



Samhain

Honoring the time of turning inward

Samhain (pronounce "sow-enn") marks the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter, the half way point between autumnal equinox and winter solstice. Samhain was historically observed in Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man, but this time of year was honored throughout all of old world Europe. Samhain can be experienced as a liminal or threshold time: when the portals to the Otherworld are more open and you can feel more connected, to the Earth, to energy, and to your ancestral past. Any threshold places must be approached carefully at this time: shorelines or other boundaries between water and land, bridges, fords, crossroads...

We will look at the concept of Anima Mundi, world soul in this section. All is connected through a deep sense of oneness with the land, our family, loved ones, ancestors, and all beings. We can feel this threshold more fully at this autumnal transition time.

Samhain is:

- a time for surrendering to the darkest seasonal months
- an in-between time, a threshold time, a liminal space
- a time to reflect and to renew
- a time for introspection
- a time for celebrating our ancestors –genetic lineage, the ancestors of our places, and our spiritual ancestors
- a time for identifying those qualities and issues in our lives which need to be transformed in the long dark of the cocoon
- a time to celebrate the mysteries
- a time for working with the energy of death



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Practices

- Invite family and friends over for a nourishing meal
- Set an extra plate for an "ancestor meal," prepare meals from your lineage (or use your best guest), set the table, use any pictures or items that represent your ancestors as you serve them food.
- Release and burn: using paper (or birch bark!) write down things you would like to burn away or draw into your life. Be sure to burn in a safe place (inside a wood stove or fire safe location). You might place the ashes in your garden or in a potted plant to grow in the coming season.
- Tell stories around a fire (or candle light). They may be family stories, or fairy tales.
- Stories to tell might be stories of endurance, of silence, and of sowing the seeds of transformation
- Read fairy tales, let the imaginal world feel expansive and inviting.
- Enjoy your roots: eat root vegetables, drink root based teas, and let the plant roots help you to connect with your own roots.
- Read stories of the Cailleach, the old creator goddess of the land, and how she rises from the mountains to reassert her rule over the winter season.



Anima Mundi

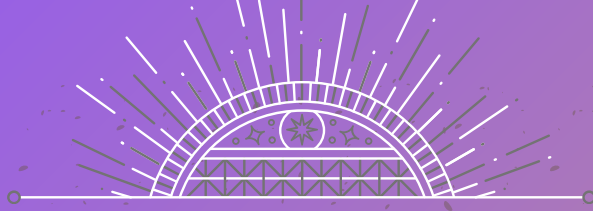
Honoring the Earth Body and the World Soul

Our innate creativity is connected to the creative pulse of the entire living world. The pre- Judeo-Christian worldview was one of dynamic relationships with the living principle of nature. Paleolithic structures such as Gobekli Tepe in Turkey and Newgrange in Ireland are the remnant expressions of this interconnected world view. The ancient Greeks saw divinity in all things. Plato described this ensouled universe as “anima mundi”—the world soul. You are connected to the ultimate source of all creative inspiration. All beings, manifest and un-manifest (form and formless) share this pulsing connection of divine force.

Over time, this dynamic perspective was persecuted, rooted out, and disempowered. But only the vision of the world died, not the world itself. Modern Science confirms what our ancient ancestors knew all along: the entire universe is pulsing and alive with creative energy. Because the universe is an ever-expanding creative force—and you exist within this universe—you too have the ability and potential to access the flow of creativity. A limited vision of your own potential coupled with the belief that the world is a dead space may be blocking your ability to tap into this flow. May this work help you to find enchantment within an alive worldview; to rethink and relearn more helpful stories. When we invite mystery and aliveness into every moment of our lives, into every small action of our days, we allow room for inspiration to flow freely.

Begin by acknowledging the very Earth itself and the other sentient beings that live upon and within the Earth (from microbe to blue whale). It is also important to remember and acknowledge the First Nations, Indigenous American, and Aboriginal Peoples who once lived on the unceded land you are likely living on. If you live in the United States, you are on land that was forcefully and violently taken from Indigenous People. Part of healing our Earth body lies in our ability to recognize and name what has happened on our lands, to our people, to our Earth. "I acknowledge the Earth, the sentient beings of the Earth, and the First Nations, Indigenous American, or Aboriginal Peoples "

What is your relationship to the land you reside upon? How are you connected to the elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether? When do you feel most connected to other people- friends, family, ancestors, or strangers? When do you feel disconnected? How can you bridge that gap?



Yoga Practice

Honoring Anima Mundi—the World Soul

Connection to Ancestors

I am connected to the Earth.

I offer thanks to the Earth body, all sentient beings, and first nations people on this land.

I am connected to the soul of all living things.

The world is animate, the divine exists within all.

Ancestral connections guide my body, life, and all actions.

The world is my teacher, my mother, my father, my source.

Dedication—dedicate your yoga practice to an ancestor you can think of or connect to, or one you might imagine.

Mudra—Brahma Mudra—the seal of the supreme spirit: hands in fist, thumb inside fingers, palms face up and knuckles touch, and held in your lap.

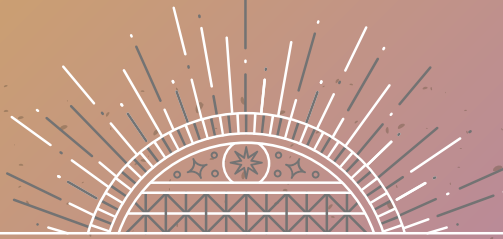
Pranayama—Brahmari breath (humming, 3 times).

Asana—Seated focus and meditation on space deep in mind, pineal gland. Core somatic movements (gut-brain connection). Tadasana--roots, twisting low lunge, hands in prayer, Hip openers, Parsvokanasana with hands in bind position (or strap), Vrksasana--roots, Virabardrasana I, Virabardrasana III, Ustrasana, Dhanurasana, Childs--Balasana, Bridge with a block, Constructive rest, roll on back with ball, Viparita Karani, face down on bolster pose. Meditation.

Mantra—Om Purnahmada--All is perfect as it is' All is connected.

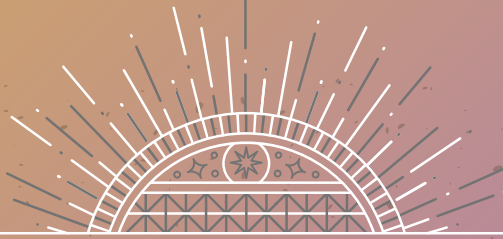
Anima Mundi Meditation

The garden of the world is enchanted, with magical powers and transcendent meaning, implicit in every part of nature.



Anima Mundi and Ancestors

Weekly Yoga Plans and Notes



Samhain, Anima Mundi & Ancestors

Journal Prompts

● What feels like it wants to fall away from you right now? How can those things be composted and turned into something new and more nourishing?

● As the year comes to a close, what fruits are you carrying forward from this year?

● If you quiet yourself, what has been lurking just under the surface or at the edges of your awareness?

● Write a letter to an ancestor that you know of (or an imagined one). You might include tales of your life, how you move through your day, what is happening in the world. What would you ask that ancestor? What do you know of them? (if anything, you can imagine) Let your imagination and creativity journey through this writing.