

MEDITATION FOR AUTUMN EQUINOX

Written by Bruce Stanley, September 2012

WELCOME

[Instructions are in magenta. Start of in a domestic garden or very close to domestic gardens. Begin by inviting those present to stand in a circle.]

Welcome to this circle and to this meditation.

Begin by bringing your awareness to where you are ... now.

Take a moment to become present and invite God's Spirit to inspire us.

We're all on different spiritual journeys ... but today we find ourselves together on this same path for this meditation. May God's Spirit be with you.

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might include the leaves changing colour, birds migrating south and leaving, other birds arriving, animals preparation for hibernation, autumn fruits: rowan, blackberry, hazelnut, fungi fruiting.]

The fourth story is our story

Food producing peoples especially mark this time as part of harvest. Druids call this time Alban Elfed (*EL-ved*) which means Light of the Water or Light of Autumn, the time of fulfillment and achievement. On the circle of the year it is at the west, the place of the setting sun. Autumn can resonate with the onset of middle age in a person's life. Some Christians celebrate Michaelmas near this time on the 29th. Saint Michael the Archangel is the most senior of angels and represents overcoming evil and chaos and protection from darkness and destruction.

You may also be aware of other themes ...

[Invite anyone to suggest what other themes are resonating for them. These might include sorrow over the passing of summer, not being ready for autumn, preparing for autumn, enjoying the changing colours, apple day]

At the equinox the day and night, light and dark are balanced which suggests that for most of the

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INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS AND THEMES

[Holding a leaf from a tree that has changed to Autumn Colours]

At Autumn Equinox we witness, and participate with, the convergence of four great stories ...

The Sun's Story

The great turning wheel of the heavens says that this is a very significant time of the year. It is one of the four solar festivals which are marked by the sun's position and movement across the sky. At the equinox the sun will rise and set due east west and from now onwards the sun will rise to the south of east, eventually rising 23.5° south of east on the Winter solstice.

The Food story

In the food story, which is linked closely with the story of our lives and survival, it marks the end of the growing and harvesting season and the possibility of rest but also of the dark, lean half of the year.

Nature's story

There is a lot changing around us in nature. What have you observed?

[Invite anyone present to suggest ideas. These

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year light and dark are normally unbalanced. Is being in balance, a rare thing? Perhaps it is a good idea to explore your balance; and an opportunity to let go of striving and enjoy the harvest and prepare for the dark half.

NATURE CONNECTION MEDITATION

[Pause and re-center as the meditation becomes more participative]

Nature can act as a mirror to us and our inner lives.

We will now visit three natural environments that represent three aspects of our own lives. In each of these environments there will be three questions for you to consider, giving a total of nine questions for this, the ninth month of the year.

[In a garden, ideally one growing some food for the table]

Permaculture Zone: One
Equinox Theme: Balance
Aspect of Life: Domestic

In permaculture this is called zone one, it is where we interact with nature most often and where we put the plants we need to visit the most. Herbs growing close to the kitchen are a good

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example. So this place represents our domestic life and we will use it to explore the equinox theme of balance.

Look around and see evidence that nature is at a balance point.

In your domestic life ...

[Leave space between each question for people to think. You can alternatively ask questions 1 and 2 together and ask 3 after a pause. Neither invite nor dissuade people from sharing out loud]

1. What is throwing things out of balance?
2. What is needed to bring more balance?
3. Do you recognise at the centre, God supporting the balance?

A prayer to end this section:

God, who made a home among us, knowing the comfort and the challenge of routine and family. Inspire in us love and peace, and light for this dark half, by your Spirit's dwelling with us.

[Next, travel to zone two]

**Permaculture Zone: Two (three or four)
Equinox Theme: Harvest**

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Aspect of Life: Work or school or other main activity

In permaculture this is called zone two (three or four). In this zone are the plants that need less maintenance, that we might visit less regularly. It represents our place of work, education or activity and we will use it to explore the equinox themes of harvest.

Notice the fruit and harvest in the land around you.

[Pause to allow people to observe nature's abundance at this time of year]

In your working life ...

[add 'school life' etc if relevant to your group]

4. What fruit can you give thanks for?
5. What hasn't grown as you wanted it to?
6. As you think about your work of the next six months, what divine help do you need.

A prayer to end this section:

3000 years ago a Hebrew King wrote a line of a song, 'Unless Adonai builds the house, the builders labour in vain.' Great Spirit – Adonai, help us let go for a moment to recognise that we cannot

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make a masterpiece of our working lives without your blessing.

[Next, travel to zone five]

**Permaculture Zone: Five
Equinox Theme: Light and Dark
Aspect of Life: Wild, unconscious, authentic self**

In permaculture this is called zone five. It is where we have no intervention in nature except to watch and observe. In our lives it represents ...

The wild, the untamed, the 'what is'.
The shadow side, the uncultured, the real.
The side of you known only to God.
Side of the inner child, free or locked up.
The you of the present moment, wise, free from ego, spontaneous.

This moment in the equinox represents a balance point before a necessary journey through the dark half of the year.

Here there are no questions supplied. Wander around, open your eyes and listen to whatever God might be communicating with you through nature.

7. 8. 9. Questions seven, eight and nine are for you to discern.

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I will offer our prayer for this zone now and leave you to your own thoughts and your own timing:

Forever holy men and women have heard the call and sought out wild, lonely and mountainous environments as unique places to be spiritually formed and to hear from the Divine – to be prepared to reenter the world carrying something new, rebalanced to bring light into darkness. God of the wild and untamed, the mountains and the valleys, keep us ever mindful of your call and ever open to your light.

[Give people plenty of time. If your location is suitable for this, you can leave people to their own thoughts in this zone and return to a central location where you can have refreshments ready. Otherwise wait quietly nearby for participants to join you when they're ready.]

ENDING

[Form a circle again and invite anyone to share what they've learned]

Final words. The changing of the seasons makes friends of us all.

May the circle be unbroken.

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