

**The Mysterious Divine Trio:
How My Mennonite Father led me to the Psychic Being**

Timothy Zook¹

Preface

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy to the only wise God our savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and evermore.²

With these words my Mennonite minister father always blessed the congregation and sent them on their way. To a boy of five or six years, this passage of scripture meant nothing in terms of theology, nevertheless I awaited it eagerly. It was my ticket to a long anticipated freedom from endless hours of incarceration, being forced to sit in reverent silence unless we were standing to sing or praying on our knees.

The words of my father's benediction were far too mystically incomprehensible for me to understand, but they left an indelible impact on my young soul which could neither be buried nor denied through the following years. This passage of scripture would often arise unbidden from somewhere deep inside. After I grew to maturity and began raising a family, I was too busy to give it serious thought and so it lay there, aging like fine wine in the depths of my being. It took sixty-five years to reach its potential, lighting up my soul, my intellect and even the emotional dimension called the "vital body."

I will never know if my father comprehended its timeless message or if it had a similar impact on his soul. I often ask myself these questions: Were we both blind to the real meaning of this cryptic passage? Did the same spiritual hunger fill us with angst and agony, reducing us to helpless tears of aspiration, catapulting us both into a deep intense search for existential truth and meaning?

But I am getting ahead of my story. I would like you to return with me to a rustic church set in a pristine Pennsylvania forest which had become my second home. Much about my childhood religious life remains an intriguing mystery. Even though the Mennonite theology that shaped my younger years was steeped in dogmatic, staunch fundamentalism, it catapulted both my father and me into deeper depths and higher heights. We were powerless to resist the innate craving for a truth and reality that would forever shatter the bounds of religious convention.

Rockville Mennonite Church was set in a small town of several dozen houses hard by the foot of Stone Mountain. Stone Mountain marked the western boundary of Big Valley, Pennsylvania where more than eighty percent of the residents were either of Mennonite or Amish persuasion. Anyone who didn't fit into these two sects was simply "English." There was no

¹ I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Robert Holland of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship for his constructive suggestions and feedback on earlier drafts of this essay. Also many thanks to my darling wife, Coral, who has put up with my many artistic and philosophical eccentricities as she edited the contents of this work, thoroughly "Coralizing" my prose to make it comprehensible.

² Jude 1:24-25 (King James Version).

neatly paved church parking lot. The Fords, Nashes, Edsels and Studebakers of yesteryear were sandwiched among the trees, creating the perfect place to play hide and seek after the last “Amen.”

My dad was Pennsylvania Dutch to the core. The gentlest son of a proudly non-resistant people, he could trace his ancestry back to the Swiss Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. Unlike most of his fellow Mennonites, he was not a strict, rigid theologian. When he caught the scent of intriguing, unfamiliar truth he was like a bloodhound on a hunt; he had to trace it down and get to the bottom of it. He was a latter-day Galileo, blessed with intuitional insights, but unlike Galileo he would not recant in spite of threats of excommunication which implied hellfire and eternal damnation.

In my home, Bibles could be found lying here and there, which our parents encouraged us to read. Hidden out of the sight of visiting friends and all too inquisitive ministers, my dad also kept his treasure trove of heretical books; in fact, he was a contemplative, often spending many hours a day in his bedroom/study. Sometimes as I passed by his closed door I could hear him reading aloud or praying. What concerned me most, were the times when the muffled voice from the study sounded tearful and agonized. I wasn't as concerned about my dad's physical welfare as I was for his apparent emotional suffering.

In reality, my dad was a closet mystic. He was never a hell-fire and brimstone preacher. On the contrary, his voice was soft but compelling. Following his example, I did not disclose the stirrings of my soul to anyone. What I felt there was nobody's business but my own. Unlike my father, however, I was not a lifelong student of the scriptures, even though I memorized entire chapters of the Bible, earning a gold star when I parroted the words correctly to our congregation. For some unknown reason the Bible was never the pure, unquestionable word of God to me. Today it is only a reference, a resource I rarely consult although many of the verses will often arise unbidden, inspiring me to search them for hidden wisdom in the archaic prose. One thing has not changed over the years: the unquenchable, fearless passion for truth I share with dear old dad. I suspect that I was born an iconoclast, but I went about it in a non-resistant, passive/aggressive, Mennonite manner.

The last three years of my father's life found his unorthodox theology beginning to filter through his sermons. Cautioned and reprimanded by his immediate superiors, he made an effort to curtail his heresy at the pulpit, but it was of no use. He could not deny what the promptings of his soul were dictating. When he rose to speak, another being would take over making him powerless to stop the flow. A year before his death in 1956, his sermons inspired a valley-wide theological firestorm. He had a following of both Amish and Mennonite dissidents who were equally hungry for truth. Summarily silenced and forbidden to speak publically, he would gather his faithful together, arranging house meetings here and there. Eventually, he rented an old school house directly across Stone Mountain from Rockville Mennonite Church. His new sanctuary was open to all; he would invite speakers from all over the country to come and share their hearts, whether he agreed with them or not.

My dad's apostasy marked the beginning of my own liberation. Our friends and family had turned their backs on us and I was bullied and persecuted at the valley Mennonite school. When I entered senior high, my parents enrolled me in a more liberal boarding school sixty miles outside the barrier mountains circumscribing our valley. I was thrilled, filled with absolute joy at the change. It was at Messiah Academy, near Harrisburg, that I began to question many of the tenets of mainline Christianity.

My dad was not entirely happy with my new found freedom and immature euphoria. Concerned that I had followed in his footsteps, launching myself into an even more uncertain trajectory than his own, he sent me a short, uninspired letter, warning me to keep myself from wandering too far afield of the faith. As with most lads, I was far more aware of how my dad lived his life and handled his affairs than I was of his cautious admonitions.

It was actually my dad who led me to the grail experience that precipitated my final break from Christian dogma. Shortly before my senior year, he drove my mother, me and my cherished younger sister to Mobile, Alabama. We wound up at a campground twenty miles outside the city at one of those mid-1950s revival meetings called “Latter Rain.” Inspired by a charismatic, highly emotional interpretation of the Biblical day of Pentecost, in my seventeenth year I was highly impressed with any theology that strayed afar of Mennonite dogma. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. These Latter Rain believers laid hands on the sick, prophesied in ancient King James parlance, dancing themselves into ecstatic trances; enthusiastic expressions of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. They claimed that this infilling was available for one and all and the evidence that this momentous event had transpired was the gift of being able to speak in tongues.

After attending three sessions a day, by the second evening I was more than ready to claim my share of this spiritual euphoria. I made my way down the sawdust trail to a row of benches set up as a make-shift altar, kneeling with several dozen other seekers. A man I did not know knelt beside me laying his hands, none too gently, on my head while he rattled on in an unknown tongue. My surroundings faded away and all that was left was the divine and myself. Although the Latter Rain teachers led me to believe it was a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, the spirit that engulfed me seemed far more personal than some universal aspect of divinity.

I seem to remember picking myself up off the ground, after being electrified by an ever intensifying current surging relentlessly throughout my entire body. As if from a distance, I heard myself speaking in tongues. Distinct, even articulate, it may have been Greek, Latin or some other foreign tongue. It may even have been some transcendental language I did not know; nor did I care to know. Caught in the embrace of a light trance that persisted for a week or more, I walked the campground late into the wee hours of the morning, still intoning the euphoric words that had erupted from a mystical, unexplored source within me—a source that I have only begun to comprehend within the last five years.

Like a docile sheep, I went through the motions of campground life, simply following the lead of those around me. Finally growing desperate for something earth-like and secure to stabilize myself, I searched for and found my darling seven-year old sister. Hoisting her up on my shoulders, I carried her until I was exhausted. Walking around the camp carrying my little sister, under my breath so no one could hear, I was intoning that incredibly tantalizing language that would not let me go.

For the remainder of the week-long series of meetings, I strolled round the camp in a daze. My sister was enthralled by being carried everywhere by her adored and adoring brother. My sister and I have maintained an unbreakable bond that has not diminished over the years. Following in my dad’s example, I spoke not a word to anyone about my state of being, which was so new and unfamiliar. I do not remember the trip back to Pennsylvania, nor the entrance into my senior year of high school.

In the short span of a few weeks or less, my life had been transformed. Whatever previous interest I had in preparing for a career or planning for my future disappeared without a trace. I pursued my studies with little interest, focusing on just earning a diploma the following May. Nothing material mattered at all. In my callow immaturity, I imagined I could do no wrong

and was totally impervious to evil. The impact of the moment that I touched the Holy Grail never entirely left me, even though over time I feared I had lost it. Like my father, I even wept and agonized over what I mistakenly feared was a heartbreaking loss. I did finally come to grips with the fact that I still lived in a dualistic world and “whatsoever a man sows, also shall he reap” remained valid, even in my exalted case.

In retrospect I clearly understand—like Parsifal—the necessity of the wearing of time and countless dead-end streets on which I have wandered; that the years of purification, sitting at the feet of the hermit all had to be endured before I would be ready to once again, with wisdom and understanding, touch my lips to the grail and drink the nectar of the gods.

I have not spoken in tongues for two-score years. I have lost all interest in religious charismatic abandonment to euphoria. I do not ascribe to any organized religion. In spite of my immature lack of concern for the financial needs of tomorrow, somehow my wife and I have miraculously found ourselves comfortably situated in a mortgage-free home in a remote town in Central Florida. It has become our refuge. Here we commune with the hermit, exploring esoteric mysteries we didn’t know existed until we were divinely led to the works of Franklin Merrell-Wolff and Sri Aurobindo.

My wife, who in her youth would have been considered a Presbyterian apostate (English) in Big Valley, often remarks: “You know honey, you can take the boy out of the Mennonites, but you can’t take the Mennonite out of the boy.” Although her observation may be quite true when it comes to my penchant for dumping apple sauce all over her homemade Italian spaghetti, I am blessedly free of Mennonite and Christian dogma. Nevertheless many of those old Bible verses remain with me, often rising unbidden, and I value their hidden truth more than ever as time goes by.

My father died two months after I began my senior year at Messiah, but I carry his legacy and it burns in my soul. It was that inheritance that brought me face to face with my Helper. I’ve often deeply regretted that I never had the opportunity to sit down with Daddy as an adult and discuss the movement of the divine in our souls. I would like to tell him that I have made a personal acquaintance with this “Him” to whom he referred in his benediction. This magical Him who is said to have the authority to present us unfallen and faultless before the presence of One who is even greater carries a power that follows me continually. I can almost feel the thrill in my dad’s heart as we converse together and I tell of my experience with this Him. I am confident that he would clearly understand my words and realize that we have both discovered the most precious treasure available to mankind since the beginning of time.

In this essay, it is my fondest desire to be of service to you and to introduce you to this divine Him, who is neither Jesus Christ nor the Holy Ghost, but a very personal and individualized being who is being born within you as you read these words. Whether you knew Him or not, He has always been a vital part of you through all of your incarnations. Your every thought, word or deed that has been oriented to truth, beauty and goodness has been initiated by the influence of this divine Him who dwells within.

By the end of the essay, I hope that you will agree with this summary found in A.S. Dalal’s work, *The Emergence of the Psychic: Governance of Life by the Soul*:

One of the most inspiring and ennobling concepts in the spiritual lore of the world is that of the psychic being. It provides a major key of understanding the significance and process of the evolution of consciousness and offers a potent tool for the transformation of consciousness.

Introduction

My focus for this work of personal reflection and research will be solely this mysterious “Him” referred to in Jude, speculating about his influence on the individual, his origin, his evolution, his mission and his ultimate goal. He obviously must possess divine powers unequalled in the mundane world because he is said to be able to take a mere human being like you and I, presenting us unfallen and perfected into the Presence of a Somewhat even greater than he. This being so, we may also infer that he is no less able than Jesus Christ to forgive sins, heal the sick and raise the dead.

Here are a couple of quotes taken from the New Testament:

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*³

Several chapters later we read: *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*⁴

In part one of this essay, we will examine the pearls that are hidden in the three preceding Biblical passages. It may already be quite clear to you that there is, at the very least, an indication of a strong connection between the “Him” mentioned in Jude and the advent of the Helper Jesus promised in the Book of John. To illuminate this connection, we must have an understanding of the complex spiritual nature of the amazing creature known as a “human being.” Toward this end, I will make use of terms and ideas taken from the works of Franklin Merrell-Wolff and Sri Aurobindo.⁵

The various components of a human being and their interworking are a fascinating subject, but we will concern ourselves only with the three basic elements that comprise the divine nature in the human species. It is obvious from the evening news that humankind harbors other aspects that can be downright demonic. In contrast to most religious persuasions who propose their brands of redemption to fix these shadowy dimensions, we are now given an indwelling, personal divine “Him” who is supremely able to tackle this daunting task.

The Judeo-Christian term for what I am calling the divine triune nature of man is simply “God in man,” but there are, no doubt, as many meanings for the august title “God” as there are Jews and Christians. Therefore, when referring to anything beyond the material universe, I will use Wolff’s phrase, “the Transcendental Component,” or as Aurobindo would say, “The Divine.” We may postulate that the Transcendental Component is unmade or self-created, undifferentiated, illimitable and unreachable by the means of human intellect or reasoning. The long and the short of it is that the Transcendental Component is ineffable.

We will begin our exploration of the divine trinity within the human being with that aspect which is the most transcendental, often called “the Self” by many of the sages. It is spelled with a capital “S”, differentiating it from the mundane self on which Christianity is predominantly focused. There is very little that can be said about the Self. It is far beyond man’s ability to penetrate because it doesn’t follow the rules of human logic. We can only say it is That

³ John 14: 16-17 (English Standard Version).

⁴ John 16: 7 (English Standard Version).

⁵ I have provided a list of selected works by these men that have informed this essay in part 4 below.

Somewhat which is the source of all that is. In some unknown way, it has apportioned a fragment of itself into every individual who has chosen to participate in the evolution.

The second aspect of the divine trio in humankind is the soul or what I shall call the “divine essence derived from the Self.” We shall have more to say about this essence in Part 1 of this essay. For now, in order to define the divine trio, we only need to know that the essence is intrinsic in all that exists in the universe. In the human body it is capable of metamorphosis into a subtle being in its own right. When this transformation is complete we have the appearance of the Helper, which then becomes the third aspect of the divine trio.

We are now prepared to examine the dynamics of a subtle being taking form within human flesh. What are the repercussions emanating from such a momentous event? How is it possible for two entities such as the Helper and the human aspect to concurrently inhabit a single form? This is a mystery of major proportions.

Part One: The Origin and Evolution of the Helper

In the first words of this essay, I quoted a passage of scripture taken from the King James version of St. Paul’s letter to Jude, drawing your attention to a “Him” endowed with special divine powers to transform a human being like you and I into someone who will never again be able to fall into ignorance and depravity; in a word, to hone us to perfection. It is also implied that there is to be a gala affair, a tremendous celebration complete with pomp and ceremony. We are told that the Presentation of this transformed human being is to be accomplished with exceeding joy.

With these startling predictions impacting my soul in no small way over the last three years, I was even more astonished when the passages from St. John welled up from within me, giving credence to my insights about this “Him” in my father’s benediction. John makes it very clear when he recounts what Jesus has to say regarding his departure from the world scene and the arduous task of preparing his disciples to take over for him. He solemnly promises his chosen twelve that he will not leave them defenseless; he will send them a Helper. Jesus also emphasizes the fact that he must depart, telling the disciples that his kingdom is not of this world, implying that the Helper is intimately connected to the mundane earth—the proof being that a Helper is taking residence within each disciple.

What are we to make of these verses asserting the imminence of the departure of Jesus Christ and announcing the advent of a Helper? We are forced to deal with the statement that the Helper not only abides with us, but will be in us forever. We are given to believe that he is not a mere static, passive presence, nor is he the person of Jesus Christ, but an intimate companion and assistant very much involved in our daily affairs. There is an enormous difference between having a separate presence hovering over and around us and a guiding spirit that resides within us. After sojourning with his disciples for three years, the dynamics were vastly altered when Jesus Christ left this world. First there were twelve often bumbling novices and one teacher. Now there are twelve apostles, each having his own indwelling being. It is no wonder then that Christ told them it was to their advantage that he go away.

In the King James Version this Helper is referred to as a Comforter, but it is not difficult to conclude that a personal helper is of far more value than a comforter could ever be. I may have access to all the comforts in heaven and earth and remain ignorant and defiled, even unconscious of the innate divine. The term “Helper” carries far more implications of intrinsic value than a mere comforter ever could. A helper provides a whole new dynamic over the notion of a comforter. He certainly may offer consolation when necessary, but he’s capable of so much more.

Besides the Him and the Helper whom we have already discussed, we have another entity yet remaining to analyze, which Sri Aurobindo introduces as “the psychic being”; one who assists us on our journey. This entity is of divine origin. After many incarnations of maturation, this being is finally able to take over the governance of the multifaceted creation which we call, very simplistically, a human being.

It is not my intention to attempt an academic proof that the Him, the Helper and the psychic being are one and the same, but there are three methods that I have found to convince me that they are indeed identical. First, I have the words and works of sages and saints like St. Paul, St. John, Sri Aurobindo and Franklin Merrell-Wolff who all agree essentially on the same premise: there is an inner divine being whose purpose, function and goal is to assist the human being in his efforts towards enlightenment or Realization. Second, I have my personal experience and the spiritual thrill of identifying the tell-tale signs of divine fingerprints in many of my mundane affairs. It’s very obvious that these fingerprints are identical and the Him, the Helper and the psychic being are one in the same. Lastly, I would call your attention to the kind of proof that Wolff defines as “imperience,” and which he differentiates from experience as the Transcendental Component involved: it is an innate confirmation of truth that is only available by making insightful inroads into a higher consciousness far beyond mundane human perception.

That the “Him” of Jude, the “Helper” of St. John and the “psychic being” of Sri Aurobindo are identical has been a mental Realization for me. Certainly Wolff would call it a premonitory or a propaedeutic Realization which is open to further illumination and more elevated imperiences. This is proof enough for me as well as for the individual who has had his or her own imperiences, but for you my musings may either be conjecture or, hopefully, an inspiration for further research and contemplation. I am completely comfortable with anyone telling me that I have it wrong. You are free to believe that the Him from Jude is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. But what then are we to make of the fact that Jesus told us very clearly that he was making his exit from human affairs. Indeed, whom then shall we postulate as the one who will prepare us for the promised gala feast of exceeding joy? Jesus has ascended despite the protestations of Christianity to the contrary. With Jesus no longer on the scene we are left with the Helper or the psychic being to see us through to eventual liberation and the Presentation described in Jude.

At this point I wish to make a parenthetical aside. To assist those of you who have a question about the predominance of the male pronouns describing the divine being, let me assure you that any reference to “Transcendental gender” is trivial and inconsequential. I have observed that the fingerprints of my wife’s Helper are definitely masculine; on the other hand, my Helper’s fingerprints are undoubtedly feminine.

There is very little more that we can postulate about the origin of the Helper. Unfortunately, we are given to understand that the great majority of the peoples of this earth do not yet have a truly evolved and self-aware Helper; the innate divine remains, as Aurobindo describes it, simply as a “spark-soul” that must go through a metamorphosis before it can come into its own and assume the role of the Helper. Thus, the spark-soul remains in the background, or as Aurobindo says “behind the veil,” through many lives, incapable of any real assistance on the yogic path to enlightenment. Nevertheless it is learning and evolving and each incarnation is vital to its continued development especially when these lives are dedicated to spiritual pursuits.

Before digging deeper into the relationship between the Helper and his human aspect, I’d like to point out a common mistake. This soul, Helper or psychic being that I am discussing is not the soul of Christianity that is considered defiled, soiled and intrinsically evil because of the

sin of Adam and Eve. The soul of which I speak is a gift of the Self and is forever attached to that Self. It requires no redemption for sin. It is not fouled by contamination from a fallen, material world or even by taking residence in an errant human being.

I have an analogy to offer that may assist in your understanding of the metamorphosis of the soul into the Helper. Let us assume that an egg is a representation of the soul. Now, the Self is the source of this divine essence known as the “spark-soul”; thus, we may consider the Self to have “inseminated” the soul making it capable of growth. This divine essence can be found supporting all individual existence in its evolution through the kingdoms of the mineral, vegetable and animal, where it slowly develops, but until encased in a human being largely remains in an embryonic state. When, however, the spark-soul supports a human life, it can grow into a fire—that is, the “egg” can metamorphose into a conscious being, which is the Helper. It is important to understand that when the Helper is born, the spark-soul does not disappear; rather, it is transformed by enrobing itself in a cognizing subtle entity. Thus we may assume that the divine trinity in humankind remains a trinity.

We will have even more to say about this metamorphosis in Part 2, but to summarize, for the present it is enough to understand that there finally comes a time when the spark-soul has developed to a point where it becomes self-aware, realizing that it is far more than a helpless babe in the manger. When that miracle happens, a new ego emerges, but one would do well to remember that unlike the human ego, this higher ego is still attached to the Self, never losing that divine connection. It never feels estranged from its source. This newly emerged Helper is like a minister who is forever in service to his king. No matter how self-aware he becomes, he will always be in total submission to the purposes of the Self. At this point the Helper has become the ruling monarch, while the human aspect becomes an assistant to the king.

Part Two: The Dynamic Duo

We will now proceed to an exploration of the nature of the relationship of the Helper to the human being in which he resides as the two of them become the dynamic duo. The subject is complex, but I have chosen this title for reasons other than mere comic relief. It is indeed defined as dynamic as well as a duo in the beginning stages. Between the emerging Helper and his human aspect there is an ever-evolving relationship. This dynamic process has continued unabated from the unconscious beginnings of the infant soul all the way up to the moment when the fully personalized Helper makes his presentation of a divinized human to the Ultimate Self.

Note that the transforming power of time is essential for both entities. Just as the human fetus requires nine months of development for birth, or a prince needs many years of training to become a king, so too the divine essence of man, the spark-soul, must pass through a series of incarnations before it reaches maturity when it blossoms into an actualized Helper. His human aspect, on the other hand, is certainly not sheltered from the ravages of an unconscious evolutionary force that continually works to propel one out of the ignorance into the realm of the self-conscious.

The unconscious evolution of which I speak is karmic law and it is not a self-aware process; however, it is a force towards the spiritualization of mankind. It is ultimately a tool of the Self that brings harmony and equilibrium to an inharmonious and topsy-turvy world; nudging nature into an awareness of itself, guiding the billions who inhabit this plane of ignorance into enlightenment. With this in mind we may take heart in the knowledge that individual human beings are never really alone. Their Helpers must also suffer the slings and arrows of all their

incarnations. We are never without a friend who can share our griefs, our sorrows as well as our transcendental delights and successes.

At a certain juncture in the evolutionary process, when the individual finally becomes aware of a spiritualizing force within, he is then prepared to receive the assistance of a descending potency, exponentially more powerful than the relatively impotent force emanating from the evolutionary unconscious. At this time the spark-soul has been awakened to self-consciousness, becoming aware of its unbreakable connection to the Divine Self and its mission to present a divinized, perfected human consciousness to its Source. It is now enabled to modify an unconscious evolution into a tailor-made force for personal spiritual ascension.

In the course of time, the spark-soul evolves into the entity we have called the Helper. Its focus is on truth and its gaze is fixed on the Self, but its feet are firmly attached to this earth by means of connection with its mortal aspect. Thus it is unmistakably the mediator between God and man or the divine and the human. This is precisely the role that Christianity assigns to Jesus Christ, but we clearly understand that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. This implies that the responsibility of mediation was passed on to the Helper. According to St. John, Christ took his leave of *terra firma* and thus relinquished all his earthly tasks to the Helper.

There is a difficulty of major proportions that ensues when the human aspect has just become dimly aware of its connection to the Helper who is just beginning to embrace its task of mediation. Psychology has it that the newborn child immediately begins to develop an ego declaring, "I am I and none other. I am separate from every other creature." This state of solipsism is usually reinforced with every incarnation, continuing to persist until the evolutionary process finally awakens a suspicion in the aspirant that there is a great deal more to this "I" than is readily apparent. The "I" changes its focus from "I am none other" to "I am all others."

The dynamic duo is now arriving at a critical point; a pseudo human ego and the super ego of the Helper are now both awakened within a single physical embodiment. We may be facing a very volatile situation; a tumultuous house divided against itself. The false ego is still oriented almost exclusively to solipsism and to worldly affairs including the enhancement and survival of the physical body while the super ego is intent on ferreting out ultimate truth and all that is divine. It is inevitable that these two newly formed egos are bound to clash and a conflict is set in motion; a conflict of which Franklin Merrell-Wolff paints a compelling picture:

There is a consciousness that is rooted to the mundane—all the ordinary relationships of the world—and there is a consciousness that soars above this in the supermundane. The latter I would liken to the eagle that flies higher than all other birds, it is said, and has the keenest eyesight of all and I'd like to liken the mundane orientation to the crow that is quite raucous and mischievous. Now between these two kinds of consciousness there is an inharmonious relationship. To orient towards the one consciousness or the other may be clear cut and essentially simple, but in the contact between the two types of consciousness there are many difficulties.⁶

To give you an example of what can happen when the crow meets the eagle, I will share an incident from my wife's spiritual autobiography, *Fingerprints of the Divine*, which is now in progress:

⁶ Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Jungian Psychology and Personal Correlations*, part 5.

It was a chilly morning in late fall as I was trudging across campus to organic chemistry class. By the beginning of my third year of pre-med, the joy of intellectual discovery was being dissolved in the downright grim competition to be accepted into medical school. Thoroughly miserable, I was still refusing to admit to myself how disillusioned I had become. My fellow pre-med students were anything but altruistic. The only thing that most of them had in mind was to become powerful and successful. Helping mankind was definitely not their primary ambition. When I began pre-med, my way had seemed divinely choreographed. Hoping to be of service to suffering people, I had done extremely well scholastically and the government had promised to pay for my education right through medical school. It seemed ungrateful to be so horribly unhappy.

As I reached the sidewalk that led to the chemistry department brooding on my dilemma, I was startled to hear an incredibly clear voice. *“This isn’t what we want! We don’t to be a doctor!”* I stopped dead in my tracks, looking around trying to find the source of those awful words, but I was completely alone in the shimmering light of the frigid Northern Florida day. I finally realized that the voice was coming from within my mind. Picking up my pace, I became a bit fearful that I suddenly had come down with some murky pathological disorder, but I felt perfectly sane and oriented. There was no way I could call myself delusional. Chalking it up to chronic self-doubt and painful sinuses, I was shocked to my core when the voice repeated the same words, even more adamantly. *“This isn’t what we want! We don’t want to be a doctor.”*

“What do you mean?” I shot back unable to repress my outrage. “Of course I want to be a doctor.”

“No you don’t. Becoming a doctor won’t feed your soul. The only reason you want to be a doctor is because you’re afraid to look like a failure.”

“That’s ridiculous!” I continued on my way, totally confused, and feeling resentful about the inner confrontation. Intuitive, half garbled messages from an unknown source were nothing new to me, but never before had I heard an inner voice so clear and confounding. I didn’t want to admit that it had the unmistakable ring of truth and a higher logic, far too compelling to ignore.

Coral’s Helper won this round when the government suddenly, inexplicably reneged on its promise to fund her way through medical school. When she heard the news, she was secretly delighted that she now had a valid way to pull out of pre-med without disgrace. Years later she finally admitted that the voice was right. The soul-food and selfless service she craved so desperately were not to be found in medical schools, but existed solely in the endless embrace of her Helper. Looking at the incident through Wolff’s analogy, we now may lift our eyes to behold a transformed raucous crow soaring in the stratosphere with an eagle as Coral has finally come to peace with her Helper. This brings to mind a passage of scripture celebrating a time when the lion shall lie down by the lamb with neither the inclination nor urge to have a choice piece of mutton for dinner.

At any rate, there must be a great deal of give and take between the Helper and his human aspect before they are able to achieve a harmonious relationship. These two levels of consciousness are so radically different. From the perspective of the crow, even though its desire may be nobly and sublimely motivated, until it’s transformed, the poor bird is too short-sighted

to capture the vast perspective of the eagle. But unity with the Helper and finally with the Self is hardly the end of our story. It is truly only the beginning.

The joyous ceremony, in which the prized trophy is presented, may indeed be called “enlightenment,” but I must ask you: Of what value is a Buddhist nirvana, a Hindu moksha or a Christian heaven if they only lead to a solipsistic bliss where no thought is given to the remaining suffering billions? What right have I to declare that I have reached my goal and permit myself to give no thought to those who are still caught in the grip of an endless merry-go-round that offers little hope for liberation? There is no supernal rule that demands a personal, private salvation while others still suffer. We do have another option!

Part Three: The Mission of the Psychic Being

In his master work entitled *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo has depicted an account of “the Many in the One.” Aurobindo explains that the One has separated Itself into a virtual infinity of Selves, apportioning a Self to each and every creature inhabiting the cosmos. Moreover, each of these Selves is identical to the One or the Ultimate. Here we immediately confront a mystery: If the One has separated Itself into an infinity of Selves, does it not cease to exist as a whole? In other words, if the One becomes subdivided into an infinity of parts, isn’t it no longer the “One”? To intensify this mystery, each Self has two aspects: the first remains conscious of its true identity (as the “One”) and is self-existent above the manifested being, superior to birth and death, and always the same; the second is the soul in the heart of the living creatures, which has entered into the manifestation of the Self.

In order for the reader to comprehend these hidden mysteries, one must call forth the imagination. The poor power of mere verbiage is not enough. We are forced to make use of illustrative stories and analogies that transcend the power of the spoken or written word. Our first conundrum is the mystery of how the One can be divided into the many without ceasing to exist as a whole. Here we may note that transcendental logic is not bound by our ordinary sensibilities, and that the “One” to which we refer need not be reduced by being so divided. We need go no further than pure mathematics to elucidate that this is possible; indeed, we find in the mathematics of the infinite that you can subtract an infinite number of infinite subsets from an infinite set and not reduce its cardinality at all!

To begin, we note that two sets have “equal cardinality” if it is possible to set up a one-to-one reciprocal relationship between all the elements of the first set with all of the elements of the second set. To illustrate this, let us take the infinite set of counting numbers $\{1, 2, 3 \dots\}$ and construct a subset out of this set by taking the double of each of its members; the doubles would be 2, 4, 6, 8, and so on—the set of all even numbers. Now, there is clearly a one-to-one reciprocal correspondence between all the elements of the first set and the second set: corresponding to 1 in the first set there would be 2 in the second set, corresponding to 2 in the first there would be 4 in the second, to 3 in the first there would be 6 in the second, and so on. Hence, we have proved that there are just as many elements in the second set as in the first; however, although every element in the second set also exists in the first set, there are elements in the first set that are not in the second, namely, all the odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, 7, . . . The second set is thus a proper part of the first set, but it has the same cardinality as the first set. It reproduces, in other words, the cardinality of the first set, and yet it has a distinctive character marking it as different from the first set; namely, it consists only of the even numbers. Now, we could build any number of these infinite proper subsets out of the set of counting numbers. We could take, for instance, for our third set the numbers that are three times the numbers in the first

set, giving us 3, 6, 9, and so on. Or we could use the principle of powers, and construct a second set by taking the squares, or the cubes, fourth powers, and so on. You can see at once, you have the potentiality of building up an infinity of subsets from our original set.

Our second conundrum relates to the two aspects or “forms” of the Self: One of these aspects remains aware of Itself and is essentially unchanged. It is the silent witness, the upholder and sustainer of the individual. It is said to dwell within a secret, sacred chamber behind the physical heart. Nonetheless, it would be useless for a surgeon to go looking for it because it is of another dimension not perceptible by the five senses. It is the inviolate Holy of Holies within the body of mankind. The other aspect of the Self is the spark-soul of which we have spoken at some length. This is the portion of divinity destined to take a desperate, treacherous journey into devolution. In other words, it voluntarily descends into a hell of darkness, forgetting who it is and its very purpose for being. It is completely ensconced in ignorance and inconscience. It is shorn of its former omnipotence, becoming utterly helpless as it surrenders all of its infinite abilities, making itself vulnerable to an unconscious evolution.

This pathetic picture of a fallen divinity begs the questions: “What could be the possible reason for such a terrible regression of an essence which was once equal to the One?” We may also presume to ask: “Of what value is the One who has no experiential knowledge of what it means to be shorn of its power and glory? What does it mean to be cast into gross darkness, becoming unconscious of who or what it is?”

The answers to these queries are not so difficult. The devolution is the means by which God discovers who He is. In other words, how could God be God if he remains forever unaware and without experience of the darker side of mundane existence? In our efforts to avoid the term “God” we could say that this is the means by which the Transcendental Component gains the experience of what it means to be separate from its omnipotence and omniscience; to understand bondage to time, space and law. For one who is never separated from all that is transcendent it would be impossible to comprehend the mundane unless and until he becomes identical with it. This is not to imply that the divine partakes of the evil and pollution in the material world, but it learns and evolves by its involvement in the negative.

The soul is now beginning the adventure of many eons of incarceration in its journey from inconscience back to the glory of his original state of being, but in its return, is armed with the powerful knowledge and clarity that imprisonment in the evolution has provided. We are given to know that even in the throes of the utter chaos and confusion of the devolution, there was always the spark that could never be extinguished no matter how severe the ordeal became. The soul is forever compelled to seek an escape from the grossness of this material plane to be reunited with its long-lost “better half.”

But there is much to be suffered for untold billions of years before this happy reunion takes place. The soul must experience everything that the cosmos has to offer. It must surrender to evolution through the ages, ensconced in the dull inconscience of the mineral kingdom, rising from this into the vegetable state, finally arriving at the mobile, heightened awareness of animals where, after many more incarnations, it becomes the soul of a human being capable of thought. Now armed with both animal sense perception and human conceptual cognition, the soul becomes the most powerful dynamism of the earth plane and is being prepared for even further advancements into what Wolff has called “introceptual cognition” in which the knower and that which is known are identical. To date there have been only a handful of individuals who have attained to this supermundane cognitive ability, but the sages have promised its eventual universal inevitability.

This then is the present moment of an evolution to which mankind has risen; a golden age when the spark-soul may again become conscious of itself, its goals and its mission. At this critical juncture it becomes the personalized Helper, which then begins his task of the redemption and perfection of the human aspect to which he is wedded. At first, he makes himself known by impulses, flashes of intuition and an inchoate disquiet with status quo. These stirrings of the soul are hidden behind the veil and they have little influence over the paramount will of the human aspect. All too often this perverse will of mortal man is completely out of alignment with the truthful aspirations of the Helper. The human aspect may spend as many incarnations as it wishes, satisfying its errant desires and remaining entrapped in bitterly disappointing worldly pursuits. It is inevitable, however, that the psychic being will gain strength and persistence over time as well as cunning. He will one day claim the upper hand and the human aspect will recognize the higher logic and the truth of the inner messages it has been receiving. In time it finally turns its full attention to the mission of the Helper and embraces its responsibility to assist in the partnership between them, separating itself from worldly pursuits that do not aid in the achievement of the ultimate goal.

I hope that the reader will now be able to apprehend that he or she has an inner Helper—the psychic being—whose quest it is to return to the individual a union with that aspect of the Self that never lost its royal majesty, a union that brings with it a divinized, perfected mundane consciousness. In this union, the Self is recognized in its “wholeness,” as the individual has had intimate experience of all that is, including the knowledge of good and evil described in the Book of Genesis. As promised in Jude, the human aspect involved has been prevented from falling and has been ushered faultless into an ineffable glory with exceeding joy.

Finally, I hope that you will see that we also have a path of yoga that is not limited to a “select few,” but is available to *all* of humankind. For each of us is sustained by a spark-soul that may be transformed into a personal Helper, and by simply attending to (or as Aurobindo puts it, “surrendering to”) our Helper we may find our way to the *summum bonum*. The purpose of involution, evolution and the plan of the ages will then have been accomplished as our soul completes its journey from darkness into light, bringing with it the incalculable gift of a total and complete comprehension of Itself—that is, that the Self is all that is above and below the heavens, and is That in which all things ultimately find their source.

Part Four: Selected Sources used in this Essay

H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, And Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Pasadena, Calif.: Theosophical University Press, 2014).

A.S. Dalal, *Emergence of the Psychic: Governance of Life by the Soul* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publications Department, 2003).

Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, vols. 21 and 22 of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2005), 238-9.

Aurobindo Ghose, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, vols. 23 and 24 of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1999).

Aurobindo Ghose, *Letters on Yoga I*, vol. 28 of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2012).

Manibhai, ed., *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga: Extracts Compiled from the Writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1955).

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “On the Meaning of Realization,” part 15 (Chicago, Ill.: October 31, 1951), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “On the Meaning of Realization,” part 16 (Chicago, Ill.: November 2, 1951), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “On the Meaning of Realization,” part 5 (Chicago, Ill.: October 14, 1951), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “Mathematics, Philosophy, and Yoga,” part 6 (Phoenix, Ariz.: November 26, 1966), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “Pseudopodal Theory of Reincarnation,” (Lone Pine, Calif.: January 4, 1970), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy,” part 6 (Lone Pine, Calif.: December 20, 1973), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work,” part 6 (Lone Pine, Calif.: June 21, 1976), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, “Jungian Psychology and Personal Correlations,” part 5 (Lone Pine, Calif.: October 1977), audio recording.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Pathways Through to Space* (New York: Julian Press, 1973).

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Introceptualism: The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object, volume 2* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Phoenix Philosophical Press, 1980).