

## Ashes to Ashes – A Meditation

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I am trying to think about what tonight really means to me. Ashes to ashes – Dust to Dust. It strikes me that I can view this from many understandings. I am not comfortable with the one that has a heavy traditional dose of guilt.

However I can reclaim it as part of our reconnection to the earth. We are, as Carl Sagen would have said, ‘all stardust’. We find ourselves so disconnected from the basic understanding that we are created from the same elements as everything else on this earth, we live as those elements and we return to those elements. I cannot discount the very ‘ground of my being’ or the very ground I will be buried in.

As I watched the juniper dust creating bold new designs on the hood of my car, I think of ash in its lightness – still containing the core of the palms we carried last year, now in a form that moves without our waving it - joyfully.

We are dust, we return to dust. We are earth – we return to earth. We are connected. We are one.

And if sin is a disconnection – and I believe it to be a disconnection in so many ways, then these ashes are not symbols of our guilt, but symbols of our restoration. A recognition of the ways that our Father/Mother God always seeks to reconnect us to God’s self.

I am also thinking of the wisdom I have learned from 12-step programs. There is a wonderful old resource for members of the program known as “The Little Red Book”. It doesn’t get used much anymore. It was originally written by addicts/alcoholics who were in AA before NA came into being. These folks felt that the ‘Big Book’ didn’t address all their issues. It is full of great stuff.

The Little Red Book defines humility as, “a realistic appraisal of things as they are.” I like that – who am I exactly – all the bits and pieces. Where is my life truly – minus the ‘trauma and drama’? Minus the high praise and the self loathing? Either disconnects me from all other travelers.

What is real? What is true? Am I connected and neither more important or less important than anything else in God’s grand universe?

“Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

That’s where I need to be today. Ashes reminding me of what is really important – grounding me in life – beautiful and messy, joyful and sad. Just another human being. A beloved human being.

‘Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.’ Not a bad way to be.