

Alice Bailey Talks

Talk to Arcane School students given on Friday, November 12, 1943

AAB: I think we have a most difficult subject tonight. I find it very difficult, not so much for myself as when I try to explain it to other people. It is on the use of the Sacred Word. It is one of the most difficult subjects to discuss with students or teach them to use. [Reading from *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 51-52]:

We come now to the consideration of a subject that always proves exceedingly difficult to students: The nature of the WORD, the AUM, and its later developments, the OM and the SOUND. Much confusion exists as to its significance or the necessity for its use. The phase of its recognition, through which we are now passing, is a purely exoteric one of accustoming the general public to the fact of its existence. This has been brought about in three ways:

1. Through the constant use in all the Christian Churches of the word "Amen," which is a western corruption of the AUM. The AUM is here the lowest aspect of the originating Sound.
2. Through the emphasis laid in Masonry upon the Lost Word, thus subtly drawing the attention of humanity to the OM, the Sound of the second aspect, the Soul.
3. Through the growing emphasis laid by the many occult groups throughout the world upon the use of the OM, its frequent use by these groups in public, and by those intent upon meditation.

The soundest approach is that of the Masonic tradition, because it deals primarily with the world of meaning and with a phase of the esoteric teaching. The use of the Amen in the ritual of the Christian Church will eventually be discouraged, because it is basically a materialistic affirmation, being usually regarded by the average churchgoer as setting the seal of divine approval upon his demand to the Almighty for protection, or for the supply of his physical necessities; all this is, therefore, related to the life of desire, of aspiration, of dualism and of request. It involves the attitude of giver and recipient.

The AUM and the Amen are both of them an expression in sound of the principle of active intelligent substance in the divine manifestation, the third aspect, and have served human need in that phase of material and form development. I refer here also to the development of mind or of the mental form. The personality as a whole, when perfected and brought under control of the Soul, is the "Word made flesh."

AAB: When the Tibetan says that kind of thing about AUM, he runs entirely counter to the eastern teaching. In the East they take the position that the AUM stands for the highest aspect, and DK says exactly the opposite here. He makes it the third aspect, or strictly materialistic. [Reading further on pp. 52-53]:

The mass of aspirants and of disciples are today learning the meaning of the OM, which is not the Word made flesh, but the Word released from form, and expressing itself as soul-spirit and not as body-soul-spirit. It might, therefore, be said that:

1. The AUM (note that I separate each aspect of this triple sound) brings the soul-spirit aspect down on to the physical plane and anchors it there by the force of its outgoing vibration. Using a symbol to make my meaning clear, it is like "a strong wind that pins a man against a wall and makes free effort difficult." It vivifies form; it intensifies the hold of matter upon the Soul; it builds around the Soul a confining prison – a prison of the senses. It

is the “sound of enchantment,” the sound that is the source of glamor and of maya; it is the great beguiling and deceptive energy, the note of the involutory arc. In it are hid the secrets of evil or matter, the uses of form, first as a prison, then as a training ground and as a field of experience, and finally as the expression for the manifestation of a Son of God.

2. The OM, rightly sounded, releases the Soul from the realm of glamor and enchantment. It is the sound of liberation, the great note of resurrection and of the raising of humanity to the Secret Place of the Most High when all other Words and sounds have failed. It is not a triple sound as is the AUM, but a dual sound, significant of the relation of Spirit and Soul, and of life and consciousness. This lost Word, symbolic of the loss in the three worlds (typified by the degrees of the Blue Lodges in Masonry) must be recovered and is in process of discovery today. The mystics have sought after it; the Masons have preserved the tradition of its existence; the disciples and initiates of the world must demonstrate its possession.

3. The SOUND is the sole expression of the Ineffable Name, the secret appellation of the One in Whom we live and move and have our being, and Who is known to the Great White Lodge through this name. Remember always that name and form are synonymous terms in the occult teaching, and these two words hold the secret of manifestation. The goal of the initiate is identification with all forms of the divine life, so that he can know himself to be an integral part of that Whole and can tune in on all states of divine awareness, knowing for himself (and not just theoretically) that they are also his own states of awareness. He can then penetrate into the divine arcana of knowledge, share in the divine omnipresence and – at will – express the divine omniscience and prepare himself to manifest in full consciousness the divine omnipotence.

AAB: I think the whole thing should go into the next set of the Fourth Degree papers. It is one of the clearest expositions that we have. [Reading further on pp. 53-55]:

I am using words that are futile to convey the underlying meaning of the Word. Understanding can only be arrived at when a person *lives the Word*, hearing its soundless Sound and breathing it forth in a vital life-giving breath to others.

The masses are hearing the sound of the AUM and, in their higher brackets, are finding that AUM the expression of something from which they seek release. The aspirants and disciples of the World are hearing the OM, and in their personal lives the AUM and the OM are in conflict. This may represent a new idea to you, but it conveys an idea of an eternal fact. It may help you to gain an understanding of this phase if I point out for you that for this first group the OM can be portrayed in the following symbol [see below] as expressing the material M nature whereas the second group can be portrayed by the symbol *m*, expressive of the Soul enveloped in matter. You will see, therefore, how the teaching leads one progressively onward and how the occult science brings one in touch with great mental reversals and divine paradoxes. For eons the Word of the Soul and the Sound of spiritual reality are lost. Today, the Word of the Soul is being found again, and with that finding the little self is lost in the glory and the radiance of the divine Self.

This discovery is consummated at the time of the Third Initiation. The initiate and the Master, along with those of higher rank who are approaching identification with Shamballa, are steadily and ever more clearly hearing the Sound emanating from the Central Spiritual Sun and penetrating all forms of divine life upon our planet – via our Planetary Logos Who hears it with clarity and with understanding – the Sound of the lowest syllable of the Ineffable Name of the One in Whom all the Planetary Logoi live and move and have Their

Being, for They are centers in the LIFE that is expressing itself through the medium of a solar system.

You can see how little use there is in my enlarging further upon this. Its sole usefulness is to give an expanding impulse to the consciousness of the disciple and to stir his imagination (the seed of the intuition), so that even while occupied in expressing the M and then the *m*, he will be reaching out after the Sound.

Earlier I pointed out that the sound of the AUM, the sound of the OM and the SOUND itself are all related to vibration and to its differing and varied effects. The secret of the Law of Vibration is progressively revealed as people learn to sound forth the Word in its three aspects. Students would also do well to ponder on the distinction between the breath and the Sound, between the process of breathing and of creating directed vibratory activity. The one is related to Time and the other to Space, and they are distinct from each other; and (as the *Old Commentary* puts it) “the Sound, the final and yet initiating Sound, concerns that which is neither Time nor Space; it lies outside the manifested ALL, the Source of all that is and yet is naught.” (No *thing*. A.A.B.).

AAB: I think the discussion of AUM and OM and how we can make it a vital thing has a very definite place.

B: Is there a difference in pronunciation between the two?

AAB: AUM starts with the sound “ä,” and OM starts with sound “o.” AUM properly sounded is seven vowel sounds. It isn’t single or triple. There was a man from India here who went to the Bell Laboratories and chanted mantras onto some kind of recording device that made forms on a screen. He sounded the AUM, and it made seven great pyramids. Then he sounded the OM, and it looked like one round sound.

ES: Would you care to elaborate on the highest aspect, the sound?

AAB: You want me to elaborate on it? When I take the fourth initiation I will. [According to *Maitreya’s Mission* by Benjamin Creme, that was to be her next initiation. SES]

P: In the Upanishads it says, “Those who sound the AUM return again, but those who sound the OM come not back and seek not again the form.” You drop out the U, which is the incarnating Soul aspect, and you get the OM, which is spirit and matter. You bring spirit and matter together.

AAB: The OM is the sound of Christ, the Word made flesh, and the moment we are the Word made flesh we return not again.

JL: Under number 1450 is concealed the AUM, which is said to be the number of pillars that support masonry.

AAB: OM – the lost Word. We will never recover the lost Word until the Temple of Ezekiel is built. It is a most ornate piece of architecture, a most amazing temple.

M: Who has to build it?

AAB: The Master Mason.

LM: What about his wheel?

AAB: There are four wheels turning upon themselves and full of eyes within and without. Isn't that the wheel of life, the fourfold personality?

RK: Also the four kingdoms.

AAB: The number four opens the door into manifestation.

FB: As I remember it, the teaching about the Sacred Word in *Letters on Occult Meditation* deals exclusively with the AUM. I am wondering whether in our next edition we should change it.

N: In the *Bhavagad Gita* there is OM.

AAB: In writing you are apt to have mistakes.

RK: A book going out to the general public might just as well confine itself to the AUM.

AAB: That depends upon whether it deals with Christ consciousness or with form.

P: Do you want to cut out entirely the divine omnipresence? The omnipresence is what we are trying to emphasize.

AD: I would have to read it.

FB: It is the implication that it carries with it. I always thought the OM was the lesser word, and our important word was AUM with its three sounds.

AAB: I always thought it was less important where you had the three.

JL: Somewhere the Tibetan says to pronounce the AUM and then stop and hear the OM sounded by your Soul. It was in something I was proofreading for England.

AAB: That is the new Antahkarana paper. Amen has four letters, which is definitely the fourfold thing. I find it difficult to explain the AUM to people. I don't know how to tell them after all these years.

RK: Someone asked me about the Sacred Word once. She wasn't in the School. To me the explanation for it is that it is a complete breath. It includes everything. It is life, and you are beginning to be conscious of life.

ES: When a person sounds the OM and then stops and hears the OM sound, what is it that does that?

AAB: I think that is due to the fact that one has reached a point of tension when slipping out of the body, and hears the etheric OM. I often hear the telephone ring before it rings. I hear it in the etheric. In meditation you reverse that. First you hear the physical sound and then the etheric. I often hear that in the Shrine Room [in the noon service meditations]. I hear the group sound, and then a few seconds later I hear it sound again.

JL: Is that what the Tibetan is trying to say when he says if you are good enough, and if you sound it properly, your Soul will sound it back to you?

AAB: If it really is the OM that you hear, it is the Soul that sounds it.

AD: From the vocal angle, when you open your lips and let them come together again, you have said the word without making a sound. That is the mechanism. Sound is vibrating breath. What comes through is the

sound of indwelling things. Sound is nothing but expressed thought. Nature makes us do that. It is inherent in all of us.

RK: Talking in terms of vibration, the Tibetan speaks of motion, and most of us think of physical plane motion, but motion is not only movement on the physical plane. On the astral plane it is desire, and on the mental plane it is thought. In that sense I was wondering what sound is on the astral and mental planes. We are taught that on the astral plane we see sound and hear colors.

LM: How do you explain this? I have been sitting in this room alone several times, and the AUM vibrates and I hear it in several different keys. This sound is alive; it is in this room.

N: In solitude in this room, and in the Shrine Room during a group meditation, in sounding the word very gently I feel a very large sound, more powerful than I myself could utter. It is not my own sound as I usually know it. It made me feel as though the whole room was filled with the group.

JL: One student can always see color when she hears the Word. She said when Mrs. Bailey sounds the word it is a golden yellow. Last night RK sounded the word as a definite green.

AAB: The golden color is the right color; that is the color I always think of. Golden yellow is the color of Buddhi, the Christ consciousness, and green is the color of sympathy, of fusion. We really have a whole field of science that has to be worked out in some way in the relationship of sound and color. If we wanted to we could have a real laboratory here, but it has to be properly and safely done, because it is a very dangerous thing. If you visualize the color red every morning, in a short time you will be perfectly unbearable.

RK: For a while I did a little experimenting, and every time I sounded the Word I noted the musical note that corresponded, also noting whether I was working with a group or thinking of a Master, or working as one. It was a pretty constant thing. Forty-five times out of 50, if I thought of the same thing it would be the same sound. It would have been a good thing to go on with it, but I stopped. I don't see colors, but I sensed the quality, and probably that expresses itself in color.

M: Speaking of OM, several years ago I started to hear it – a beautiful note without beginning and without end – and I thought it might be the music of the spheres. Not so long after that someone brought a bell. When the bell was rung it startled me, for I recognized that the little bell rang the OM. I recognized the sound that I had been hearing and I knew it was the OM that I had heard.

AAB: It might be your own note.

FB: You used to seek to discover the note of the Shrine Room.

RK: No, just the range of my own meditative content.

FB: One could note changes according to the intensity of life at Headquarters.

JL: Strange thing about AUM and OM – there is no vowel or consonant that will make you finish by shutting your mouth and keeping quiet. When you are finished you have to shut up.

AD: "O" is considered to be a resonating sound. It is a vowel and includes all sounds. When you bring the lips together it goes on resonating through your lips.

H: Doesn't "M" stand for the physical aspect, the mother aspect?

AAB: That is one of the paradoxes. “A” is the sound of power; “U” is the recipient cup that holds the water of life; “M” is the form.

FB: We are taught that sounding the AUM silently has a different effect than sounding it audibly. Also, to create on the physical plane you must use AUM. The more the perfect the “M” sound, the more perfect the magical act.

AD: When people sing correctly they don’t deliberately articulate and enunciate. They think of the thing to be expressed, and the voice conforms to the thought.

M: That is done also when speaking.

AAB: Personally, I would like to see every occult student take singing lessons. I think if they would take lessons for one year they would become real esotericists. For years I had the best teacher in London teach me singing.

M: We can’t all sing, but we can learn to speak correctly. I am taking lessons from a teacher who was trained to read in unison beautiful poetry. We have breathing exercises all the way through to the resonant nasal sounds.

AAB: It would be interesting to take singing lessons, not to sing but to regulate the voice. Why is an operatic diva usually emotional? Because her breath is from the solar plexus, not from the heart.

AD: That is the old way. The technique is changing now. In the first lesson I start them on “O” so that the breath starts going up into the head, and they get the headspaces open, and you have a free individual. The voice has registers that correspond to five planes – dense physical, etheric, emotional, mental and higher. The point at which the voice sounds good reveals where a person is polarized; where it sounds bad indicates where the conflict is located. The voice reveals everything.

M: Sound is the most occult thing there is.

AD: My etheric body is such that it tunes in with the students, and when the student reaches alignment I get cold all over. They want to stop singing, but if they go on, suddenly the chill changes and a warm glow goes through the student, and the same thing happens to me.

AAB: Take the break in the voice. Is that indicative of a place where they are at fault?

AD: Yes, I spoke to Dr. Assagioli about it, and he said I was right.

AAB: I broke at high F [sometimes called F5].

AD: The emotional zone in the voice is above medium high C to F. F is the breach between emotions and mind. You had to break through the breach in order to move up on to the mental plane. I read in *The Secret Doctrine* that when one can find that little nerve up in the pharynx behind the soft palate, one has found entrance into higher realms. Singing can actually take you into the higher realms.

AD: All nerves in the throat are dual, except for one that spirals and goes round and around the windpipe.

RK: The signature of God.

AD: Absolutely.

RK: I took lessons from AD for three years.

AD: RK used to say that I don't sing; *it* sings me.

FB: I think we might find it very useful in the advanced degrees to study something about the use of the OM. We have had teaching about listening to the Soul sound the Sacred Word, and then letting the personality reflect it and utter it. If we could learn to make an alignment sufficient to let the Soul sound the OM and let that vibrate in the personality so that the personality would sound the OM instead of the AUM, we might get this effect.

RK: The Soul *is* sounding it the whole time. Let us just hear it. But that is a very good point. Couldn't we have that as an exercise in the Fourth Degree, the sounding of the OM as FB suggests?

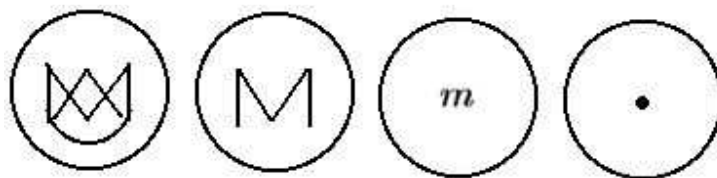
AAB: AD, I wish you would get some of these things you have been telling us down on paper. [Reading further on pp. 55-56]:

There are, therefore, great points of tension from which the Sacred Word, in its major aspects, goes forth. Let me list them for you:

1. The creative point of tension – a tension achieved by a Planetary Logos when He responds to the Sound of the Ineffable Name and breathes it forth in His turn in three great Sounds, which made one Sound on His Own plane of expression, thus creating the manifested world, the impulse towards the unfoldment of consciousness, and the influence of life itself. This is the Sound.

2. Seven points of tension on the downward or involutory arc; these produce the seven planets, the seven states of consciousness, and the expression of the seven ray impulses. This constitutes the sevenfold AUM of which the Ageless Wisdom takes note. It is related to the effect of spirit or life upon substance, thus originating form and creating the prison of the divine life.

3. The AUM itself or the Word made flesh; this creates finally a point of tension in the fourth kingdom in nature, at which point the evolutionary cycle becomes possible and the first dim note of the OM can be faintly heard. In the individual this point is reached when the personality is an integrated and functioning whole and the Soul is beginning to control it. It is an accumulative tension arrived at through many lives. This process is expressed in the Masters' Archives as follows:



You must remember that these symbols are an attempt on my part to translate ancient signatures in modern occidental type. The only one that is the same in all languages is, esoterically, the AUM.

4. Then comes a point of tension from which the individual eventually achieves liberation from the three worlds and stands as a free soul; he is then a point within the circle – the point

indicating the point of tension from which he now works, and the circle the sphere of his self-initiated activity.

AAB: I need not carry the story further; from tension to tension the initiate passes, just as do all human beings, aspirants, disciples and the lower grades of initiates; from one expansion of consciousness to another they go until the third initiation is undergone and points of tension (qualified by intension and purpose) supersede all previous efforts and the will aspect begins to control.

Here, briefly, is a fresh slant upon the familiar theme of the Word – a theme preserved in some form by all the world religions but a theme that, like all else, has been so materialized that it is the task of the Hierarchy to restore the knowledge of its meaning, of its threefold application and its involutory and evolutionary significances. Students would do well to remember that its sounding forth vocally upon the physical plane means little. The important factors are to sound it silently, inaudibly and within the head; then, having done so, to hear it reverberate there and to recognize that this self-initiated Sound – breathed forth from a point of tension – is a part of the original SOUND as it takes form as a Word. When we perfectly express the AUM, we can then sound the OM with effectiveness from progressive points of tension, until the Third Initiation. Then the effect of the OM is such that the personality as a separate identity disappears, the Soul emerges in all its glory, and the first faint sound of the originating SOUND breaks upon the ear of the transfigured initiate. This is the Voice referred to in the Biblical account of the Transfiguration. This Voice says, “This is my beloved Son.” The initiate registers the fact that he has been accepted by Shamballa and has made his first contact with the Planetary Logos, the Hierophant, the Initiator at the Third Initiation, just as the Christ, the Master of all the Masters, is the Initiator and the Hierophant at the first two initiations.