

THE POINT OF TENSION

By Scott Mandelker

The "point of tension" is a phrase much used in the esoteric literature of the collected works of Alice Bailey, and it informs her transmission of the Master DK's teachings anent discipleship and the guidelines for the conduct of the disciple. Yet its deeper meanings and esoteric considerations are rarely delved into at any great length, and although we may understand it to refer to a type of mentally polarized, attentively stabilized poise in consciousness, the implications of this poise and just what it connotes energetically is not quite clear. This essay intends to shed further light on the process, nature, and ramifications of the attainment of a point of tension in the serving-consciousness of the engaged world worker. It is important to understand just what this tension is all about, just what such a "point" really involves, and its effects and functions in the ongoing personality modification/transformation of the seeker/server. There is great value in gaining facility with the development of this condition, and in the development of broad and detailed comprehension of this process as it relates to the Soul-personality axis.

Usually, DK advises the disciple to maintain both steady mental polarization keeping awareness and the spark of conscious potentiality in the head, (hence available for utilization by the in-streaming Triadic energies entering through the two major head chakras). He also counsels us to achieve and hold a creative and alert point of tension that may access both the subjective realm of input, Soul-influx, and the intuitive energies available for service-transmission, and at the same time "keep an eye on" the changing personality-realm phenomenal display--hence developing attunement in two directions. This is thus the

usual and accepted meaning of the point of tension: a condition of dually focused, responsive, steady and opened mental polarization, able to respond in two directions, (horizontally in the world of men and vertically to Soul-influx). Thus the point of tension is really a point, as it involves a dually-detached poise: detached from both Soul-energies and personality-input (from self and other); it is also a *tension-position* because it holds and guards steady equipoise between two quite vibrationally dissimilar (and equally tempting), realms of energies/phenomena. The temptation involved in personality glamors is apparent and clear to all -- especially the flickering astral miasma, the glittering emotional show of self and other but the temptation of the higher planes is best known by those who have deepened access/facility with these transpersonal energy-realms of the One Being. Simply put, the disciple must refrain from the "absolute and rejecting-aspects" of detachment bound up with his ability to leave the *personality city* -- and thus not grasp on to *emptiness*, or bliss, or false and evolutionarily-useless *isolated unity*, (in its lower manifestation of a preference for isolated, vast solitude-in-consciousness to actively engaged service in the world). Thus the disciple remains in tension, suspended between equally compelling worlds (Soul and personality), and his mental poise is either an unsteady balancing act (continually offsetting in consciousness basic urges towards either realm), or a well-developed *concerned detachment*. Therefore, mental polarization is not intellectual attachment - it is steady mental dwelling/receptivity linked to two realms of experience/energy inputs, which takes care to sample from both, correlate, and

provide the needed energies in the personality display as much as can be done.

Thus mental polarization becomes a dynamic and fundamentally fluid affair; far from crystallization of thought forms, the disciple with such poise plays and works freely in the "island between two streams" and knows the Two but unifies them into the One. He has a basic type of 4th ray quality of mediator--bringing harmonization through (inherent) conflict. For such conflict is both inevitable and also the catalyst for greater and more penetrating service; the very dissimilarity in vibratory quality and rate between the Soul-realms he samples/transmits from, and the rate of the personality worlds he serves/dispenses to, is a powerful generator of *potential* in his service. Potential in electrical systems is generated and manifest through polarity, likewise a Heraclitus' noted phrase that "conflict is the mother/progenitor of all"; in terms of the service rendered by the disciple holding a creative point of tension, the natural conflict between the positive Soul-energies and negative personality forces (associated with their three respective planes), is the seed-bed, (or perhaps "irritant friction"), which sets in motion his service work.

With respect to the energetic qualities involved, the disciple has as his menu the fire and wind of the spiritual/mental planes, and as his "dinners to be" the water and earth of the astral/physical planes. Truly an alchemical process uniting substantially dissimilar opposite energies, service from the cultivated and intelligently-held point of tension involves the careful admixture of combustible, and often times repellant elements. The chemistry of such service has many by-products, and many "enzymatic catalysts" aiding the process (including, perhaps, most of all the basic resonance/compatibility between the server and the served's own personality sheaths). Such chemistry is veiled, esoteric, complex, and quite fascinating to begin to study. Human biophysical chemistry is the infant-predecessor to the eventual science of energies, as a particular (if not central) aspect of the

eventual Science of the Soul. We cannot go deeply here into this particular chemistry text, but some more elucidation is useful and informative, following to some extent upon the heels of the work, *A Treatise on White Magic*, (by Alice Bailey), which is the magician/disciple's beginning handbook for proper working. It should be noted at the start that the "air/fire, earth/water" dichotomy, as representative of the Soul-personality interface accomplished and utilized by the mentally poised disciple "in tension" is basically a metaphor for certain qualities of energy that we can associate with such physical elements. Indeed, the energies themselves are nameless, but they do reflect in certain ways the basic archetypal intuitive sense associated with each of those earthbound elemental categories. When spirit (transpersonal planes) is associated with fire, we are trying to indicate its heat (relative to the coolness of the personality forces), and it's flaming-ascending-dancing nature (associated with the tendency of all spiritual energies to draw upwards that which they contact, being their natural upward movement intrinsically; and also hinting at the "playful" or fluidic basis which is ever-changing, and tremendously sensitive to environmental influences). Even here we are describing a nameless reality, (being Soul-energies), with metaphors on top of metaphors, extracting and elaborating upon physically recognized qualities of the elemental categories (in this case, fire). Yet the method has value for deeper comprehension of the function of such energies, for the basic and "inherent" elements (the deeper quality of essential fire that gives birth to physically observed fire), are certainly related to their physical manifestations (as reflective-projective sources), and their "quality-amplification" teaches us about their essential nature.

Thus "fire as spirit", indicates the burning, decrystallizing, and destructive-creative aspects of transpersonal energies of all major types, (not merely of the First Ray principle which we normally associate with decrystallization). In fact, all Triadic energies

decrystallize and burn away personality obstructions in various ways, dissolving force-aggregations that obscure and distort the total transparent-reflectability of the personality sheaths in the individual. When we describe spirit as fiery, we are saying that it naturally intensifies and raises in "temperature" (occultly speaking) the elemental matter of the three personality bodies; that spiritual energies, of all the three major rays of aspect in particular, naturally and effortlessly raise the vibratory rates and "tempos" of personality, triple-body matter. This process is identical with our common understanding of "burning-purification", for what we see as "destruction-by-burning" is simply the natural result of certain complexes having their "weaker, less densified" (spiritually densified) matter being raised in vibration and lawfully falling away, vaporized into a dissolution condition. Thus, combustion-by burning, accomplished equally by spiritual influx and physical fire, involves acceleration of temperature, vibratory interractional rates, and internal stress and these serve to combust or vaporize all that is "ready" to go off into the more ethereal regions. When fire is applied to water, only the precipitates, the minerals in solution, are left if the boiling process goes to completion; thus only the densest materials remain, and all else vaporizes. Likewise, when spiritual potencies enter the personality sheaths through either individual Soul-invocation following genuine steady attunement, or through the service work of disciples able to maintain mental polarization at the point of tension, then the personality matter is dissolved accordingly. The observed results of this process are emotional catharsis, etheric reorganization/rebalancing, and mental decrystallization/reformulation. The personality is purified through fire, the complexes of its energy "webbing" are raised in energetic interractional rates (both with in themselves and in relation to other patterns of the bodies), and the result is that new patterns are born and old ones go off, out of the personality sphere and so dissolve into their

constituent atomic units.

This same type of qualitative-metaphoric analysis (in an esoteric sense) can be applied to each of the other elements, and much would be learned thereby concerning the nature and interractional dynamics involved in Soul-personality interchange, and personality modification and transformation based upon service or individual meditation work. One can then begin to look at the meeting of fire and water, spiritual triadic energies descending into the "deep blue" of the astral sub-planes of the individual, (or of the human kingdom as a whole). These are surely "opposites," and yet they have a certain natural complementarities, and the physics of their interaction can be described analogically by observation of the dynamics of physical fire and water in their relations. The spirit literally causes the astral body to produce "waves of transformation; rhythmic tides and undercurrent flows of adaptation to the higher influx; energetically, the astral matter is dispersed and certain complexes "heated into vaporization" by the spiritual energies, and so personal emotional sensitivity and responsiveness is naturally increased as one becomes more receptive to the Soul. In service, the mentally polarized worker basically works upon the mental sub-planes, and his effect on the emotional plane is generally via the mental down flow caused by his thought-interventions, which transform the mental dynamics of those he serves. In the work of the psychologist or the so-called body worker, more direct action may be made upon the watery or earthly elements/bodies, (the astral/physical vehicles), and this introduces other factors besides mentally initiated forces. In these cases, natural radiatory healing through the etheric chakras channels particular Triadic energies to the recipient, and this is largely unconscious on the part of the disciple, until the third initiation, when radiatory healing can be "seen and heard" by him.

In general, the disciple holding mental polarization at the point of tension, dually-focused between Soul and personality energies,

playing intelligently and through love with the antithetical energies of each realm, will be effective in radiatory healing upon the physical and astral bodies of his recipients as a measure of his Soul attunement and alignment. Thus the attuning disciple heals those bodies, transforming the earth/water realms spontaneously, as a measure of the purity and clear responsive activity of his etheric chakras and this largely unconsciously and without active mental coordination. After the third initiation especially, true radiatory healing becomes a mentalized and consciously engineered affair, and more than being the instinctive response of clarified chakras, becomes a joint effort between Soul-chakric channeling and mentally guided intervention/control. At this stage, work with unified fire/air may reach consciously into the regions of water/earth, for there is at this point such coordination between the fire and air (spiritual alignment between mind and Soul) that they become as one, and wielded singly may offset and then utilize the forces of the two lower sheaths in service. Thus, air has fire enough to not disperse when in direct contact with the earthly: mental thought-form construction abilities are so well informed by spiritual energies (of all three major rays of aspect) that they can enter into and dissolve/transform the solidity of the physical body. This is the origin of certain magical abilities of adepts who may levitate and make invisible or insubstantial the physical form; the spirit/mental (fire/air) single-instrument (after the third initiation) is strong enough to dissolve the apparent solidity of cohesion we call the dense physical body.

Likewise, spirit/mental, fire/air may descend directly into the astral waters without fear of extinguishing the fire, (which would not be a genuine extinguishing, but rather the extinction-dissolution of spiritual form-transmissions when directed into the emotional bodies of those receiving direct service). In this case, something like a thought-form "bubble" surrounds the descent of fire into the "waters of affliction", a bubble of air

(mentalization) that protects the direct circulation of fiery Triadic energy through the astral miasms. This is both an advanced practice and a specialized form of service. For the astral body literally is like water compared to transpersonal Triadic sources (fire), and there is a metaphysical, lawful "antipathy" between.

Language can barely do justice to a description of this, of course, but metaphor may reveal some aspects of this dynamic interaction. It basically has to do with relative vibratory differences and the factors of form/formlessness, time/timelessness, space/non-space, which are all inherent in this polarity. However, this is the condition of all personality/transpersonal interfacing: one exists beyond time and space, while the other is embedded in the illusion and vibratory pattern of time/space veiling. Ironically, the specific antipathy between fire/spirit and water/emotion is that they have a fundamentally identical core-vibration and share a deep resonance, in a quite profound esoteric sense that can only be appreciated intuitively through meditation upon these elements, and their essential nature. If it makes any sense at all, their antipathy is manifested through the very congruence of their inner nature which may not make sense to the intellectual mind but can be grasped quite easily by recognition of their symbolic unification; namely the so-called Star of David motif known to esotericists of all times as signifying Soul-personality fusion. Here, the upward triangle stands for the Soul, the fire element, while the personality as a whole is represented by the downward pointing member. A hint is here given in that the entire triple faceted personality is shown by the same symbol used for the astral vehicle in particular, the watery element; esoteric considerations for reflection include the equation of passive, dissolving, obscuring astralism with the nature of the basically illusory personality-body. As the Master DK would say, one may profitably "ponder on this." The point that may have been lost by the discussion of "astralism as

personality", is simply that the opposites attract, (fire and water), for the basic reason that they are fundamentally of an integral nature, in some obscure sense congruent if not essentially identical. And for such a reason are they called opposites! In their outer aspect they can be considered opposites, but the inner reflection reveals their identity and so they naturally come together. Such a non-dual paradox actually helps us go beyond the attempts at linguistic qualification of basically experiential subjective phenomena; and the real "knowing" always grows out of personal "intuitive-resonance", not intellectual divisions.

Then where does this leave us in our explication of the nature of the disciple's cultivated point of tension as the foundation for creative service? We are thus better acquainted with the energy qualities of the dual-focused realms he works with, and we have gained a sense of the alchemical processes involved in this type of service all of which amplify the meaning of tension. We find it to be a "betwixt and between" place where sensitive and alert detachment from all energy qualities is the only security and guarantee of effective and accurate service. Of course the process is not all that deliberate and mentally-calculated in actual practice; the Soul-infused disciple naturally dwells on the plane of mind, naturally senses both the quality of need in the personality bodies/systems/patterns of those he may aid, and naturally is en rapport with those Triadic energies "just waiting" to fill particular needs. This includes his ability to access and utilize the seven rays and their qualifying sub-rays, to initiate activation and direction of various etheric chakras (singly and in combination), and his developed sense of time and timing -- knowing when to start and stop, and knowing relative degree of intensity/amplitude needed in any particular process. All of this will be guided by heart sensitivity, and by the intelligent creative "blueprints" inherent in the Love-vibration of the Soul (pervading the personality and its consciousness). This guidance in particular is

what differentiates the white from the black magician.

The white worker puts himself "in the arms of the Soul", and streamings from the Soul-petals descend through him guided by "Loving-Intelligence." Such Loving-Intelligence indicates the basic quality or keynote of our system; that which gives birth to our recognized "second ray" of Love-Wisdom, and so under girds all the advanced service activities of disciples, no matter what form of expression it may take. The white worker (especially in the old mystic days) "trusts in the Divine and lets God do the work", which is then refined by the advanced occultist whose every move is indeed guided by Divine Love in service, although he has intelligent choices to make also. On the other hand, the black magician utilizes mental scheming and planning from start to finish, having shut off the heart chakra and hence requiring mental guidance as foundational infrastructure for his manipulation-working (his "service to self"). The white worker has a natural, systemic, indeed universal "tracking system" to guide his conscious service (namely Divine Love), while the black worker must close this off, offsetting it with mentalized structures of ever-precarious design and faculty (as they must dam up and block out the genuine pervasive Love that informs all of Creation -- not an easy task!). His work is ever the more precarious, and in the end he must yield to Love, which is not separateness at all, but rather union and embrace the universal "given" which stands prior to any effortful separateness he may utilize upon his "left-hand path."

The point of tension is then the midway place in the alchemical crucible of the dynamic and ever-shifting Soul-personality axis. The mental polarization of the disciple upon the path of "service to other" becomes a broad and farseeing vantage point (and "point" is all that it is, for no solid dwelling can anywhere be held); and from this point the disciple can work in two directions, head-up to the Soul and hands-in to the personality domain. Thus he acts to bridge the spirit-matter polarity in the

three worlds by himself modeling and exemplifying this bridging; he teaches through example (at the most basic level of his work), and he works at the at-one-ment of dissimilar energy-realms. In the process of evolution, man as kingdom also stands in this midway point between super and sub-human kingdoms, and the human station per se is a point of tension -- neither god nor animal, neither liberated nor instinctually herd-bound, neither exclusively beyond time/space nor completely entrapped by it (as the human mind opens out to the eternal). This fact may explain to some extent the inherent pain and suffering of being human, the tremendous power and stability available to those who learn to handle, transform, and transmute energy-conflicts upon the physical realm, and also the great value-opportunity presented by earthly lessons -- an opportunity oft-times noted in the esoteric literature, as quite well appreciated by those out of incarnation wishing for the chance to accelerate their progress towards perfection and reunion with the Creator-of-All. We are all inevitably experiencing basic and unavoidable points of tension while incarnated within the physical/human dimension, and the conscious activity of the consecrated and pledged disciple is emblematic of his creative utilization of what for most of humanity is a source of perpetual struggle and chaos. The point of tension, known and held and eventually enjoyed in selfless service, becomes the gateway to infinity and infinite potential.

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