

# The Stars Alcyone and Aldebaran in the Constellation of Taurus

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*The Star of Intelligence and of the Individual and The Eye of the Bull*

## Abstract

Located in the constellation of the Bull, the stars Alcyone and Aldebaran are often discussed in the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey and hence merit study. Using relevant passages from Alice A. Bailey's *Esoteric Astrology*, supportive information from the Theosophical literature of H.P. Blavatsky, and relevant sources in astronomy and myth, this essay demonstrates that Alcyone and Aldebaran can be understood as intensified versions of the star groupings in which they are found. For Alcyone, this is the Pleiades; for Aldebaran, it is the greater and inclusive constellation of Taurus. Drawing on these placements and interpreting the myths and legends associated with these stars and constellations, the discussion uncovers the central themes of Alcyone and Aldebaran of importance to striving seekers, disciples, and initiates: the intelligence in matter, response of matter to changes of evolutionary periods, the submergence of old Atlantis, the crisis of individualization, the power of axial rotation as a segregative force, the nature of desire, the transcendence of desire, the destruction of personality obstacles, distribution sequences for the transmission of stellar energies, and transformation through the vision of synthesis. The essay concludes with the reminder that the published literature of Alice Bailey's esoteric astrological doctrine provides no mathematical or geometrical method for locating star energies at specific degrees of the zodiac in birth chart astrology, but rather calls the seeker to a recognition of encompassing issues and labors of universal relevance on the spiritual path.

## Introduction

Star life as sources of distinct evolutionary energies constitutes one of the unique factors of the metaphysical literature generated by Alice A. Bailey under the inspiration of the Tibetan Master, Djwhal Khul. In this literature, the Tibetan Master referred not only to entire constellations as sources of energies impelling spiritual evolution, but also to specific stars. Alcyone and Aldebaran are two such. Denominated by the Tibetan Master as the *Star of Intelligence and of the Individual* and the *Eye of the Bull* respectively, these two stars play a significant role in both the objective and subjective dimensions of manifestation, the first associated with tangible geological forces which act at the ends and beginnings of vast evolutionary periods as well as with the establishment of the sense of individuality, the second representative of fundamental subjective spiritual lessons concerning desire, its conquest through right detachment and the

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## About the Author

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destruction of subjective impediments, and ultimately the victorious expression of the Divine Will. Significantly, the esoteric influence of these two stars is grounded in the issues and transformations associated with the constellation Taurus, the Bull. Hence, understanding the natures of these two stars rests on a journey which leads outward from and back again into the fundamental ground of the constellation Taurus. Ultimately, these two stars embody the universal perspective which is proper to the great solar beings which inhabit them. They radiate the universal light which streams down upon and into Humanity and Hierarchical disciples, providing inspiration for evolution and eventual initiation.

### Alcyone

Situated in the shoulder of the Bull constellation, Alcyone is *Eta Taurii*, the seventh brightest star in the constellation of Taurus, certainly not the brightest star in that constellation. That distinction goes to the star Aldebaran, discussed below. In this section however, the star of the moment is Alcyone, which indeed claims pride of position as the star of greatest magnitude (or brilliance) within the subgrouping of the Pleiades. This fact might well suggest that the nature of Alcyone is an intensified and concentrated version of all the themes associated with the Pleiades. These themes constellate around the theme of form and its production. Thus, Alcyone as the most noticeable star in the Pleiades might be expected to reproduce that theme in some form. In fact, it might legitimately be expected that Alcyone shall prove to be the very epitome of the themes and energies radiated generally by the entire Pleiades grouping, which itself is positioned in the constellation Taurus. Thus, the subject of inquiry here resembles a nested Russian doll: Taurus is the biggest doll, the Pleiades the next smaller, and finally tiny Alcyone. In this case, the interior smallest doll represents a great intensification of the general characteristics typical of its two greater contexts. Still, the nature of Alcyone is much of a mystery. The Tibetan Master mentions it often, however, so it's a topic worthy of study.

To zero in on the type of esoteric influence radiated by this star, a study of its name and mythic associations might be of help. The name of Alcyone apparently hails from the Greek words *alkyonein* and *alkyonion*, terms for a type of bird known as a kingfisher.<sup>1</sup> The kingfisher is important in this context because it makes a nest which was thought by the ancient Greek-speaking people to resemble a certain type of soft coral. Soft corals in general were called in Latin *alcyonium*, a word which also figures into the genesis of the name for the star, Alcyone.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it would seem that the word origin for the name of this star is linked in some way with the marine life form known as coral. An important question is here to be raised. Why would ancient sea-faring peoples have associated a star with the calciferous remains of underwater sea life? After all, the two are a bit disparately positioned, to say the least. The answer to this question will reveal important facts about the star under consideration, just as might be expected from the Tibetan's general dictum that more real occultism hides in the names of the stars than has previously been recognized.

As the reader may recall, the stars in the Pleiades grouping were referred to by famed nineteenth-century Theosophical occultist H.P. Blavatsky as *the Atlantides*.<sup>3</sup> Today we call these stars the Pleiades, but to Blavatsky, they were the Atlantides. The moment the esotericist hears the word Atlantides, the notion of the great Atlantean continent leaps to mind, and indeed, this connection is relevant. As it turns out, the term Atlantides comes from the fact that the seven stars of the Pleiades were considered in Greek myth to have been the daughters of Atlas. Hence, they can be referred to under a permutation of their father's name. But there is more to this patronymic name game than meets the eye. It takes but little imagination to see that the name Atlas is a great deal like the word Atlantic (as in Atlantic Ocean), or even Atlantis. Indeed, Blavatsky equates Atlas with just this, with the etymologically similar Atlantis in particular, and goes on to say that the seven daughters reputed to be the progeny of Atlas are in fact none other than the

seven subraces which ran their courses on the Atlantean continent.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the occult reading of the Atlantes is that they are so named because they constitute the seven races spawned by Atlas. Since the Atlantes equal the Pleiades, this means that the seven races which manifested during the Atlantean period are either symbolically or literally represented by the constellation today called the Pleiades.

Such a dramatic assertion is of course difficult to reconcile with the twenty-first century's astronomical concepts. According to Blavatsky, the knowledge had by contemporary astronomy about the Pleiades is but a weak and pale reflection of actual historic events, vaguely hinted at by the name and myths connected with these stars. "Astronomically," she stated, "the Atlantes have become the seven Pleiades...."<sup>5</sup> In this process, all has been forgotten about the seven races run on the continent of Atlantis, save a very tattered remnant in the form of exoteric stellar lore. Blavatsky's interpretation thus fills in missing information and suggests that the Pleiades are symbolically equivalent to old Atlantis, now long underwater. The mystery as to why ancient peoples connected the Pleiades to underwater life is thus solved. If Blavatsky's claim is accepted, then it can be reasoned that ancient peoples connected the Pleiades to underwater life because they knew that the Pleiades were linked to the submergence of the old Atlantean continent. It's a strange argument to the modern mind, akin not to scientific astronomy but rather to mythic thinking. Indeed, myth serves to substantiate this connection, for in ancient Greek myth, Alcyone as the brightest star of the Pleiadean cluster was held to have once been an "Atlantid nymph" who was mated to the Ocean as Poseidon or Neptune.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, Alcyone itself represents a nymph of the Atlantic Ocean. Even more simply stated, Alcyone and her sister Pleiades stand for old Atlantis. Consider now the role for the Pleiades claimed by Blavatsky. As stated earlier, Blavatsky held that forces from the Pleiades (together with that of other celestial factors) both determine the time and emanate the causative energies for the upliftment and subsidence of continents and land masses

at the appearance and disappearances of the various root races.<sup>7</sup> Since a change of root races (from the Fourth or Atlantean to the Fifth or Aryan) is exactly what occurred at the submergence of the Atlantean continent, the linkage of the Pleiades in general and Alcyone in particular with the site of such an occurrence near the close of the Fourth Race is entirely consistent. It is as if ancient peoples stated to posterity in their choice of a name for this star, "The influence of this star causes great lands to subside, and to join the underwater world where corals can be found." Hence, it might be concluded that the only slightly veiled reference to undersea life in the name of Alcyone does just what the Tibetan Master said it would, for it both conceals and reveals actual occult teaching.

However, there exists yet another explanation for the origin of the name, Alcyone, this one offered by Blavatsky in her *Theosophical Glossary*. Blavatsky indicated there that the word Alcyone is the same as the Greek word *halcyone*, which word is surely related to the English word halcyon, meaning calm or peaceful. According to Blavatsky's entry on Alcyone in the *Glossary*, Alcyone or Halcyone was not a daughter of Atlas, but rather of Aeolus, the god of wind. Halcyone was married to Ceyx, who met misfortune and drowned on the way to consult an oracle. Halcyone's grief was so great that she, too, cast herself into the sea, thus to be at one in death with her beloved. Then, Halcyone and Ceyx were both transformed by the gods into kingfisher birds, the female of which is known in legend for its purported habit of laying eggs on the surface of the sea to calm it during the critical period seven days before and seven days after the Winter Solstice.<sup>8</sup>

Oddly enough, this story of Alcyone leads directly to the sea, just as did the previously recounted version. And what is even more astounding, both versions involve kingfisher birds, for the first version of the Alcyone story connected this star with a soft coral resembling the nest of the kingfisher, and the second ends with two loved ones transformed post mortem into these special birds. In certain parts of the world, the kingfisher is called by the name

*halcyon*, and is held in reverence for its mythic ability to “calm the waters.” Might this possibly be a reference to the final calming of the waters after the fury of the Atlantean deluge had subsided, and smooth waters folded over what had been the frothing maelstrom of a land mass in process of implosion?

Whatever is the case, it is clear that the Pleiades in general and Alcyone in particular are in some way connected with the submergence of old Atlantis, parts of which land mass survive today in the United States, according to the Tibetan.<sup>9</sup> There a strong Pleiadean vibration might be expected, together with all that it connotes concerning the creation of material forms. The affluent and materialistically-oriented American culture—obsessed as it is with the manufacture, purchase, and possession of items—might well attest to this lingering Pleiadean influence, now exaggerated and focused in a tangible and concrete way.

After all, the Tibetan did call the Pleiades “the mothers of the seven aspects of form life.”<sup>10</sup> To this can now be added the fact that the star Alcyone in particular is implicated in the generation of material form,<sup>11</sup> just as is the Third Aspect. Of course, the Third Aspect is also known as the Third Ray, or the Ray of Active Intelligence, and it is this ray which is particularly linked with Alcyone, said by the Tibetan to be called *the star of intelligence* in Hierarchical parlance.<sup>12</sup> Active Intelligence was the dominant note in the previous solar system, during which Alcyone was extremely influential, according to the Tibetan. So very influential was Third Ray Alcyone, according to the Ageless Wisdom teaching, that it was from this very celestial body that the entire substance of our portion of the manifested universe was infused with manas, or the capability for intelligent response.<sup>13</sup>

***... the influence of Alcyone reaches equally into the depths of matter, the individual psyche, and the mainsprings of human group destiny. This is so because the Third Ray, which expresses through Alcyone, governs matter and the entire material manifestation of Deity's self-expression***

Thus, there emerges a picture of Alcyone as a potent agent for the distribution of the Ray of Active Intelligence, and this seems to have been the case not only in aeons past, but to be so in the present solar system as well. Here is one obvious reason why Alcyone is called *The Star of Intelligence*. It is because Alcyone embodies and distributes all that the Third Ray of Active Intelligence connotes. Prime amongst these characteristics is that of manas, or mind, which contains within itself all the necessary characteristics for the unfoldment of the four rays of attribute. Thus, intelligence in this sense represents a vast capacity for adaptation and meaningful variation.

It represents the fullness of Divine Mind diversifying itself into the full range of its possible permutations. This is the intelligence manifesting through Alcyone, a distributor of the Third Ray.

It was this same force which played an important part in the creation of the human kingdom at the crisis of individualization some eighteen and a half million years ago. According to the Tibetan, mind force came forth from Alcyone during the crisis of individualization<sup>14</sup> and joined in with other celestial influences to instigate the great happening of which present day human intelligence is the partial evidence. Alcyone, then, was one of the factors which brought mind to animal man and raised him to the status of the Fourth Kingdom. Apparently the Third Ray made a large contribution to this process.

Expressing through Alcyone, the Third Ray brings to bear yet another important effect discussed at length in Alice Bailey's *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. In that work, Bailey explains that according to the esoteric occult teaching, it is the Third Ray which brings about the ability of any individual atom (whether chemical,

human, or cosmic) to distinguish itself from the surrounding environment by establishing its own unique properties via the effects of axial rotation. This being so, The Third Ray is therefore that power inherent in creation which separates the unit from the mass and allows the unit to set up its own characteristic life sphere and vibrational rate.

It is this power to which the Tibetan referred when he called Alcyone *the Star of the Individual*,<sup>15</sup> for Alcyone is a distributing agent of the Third Ray, which ray confers the power to establish segregated existence in a material sense. Undoubtedly, to call Alcyone the *Star of the Individual* is to suggest not only the obvious material sense in which this is the case, but also the ready implications in connection with the psychologically individualized human person, who senses difference from others and thus moves out of the mass into his or her own defined sphere of existence and character. It can be said, then, that the influence of the star Alcyone governs this phase of individuation in human evolution, providing power and energies for the creation and integration of the separative personality expression. This is in keeping with the nature of the Third Ray and its propensity for the creation of distinct identity in contrast to uniform, melded homogeneity. Axial rotation, then, is an important expression of the Third Aspect, responsible for the segregation of units into specific spheres of being, and typical of emanations from Alcyone.

Yet, axial rotation is characteristic of Alcyone's influence in yet another way. According to the Ageless Wisdom, Alcyone functions as some type of orbit point for an unspecified but large number of stars,<sup>16</sup> which collectively might be thought to rotate around an axis passing through that star. The idea that Alcyone might function in this way was once a widely entertained hypothesis,<sup>17</sup> but mainstream astronomy no longer accepts such a possibility.<sup>18</sup> However, the role of Alcyone in greater space may yet prove to be something more along the order of what the esoteric teaching suggests. The ancient wisdom of India calls Alcyone "Amba," or Mother,<sup>19</sup> linking Alcyone's nature with precisely those characteristics said the by Ageless Wisdom to inhere in the Pleiades in

general and Alcyone in particular. Perhaps this terminology is reflective of the fact that Alcyone does in fact function as a point of origin or a pivot point in a way not yet susceptible of verification by science.

Certainly, India makes obeisance to the spiritual centrality of Alcyone in more than one way. In the early literature of Hinduism, the star Alcyone was referred to as Arundhati, and was held to be the "wife" of Vashishta, the chief or leading star of the Seven Rishis (the Great Bear).<sup>20</sup> Arundhati and Vashishta thus constituting a stellar and somewhat ultimate archetype for the wedding of the opposites, these two stars were customarily worshipped by the newlywed Hindu couple upon first entering the newly established marital home.<sup>21</sup> Here is a picturesque exoteric demonstration of the general esoteric principle that the stars of the Pleiades are paired with the stars of the Great Bear in a polarity relationship of signal import. Of note is the fact that in this Hindu belief, Alcyone is paired with the chief star of the Seven Rishis, a positioning which might be interpreted as a hint suggesting an extraordinary role for Alcyone. From this linkage between Alcyone and on the Seven Rishis, it might be gathered that there is more concerning the potentially central cosmic position of Alcyone than has currently been discovered.

Just as Alcyone may exert a great influence over the life of space in a number of ways, this star is said by the Ageless Wisdom tradition to exercise an equally widespread influence upon our planet. Alcyone, said the Tibetan, holds sway over the entire collective of Humanity,<sup>22</sup> a contention mirrored by Blavatsky's earlier assertion that the Pleiades (in which Alcyone is found) are connected in occult science with the destinies of nations.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, this would be true given the powers levied by the Pleiades in general and Alcyone in particular over the geological foundations upon which the lands of nations rest. It also makes sense that Alcyone, the star of the individual, would govern Humanity, for Humanity seen from one angle is nothing but a collection of individuals.

As is apparent, the influence of Alcyone reaches equally into the depths of matter, the

individual psyche, and the mainsprings of human group destiny. This is so because the Third Ray, which expresses through Alcyone, governs matter and the entire material manifestation of Deity's self-expression. This is yet another reason why Alcyone is both the star of the individual and that of humanity, for both the individual and Humanity are manifestations of the Third Aspect, the personality facet of deity, that of outer appearance. This aspect of Deity appears as matter in time and space, demonstrating as diversity and particularity. Just as the First Aspect expresses as spirit, and the Second Aspect as soul, so the Third Aspect manifests the personality facet. It is this facet of divine expression to which the energies of Alcyone contribute.

Consequently, the influence of Alcyone enhances that Third Aspect urge (found within the stuff of creation, the individual and groups) to spin off from the greater mass and establish a unique character. It is this which causes the physical and psychological peregrinations of Humanity (including the mass movements of peoples over vast territories), as Humanity explores all the possible ramifications inherent in manas, or the prolific and diverse Third Ray power. It is also this Third Ray diversifying urge which causes the individual person to diverge from the herd and to explore the creation of his or her personal identity and point of view. All this is strongly tied to the influence of Alcyone, intimately involved with the making of the individual person and the explorations of potential by the Human Kingdom.

Interestingly, Alcyone is also linked to a zodiacal influence characteristically known for its ability to overcome excessive individuality and to promote group coherence. According to the Tibetan, Alcyone is especially linked to the constellation and sign of Aquarius,<sup>24</sup> which zodiacal influence is deeply involved with matters of groups and collectives, normally functioning to integrate the individual into an association with others of his or her kind. However, the influence of Aquarius is also known for its inclination toward the unique, the distinctive, and the independent—all constituting characteristics of the Third Aspect in

manifestation. Hence, it might properly be concluded that the energies and forces of Aquarius match up particularly well with that of Alcyone and its basic Third Ray vibration. This is likely the underlying reason for the close linkage between this constellation and star, Aquarius and Alcyone.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Tibetan did not say so, it is likely that Aquarius, Alcyone and Humanity constitute a triangle of energies and forces dealing with the resolution of tensions between individuality and group affiliation, ultimately fusing the drive for diversity (embodied in Alcyone) with the greater purposes at hand (embodied in Aquarius). Consequently, this triangle is likely a very potent psychospiritual influence upon the New Group of World Servers, who must straddle the line between Humanity and individualism on one hand, and the world of souls or group collaboration on the other.

Members of the New Group of World Servers, working as they do to knit together the fractious nature of Humanity with the inclusive nature of soul consciousness, may use the energies of the Aquarius-Alcyone-Humanity triangle to help humanity gain greater perspective and then to direct the immense creativity of the Third Aspect into channels consistent with the greater group good. The energies inherent in this triangle also likely provide the material vehicles and conditions for arrangements in space and time required by the unfolding Plan, with Aquarius providing the right mental orientation and Alcyone providing the material bases, both of these merging into expression through the field of human endeavor. Thus, the Aquarius-Alcyone-Humanity triangle likely makes itself felt. It is the flexibility inherent in the Third Ray, pouring through Alcyone, and the tolerance of uniqueness conferred by Aquarius which makes this possible, as the two working together serve to leaven Humanity's consciousness in the direction of a much wider world of possibilities. Perhaps it is in this way that the eldest of the Atlantides redeems her work in the previous solar system and simultaneously advances the onward march of evolution toward the goals of this system and the next.

## Aldebaran

Located not far from Alcyone, Aldebaran is yet another bright and highly noticeable star in the constellation of Taurus. In fact, Aldebaran is Alpha Taurii, the very brightest star in the constellation of Taurus.<sup>26</sup> Perceived by many ancient peoples as well as today's astronomers to be located right where an eye might be in the head of the Taurean Bull, Aldebaran is also called the *Eye of the Bull*, or sometimes the *Red Eye of the Bull* for the ruddy light it casts.<sup>27</sup> Its name comes from the Arabic, Al Debaran, which means *The Follower*, an allusion to the fact that the star Aldebaran rises just following the ascension of the Pleiades.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Aldebaran, Alcyone, and the Pleiades are all close neighbors in a fairly compact area of the sky.

Aldebaran holds an important place in the history of astrology and astronomy because it is one of four stars used by the ancient Mesopotamian and Persian sky watchers as reference points against which to measure the circle of the ecliptic. The four stars used in this manner were Aldebaran in the constellation of Taurus, Antares in the constellation of Scorpio, Regulus in the constellation of Leo, and Fomalhaut in the constellation of Aquarius.<sup>29</sup> These four points establish an almost precise square in the celestial sphere, allowing for the delineation of the 360 degree circle with considerable accuracy. Thus, these four stars were used as the original reckoning points for the structure of the zodiac, perhaps as early as 5000 years ago.<sup>30</sup>

Aldebaran as one of these has been called one of the *prime fiducials* (or main reckoning stars), considered by ancient astrology to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> degree of the sidereal constellation of Taurus. The other three stars also held the 15<sup>th</sup> degree position in their respective constellations, functioning as marking points upon which the remaining constellations were measured out in even 30 degree arcs<sup>31</sup> in much the same way as today's tropical signs are measured off in the ecliptic (though the tropical signs are figured from the equinoctial points

rather than from prominent stars). Aldebaran thus helped make astrological mapping possible.

The Tibetan never referred to Aldebaran by its modern quasi-Arabic name, speaking of this star only as the *Eye of the Bull*<sup>32</sup> and the *Golden Eye of Taurus*.<sup>33</sup> However, there can be no real doubt as to which star he meant, for his terminology closely matches the popular name of this star, which name was also used by the early dwellers of the very country from which hailed the Tibetan's amanuensis.<sup>34</sup> Given that Aldebaran is characterized by the Tibetan as the *Eye of the Bull*, or in other words, the *Eye of Taurus*,<sup>35</sup> is not likely that a full esoteric understanding of this star can be had apart from an understanding of the constellation in which this star exists.

The constellation Taurus exerts a complex influence, according to the Ageless Wisdom. At the most basic level, this constellation deals with the energies and forces like unto the animal for which it is named. Since the bull traditionally stands for brute strength, sexual prowess, and a fierce disposition when under threat, so this constellation deals with the energies that stoke the fires of the reproductive urge, the instinct to rebuke all intrusion, and the tendency to establish ownership. Plainly these tendencies play their appropriate and necessary roles, promoting the necessary population of the globe, bodily protection, and the continuity of physical existence.

Reproduction generally falls under the dominion of the sacral center, for this center governs sexuality. It is the transfer of forces from the sacral center to the throat center, however, which is the esoteric objective under the influence of Taurus.<sup>35</sup> Of course, this process of transfer requires time to complete, and in the early stages of Taurean influence, the concentration of forces remains in the lower (and not the higher) of the two centers concerned. Thus, at one level, Taurus symbolizes physical appetite and the force of carnal or material desire, a characteristic aptly portrayed by the virile and determined animal after which this constellation is drawn.

The sexual, self-protective, and possessive tendencies of bull-like psychology are only the most basic level of the Taurus influence, however. According to the Tibetan, under the influence of Taurus, the individual or group so affected also learns through repeated scenarios of mounting desire, its eventual gratification, consequent satiation, and eventual disinterest, that the most basic level of material craving represents no spiritual ultimate.<sup>36</sup> This process takes place slowly, over vast periods of time, spanning many incarnations.

Thus, according to the Tibetan, the influence of Taurus when working at the level of form (or personality) slowly and repeatedly brings about situations in which lessons can be learned concerning the nature of desire—the fact that it is ephemeral, repetitive, and if expressed in excessive degrees and wrong directions, can lead to a problematic identification with the sheaths of consciousness rather than with consciousness itself.<sup>37</sup> In sum, it might be said that the Taurus influence, when speaking to the awakening soul conscious individual, ultimately conveys the all-important soul lesson that detachment from form is a natural process, and that gradual relinquishment of the more primitive desires is a natural evolutionary movement.

However, the esoteric meaning of Taurean influence goes even beyond this, for the influence of Taurus in its refined form is also said to stand for those urges which function as a vehicle for the Will or Purpose of Deity,<sup>38</sup> for finally, when the individual or group functions at the monadic level, the influence of Taurus brings about a connection to the highest levels of Divine Will and Purpose.<sup>39</sup> As a result, it might be said that Taurus represents the force of material personal desire at one extreme, while it represents the intent of Deity in the overall evolutionary Plan on the other. Though it is indeed possible that the former serves the latter in many a case, there remains a divergence of quality in the apparent opposites represented by the influence of this constellation. For the striving individual seeker, perhaps it might be said that Taurus represents raw, unrestrained physical appetite and stubborn insistence upon individual demands on

one hand, as opposed to right aspiration and appropriate intention on the other. Taurus thus represents a wide spectrum of possibilities.

The influence of this constellation evokes such a divergent response because it is a repository of not only the Fourth Ray (or the Ray of Harmony via Conflict), which ray is usually associated with this constellation and sign, but also the First Ray, which ray is notorious for its tendency to bring out both the worst and the best in that which it contacts. According to the Tibetan, it is this potent ray of Will and Power which works through the constellation and sign of Taurus, and in so doing, evokes vastly diverging responses from Humanity.

Here is how the Tibetan characterized the two extremes of Taurean influence as it channels Ray One into our system and planet.<sup>40</sup>

On the downside, he said, this Ray One influence pouring through Taurus evokes from Humanity a bullish, headstrong insistence hell-bent upon following the way of aggression and greed, resulting in a blindered forward rush into materialistic systems of life, thought, and desire.<sup>41</sup> In this collective tendency can clearly be seen the instinctive belligerence of the Bull, surging forward to overcome any who might invade its territory. However, there is also a sense in which *the onward rush of the Bull* is a good and necessary factor, as it does also facilitate the accomplishment of the underlying goal of the evolutionary process.<sup>42</sup> All the same, there seems to be a large component of the Taurus influence which leads to pugnacious and even militant stances in parts of Humanity.

On the upside, said the Tibetan, Ray One working through Taurus stimulates in the advanced members of Humanity a very different set of impulses. When the energies of Ray One working through Taurus impact members of this group, instead of being roused to material and martial ambitions, they rise to a vision of far distant evolutionary possibilities, as though glimpsed through the very *Eye of the Bull* itself, and consequently undertake a determined and steady forward movement on the evolutionary path, in service to the Divine Plan, no matter what the immediate dangers and diffi-



culties might be.<sup>43</sup> Within this characterization of the refined Taurean influence is likely contained a broad hint in regard to the nature of Aldebaran, which as the brightest star in Taurus, is quite likely the apotheosis of the Taurus influence.

Of immediate interest to the esoteric astrologer is the link through which all this Ray One power gains entrance to Taurus. The Tibetan stated plainly that this Ray One influence acting in Taurus comes from the Great Bear, the agent of Divine Will and Power.<sup>44</sup> He went on to say that in recent times, and on account of evolutionary advancements, a new linkage has arisen between several astrological factors, including the Great Bear and Taurus. This linkage begins with the Great Bear, from which Ray One energies emanate, and flows through the large physical constellation and related zodiacal sign of Taurus. It then continues through the smaller and more focused Pleiades star cluster (being relayed by one of the Pleiades in particular), then the specific star Aldebaran, and finally the planet Pluto (which planet distributes the First Ray), to usher Ray One energies into our solar system.<sup>45</sup> It is likely that the Tibetan also intended the invisible planet Vulcan to be included in this distribution sequence, for he mentioned this body within the general context of the discussion on Ray One force as it pours through Taurus.<sup>46</sup> This would establish the entire Ray One distribution sequence as follows: Great Bear, Taurus, Pleiades, Aldebaran, Pluto/Vulcan. The Ray One energies thus channeled then surge through Shamballa, our planetary head center, and from thence right into our planetary life.<sup>47</sup>

The impact of Ray One energies coming through this linkage results in the evocation of not only all the problematic bull-headedness and territoriality evidenced by mass Humanity, but also the will to serve the Plan as demon-

strating in initiates, disciples, and aspirants.<sup>48</sup> As can be seen, again a great divergence of effect is to be noted, the opposite ends of which bracket the possibilities presented by the potent influence of the Taurean influence mixed with Ray One energies. Clearly, this mixture can equally throw into high gear the selfish and acquisitive instincts of unregenerate human nature on one hand, and the consecrated spiritual will of the most refined seeker on the other.<sup>49</sup>

That Aldebaran is involved in bringing all this psychospiritual influence into our system was stated forcefully

but symbolically by the Tibetan, who put it this way. "This Shamballa force...proceeds from far distant places, pouring through the eye of illumination into those spheres of influence upon...the Earth, impelling the Bull upon its onward rush."<sup>50</sup> Interpreted, this statement might be restated as the following: The Ray One energies which power Shamballa on our planet come from the far distant stars of the Great Bear. These Ray One energies ultimately pour through Aldebaran to reach our Earth, thus bringing the energies and tests of Taurus (in which constellation Aldebaran is located) fully into our region of experience.

Note here that all the additional factors in the previously described Ray One distribution sequence are not enumerated. However, they might be understood as implied, and it would thus appear that in this statement, the Tibetan simply emphasized the essential factors, referring under cover of symbolism to only the Great Bear and Aldebaran. In so doing, the Tibetan may have used Aldebaran as a representative of the entire constellation of Taurus and all that it connotes, for he stated that Ray One force "pours through the eye of illumination...impelling the Bull on its onward rush," which is as much to assert that the "eye of illumination" in some way facilitates the expres-

*... Aldebaran embodies in a concentrated form the entire evolutionary lesson coded in the constellation and sign of Taurus.... It might even be said that the influence of Aldebaran itself brings about the re-orientation of force necessary to move from control by the separative will to cooperation with the Cosmic Will.*

sion of energies from Taurus, the Bull. This is one reason why it may be suspected that in Aldebaran are concentrated the energies of the constellation Taurus in which it is found, just as may be the case with Alcyone and the Pleiades.

All the same, it is possible that the term *eye of illumination* as used here refers to some unknown subjective factor or even the third eye in the human being. Certainly, the Tibetan did equate the *Eye of the Bull* with the ajna or brow center in the individual person in particular passages in which this star was discussed. For example, in one passage the Tibetan indicated that the *Eye of the Bull* is like unto the single eye of the New Testament, which when “single” (or perhaps concentrated), makes the whole body full of light.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, this is a reference to the organ of spiritual vision which, when developed, reveals the clairvoyant view of existence, a light filled energy field. Another passage in this same vein suggests that the star Aldebaran is the archetype for the eye of spiritual vision in the individual person.<sup>52</sup> Yet a third asserts that the *Eye of the Bull* and the focused, opened *eye of illumination* in the individual person are the same thing.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, then, to say that far distant star energies flow through the *eye of the bull* is to say that such stellar energies flow through the ajna center of the human person at some point in evolution, and it is in this way that the true esoteric work of the Taurus archetype is facilitated.

There can be little doubt that the Tibetan meant to indicate a strong correlation between the functioning of Aldebaran, the star, and the *Eye of the Bull* as the etheric “eye” near the forehead of the human person. In fact, it might perhaps be well to go so far as to say that the equivalence between the celestial Bull’s Eye and the human ajna suggests a linkage between the mastery of the forces of Taurus and the development of the ajna center, such that when the mastery of these Taurean forces takes place, so also occurs the unfoldment of the eye of illumination in the individual human person, unto the point of complete clairvoyant perception.

Compelling as this analogy between star and etheric center may be, it nonetheless seems that in other contexts, the term Eye of the Bull almost undoubtedly refers straightforwardly to the star Aldebaran. Thus, there emerges a picture of the star Aldebaran as an illumined orb capturing the massive Ray One energies emanating from the Great Bear, which then pour through this star as though it were an open eye casting the rays of its light-filled gaze downward into creation, thus prodding the Taurean Bull and all its effects the more forcefully into action.

In so doing, this great Taurean celestial eye functions also, according to the Tibetan, as the “eye of revelation.”<sup>54</sup> The revelation here referred to is no doubt of both cosmic and personal scope, affecting universal process and individual progress alike. But just exactly what does the *Eye of the Bull* reveal? According to the Tibetan, it reveals nothing less than “...the stupendous and sublime plan of Deity.”<sup>55</sup> This is the essential esoteric function of the star Aldebaran, known since ancient times as the *Eye of the Bull*. It has the power to pull aside the curtains of matter shrouding the central mystery of existence, and in so doing, expose the workings of Divine Intent to full view. This it does not only for the individual seeker, but for the collective as well, though the collective may only grasp such a communication slowly. Still, such is the potential for subjective experience conferred by the rays of Aldebaran, which star was said by the Tibetan to convey a spiritual vision of synthesis as an ultimate revelation.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, such a majestic stellar revelation is hardly a simple thing to receive, even though requiring only a few words to declare. To glimpse the entirety of the Divine Plan is a staggering experience surpassing the confines of normal human mentation. Much preparation must take place before cosmic content such as this can be contained in the consciousness of a group or individual. Many erroneous structures of thought and behavior must be swept away, that an opening in mind and matter may be made. And much must be changed in the orientation toward material embodiment itself if

such an insight is to be grasped. Otherwise, the mind will simply be too narrow and earthen to comprehend the complexity and nuances of the unfolding Divine Plan.

Fundamental resistance to tremendous change such as that required for cosmic understanding resides right in the form nature, for the form nature is geared toward considerations other than the comprehension of the entirety of the Divine Plan. This resistance inherent in the form nature is symbolized by the Bull of Taurus itself, which animal stands staunchly as master of its territory, unwilling to compromise, bend, or adapt. The exoteric astrological portrayal of Taurus underscores this fact, holding that Taurus represents that which is imperious, set in its ways, and bound by habit.

Thus, the constellation of Taurus contains all the elements of an evolutionary drama, with both the incentive to evolve and the resistance to doing so well represented. Little mystery that this constellation and its representative are also associated with Ray Four, the ray under which understanding is only achieved via drastic contrast, for here the contrasts are marked, indeed. The battle between these contrasts makes for the Taurean drama, which results from the impact of Ray One as it strikes the elementary material tendencies embodied in this archetype. Once this Ray One energy passing from the Great Bear, to Taurus, and through the Eye of the Bull reaches Earth, its kingdoms, and the striving seeker in particular, it is ready to take on any of the resistances the form nature might muster. The Tibetan has indicated that Aldebaran is critical in this process, stating that is through this star (or the *eye of illumination* as he called it) that pours the force responsible for the removal of all obstructions, thus letting the entire impact of Taurus do its work for evolution on our planet.<sup>57</sup> Ray One influence from Aldebaran thus makes way for all the lessons of Taurus, which (stated positively) concern right direction of desire and right orientation to the form nature. In this process, Ray One influence from Aldebaran acts to enhance or increase the presence of spiritual light in the planet and the person, simply by ridding all levels of those factors which impede spiritual evolution.

This is to say a great deal, as might be imagined, but even at its simplest level, it makes clear that Aldebaran is a potent distributor of the Destroyer Ray, Ray One. This ray influence leads directly to the invisible planet, Vulcan, which distributes Ray One itself, and which planet sways the affairs of Taurus from its position as both esoteric and hierarchical ruler of this constellation and sign. Obviously, the influence of Vulcan participates in the decimation and neutralization of those resistances to be found hiding so stubbornly in the form nature, so aptly represented by the Bull. The Tibetan hinted that this is so when he implied that it is really the forces of Ray One Aldebaran and Vulcan which guide the person or group much affected by Taurus.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, it might profitably be speculated that the essential lesson to be learned under Taurean influence concerns the difference between the stubborn little self-will of the separative personality and the majestic cosmic will of the monad and beyond. Aldebaran plays a central role in rendering that distinction in starkest terms to the advancing disciple, though the fullness of its message arrives only over long periods of time. The fact that Aldebaran's influence is only fully accessible to persons on later stages of the spiritual path was underscored by the Tibetan, who stated that the influence of Aldebaran can only act freely in an individual when all glamour and illusion have been dissipated, which stage is reached at the Third Initiation.<sup>59</sup> This qualification falls right in line with other statements made by the Tibetan regarding the stage of evolution at which star energies in general are truly available for the individual seeker. Thus, it can be expected that until the Third Initiation is reached, an individual will be slightly to very discomfited by the influence of Aldebaran, as with that of other stars, for until monadic awareness supervenes, stellar impact is perceived as relatively inimical, especially to the consciousness strongly identified with form. Hence, to those on an early stage of the path, Aldebaran signifies somewhat of an ominous influence, wielding as it does the Ray One capacity for destruction of attachments and mistaken identifications.

In sum, it appears that Aldebaran embodies in a concentrated form the entire evolutionary lesson coded in the constellation and sign of Taurus. This star teaches of the necessity to orient force away from the more primitive physical impulses, and to replace those impulses with a sense of the greater cosmic movement and one's place therein. It might even be said that the influence of Aldebaran itself brings about the reorientation of force necessary to move from control by the separative will to cooperation with the Cosmic Will. The counseling esoteric astrologer and serious student should take note that this dramatic influence from Aldebaran enters our solar system through its astrological intermediaries — which are the visible and invisible planetary representatives of Ray One, Pluto and Vulcan respectively. This fact imparts new meaning to those lifetimes and periods when the individual is strongly influenced by either or both of these two Ray One bodies, which carry the stellar imperative of Aldebaran into the region of human psychology.

## Conclusion

As this essay has shown, the stars Alcyone and Aldebaran play significant roles in the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan. Within this context, these two stars are regarded as sources of powerful evolutionary energies, often but not always operating in a manner which is apparently destructive to the form nature.

The esoteric astrological teaching maintains that Alcyone exerts this influence in numerous ways, generating form and maintaining a fundamental connection with it, governing the uplift and subsidence of land masses associated with vast evolutionary periods, activating and governing the intelligent response coded into matter in the previous solar system, and driving the segregative effect of axial rotation, together with its psychospiritual correlate in the process of individualization. Further, Alcyone stands as a pivotal representative of the negative or female polarity, paired as it is with one of the stars of the positive and masculine polarity found in the Great Bear. Finally, the esoteric teaching holds that Alcyone affects all

of Humanity, perhaps through the constellation and related zodiacal sign of Aquarius, through personal awakening into individuated existence and through the instinctual mass migrations or explorations undertaken periodically by large groups of Humanity.

Likewise, the esoteric astrological doctrine maintains that Alcyone's close neighbor, Aldebaran, brings to bear a major influence within the plan of spiritual evolution. Addressing itself to the question of desire and its management, Aldebaran is characterized in the esoteric astrological teaching as the epitome of the themes connected with the constellation and related zodiacal sign of Taurus. In this sense, Aldebaran brings intensive focus to the process of experiencing desire, learning to detach from form control, and ultimately connecting with the Greater Cosmic Purpose. Within this development is implied the gradual lifting of energies from the lower etheric centers of the disciple and initiate to those above the diaphragm. For this purpose, in individuals and the collective, energies from a Ray One source in the Great Bear pour through the constellation and sign of Taurus, the Pleiades, the star Aldebaran, and the planets Pluto and Vulcan to reach life on our planet. The end effect is the destruction and elimination of all impediments to spiritual evolution, a profoundly disruptive process which inevitably entails the temporary intensification of seemingly adverse qualities. The esoteric astrological doctrine thus characterizes the effects of Aldebaran as signally purgative, removing by force and fury those obstacles in the personality and in the collective which would resist the grander vision emerging through stellar stimulation.

The question of exactly how in astrological chart technique this stellar stimulation reaches the individual disciple and initiate is not taken up by the Tibetan Master in the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey. In the published sources representing this doctrine, the Tibetan Master speaks only of energy flows, the reception of energies by consciousness and its sheaths, and the consequent results in the human outlook. Nowhere in this doctrine are there given specific degrees of the zodiac through which such stellar energy flows are indicated. Modern as-

trologers often find this lack of specificity maddening, accustomed as they are to the use of the 360 degrees of the zodiac as specific placements for the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven, planets, and other significant points in the astrological birth chart of the individual. As centuries of use have proven, these specific placements and their activations by transiting planets are valuable and reliable elements of astrological analysis. However, a technique answering to this level of modern astrological analysis was not ever provided by the Tibetan Master in regard to the actual stars themselves. Thus, until another installment is received from authentic Hierarchical sources, it seems best to limit inquiry and discussion to the concepts the Tibetan Master did articulate in the published Bailey writings.

Given that, it is possible to see that the characteristics associated with the stars Alcyone and Aldebaran are timeless, archetypal designs applicable to all human spiritual striving. As enumerated by the presently available esoteric literature, Alcyone and Aldebaran point all sincere seekers to the work of transforming the stubborn ways of the separative personality into the inspired ways of the one who has seen the Greater Cosmic Vision and has committed oneself to it. This would seem enough for the moment.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Babcock Gove, ed. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1961). The word "kingfisher" brings to mind the "Fisher King," an important figure in Grail Legendry. This potential connection between Alcyone, kingfishers, Fisher Kings, and Grail Legendry is no doubt worthy of further research by those so inclined.

<sup>2</sup> Of interest is the fact that Renaissance alchemists equated coral with the philosopher's stone. On this point, see Francis Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 120, 205. This connection between coral and the alchemical quest suggests yet another line of inquiry that might be taken up in connection with the star Alcyone.

<sup>3</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* vol. II (Wheaton: Theosophical University Press, reprint of 1888 edition), 772.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 768.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> R.H. Allen, *Star Names, Their Lore and Meaning* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000 reprint of 1899 original edition), 403; Vivian Robson, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1923), 119.

<sup>7</sup> Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, 785.

<sup>8</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, (Adhyar: Theosophical Publishing House, reprint of 1892 edition), 16.

<sup>9</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations*, (New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1949), 46.

<sup>10</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, (New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1951), 201.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 111, 679.

<sup>17</sup> Robson, *Fixed Stars*, 14, 119; H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* vol. I (Wheaton: Theosophical University Press, reprint of 1888) edition, 501.

<sup>18</sup> Allen, *Star Names*, 405; Robson, *Fixed Stars*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Robson, *Fixed Stars*, 119. According to Blavatsky in the *Theosophical Glossary*, 17, Amba is the Sanskrit name for the "eldest Pleiad," which fact would make Alcyone the eldest or senior of the Pleiades.

<sup>20</sup> Allen, *Fixed Stars*, 404.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 198.

<sup>23</sup> Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, 768.

<sup>24</sup> Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 194.

<sup>25</sup> This linkage between Third Ray Alcyone and Aquarius might also indicate an additional ray signature for Aquarius beyond that which is most frequently mentioned by the Tibetan in connection with this sign. Perhaps it shall ultimately be found that Aquarius distributes Ray Three, in addition to the conventional Ray Five, and the previously proposed Ray One.

<sup>26</sup> J.D. Staal, *The New Patterns in the Sky: Myths and Legends of the Stars* (Newark, OH: McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, 1996), 76.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Allen, *Star Names*, 383.

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- 29 Staal, *New Patterns*, 54.  
30 Allen, *Star Names*, 385.  
31 Cyril Fagan and Roy Firebrace, *A Primer of Sidereal Astrology* (publisher unknown, 1961), 135.  
32 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 154, 393, 403, 565, 566.  
33 Ibid., 379.  
34 According to Allen in *Star Names*, 384, the early English called Aldebaran “Bull’s Eye.”  
35 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 398.  
36 Ibid., 107.  
37 Ibid., 205, 381.  
38 Ibid., 376, 381.  
39 Ibid., 381.  
40 The two paragraphs that follow are summarized from Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 377, 378.  
41 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 377, 378.  
42 Ibid., 376.  
43 Ibid., 377, 378.  
44 Ibid., 376.

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- 45 Ibid.  
46 Ibid., 375.  
47 Ibid., 376.  
48 Ibid., 377.  
49 Whenever the striving server registers the irresistible intent to aid in the Plan, it is the mark and evidence of this Ray One linkage from the Great Bear via Taurus, the Pleiades, Aldebaran, and Pluto to our planet, coming to resonate in the very head center of the individual, from thence to affect the surroundings.  
50 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 376.  
51 Ibid., 154.  
52 Ibid., 403.  
53 Ibid., 565, 566.  
54 Ibid., 376.  
55 Ibid.  
56 Ibid., 162, 381.  
57 Ibid., 376.  
58 Ibid., 393.  
59 Ibid., 383, 384.