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Authors: Murken, Sebastian / Namini, Sussan  
Title: "Heavenly Services: Psychological Reflections on Today's Attractiveness of Angels"  
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**Panel 13: How can different forms of “new religiosity” be understood psychologically?**

**Time: Tuesday 29/08/2006, 10.30-12.30 h, Room 1 (91.93)**

**Program:**

1) Murken, Sebastian & Namini, Sussan: Heavenly services: Psychological reflections on today’s attractiveness of angels

**Abstracts:**

1) Murken, Sebastian & Namini, Sussan: Heavenly services: Psychological reflections on today’s attractiveness of angels

Since more than a decade, angels seem to be omnipresent in many countries of the modern Western world. They have not only become a very popular decoration object and motive, we also encounter them in films, novels, objects of art etc.; even sales promoters have discovered their heavenly power. Moreover, one could even get the impression that angels start to replace God. A recent survey in Germany yielded that 66% of Germans believe in guardian angels whereas only 64% believe in God (forsa, 2005). Thus, it can hardly be neglected that angels are of major relevance to many individuals. However, the question remains open, why they are so popular? The angel boom has repeatedly been explained as an expression of postmodern religiosity/spirituality and a new need for transcendence (e.g., Geuter, 2003; Wolff, 1991). However, it seems that angels serve more than a human need for religion. A look at popular angel self-help books, seminars etc. suggests that angels offer a variety of resources for coping with life’s demands in modern societies and promise the fulfillment of a variety of central psychological needs. Angels not only protect humans, they also help them in many ways, heal and give comfort and meaning. They accompany a person through all his or her life, from birth to death, they see and mirror the individual in a unique way. It seems that the diversity of angels and angelic functions which is offered as well as the idea of an individual guardian angel allow angels to conquer the hearts and minds of large numbers of individuals. In this presentation, the psychological relevance of angels for the fulfillment of human needs and coping with life will be reflected. The functionality of the angelic offers will be discussed critically from a psychological perspective.