

**MEDITATIONS FOR HADEN SPRING INTENSIVE RETREAT  
IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

**April 9 – 12, 2026**

*Thursday, April 9: Earth (Sharon Brain)*

“In Praise of the Earth” -- by John O’Donohue (as edited and adapted)

Let us bless this Earth.  
that harnessed the mind of time,  
that waited for the seas to warm,  
Waited to welcome the emergence  
Of what lay dreaming within.

And knew how light would nurse  
Whatever grew, until the face of the Earth  
Brightened beneath a vision of color.

And when the ages of ice came  
And sealed the Earth inside  
An endless coma of cold,  
The heart of the Earth held hope,  
and stored fragments of memory,  
Waiting for the return of the sun.

Let us thank the Earth  
That is the eternal ground of Home  
That holds our feet firm  
So we can walk in space  
To infinite galaxies.

Let us salute the silent certainty of mountains:  
Their sublime stillness,  
Their dream-filled hearts.

Let us praise the wonder of a garden  
Trusting the first warmth of spring  
Waiting till Earth’s black infinity of cells  
Becomes charged with dreams  
Then trusting Earth’s kind nurture  
Of the seed, slow-coaxing it  
To trust the act of dying.

We bless the humility of the Earth

That transfigures  
the outlived growth.

The kindness of the Earth,  
that opens to receive  
All out-worn forms  
Into the final stillness.

Let us ask forgiveness of the Earth  
For all our sins against her:  
For our violence and poisonings  
Of her beauty.

Let us remember in our own bodies,  
That ancient sacred clay of the earth,  
Holding the memory of the seasons,

The fluency of water,  
The warmth of fire,  
The quivering-touch of sun  
And the shadowed mystery of moon.

That we may awaken,  
That we may live to the full  
The dream of the Earth  
That we may emerge  
And incarnate  
In mind,  
in body,  
in spirit,  
and in light.

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*Closing (Ron Lorentzen)*

Grounded in Earth's firm and loving hold, may we embark on this retreat in alignment  
with all of the elements.

*Friday, April 10: Water (Lyn Doucet)*

(Adapted from the poem “The Dialectics of Water” by Darrell Bourque)

I am water,  
Before the world was, I was.  
In your mother’s womb you swam in me,  
Thrust into the world you lived in me.

I am water, the trees drink me with joy, the animals find my pools.

I don’t understand the ways of your world,  
The way you build dams and levees  
and pour into me  
Things not meant for me.

But, I am water. I do not judge, I am the oldest of stories,  
I have seen all. I go where I need to go, and do what I need to do.

You call me river, and lake, and ocean. I live under what  
You call solid ground. I am everywhere and always there.  
Without me there is no you.

Most of what you are, I am.  
I gush, I overflow, I give all to drink.  
I am in your songs, your soup, your paintings, I live in the blood of your children.  
I am water. I am life.

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*Closing (Ron Lorentzen)*

Awakening from the drift of night’s sleep and dreams, may we feel the powerful current  
of today’s learning and work.

*Saturday, April 11: Air (Ella Hadley)*

(Adapted from various works of John O'Donohue, Cat Stevens/Yusuf Islam, and Hildegard von Bingen)

I bless the night that nourished my heart  
To set the ghosts of longing free  
Into the flow and figure of dream  
That went to harvest from the dark  
Bread for the hunger no one sees.

All that is eternal in me  
Welcomes the wonder of this day,  
The field of brightness it creates  
Offering time for each thing  
To arise and illuminate.

I place on the altar of dawn:  
**The quiet loyalty of breath,**  
The tent of thought where I shelter,  
Waves of desire I am shore to  
And all beauty drawn to the eye.

May my mind come alive today  
To the invisible geography  
That invites me to new frontiers,  
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,  
To risk being disturbed and changed.

May I have the courage today  
To live the life that I would love,  
To postpone my dream no longer  
But do at last what I came here for  
And waste my heart on fear no more.

**As a bird soars high,**  
**In the free holding of the wind,**  
Clear of the certainty of the ground,  
**Opening the imagination of wind.**  
Into the grace of emptiness,  
May your life awaken  
To the call of its freedom.

**I listen to the wind of my soul, only God really knows**  
**I am a feather on the breath of God**  
**Today may the blessing of wind be upon me.**

*Closing (Ron Lorentzen)*

May the zephyrs of spring lift us gently into this day and clear our minds for the wisdom and companionship which awaits.

*Sunday, April 12: Fire (John Harris)*

In Greek mythology, the Titan Prometheus defied the Olympian gods by taking fire from them and giving it to humanity, an act for which he was punished by the gods.

Fire is a powerful symbol for Taoists, representing transformation. It embodies the dynamic forces of nature and the universe, serving as a channel for spiritual practices and rituals.

In Hinduism, fire symbolizes purification, transformation, and the divine connection between humanity and the cosmos, also playing a central role in rituals and spiritual practices.

Fire in Buddhism serves as a powerful metaphor for the nature of human experience, illustrating the burning desires that lead to suffering and the path to extinguish these fires through understanding and practice.

Fire was a central element in Celtic spirituality, symbolizing life, transformation, and the divine. Fire was also seen as a purifying force, capable of transforming the physical into the spiritual and cleansing the spirit.

In Judaism, fire serves as a powerful symbol of divine presence, spiritual energy, and ritual practice, while also representing both creation and destruction.

Zoroastrianism places profound significance on fire as a central element of worship. Their sacred fire (Atar) represents purity, truth, and the divine presence of Ahura Mazda.

In Alchemy, fire was believed to drive change and transformation.

For Christians, fire symbolizes divine presence, judgement, purification, and the divine spirit, playing a significant role in biblical narrative and rituals.

Fire holds a central place in the spiritual and cultural practices of many North American indigenous traditions. It is seen as a sacred force representing transformation. In various indigenous cultures, the Sacred Fire embodies the spirit of the community, connecting people to their ancestors, the natural world, and the divine.

In Islam, fire symbolizes both divine punishment as well as guidance. It serves as a warning against disbelief and a tool for enlightenment.

Fire is often used in Sikh rituals and ceremonies, such as the Havan (fire ritual), which is believed to purify the elements and is performed to awaken spiritual insight.

In the Wiccan tradition, fire symbolizes transformation, purification, and the divine connection between the earth and the cosmos. It represents the inner spark of divinity,

willpower, and determination, and is seen as the purifier, burning away illusions and leaving only truth.

In shamanic practices, fire is a sacred tool for purification, healing, and communicating with the spiritual realm.

The Wands suit in tarot represents energy, creativity, and action, and is associated with the element of fire.

Fire's transformative power is central to its archetypal significance. It consumes and refines, symbolizing processes of growth and change. In mythology, this is reflected in the Phoenix, which burns in flames only to rise anew from its ashes. Jung often likened fire to the process of individuation, where the psyche undergoes a metaphorical burning to integrate unconscious elements into a more complete self.

What is the condition of your inner fire? Are you still gathering tinder? Is the tinder all assembled but waiting to be ignited? Has the flaming tinder started to burn the kindling but not yet the fuel? Is the fuel burning like a bright, warm, bonfire of cosmic love, or has it burned down to smoldering embers and needs more fuel? Is your inner fire burning brightest in your intellect, in your heart, or in every cell of your body?

May this meditation and our final morning of the Intensive serve to tend your inner fire of transformation, whatever its condition, and to give you the mythic tinder, the archetypal kindling, and the spiritual fuel to burn your brightest and to bring illumination and love to a sometimes dark and hurting world.

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*Closing (Ron Lorentzen)*

As we enter into this final day of retreat, may the passion that we have kindled refine our wisdom and transform our spirits, today and in the days to come.