

ESOTERIC EXTENSION OF TAROT TO DEVELOP SUPERSENSORY POWERS

LESSON 26

Transcriptions from Ann Davies' Class Lectures

With Tarot Key 8, Strength, we examine from an advanced standpoint the first of the powers or laws through which the first seven keys operate. In Qabalistic interpretation, the force symbolized by Key 8 is the primary source of power; Qabalah calls the symbolism relating to this key the secret of all spiritual activities. This secret of all spiritual activities is based on the fact that the lion is the actual symbolic image of evolution itself. In Qabalah the vital soul is also called the animal soul because it is shared by man with all creatures below his evolutionary stage. This vital or animal soul is symbolized by the lion in Key 8, which we shall analyze later.

The basic meaning of the Hebrew symbol attributed to this letter, Teth, is "perfect." Notice that the shape of the letter is that of a coiled serpent like the ancient serpent symbol. The figure 8 above the woman's head indicates a similar meaning, because, aside from 0, 8 is the only number that indicates continuous, never-ending motion, without beginning or end.

The symbolism of both the 8 and of the serpent's tail points to the very special activity of the Kundalini, the serpent energy, said to lie coiled at the base of the spine. By this we do not mean the physical base of the spine. There are certain ganglia at the base of the spine that have electromagnetic connections with the subtle vehicle which holds this coiled up energy. In the majority of human beings, most of this energy lies dormant; very little is able to rise upwards through the spine to the brain. Therefore, only a small part of man's total capacity for consciousness is expressed. In both the Eastern and the Western traditions, the final aim of occult disciplines is to awaken the Kundalini's energy flow.

What is meant by awakening the Kundalini? Here we can get into trouble if we do not understand what this force involves. Many western aspirants attempt physical exercises which are dangerous without proper supervision--exercises that come from our eastern brethren. If they are able to force the awakening of the Kundalini prematurely, the result is usually insanity. The Kundalini is the energy of the vital soul, the animal consciousness. If the human consciousness loses or relinquishes control of this energy, it becomes controlled by its own lower forces which is what happens in violent types of insanity.

There are acceptable methods to force the Kundalini to rise--breathing exercises, Yoga, the use of certain mantras. These exercises must be carried out in a culture and an environment that are exactly suited to such experiments and under the watchful guidance of a teacher who has attained perception and awareness and who can protect the aspirant from the dangers involved.

The western school of occultism, which B.O.T.A. represents, reflects its own cultural heritage, including lineal descent from the ancient training of the Essenes and the Eleusinian Mysteries. The esoteric tradition and training of B.O.T.A. are directed toward the western culture and western man. These practices have been aimed toward evolving the animal nature, or animal soul, the subconsciousness. This is the humanizing or evolutionary development of subconsciousness. Subconsciousness in most of us is unfortunately not entirely humanized.

We all carry the animal soul consciousness as a basic level of our awareness. Some of us still have a very large proportion of this primordial consciousness which we have not yet transformed into the humanized element. This untamed part of our nature is responsible for many of our problems. Until we humanize subconsciousness, any forcing method for awakening the Kundalini is dangerous. Techniques for arousing the Kundalini have been given out a little more in each successive era to aspirants who are ready. The ability to use this energy in a carefully directed manner is one of the keys to attaining higher levels of awareness and control.

Key 8 shows the actual process by which this awakening is accomplished. The woman controlling the lion is symbolic of the Empress. She is dressed differently but she is the same. She is also identical with the High Priestess and with the female figure in Key 6. All of these women are different aspects or different expressions of one thing. Notice that in the presentation of the Tarot, a positive pictorial image is given to you. If a negative aspect of the principles involved were pictured in these keys, it would stimulate your negative qualities, strengthening the animal levels in you. That is how suggestible the subconsciousness is in terms of potent symbolism. In the work of our order, this symbolism has been very carefully controlled. Every last detail of each Tarot key gives messages to your subconsciousness, whether or not you are consciously aware of the meaning; the subconscious receives positive suggestions bringing higher perceptiveness, greater control, and greater awareness.

Students, even those who have been working with Tarot for only a short time, find that their awareness in many areas is considerably heightened. They discover that colors are more vivid, that their emotions are more alive, the sense of touch is more sensitive, and that they become more aware of the inner states of the emotions of other people. The increased awareness evoked by Tarot Key 8, together with the other keys, acts to awaken the Kundalini in a gradual, balanced manner and under positive mental stimulus. This method is to be contrasted with physical forcing methods which do not of themselves provide the necessary development of conscious control and spiritual growth.

Here the female figure represents human consciousness, fully humanized. What is it that she is doing? In the lessons, Dr. Case explains that the roses should make a second figure 8, one part about her waist and the other about the neck of the lion, giving us another message in terms of the figure 8. The figure 8 above the woman's head shows us that this act is very closely related to the Magician. It is our self-conscious attention to our various states of feeling, being, acting, reacting, which is responsible for humanizing our subconsciousness. This key, therefore, symbolizes the attitude of the Magician through the figure 8. Here red roses of desire form the figure 8, connecting the higher aspects of subconsciousness with the lion. Since roses are cultivated flowers, you are told through this image that subconsciousness should respond and act from cultivated desire rather than from animal desire. Raw, untrained, and uncultivated desire is a power to be tamed; under control it is that which we work with to attain higher states of awareness and control. The red roses also relate to love, because roses are the flowers of Venus, the Goddess of Love. Again we are given a precise idea; we cultivate desire through the rose of Venus, through the drives of love.

The figure of the lion itself has great significance in spiritual alchemy. The Great Work has to do in alchemical terms with transforming the green lion (this term is similar to the idea, as Dr. Case used to say, of green apples on the Tree of Life) into the red lion. In other words, that which is green or unripe is ripened or turned red through the control of cultivated desire, of directed love. The lion itself also indicates the Mars energy by its red color. Mars energy is very closely related to reproductive energy on all levels: plant, animal, human. It is one energy that expresses itself on many different levels, the energy by which we grow and work. This is the energy that drives us in our livingness to attain to ever greater states, ever more expanded consciousness. It also is the energy that can turn and rend us through ignorant misuse, causing the calamities and pain that make us grow.

This key, associated with the serpent, can be related to the Tempter. It was the serpent that tempted Eve, and yet it is through overcoming the Tempter that we attain completely to our divine heritage, the divine manhood. Jesus was taken to the mountain top and tempted, and so are we all. This, again, is the message of the symbolism: the overcoming of temptation with and through cultivated love and desire.

Notice the position of the lion's mouth. The woman's hands are in the lion's mouth, indicating that this is a tamed lion. He is a strong, vital lion, colored red, yet he is chained by the roses of desire.

The cat and the lion are much alike and it was through a cat that I had my first experience of the raw, wild, primordial energy that we call the animal soul. It is not really a soul yet, but the primitive matter out of which consciousness develops. All control, all supersensory powers, all applications of power depend on our thorough understanding of the principles portrayed by this key and our ability to align ourselves with its activities and laws. That is why Key 8 is called the secret of all spiritual activity.

I was sitting with Dr. Case's cat on my lap, reading and petting him. He was purring and my attention was distracted from my book to the cat, who was a beautiful creature. As I listened to him purr and felt the warmth of his body, I found myself meditating on the cat. I started to speak to him in my consciousness. I wanted to know how it felt to be so very happy as a cat; he was certainly happy at that moment. I yearned to know how it feels to have happiness and joy and contentment as a cat. How does it feel to be a cat? I found myself speaking to him in that way, wanting to touch his innermost depths. All of a sudden I became infinite, beginningless and endless animal consciousness. This is the closest description I can give. There was no form attached to the experience at all. There was no knowledge of anything existing as form. It was like being all of space but all of space as the consciousness of a screaming, wild, free ecstasy, but utterly unhuman, a screaming wild joy beyond anything I can describe. Not that there was any sound--I use the word "screaming" to convey the feeling. Go back in to your mind to when you were a child and try to remember something that was so extraordinarily wonderful all of a sudden that you couldn't bear it, you absolutely could not bear it, and you had to jump up and down and scream. This is an approach to the idea. There was an inability to contain this screaming ecstasy, the wild free ecstasy--a knowledge of nothing else.

Then suddenly I was back as Ann Davies, but in that split second coming back from all of that enveloping beginningless, endlessness, beingness, though it was a micro-second, I

suddenly knew innumerable things. I knew the difference between animal consciousness and human consciousness. I knew the primordial energy which the Lord of Life uses to start shaping, gradually, the evolution of the consciousness through the animal and human forms.

These things were a revelation to me because up to that time I had been one who sneered at repressed individuals, those who could not be spontaneous in expressing themselves. I had the idea that in order to express your innate beingness you had to rid yourself of all kinds of inhibitions. It was not really a wrong idea, but I had the wrong concept of it. In that second I recognized something, and I have never stopped receiving different developments from that particular experience; because when one has an experience that reaches into the very heart, the primeval principle of a thing, a contact is made. From time to time, as the cycles progress, new concepts come, just as everything keeps growing. Each year I receive something to add to my knowledge from the previous year.

My first reaction to this experience was an understanding of the difference between the basic animal consciousness and human consciousness--inhibition! That was the word I chose in that split second of perception to interpret the knowledge, although it was more than that. What does it mean? Self-consciousness is evolved by limiting the area of consciousness. What is limitation but an inhibiting of our scope of activity? In the last lesson we spoke of fenced-in areas of attention. God evolves centers of self-consciousness by taking the primordial, wild, free substance within certain levels of Its Self, of Its beingness, and compressing this primeval material. It is this compression that forms the starting point in the evolution of human consciousness in the same way as you use a magnifying glass to concentrate the rays of the sun to start a fire. In other words, if primordial power is concentrated, limited self-consciousness is forced to develop; whereas undifferentiated primordial or animal consciousness is not consciousness of self at all--it is simply consciousness of screaming ecstasy and nothing else. It is through the principle of limitation that the whole glory of evolution becomes manifest.

And what is the principle of limitation but discipline? What makes us human? We do not physically hit each other over the head for food or tear each other apart with our teeth over a carcass, although some of us do in other ways. We have control, self-induced control, because we have each evolved a self-conscious center that can directly shape the wild, primordial matter into the flowers in our part of the universal garden that can control our share of the lion's energy.

Inasmuch as none of us has evolved to completion, we are apt to make the mistake of placing some of our disciplines and inhibitions in the wrong areas, and therefore we display bigotry and prejudice. However, we suffer the consequences and even the consequences serve to develop us in time, because of their compressing aspects. Finally we learn to consciously regulate the disciplining and directing and thus we gain control of all our powers.

You cannot have power without being able to narrow your sphere of consciousness. How could you read a book if you did not focus and limit your attention to the book, blocking out everything else that is going on? Is that not using the inhibitory principle? You are using that same principle in reading this lesson. All real self-consciousness is

developed from use of this limiting principle; therefore, the attainment of the highest states of consciousness is dependent on our learning what it is that we should direct. We should not inhibit our self-expression in the sense used by some psychologists. Some people are so ashamed of certain ideas or thoughts or emotions that they bury them deep in sub-consciousness, blocking them off. This is the negative use of inhibitory processes. This is not how it should be done.

Tarot Key 8 shows you the correct way. We need that wild, free, primordial energy; we need it to make it into a tame lion, so tame that it does not strike back at us. This part of our nature often does turn on us, because we have not yet learned how to watch and direct our emotional energies, those raw energies as yet not trained into beautiful, cultural patterns as the roses represent.

For this week, try using the discipline of weaving chains of roses around your emotional and desire nature. Every time you find yourself getting irritated, angry, hostile or envious, mentally throw a loop of roses around that particular lion. Lift your heart to the loving human aspect of your subconsciousness and learn to pet your animal nature into becoming a willing servant, serving your evolution as you grow ever closer to the Most High.