believe that Judaism or Christianity is good and Islam is evil. Or that Islam is good and Hinduism is evil. Or that Hinduism is good and Islam is evil. At the very least we think that sickness, suffering, and death are evil and that health, pleasure, and life are good.

In some way or another we think we know what we actually do not know. We have gotten "lost" in our pretense that we know good and evil. We do not accept our state of essential ignorance. We want to know. We want to be the judge of what is good and what is evil. And we judge everything. We applaud part of life, and we reject part of life. We profoundly hate some aspects of life. We no longer live in the Garden of Eden. We live somewhere to the East in the land of Nod.

Let's go back to the biblical story, remembering that it is a story, a story about us. It is a story about our lives today.

The snake said something like this to Eve, "The knowledge of good and evil is sweet to eat and it will make you wise like God. Take some. Why would you want to go on living in a land of sheer Mystery when you could make sense of life? You could know how to live. You could have some certainty about things. God did not have your best interests in mind when he forbid you to have this wonderful thing."

So she ate some certainty and gave some certainty to her husband and he ate some certainty too.

Then their eyes were opened. They saw life in terms of good and evil.

Oops, they noticed that they were naked. Ooooh, this was bad. So they hid their shame behind some fig leaves.

"Naked" is a symbol for being **exposed** in our basic decision making. To be naked in this way means to be without certainty that what we are doing is correct. Naked is our true state. We do not have an absolute certainty of good and evil in which to clothe ourselves. In order to be certain we have to lie; we have to hide. We have to hide ourselves from our selves and our neighbors. And most basic of all, we have to hide from Reality.

In the Genesis story hiding was not successful. Reality came to them walking in their garden in the cool of the day. Reality came to audit their hiding from Reality. Perhaps we have had that experience.

Our mode of hiding might include living in a state of being ashamed of ourselves for being so uncertain. Shame can be an indication that we have eaten the forbidden fruit. After eating that false certainty, Adam and Eve entered into a life of shame about who they actually were. That is, **WE** have entered into a life of shame about who **WE** actually are.

Here is a poem about that shame:

When, in the distant Garden of our past,  
human beings desired to be Eternal,  
shame entered the cosmos.

Sensuality became shameful.

Ugliness became shameful.  
Weakness became shameful.  
Ignorance became shameful.  
Our crummy childhoods became shameful.  
Our lopsided cultures became shameful.  
Our deaths became shameful.  
Our desires became shameful.  
Our feelings became shameful.  
Our thoughts became shameful.

Yes, when we chose to be wise, like God,  
everything that was not Godlike  
became shameful.

My cat knows no shame.

In the Genesis story, Adam and Eve are ashamed of their actual lives. They are hiding their delusory living behind the fig leaves of their denials, lies, and suppressions. Then Reality comes walking through the garden in the cool of the day. I love this story.

“Where are you?” says Reality, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the forbidden tree?”

“Well,” says Adam, “Eve said blah blah blah.”

“Well,” says Eve, “the snake said blah blah blah.”

“NO EXCUSES,” says God, “OUT! Out of the Garden.”

And what is the garden? The garden is the land of Mystery. It is a land of WONDER, of Wonderstanding. But we humans want a land of understanding. We want to know. We want certainty. We want to judge one another. We want to be prigs and bigots and dogmatists and arrogant know-it-alls. There is no place for such persons in the Garden of Innocence.

Not only Adam and Eve but all of us still prefer being “smart asses” to being in a land of wonderstanding with mighty rivers of freedom; mountains of care for ourselves, others, and all beings; plus grand wild seas of tranquility that appear in the midst of whatever Reality provides. Rather than our actual wonder-filled life, we prefer to be “smart,” hoping for a life we do not have, killing those whom we envy, building towers to the heavens to celebrate our own arrogance, and so the story continues.

Do we “wonderstand” the Adam and Eve story? Do we really “wonderstand” that the choice to eat the knowledge of good and evil is the foundation of all delusion? Do we see how humans in all eras of our history have rejected Reality for some humanly invented culture of certainty? Do we realize how we ourselves reject the vast Mystery of actual existence in order to have answers in our hip pocket?

Moses left behind the answers of Egypt in order to lead a community of Freedom in the desert. Jesus spent his entire ministry fighting against the moral certainties of the scribes and Pharisees. Paul made freedom from legalism the cornerstone of his preaching. The whole Bible witnesses against worshiping the so-called “moral certainties” of any religious tradition. But we have all eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



Our parents taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.  
Our Jewish synagogue taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.  
Our Catholic catechism class taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.  
Our Protestant Sunday school taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.  
Our atheistic uncle taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.  
Our entire culture taught us good and evil and expected us to live by it.

The knowledge of good and evil is sometimes called "moralism." Moralism is an oppressive ruler that rules our lives. Jesus, you may recall, fought against moralism in most of his teachings. It is a disease from which none of us have fully recovered.

This poem likens moralism to a king, an oppressive king who must be dethroned in our lives:

Kill the King, I say.  
Let anarchy reign.  
Kill all moral principles.  
Bury them in the Earth  
and let them rot.

If you feel grief  
for any kingly principle  
or any principled king,  
EXPRESS it emotionally &  
honestly & passionately.

EXAMINE your loss carefully  
to see what feelings  
these principles have been suppressing,  
to see what spiritual freedom  
they have encrusted.

In place of the King,  
assemble a COUNCIL,  
a council in your mind.  
Seat men & women --  
the best five or twelve you know  
-- best at expressing their feelings  
and thinking clearly.

Place yourself in the circle with them.  
Ask them each to speak  
on your agenda,  
on what you shall do with your life,  
on how you shall become wiser,  
on how you shall find & express  
your heart,  
on how you shall commit yourself  
to action.

LISTEN!  
Let their words sink into your heart.  
Say no words in response.

Think no critical thoughts.  
LISTEN  
for what you have never heard before.  
Ask the next to speak  
and the next.

When all have spoken,  
now you may speak.  
Do not begin with evaluation  
of what the others have said.  
Say what wisdom you have heard.  
Say what feelings rise in your heart  
or chill your bones.  
When this is thoroughly done,  
then allow yourself to sort out  
the best your council said  
from the dross.

If any kingly principle rises  
to frustrate this process,  
command it to return to the abyss.  
Let fresh and fragile principles,  
guidelines really,  
be formed by you  
to order your practical living.

Do not take your guidelines seriously.  
Live from your heart.  
Let Spirit Freedom reign.  
Principles are your servants,  
not your masters.

The King is dead.  
Long live LIBERTY  
your COUNCIL  
and YOU.

Inherent Purity means that the cosmos is working perfectly. Gravity is working like it is supposed to be working. Evolution is working like it is supposed to be working. Human processes are working like they are supposed to be working. Living is working like it is supposed to be working. Dying is working like it is supposed to be working. Human Essence is working like it is supposed to be working. The fall from Human Essence into futility and despair is working like it is supposed to be working. Recovering from despair is working like it is supposed to be working. Realization of our true nature is working like it is supposed to be working. Everything is working perfectly.

Fundamentally, nothing has to be changed. Nothing has to be altered. Nothing has to be made over. Nothing has to be reformed. Nothing has to be improved. Everything is working perfectly. Also our Freedom is working perfectly. Our Freedom is a Purity that is beyond good and evil.

When we are living in our Freedom, we may feel called to oppose the lies, social injustice, and ecological devastation that surround us. We do make judgments, but we

know we make them and we know that they are fragile human-made judgments. Judgments made in Freedom are not certainties. They are risks into the unknown of living. It turns out that living in our Freedom, we have the courage to envision and build new social structures that are more just and ecologically balanced. But these possibilities for “progressive change” do not mean that the cosmos is not working perfectly. Possibility for change is part of our situation and these possibilities do not mean we should not have been born into this family with its traumas, or into this society with its oppressions, or on this planet with its vulnerabilities. This is our life. This maze of limitations and possibilities is our life. And within the actual situations of our life, we have the Purity of our Freedom. Being Pure is not doing the right things, it is simply being our Freedom.

Living in the Purity of our Freedom in the actual here and now of our perfectly operating cosmos includes living amidst possibilities for changing things. It means realizing or not realizing those possibilities in accord with the ways those possibilities can be realized or avoided. Human beings must choose among the possibilities that face them. Human beings are co-creators with the creative Every-Thing-Ness that creates the actual outcomes within the flow of this perfectly operating cosmos. It is also true that human beings must abide by the actual limits they face. We can fight with these limits, but we cannot win. Such fighting only makes us resentful that we are limited in the ways that we are limited. This very resentment is a product of the perfect cosmos operating perfectly. Similarly, we might fight against the possibilities that confront us, but such fighting only makes us resentful of the possibilities that we face. This is often called “cynicism.” Rather than aggressively moving on our challenging possibilities, we bite and snarl our resentment over the fact that these challenges disturb our “virtuous” passivities.

People who think they know what is good and evil are offended by the vision of Inherent Perfection and the Purity of Freedom. Each of us will resent this vision of a perfectly operating cosmos as long as we think we know how things should operate. Nevertheless, the truth is that we human beings are ignorant about good and evil in the ultimate sense. All our criteria of good and evil have been created by us to guide our practical living. Our parents have taught us good and evil to help us in our practical living. Our societies have taught us good and evil to help us in our practical living. Our religious groups have taught us good and evil to help us in our practical living. Our conscience has been formed by these structures of good and evil. But our conscience and all these guidelines for living are relative not absolute truths. Each living situation presents choices and complexities that require freedom and creativity that go beyond any of our criteria of good and evil we have been taught or have invented for ourselves. Our actual choices are free ventures. Our criteria of good and evil are creations of our Freedom, and these criteria become restrictions upon our Freedom to respond appropriately within our actual situations. Our unquestioning commitment to our standards of good and evil is a flight from Freedom.

And this is a common failing of humanity, to flee to the safe haven of thinking we know that what we are doing is correct. But we can never know we are correct, unless Freedom itself is our criterion for correctness. When Freedom becomes our starting place, then we are correct no matter what choices we make. Or perhaps we should say that we are always incorrect but we are forgiven and correctable. We are pure with a Purity we do not achieve. And that Purity is our Freedom.

The myth of Adam and Eve is about this primal condition of humanity. We stand before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tempter tells us that eating from this tree will make us wise like God, but God in this story has told us that such

knowledge is forbidden to humanity, that eating the delusion of the knowledge of good and evil will kill our souls. Our true nature is Freedom, the Freedom of making decisions without ever knowing for sure whether they are correct, of leaving the ultimate judgments to the Creator of this perfectly operating cosmos. Knowing good and evil is a departure from our Inherent Purity.

And this Inherent Purity beyond good and evil is given to us, not achieved. It is one of the angels on our ramp from here to Eternity. And this ramp, with all its angels, is constituted by Eternity, not by human effort. Our true Purity, our true righteousness, our true Perfection, our Freedom is not something we have to strive for; it is something we only have to Be.

## **The Attuned Working beyond Fate**

Finally, I will describe the doing pole of our essential Spirit Freedom. This is the ninth and last family of angels in the pantheon of angels that move “up” the ramp of our soul in response to our ongoing encounter with the Eternal. “Attuned” means being aligned with the way the cosmos works, with the way human nature unfolds, with the way interactions among human beings operate. In our colloquial speech we sometimes speak of being “with it.” The opposite of being “with it” is being “out of it.” In casual speech we seldom say what “it” is. But if we suppose that “it” refers to our Personal Essence, to a conscious participation in the Ground of our Being, then being “with it” is a promising expression of what I mean by “Attuned Working.”

Attuned Working is both obedience to the The-Way-It-Is and creativity as self-initiated action. Freedom as Attuned Working is both obedient and creative. Freedom is obedient creativity and creative obedience. Attuned Working is a totally different understanding from the one we associate with “fate” or “fatalism.” We are indeed fated to be a part of this cosmos, this humanity, this era of history, this individual person. Nevertheless, being “with it,” (being attuned to the Final “IT”) does not mean being stuck in a groove on an already recorded record of fate. The symphony of our life has not yet been written. It is unfolding measure by measure. And our creativity is contributing to this unfolding. The author of the Gospel of John has Jesus say, “My Father is working and I am working.” This gives us a sense of what Attuned Working is like. Our working is indeed creative, but if our working is “with it,” it is also obedient to that Master Working within which we are also working.

We can be *unattuned* in two different ways. We can suppose that our destiny is already set and that we can do nothing about it. Or we can suppose that our destiny is entirely up to us and that we must design our purposes and plan our lives in opposition to the powers that be. Indeed, so popular are these two ways of being unattuned, it is difficult to even understand the notion that there is such a thing as obedient freedom or free obedience. We easily assume that if our life is free, it is not obedient – and that if our life is obedient, it is not free.

One of the ways that Attuned Working comes into view is fully grasping that Freedom is part of The-Way-It-Is. Being obedient to The-Way-It-Is includes being Freedom. This means that there is no specific purpose to which each of us is called. It is not in accord with The-Way-It-Is to say that the cosmos or nature or God has a plan for our lives. The purpose of our lives has not yet been chosen. This openendedness is part of the The-Way-It-Is. Being obedient to The-Way-It-Is means participation in choosing our specific purpose and working out our specific plans. And this choosing continues throughout our lives.

At the same time, such choosing is Spirit Freedom only if it is done in obedience to the Master Working. The cosmos works the way it works, human nature unfolds the way it unfolds, human interactions interact the way they interact. Our Essence is what our Essence is. Freedom is what Freedom is. The Joy of being “with it” is what the Joy of being “with it” is. If our choosing chooses to fight with or to ignore the Master Working, then our working is not attuned, our Freedom is not Free, our obedience is not obedient, and our joy is not the joy for which we are constituted.

Here is a poem that may help us feel our way toward an experience of Attuned Working:

“The purpose of life,”  
some theologian said,  
“is to trust the Mystery  
and to enjoy Mystery forever.”

Some sage in the East put it this way,  
“Those who say what the purpose of life is, don’t know,  
And those who know what the purpose of life is, don’t say.”

The Infinite seems to be silent on the subject.

So I say, “The purpose of life is to ask  
what the purpose of life is continually,  
but to never know or expect to know –  
indeed to know  
that the purpose of life is  
**not to know**  
what the purpose of life is.”

So let us choose in freedom  
some finite purpose for our lives,  
knowing that we have chosen it  
and that we can choose again  
when its limitations appear.

What does “when its limitations appear” mean? How do we know when our creations meet limitations? One might suppose that if Freedom is our Essence, no limitations would exist. While it is true that our Freedom is unlimited in the sense of being a raw cause that is uncaused by any other cause, it is also true that the specific temporal creations of our Freedom meet with limitations. Our life is a dialogue with Reality, not a monologue in which we create the whole story of history. We are co-creators with an “Infinite Creator” who each moment sustains us in being as a co-creator. Our choices make a difference. The outcomes of the future are not already settled; nevertheless, we are not in full charge of those outcomes. In fact, we are powerless to even know, much less determine, what the outcomes of our choices will be. Nevertheless, because we choose, the future unfolds differently. I once wrote a poem that contained this key verse:

God waits to decide what the future will be  
until you decide who you will be now.

An eternal weight of significance is placed on each decision we make. “God” is a devotional word for Reality, for Infinite Mysterious Reality. This Reality responds to

each choice we make. Life is a dialogue in which we are challenged to choose again and again. Our Attuned Working is an ongoing dialogue: Thou - I - Thou - I - Thou - I - Thou. God has the first and last word of this master dialogue, but our attunement to our encounters with Reality and our attunement to our own freedom to respond co-creates the course of history.

When I was studying the life of Martin Luther and the whole history of the Protestant Reformation, an image appeared to my mind that I have never forgotten. I saw Martin Luther as a hard rock that stood up in his time and place. I envisioned God using this rock as a pivot upon which the entire history of that era was turned. Martin Luther made history, yet he never knew what history he was making. We could also say that God made history in response to God's loyal player, Martin.

Attuned Working is more than a blind surrender to the mysterious wall of darkness that Reality always presents. The person in this state of Spirit embraces the full power of human reason to know what can be known in an inclusive and future oriented way. He or she may build instructive models of the past and use them to build inclusive visions of possible futures and the means to moving toward those chosen visions. In other words, Attuned Working is something more than spontaneous response to each passing situation. Attuned Working means being attuned to the whole sweep of cosmic and human history. As Attuned Workers we seek to be attuned to the whole sweep of our particular life as that life interfaces with the whole sweep of Reality. In Attuned Working we inquire about the appropriate purpose for our life and build that purpose in the full knowledge that it is we who build it and that all our constructions are fragile. Nevertheless, if we live in the Spirit quality of Attuned Working, the building of our life purpose is not simply arbitrary. It is an act of obedience to the whole sweep of cosmic and human history.

Such Obedience to the Whole is the back side of the coin of Freedom. Freedom is Obedience to the whole sweep of Reality. Obedience to the whole sweep of Reality is Freedom. We can see how both of these things are true when we come to see that obedience to anything less than the whole sweep of Reality is a form of bondage. If we are only obedient to the well-being our family, we are not free to act creatively on behalf of all families. If we are only obedient to the well-being of our nation, we are not free to act creatively on behalf of all nations. But if we are obedient to the whole sweep of Reality, then are we truly and fully Free. To wonderstand this paradox is to wonderstand Freedom as Attuned Working beyond fate.

Like all the other angels, the angel of Attuned Working is an aspect of our essential soul. Attuned Working is an angel moving up the ramp of the soul in response to that Eternal Reality that constitutes the whole ramp and all the angels upon it.