

GRAINS OF SAND

by Patricia Adams, June 26, 2016

LAST FEBRUARY, SIFTING SAND THROUGH MY FINGERS. ON SANIBEL ISLAND IN FLORIDA., ' I THOUGHT OF THE QUESTION; WHICH IS GREATER, THE NUMBER OF SAND GRAINS ON EARTH OR STARS IN THE SKY?

SO, OF COURSE, I WENT TO MY NEW MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION--- I GOOGLED, *SAND GRAINS/STARS?*

(BY THE WAY – CAN ANYONE EXPLAIN TO ME HOW I COULD TYPE THOSE 2 WORDS AND WITHIN 1 MINUTE HAVE AN ARTICLE BY ROBERT KRULWICH ANSWERING THAT VERY QUESTION?)

THERE ARE MANY MYSTERIES IN OUR LIVES.

KRULWICH NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF GRAINS OF SAND ON THE EARTH (AND THAT INCLUDES SAND ALONG THE BEAVERKILL) HAS BEEN CALCULATED AS SEVEN QUINTILLION, FIVE HUNDRED QUADRILLION GRAINS.

THEN HE GOES ON; O.K. SO HOW ABOUT STARS? WELL, IT TURNS OUT THAT WHEN YOU LOOK UP, EVEN ON A CLEAR AND STARRY NIGHT, YOU WON'T SEE VERY MANY STARS. PERHAPS ONLY SEVERAL THOUSAND. BUT THIS IS ONLY WHAT **WE** CAN SEE. BUT WITH THE HUBBLE TELESCOPE AND A CALCULATOR, COUNTING DISTANT GALAXIES, THE NUMBER OF STARS JUMPS TO 70 THOUSAND, MILLION, MILLION, MILLION – WHICH MEANS MULTIPLE STARS FOR EVERY GRAIN OF SAND. (AND – PERHAPS THERE IS NO WAY TO COUNT THEM AS THEY ARE INFINITE THERE IS NO END TO THEM— TRY TO GET YOUR HEAD AROUND THAT!)

KRULWICH , GOES ON TO SAY : YES, THE NUMBER OF STARS IN THE HEAVENS IS UNBELIEVABLY LARGE, BUT; *YOU WILL FIND THE SAME NUMBER OF MOLECULES 'IN JUST TEN DROPS OF WATER.'* IN OTHER WORDS , THE NUMBER OF H₂O MOLECULES IN THOSE DROPS, IS EQUAL TO ALL THE STARS IN THE UNIVERSE.

HE CONCLUDES BY SAYING ‘

“NEXT TIME I LOOK UP AT THE SKY AT ALL THOSE STARS, I WILL BE IMPRESSED, OF COURSE, BY THE MULTITUDE OF STARS, BUT AT THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE, IN THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD, IN THE TEENIEST OF PLACES, THERE ARE EQUALLY VAST NUMBERS OF TEENIER THINGS.

MY THOUGHT IS – IF THERE ARE THAT MANY MOLECULES IN TEN DROPS OF WATER --- JUST THINK OF HOW MANY MOLECULES WE HAVE IN 10 DROPS OF BLOOD – THEN THINK OF THE AMOUNT OF

BLOOD WE HAVE CIRCULATING IN OUR BODY. IN THE TEENIEST NOOK OF OUR PHYSICAL BODY – THERE ARE ALL THESE MOLECULES, AS WELL AS CELLS, ATOMS, NEURONS ----BUSY DAY AND NIGHT -----KEEPING US ALIVE. WE ALL HAVE A UNIVERSE UNDER OUR SKIN.

AND THIS BRINGS ME TO MY TOPIC TODAY – BODY AND SOUL.

I THOUGHT OF THIS BODY/SOUL SUBJECT BEFORE I READ THE SUGGESTED BIBLE READINGS FOR TODAY. THIS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE – I THINK OF A TOPIC, AND THEN FIND OUT THE TOPIC RELATES TO THE LECTIONARY ASSIGNED FOR THE DAY.

I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT ELIJAH, ALTHOUGH I WANT TO COMMENT ON THAT. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A GREAT EPIC– I DON'T GET MUCH FROM ELIJAH FOR A MESSAGE. HOWEVER, MENDELSON CERTAINLY FOUND A MESSAGE, WHICH HE TRANSLATED INTO A BEAUTIFUL WORK OF MUSIC. SOME OF OUR FAVORITE SONGS 'CAST THEY BURDEN UPON THE LORD' AND LIFT THINE EYES ARE FROM ELIJAH.

BUT THE SUGGESTED GOSPEL; GALATIANS 5-1;13-25 – RELATES TO WHAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT.

WHILE I CERTAINLY AGREE WITH **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF** WHICH IS VERSE 5-1, – I DON'T AGREE WITH GALATIANS 13-25; THE DESCRIPTION OF THE HORRORS THE FLESH.

NOW THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE OBVIOUS; FORNICATION, IMPURITY, LICENTIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, SORCERY, ENMITIES, STRIFE, JEALOUSY, ANGER, QUARELS, DISSENSIONS, FACTIONS, ENVY, DRUNKENNESS, CAROUSING AND THINGS LIKE THESE. I AM WARNIING YOU, AS I WARNED YOU BEFORE; THOSE WHO DO SUCH THINGS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

BY CONTRAST, THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL. THERE IS NO LAW AGAINST SUCH THINGS.

AND THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST JESUS HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES. IF WE LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO BE GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT.

WELL, I BEG TO DIFFER.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DENY THE FLESH TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT. SPIRIT AND FLESH ARE ONE. OUR BODY IS A TEMPLE – HOW CAN WE NOT HONOR THE MIRACLE THAT IS OUR PHYSICAL BODY. THINK ABOUT ALL THOSE QUADRILLIAN CELLS, AND MOLECULES UNDER OUR SKIN. AND WHAT ARE THEY UP TO? KEEPING US ALIVE, THAT IS THEIR 'JOB'—IF WE DIE, THEY DIE. LET'S PUT IT INTO PERSPECTIVE.

I LIKE TO THINK OF THE ROMANTIC'S IMAGE, STANDING IN CLAY – FEET PLANTED ON THE EARTH – LOOKING UP AT THE UNIVERSE.

WE STAND ON THE EARTH WITH BILLIONS OF GRAINS OF SAND, LOOKING UP TO THE UNIVERSE WITH BILLIONS OF STARS AND UNDER OUR SKIN ARE BILLIONS OF MOLECULES. MORE THAN ALL THE STARS AND THE GRAINS OF SAND TOGETHER. AMAZING THOUGHT.

DURING SHAVASANA, DEEP RELAXATION IN YOGA, WHEN I CAN'T EXACTLY CLEAR MY MIND, I FOCUS ON SOME PART OF MY BODY – HEART, LUNGS, BONES. THERE IS AN INNER STILLNESS WHEN THINKING ABOUT YOUR INTERNAL BODY. I HAVE HERE A VIDEO, MADE BY NORRIS CHUMLEY WHO IS HERE TODAY, ABOUT THE MYSTERIES OF THE JESUS PRAYER. MONKS FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS HAVE SEARCHED FOR STILLNESS, AND I SUGGEST WE FIND A DIVINE STILLNESS WITHIN

BUT I ALSO THINK ABOUT MY 'ORGANS' ACTIVELY; I THANK THOSE UNITS FOR WORKING SO HARD IN SPITE OF THE CHALLENGES I THROW AT THEM – WHAT I EAT, DRINK, WHEN I DON'T SLEEP OR GET TOO MUCH SUN.– THOSE MULTITUDE OF CELLS KEEP WORKING TO CORRECT MY CARELESSNESS.

I ONCE HAD A SONOGRAM OF MY HEART WHERE I COULD WATCH THAT LITTLE ORGAN PUMPING REGULARLY – PUSH, RELAX, PUSH, RELAX – NEVER STOPPING NIGHT OR DAY—NEVER TAKING A BREAK.

YOU GOTTA THANK THAT HARD WORKING LITTLE HEART.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THE MILLIONS OF CELLS JUST RANDOMLY CAME TOGETHER TO MAKE THE HUMAN BODY.

A VIDEO, **JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE** POSES THE QUESTION “ WHERE DO WE COME FROM AND WHY ARE WE HERE’ – OBVIOUSLY NOT THE FIRST TIME THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED.

BUT THE EXPLANATION FOR OUR EXISTENCE IS INTERESTING.

IN THE beginning was the Big Bang. Out of nothing everything came into being. And first it was billions and trillions of molecules that later on gathered together, forming planets, galaxies, imploding, exploding, always on the move. The molecules of our bodies are as old as the universe itself, and they once flew through space together with all the other stars until they started to form earth.

If you think of it – how high was the probability that life could start to exist? Thousands and thousands of different factors were necessary to create life, and they all happened perfectly at the right time in the right way. Just to mention some of them – the right distance between earth and sun that was needed to create the atmosphere (if earth would have been closer or more far away there would be no life), all the processes of cooling down the planet to the right temperature, all the different elements that had to be brought together in a specific way under specific circumstances so that life could be created, and the fact that out of single cells at the very beginning this abundance of life forms was created... this all – according to universal timings – in the blink of an eye.

THE VIDEO NOTES THAT THE RATE OF EXPANSION AFTER THIS OCCURANCE WAS SO BALANCED THAT IF ONLY A MILLIONTH OF 1% WAS QUICKER OR SLOWER, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN A BLACK HOLE, NOT A UNIVERSE CENTERED ON THE SUN.. THE VIDEO ARGUES THAT THE CELLS MAKING UP OUR UNIVERSE ARE **SELF-ORGANIZING** . THE PATTERNING OF LIFE IT IS NOT ACCIDENTAL === THERE IS AN AWARENESS IN THE SELF ORGANIZING ELEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSE. --- IF YOU BELIEVE THIS, THE CELLS IN OUR BODY ARE SELF ORGANIZING – THEY ORGANIZE TO KEEP US ALIVE.

OUR FLESH **IS** OUR SPIRIT. TO GO BACK TO PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS, HE FIRST ADVISES THE GALATIANS TO 'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF' – ALSO THE PRIMARY COMMANDMENT FROM CHRIST. THIS MOTTO RECOGNIZES THAT YOU MUST LOVE YOURSELF FIRST, AND IF YOU 'LOVE THYSELF' DON'T YOU HAVE TO LOVE YOUR PHYSICAL SELF?

PAUL SAYS TO REJECT THE FLESH BECAUSE THERE YOU FIND ENMITIES, STRIFE ANGER, ETC BUT I ARGUE THAT YOU ALSO FIND PATIENCE, KINDNESS, AND GENEROSITY. WHAT IS MORE GENEROUS AND PATIENT THAN THE BODY CELLS TRYING TO RIGHT US WHEN WE ARE STRUCK WITH AN INJURY OR ILLNESS. JUST A SMALL WOUND – SAY A CUT ON YOUR FINGER CAUSES AN IMMEDIATE REACTION OF THE FLESH -- BLOOD TO KEEP IT CLEAN, DRIED BLOOD TO SEAL IT, SKIN GROWING OVER TO HEAL IT.

I ALSO THINK OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN INDUCED COMA'S WHEN THEY WERE VERY ILL – STUART ROOT FOR ONE. IT'S AS THOUGH THE MIND/SPIRIT HAD TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THE EQUATION SO THE FLESH COULD HEAL THE BODY – AND IT WORKED!

THINKING ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL BODY ALSO MAKES YOU THINK ABOUT THE END OF THAT BODY – AND HEAVEN KNOWS THERE ARE ENOUGH BOOKS AND ARTICLES NOW BEING WRITTEN ABOUT ILLNESS AND DEATH –

ATUL GAWANDE'S **BEING MORTAL**, PAUL KALANTHLEI '**WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR**' ABOUT HIS BEING DIAGNOSED WITH STAGE 4 LUNG CANCER WHEN HE WAS 36. AND THEN ONE OF THE BABY BOOMER WRITERS, ANNIE LAMOTT- **SMALL VICTORIES; 'SPOTTING IMPROBABLE MOMENTS OF GRACE**. AND THERE ARE REGULAR ARTICLES IN THE NYTIMES, NEW YORKER, WALL ST JOURNAL.

EVEN ON THE RADIO. WHILE DRIVING, JOHN AND I WERE LISTENING TO ONE OF THOSE PROGRAMS THAT I THINK OF AS A SPIN OF OFF THIS AMERICAN LIFE – I THINK IT WAS RADIO LAB. AND THE SUBJECT WAS WHAT HAPPENS ATER DEATH. IT WAS AN ODD TAKE, ACTUALLY. ONE OF THE STORIES WAS ABOUT HOW PRESENT DEATH WAS EVERYWHERE IN THAT WHEN ANYTHING WAS OVER – IT HAD DIED IN THE SENSE IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN THAT WAY AGAIN – LIKE THE BUDHIST IMAGE OF NEVER PUTTING YOUR FOOT IN THE SAME WATER IN A RIVER. BUT THEY USED, OF ALL

THINGS, THE DEATH OF A SESSION OF CONGRESS. ONCE THE FINAL GAVEL IS SOUNDED, THAT CONGRESSIONAL SESSION IS DEAD. IT IS ONLY ALIVE IN WHAT DECISIONS WERE MADE AND CARRIED OUT AND WHAT THE VARIOUS CONGRESSMEN CARRY BACK WITH THEM.

WELL – A BIT OF A STRETCH, BUT THEN I THOUGHT OF THE ‘CONGRESS’ OF THE BODY – AS I MENTIONED BEFORE ALL THE CELLS AND MICROBES WORKING AS A TEAM TO KEEP ME BREATHING AND LIVING.

AS EINSTEIN SAID, Energy cannot be created or destroyed, it can only be changed from one form to another.” AND WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT HOW OUR CELLS WERE PRESENT AT THE CREATION. SO WHAT HAPPENS TO ALL THOSE CELLS IN OUR BODY? NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR BODY – LEFT TO DECAY IN A CASKET OR INCENORATED – THOSE CELLS GET TO BE SOMETHING ELSE.

NOW WITHOUT SUGGESTING RE-INCARNATION, THE ENERGY IN OUR SOUL/SPIRIT ALSO CAN PERHAPS NOT BE DESTROYED.

OUR PHYSICAL BODY – LIKE A SESSION OF CONGRESS WILL DIE- BUT THE UNITS OF THIS BODY WILL GO ON.

SO WE ASK THE QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR CENTURIES. AND SURELY THERE IS THE RIGHT BODY AND SOUL BALANCE AS WE ASK WHERE WE COME FROM --- AND WHERE WE GO AFTER OUR TIME ON EARTH. I AGREE THAT THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN COMPREHEND A QUADRILLION OF ANYTHING – MUCH LESS TRYING TO COMPREHEND INFINITY OR ETERNITY.

A FRIEND ONCE MISS-SPOKE ,BUT SAID SOMETHING SO TRUE, HE SAID, ‘MY MIND WAS WUNDERING AROUND’ . WE CAN WUNDER AROUND OUR LIFE ON EARTH,. IT IS A WUNDER. A GREAT MYSTERY.,

I’LL CLOSE WITH ANNE LAMOTT’S BALANCE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING AND PHYSICAL COMFORT; IT’S NICE AND SIMPLE;

IT REMINDS ME OF MY MOTHER ONCE SAYING – WHEN I PROBABLY WANTED TO BUY LOAFERS INSTEAD OF SADDLE OXFORDS, “BE GOOD TO YOUR FEET. THEY HAVE TO CARRY YOU A LONG WAY IN LIFE”

Lamott wrote: Beautiful moments heal, as do real cocoa, Pete Seeger, a walk on old fire roads. All I ever wanted since I arrived here on earth were the same things I needed as a baby, to go from cold to warm, lonely to held, the vessel to the giver, empty to full. You can change the world with a hot bath, if you sink into it from a place of knowing you are worth profound care, even when you're dirty and rattled. Who knew?”

