

**Haden Institute
January 2026 Intensive**

The Alchemists and the Dissident Daughters

MEDITATION SCRIPT

THURSDAY: Divine Light in the Heavens

Introduction

Welcome home, and welcome to this time of meditation created by The Alchemists and the Dissident Daughters. We invite you to settle in, take a deep breath, and open your heart.

(Pause)

“Let there be light.” With these four words, God spoke into being a brilliant, energetic stream of waves and photons that would illuminate an entire universe, filling it with vibrant color.

These radiant waves were astonishing, traveling at almost 300 million meters per second to reach every nook and cranny of Creation until it glistened and gleamed.

So, too, this dazzling primordial light was a revelation. It not only showed the brilliance of all that was to be created, but it also pointed to its source. Turns out, God is Light. This Divine Light is without beginning or end. It is a glorious light that reaches every molecule, every atom. It is creative, nourishing, and sustaining. It is joyful and life-giving. It is filled with Love. And it is everywhere.

Even in darkness.

Scientists have discovered that what appears to be darkness to the human eye is actually filled with tiny particles called “neutrinos.” These neutrinos are slivers of light that fill the universe. This means there is no such thing as total darkness, even though the human eye thinks there is. This means there is nowhere God is not, even though the human heart may fear there is.

According to the calendar, we are in the winter season, a time of long, cold nights full of darkness. Similarly, we may also be experiencing the darkness of grief, loneliness, or some other form of pain. This is when we need the Divine Light. We need to be reminded that we are not alone and that we will not be left in darkness. Because even in the dark, there is Light. Even in the dark, there is Love.

This week, we invite you to experience the revelation of Divine Light, especially in darkness. We’ll start with a big picture view of the heavens, where black holes radiate some of the brightest light in the universe. From there, we’ll ground ourselves in the manifold ways nature reveals God’s light, including the darkest cave or the deepest ocean. On Saturday, we’ll experience the Divine Light shining through our fellow humans. Finally, on Sunday, we’ll turn inward to our soul, that place within us where the Divine Light of Deep Love burns without end.

To honor this Divine Light and this sacred space, we ask you to enter this space in silence each day. We also ask that you arrive in time to begin the meditation at 8:30am every day.

But for now, we invite you to get comfortable. Take a few deep cleansing breaths. Then, when you're ready, let the words of Irish poet and mystic John O'Donohue draw you into the brilliant mystery of heavenly light. Our time of silence will begin and end with the singing of the bowl.

Come and see that the Light is good.

(Pause)

“For Light”
by John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Light cannot see inside things.
That is what the dark is for:
Minding the interior,
Nurturing the draw of growth
Through places where death
In its own way turns into life.

In the glare of neon times,
Let our eyes not be worn
By surfaces that shine
With hunger made attractive.

That our thoughts may be true light,
Finding their way into words
Which have the weight of shadow
To hold the layers of truth.

That we never place our trust
In minds claimed by empty light,
Where one-sided certainties
Are driven by false desire.

When we look into the heart,
May our eyes have the kindness
And reverence of candlelight.

That the searching of our minds
Be equal to the oblique
Crevices and corners where
The mystery continues to dwell,
Glimmering in fugitive light.

When we are confined inside
The dark house of suffering
That moonlight might find a window.

When we become false and lost
That the severe noon-light
Would cast our shadow clear.

When we love, that dawn-light
Would lighten our feet
Upon the waters.

As we grow old, that twilight
Would illuminate treasure
In the fields of memory.

And when we come to search for God,
Let us first be robed in night,
Put on the mind of morning
To feel the rush of light
Spread slowly inside
The color and stillness
Of a found word.

(Sing the bowl to mark the beginning of silent meditation.)

(Sing the bowl to signify the end of the meditation.)

FRIDAY: Divine Light in Nature

“Divine Light in Nature” by Jeanne Crawford

Welcome. This morning, we'll ponder all the ways nature reveals the Divine Light. We invite you to settle in and find your breath.

(Pause)

(Invocation)

Beloved Light that breathes through all creation —
through mountain and river, seed and star —
I open my heart to your shining presence.
May your light move through me
as wind moves through trees,
as sunlight dances upon the water,
as fire glows in the hidden heart of stone.

(The Awakening of Light)

With each breath, imagine the early dawn.
Mist rises from the earth.
The world holds its breath in golden stillness.
A beam of first light touches the horizon
and enters your crown —
a warm, living current.
You whisper inwardly:
“The light is rising in me.”

(Descent into the Heart)

The light flows down like a stream through a forest —
over moss and root,
through still pools of memory —
until it reaches your heart,
where it gathers like sunlight on calm water.
Each heartbeat sends ripples of light through your body.
Whisper:
“I am the river through which the light flows.”

(Union with the Elements)

Now feel the light moving outward —
to your arms and hands, like wind through branches.
To your legs and feet, like roots sinking deep into fertile soil.
You are tree and earth,
sky and flame.
Above you, the stars shimmer —
mirrors of the same light now pulsing within your being.

The Sacred Light is not apart from you.
It is you —
breathing as the deer in the meadow,
singing as the ocean’s wave,
resting as the mountain under the moon.
You are the still point where the universe glows awake.

(Stillness)

Rest now in the radiance of nature’s heart.
Let all boundaries dissolve.
No division between breath and breeze,
between heartbeat and drum of rain.
Only one vast field of luminous life,
soft and endless.

(Closing)

When you are ready, bring your awareness back to your body —
your roots in the earth,
your breath steady and calm.
Whisper:
“The light of the world lives in me.”
Bow inwardly to the sacred life within and around you.
Then, open your eyes
as if opening to morning —
bright, renewed, and holy.

(Sing the bowl to mark the beginning of silent meditation.)

(Sing the bowl to signify the end of the meditation.)

SATURDAY: Divine Light in Others

A reading from *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* by Thomas Merton

Good morning. After looking to the heavens and to creation for signs of Divine Light, this morning, we turn to our neighbor, to each other, to see the Light of Life and Love shining within. We invite you to settle in and find your breath.

(Pause)

There are moments when the veil between the ordinary and the sacred seems to grow thin — when the world shimmers with the presence of the Divine.

Thomas Merton once experienced such a moment of deep connection in the people around him. He writes,

“In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world. The sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud. I have the immense joy of being human, a member of a people in whom the Divine chose to dwell. As if the sorrows and confusions of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.”

Merton saw what we so often forget — that every person we pass on the street, every face in the crowd, every stranger and every friend, is radiant with sacred light.

The Incarnation or manifestation of the Divine means that the One who is beyond all form does not stand apart from humanity but dwells within it — and in that dwelling, sanctifies our very being. The same light that shone through Christ still burns quietly in each of us.

Later, Merton tried to put words around this mystery again:

“At the center of our being is a point of nothingness
which is untouched by illusion,
a point of pure truth.
This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty
is the sacred glory within us.
It is like a pure diamond, blazing with invisible light.
It is in everybody,
and if we could see it
we would see these billions of points of light
coming together in the face and blaze of a sun

that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely.”

Imagine that — billions of points of sacred light, hidden in the hearts of ordinary people, shining together as one great sun.

When we look at one another with eyes of love, we begin to see what Merton saw. The sacred light is not reserved for the saints or the pure of heart — it is the hidden radiance that lives in every human soul.

To recognize that light is to see as the Divine sees: not through the lens of judgment or difference, but through the lens of love.

It is to walk through the world whispering, perhaps even laughing quietly to ourselves, 'They are all walking around shining like the sun.'

Let that vision rest within you now. Think of those who have reflected sacred light to you — those whose kindness, honesty, or courage have shown you something of the Divine. See their faces. Feel gratitude for the ways their light has touched your life.

And know that the same light dwells in you — that you, too, are walking around “shining like the sun.”

(Sing the bowl to mark the beginning of silent meditation.)

(Sing the bowl to signify the end of the meditation.)

SUNDAY: Divine Light Within

An excerpt from “I Am Love: The Divine Essence Within” by Sandip Chavan

Good morning. For the last three days, we've been noticing the Divine Light above and around us. For this last meditation, we want to bring it home to the sacred Light that dwells within us. We want to recognize this inner flame, this "uncreated light" that is the source of our life, love, creativity, consciousness, and being.

Please note that, following the meditation, you will be offered a small gift to take home with you - a representation of the Divine Light that is in and with you. But for now, we invite you to settle in, get comfortable, and begin to bring your awareness to the present moment.

(Pause)

In the realm of souls, I softly rise,
An ethereal essence, a boundless prize.
A sacred presence, a cosmic art,
I am the whisper that ignites the heart.
Beyond the stars, where mystics roam,
In the depths of silence, I find my home.
Unseen, yet felt, in every sphere,
In unity, I conquer fear.

In the gentle breeze that softly weaves,
In the symphony of rustling leaves,
I am the force that binds all things,
The dance of life, the song that sings.
I am the dawn that breaks the night,
The beacon of hope, the guiding light.
In darkest hours, when shadows loom,
I dispel the darkness, and souls resume.

In “Memories, Dreams, Reflections” by Jung, he writes, “When the great night comes, everything takes on a deep note of dejection and every soul is seized by an inexpressible longing for light.” “The longing for light is the longing for consciousness.”

Elsewhere in the same book, Jung recounts drawing mandalas, and recognizing them as a symbol of psychic wholeness. That they represented “the eternal mind’s eternal recreation.”

So with that, may I just repeat that one last line- “In darkest hours, when shadows loom, I dispel the darkness, and souls resume.”

(Sing the bowl to mark the beginning of silent meditation.)

(Sing the bowl to signify the end of the meditation.)