

ESOTERIC EXTENSION OF TAROT TO DEVELOP SUPERSENSORY POWERS

Lesson 2

Transcriptions from Ann Davies' Class Lectures

Occult principles are based upon knowledge of the powers of consciousness. This is the fundamental principle of every esoteric school, whether it be Unity or New Thought, Yoga or Vedanta. Any school of thought founded upon metaphysical tradition teaches as its basic concept that consciousness is that which builds--consciousness is that which has the power.

If you look back to the time when you first entered upon the study of metaphysics or occultism, you may recall that your heart was filled with inspiration. The powers of the mind were new to you, and for some strange reason you were able to accomplish much more initially than later. You have probably wondered why this was so. Many of our members write to us asking, "Why is it that I was able to hold to specific states of mind, to hold my emotions, to keep my aspirations pointed beautifully for a time, and now suddenly I can do nothing?"

When you were first introduced to the concept of consciousness as the creator, you began to experiment to see if it were so; you had enthusiasm, that child-feeling of miracle. Do you remember as a child feeling the wonder, the sensation of the magical in a new recognition or realization? It is this magic, this wonder more basic to faith than we often realize, that makes it possible to utilize these laws and principles effectively. "Except ye become as little children. . . ." With familiarity there comes staleness if not contempt. As you become accustomed to the idea that consciousness is the creator, you lose this early feeling of wonder and miracle. You tend to fall back into old habit patterns and unhappily thereby to recreate that which is frustrating in your environment. This relapse is due to the fact that while it is our emotions that are the fuel of consciousness, it is that to which we direct and on which we hold our attention that directs the powers of consciousness.

In Tarot Key 1, The Magician, you have depicted symbolically the principle of attention, the ability to hold in your mind specific thoughts or ideas unswervingly. But how many of us can sit down and concentrate or meditate for one hour without our minds and hearts swerving from the thought which we are trying to hold?

Yet, have you ever had difficulty in holding your beloved in your mind? It is an interesting principle and a basic idea in occultism (overlooked by too many aspirants) that we have to fall in love with the powers of our own consciousness, in recognizing what these powers are. That is why the meditation on Key 1 in the Book of Tokens says, "Not thine, but Mine is the power of attention. . ." The reason we have such difficulty in holding our minds and our attention fast on something that we want is because we are not truly in love, either with our powers of consciousness or with that which we think we want!

It is true that what you want is yours, but this is a statement easily misunderstood. Before you can begin to work practically with the Tarot, you must grasp what is involved here and see how you can utilize this power, how you can attain what you want, and first of all how you can be sure of what it is you really want. You will remember that the very first thing that the aspirant was told to do in our first course of lessons was to write down what he wants. But the problem is that in thinking that you know what you want, you are deluding yourself. You have to learn how to discover what you really want, and whether it

is worth having. Many members respond when they are told that this is the first thing they must do by saying, "I don't really want anything except illumination." Was that your reaction? Did you say to yourself, "I don't want anything but illumination, or spiritual development, or to serve?"

In all the metaphysical schools of thought there is one thing that every aspirant has drummed into him: "Fulfill your desires; you can have what you want!"

We tell you the same thing, an echo of what you have read and heard. However, what you want is dependent on your knowing "Who am I?" That is why all schools tell you that if you do not know who or what you are--or if at least you are not ready to go on the assumption that you are something specific--all the wanting in the world is not going to do any good. We tell you this too, but we do not stop there! It is not that you do not get what you want--you do! It is that, in most cases, you do not recognize that you are getting what you want! You must learn to recognize that everything in your environment, everything that you think and feel, every unhappy relationship as well as every happy one, every detail of your life that you yourself have created, both the joyous and the unhappy, both the frustrating and the fulfilling, is of your own creating. You must discover how it is that you have created these things, and what it is that you are doing in order to discover what you are and who you are.

In the Book of Tokens you will find expressed the underlying concept that there is One, The Indivisible Essence. Some people object to the word "God." Which is a pity, because "God" is a brief word and it takes a bit longer to say "The Lord of the Universe" even though it is a more poetic phrase. "The One," "the Indivisible," "God," "The Lord of the Universe," "the Universal Spirit," "the Life Principle," it doesn't matter what we call IT.

An occultist who wants truly to utilize consciousness consciously must be able to say, "I know what I want." In working toward this goal, he has first to make an assumption. He must do what the scientist does. The scientist says, "If such-and-such is true, then such-and-such should result. Let us test this." We say to you, "If it is true that there is only the One Life and that this One Life has many aspects of Itself, (which we call you and me, Tom, Mary, Dick and John), and if that one universal principle is the One Self, then that Self knows exactly what it is about and exactly what it has in store for you as its center of expression."

Some students are disturbed at the idea of being just a part of a Universal Self. They fear the loss of individuality. Our answer is that though one may be a mother, a daughter, a sister, a student, a teacher, though one may be parts of many relationships, one is still oneself. Therefore, the fact that it is said in esoteric philosophy that there is only One Being, One Will, and that all that exists is an aspect or an expression of that Will, does not lessen the eternal individuality of any one aspect. If you have had this fear, the concept that one Universal Self takes away from your own individuality or the eternalness of your selfhood as a unique individual, we hope that this analogy will help to eliminate that fear.

This One Self is evolving or growing and experiencing Itself through Its various aspects. If you have studied the way in which consciousness works, you must know that it

does this through what is held in the mind, what is held as the desire. When you are asked, "What do you desire?" it is fruitless for you to reply that you do not know what you want or to answer that you want to receive spiritual development or to serve. In actuality, he who lives with the intensity of the moment knows that it is through the differentiation of varied and various things--through the working toward the fulfillment of his various wants--that the meaningfulness of life comes to him.

Those who have read the literature of the Eastern Tradition are apt to hear that the desire for a nice house to live in, or for good health, or for this or that profession, or for a pretty dress is beneath the dignity of spiritual aspirations, below spiritual levels. All that we can say to this at the moment (though we shall have more to say later), is that they have made the mistake of separating from God certain things that they call materialistic, as against that which they call spiritual. This error is one of the reasons we have problems in discovering what it is that we want and how to bring it into being. We think that to enjoy a good meal or a beautiful dress is immature or unspiritual, that he who walks with his head in the clouds, uttering platitudes such as "God is peace," is a beautiful, spiritual being.

But when you look out at life and see the variegated plumage of the bird, when you see the diversity in the dress of the flowers, when you see that every leaf on every tree has different form, when you see the colors and the different shapes and shadings of the mountains, when you consider all the manifold things that man has learned to give expression to, you must realize that true spirituality is in being able to love and see and experience God in each and every little "material thing," and in recognizing that these things are not so "material" after all. A great mistake that spiritual aspirants often make is in trying to make a distinction between physical aspiration and spiritual aspiration. Yet, many an enlightened adept or Master of Wisdom walks the earth in a body.

There are some who say that a Master does not need a body who go to a great deal of trouble to communicate with these Masters via Ouija boards or other psychic sources. Sometimes they can achieve contact with very highly evolved souls or even rarely with Masters, but on the whole the vast majority of those aspirants who think that spiritual enlightenment makes it unnecessary to deal in or with the physical universe or that one should evolve beyond that and who look with disdain upon physical or material things are making one of the gravest of errors.

The Inner School, through instruction in the Holy Qabalah, teaches and stresses that the physical universe is the flowering of God's desire, that the entire universe comes about because God, the One Life, desires to experience Itself in all the myriad ways and means that are. The Self experience of God comes through the desire of God to express in and through form. This view is not at all similar to the creed of the materialist, who believes that there is no creative spirit, that man lives only from birth to death, and ends. He who lives by that materialistic creed usually lives selfishly, taking advantage of his fellow man, feeling that the end justifies the means. He is neither a happy nor a pleasant person. It is not materialistic, however, to recognize that what is called the physical universe is in effect the dress or garb of God; that everything that occurs, everything that comes into physical being is an expression of the Primal Will of God, of the One Life, expressing itself in and through form, because this is what God desires.

If that which is, is God's desire, we come to the question: "Does God want all of the horrors that go on?" When we say that God apparently knows what He wants, and that we do not, we mean that according to true esoteric teachings which we have verified, the human consciousness is an infantile power of the Lord of Life. When you start to teach a baby how to eat, it will spill food all over itself because it has not mastered muscular coordination and cannot eat properly. The results will be sloppy, yet it is not of itself evil. The reason you have experienced problems in seeking to fulfill your heart's desire and have found it difficult to manifest that which you attempt to bring into experience, is because you have been letting your powers of consciousness or mind operate at an infantile level--sloppy attention wandering.

You must make up your mind to choose some goal, even a tentative one, or else you will get nowhere. If you do not know where you are going, you will wander in circles. It is better to make up your mind to go anywhere just in order to develop your muscles. That is why it is vital to make up your mind to a specific thing toward which your desire will drive you and to work at it.

We shall try to show you what you really want and how to have the insight, the intelligence and the ability to recognize your mistakes, because often after you decide you want something you discover it was not what you wanted at all. You must learn to have the courage and the agility to change, to switch to the next thing that you develop as a goal, resulting from re-evaluation. You must learn to utilize these shifts in direction and to keep yourself pointed with your consciousness towards an ever more evolved desire.

The feeling which some hold that to want a pretty dress is materialistic and that to want to attain to spiritual heights is very important, results only in wandering in circles. Here is an example of what happens: We know of a woman who felt that she had outgrown the need for all physical things. She was not interested in clothes or a good job. She wanted to attain to complete illumination, to be released from the pain and suffering of having to reincarnate. She commenced to meditate continually on the idea of obtaining illumination and to look down on anything that had to do with physical needs or physical expression. She had a great deal of power. Whatever she wanted to think and feel she was able to think and feel intensely. The result was that she lost her job, for obviously if it was not good enough for her, she was not good enough for it. She had no living. She tried to obtain another job but could not. She became destitute, this spiritual aspirant, still clutching the idea that these were the tests and trials that God was bringing to her in order that she might overcome and do away fully, finally, and forever with the terrible physical universe. As she continued to meditate on this idea, she found that she was becoming more and more divorced from life. Originally she had had quite a loving feeling towards people, but with her desire to escape from life, her emotions withdrew, and she began to move through life hungry, as unspiritual an individual as you could find, and without friends. If you withdraw from life, life will withdraw from you in accordance with the principle that consciousness creates. In this instance, fortunately this woman was intelligent enough to eventually recognize that she had been creating with great ability, that she had had excellent success. One could certainly say of her, "What did she want?" An objective observer would ask, "Is this what you would call the spiritual path? Look what happened to this person." And would that not be a fair question? This is rather extreme, but everyone of us has been guilty of exactly that sort of action in one way or another.

We think, because we have read it somewhere, that we should kill out desire. We think that the way to attain spirituality is to trample down our desires. Indeed, what actually happens, is that we become more and more fearful of our desires, we press them down, we bury them. Yet, if we have no desire, we are unable to have love. There is an inseparable relationship between the two. In Qabalah desire is assigned to the planet Venus, and Venus is the goddess of love. Desire is something that must be treasured; man must not kill out desire; man must nurture desire like the most precious of living things. Man must learn how to listen to his heart, to study his feelings, to call from the depths of his being his truest, most sacred desire and fan it into a flame so that the desire will take complete possession of him.

This sounds the opposite of what we usually hear, and yet it is not. There is much more involved here than appears on the surface. We must learn to know what we want, if we are going to be true sons and daughters of God, if we are to develop our ability to direct our consciousness consciously, instead of being washed hither and thither in the currents of subconsciousness. We must discover what we want and fan the flame. We must be willing to make a few mistakes, even to decide that what we thought we wanted, we did not.

Some who have been in occultism for a while go through a period in which they become terrified. This happened to me. I wanted a thing and I got it, and it was terrible. Then I became afraid to want anything. I was one of those who created too rapidly. Many of us are fortunate enough to do it more gradually, but others have such intensity in their nature that whatever they decide to desire comes upon them like an avalanche. They find themselves overwhelmed. We must be willing, however, to desire, to work with desire, to learn and utilize the techniques of desiring properly, even though at times we make mistakes and must reap the consequences. This is what teaches us to desire more intelligently the next time. How can we be co-creators with God if we are not willing to strive, to develop, and to accept the sore muscles of emotional exercise?

Those who do not know what they want must look into their hearts and ask, "Am I afraid of what I might get if I got what I want, or am I afraid that if I work on what I want and it comes to me, I will discover that I am tied to it, it is an attachment?" This is a real danger, over-attachment to the manifestations of our desires. We shall have to learn to bring about manifestations by understanding how to lose our attachments to the things that are here and now, which is one of our greatest difficulties. We keep tomorrow's good from coming to us by hanging on to today's frustrations! We shall show you how to cease doing this, as it is one of the reasons that you fail so often. You cannot put any thing in a pot already filled to the brim. That is what we try so often to do. We are not willing to let life flow through.

My own experience has shown me the results of clinging to yesterday's beliefs. When I was 21, I had a very serious illness which left one of my legs very weak. I had to walk on crutches or with a cane and a heavy brace. Being completely immersed in occultism, I spent day and night in study. I made all the usual mistakes, thank God, for only when we make mistakes are we in a position to understand what it is we do with our consciousness, what we need to learn about it. Then we are in a position to help others avoid the error, or at least to recognize it more rapidly. For that reason I am very grateful

to the Lord of Life that I made these mistakes. I was guided definitely and specifically to learn from them.

I was relatively helpless, physically, at this time, and the disablement was also very painful. I foolishly kept my attention focused on my unhappiness because I resented not being able to get around. We little realize what the powers of consciousness can do. My attention and my emotions were focused hypnotically on the fact that I was disabled, that I could not get around without crutches or a cane, that I was kept from all sorts of activities. The result was that I led, for a time, a very circumscribed life and was very unhappy. A time came when suddenly I received an insight. I recognized that instead of keeping my consciousness and attention focused on the disability, I should be thanking the Lord of the Universe that I could get around. After all, I could, with a brace and crutches cover quite a bit of territory. I used to drag ten books at a time home from the library, wearing the crutches and the brace, so I was not really incapacitated. I had not recognized that.

When it occurred to me that I should be happy and grateful that I could get around at all, I began to sing praises to the One Life. It was Tarot and Qabalah that awakened me to this. I had just entered this field of training and teaching, and it was an illumination, this recognition of what I had been doing and what I needed to do. The realization was so deep and profound that despite the fact that I was suffering physical pain, despite the fact that I was living on top of a very steep hill, I managed to rejoice at the fact that I could get around!

Then an astonishing thing happened. I was already working with Dr. Case at this time under his private instruction and training. A student told me that another student had heard that I was on crutches. He did not know what the problem was, but he was a doctor and felt intuitively that he could help me. He asked that I be brought to him. All that he was to me was a name on a card.

I was taken to him and he helped me so that within a few weeks I was off the crutches, off the cane, off the brace! I could walk for long distances; I could get around with ease and without pain. I had been in constant pain, when on my feet, for many years.

What brought about such an occurrence? First of all, I stopped using my emotions negatively in that particular area. Some will ask how one can hold a positive thought when he knows that a negative situation exists. In occultism, you must learn that no matter what the condition is today, no matter how dark, no matter how dreary, no matter how painful, today is merely the passing transitory result of yesterday's nonsense. How you choose to react today, what you choose to feel and give your attention toward, that is what builds tomorrow! Some who have studied deeply in the eastern schools frequently err in this way. There is much beauty in the Eastern Tradition, but it lends itself to certain misinterpretations, such as the belief that everything sad or painful is the result of earned karma. It is, in a sense, but they do not quite understand what is meant by karma. We sigh and moan and say, "This is my karma; I'm washing out a great deal of bad karma!" If that is what we are holding our attention on, we are building more unpleasant karma, though it is not necessarily bad karma.