

The Tradition of the Holy Guardian Angels in the Second Century

In this article I will try to shed some light on the long forgotten cradle of our teachings on the Holy guardian angel. I will not write too much about its nature and how to acquire it, as this is the core work of the initiate from his or her entry into the order, until the level of 5=6. This article will give you the opportunity to seek deeper into this work, and thus be led to the original material and teachings on why an angel is of absolute necessity, and how to achieve union with it. The references from original material are taken from David Brons' writings on the Valentinian tradition, who has written extensively on the topic and whose material this article is closely based upon.

Many initiates in the Golden Dawn based tradition believe that the concept of the Holy Guardian angel was first presented in *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. This book is a manual that presents a six months retreat for the purpose of receiving contact with this entity. In the Catholic Church it is believed that such a tradition came from within the mother church in the Middle Ages. But both stands are wrong...

The earliest Christian to teach about guardian angels was the second century mystic theologian and gnostic initiator Valentinus (ca.100 – 175 AD). The Valentinians as his followers came to be called, were reformed Gnostics who had mingled traditional Gnosticism with what later become the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the teachings of Plato. They used both sacraments and initiations as their methods.

These initiates taught that Guardian Angels played an essential role in the salvation of the individual.

In their literature, angels are almost invariably depicted as male while the individual person's

spirit or divine spark was depicted as feminine. The person who attained to a mystical experience of the divine (gnosis) was said to have become joined to their angel in the "bridal chamber", this process was also made into an initiatory sacrament by the same name. This sacrament was the highest initiation and assured the deliverance of the individual.

According to David Brons, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the Valentinian teachings on 'the fall', in order to fully understand their teaching about Holy Guardian Angels. For them, the significant event in 'the fall' was not the eating of the apple but the separation of the male from the female (Genesis 2:21-23). This event was taken to signify the alienation between humanity and the divine. Our inner spiritual spark is thought of as female. It originates from God and has a male counterpart or angel in the heavenly world or Fullness (Pleroma). In the fall, our spirit became separated from its angel. This separation is said to lead to our mortality and our expulsion from paradise into the



illusory world of matter. This might give a Valentinian aspect to the process of the work of requiring contact with the Guardian angel in the SR+C practice for brothers and sisters devoted to the gnostic tradition. It is also through the union with the angel that one is able to escape the rulership of the planets and the Zodiac, and thus be released from the blind fate (and rebirth?).

Valentinians taught that Christ came "to give life unto those who had died by separation and join them together (i.e. with their angel)" (Gospel of Philip 70:15-18). The angels were said to accompany him when he descended into this world. One important teacher says, "He went forth outside the Limit (of the heavenly realm) and, being an angel of the Fullness, he brought with him the angels of the superior seed. And since he had proceeded from the Fullness, he himself had the redemption, but he brought the angels with him for the correction of the seed". (Excerpts of Theodotus 35:1-2) These are the angels who heralded the birth of Jesus (cf. Luke 2:6-14).

The angels are said to share in the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan (Matthew 3:13-17 pars). The teacher Theodotus claims that "In the beginning the angels were baptized through the redemption of the name which came down upon Jesus in the dove and redeemed him" (Excerpts of Theodotus 22:6). He claimed that they are baptized for human beings "in

order that we too, possessing the name, may not be held back and prevented by the Limit and the Cross from entering the Fullness" (Excerpts of Theodotus 22:4).

The angels are said to take an active role in the salvation of the individual. According to Theodotus, "They entreat and supplicate for us as if for a part of them, and, being restrained for our sake in their haste to enter (the heavenly world), they plead for forgiveness for us, in order that we may enter in with them. For they virtually have need of us that they may enter, since without us it is not permitted to them." (Excerpts of Theodotus 35:3-4). Similarly Herakleon says, "The Saviour who is also the Son of Man, harvests and sends as reapers the angels . . . each for his own soul." (Herakleon Fragment 35).

Through mystical experience or gnosis, "we are raised equal to angels, restored to the males, member to member, to form a unity" (Excerpts of Theodotus 22:2). One is said to be joined to an angel, just as a bride is joined to her bridegroom so that, "once they unite with one another, they become a single life" (Exegesis on the Soul 132: 34-35 cf. Genesis 2:24). This is regarded as the restoration to the original condition before the fall.

For those of you who contemplate the cross and its mysteries, it is the heaven and the earth



that meets in the union, heaven as the Spirit and earth as the Soul. It transforms the Nephesh and it gives us a rebirth in this life. It is like drinking alcohol, it affects every cell in your body, except that it reaches your entire cognitive schema, all your thoughts and ex-



Picture: Sor. A.P.A.D.

periences are given new values. And the more you drink of this angel, the more sober you get...

Valentinus describes it this way, "The Father is within them and they are within the Father, being perfect, being undivided in the truly good one, being in no way deficient in anything, but they are refreshed in the Spirit" (Gospel of Truth 42:27-33). Joining with one's angel was said to allow the person to lead a sinless existence (Gospel of Philip 65:23-26).

They believed that the person received or became possessed by the light (Gospel of Philip 86:4-6), that is, their bridegroom angel. Valentinians were the first Christians to teach about guardian angels. They believed that they were destined to be joined to an angel, in a kind of celestial marriage of the human with the divine. One could receive an angel either through mystical experience (gnosis) or by imposition of hands by a person who was already joined to an angel.

The Valentinian theology on the topic of Holy Guardian Angels is the foundation of how it has been used in the different orders. In the SR+C we work on preparing the coming of this 'event', Valentinians would say that we are preparing our bridal chamber. The SR+C method is an example of a tradition that depends upon the reception of the angel through mystical experience through the practice of theurgical and magical preparation work. An example on a tradition that works along the line of 'imposition of hands by a person who was already joined to an angel' is the Elus Cohen tradition (the oldest theurgical school working today) as it is worked in the Ordre Reaux Croix. There the initiator finds the correct angel, and connects it to the initiate, the work is then to merge with it. However, the results are the same, and the source of these illuminating teachings is the long forgotten initiator, teacher and theologian Valentinus and his followers.



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