

Talk by Alice Bailey to Arcane School students February 25, 1944

AAB: We are returning to Rule 4. In the Fourth Rule we come to something totally different. It concerns the effect of the Ashram, of the group, upon the individual in the group, and deals with the work of the Ashram and the Master and not with the individual in the Ashram.

One of the things you learn when working with groups of esotericists is that they have one major preoccupation, and that is themselves in the group. They are preoccupied, if they are raw beginners, with themselves from the character angle. Then as they get more into it, they get preoccupied with themselves in relation to those around them and the group here on the physical plane and whether they have an effect in this and that direction. We discover that people are difficult to work with and later that we ourselves are difficult to work with. Everything of a personality nature in a group comes to the surface and works itself out if there are enough people in the group to stand steady and have patience.

Then when that preoccupation is beginning to pass, there comes a preoccupation with status. Where do I stand upon the Path? What is my relation to the Master? Is the Master aware of me? Is the group, the Ashram, aware of me? Where do I stand? Where am I going? Am I making good? All those are elementary phases on the Path, and they have to be outgrown.

Eventually the disciple becomes less self-aware in the group, and the preoccupation then becomes how much can be done as a Soul to relieve the Master of all responsibility where the disciple is concerned. How does one carry out one's individual service to humanity while at the same time carrying out the Plan that the Ashram presents to us for fulfillment?

Then will come the higher preoccupation, which I don't think we need to get into right now, because I think we want to keep this group practical. I like to think that this group has left behind the elementary preoccupations, that we don't think so much about ourselves, that we should be enough blended and fused to be natural with each other, naturally disagreeable even. If we are disagreeable people or if we are nice people, we don't get alarmed over it. We are just disciples working together and not interested in personalities at all. We drop ourselves consciously and deliberately below the threshold of consciousness, which is a paradoxical sentence. Then we can stop thinking about ourselves, our status, our importance in the Ashram, and become simply instruments, people who have only one objective and that is to help, simply to help anybody and everybody we meet – in a large way if we are large people, or in a small way if that is all we can do. I have seen so many people fail because of one of two things. Where they have an important piece of work to do and they haven't the equipment, they go through a cycle of complete frustration because the vision is too big and the attainment, or even partial attainment, lies outside possibility. In this case, take the position, "here I stand and through me the Soul can work." Or else they are so conscious of their lack of equipment, of their inability to make good, that they fail all around and don't even do the little things they might do. I look at people, and knowing something of their background and their inheritance physically and otherwise, of the environment in which they were brought up, I am conscious that they are doing better where they are than I am with what I have.

The Fourth Rule deals very largely with factors that lie way beyond our comprehension. I am going to read the last sentence of our theme for this evening because it is an amazing one and it provides a most interesting seed thought.

The reservoir of life is the place of death, and this is the first lesson that the disciple has to learn.

I am reading that first because the whole thing leads up to it. This is the rule: [Reading from *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 96]:

Let the group see that all the eighteen fires die down and that the lesser lives return unto the reservoir of life. This they must bring about through the evocation of the Will. The lesser wheels must not for aye revolve in time and space. Only the greater Wheel must onward move and turn.

This is a rule peculiarly related to the fourth Creative Hierarchy, embodying its goal as the Aryan root race can sense and approximate it. It is peculiarly related also to the quaternary to which we give the name “personality,” composed of a vital or etheric body, a sum total of emotional states and a mind, plus that integrated something that we call the whole man. Rightly understood and followed, this rule reveals the nature of the fourth plane or fourth state of consciousness, that of Buddhi or the plane of pure reason, the intuition.

AAB: There is a clue in the words “Let the group see” because on the Buddhic plane there is no personality life at all, only group life. Therefore the whole rule has to be interpreted and understood from the angle of the intuition. [Reading further on p. 96]:

From the angle of the higher initiate, this rule is related to the activity of Monad, Soul and body within the planetary Life, and covers a great mystery and an entire system of relationships of which the individual in the three worlds is a dim and uncertain shadow. Some clue to the higher quaternary dealt with in this rule will emerge dimly in your consciousness (more is not yet possible) if you will attempt to realize the following:

1. The Monad relates the initiate to the Will of God, to the Council at Shamballa, to forces active on the planet Pluto, and on another planet that must remain nameless, and also to the Central Spiritual Sun.

AAB: The real theme of this rule, as I can see it, is that by the evocation of the Will, the lowest aspect of the Monad, we bring about death. That is really what is meant by HPB’s statement to “kill out desire” in *The Voice of the Silence*. It is in the reservoir of life that we find death. [Reading further on pp. 96-97]:

2. The Soul relates the initiate to the Love of God, to the consciousness aspect of Deity, to the Hierarchy as a whole, entering it through the Ashram of the Master Who has aided him to take initiation, to the planets Venus and Mercury, to the Sun Sirius, and to the Heart of the Sun.

3. The Personality relates the initiate to the Mind of God, to the intelligence principle of the planetary Life, to humanity as a whole, to Saturn and Mars, and to the physical Sun through its pranic aspect.

4. The Life aspect of the planet, or that great ocean of forces in which all these three aspects live and move and have their being, relates the initiate to that Life that works out through Shamballa, through the Hierarchy and through Humanity, thus forming part of the great sum total of manifestation.

It is to these major quaternaries that Rule 4 refers, and their relationships only emerge as the initiate keeps the rules.

AAB: This rule contains four sentences, each referring to one of the four aspects. The first sentence is “Let the group see that all the eighteen fires die down and that the lesser lives return to the reservoir of life.” Second, this must be brought about through the evocation of the will. Third, the

lesser wheels must not always revolve in time and space. Fourth, “only the greater Wheel must onward move and turn.” This has to do with the effect of the group life and its radiation upon the individual in the group.

What effect does this group of twenty-one people have upon me, the twenty-second? Could we put into clear wording the effect that this group has upon each of us? It’s not what we do to the group, but what does the group as a whole do to you or to me? It must do something. Then when you come into a Master’s Ashram and are still more sensitive and still more perceptive, what is the effect of the Ashram as a whole upon you? Not the effect of the individuals but the effect of the whole Ashram? We are not sensitive enough to group impact to answer this question.

“Let the group see that the eighteen fires die down.” These notes deal with the group personality impressed upon all the personalities of its members. None in the Ashram is below the level of a disciple on the evolutionary ladder. In an ordinary group you have contrary force, but in the Ashram everybody is a disciple, has met certain requirements, and has left certain things behind. It is interesting to speculate upon what a group like that would be where everybody is at a relatively high level. A Master’s Ashram has in it disciples and initiates of all degrees, but no probationary disciples, only disciples who are accepted and dedicated. [Reading further on p. 98]:

The three Rules we have earlier considered are general in nature and relate to certain broad themes or demanded hypotheses that must govern the consciousness of the disciple in the future. In this particular Rule we enter the realm of the specific and are presented with certain “intentional” activities that must govern the disciple’s life now that he is an integral part of the Ashram. He is faced with the proposition of making his life of such a nature that it furthers the group purpose, enhances the group strength, eliminates all that might hinder group usefulness, and brings closer the objective for which the group was formed – the carrying out of the Master’s plans.

AAB: The Arcane School exists to carry out plans given by the Tibetan. What we mean is that within the School is a group of men and women who pledge themselves to do that, and even they back down. A pledged disciple may display serious faults, but he never turns his face the other way; he never weakens, never. [Reading further on p. 98]:

It was the disciple’s innate, instinctual and individual response to this ray objective, and his effort to subordinate his personality to the dimly sensed Soul dedication, which led the Master in the first instance to recognize him and incorporate him into his Ashram. The moment that happened, the disciple came not only under an increased impact of egoic force and egoic impulsive intention (using those words in their occult sense), but the group radiation began its beneficent work upon him. The magnetic “pulling” power that had hitherto led him forward is now superseded by a radiating stimulating potency; this effects great changes in him, and produces both eliminating and substituting results.

AAB: A Master will interfere via a projection of his energy or thought at a time of great emergency when a disciple, through some weakness, is liable to hurt the group. He does not interfere on behalf of the disciple. It is difficult for us to realize that a Master cannot think in personality terms. It is as much of an impossibility for a Master to think in terms of personality as for us to think in terms of a dog’s consciousness. Initiates and disciples can think in both directions. [Reading further on pp. 98-99]:

The effect of the life of the Ashram, as far as the group that forms it is concerned and apart from the Master’s Own potency, can be described as follows:

1. The life of the personality is steadily weakened, and its grip upon the Soul is definitely loosened. The Soul begins to dominate in a very real sense.
2. The necessity of incarnation becomes appreciably less, and finally life in the three worlds of human manifestation becomes needless. All the lessons have been learned and the Soul objective has been attained.
3. The Will of the Monad begins to be sensed; the will aspect blends with the love aspect and makes the intelligence aspect fruitful and effective for the carrying out of divine purpose, focused for the disciple through the Ashram.

AAB: You have to learn to work as a group and register the group spiritual stimulation if you are ever going to be responsive as a disciple to the energy focused upon the individual through the Ashram. [Reading further on p. 99]:

4. The purposes of time and space, of events and extension, of matter and consciousness have been achieved and are eventually superseded by something for which we have as yet no term and of which we have no conception. It is that which begins to express itself after the third initiation, when the Father aspect “comes into view” – I know not how else to word it.
5. The whole is seen to be of more vital importance than the part, and this not as a dream, a vision, a theory, a process of wishful thinking, an hypothesis or an urge. It is realized as an innate necessity and as inevitable. It connotes death, but death as beauty, as joy, as spirit in action, as the consummation of all good.

AAB: With the Soul in action you have incarnation, but when you have spirit in action you have death.

RK: I suppose that is why there is so much death on Earth today because spirit is in action.

M: Wouldn't it be great if people could understand that more fully?

AAB: We are so identified with the form. [Reading further on p. 99]:

It will be obvious, therefore, that the interpretation of these Rules must involve capacity to pass beyond the usual attitudes and what one might call the usual metaphysical and Theosophical platitudes, and to see life as the Hierarchy sees it. This means that life is approached from the angle of the Observer and not from that of a participator in actual experiment and experience in the three worlds.

AAB: Death is in reality unconsciousness of that which may be functioning in some form or another, but in a form of which the observer is unaware. This is one of the first lessons the disciple learns. This is amazing because of its implications. If this group here really understood the significance of what the Tibetan is saying, we would not be sitting here applying these things to ourselves and wondering whether we understood. We would be occupied with something so much beyond that that I don't know how to express it.

B: If we were able to interpret spirit in action it would help take the sting out of the wholesale deaths that are taking place at this time.

AAB: The masses don't even understand what *Soul* in action means.

B: Would it be possible for us to interpret this idea so as to interpret death to people?

AAB: I don't see how you can explain what the Tibetan said. They won't like the idea that "the new energies that bring in the new cycle always begin by destruction" because the attitude of the average person is to hold on to the old. The work we are doing in the School, and in schools such as this, is to teach the mass of intelligentsia the work of a *Soul* in action, and you have to go into definite discipleship to be able even to sense the work of *spirit* in action other than theoretically.

P: It's impossible due to people's emotional state and lack of control. They wouldn't be receptive to it.

AAB: They are identified with the form.

AP: It isn't death itself alone, but the absence of something in their life. I still suffer anguish over the loss of my mother who died two and a half years ago.

AAB: We can get a response from people to one of the lower aspects of the same teaching when they believe in the immortality of the Soul. It is an effort for the ordinary person to understand what the Tibetan means by spirit in action. The mass of people has to believe in immortality, in heaven.

CH: Wouldn't the two ideas of reincarnation and karma be next?

AAB: I think that will be the major teaching given out to the average person. We have brought the whole teaching down from where the Tibetan wants it. "Spirit in action" has nothing to do with the death of the form. All this teaching is new.

M: Death in the form is what seems to bother humanity today. It is up to the group to understand how we can present it to people who are troubled over death in the form.

AAB: You can't present it. It is impossible for you to realize the things out of form that you may know and register that have to be destroyed equally with the form. I suppose one of the lowest parallels that expresses this fact is that you become an idealist and build up a theory and that theory has governed your actions for years. Then it becomes a limitation and it has to die. Your ideals have to go because, when you have an ideal that is conditioning your equipment and your life, you are divided, you are dual, you are not a unified person. This is a dangerous doctrine for beginners, but a divine truth for those who know.

RK: Because those who know function in synthesis and the others function in duality.

AAB: And their emphasis is in connection with the things of the form. You all remember Mrs. GVH. She had an idea of love. It was her idea of love and she talked the patter of love all the time, and that ideal she had of love separated her from us. It was a detriment to our relationship. Some day her idea of love has to be destroyed. It will be destroyed when her intuition is awakened. The death of such ideas is far more important than the death of the form. Have you ever thought what a safeguard the physical body and brain are in protecting you from the astral plane and that if you weren't limited by the physical body, the whole astral plane might pour in on you as it does with people who are dying. You are protected by the body, and there are things that have to be destroyed when you function from the plane of Buddhi. This astral business could find no entry in us if there weren't those reactions in us that attract the evil. Those things in us that let in the undesirable astral have to be destroyed.

There shall be no more sea, and this is the second death. [Paraphrase of Revelation 20:14 and 21:1]

The water or sea is a symbol of the astral body. Use your imagination. Wouldn't you hate to have the astral plane entirely disappear? You are apt to think of it in terms of evil, but there is a lot of beauty there too. All the things you imagine, all the things you picture in terms of color and beauty. What takes its place?

M: What takes the place of beauty?

AAB: Something we know nothing about. There is no color except in form. There must be something higher when we have the mechanism to know and recognize it.

W: What about sound and what we call music? There must be higher grades of sound. Is that part of the astral plane too?

AAB: There is no sound on the astral plane. It's always the higher correspondence of these lower things.

M: What is meant by the eighteen fires?

AAB: From our point of view, seven on the physical plane, seven on the astral plane and four on the lower mental equals eighteen. They have their higher correspondences.

CH: What about that portion about group radiation and magnetic pulling power?

AAB: [Quoting from above]:

The disciple came not only under an increased impact of egoic force and egoic impulsive intention (using those words in their occult sense), but the group radiation began its beneficent work upon him. The magnetic "pulling" power that had hitherto led him forward is now superseded by a radiating stimulating potency; this effects great changes in him, and produces both eliminating and substituting results.

That is why it would be dangerous to work on the astral plane if you were only a probationary disciple, because probationary disciples need magnetic pulling power. He is at the stage where maybe he has to go back. The probationary disciple in an ashram is subjected to the stimulating radiating potency and might go utterly to pieces. Christ spoke about a man out of whom seven devils were cast, and his last state was worse than his first. A tremendous casting out took place, but nothing was put in at the stage where he was receptive to that which must be superseded, that which must be eliminated. It's dangerous to push people too hard.

RK: That magnetic pulling power and the radiation that supersedes desire – it seemed to me that we are functioning on that level that we call the Spiritual Triad, and that which holds the disciple as a mental pull is mental matter infused by the Soul. That which supersedes it is Soul matter infused by the intuition, by Buddhi. That is the radiating thing. That which supersedes that is the spiritual potency of the Monad and that is dynamic.

Magnetic – Radiating – Dynamic

The Tibetan says of a certain disciple that when he becomes focused as a Soul it will be done by radiation. The effect of the life will be serving by radiation, and that is because he is tuned in on Buddhi.

AAB: I think it is dynamic spirit in action that really produces death.

N: The impact of the group on the individual is interesting. I sense that in relation to the School. I feel wonderful when I am able to identify myself with it. I have a sense of joy in feeling that I am a part of it.

RK: We talk around the teaching; we dare not tackle it, and yet as it was given to us we might gather ourselves together.

AAB: In group formation your mind gets it. It was interesting when we were doing telepathic work some years ago. We were 75% successful. One person would be chosen each month to do the broadcasting, and the remainder of the group was to receive. Sometimes we would broadcast a number, sometimes a symbol and sometimes a word. Some people saw it, others would hear it, and the ones who were the best knew without any seeing or hearing, and they were usually the ones who were more correct than the others. I find it quite easy to distinguish between telepathy and clairaudience, but it's difficult to distinguish between clairaudience and intuition. I think telepathy is the lowest stage of intuition.

FB: This problem of spirit in action producing death ties in with what is going on in Europe. There is a tremendous new life. The reservoir of life is almost overflowing, exemplified by the strength of humanity at this lowest point to insist that we are going to have a better world. It is an amazing thing, and that to me is the reservoir of life that is the place of death, and the death of the physical body that is occurring is practically of no matter. It is the death of the human qualities brought about by the widespread degradation forced upon humanity. Millions are so degraded through suffering that they are the vehicles in which the aspect of death is functioning in the reservoir of life. Things die in humanity that ought not to die.

AAB: And things that ought to die are dying. This is the measure of the Hierarchical problem.

AP: Christ is now acting as the preserver, and it is the preservation of just those things that FB is speaking of.

M: The preservation of spirit, the desire for a better way of life – that must come from spirit.

AAB: Or from vision.

FB: I think it comes from that human quality that we call goodwill.

AAB: You mean Will-to-Good.

FB: Which is going to be the new facet of the same diamond, a new door into consciousness, into the masses of humanity, a new quality apart from love, etc., which we are already used to.

AP: In the last analysis, doesn't that mean that the one imperishable, immortal thing that cannot be destroyed by anything is the divine life within us?

AAB: Of all evolution.

FB: Goodwill is of the new day. If you hope, it is a very different thing, if you have faith. If you have hope, by that very position you assume it is going to be done for you. You haven't lost your faith in God. But if you have the Will-to-Good for humanity, you are dynamically active about it.

AAB: I think you are right.

M: Are you inactive when you hope?

AP: It isn't the will.

AAB: Hope is an emotion. It is inactive.

M: I believe that Christ established hope on Earth, and that is what is being preserved.

AAB: You know it is being preserved; you don't hope.

M: It is for the better way of life.

AAB: Hope and desire are the same. I think the only people entitled to hope are the Hierarchy. They hope we are going to do it.

RK: They know we will do it because we are really built into the chain of Hierarchy.

AAB: I think by hearing it in group formation you will get more than by sitting and brooding over it by yourself. I think we would drag the light down if we attempted it by ourselves.

FB: Getting the teaching in this way, our concrete minds don't have time to get in the way.

AAB: I think that is true.