

When I got here today I asked _____ to get me a glass of water. _____, where did you get this water? Where did it come from before that? Where did it come from before that? Where did it come from before that? This water has been on this earth for billions of years and will continue on this earth for billions of years to come. It has passed through clouds, mountain streams, it has passed through fish, plants, animals, soil, pipes and water treatment plants before it got into this glass.

Now I want to show you something magic. [drink water] Where did the water go? Is it really 'in' me, or is it now me? We humans are two-thirds water. Water is a big part of who we are. We are not separate from the water we **are** the water. But the water will pass through me. Where will it go? Just like the water passed through other animals and plants, it will pass through me. Then where will it go? Then where will it go? Then where will it go? Water connects us to the plants, the animals, and all of creation.

Everyone take in a deep breath of air and slowly let it out. [breathe in and out] Where did the air come from before we breathed it in? Where did it come from before that? Where did it come from before that? So plants breathe too, right? They breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe our oxygen. The air we breathe, like the water we drink, has passed through trees, animals, plants, other people for millions of years. The Hebrew scriptures refer to God as yah-weh. Hebrew scholars tell me the word is meant to be breathed more than spoken. Inhale on the Yah and exhale on the Weh. Hebrew scriptures in the book of Genesis refer to the spirit of God or the wind of God as Ru-ah. Again a word meant to be breathed as it is spoken. The author of Genesis clearly understood the sacredness of air. The Buddha taught the importance of being mindful of breathing and meditating as a way of reaching Enlightenment. Where does the air go after we breathe it in? Not all of it goes out of us. The oxygen goes into our blood stream and circulates through our bodies. The air becomes us. We live in the air like the fish live in the water. We are connected, by the air, to all of creation.

I brought some things from my garden at home to show you. [show a vegetable] What is this? What is it made of? What do you need to grow a plant? That's right, water, soil, air and sunlight. The soil is full of minerals. When we eat the vegetables, we eat the minerals of the soil also. Like the water and air, the soil becomes us. We are the soil. The rich soil is called humus. It is related to the word human. The author of the Book of Genesis used the name Adam for the first human, or a-DAM in Hebrew. The Hebrew word for the earth is Adamah. We are of the earth and we are the earth.

There is something else in the vegetables other than air, water and earth. Anyone know what it is? What was it that is needed to grow a plant? That's right, water, soil, air and sunlight. Sunlight is energy; it comes from the big burning ball of fire we call the sun. It flies across space a great speed and is collected by the plants. Can we collect sunlight for energy for our bodies? No. Only plants can collect sunlight. Animals that eat the plants store that energy in their bodies and use it to live. These vegetables are like little batteries that store solar energy. We eat them when we need the energy.

For thousands of years humans have understood the importance of these four elements that we have been discussing. Earth, wind, fire and water. For thousands of years humans have understood the connection between these four elements and life on earth. They have understood the web of life, the web of creation, or the web of existence one of the seven the Unitarian Universalist principals. The principle of “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” But lately we humans have forgotten the connection. We have separated ourselves from the elements and have been abusing them. We have polluted our air, water and soil. We burn fossil fuels to release the energy that they store. The energy in fossil fuels originally came from the sun, billions of years ago, when plants covered the earth. These plants stored the energy of the sun and carbon from the air, and then were forced underground through a shifting of the tectonic plates. Under the earth, it was subjected to lots of pressure and heat converting it to coal, oil and natural gas. It is ancient sunlight stored underground for billions of years. When we burn the fossil fuels we also release toxins that make our air toxic and make us sick. They fill our water with toxins that we eat with the fish. They fill our soils with toxins that we eat with our vegetables. We cannot continue this. We must find another way. We must be mindful of our connection to the earth, air and water. We must fully understand the web of existence.

In my spiritual journey, my search for the truth, I took stock in the electricity I use, because in Kentucky 95% of our electricity comes from coal.

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