

Great Esotericists

Alice A. Bailey (1880–1949), Twentieth-Century Sirian Channel

Who Was Alice Bailey?

A spiritual leader and innovator within the Theosophical tradition established by famed nineteenth century occultist H.P. Blavatsky, Alice Bailey was a prolific twentieth-century British metaphysical writer whose twenty-four works have done much to shape the world of modern metaphysical spiritual literature. In fact, Bailey's contribution to global spiritual culture has been so great that the respected American scholar of religion, J. Gordon Melton, has claimed that Bailey's books are the *single most important source* that set the stage for the rise of the worldwide New Age Movement.¹ Given the pervasive planetary extent of the New Age Movement and its unparalleled effect on religion and spirituality, this claim elevates Alice Bailey to the status of a leading figure in contemporary world religion and spirituality.

Throughout the twenty-four books published under the name of Alice Bailey, there runs the theme of the star Sirius and its unmatched importance in the spiritual universe. For example, Bailey's writings claim that energies from the star Sirius were instrumental in the appearance of the Human Kingdom, provided the essential impetus for the establishment upon Earth of the mysteries of initiation and their overseers, the Planetary Hierarchy, stood behind the creation and rise of the mysterious and powerful Masonic Order, are the source of the Law of Karma, and result in the basic impulses which drive all phenomena of periodicity. These representative statements are just a few of the astounding propositions revealed in the literature of Alice Bailey in regard to the star Sirius. Bailey's works to date represent the most comprehensive assessment of the influence of this star available in metaphysical literature. For that reason, knowledge of Bailey's identity and

method of obtaining spiritual information is of importance to all seekers in the Sirian tradition.

Born Alice A. La Trobe-Bateman on June 16, 1880, in Manchester, England,² Alice Bailey was raised in an upper-class family and reared in the Anglican or Episcopalian church. Religiously inclined, Alice's first marriage wed her to fellow Englishman, Walter Evans, a former military officer who was to become an Episcopal clergyman. After marriage, Alice accompanied Evans to the United States for the completion of his theological training. Evans was eventually assigned to a cleric's position in California, a geographical move which was to prove pivotal for Alice, for it was in California where Alice would make contact with the Theosophical Society and cement the course of her later life and works. In the meanwhile, Alice gave birth to three daughters. Even so, Walter Evans proved to be an entirely unsuitable husband and father, his ability to provide financial stability hampered by alcoholism and indulgence in domestic violence.

At length, Alice was able to obtain a divorce and build her life anew in the second decade of the 1900s. It was during this period that Alice discovered the writings of Helena P. Blavatsky, the nineteenth-century occult writer and co-founder of the Theosophical Society. Alice became a member of the Theosophical Society in California, rapidly progressing from the status of an avid student to that of a much sought-after teacher of Theosophical principles. Then, in November of 1919, she entered into a phase of her life that would dominate for the following thirty years: a clairvoyant or telepathic moment which forever altered her life. As she has described it, she experienced her first telepathic contact with the spiritual Master to whom she would

later give complete credit for the content of all of her books.³

At about the same time, the Theosophical Society arrived at circumstances that were to have a decisive effect upon Alice's destiny. A split developed in the Theosophical Society between the forces of traditionalism and the forces of a more modern persuasion, and the more liberally minded Alice found herself cast to the edges of the group. Finding himself in the same position was Alice's husband-to-be, American Theosophical figure Foster Bailey. The two were offered administrative jobs with the office of the Theosophical Society in New York City, where they each moved and later married.

As conditions within the Theosophical Society continued to conflict with the Baileys' beliefs, and as Alice's telepathic connection with the hidden Master resulted in a growing list of compelling published writings, Foster and Alice Bailey joined forces in acting independently of the Theosophical Society to establish The Lucis Trust in 1922, and the Arcane School in 1923.⁴ The Trust and the School were formed in response to the world-wide interest evoked from the publication of Mrs. Bailey's *Initiation, Human and Solar, Letters on Occult Meditation*, and *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, all transmitted telepathically to Alice Bailey by the Tibetan adept known as Djwhal Khul, or the Tibetan.

Who Was Djwhal Khul, the Tibetan?

The identity of the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul is of critical importance to the nature of the information appearing in the books of Alice Bailey. A statement regarding this issue appears in the front of most of the Bailey books now published by Lucis Trust. Titled "Extract from a Statement by the Tibetan," it identifies the writer of the statement as a "Tibetan disciple of a certain degree" who lives in a physical body on the border of Tibet and who presides over a large group of Tibetan lamas. Dated August 1934, the statement goes on to indicate that the Tibetan's mission is the teaching of perennial spiritual truths wherever possible and the assisting of other Masters.

Bailey herself corroborated these assertions in *The Unfinished Autobiography*. There she recounted the story of a close acquaintance who, against her wishes, attempted three times to find the Tibetan at his supposed location of Shigatse, Tibet. Having traveled to the Tibetan hamlet of Gyantse in Tibet, some fifty miles southeast of Shigatse, the acquaintance was at long last rewarded with a visit from an aged Tibetan lama highly revered by the locals. This lama indicated knowledge of Bailey, her writings and work, and gave the visitor a gift of incense intended for Mrs. Bailey. The local authorities were reportedly astounded, citing the exalted spiritual stature of the particular lama in question and the fact that he had never been known to have left his post in that manner.⁵ Bailey recounted this vignette in such a fashion as to indicate her certainty that the visiting lama was indeed Djwhal Khul. Hence, it seems that Alice Bailey was aware of the Tibetan as a definite, incarnated individual living in the Himalayan Range.⁶ The Theosophist, C.W. Leadbeater, also claimed to have had direct physical knowledge of Djwhal Khul, whom Leadbeater described as distinctly of Tibetan body type and showing signs of age.⁷

Mentioned in the above story are Gyantse and Shigatse, Tibetan place names used before the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Today these two locations appear on maps in Chinese form as Gyangze and Xigatze (and related spellings). Now well within Chinese territory, both are located west of Lhasa, the former capital of Tibet. Gyangze is about 100 miles southwest of Lhasa; Xigatze is about 125 miles west-southwest of the former capital. Darjeeling, India, lies approximately 175 miles almost due south of Xigatze, and Calcutta is to be found about 250 miles to the south. Mt. Everest is not far away, about 125 miles southwest of Xigatze. The general area is one of exceedingly rough terrain, with some of the highest elevations of the Himalayan mountain chain nearby.

Other sources have also singled out Shigatse as a location inhabited by extraordinary spiritual adepts. These include Theosophical literature⁸ and James Stephenson, who has stated that

H.P. Blavatsky identified Shigatse, Tibet, as the residence of the Masters Morya, Kuthumi, and Djwhal Khul.⁹ Sylvia Cranston, arguably the best biographer of Blavatsky, reported credible indications that Blavatsky spent time in or near Shigatse, perhaps in association with what may have been a secret esoteric school located at the nearby Buddhist monastery of Tashilunpo.¹⁰ Shigatse was also identified in Bailey's *Initiation, Human and Solar* as the residence of several Masters.¹¹ To the extent that these statements can be taken at face value, it appears that significant agreement exists regarding at least the one-time location of certain advanced beings, Djwhal Khul among them, at Shigatse.

However, the Tibetan also describes himself as "a resident of northern India" in material first published in 1944.¹² Given the fiendish Chinese invasion and decimation of Tibet which was to begin in the early 1950s, such a removal to a nearby, safer area might well have been a precautionary measure prompted by precognitive awareness. It is also highly probable that any other such Masters once located at Shigatse did similarly, repairing either to physical locations or states of matter less exposed to the coming Chinese onslaught, the full horrors of which are now known to the West.

Hence, available information indicates that the residence of the Tibetan during his communication with Alice Bailey was either southern Tibet or northern India, perhaps both. In any case, before the Chinese takeover of Tibet, the general region encompassing both these locales was steeped in ancient spiritual traditions and folk beliefs of sacred spiritual beings inhabiting the mountain fastnesses. In this atmosphere, deeply influenced by Tibetan Buddhism and the various holy traditions of India, reports of beings who were capable of superhuman feats such as powerful, sustained telepathy, extraordinary modes of self-projection, the influencing of the weather, healings, and other seeming miracles were part and parcel of daily life. No one doubted their reality, established by centuries of occurrences.

The reality of these modes of functioning has been well documented in such works as

Alexandra David-Neel's *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, *The Way of the White Clouds* by Lama Anagarika Govinda, John Blofeld's *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet*, and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz. In addition, the whole of Tibetan Buddhism is rife with stories and traditions of extraordinary spiritual, mental, and psychic force generated from lengthy dedication to sacred practices. Such sacred practices were well known in the high Himalayan culture that straddled the border between southern Tibet and northern India together with its smaller northern neighbors.

It is out of this transcendent milieu that the influence of the Tibetan would therefore have emanated. A telling example of this coloring appeared in the Tibetan's use of the term "psychic gift waves." The Tibetan used this phrase in at least four passages of his transmissions to Bailey. In each example, the phrase signified the telepathic effect of a Master's spiritual emanations upon a student or disciple.¹³

"Psychic gift waves" is a literal translation of the Tibetan word BYIN RLABS according to Sanskrit and Tibetan scholar David Reigle.¹⁴ The English phrase "psychic gift waves" also appeared frequently in another work, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, as edited by W.Y. Evans-Wentz. This work is a collection and translation of authentic teachings from important Indian and Tibetan gurus, accompanied by oral teachings received by Evans-Wentz from his Tibetan guru, Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub.¹⁵ As with the Tibetan's usage, in the Evans-Wentz collected translations, the phrase "psychic gift waves" signified impulses of psychic energy telepathically transmitted from the Master (whether incarnate or not) to the disciple and constituting the true initiation into greater spiritual realities.¹⁶ The Tibetan himself states in his dictation to Bailey that the phrase "psychic gift waves" was used by what he called "Tibetan occultists."¹⁷

This single but significant example is highly suggestive that the Tibetan Master who telepathically transmitted information to Alice Bailey had roots in the ancient spiritual

lineages widely revered and celebrated in his geographical region. In contrast, it is not likely that such a phrase as “psychic gift waves” came out of Alice Bailey's own vocabulary. Though it is possible that she had read this phrase prior to its appearance in her works, her own linguistic style as demonstrated in her autobiography and elsewhere is typically a very British English.

Hence, upon the basis of Bailey's statements, the Tibetan's own words, and the known character of the geographical area from which the Tibetan ostensibly hailed, it seems plausible that Djwhal Khul was indeed a Tibetan adept physically located within a region once known for its extraordinary spiritual atmosphere. The type of consciousness common to his background would have therefore included understandings and capabilities far beyond those characteristic of average humanity. These might well have included the ability to communicate telepathically in a sustained and controlled manner.

However, there is more beyond the Tibetan's cultural frame of reference relevant to twenty-first century seekers interested in the Sirian theme. To the obvious influences attributable to his probable Tibetan spiritual lineage must be added the salient fact of the Tibetan's identity as one of many Masters constituting what is known as the Planetary Hierarchy. This is one of the reasons why the nature of the teaching given through Alice Bailey is not straightforward Tibetan Buddhism or Buddhist Tantra. It is of another character.

According to esoteric sources, the Planetary Hierarchy to which Master Djwhal Khul belongs is a largely unseen group of highly evolved beings who represent the next step for Humanity and who beneficently guide evolution on our planet through the radiation of spiritual influences and progressive ideas. The notion that such a group exists is not a new one. Numerous teachings throughout the ages have pointed in this direction, but the information transmitted by the Tibetan to Alice Bailey is perhaps the most direct and detailed revelation of the nature of the Planetary Hierarchy. As the Bailey works explain, the

members of this group were once average humans, but they have now raised themselves to an advanced status through countless lives of spiritual self-transformation. Throughout the Bailey works, the Tibetan indicated that such progress is the destiny of all human beings, though some may move forward quickly while others tarry.

To all the above must be added the initiatory status of the Tibetan within the grades of the Planetary Hierarchy. Published material indicates that at the time of his work with Alice Bailey, the Tibetan was an initiate of the Fifth Degree.¹⁸ According to the Bailey writings, very few individuals have reached such a point in evolution, one stage beyond the attainment of the Master Jesus in Galilee.¹⁹ Indeed, the Fifth Initiation marks a point far beyond the attainment of even the most gifted of average Humanity, one at which the individual has developed a highly spiritualized consciousness and has therefore earned the right to modes of functioning incomprehensible to the average individual. That the Tibetan functioned with full, reliable, and accurate remote telepathic viewing capability is evident in his letters to individual students reproduced in Alice Bailey's *Discipleship in the New Age*, Volumes I and II.

The Tibetan's Work

As given his own published statements, the Tibetan's work with Alice Bailey was but the second of three steps taken by Hierarchy for the purpose of revealing a much greater portion of the perennial spiritual knowledge called the Ageless Wisdom. The first step in this process was embodied in the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, with whom the Tibetan claimed he worked behind the scenes as telepathic transmitter.²⁰ Blavatsky's 1888 *Secret Doctrine*, an unparalleled study of the common themes underlying all the world's symbol systems, therefore provides the conceptual foundation for the works by Bailey. The close relationship between the works of Blavatsky and Bailey was acknowledged as well by Bailey in her autobiography when she stated that *The Secret Doctrine* was the basis for all her writings.²¹ This linkage was underscored by the fact that Bailey was a vocal

supporter of Blavatsky's efforts, maintaining membership in the Theosophical Society almost until death in 1949.²²

Accordingly, the Tibetan has said that the work of Blavatsky and Bailey function respectively as teachings preparatory and intermediate, and that both are intended to precede and condition the dawning Age of Aquarius,²³ a time period defined by the passage of the vernal equinox point in front of the stars of the constellation Aquarius. Of great interest is the Tibetan's further claim that a third and revelatory installment of his teaching is due to appear between 1975, and the early part of the twenty-first century.²⁴ The third phase of the Tibetan's telepathic transmissions can therefore reasonably be anticipated to take shape in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

That time is upon us now. A mere eight years remain within the period specified by the Tibetan for the third installation of Initiatory Wisdom to be released. It is therefore of relevance to all seekers in the Sirian tradition to know of Alice Bailey and the teachings on Sirius given through her by the Planetary Hierarchy. Such knowledge may very well form the stepping-stone to greater comprehension of the third installment of Initiatory Wisdom when it is soon released.

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¹ J. Gordon Melton, *Perspectives on the New Age* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1992), xi.

² Alice A. Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography* (1951, reprint; New York; Lucis Trust, 1979), 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 162-168.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 193, and the pamphlet "Lucis Trust."

⁵ Bailey, *Unfinished Autobiography*, 164-166.

⁶ That Alice Bailey experienced an authentic contact with a Tibetan Teacher is supported by Theosophical, esoteric, and Buddhist scholar David Reigle, who is a linguist of the Tibetan and Sanskrit languages as well. Reigle has writ-

ten that correlations between the teachings on initiation to be found in Bailey's work and certain Tibetan Buddhist teachings on the same subject, are so close that he can only conclude Bailey did indeed receive privileged telepathic transmission of inner teachings not available to the West at the time. His research and conclusions are reported in the Canadian Theosophical newsletter *Fohat*, Spring 1997, 9-11, 22.

⁷ C.W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (1927, reprint; Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1959), 43.

⁸ Virginia Hanson, *An Introduction to the Mahatma Letters* (Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1959), 10.

⁹ James Stephenson, *Prophecy on Trial* (Mumbai: Trans-Himalaya, 1983), 13.

¹⁰ Sylvia Cranston, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement* (New York: TarcherPerigee, 1993), 83, 97.

¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1951, reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1979), 33, 42, 54.

¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I* (1944, reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1972), 7.

¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour A World Problem*, 61; *Discipleship in the New Age I*, 81, 87; *Discipleship in the New Age II*, 114-115.

¹⁴ Personal communication, January 1999.

¹⁵ W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (1935, reprint; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), vii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II* (1955, reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1983), 114.

¹⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (1957, reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1985), 522. In this passage from a letter dated January 1946, beginning on p. 519 of *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, the Tibetan stated that he had taken the Fifth Initiation ninety years previously, which would have been about the year 1856. However, 1875 is given as the date of the Tibetan's Fifth Initiation on p. 57 of *Initiation, Human and Solar*. Though these two citations disagree regarding the date at which the Tibetan took the Fifth Initiation, there is no disagreement regarding his initiatory status, which status is restated on p. 707 of *The Rays and the Initiations*.

¹⁹ On pp. 56 - 57 of *Initiation, Human and Solar*, The Tibetan explained that the Master Jesus underwent what is called the Crucifixion or Fourth

Initiation when he allowed his physical body to be used by the overshadowing Christ in Galilee. The Master Jesus then went on to attain the Fifth Initiation at a later incarnation as Appollo-nius of Tyana, according to the Tibetan.

²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, pp. 57-58, which specifically indicates that it was Djwhal Khul who revealed to Blavatsky many of the diagrams and much of the data to be found in *The Secret Doctrine*; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 255; *The Externalisation of*

the Hierarchy, p. 685; *Esoteric Healing*, pp. 521, 536, 565. The same point appeared on p. of “The Tibetan Master’s Work,” an undated pamphlet published by the Arcane School.

²¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography*, 191.

²² *Ibid.*, 171, 172, 175.

²³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960, reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1988), 255.

²⁴ *Ibid.*