

Angelic Symbolism

Angelic identities have developed as expressions of the harmonious ideal, much in the same way that the gods and goddesses of early cultures evolved identities to help the people of the time recognise, and relate to, the various human qualities or forces of nature in the most balanced way.

As such, the appearance of angels (and all other spiritual consciousness as well) in our minds, artworks and writings, has more to do with how we see their role or function, than it has with their true vibrational existence. Although this imagery is symbolic, rather than literal, it provides an incredibly powerful way for us to create a focus on the experience of connection with these energies.

Angelic beings are represented as androgynous, in most cases, although we may *feel* a more masculine or feminine energy in the context of their function or the issues for which we are calling on their support. If the energy is associated with the feminine / yin pattern of receptivity (receiving comfort, love, insight, etc) it will seem more female. If it is associated with the masculine / yang principle of activity (taking action and making things happen, or protection related activities) it will seem more male. For example, Archangel Michael is seen as a 'warrior of light' and carries a more masculine energy, while Archangel Gabriel carries a more feminine energy in the role of communication and creativity.

Wings are symbolic of the relationship (communication, transport, or travel) between two points. The symbolism of wings has been applied to angels, as 'messengers', and also to a variety of other ancient deities. The Greek god Hermes is shown with small wings on his hat and feet, symbolising his role as the 'messenger of the gods' and his functions in relation to crossings, travel, communication and exchange.

Wings and feathers have long been associated with the element of air and the communication of spiritual truth. In shamanistic cultures, birds of flight, like the raven, crow or eagle, are seen as expressions of divine presence, delivering messages and offering protection. In Egyptian traditions, the feather of Maat is symbolic of divine truth and cosmic order, and it was believed that, in the 'judgment' of the Underworld, the heart of a man was weighed against this feather. If you find feathers on your doorstep, it's said to be a sign that angels are with you.

In the early stories and images, the angels usually did not have wings unless they were specifically performing a messenger function. They generally appeared just like physical people, or simply as 'beings of radiant light'. It was only later that angels were given wings in all situations and, much later, during the Renaissance, that they began to be depicted as cute, cuddly babies.

The symbolism which creates the most appropriate connection for you is what matters here, and not the question of 'what angels really look like'. When I'm requesting support, I'll picture the angels differently depending on my purpose. If I'm seeking comfort and nurturing, then I'll imagine soft, gentle beings of light with huge wings which envelop me completely. If I'm looking for practical support, such as help with a project, then I'll imagine the angel just like a person, with all the particular qualities I need (wings optional). This shift in perception helps to focus the intention and expectation of my request. When I want to 'get the job done', I don't want a soft fluffy cuddly angel, I want a big strong capable energy with practical skills, so that's what I picture. I'm saying "I'm not looking for comfort here. I'm looking for action."

Angels & Archangels

In the context of angelic support, the Archangels could be viewed as the 'team leaders' of the Angels. Their energy patterns cover the broader areas, like protection or healing in general, while the individual Angels make up these 'teams' and are associated with very specific situations or qualities. If you call on an Archangel, you receive those patterns, in general, as well as the specific angelic patterns relevant to your situation.

The Archangels have evolved well-defined identities and names, which remain fairly constant across the different religious and cultural frameworks. Thus, you can select them directly, according to your specific intentions. However, there are as many individual Angels as there are possibilities in existence and so, for the most part, these are not named or identified through personification.

When you call on an individual Angel, you are basically intending to draw a specific pattern into your life, so you simply need to apply the name of the quality or pattern you desire. If you call on Angels, in the plural, you are similarly requesting all patterns of perfection in relation to that quality.