

## Presentation on the Second Choir—Archangel Raphael

### Part 1

Before going directly into our presentation on the Second Angelic Choir and its Warden, the Holy Archangel Raphael, we would like to very briefly outline the notion of angelic reality and our possible relationship to it. This idea suggested itself following Silverdale's question: "Do the seven choirs and their wardens correspond to the seven primary statements in Prayer Absolute?" Given our experience together thus far, the question is rhetorical, with the real question being not if but *how* they correspond, and what this means to each of us *experientially*, both individually and as a group.

Although there is little agreement among "authorities" on the ordering or composition of the celestial hierarchies, there *is* a consensus—in both Fourth Way and Cabalistic teachings—that there are levels, or steps, or "degrees of vivifyingness" in the created universe, from the most "dense" to the most "spiritual," and that angels are one class of the non-physical entities who attend to and support the functioning of these different realities. Moreover, angels send messages and transfer information *and energy* between these various levels, *connecting all creatures with their creator*. These "levels" denote different dimensions of experience with different numbers of laws, frequency of vibration, and density of materiality. In Fourth Way schools this structure is referred to as the "Ray of Creation, and gives us a hierarchy of seven levels, the *imago dei* represented in human beings: the Absolute, All Worlds, All Suns, the Sun, All Planets, the Earth, and the Moon. As we have learned in our work together, there is a descending current, flowing from the unity of the Creator to the fragmented multiplicity of the creation; as well as an ascending current back to unity within the Creator. This *returning* current requires not only our consent, but our conscious labors and intentional sufferings as well.

In precisely the same way, Cabalists speak of the Tree of Life (Etz Chaim) with its ten Holy Sephiroth (or "vessels") and Jews and Christians alike speak of Jacob's Ladder ( Gen 28:10-22) as an ascending stairway to Heaven that humans may climb—if they are willing to sacrifice their most cherished illusions spawned by repeated contact with organic life. After descending into the creation and taking on "coats of skin" as said in Genesis 3:21 ( descending from Atziluth, the Divine World, through Briah, the Spiritual World, to Yetzirah, the Formative World or world of the Psyche, and finally down to Assiah, the physical world or the World of Making), humans *can* return to the Source, thus completing the cycle spoken of in Exodus 3:16, where the God of our Megalocosmos says " I am that I am ( *Eheieh Escher Eheieh*)"—"I am" being Kether, the Unity of the Crown; "that" being the descent through the four worlds into earthly manifestation at Malkuth; and "I am" signifying the completion of the return. This is the only place in the Bible where this, the highest name of God, Eheieh (Aleph-Heh-Yod-Heh), is given. This God-Name points to the entire teaching of the Cabala, or the Spirit of the Law, just as Gurdjieff claimed that the idea of evolution (the Return) was the central idea around which all the other ideas of his system were concentrated. We find again the same process in the in-breath/out-breath cycle of Brahman in Hinduism. Hindu and Buddhist yogis likewise articulate the seven *chakras* that represent these same interpenetrating realities accessible to all people. We consider this worth noting because, as we shall see later on, *this return to wholeness is the heart of all healing*.

Maps of Possibility like these we have touched upon are found in all cultures, and in all of these cultures, angels—or avatars, daimons, devas, bodhisattvas, or even ETs--- represent those creatures in a vast sea of life most willing and most able to assist us in our journey home. They are the links between us and our Creator, even though the celestial hierarchies produced by the minds of humans may lose something in the translation from experience. Eventually, if God so chooses to bless us, these Beings can also teach us *how* to work. And in spite of all this complexity, as David has emphasized on numerous occasions, it is important to remember that it is the full and personal sensory experience of each level—and of whatever Wardens and angels may grace us with their presence— that will give us effective purchase on our climb up the ladder. Ultimately, it is our *relationships* with these creatures that link the human with the divine that is most important. All of this we consider important because *all correspondences are analogues, and all analogues are of necessity subjective*. It is therefore inevitable, and perhaps even desirable, that we will encounter differences resulting from the thinking brain’s need to have everything in perfect order before doing anything else. Such uncertainty is humbling, a quality which for humans seems always to be in short supply.

## Part 2

The Seven Choirs attend the Seven Heavens, and the Heavens themselves may be viewed as veils between these levels of reality. Each level is a domain of experience, having its own characteristics. Each consecutive veil opens a person’s perception of Reality just a little bit more, enabling that person to see more of the truth-- but not too much, too soon.

1. The uppermost or highest heaven is the Seventh Heaven, called Arabot; it is likened to a vast plain or the surface of an endless sea, and is where the major experiences of Enoch occurred. It is ruled by Cassiel, and is the home of God on his Throne, along with the highest orders of angels—the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. We find here also the angels of love, fear, grace, and dread (3 Enoch). It is where all beings cry out “I am” when they are born, and represents the supernal triad of Kether-Hokmah-Binah. It is the place of origin for the Divine Dew—the Dew of Hermon—which produces ecstasy in spiritual aspirants (*Nectar* in Gurdjieff’s work ?).
2. The Sixth Heaven is Makom, meaning “the place,” and is ruled by Zachiel. It is the Beriatic (or Spiritual World) triad of Hokmah-Binah-Tiphareth. It is called the “Palace of Mercy”, although there is plenty of severity present as well, since it is from this space that issue the measure of trials and rewards to be visited upon the lower worlds. This could therefore be called the place of the “Template of Destiny.
3. The Fifth Heaven is called Maon, or “Dwelling,” and is the Beriatic triad of Chesed-Geburah-Tiphareth. It is ruled by Sandalphon or Sammael, and is where seeds of the Seventh Heaven begin to develop and separate from the Divine. Despite this separation from Atziluth, the connection with Tiphareth gives this space a special equilibrium and beauty of its own. It is a place of shapes, colors, and sounds.

4. The Fourth Heaven is Zebul, which means “Habitation.” It is the triad Tiphareth-Netzach-Hod. This is the firmament of celestial influence, where the sun, moon, and planets have their origin. It is the Beriatic template out of which the Yetziratic supernal triad will be formed. Here the Archangel Michael is guardian over the House of Israel—meaning all those individuals who live in *any* of the seven heavens of creation.
5. The Third Heaven is called Shehakim, which means “Skies,” and is ruled by Anahel or Haniel. It is defined by the Netzach-Hod-Yesod triad, where the first generation of creatures, fish and fowl, are spawned, introducing the cycles of birth, growth, decay, and death that will produce further fragmentation at the bottom of the triad. It is in this heaven that humans can rise in prayer and be instructed by angels, and where manna (*Ambrosia* in Mr.G ?) is created to feed the worlds below.
6. The Second Heaven is called Rakiyah, just as in the second day of creation. Raphael is the ruler of this heaven. It is the Daath of Yetzirah, the World of Formation ( *Psyche* in Greek), and the veil that prevents human beings from seeing too clearly into the ways of Heaven, especially those perceptions of *eternal recurrence* which could lead to despair if experienced directly at our early stage of ascent. Like all the heavens, Rakiyah represents a kind of spiritual experience, one that often allows the aspirant to see himself as others see him and thus discover the key to himself and his purpose in existence. This is the space where moments of Satori occur, as well as the sudden illumination of the Clear Light at death, or even in profound moments in daily life when things go silent and become motionless. Raphael likes the company of humans; he likes to travel with them, get to know them, maybe even help them to see how their sleeping machines appear to others.
7. The First Heaven is the Malkuth or Kingdom of Heaven, called Vilon, meaning the “veil of Heaven.” It is the lowest heaven, and represents the first of many levels of spiritual awareness possible to human beings. There are more angels here because there is more traffic here; people taking their first steps. This is where we first glimpse the light of the upper worlds. When we make efforts to observe and remember ourselves, to activate presence, we momentarily pull back this curtain, only to have it drawn back when we again fall asleep. This can go on seemingly forever. To the Cabalist, every time Scripture refers to Day or Night, it is used to define this condition of being awake or not awake.

Thus we see that the seven heavens are a hierarchy of descending and ascending spiritual conditions, each of which has its own distinct sensory signature for all creatures in the Creation.

## Part 3

Tonight we wish to invite into our sacred space the presence of the Holy Archangel Raphael, the Warden of the Second Choir and the Ruling Prince of the Second Heaven. His name “Raphael” means “God has healed” or “The Shining One who heals,” and is of Chaldean origin. His original Hebrew name was “Labbiel”, which was changed, according to Jewish tradition, when he complied with God’s command concerning the creation of man. In Hebrew, the word “rapha” means “healer” or “doctor,” and this Archangel is widely regarded as the ruler of all angels of healing. In The Book of Enoch, book 1, we read that he is “one of the presences set over all the diseases and all the wounds of the children of men.” Raphael is often associated with the image of the serpent, generally in the form of a caduceus mounted on the staff he carries. He is one of only three angels mentioned by name in the Bible.

Although considered the leader of the Order of Virtues, he is also said to have the six wings of a Seraph, and at the same time to belong to the Cherubim, the Dominions, and the Powers. As noted, he is considered the chummiest and funniest of angels and has often been pictured by artists chatting merrily with mortal beings.

Archangel Raphael has a variety of functions in addition to his primary role of healer. He is considered to be the Regent of the Sun and the Archangel of the sephira Tiphareth in Assiah, the “world of making,” one of the four worlds of Jewish cosmology. He is chief of the Angelic Order of Virtues, guardian of the Tree of Life (Etz Chaim) in the Garden of Eden, one of the six angels of repentance, and is an angel of prayer, love, joy, and light. He is also, in his spare time, an angel of science and knowledge, and is regarded as the friendliest of angels, frequently enjoying the company of men, regardless of their stature. This last characteristic is fully expressed in the Book of Tobit, where Raphael accompanies Tobias on his journey from Nineveh to Media and only reveals himself as an angel – while healing Tobias of blindness- -at the end of their journey. This story also illustrates his reputation as a guardian of all travelers, whether the journey be physical, psychological, or spiritual. Raphael has a marked sense of humor, and in addition to his loftier duties as one of the seven holy angels who attend the Throne of God, he is often known to help humans find lost pets.

Maybe He can even help you find a missing part of yourself.

***“In the Name of the Eternal, we invoke the presence of the Holy Archangel Raphael, and thank you for infusing us with your healing vibration of emerald-green light. As you rise in the East like the morning sun, clarity begins as fear and darkness fade away, allowing each of us to see anew the joy of creation. Your light-hearted touch lifts our Spirits, and expands their embrace to include all our fellow creatures. As you heal us of all wounds, past and present, we are restored to wholeness and remain steadfast in our calling of helping others. May God’s will be done. Amen.”***

## Part 4

One of the ways to understand how Raphael effects his gift of healing is to look more closely at his name in Hebrew, spelled out in its four individual letters. Hebrew is regarded by many as a holy language (Leshon Ha Kodesh), since—according to legend—it was given directly to mankind by an angel of God. We can therefore unpack the meanings of each letter, which has a name as well as a number, in addition to a host of other associations given over millennia by a variety of influences. One of these sets of attributions is the Tarot, where each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet is represented by a card—a key—of the major arcana.

Raphael is spelled in Hebrew as Resh, Peh, Aleph, and Lamed, or RPEL without vowel points. Using the attribution of the letters of the alphabet to their corresponding major Arcanum in the Tarot, we can unfold a wealth of meaning within the name. We can now examine each letter in sequence.

Resh    Key 19    The Sun    R    Numerical Value: 200

As the conscious and unconscious aspects of our mentality are gradually regenerated, illuminated and born anew, our human personalities become a radiant center through which our Essence can manifest. This is when the “alchemical marriage” of the biological machine and the essential self has begun through the power of mutual adoration. Less and less are we ruled by a multiplicity of little “I’s”, and more as a whole person. As our center of gravity shifts more firmly into our Essential Self, we begin to realize that all the circumstances of our lives are only our own projections. This recognition is incomprehensible to the “natural man” who remains identified with his or her organic body in the phenomenal world. However, to the individual who has worked in a school sufficiently long to live his life as a harmonious blending of essence and personality, with essence the dominant force...that person becomes an open channel for the expression of the Absolute.

Peh    Key 16    The Tower    P    Numerical Value: 80

The extraordinary works that persons of essence can do depend largely upon applications of the Mars force, which is like electricity and governed by similar laws. To persons who are ruled by their biological machines, this force is often misused and therefore inimical to their spiritual development. Used properly, however, it is the force that breaks down all structures of error, *such as all beliefs in our separation* from the Divine and our fellow man. It also begins to weaken our egoic sense of pride and self-importance. However, as we progressively identify our personal “I” with the universal “I”, this energy begins to awaken the Constituting Intelligence represented by the Emperor in Key 4. We begin to act from a center of gravity that reflects more wholeness, and less divisiveness. We then find ourselves acting less and less as a separate being, and with more compassion *and* effectiveness.

Aleph    Key 0    The Fool    A    Numerical Value: 1

This key represents the life force that permeates the entire universe, and is called *Spirit* in English, *Ruach* in Hebrew, *Pneuma* in Greek, and *Prana* in Sanskrit. It is without limitation of any kind, as it is one thing, not many. Throughout the Tree of Life, any imbalance restricts the flow of this primordial power. The path of return is the path of balancing the pillars of severity and mercy, enabling the middle pillar of

consciousness to rise into progressively more expansive states of awareness. The individual who lives from their Essential Self grows into an open channel for this force, unbound by any sense of separation.

Lamed    Key 11    Justice    L    Numerical Value: 30

This key teaches us that any modification of thought or emotion can be achieved by exercising its opposite. The well-known alchemical doctrine “Equilibrium is the basis of the Great Work” is the central message in this key. In order to balance a negative emotional state or the thoughts it generates, we do not try to suppress it, but to discover its positive opposite, and then cultivate it. Thus fear is not countered with hate or avoidance, but with love. By finding that place within us where we experience love, we can access it and expand it, using it to fill the space once held by fear. This key teaches us to not just passively contemplate the opposite, but to *actively cultivate the expression of the positive state, in our postures, movements, thoughts, and feelings.*

We now have additional insight into the healing factors hidden in the Hebrew name RPAL (Raphael). Suffering is a result of imbalance or disharmony of our functions, which are themselves the inexorable result of incarnation on the physical plane. Multiplicity and fragmentation entail identification, conflict and a sense of separation, generating fears, repulsions, and attractions that attempt to rob us of our sense of Presence and the Awareness of who we really are. As we enter the path of return to the Source of Attention, trying to find our place in the Work, we balance and harmonize these conflicts within us and reclaim that forgotten Wholeness which is our birthright. *Wholeness is unified Presence, and unified Presence is healing.*

## Part 5

Suggestions to other class members before presentation

1. Review the correspondences, sigils, and incense(s) associated with Raphael, and use them as you wish in your invocational space.
2. Review the short form of the Healing Service of the New American Book of the Dead, if you wish to use the space we create to pray for a specific person at the end of our presentation. What you will need is given below. Let David know before the presentation and he will call upon you at the appropriate time to read for that person.

*“This Healing Service is directed to the Being of \_\_\_\_ (name of person being healed) who is suffering from \_\_\_\_ (disease). May this Healing Service be used for the benefit of the Being of \_\_\_\_ (name) and for the healing and balancing of his/her organic body.” \**

Read appropriate chamber associated with the illness of the person being healed. After a few or several moments of silence, then close with:

*“This completes the Healing Service for the Being of \_\_\_\_ ( person’s name). May this be used for the benefit of the Being and for the balancing and healing of his/her organic body.*

\* You may also wish to review Angels Healing Journey, p.xi, and select the specific angel for the specific disorder from which the individual suffers. You may then wish to ask Raphael to send that specific angel, and/or any other that Raphael may deem necessary. If you elect to do this, you may use something like this here: *“We ask Raphael to send his angel(s)\_\_\_\_\_ (name of angel or angels) to assist in this healing.”*