

Intro to Sophian Orders Study Guide

Based on Sophian Tradition and the forums on Sophian.org

Study Guide produced by Magdalene Circle (www.magdalene-circle.org) an affiliate of Ecclesia Pistis Sophia in Austin Texas.



Sophian Orders

The Sophian Orders are designed to be in-depth teachings and study areas for Sophian Initiates so that they can delve deeper into the mysteries of Logos and Sophia. Each order is designed to help those with particular gifts and interests explore their calling and their path with others and individually. These Orders are as old as the tradition itself, but are living so that they grow and change with each generation. The following are the current Orders available to Magdalene Circle Members:

- **Order of St. Mary Magdalene** - Divine Feminine
 - Sanctuary - Dark Mother
 - Sanctuary - Guadalupe
- **Order of St. Michael** - Spiritual Protection / Templars
 - Sanctuary - Exorcism
- **Order of St. Raphael** - Healing Arts
- **Order of St. Gabriel** - Prophecy and Dreaming
 - Sanctuary - 72 Names of God
- **Order of St. Uriel** - Wonderworking, Ritual
 - Sanctuary - Earth Sophia: Stones, Plants & Animal People
- **Order of St. Tzafkiel** - The Sage, Study
- **Order of St. Lazarus** - Death & Dying

The Order of St. Mary Magdalene



The Order of St. Michael and Order of St. Mary Magdalene are among the principle orders in the Sophian lineage. The Order of St. Mary Magdalene, as its name implies represents a path of devotion to the Divine and Sacred Feminine, the Magdalene Path, and the Order of St. Michael represents the guardianship of this Sophian Gnostic tradition; and specifically represents an order of the “Knights and Dames of the Holy Grail.”

While some of the practices may have corresponding empowerments and oral transmission shared within the context of a traditional Sophian circle, there is no formal initiation into the Order of St. Mary Magdalene. Rather, any Sophian who has received the outer form of initiation into the lineage can be an initiate of the Order of St. Mary Magdalene simply by taking up her practices – in essence, this Order is based upon a process of self-initiation that begins with the building of a shrine to Our Lady and a ceremony of self-anointing.

There is a specific blessing that may be extended by Sophian lineage-holders called “taking a person under the Mantle of the Holy Bride,” but this is not an initiation into the Order of St. Mary Magdalene, as it can be extended to anyone who desires to receive it, whether or not they are an initiate of the Sophian lineage – it is a common way of extending special blessings by Sophian lineage-holders.

The theme of self-initiation found in the Order of St. Mary Magdalene directly reflects the truth of the Shekinah of Messiah, the Holy Bride: “She comes to all who call upon her, and always she is near awaiting the call – no one needs an initiation to know the Holy Bride, for she reveals herself to those who love her and call upon her name.” Thus, Sophians have never created a ceremony of initiation into the Order of St. Mary Magdalene, but rather have taught aspirants how to call upon the Anointed Bride for themselves and how to receive initiation from her.

There is no initiation and no vow in the Order of St. Mary Magdalene – there is only our love of her and her love of us. We are hers and she is ours; such is the nature of the Order.

According to Tau Miriam, one of the most noted masters of our branch of the Sophian tradition, no one needs to be taught the most essential practice of the Holy Bride, for it is known inwardly within one’s heart. It is an intimate communion with Our Lady through prayers of the heart and an awareness of life as the radiant display of her glory, so that one walks constantly in her presence. This, in essence, is the view of the Order, we receive all that transpires in life as the dance of the Holy Bride – and we live with the holy awareness that we, too, are a movement of the Shekinah of Messiah.

Whether a person is an initiate of the Sophian lineage or not, the practices of the Order of St. Mary Magdalene will be beneficial to anyone inclined to take them up – therefore we shall share them here for all who desire to receive and practice them.

The Order of St. Michael: The Wisdom of Chivalry & Gnosis



The Order of St. Michael and Order of St. Mary Magdalene are among the principle orders in the Sophian lineage. The Order of St. Mary Magdalene, as its name implies represents a path of devotion to the Divine and Sacred Feminine, the Magdalene Path, and the Order of St. Michael represents the guardianship of this Sophian Gnostic tradition; and specifically represents an order of the “Knights and Dames of the Holy Grail.”

Originally, these two orders represented teachings and practices through which men and women might honor the Holy Bride, the Order of St. Michael being primarily for men and the Order of St. Mary Magdalene being primarily for women; however, in modern times these orders are open fully to both men and women – though, no doubt, men will have a special understanding of St. Michael in their experience as men, just as women will have a special understanding of St. Mary Magdalene in their experience as women.

In some legends of the Holy Bride she is said to have a daughter (Sarah) and in others she is said to have a son (Michael), and in some she is said to have “twins,” a daughter and a son. Thus, the Order of St. Michael acquires its name from legends of Mary Magdalene giving birth to a son called “Michael,” but also acquires its name from the archangel Michael, inspired by the twelfth chapter of Book of Apocalypse.

To understand the generation of the Order of St. Michael the Order of St. Mary Magdalene must be mention, for quite literally it was an order created to guard the Sophian/Magdalene line of Gnostic Apostolic Succession and is said to be an “old Gnostic Templar lineage.” It is a Chivalric Gnostic order that stands independently from other chivalric orders, and by nature is an esoteric chivalric order, for as much as teaching the principles of chivalry and the righteous warrior outwardly, inwardly it teaches the “art of a spiritual warrior,” an art of divine theurgy (“the way of the exorcist”), which is used as a means of invisible and spiritual protection of the Sophian Gnostic lineage and its initiates, and is extended to people in need of assistance.

Initiation into the Order of St. Michael is based upon the ceremony of a dubbing of a chevalier (a knight or dame) and the speaking of the Holy Vow of the Order; the key symbols of the Order are the Sword (or Lance) and the Grail, which are used in a Gnostic Mass that reflects a key mystery celebrated in the Order: Hieros Gamos.

The ceremonial robe of the Order is a white robe with a red Templar cross on it and a red cord is worn, and typically black clothing is worn beneath the robe.

Although the Order of St. Michael is an esoteric and initiatory order, the spiritual wisdom of many of the teachings and practices can be beneficial to the initiate and non-initiate alike; also, due to the influence of the Order of St. Michael, Sophians frequently discuss and explore principles of chivalry and their application in the Gnostic Path.

The Vow of the Order Of St. Michael
Do not fear in the face of the Enemy;
Do not lie, but live by the Spirit of Truth,
even on the pain of death;
Love the Holy One,
with all your heart and soul,
mind and strength;
Love Wisdom;
Defend the orphan and widow,
the poor, the outcast and the oppressed;
Cultivate love and compassion,
and stand as a righteous warrior;
Guard the Holy Grail,
and the Order of the Grail;
Bring peace;
Do not do what you hate.

The Order of St. Raphael: Healing Power of Divine Being



In the Gnostic Christian stream we are called to the threefold spiritual labor – we are called to be Light-bearers, Healers and Peacemakers. The Order of St. Raphael, as its name implies, represents teachings and practices of the Healing Way, a vehicle of Self-realization through the practice of healing arts. Quite naturally anyone called as a healer is called into the service of others, having a desire to facilitate the healing of others; yet the foundation of the healing way is the healing of ourselves, for as the old saying goes, “Physician heal yourself.”

In Gnosticism we understand the essence of healing ourselves in the phrase, “Know yourself,” for all illness and dis-ease, all sorrow and suffering arises from a fundamental ignorance of ourselves, ignorance regarding the nature of our mind, consciousness or soul, and our innate unity with the Divine (God and Godhead). Whether we are experiencing illness or dis-ease on a spiritual, psychic (mental-emotional) or physical level it is rooted in the mind, in our consciousness or soul, and in our relationship with the source of our being, the Divine. Thus, in seeking our healing on any level, first and foremost we must look into the state of our own mind or soul and into our relationship with the Divine; for ultimately it is from our inmost being and the source of our being that we can receive healing and potentially facilitate the healing of others.

The primary focus of the Order of St. Raphael is spiritual and psychic healing, as basically speaking, illness and dis-ease in the body has its root in our spiritual and psychic being. Thus our focus is cultivating our spiritual life and practice through which we can heal ourselves on a spiritual level, and through which we can activate the power of the mind or soul that can bring about radical healing on a psychic and physical level.

This is reflected in the two sayings of the Master that typically followed the healings he performed. He would either say, “Your faith has healed you,” or he would say, “Go and sin no more.” In both cases he points to the spiritual life of a person as the foundation of illness and wellness, as well as the cause of inauspicious and auspicious circumstances in life; our health and happiness depend upon the development of our interior life, according to the teachings of Master Yeshua, who was perhaps the greatest of all healers to ever walk among us.

Thus, the foundation of all healing practices of the Order is the development of your own interior life – the aspirant to the Order of St. Raphael developing a daily practice of prayer and meditation integrated to their daily living. At the outset aspirants are asked to gain skill with several basic Sophian practices: Silent Witness, Primordial Meditation, Middle Pillar Meditation, Giving and Receiving Meditation and at least one Partzuf Meditation – for all of these are integral to the healing art taught within the Order. (Instructions for all of these practices are provided on our website.)

Initiation into the Order is based upon the inner form of the Threefold Rite of Initiation within the Sophian Gnostic lineage – a spiritual transmission communicated through “mystic word, radiant holy breath and the laying on of hands.” The inner form of the Threefold Rite is imparted when the Gnostic and Light Transmission begins to occur in the interior life of an initiate and serves to facilitate the unfolding of higher gradations of the Light Transmission in their experience. Essentially, it is akin to “Shaktipat” in Eastern schools, when a spiritual adept or master facilitates the awakening of the Serpent Power (or “Kundalini Energy”) in the disciple. However, in this Gnostic initiation, the awakening of the Serpent Power is coupled with an experience of the “reception of Divine Light from above”; hence, it is a moment of Light Transmission, the transmission of a living presence and power. When the inner forum of the Threefold Rite is in place, then the initiation into the Order of St. Raphael can be given to those who seek it, for the necessary development of the interior life of the aspirant is present through which such an initiation can be received and integrated.

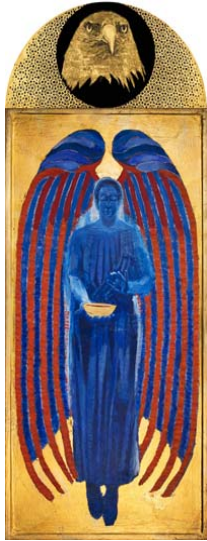
Of course, Sophian initiates can study, practice and benefit from the healing methods taught in the Order of St.

Raphael without being an actual initiate of the Order; there is nothing to preclude a person from taking up and using the practices – but the actual initiation and empowerments for the practices are only imparted with the corresponding maturation of the interior life, reflecting and facilitating the initiate's own process of Self-realization in Christ.

Generally speaking, initiates of the Order study various other healing arts, such as working with herbs and other therapies, along with the methods taught in the Order. Thus for many initiates their study of healing arts and practices extends well beyond what is taught within the Order of St. Raphael, and initiates are encouraged to study any healing art they feel inclined to study, as well as to share their knowledge with one another.

Here it must be said: At no time do we discourage individuals from seeking proper medical treatment or advocate that an individual uses only spiritual and psychic methods of healing; but rather, we advocate the use of spiritual and psychic methods of healing as a support to whatever other forms of medical treatment an individual might seek, whether "traditional" Western medicine or "alternative" medicine. We believe in the healing power of faith and the healing power of the mind – the healing power of the Divine in us; yet we also believe in the human intelligence and its capacity to cultivate various methods of healing and medicine; for as it is said in Sophian teachings, "All truth is Divine Truth," regardless of whatever form it might assume.

The Order of St. Gabriel



The teachings and practices of the Order of St. Gabriel focus on the development of lucid dream and dream union, as well as vision quests and prophetic meditation – as with all of the Holy Orders of our lineage, many of the ceremonial practices that correspond to the Order of St. Gabriel are found within the Order of St. Uriel, such as, for example, some of the sacred ceremonies given for New and Full Moon that invoke luminous dreams or prophetic vision, or ceremonies for flame gazing or crystal gazing.

Dream, vision and prophecy have a very close relationship with death and the afterlife states, and the awareness of reincarnation, so the Order of St. Gabriel and Order of St. Lazarus are closely related, and typically, to work within one Order, is to work within the other also – their methods are often the exactly same, but just oriented differently.

Just as everyone is not a wonderworker, a magician and shaman, but everyone can make use of the wisdom and spiritual practice of the wonderworker, so everyone is not a prophet or vision bringer for the people (navi), but everyone can potentially benefit from the wisdom and spiritual practice of the vision bringer. Indeed, no one can make themselves a wonderworker or vision bringer – the Divine Mother calls and chooses the holy women and holy men who are to be her messengers, and it is she who make a person a wonderworker or vision bringer; but we all can practice something of the wonderworking art and way of the prophet – we can all seek to live as holy women and holy men, and seek to serve as light-bearers, healers and peacemakers. In so doing it may very well be that we are called and chosen by the Mother Spirit, for whenever the necessary conditions are in place Divine Grace can move with, in and through us, and even become manifest as us.

It must be said, however, that the teachings and practices of this Holy Order are not intend for the novice practitioner – rather they are advanced teachings and practices meant for more experienced and skilled initiates; likewise, to take up the practices of this Order requires a certain psychological and spiritual balance, and a certain degree of maturity in the path and life – in the midst is seeking dreams, visions and prophecy traps of self-delusion abound, and naturally there are many psychic and spiritual dangers. The many plights we often see in the new age movement, psychism and occultism very well reflect this – inner and secret teachings are a grave danger in the hands of those not prepared for them, or those unwilling to the true self-discipline and spiritual work that is involved in them.

Thus, the teachings and practices of the Order of St. Gabriel assume that a person is very well grounded and established in the spiritual life and a daily continuum of spiritual practice, and they assume a good heart and good intention – one of service to the Divine and to the people, not one's own self-interests and selfish ambitions. In the wonderworking art and way of prophecy it must be remembered that we attract to ourselves spiritual beings-forces corresponding to our thoughts, emotions, desires, words and actions, whether of the Divine Light or the Shadow; we must be able to dispel shades and shadows and reintegrate ourselves with the Divine Light. Likewise, in order to do this, we must develop the capacity to discern between the Light and the Darkness, good and evil, truth and falsehood.

Just opening oneself to any passing spirit seeking a dream, vision or prophecy is simply not wise and cannot lead to anything good; if we open ourselves with the wrong intention or motivation, it will not be the Divine Spirit or Divine Powers that come to us, but rather a spirit of the Other Side, as the Kabbalah calls it.

Here we must say, spiritual gifts and magic powers should not be put up for sale – they are given to us freely by the Mother Spirit for the people, not for sake of a business for our profit; all that we receive from the Holy Spirit is for the people, for the sake of the Great Work. Granted, it is wise and it is necessary to support spiritual work, and receiving spiritual assistance we are blessed to the degree that we freely give support in return, but in the way of tithe or love offerings – *charity*, not by vital demand of set fees; the proper exchange of energy is well reflected in the story of Abraham and Sarah and Melchizedek, to whom Abraham and Sarah freely gave when he blessed and initiated them.

In the same way that these teachings and practices are given to you without any demand of payment, so must you use them for the people without any demand of payment for your service – if something is given in return, out of love, to honor and respect the movement of the Divine Spirit, well and good, but if not, well and good; in a movement of the Divine Spirit everyone is responsible for the generation of auspicious circumstances and moving with the Mother Spirit – what transpires will reflect a person's own energy, and it is not given to us to stand in judgment or to withhold, but rather to move as the Divine Mother guides us, giving freely in love and compassion.

As with many practices of the Holy Orders, those of the Order of St. Gabriel have relied upon an actual discipleship or apprenticeship with a lineage-holder of the tradition, and upon both oral and experiential transmissions – *empowerments*; nevertheless there are many practices of the Order that can be beneficial apart from any empowerment, and if a person walks with a good heart and good intention, often the Mother Spirit can grant an empowerment – thus we will focus on practices that might be of the most benefit apart from the traditional empowerments.

Here we can say the two most essential keys for dream work, vision quest and prophecy are *self-purification* and the *generation of completely positive energy* (merit); everything depends upon these two things, coupled with spiritual self-worth and spiritual humility. Essentially, the bringer of vision must become transparent to the Divine Spirit and Divine Light.

At the outset of taking up the teachings and practices of the Order of St. Gabriel, begin by reading and contemplating all that is said of John the Baptist in the gospels; contemplate what is said of him as though you are a person going out for baptism by him, then contemplate what is said as though you are one of his disciples, like Yeshua, and then contemplate what is said as though you are him, the bringer of vision and opener of the way. (As you do this, use creative visualization in meditations.) While you are practicing this, perhaps take up the practice of Union with John the Baptist, given elsewhere on our website. This is the beginning for all initiates of the Order of St. Gabriel.

The view of this Holy Order is: “All reality is dream-like.” Let all initiates of this Order take up this view.

The Order of St. Uriel: The Wonder Working Art



In previous generations there were two branches or expressions of our art of divine theurgy, one called the “Art of the Temple of King Solomon” and another called “The Assembly of the Prophets,” the former representing a very refined form of “ceremonial magic” performed in traditional “magical temples,” that latter being a completely shamanic form of magic, earth-centered, yet walking among the stars, the heavens. In this present generation I do not intend to pass on the Art of the Temple of King Solomon, but rather it is my intention to pass on the teachings of the Assembly of Prophets – a completely shamanic way of divine theurgy, one that is directly reflected in the Holy Torah and Gospel. Essentially, in these times we have a deep need to become more connected with the earth and our environment, while laboring to unfold a Supernal Realization. Thus a refined ceremonial art bound to formal temples is not so useful to us, but rather we have a need for the restoration of a shamanic way, one that places our feet firmly upon the earth and that understands the magic of the ordinary, while letting our head abide in the heavens and venturing into the supra-mundane.

There is a great deal of our art of divine theurgy and Way of Power that can only be communicated in person, through experience, and much that is private, shared only with those who draw near; but it is my hope to share all that is possible in this medium, and all that might be good and beneficial for independent practitioners and members of our circles of Ecclesia Pistis Sophia, the Body of Faith-Wisdom.

The Order of St. Tzafkiel: The Way of the Philosopher, Sage & Scholar



Archangel Tzafkiel corresponds to Binah-Understanding, which is the integration of Da'at-Knowledge; among the archangels of the Holy Sefirot, St. Tzafkiel is called the "Knowledge Keeper," and the "Angel of Remembrance," and is the philosopher, sage and scholar among the archangels, holding the remembrance of all teachings, all divine revelation, and all that has transpired in God's creation – the knowledge keeper and the one who remembers is exactly the role of a philosopher, sage or scholar.

Binah-Understanding implies Da'at-Knowledge integrated, and the self-realization that comes from the integration of True Knowledge – this, of course, is something different than the common use of the term "scholar" in modern academics, which all too often is a superficial form of intellectual knowledge, the accumulation of information and facts being mistaken for True Knowledge; by philosopher and scholar, we mean the sage, the wise one who has knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and whose knowledge is founded upon direct spiritual and mystical experience, illuminations of the Divine Spirit, Divine Wisdom (Hokmah). What is often called a "philosopher" and "scholar" in modern times is most often an outsider to the experience upon which they pontificate, contemplating and theorizing from "evidence" and "arguments" gathered apart from the experience of which they speak – especially in terms of religious, spiritual and mystical studies; in fact, according to many modern schools of "scholarship" the "scholar" is taught that it is best to remain an outsider to maintain one's "objectivity," though the result is that it's rather like a blind person commenting on a fantastic vista and view they have never seen or experienced. The way of the true sage, however, is that of the insider – the most intimate knowledge, which generates understanding and wisdom; in terms of the spiritual and mystical, it is knowledge of the mysteries of existence or creation, and knowledge of the mysteries of Enlightenment or God – and in its fruition it is the experience of union with God, or the actual experience of Divine Illumination; this is the true philosopher and sage, the true *spiritual scholar*.

The Way of Knowledge in the Holy Kabbalah corresponds to St. Rafael, but the application of the Way of Knowledge corresponds to St. Tzafkiel and St. Ratziel. The attribute of St. Rafael to the Way of Knowledge implies the spiritual power of True Knowledge (gnosis), the power that heals and make whole through knowledge of Enlightenment or God which dispels the ignorance (agnosis), the illusion of separation, which is the cause of all illness and disease, all sorrow and suffering. The attribute of St. Tzafkiel and St. Ratziel to the application of the Way of Knowledge reveals the nature of this Holy Knowledge as *penetrating insight or awareness*, and as something more integral, more holistic than merely intellectual or conceptual knowledge; something that joins intuition and other modes of our intelligence with our intellect or reason, a way of knowledge that is not opposed to faith and devotion, but that unites our mind, heart and body with our soul and spirit – it is the Way of Knowledge as an integral path of self-realization that brings about increasingly higher gradations of Divine Illumination (True Gnosis).

The way of the holy sage is *Contemplative Kabbalah* – but this way of study and contemplation includes prayer and meditation, and faithful devotion to the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God, which is the Holy Spirit through which the prophets have spoken and the revelation of the Divine has transpired. Thus, a true philosopher and sage will share much in common with the navim (seers or prophets), although theirs is a different way than that of the navim.

As with any of the Holy Orders in the Tradition, this way assumes a true call to it and assumes the abilities, the talents, and gifts of the Spirit that empower a soul in this way – a significant array of perception and intelligence, and a sharply refined intellect or reason, one united with the intelligence of the heart, faith and intuition.

If you are called to the Way of the Philosophers and Sages – the true spiritual scholars, and you aspire to this Holy Order, then seek wisdom and cultivate your passion for knowledge, wisdom and understanding (Habad); let it burn like a blazing fire in you, and let it become a hunger and thirst for righteousness, so that as Adonai Yeshua teaches us, you will be satisfied. Take up the study and contemplation of the Holy Scriptures and mysteries of Kabbalah in detail and depth, always seeking to penetrate the depths and always seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit – as you venture into the broad country of diverse fields of knowledge integral to your studies, remember your faith and cleave to the Messiah and Shekinah of Messiah, Christ and Sophia.

In your study of the Holy Scriptures pay special attention to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Book of Wisdom, Job,

Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the Perfect Thunder Mind; also, in due season, study and contemplate the great philosophers in our stream of Light Transmission – those who have taken their contemplation of holy matters deep into the mysteries and who have drawn out great wisdom through the blessing and grace of God.

If you are willing and you are called, rooted in spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom, take up academic studies seeking an integral awareness and pursue your studies to the furthest extent, cultivating your intelligence in full – love all knowledge, remembering that all truth is God's truth, and that all true knowledge is God's knowledge; all knowledge is the knowledge of God, the Holy One, for it is the presence and power of God that is the manifestation and existence of all – as in the Way of Love we must say, "There is only the Beloved, the Holy One; there is nothing that exists but God."

In the Way of Knowledge remember this: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8).

So also in the Way of Knowledge remember: "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge (Da'at); fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

Indeed, having passion for true knowledge, seek the Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of Yahweh; for as it was prophesied of the Messiah, "His delight is in the fear of Yahweh" (11:3), and as the wise sage has taught us, this holy awe is the beginning of true knowledge (Da'at).

This is the very first contemplation given to the novice in our Holy Order – contemplate and understand what the masters of the tradition mean by "fear of Yahweh," and understanding the fear of Yahweh, cultivate that fear so that it may instruct and guide you in the Way, Truth and Life Divine.

Here we shall say: There is no love of Yahweh without fear of Yahweh; all who draw near to Hayyah Elohim, the Living God, will know the fear of Yahweh – the one who does not fear cannot see or hear so as to know Yahweh, that, or they are either foolish in their pride and arrogance or lacking in intelligence. All who have drawn near to Yahweh Elohim bear witness to this holy awe that invokes fear and trembling, therefore if another testimony is given lacking the fear of Yahweh we know, as yet, that soul has not experienced nearness with awareness.

If you wish to ponder this go and contemplate the Book of Proverbs until the Shekinah of Yahweh comes speaking Divine Wisdom.

In conclusion we can remind aspirates to this Holy Order that the peak of all knowledge, understanding and wisdom is Supernal Habad – Supernal or Messianic Consciousness; the generation of Supernal Habad is the noble ideal and aim of the holy sage, and through their acquisition of knowledge their labor is the spiritual education and illumination of the children of God, the children of the Great Seth.

*You will find teachings that correspond to the contemplative practices of Order of St. Tzafkiel in many of the forums where the contemplation of mysteries runs deep – for example, many discussions in the "Christian Kabbalah" forum venture into Contemplative Kabbalah and the Way of the Sages, as do our discussions of the Zohar and Holy Scriptures.

The Order of St. Lazarus: Practices for the Dead and Dying



The Order of St. Lazarus, as its namesake implies, is composed of the teachings and practices surrounding the mysteries of dying, death and the afterlife in our Christian Kabbalah; hence, teachings and practices of the Sophian Gnostic tradition on conscious living and conscious dying, with a specific focus upon spiritual work with those who are dying and spirits of the dead.

The foundations of the teachings on dying, death and the afterlife from the Order of St. Lazarus are recorded in *Gnosis of the Cosmic Christ*, in the chapter exploring the mysteries of Yesod in the Tree of Life – those teachings will not be rewritten here in this forum, but we will rely upon the study and contemplation of the published work. Along with this, initiates of the Order may wish to study other materials that are available on the subject, such as *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, by Sogyal Rinpoche, which is an excellent book on the subject and accords very well with Sophian Gnostic teachings; also works by Stephen Levine and Elizabeth Kubler-Ross on the subject, and the book, *Facing Death and Finding Hope: A Guide to the Emotional and Spiritual Care of the Dying*, by Christine Longaker. Coupled with *Gnosis of the Cosmic Christ* and the teachings and practices given in this forum, initiate should be well schooled for their spiritual work.

Our spiritual work with the dying and the dead does not require an actual involvement or physical presence in care for those who are dying; however, many initiates of the Order do take hospice training and do actually become involved in the care of terminally ill individuals – it provides the opportunity for more direct experience and spiritual assistance, and serves as a ground for a greater spiritual education founded in actual experience around dying and death. This, of course, is strongly encouraged whenever possible.

Spiritual assistance of the dying and dead is part of the Healing Way in the Tradition, naturally so, for all healing does not take place in the body, but often only takes place beyond the body, and ultimately, all true healing is in the soul and of the soul – the restoration of the soul to its innate union with the Divine Light, with God and Godhead. Thus, typically, initiates of the Order of St. Lazarus also study and practice in the Order of St. Raphael; likewise, in that spiritual work with dying and death requires a certain intuitive or visionary capacity, and is strongly linked with practices associated with sleep and dream, initiate of the Order are also usually familiar with the teachings and practices of the Order of St. Gabriel as well – teachings and practices associated with dream and vision and prophetic meditation.

The very heart of spiritual practice in the Order of St. Lazarus is Giving and Receiving, Union with Partzuf and the Transference of Consciousness – the practice of the Transference of Consciousness being the most essential; thus, initiates of the Order will be intimately acquainted with variations of these practices.