

POST-VIRAL MEDITATION: A COMMUNICATION FROM OUT OF SPACE AND OUT OF TIME

[Communications Bulletin 203758960-119-C]

The final extinction event mutation of the COVID-19 virus on Planet Earth of the Milky Way galaxy terminated the life of the transmitter identified as Alex Barkley. Research in the inter-galactic archives indicates that he was an actuary on the United States Department of Defense team charged with protecting a corps of top federal civilian and military employees and their families. A population of 2500 selected souls was to be secreted in the depths of a mountain retreat and fed with hydroponically-grown crops and nourished with ultra-filtered air. The filtration proved to be inadequate. Viral spores managed to get through and the select 2500 were in the end as dead as all the other living things on Planet Earth of the Milky Way galaxy.

The virus had mutated to attack both fauna and flora. So crops and all green things were killed along with the animals they nourished. The virus left only dust remaining of all the fauna and flora which it consumed. The spore-filled dust left by the ravages of the mutated COVID-19 virus caused Barkley and his other team members to wonder if a post-pandemic Earth might become an infection source for nearby worlds. In fact Planet Earth of the Milky Way galaxy remains to this day an interdicted zone for intergalactic travel.

The appended transmission was decoded by the Government Communications Commission of galaxy 119-TR-50461 some ten years after the extinction event on Planet Earth of the Milky Way galaxy. It is posted for public consumption after review by the inter-galactic governmental authorities.

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Published by authority of the Government Communications Commission.

[Decoded Transmission Text]

I wake up not in a cloud of viral dust but in a huge bowl-like terrain that stretches farther than I can see in all directions. A great light shines down from above. I perceive no body for myself, just a spark-like dot of energy. All around me are uncounted other sparks apparently in the same condition as I. We share an impersonal collective consciousness, and emit a collective hum or vibration. I don't perceive our hum as any kind of hymn or paean. However, I am happy and content in my new environment and I presume fellow sparks feel the same as I. I still possess my individual identity from my past life, and I assume the same holds true for my fellow sparks. I have the sense that we rotate within the bowl, but it is impossible to perceive movement.

We sparks are finite in number—I call our number Pansparkion. We include not only all the universe's dead (animal and plant), but also the sparks which will one day inhabit yet-to-be-born animals and plants throughout the universe. There are placeholder sparks for the sparks temporarily absent in living animals and plants. From this bourne we all go and eventually return. There is an exit for sparks departing to be born and an entrance for sparks returning after death. These are reputed to reside on the rim of our bowl, and have the character of what some scientist have called wormholes, except that ours connect our extra-spatial and extra-temporal world with spacetime.

Despite its vastness, the bowl which we inhabit is finite in extent. Even a human being can imagine a number greater than our population—for example, just multiply Pansparkion by itself Pansparkion times. Some maintain that Pansparkion, despite its size, is a prime number, which may have something to do with the frequency and the amplitude of our hum.

We sparks have no communication among ourselves other than our collective consciousness, which is the source of the information I impart herein. We remain mutually anonymous. In this domain out of space and out of time, there is no hope of reunion with other beings with whom we shared our lives. You might think that we sparks would yearn to travel along our erstwhile world-lines, to re-experience our lives, but we feel no such desire. On a more ambitious scale, we might yearn to see the rise and fall of empires, the birth and death of worlds, the creation and the end of the universe itself. However, such powers are not vouchsafed to us. I wonder if our dwelling place might be the inside of a massive black hole at the center of the universe—perhaps the birthing place and the dying place for the universe itself.

The virus on my erstwhile Planet Earth managed to kill not only the birds of the air but even the great leviathans of the deep. The largest and the smallest of all Earthly animals and plants perished under the ravages of the virus. Biologists debate whether viruses have the spark of life within them. I do not know whether any of the viruses which killed everything living on Earth are now a part of our community here. Whether sparks who did execrable deeds while in their living bodies share out peace here is not known to me. Bad actors like Adolf Hitler and Jack the Ripper may or may not reside among us sparks. Whether certain sparks are allowed to be extinguished after their lives it not known for sue to us. Perhaps only the placeholder sparks corresponding to evil-livers continue to shine in our peaceful domain. Surely evildoers in life cannot be allowed to disrupt the frequency and amplitude of our vibration as facilitated by the primality of our numbers.

I cannot account for the peace of what many erstwhile living beings might consider to be nothingness. The rest and contentment enjoyed by us sparks does not conflict with the great light shining upon us from above. How can we be bored when no time elapses here? Or yearn for travel or adventure when our domain is the totality of our existence? We each have but one journey to make—to and from the living realm in spacetime. There is no multiple journeying or reincarnation in this domain. We each of us after all experienced the joys and suffered the pains of our lives once and for all—long or short, happy or tragic as our lives may have been. The events of our lives persist in spacetime—which is elsewhere and elsewhen insofar as we sparks are concerned. What more have we to ask of eternity? Who or what is the great light which shines above us I know not. (Apart from the great light, everything above us is darkness.) I know only that the light sheds its illuminating warmth on us. Since there is no time here, I do not know whether our domain is eternal. If we sparks inhabit the interior of a black hole, whether our home might undergo cycles of implosion and explosion might not even be perceived by us.

Now I am encoding the numerical equivalent of this message to send out as part of our communal hum. I have not been apprised that this is forbidden. Certainly, the energy loss from our extra-spatial and extra-temporal world will be *de minimis*. I do not know if any conscious being capable of deciphering it will receive my message. I hope that my message may engender hope for any living beings in spacetime who may receive it. I have come to the realization that the virus which killed me has an intelligence and destiny of its own. Perhaps one of the viruses which killed everything living on Planet Earth is my spark neighbor in this new domain. It may be that the virus and all that it killed—including me—share one

destiny here. Spacetime may not have been able to both of us, but perhaps the shared domain where we both now reside can and will.

Alex Barkley

Formerly of Planet Earth, Milky Way Galaxy