

Working With the Angels
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There are three characteristics of angels that are frequently pictured in artistic renderings. The first characteristic is that angels have wings. We think of the earthly creatures that have wings, the birds: they inhabit a sphere above the earth, the airy regions. They live in a world of light and uplift, not limited by earthly gravity.

Picturing angels as having wings is an artistic way of saying that angels too are not bound to the earthly. They are limitless; they live in expanses. They live with the world of eternity at their backs.

In Ezekiel 10:12 there is a mighty description of great angelic beings covered in eyes. Therefore angels' wings are pictured as having eyes on them. Eyes convey consciousness. They take things in, into a consciousness that is broader, brighter, clearer, purer, and more transparent than human consciousness. Eyes also shine forth; the gaze of an angel radiates love and recognition.

A third artistic motif used in picturing angels is as a musician. A good piece of music opens up heaven for us. In music, spiritual creative forces permeate space, harmonizing souls, ensouling and spiritualizing community; tuning souls to one another.

These three motifs, wings, eyes and musician, can help us understand the relationship between the human and the angelic realms.

There are nine ranks, or choirs of angel above the human realm. The third group of three, the angels, the archangels and the Primal Powers or Archai, are the three choirs we want to look at today.

Angels

The lowest of these choirs, the angels, are the ones closest to the human realm. Angels are intimately connected with *individual* human beings. We each have an angel assigned to us, a guardian angel, who accompanies us along our paths through lifetimes. Their 'wings' give them the overview that it is not possible for us to have. The angel's 'eyes', angelic consciousness, sees, takes in, and remembers everything for us. The angel can remember what we have been and who we want to be. Angelic consciousness is, like that of a chess player, able to anticipate the results of our moves. Our angel is the carrier of our higher self. Angels listen to our thoughts. To become aware of one's angel is to feel oneself to be watched, seen and recognized. Our angel's eyes radiate love, recognition.

The Angel in You
Rose Auslander

The angel in you
Rejoices over
Your light
Weeps over your darkness

Out of his wings whisper
Words of love
Poems, tender affection.
He watches over
Your path

Direct your step
Angelwards.

Our guardian angel is the musical director in our lives. Together with our angel we have decided what our life, our piece of music shall be—a light-hearted piece? A grand tragic symphony? A simple folk melody? Our angel sees to it that the events, the people we are to meet, the instruments so to speak that we need to make our music are presented at the proper time.

But our angel and the spiritual world have given all of us a particularly precious and important gift—our freedom. Nothing is determined. Opportunities are presented to us. The angels gently suggest through inspirations, thoughts, atmospheres, will impulses. But whether or not we respond, or not, and how we respond, is entirely up to us. How we play our life's music is our choice.

To the guardian angels themselves, this connection with the human realm is not a matter of indifference. For the angels have bound their destiny to ours. They have existentially connected themselves to us. They not only walk with us; they have connected themselves with our thoughts, our feelings, our will, at great danger and possibly great pain to themselves. They have devoted their being to ours. Our destiny is their destiny. Human truth, beauty and goodness, as well as human passion and darkness reaches up into the spiritual world through our angel.

An Angel Speaks
Christian Morgenstern

O if you knew how your countenance
is changed, when in the midst
of that pure gaze which can unite you with me
Your hold upon yourself is lost
And you turn away.

Just as a landscape in clear light
May suddenly cloud over, do you close
Yourself against me, and I have to wait
And wait in silence, often long.
And if I were like you a human being
The pain of disdained love would kill me.

But since the Father has given me unending patience
I wait for you unshaken
and expectant, whenever it may be you come.
And even this gentle reproach
Take not as reproach—only as a pure message.

How can we strengthen our connection with our own angel? How can we work in community with our angel? Every quieting of feelings of irritation or anger or envy, creates space for our angel's clarity of conscious and overview to enter our souls. Everything done in tranquil prayer or meditation, all religious practice, contributes to this. Our angels are particularly connected to us in the sacraments. We will say more about that aspect later.

Our angels are particularly interested in our thoughts, in what we are able to generate voluntarily as thoughts. Following the 8-fold path that Buddha laid out—right thought, right resolves, right actions etc. requires that we give thought to our lives. The eightfold path is an exercise in thinking, in walking with our angel, a way of 'directing our steps in the dance angelwards'.

Archangels

The next choir of angelic beings is the archangels. They work more deeply out of the space of eternity. Their wings are broader, their eyes, their consciousness more penetrating. They are like a teacher who works with a group of children for many years until he/she becomes deeply heart-connected with each one of them and they with the teacher. Under the archangel's wings are a whole people, nation or folk. The archangel receives souls conceived into a people and permeates them so that they become Russian, or American, or Japanese. They do so primarily through the particular language. They are the inspiring geniuses of the languages, the structure, the sound, the pictures and phrases and sayings, the feeling tone. In ancient times, Archangelic inspiration in song and poetry works to form the souls of a people in a language group, just as adult language and speech works to form the child in its development. Archangels inspire language in order to give the possibility of developing particular special faculties within the souls embedded in the language group. Archangels work in the soul landscape of groups of people in which individuals shine like centers. Speech is the connector, the bridge between people. Speech is the archangelic atmosphere, the archangelic ocean in which we swim.

There are three forces that work in any nation or peoples

- archangelic inspiration
- opposing forces, which attempt to eradicate what the archangel, brings.
- individual human beings with their own weaknesses and their own destinies.

As a result of these three forces there is a wrestling over the proper progress and evolution of the individual's and the folk destiny. In ancient times, the archangel could inspire, and work through kings and statesmen. The king was the carrier of archangelic consciousness. Now the archangel must find others, the artists, the poets, the thinkers, to be the carriers of their inspirations. We need to become more conscious about how this folk destiny will be decided. We need to become more conscious of how our own destinies work in consonance or in opposition to the archangel of our country. We need to become more aware of what our archangel wishes to bring, more aware of what the opposing forces are doing to thwart that.

The archangels are greatly concerned with the current growth of the forces of darkness. They are looking for possibilities to expand and strengthen their connection with human beings. They need

- our spiritual knowledge
- the effectiveness of a cultus that awakens spirit consciousness
- the initiative of single individuals who begin to understand.

How do we strengthen our relationship with the archangel? One way is through the proper use of language. That we begin to use words thoughtfully, creatively; that we use words not to wound, but in such a way that truth and selfless spiritual meaning shine through them.

We strengthen our relationship with the archangel when we develop in ourselves the kingly graces that Shakespeare, that master of the English language, mentions in *Macbeth*: justice, truthfulness, temperance; stableness, bounty, perseverance; mercy, humility, devotion; patience, courage, fortitude.

Primal Powers—Archai

Our guardian angel watches over our uniquely irreplaceable selves, they are particularly interested in our thoughts; the archangels integrate us into a nation and people through the feeling tone of language; the Primal Powers or Archai are the highest members of the third hierarchy of angels. They weave and coordinate the various peoples and nations into a whole. They work to make us into human beings, a part of the human race.

The Primal Powers are responsible for the great rhythms of human history, the time periods of the great cultural epochs. A single human life unfolds in seven year rhythms: at seven, the change of teeth; at fourteen puberty; at 21 we receive our majority (our ego takes hold); at 28 there is an experience of loneliness; at 33-35 an encounter with death experiences. In like manner mankind as a whole undergoes a rhythmic development—the great cultural epochs. The Primal Powers are the conductors of the heavenly orchestration of those greater time periods. So it is the Archai who stand behind the rhythmic unfolding of the great cultural epochs, ancient India, ancient Persia, Graeco-Roman, etc. in which human capacities are developed *for all of mankind*. Each of these great epochs lasts approximately 2100 years.

Furthermore, within these larger cultural rhythms there is a smaller rhythm of about 350 years in which one of seven archangels is asked to be something like a soloist in the orchestration of the symphony of mankind. Just as a soloist in an orchestra sets the tone and color and voice for the rest of the instruments, so too does each of the seven archangels offer a different specific quality to the human orchestra. In the 1400's Gabriel, the archangel of birth and incarnation, began leading mankind fully into earth circumstances. The result was the full blossoming of science, of world discovery, business, industry, and technology. Mankind conquered the earthly spheres, and rightly so.

In the late 1800's the archangel Michael took over for the period we are currently in. He brings a totally different character and mood. Gabriel's emphasis was on the birth portal, the incarnational portal of earthly life. Michael leads us to the other portal of earthly life, the portal of death. There we experience him as the spiritual leader of mankind back into the spiritual world. He is often pictured holding the balance scales that weigh human souls after death.

The ball that was set in motion by Gabriel continues to roll; we continue to be interested in the earthly. But what is good in one time eventually becomes over-ripe, and then it can fall into the hands of evil adversaries when its proper time is past. Michael wrests us out of a too strong or one-sided connection with the earth. Becoming fully earthly was a necessary stage in humankind's development; but a stage to pass through, not a goal. All the human initiative and strength and activity that went into conquering the outer world should now go toward the spiritual, so that we become explorers, discoverers, masters in the spiritual sphere. And we see that happening—the rise in interest in the angelic world, in hospicing of the dying, in near death experiences, the rise in interest in spirituality altogether. Human beings are now seeking spiritual experience. Things, ways of thinking, institutions that do not serve this current human task can be taken possession of by the adversary forces. Therefore, outmoded ways of thinking, outmoded institutions need to be dismantled to prevent them from falling prey to the adversary and destroying mankind.

Michael, like all the angelic beings, respects our freedom. So he uses crises, blows of destiny, shocks, in order to awaken us to our true contemporary calling. These crises are initiated by the angelic world, not against *us*, but against the adversarial forces that would chain us in slavery to the earthly, now that the earthly is no longer our primary task.

The guardian angel is interested in what the human being thinks; the archangels concern themselves with soul capacities. The Archai themselves are fiery spirits, enkindling and purifying love; they live in glowing enthusiasm for the awakening of human beings into free understanding and free action. The Archai are intensely interested in what the human being *does*, in human work. They are interested in what significance our work has for wider circles of people and for nature. In the end, everything we do has such a significance. When human beings consecrate their work as service to divine beings, (not to the adversaries) then it is acceptable to the Archai.

The spirit of the current time, now under the regency of Michael working for the Primal Powers, requires of humanity three things:

- First, human encounters are to become sacramental. Every human being is to be met, not at the level of appearances and earthly identity, but in his or her true eternal being.
- Second, as a consequence of seeing the eternal in the other, that all religious life be built on absolute freedom;
- And third, that the human being become capable of grasping and knowing, experiencing the spiritual realities of the world *consciously*, through and in and with thinking and thought.

This is how do we begin to work with the Primal Powers and with Michael in the current orchestration of humanity—that we meet others as eternal beings, that we practice (and let others practice) religion in absolute freedom, and that we begin to experience within ourselves the spiritual reality, the eternal, in everything we do in the temporal world.

Heavenly Cultus, Earthly Cultus

What do the angelic hierarchies have to do with The Christian Community? How does the Christian Community work with angelic hierarchies?

In Revelations 1 we hear “...upon turning I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the lamp stands I saw one like the Son of Man clothed in a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest...In his right hand he held seven stars...the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.”

And in Rev. 5

“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne,...the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” Revelation 5:8

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” Revelation 7:8-10

“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.” Revelation 8:2-5

There is a heavenly altar and a heavenly cultus that is always going on. The Christ Lamb, appearing amidst the seven lights, is continuously making His offering. He holds the stars of the angels of the communities in his right hand. From the being of Christ issues forth a continuous and everlasting stream of love, of devotion, of grace out into the world. This is His offering. Each of the hierarchies continuously makes their own offering of love and devotion that streams upward to join with those beings above them toward the Lamb. Multitudes of human beings in white robes also participate.

The earthly divine service is an image and imprint of the heavenly. The heavenly offering service plays out on the earth when human beings open themselves to it. This is what the angels are working toward—the weaving together of what streams forth from the Christ Lamb's offering, to weave it into the future of humankind. The angelic world created the heavenly cultus. The Act of Consecration of Man is an image of it; a vessel that human beings can dip into and draw out spiritual substance that can flow into the earthly.

The guardian angels of individual destinies draw closer during the Act of Consecration of Man because they are particularly interested in those moments of quiet prayer, of thoughtful contemplation, esp. within the divine service. The result is that during the Act of Consecration of Man, human beings are strengthened by the approach of their angel. And the individual's guardian angel itself becomes stronger, more radiant through what lives in the human being during the sacrament.

The Angel of the Community

There are also angels who have grown into the larger task of being responsible not only for individuals, but also for groups of people who come together, not out of national or family connections, but simply because they voluntarily want to. They are the angels of the communities.

These angels are a little higher, a little closer to the working of Christ. They live in the Act of Consecration of Man and the sacraments and strengthen them. They lead hearts and thoughts to a higher unity, to something that can be more powerful than what any individual can generate, something wherein the sum is greater than the parts.

As individuals we can open not only to our own guardian angel, but also to the angel of the community.

The community, like the individual, has a destiny. Just as in a human life, the community experiences its joys and sorrows, triumphs and tribulations. The angel of the community is also at work within the life tasks, the trials and tests of the community's destiny. Further, the community angel also integrates the community's efforts into the geography, the landscape, and the cityscape where the community is.

So individual guardian angels take an interest in the sacraments; and the angel of the community draws near whenever the sacraments are celebrated; the national *archangel* also takes an interest in what happens. Especially through the spoken word and its purity and the truthfulness of its meaning in the service, the archangels can take up the substance of what we offer and use it to guide and strengthen our nation on its evolutionary path.

The Primal Powers, the Archai, the orchestrators of humanity, are also interested in partaking in and strengthening that in the sacrament which will best serve humanity as a whole in this particular present cultural epoch. Through Michael as their current soloist, the Primal Powers draw near and partake in what streams out from the sacraments. They help humanity to practice religious life in freedom, to grasp spiritual realities not only in dreams or in the dreamlike quality of feelings, but also to experience the divine in knowing, thinking, wakeful consciousness, and then to take that experience out into the world in which we work.

We know the Christ in freedom so that we can take him into the way we think, so that along with others we can begin to offer to him and to the angels, the best of ourselves: our gratitude, our love, our devotion, our purest thoughts. We offer them as bread, as incense for the angels, as a positive contribution toward the true evolution of all of humankind. We offer ourselves so that our own eternal true core, our I AM, is given what it needs for earthly life. So that our

- Thinking is clear and objective toward the spirit.
- Feeling freed from subjectivity to become an organ of perception for other Beings.
- Will is perceived as coming from others, and affirmed as our own.

We offer ourselves so that religious facts aren't merely taken on faith, but become fulfilled as the experiential knowledge and fact of Christ walking with us, working in us.

I would like to close with a verse from Rudolf Steiner, that one could think of as the voice of our angel through whose voice Christ speaks to us:

Be still and know
That I AM the power within you.
There is no might in circumstances;
There is no might in the personal;
There is power only in me
For I AM the ground, the essence of your being.

*This address was based on several lectures by Rudolf Steiner, collected in volumes titled *Angels*, and *Guardian Angel*, (Steinerbooks) as well as in a volume titled *Angels in the Light of Spiritual Science*, self published by Richard Lewis. Also very inspiring were *Our Spiritual Companions*, by Adam Bittleston, (Floris Books), and *Mensch und Engel (Man and Angel)*, by Hans Werner Schroeder (Urachhaus, not yet translated into English).