

SEVEN STEPS IN PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

LESSON SEVEN

In beginning this lesson let us review briefly what you have learned concerning the powers of subconsciousness.

1. Subconsciousness cures every disease. This curative power may be aroused by mental methods which often succeed when other means for stirring the subconscious healing potency into activity have failed.

2. Subconsciousness keeps a perfect record of all our experiences and contains also a summary of the essentials of the race experience. This racial record is a source of the greater part of our intuitions and many scientific "discoveries" are really "recoveries" from it.

3. Subconsciousness makes connections for us with whatever we need in order to be what we want to be, do what we want to do, and have what we want to have.

4. The operations of subconsciousness are controllable from the conscious level provided the right means to this end are used.

As you learned in Lesson 2, knowledge of the potencies of subconsciousness, and of the means whereby it may be controlled, is no new thing. Some of the methods are very ancient. Only the terms of modern applied psychology are new. In many respects the ancient technique for gaining command over subconscious forces is more certain, more efficacious, than methods developed recently.

For centuries the details of this ancient technique for reaching subconsciousness and releasing its forces were jealously guarded secrets of small groups of initiates. Generation after generation, carefully selected and tested persons were admitted to these exclusive circles of the wise. Methods for utilizing the powers of subconsciousness were communicated to these pupils under strict obligations to secrecy. They were also taught the spiritual significance of these powers.

The transmission of this ancient knowledge has continued to this day. Since the great awakening to the truth of occultism which began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, much information formerly held in reserve has been given out. The custodians of the Inner Wisdom have permitted knowledge formerly taught in secret to be communicated to all who seek. This course, and those that follow it in the B. O. T. A. curriculum, constitute such a system of open instruction derived from the secret tradition.

The fundamental technique for control of the subconscious forces, as laid down here, was formulated about seven hundred years ago by members of a branch of the Inner School who met at stated intervals in what was then the intellectual center of the world--the city of Fez in Morocco. The technique they devised is based on the following law of subconscious mental activity:

Subconsciousness responds more readily to visual images than to any other form of suggestion.

This is easy to understand. Of all our senses, sight is the most highly developed. A Chinese proverb says, "One picture is worth ten thousand words." Suppose a Chinese, a Hindu, a Frenchman and an American, none of whom understands any language other than his native tongue, look together at a picture of a tree. They all know what it is and the subconscious association of ideas evoked by the picture will be practically the same for all. Each observer may have his own peculiar personal reactions, but he will share deeper responses and associations with the other observers.

Every visual image has its own invariable subconscious responses. Look at a picture of a tree and write down the ideas which rise in your mind. Continue this experiment two or three days. At the end of this period you will have made a list of associations identical in all essential respects with what would be written by any other person in the world.

An experienced psychologist could tell, almost at a glance, what associations in your list were reactions peculiar to yourself. After crossing these off, the other items in the list would be the same as those in a list submitted by another person. The main difference between one list and another would be the order in which the various items were set down.

Because this is true, a series of pictures designed in accordance with the laws of subconscious association may be depended on to evoke specific predictable responses. No matter who looks at them, the designs will always call up the same associations of ideas once their influence makes itself felt below the merely personal level of reaction. Even when one does not know the inner meanings of such a picture, or mistakes its true significance at first, the subconscious reaction is bound to be called forth provided one looks at the picture often and attentively.

Upon this fact an ancient technique has been founded. This method for reaching and releasing subconscious powers consists in repeated acts of attention to visual images combined in a series of pictures. The pictures produce the subconscious reactions automatically.

It is better, of course, to know beforehand what each picture means. When one is able to understand why a given design sets up a definite subconscious reaction, the effect is produced quicker because the force of conscious expectation is added to the inherent suggestive power of the visual image.

Looking at a set of pictures then, is the basis of this technique for evoking and directing the mighty forces of subconsciousness. The pictures are known as "Keys of Tarot," twenty-two in number. (Tarot is pronounced approximately Tear-oh, the first syllable accented and rhyming with "bear." This is the more usual pronunciation, preferable to that which sounds the final "t.") Every one of these pictures is an ingenious combination of visual images which bear true psychological correspondence to one another.

Hence every Tarot Key calls forth a specific subconscious response. The reaction is partly mental, partly physiological. Each picture sets going a subconscious deductive process which modifies or changes those hidden activities which condition all states of the physical body and its functions.

The first Tarot Key is designed to rouse subconscious contact with sources of Superconscious power and vision. The second Key calls forth mental and physical states favorable to concentration and to alert attention to one's environment. The third picture brings into operation forces which find expression in memory and recollection. The fourth induces conditions of mind and body which are required for creative imagination. And so on through the whole list of mental activities required to produce a balanced, well-rounded personality.

Our wise predecessors discovered that all modes of human consciousness, all powers of personality, fall naturally into twenty-two principal classes. By careful self-examination and by observing the behavior of others, these investigators learned what visual images correspond to the twenty-two modes of consciousness constituting the psychological make-up of every human being.

After long experiment and careful checking and rechecking of data, they were able to determine what combinations of pictorial imagery will always call into activity each of the twenty-two fundamental powers. Then they submitted their findings to a group of artists among their number. These artists designed the twenty-two Tarot Keys.

Two versions were made. One was crude and its designs were purposely left incomplete. Yet they were accurate enough to be useful to Initiates who had seen the more elaborate version which was never put into general circulation. The esoteric Tarot Keys were shown at regular meetings of obligated members of the School to which we owe the invention of this marvelous device.

The crude version was disguised as a game. This enabled the Initiates to use the Keys in public without being suspected as students of knowledge proscribed by the ignorant bigots then in power. This was a decided advantage in avoiding the grave dangers attending the study of practical occultism in a day when orthodox thinking held so much temporal authority. The game won instant popularity and thus the Tarot became the origin of our pack of playing cards.

The secret version of Tarot has been used by members of the Inner School from about the year 1200 until now. It was hinted at in early Rosicrucian books which mentioned the ROTA as being one of the most valued possessions of members of that mysterious fraternity. TAROT, in fact, is an artificial word made by transposing the syllables of ROTA (Latin for "wheel") and adding an extra "T" as a blind.

Benjamin Franklin and many other important figures in the history of human progress knew Tarot and used it. These wonderful pictures have exercised a tremendous, if little-known, influence on the whole human race.

The writings of Eliphas Levi, quoted at some length in Lesson 1, were a direct result of changes brought about in his consciousness by studying Tarot. This he declares openly and says also:

"The Tarot is a veritable oracle, and replies to all possible questions with precision and infallibility. A prisoner with no other book than the Tarot, if he knew how to use it,

could in a few years acquire a universal science, and would be able to speak on all subjects with unequalled learning and inexhaustible eloquence. The oracles of the Tarot give answers as exact as mathematics, and measured as the harmonies of nature. By the aid of these signs and their infinite combinations, it is possible to arrive at the natural and mathematical revelation of all secrets of nature. The practical value of the Tarot is truly and above all marvelous."

An eminent Russian philosopher, Ouspensky, author of *TERTIUM ORGANUM*, a book which has exerted great influence on modern thought, says of Tarot:

"There are many methods for developing the 'sense of symbols' in those who are striving to understand the hidden forces of Nature and Man, and for teaching the fundamental principles as well as the elements of the esoteric language. The most synthetic and one of the most interesting of these methods is the Tarot. . . For it represents. . . a summary of the Hermetic Sciences--the Kabala, Alchemy, Astrology, and Magic. All these sciences, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, really represent one system of a very broad and deep psychological investigation of the nature of man in his relation to the world of phenomena (the visible, physical world.) The letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the various allegories of the Kabala; the names of metals, acids and salts in alchemy; of good and evil spirits in magic--all these were only means to veil truth from the uninitiated."

Freemasonry is one survival of the ancient psychological system, though few Masons know what a treasure they have inherited from the past. Yet some of their great leaders do understand. Consider these words of General Albert Pike, Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite in the United States, and author of the textbook *MORALS AND DOGMA*:

"He who desires to attain to understanding of the Grand Word and to the possession of the Great Secret, must follow, to class his acquisitions of knowledge and direct their operation, the order indicated in the alphabet of the Tarot."--*MORALS AND DOGMA*, p. 777.

What is the Grand Word? Its essential meaning is MAN. What is the Great Secret? That of directing the hidden forces of man's Inner life, the potencies of subconsciousness. The operation whereby this may be accomplished is the Great Work of which so much has been said and written. The Keys of Tarot are a most valuable means for enabling us to carry out this operation because each Tarot picture calls forth specific powers from subconscious depths, thus developing our Spiritual faculties and awareness.

The Tarot techniques will help you to dissolve old habit-patterns of response to life experience, releasing this energy into the conscious images you are now working with. The impact of Tarot imagery upon your subconsciousness will bring about a transmutation of your personality. Feelings of anxiety and insecurity will be dissipated. Tarot will help you to transfer your sense of "I" from the personality levels to the Higher Self. Finally, if you persevere, you will know what it means to walk with God.

The next course in our curriculum will be the beginning of your Tarot studies. It will include a set of Major Tarot Keys. Use them according to the directions in the lessons

and you will make real progress in the art of using the powers of subconsciousness. The next series of lessons is called Introduction To Tarot. It consists of eleven lessons, and includes, besides the Tarot Keys and the weekly lessons, the booklet HIGHLIGHTS OF TAROT.

This week test your grasp of the material you have received by answering the questions at the end of this lesson. Send your replies to Frater A, B. O. T. A., 5101-05 North Figueroa St., Los Angeles, California 90042.

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Please answer the following questions as briefly as is consistent with clear expression. Use paper of standard letter size. Put your name and address, including your zip code, at the upper right hand corner of the first page. Use typewriter or pen and ink and write on one side of the paper only

1. Have you clearly formulated your first objective?
2. Have you planned the steps necessary to attain it?
3. Do you perceive clearly what forms of bodily activity are required in order to realize your One Aim?
4. Can you form clear mental images?
5. How do you define subconsciousness?
6. What danger arises from the peculiarity of the subconscious reasoning process?
7. What value has silence?
8. Since beginning the work, have you observed any changes in yourself?