

Talk by Alice Bailey to Arcane School students on Friday, April 23, 1943

MW: Could we eventually take up some of the subjects that have to do with the esoteric schools of the future?

AAB: You are referring to *Letters on Occult Meditation*. I think the Arcane School is preparatory to the preparatory schools, and I do not see that we will be taking up in the School any specialized training for initiation, because that is what the specialized schools are intended for. I have this question in mind because I am not sure that there are enough people in the world to organize and run these schools. We were told ten or twelve years ago by the Tibetan that there were only 400 disciples on the planet. We were told recently that the number has increased by thousands. If in so few years we have jumped from three figures to four, it must represent a tremendous step ahead for the race. Those numbers in relation to the literally billions of human beings is such a small percentage that it hardly counts, and it wouldn't count at all if it weren't for the fact that accepted disciples (the ones of long standing, not the recently accepted ones) who work conscientiously wield power out of all proportion to their numbers. The only accepted disciple who really gets anywhere and becomes a source of power is one who has stepped out of the dramatic center of his own life. They may have their moments of introspection and selfishness, but their lives are externalized, and they are not interested in themselves. The beginner never forgets he is an accepted disciple. It is all so new to him. It takes him a long time to get over the Master's interest in him. When that is the case he opens himself as a vortex of force, and that is why the average disciple in the beginning is so awful. Every fault he has is brought to the surface and externalized, and the good he does is often negated because the personality is over-stimulated by discipleship.

I don't believe occult schools will be founded until we have appropriated and used the information we now have, and what we now know is ABC. I know that there is an awful lot that I know that I haven't used. There is information and knowledge in my head that I haven't made use of on the physical plane. That is true of every one of us. In connection with our weaknesses we know how to get rid of them and yet we don't. We are tired; the spiritual life is tremendously tiring. I don't know whether you all would be willing to write out what you think initiation means for you in the space of one page, what the next step for you to take would be. We could assemble the answers and they could be put in *The Beacon*. Here is a group of people who have had an awful lot of teaching about discipleship, and we are disciples of some grade or other, and the moment you make the claim humbly that you are a disciple, that moment you have really said to your Soul and the other disciples, "I am prepared for initiation." That is what you have said, and it is a tremendously solemn thought. The moment we come out of the rank of aspirants and take a certain position in our own minds – that we are disciples – that moment we have said, "We will take initiation and we serve notice on disciples of our own rank that we are going to take initiation."

Here are some paragraphs from the unpublished writing of the Tibetan [subsequently published in DINA I, p. 86 ff.]

The initiate, therefore, stands ready for what? For the instant recognition of what is new, ...

He is not dealing with purification, with the building of character, with academic technical knowledge. You have to have that in order to interpret that which is new:

for its immediate grasp and the reading of the new step in the unfoldment of the pioneering human consciousness, for the revelation – steadily and constantly presented – of the new and superseding concepts. These concepts possess a dynamic expulsive power and satisfactorily meet human need in the immediate cycle. He is ready for the instant relinquishing of all that seems futile and unnecessary and inadequate to the need of the hour, and for the reception of the power from on high that breaks and

destroys that which has become crystallized, that has served its purpose and become old and useless; he is ready to work as a practical occultist (and not only as a mystical idealist) upon the levels of vision as well as upon the levels of practical human affairs.

The secret of revelation is that revelation only comes to those who are revealers. That is an initiate. Just casually reading it I would have said it was instructions for disciples. The more I thought about it the more I realized it was more than that.

Initiation might be defined at this point as the moment of crisis wherein the consciousness hovers on the very borderline of revelation.

The initiate is the man who has responded to the teaching, has recognized it intuitively, and in addition has taken the next step forward that will take him from the borderline of revelation into revelation.

The demands of the Soul and the suggestions of the Master might be regarded as in conflict with the demands of time and space, focused in the personality or the lower man. You will have, therefore, in this situation a tremendous pull between the pairs of opposites; the field of tension or the focus of the effort is to be found in the disciple "standing at the midway point." Will he respond and react consciously to the higher pull and pass on to new and higher areas of spiritual experience? Or will he fall back into the glamor of time and space and into the thralldom of the personal life? Will he stand in a static quiescent condition in which neither the higher trend nor the lower pull will affect him?

Will he respond and react consciously to the pull, or will he fall back into the glamor of time and space, or will he stand in a static and quiescent condition? Again and again I meet people who are in that static quiescent condition, and I know that if they would take the step off the borderline they would take initiation.

One or other of these three conditions must distinguish him and must succeed upon an earlier and vacillating experience wherein the disciple vibrates between the higher and the lower decisions. It is at this process, the Master presides. He is able to do nothing because it is the disciple's own problem. He can only endeavor to enhance the desire of the Soul by the power of His directed thought. The personality can also do nothing, for at this point both the physical body and the astral vehicle are simply automatons, waiting responsively for the decision of the disciple, functioning in his mental body.

The three aspects of the one self are: Soul, Personality, Disciple. The correspondence in discipleship is: Monad, Soul, Personality. It is the Soul on its own plane, the disciple at a point of fusion, and then there is the personality of which the disciple is aware. I think that is a point it would be well to discuss a little because it is an exceedingly significant and esoteric point.

Only the disciple can act upon the mental level of consciousness at this point of endeavor. Once he does so, the die is cast. He either moves forward towards the door of light where the Master takes his hand and the Angel of the Presence becomes potent and active in a way that I may not describe to you, or he drops back temporarily into the life condition of the lower man; glamor and maya settle down anew upon him, and the Dweller on the Threshold inserts himself between the disciple and the light from the open door and renews activity. The disciple either awakens suddenly to a wider grasp of reality and a deeper understanding of the Plan and his part in it, or the "veils of earth" close over his head; the vision fades and he reverts into the life of an ordinary human being, probably for the period of the incarnation wherein the opportunity was offered to him. Should he, however, go forward through that door, then (according to the initiation that becomes possible) will be the revelation and its attendant consequences. The revelation will not be the revelation of possibilities. It is a factual experience, resulting in the evocation of new powers and capacities and the recognition of new modes and fields of service. These powers are conditioned by past developments, and the presence of these capacities, plus a freedom of movement "within the bounds of the Hierarchy" that lies far beyond anything that he may have dreamed, become his.

Great crises on the borderline of revelation. The initiate stands on the borderline in indecision. We need to thrash out in our minds a definition of the point of crisis wherein a consciousness hovers on a borderline of revelation. The three conditions are: will he respond, will he fall back, or will he stand in static and quiescent condition?

Dr. X: Does the crisis come accidentally or do we force it? How is the crisis going to be produced?

AAB: Both ways, nothing accidental, from circumstances, the conditions under which the disciple lives and because the real disciple always forces the issue. So many do not force the issue. The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. The violence, the forcing of the issue, is lacking in so many cases.

The initiation, the crisis, the revelation – the thing that has interested me in what the Tibetan is doing is that he has changed our conception about initiation, which was a very material conception. In all that teaching there are two outstanding notes – one is the emphasis on character building, and the second is what a Master does to a disciple in order to make him an initiate. The truth is that a Master does nothing; he just watches over the disciple as he goes through his difficulties. The disciple himself, the initiate himself, brings about the crisis because he is an initiate and a vortex of force, and when a point of crisis is correctly utilized, then the initiate passes over the borderline, at which point so many stand quiescent, and revelation is given to him.

VH: Don't you think a disciple has to earn crisis?

AAB: You could put it that way. How do you earn crisis?

VH: By service, by giving out the teaching, by aspiration of a very intense kind, the whole life directed toward that one point.

AAB: Two conditions govern initiation: service and your relationship to the three worlds. But the initiate is dealing rightly with that which is not of the three worlds – with the life of people outside of the three worlds altogether.

VH: Do you believe you can become an initiate if you haven't served the Hierarchy?

AAB: That is the law, but that wouldn't be enough, because the world is full of servers who kill themselves with service. Service for the Hierarchy isn't enough. The outstanding thing that struck me in the Theosophical Society is that it is a great group of fanatical devotees who do believe in the Hierarchy and are occupied with the Hierarchy, but I never met an initiate in the TS. It would be interesting to find out what the other requirement is.

B: A sense of aspiration to become initiate, "to tread upon the work I do," self-abnegation.

RK: You initiate things and carry them through.

AAB: What prompts you to initiate them?

RK: I am identified with the whole. Will, interest, not desire, not the will that drives, but the will that remains.

AAB: We have service, aspiration, the will that remains. What else do you need?

C: Revelation.

AAB: Revelation is the reward.

LM: Identification.

AAB: Sensitivity to the unknown.

RK: That could be the spiritual instinct.

VH: Many people are sensitive to the unknown.

AAB: It depends upon what your unknown is. It means a great deal more than that. There are certain factors in your mind such as experience, aspiration of course, service of course, the fixed will, orientation, identification, but there is no identification until after the third initiation when there is unification. I think we are below that level. Identification, yes, but that applies to the higher initiations. I haven't the remotest idea what it means.

Going back to sensitivity to the unknown, for the probationary disciple – the real probationary disciple who has worked at character building, purification, at mind development and the control of the emotions – the Master and the Master's Ashram is the unknown, and he gets increasingly sensitive to it. He becomes more and more sensitive to impressions from the Master until gradually the unknown becomes the known fact in his experience and he becomes part of the Ashram that has always enfolded him, but he didn't know it. Then he is an initiate. What next? I think we should become a factual group and work at a higher turn of the spiral.

RK: With the Hierarchy.

AAB: With the Hierarchy and the Plan.

N: As a person becomes manifested love on the plane on which he dwells, he will become sensitive to the unknown. When such an attitude is applied to all the problems of life, it seems to me that the things we become sensitive to have nothing to do with the lower aspect. It seems to me that love makes a person porous to the unknown.

AAB: You are quite right, basically, but you will never be an initiate by being loving.

N: I think there should also be wisdom and dynamic activity.

AAB: Where does mind come in then?

N: Mind is the active agent of the love aspect, and whatever sensitivity is open to the higher ideas of the Plan, the mind must immediately put into action. The will must assist it, but love will always fuse it and keep it alive.

AAB: You are quite right.

RK: Talking about the life aspect, which supersedes the love aspect after the third initiation, you take us up to the third initiation because at the third initiation love functions via the mind. This is what we are groping after in the Fourth Degree – the Life, the Monad.

AAB: Then you have the perfect manifestation of deity that has never yet appeared on Earth, not even in Christ. The next great race will produce a Hierarchy and a group of Masters infinitely removed from the present one because we shall be infinitely removed from what we are now, and Christ will have passed on to take the next step and we shall have His successor.

N: We shall be just as far from Christ as we are now.

AAB: We will never catch up with Him. Of course all these differentiations are differentiations of mind. They only exist in time and space.

What I want to see work out in this group is a series of recognitions and not this vagueness that we have. We talk vaguely about life and love and initiation, but these things aren't vague in reality.

VH: Life is rather vague.

AAB: We don't know anything about it. The initiate of the third degree is beginning to know what it is.

RK: When we begin to work with life, purpose comes in and the quality of the purpose determines the reality of the life. Life is characterized by a purpose though it is seemingly purposeless. It always works toward God – purpose in a purpose.

AAB: These are some of the ideas that we vaguely have that eventually lead us to revelation if we follow them up. I like the words the Tibetan uses: Life, Quality, Appearance. They are truer to the whole thing.

JL: Who takes initiation? The disciple takes the initiation. The personality has nothing to do with it; the Master has nothing to do with it; the Soul does nothing toward it. Who is the disciple?

AAB: Personality, Disciple, Soul – work it out. On the downward arc the Soul was continuously initiated into matter until it reached its major initiation, which was individualization. Had you thought of that in terms of initiation? What individualizes? A center of life that was formed of quality and substance coming together. That center of life is the individual, and then cycle after cycle that individual passed through initiation after initiation. Every time one of the five senses became a functioning fact that was an initiation of the individual. As you watch a baby when it first hears, touches, sees, tastes and smells you are watching initiation take place. Then another initiation came after the individual entered the Hall of Learning and acquired knowledge and selfishness, and through knowledge and selfishness the individual was initiated into the nature of the three worlds and his consciousness gradually expanded until the individual was initiated into the physical way of life and the emotional way and the mental way. That is where we are made up of Soul substance and life, and it is that individual that takes initiation.

C: I think that the individual is a speck of the One Life, and the One Life is taking initiation piecemeal.

AAB: That is a theory, and in initiation there is no theory. Nobody knows what life is. Initiation is a factual thing, and I want you to get this great synthesis and gradation on the downward arc and on the upward arc and come to the five great initiations. The reason we are having so many additions to the rank of disciples is because the One in Whom we live and move and have our being is passing on to a new initiation and the individual cells in His body are moving forward to take their next step. Personally I don't understand anything about the life aspect, and I don't believe that anybody

does except initiates of the fourth, fifth and sixth degrees, and they never talk about it because they know it is a waste of time. So we just get the theoretical side of it.

VH: Does initiation go on ceaselessly then?

AAB: I don't know. In *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* [by W.Y. Evans-Wentz] there is a path of higher initiation, and the Tibetan tells us that initiation is only an experiment on this planet. I don't know what initiation is, for you cannot know unless you know what the goal is for all initiations. All you can do is to apply it to the next step ahead.

One of the most valuable things a disciple can do is to know what he knows and what he doesn't know. The trouble with so many disciples is that aspiration has leaped ahead of capacity to understand. I want this group to get factual about things and not deal with subjects that we cannot understand.

The Christ never took initiations; Jesus took them. At the time of the five great crises the body was not His but that of Jesus. It wasn't a question of personality there. The whole subject is one of the deepest mysteries.

RK: Rudolf Steiner had a book on Jesus Christ.

AAB: He gave a very material presentation. It seems to me that he confused the consciousness aspect of divinity with the historical Christ and made the historical Christ sum up in Himself the entire Second Aspect of divinity so that no one before or after could replicate it, whereas Christ said, "the things that I do ye shall do, and greater things shall ye do because I go unto my Father."

AP: It never has been and never will be again.

AAB: It has been before. The only difference between Christ and the previous great teachers or the Buddha and the previous teachers was that the emergency of the times called for a focusing of power, and they were the only people capable of receiving it. I think we are on the verge of seeing it again because the will aspect has to focus itself in something.

AP: Initiation to me means successive expansions of consciousness and becoming that of which you become conscious, one after the other, and as you take each one you become that and know what you are and what it is. Coming right back to where we are, get a conception of life and love and wisdom and then become it, and then take the next step.

AAB: That's what I mean by sensitivity to the unknown and expansion of consciousness and then becoming. "Having pervaded the universe with a fraction of myself, I remain." Same thing.

AP: The important thing and the only way to grow is to focus on the next step, get that expansion and build it into yourself just as food is assimilated into the body. I can lose myself in the idea of becoming.

AAB: Initiation succeeds becoming to reverse it. What you really mean is that you are not conscious of that which lies beyond, and then you have to demonstrate it actually on the physical plane, but you can never show the extent to which you have become. They never fathomed Christ. The initiate is never understood. The trouble is that past students have made initiation so much easier than it is. They have made it depend upon the personality, which it doesn't. They have been so preoccupied with what the initiate has to do that they have lost sight of what he becomes and

becomes identified with. The initiate becomes a powerful introvert and at the same time a powerful extravert.

R: It is a question of being integrated into a group as a group.

AAB: Yes, like the five senses. The moment the child is initiated into the five senses he becomes a participator with all who have developed the same senses.

AP: The Scottish Rite Temple in Washington has an inscription cut into the base of the altar as to what initiation is.

AAB: A disciple works always from the midway point; an initiate always returns to the middle of the temple.

RK: I think that if we here come to clear conclusions, greater work can be accomplished. We become magnetic to each other and more magnetic to the great ones.

AP: You become a focal point in the mind of God. Becoming, those initial steps – more and more it seems to me that all these things are fourth dimensional things, and we are still only in three dimensions. You talk about going on to life and love. You have to proceed in four directions in relation to all of those qualities in order to have an answer. Something clicks and all of a sudden you move right into an entirely new substance or thought. Just as a catalyst causes a rearrangement and reorientation, and the whole mass changes and you have a new substance. The diamond and carbon have the same substance in them. There is a rearrangement of the particles. Something like that happens spiritually when you are initiated.

RK: I saw what it means to mount the cross. To mount the cross is really, in this fourth round, to go four ways at once to the fifth.

VH: Do you think if you take initiation you go into a new dimension?

AAB: That is quite true.