

Alice Bailey Talks

Talk given to Arcane School students on April 20, 1945

AAB: We have a rather curious paper to read tonight. It has to do with group initiation, with the four requirements for group initiation and the three ways in which a group preparing for initiation has to use the power of destruction. The Tibetan and presumably some of the other Masters are trying an experiment at this time. They are trying to see whether initiation can be shifted out of the realm of the individual into the realm of group activity. I don't know how much thought you have given to group activity in preparation for initiation. It means a great deal more than getting on together. Among the four qualities that a group preparing for initiation must have, impersonality is not listed because that is assumed. One of the first ideas that we have to grasp is that sentiment doesn't enter in. When we say we like each other, that is being sentimental, and it has no bearing on the situation. It should be possible for people to achieve such a degree of impersonality that on this level we may not like each other, but the Soul link would be so strong that that need never matter. I think that is a thought that warrants your consideration. This group has been meeting for a long time, over three cycles of months, just over three years. We have been working together as a group, and I wonder how far we have gotten toward our objective, where we really stand, and what we have definitely achieved. To me that is very important.

RK: From the angle of the Tibetan I think that group initiation is a very hopeful idea at this time because already we see what group work entails from the world of sport. Professional team work has a slight bearing and is illustrative of how people work together.

AAB: As a group what are we working for? That to me is the next thing that has to emerge out of this group relationship. For what particular ends is this group working? We all have a good time, but is anything happening? What is our objective? Where are we headed? What use are we to the Hierarchy?

The Tibetan has given two definitions of initiation. One is that initiation is simplification. One is that initiation is a process and not an event. I want to mention those two definitions because I think they should color our recognitions in these meetings.

What is being simplified in your life, not as a personality, but as a member of this group? What is being simplified in this group? And have you gotten out of your minds altogether that an initiation will take place? Because initiation is a process and not an event.

The whole value of the Theosophical Society was their presentation of the fact of the Masters and the fact of initiation, and their value does not depend upon the accuracy of the information they gave out. Most of it was inaccurate. They pictured the Masters as hunting for human beings worthy of being their disciples, and after they had been submitted to intense training on the part of the Masters, an event takes place in which they take initiation. The Tibetan has upset all that, but the Theosophical Society did point out the fact of the Masters and of initiation. As people go on the path of discipleship they discover for themselves what the Tibetan has said. The Tibetan has said that the Master is not interested in you as an individual; they will only recognize you if your world service is adequate to the opportunity. Initiation will mean tremendous simplification in your life. Initiation is a group process today, and that is natural as everything in the world is along the line of organization.

R: More an organism than an organization.

AAB: What is really happening when these groups can be formed and begin to function are the first steps toward the externalization of the Hierarchy. Only now are we beginning to get that. Will you have in your mind then that initiation is a simplification? It is a process and not an event. It has to be a group process, and it leads to the externalization of the Hierarchy on the physical plane, and for some reason we have all been gathered together to see whether we can help make that possible. Do you ever consider what the Hierarchy has to work with? Your appreciation of what the Hierarchy is up against will be commensurate with your vision of the task to be done, and to me the task to be done is so stupendous that it seems that that is the answer to your simplification. To do this task you have to discard every entanglement and get rid of every impediment – the ties that hold you. I think that the war itself has produced a great simplification.

R: Don't you think in this group we have achieved some simplification?

AAB: Try to read all these instructions from the deepest esoteric standpoint that you can reach. [Reading from *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 208]:

I would like to speak at this point in our discussion of the fourteen rules for initiates, upon the theme of group initiation; these rules are those to which groups that are seeking, in unison, a group expansion of consciousness, must learn to conform.

AAB: Does that mean that each individual person has an expansion of consciousness or does something happen in the group that we register together. I do not know. Do you see the distinction there? Does he mean that you and I will have an individual expansion of consciousness that will enlarge the group consciousness but still be our own, or does he mean that something else will happen?

In Vision and Organization the writer says that groups work together for a certain length of time, and where there is honesty of purpose and spiritual integrity and good relationship established, suddenly that group will produce from within itself two things: first the appreciation of a new aspect or phase of truth, and then the person that can take that phase of truth and give it to the world. I think that is worth considering. But the writer himself is blinded by conceit, which only shows that you don't have to be perfect to get hold of something.

M: What is perfection?

AAB: It is a relative thing. Certain things distinguish the initiates of the world and they are our standards of perfection. Source-Method-Goal – that is what we have to get clarity on. [Continuing to read from p. 208]:

It is for this reason that I have hitherto omitted to go into detail in relating these rules to the seven centers or, specifically, to the great seven solar initiations. Of these seven initiations only five concern average humanity. The remaining two initiations concern only those who are willing to meet certain unusual requirements and to produce that special effort that entitles them to the appellation, “Victors, through the clear pure will.”

Group initiation is no easy achievement, particularly as it is practically an untried experiment and constitutes essentially a pioneering effort. That such a development was inevitable, if the evolutionary growth of humanity proved in any way satisfactory, was early realized by the Hierarchy. However, it has taken millennia of years to make it seem – as a hypothetical effort – in any way possible, and only tentative experiments have as yet been attempted. The first objective of

these experiments (going on quietly in various places all over the world) is to see if a group of disciples can work together in such a manner that an inner fusion can be seen – by the Masters – to be taking place.

AAB: On what are we working together? The Masters are watching to see. The only effort we are making is a joint effort to understand, but is that what he means? I think we are on the verge of great success, but it will not come unless we work in unison.

R: Don't you think we all have the feeling that we are trying to become channels of light?

AAB: I don't think that is what we are intended to be. That is a tried thing. This is a new thing we are trying here. To be a channel of light is what the clergy say. I think that behind all that is something we have not yet touched.

W: It is more like a dynamo.

AAB: Like the heart.

RK: A group entity has a work to do consciously and purposefully.

AAB: That is what is lacking.

RK: The group entity should know that purpose along with the group plan.

JL: Isn't the work we can do the building of an esoteric school?

AAB: The building of an esoteric school isn't a qualification for initiation. I don't think so. I don't quite know what he is after, because esoteric schools have been successfully built by independent disciples down the ages. If you say it is that or the externalization of Hierarchy, that shifts things back onto the Hierarchy, but this has to be a self-initiated activity.

CH: If it is an untried experiment.

LM: Might it not have something to do with impression?

AAB: I think you are right. I think there is something there that we might be able to work on. There is something lacking in this group.

B: Read the Law of Group Progress in Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2. Many of the things you are talking about you will find there.

M: Maybe it will have something to do with simplification.

AAB: It is bound to.

M: A step at a time in simplification.

AAB: It will have to be because the physical plane is the plane of multiplicity, and as you proceed you go from multiplicity to unity. It is a question of registering it.

RK: What the group needs is tension, because tension will make the group an entity.

AAB: [Continuing to read from p. 208]:

The first objective of these experiments (going on quietly in various places all over the world) is to see if a group of disciples can work together in such a manner that an inner fusion can be seen – by the Masters – to be taking place. The results, hitherto, have not been encouraging. It has, for one thing, been difficult to find disciples who are approximately at the same point in evolution, whose rays are “shining through” adequately, and who can evidence some one quality, or some controlling theme (if I may use such a phrase) that they share in unison and that would suffice to hold them together and prove strong enough to offset personality differences, preferences and barriers.

AAB: What is the one thing that holds us together?

N: The Law of Synthesis.

AAB: I was wondering. I wouldn't think so. There is something existing in each person here that is uniform with all other personalities and is strong enough to negate our differences. Let us have it in mind.

R: I think the quality of spontaneity. When we first met there was so much self-consciousness. I feel that we have taken our first steps toward simplification.

AAB: Provided it is a first step and not just familiarity with each other.

AB: There's a sense of direction and purpose.

AAB: Yes, that is so. [Continuing to read from pp. 208-209]:

It has not been possible, as yet, to do this. Group after group has been tried and tested out by different Masters in various parts of the world, and hitherto all such attempts have proved failures. When I use the word "failure," I mean failure from the angle of the planned objective. From the angle of the individual growth of any particular disciple, there has not necessarily been failure; from the angle of the unwitting, general public, the publication of Discipleship in the New Age will prove in years to come an epochal success.

It might be of value to consider briefly what group initiation involves, and to do this factually and not sentimentally and aspirationally.

One of the problems confronting the Hierarchy in this connection is the elimination of sentiment – that curious, emotional reaction and relationship that links all the members of a group together in the bonds of liking or disliking. Where there is liking, then too strong a personality relation is established, as far as the good of the group is concerned. The group equilibrium is disturbed. Where there is disliking, the inner faculty of rebuff works constantly, and cleavages then occur. Is it not true that your relation to each other is frequently subjected to the impact of approval or of disapproval? When that attitude exists, the first steps towards group fusion are absent. This is what we mean by sentiment, and this emotional reaction must disappear as a preliminary stage. I speak not at this time about impersonality. For some people, impersonality is simply an escape mechanism from responsibility; for others, it connotes suppression and entails such hard labor that the entire time of the disciple is given to the achievement of impersonality, thereby guaranteeing

non-success. That at which you strenuously strive and that assumes undue place in your thinking, in due time becomes itself a prison and merits later destruction. Such is the occult law. Impersonality is possible only to the disciple who knows truly how to love, and to him who sees life and its phantasmagoria (including all associated persons) in the light of the Spiritual Triad.

LM: Is phantasmagoria a sort of a human specter?

AAB: It is something that the Soul has created.

RK: We have to elevate our sight in order to see truly.

AAB: [Continuing to read from pp. 209-210]:

It is to this that Rule 11 primarily refers, and it will not be possible for you to comprehend the significance of this rule unless there is a measure of clarity in your minds about true group relationships. Such relationships are not based upon personality or impersonality, or upon liking or disliking, or on criticism or non-criticism, but upon a real comprehension of “divine indifference,” spiritual detachment and deep, persistent, unchanging love. To many earnest aspirants the juxtaposition of these phrases will seem paradoxical, but an understanding of the occult paradoxes tends to liberation. In the comprehension of these basic attitudes lies the first lesson of the aspirant to participation in group initiation.

The second point that the group thus striving has to grasp is the necessity for the utilization of the force of destruction.

A group is brought together under karmic law, ashramic necessity and Soul direction.

AAB: Ashramic necessity is based upon fact that the Soul of each of us is in an Ashram, and there is a reflection on the physical plane of its place in the Ashram. That place in the Ashram is already occupied by the Soul. So there is Ashramic necessity that at some stage in the evolutionary process aspirants like us will find ourselves, and that is a reflection of the place where the Soul belongs. HPB tells us that the Soul is already a Master, and we have to become what we are. The entire Kingdom of Souls is the Hierarchy, but some Souls are unable to express themselves down here. We know the Hierarchy to be perfected human beings whose personality achieved inner

recognition. The Hierarchy is the Kingdom of God on the inner plane, responsive to impression. What are you responsive to? How does the Master reach you? Through impression? When you have set up a rapport with the Soul, it enables you to respond to Ashramic necessity.

JL: Would that make members in the Ashram dependent upon the individual and not upon the Master?

AAB: Yes.

JL: Has the Ashram an unlimited number?

AAB: When DK formed his own Ashram and was no longer a senior member in that of KH, his Ashram relieved the Ashram of KH of a number of students. It is all linked and tied together.

RK: It is not only moving up, but Light is coming down.

AAB: Impression is coming down. I think we are going to discontinue the use of the word "light," and we are more likely to think in terms of Pentecost rather than of light. There you have the science of impression.

M: You understand no matter in what language it is transmitted.

AAB: [Continuing to read from p. 210]:

A group is brought together under karmic law, ashramic necessity and Soul direction. Immediately there is presented to the watching Masters an opportunity for the very definite training of some willing aspirants, but also an equally definite point of tension, indicating real difficulty. There is little, in reality, to link these people except inclination, a joint aspiration and a goal seen and held in unison.

AAB: Inclination, a joint aspiration and a goal seen and held in unison. [Continuing to read from p. 210]:

The outstanding characteristic of such a group is spiritual selfishness.

AAB: What are you here for? You want to know more, you want to be more sensitive to spiritual values. Our main motive is our own spiritual development. [Continuing to read from p. 210]:

This statement may surprise you until a close scrutiny of your own heart is undergone, and then I venture to predict that you will discover that it is not divine love of humanity that has enabled you to find your way into the outer group of some Ashram but desire for development, for achievement and for liberation. The first step, therefore, is to recognize this and hence the injunction so often misunderstood: Kill out desire. This has to be the first destructive activity of the disciple. It is not what disciples seek, or want or desire that should condition them and drive them to what we might call “ashramic acquiescence,” but the all-impelling motive of world need. So disciples begin to rid themselves of desire by a process of attrition. They do not positively fight desire with a view to its elimination; they do not seek to transmute it (as should the probationary disciples), but they cease to give it any recognition.

AAB: The disciple thinks, “I want to know. So what? I won’t give it any importance but will go on.”

RK: The Tibetan uses three words. They are unfoldment, achievement and liberation. Those are very distinctive steps. We are still at the stage of unfoldment. As a group there is no achievement.

AAB: [Continuing to read from pp. 210-211]:

They fail to provide it with the needed stimulation of attention, for as ever, energy follows thought; they are preoccupied with world need and with the service they can render, and – almost inadvertently, as it were – desire dies of attrition.

It will be apparent to you, therefore, that it will take time for all the members of a group to achieve the destruction of individual desire, and that until some measure of this united liberating process is attained, the group cannot go forward together as a unit on the Way of Initiation.

The next step is the destruction of the ties that link the personalities of the group members. These must be severed, and the relation between the group members must be on the basis of Soul activity, joint pledge to the Master of the Ashram, and a united service given to humanity. There comes a

point of freedom in the group relation that will demonstrate in some definitely planned and united activity, carried forward in the outer world, but enriching the life of the Ashram. Until this stage is reached, the activity of the group corresponds to that of the probationary disciple and not to that of the pledged disciple. The spontaneously emerging group work, engendered by the group consciousness and fusing the entire group of disciples at a point of tension in service, is the first indication that the group is ready for further teaching, for an intensification of its group potency, and for a closer relation to the Master. This has all been brought about by the group itself, independently of any injunction of the Master, and as a result of the united Soul life of the group effectively making its presence felt. These two spiritually destructive processes – the destruction of desire and the severing of all personality ties – are the first two and essential results of true group work.

AAB: When we start true group work, are we going to sever our personality ties?

RK: It seems a very simple process of withdrawing from astral and concrete mental relationships and focusing at what we call Soul, but which is consciousness of son of mind, and from that level we work. We are unconscious of it.

AAB: There always will be a crisis of severance on the physical plane in order to arrive at Soul relationship on the physical plane.

N: Isn't that a form of death of a certain phase of activity?

AAB: It isn't a thing you do as a personality or from personality motives. It is something that happens because that inner spiritual life is so strong that it stimulates the inner spiritual life of those in the group, and your personality relationships die of attrition.

RK: The crisis is not horizontal but vertical.

AAB: It is both; that is what makes it so terrible. [Continuing to read from pp. 211-212]:

The third quality that must be utterly rooted out and destroyed is that of all reaction toward recognition, whether that recognition is accorded by the world of human beings, by other disciples, or by the Master. The ability to work without any token of recognition, to see others claim the

reward of action taken, and even to be unaware that the results of the good initiated by individual disciples or the group are claimed by others, are the hallmarks of hierarchical workers. The Masters get no recognition for the work done by Their disciples, though They initiated the original impulse and have given both guidance and direction; the disciples carry out the Plan; they shoulder the responsibility; they pay the price, either good or bad, or the karmic results of instituted activity, and they are the ones who gain the recognition of the crowd. But – until disciples seek no recognition, until they fail to think in terms of results and are unaware of the reaction of the world to their work as individual disciples – they have as yet far to go in order to gain the higher initiations. The entire problem becomes increasingly difficult when an entire ashramic group is concerned, for the recognition of the group service seems little to ask from the world that is served; nevertheless, such a demand and such an expectation delay the complete absorption of the group into the inner Ashram.

AAB: We are beginning to get something of that. There was a lecturer from the Theosophical Society who was terribly antagonistic to our work, but she is now referring people to the School because I said to her some fifteen years ago, “You are a disciple on your way into an Ashram, aren’t you?” She said that thought had always stuck with her because I had said it when she came as an enemy. I was impersonal, and the result was that some years later she is sending people into the School. Someone came in from the Theosophical Society and said, “I never knew that a group of people could work together on a basis of complete equality.” [Continuing to read from pp. 212-215]:

These are not, however, impossible objectives, or I would not waste your time or mine in their delineation. The group can measure up to the occult necessity if unitedly they recognize the scope of the endeavor and unitedly strive for complete absorption in service – an absorption so deep that it excludes all other recognitions, particularly those of a personal nature. We come back, therefore (as is continually the case), to the fact that when a group can arrive at a suitable point of united tension, non-essential reactions disappear and undesirable qualities are automatically removed.

These three types of work along the lines of destruction merit your careful consideration and – because they are along the line of the destroying aspect – it will be apparent to you that the method employed is that of the utilization of the group Will. It will be equally apparent that the group Will can only make its appearance under the Law of Occult Continuity when, and if, the group is functioning intelligently and demonstrating love adequately.

We now come to the third factor which group initiation involves. This is diversity in unity, consciously recognized and utilized. A group is not composed of disciples all of whom are being prepared for the same initiation. This is often a hard saying for group members to accept. The significance of my earlier statement, that a group is composed of men and women all of whom are at the same point in evolution, is a generalization and simply means that all of them have reached the point where they are pledged and unalterably committed to the work of the Ashram, under some particular Master.

The work, however, requires a diversity of quality and of potencies in order to be effective in manifestation upon the outer plane. It needs those who are in close contact with the Master, and are therefore initiates of a certain standing; it needs also those who have facility of relationship with the inner Ashram and are therefore senior disciples, though not necessarily high initiates; it needs also those not so advanced upon the Path of Discipleship because they have, or can establish, a close connection with ordinary humanity in the life of everyday.

A group of disciples such as this is consequently a miniature hierarchy, and a hierarchy exists in its various degrees in order to permit a wide range of effective relationships. Ponder on this statement. You can see now why there is necessity for the elimination of personality reactions, for only thus could the groups function as a coordinated unit with the various members recognizing each other's status and yet not moved to jealousy or belittlement thereby; the work is then carried forward on the basis of inspiration, coordination and practical application. The senior members of the group, and those with the most advanced status (whatever that may be), provide the incentive of the Plan as they receive it from the Master; the more experienced among the disciples then coordinate the Plan within the group, relating it to the Ashram and indicating its approach to the world of humanity; the neophytes – pledged and dedicated though yet without experience – carry out the Plan upon the physical plane. This entails, as you can see, smooth and effective coordination, a proper attention to the general picture, and an application of the detail of work to the immediate necessity. It is a hard task for a group of intensely individualistic disciples (and all disciples are individual) to begin to take the first steps towards these attitudes and the relationships which distinguish the Hierarchy as a whole.

Still another important factor in the group preparation for initiation is the cultivation of silence. How, we ask ourselves at times when the functioning of the Ashram is under discussion, can we

train our disciples to realize that, essentially, silence is not refraining from speech. So many disciples seem to think that it is, and that they have to learn not to talk if they hope to take initiation. Some would do a great deal better if they talked more than they do – along right lines. The silence imposed in an Ashram is refraining from certain lines of thought, the elimination of reverie and the unwholesome use of the creative imagination. Speech is consequently controlled at its source, because speech is the result of certain inner sources of ideas, of thought and of imagination; it is the precipitation (at a certain point of saturation, if I might so express it) of inner reservoirs that overflow on to the physical plane. The retention of speech and the suppression of words, if they are the result of a realization that what is to be said is wrong, or undesirable, or unwise, or wasteful of energy will simply increase the inner banking up and will lead eventually to a still more violent display of words at a later date; it may also bring about serious and disastrous conditions within the astral body of the disciple. The silence of thought is to be cultivated, and I do not mean silent thinking. I mean that certain lines of thought are refused admission; certain habits of thinking are eradicated and certain approaches to ideas are not developed. This is done by a process of substitution, and not by a violent process of suppression. The initiate learns to keep his thought apparatus in a certain effective condition. His thoughts do not intermingle the one with the other, but are contained (if I may thus pictorially word it) in separate compartments or carefully filed for reference and later use. There are certain layers of thought (again speaking symbolically) that are held within the Ashram itself and are never permitted to enter the mind of the disciple or the initiate when not consciously working in the Ashram; others are related to the group and its work and are given free play within the group ring-pass-not; still others are of a more mundane nature and govern the daily life and relationships of the disciple with personalities and with the affairs of civilized living and physical plane events. These are only indications of what I mean, but will suffice to show (if you duly meditate) a little of what is meant by the silence of the initiate. Within the permitted levels of contact, speech is free and unimpeded; outside those levels, no indication is given that the other spheres of thought activity, with their conditioning speech, even exist. Such is the silence of the initiated disciple.

We have therefore considered briefly but suggestively four qualities that a group preparing for initiation needs to develop, to consider and unitedly to achieve. They are:

1. The achieving of a non-sentimental group interrelation.
2. Learning how to use the forces of destruction constructively.

3. Attaining the power to work as a miniature Hierarchy, and as a group to exemplify unity in diversity.
4. Cultivating the potency of occult silence.

FG: As you were reading and talking about levels of Hierarchy it struck me that that is what is going on today – the leveling of humanity.

AAB: I think that is hopeful.

RK: It demonstrates a certain type of fusion within humanity.

AAB: It is a fusion of consciousness, of course.

GP: Last week we were talking about Roosevelt's fearlessness. In Dr. Cryle's book there is a statement that they have discovered that people paralyzed from the waist down lose their sense of fear and worry, and I was wondering if President Roosevelt was fearless on account of that.

AAB: I wouldn't think so. I think he was born that way. Fearlessness has to do with the adrenal glands.

M: He overcame his handicap and after that he became great.

RK: Even that affliction released the sense of inferiority in others. He served even in that way.

M: He gave them confidence to do something.

FG: I think simplification is going to be increased by modern architecture.

N: I had occasion to notice a review of a book on art by the French artist Faure. He said that someday, by a single line, we will give much more than in the past by many lines and greater confusion. The law of symbols will come into its own.

AAB: Of course there is a geometrical pattern behind every form. That applies to groups and things.

JL: The further the spirit of Christ gets into the world the more unification you will have and simplification by interrelationship. It blends them all into one, they are all still there.

FG: What form of simplification will this group take as it gets more unified?

N: More work and less talk.

AAB: As far as I can see, it is mostly talk and no work.