**Dylan, Blake and God: Every Grain of Sand**

*Shot of Love - 1981*

For this song, Dylan had an immediate influence and inspiration with William Blake’s “Auguries of Innocence”

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour

It can be read as a Christian text.  It has a confession, and Cain… but what Cain did was kill his brother.  So what is Dylan going to do?

Looking back we might recall that Dylan became a Christian in 1978 or thereabouts, and *Shot of Love* was 1981.  After that we get *Infidels*, generally agreed to be a return to his pre-Christian vision of life.  It all seems to suggest an ending of one era, and the opening of a door on the next.

Blake wrote “We are led to believe a lie” and maybe this beautiful reflective song has this notion at its heart.  Just consider the lines:

Sometimes I turn, there’s someone there, other times it’s only me  
I am hanging in the balance of the reality of man

This is an utterly beautiful song whichever way you read it, and that’s fair enough.

But if one does want to explore the meanings, I think there are many alternatives here.  Dylan here was *gazing into the doorway*, not just of *temptation*, but of his own future.

*In the time of my confession, in the hour of my deepest need  
When the pool of tears beneath my feet flood every newborn seed  
There's a dying voice within me reaching out somewhere  
Toiling in the danger and in the morals of despair*

*Don't have the inclination to look back on any mistake  
Like Cain, I now behold this chain of events that I must break  
In the fury of the moment I can see the Master's hand  
In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand*

*Oh, the flowers of indulgence and the weeds of yesteryear  
Like criminals, they have choked the breath of conscience and good cheer  
And the sun beat down upon the steps of time to light the way  
To ease the pain of idleness and the memory of decay*

*I gaze into the doorway of temptation's angry flame  
And every time I pass that way I always hear my name  
Then onward in my journey I come to understand  
That every hair is numbered like every grain of sand*

*I have gone from rags to riches in the sorrow of the night  
In the violence of a summer's dream, in the chill of a wintery light  
In the bitter dance of loneliness fading into space  
In the broken mirror of innocence on each forgotten face*

*I hear the ancient footsteps like the motion of the sea  
Sometimes I turn, there's someone there, other times it's only me  
I'm hanging in the balance of a perfect finished plan  
Like every sparrow falling, like every grain of sand*