

All this joy
All this sorrow
All this promise
All this pain

Such is life
Such is being
Such is Spirit
Such is love

In the Shelter of Each Other by Reggie Harris

In the shelter of each other
In the shelter of our lives
We are open, we are dreaming
We are hopeful, we are wise

You know that many times the pain of the world crashes in
We feel angry and afraid
We start to lose our sense of hope, our sense of direction.
Isolation, we have learned, will not bring much in return
If we truly cannot learn to live as one

You know that many times the pain of the world crashes in
We feel broken and betrayed
We start to lose our sense of joy, our sense of connection.
And though our history remains, it's our actions we must change
If we hope to heal our planet, we know that we must stand
In the Shelter of Each Other

Where do you find shelter in the joys and sorrows of life? Where/how do you OFFER shelter?

Heart-Listening Sessions have been so fruitful in revealing what is alive in our community at this moment.

- A desire to deepen and strengthen our connections with each other, and to find creative ways to meet the needs of those who are here now
- A desire for outreach to those who are isolated, have stopped coming to Unity, or who might not even know this gift exists!
- A continued desire to learn, study and grow spiritually, through Unity teachings, and other spiritual writers/practices

Where do you find shelter in the joys and sorrows of life?

- **Shelter in family**
- **Shelter from family!**
- **Shelter in loving friendships**
- **In prayer/connection to our divine nature, spending time with the unnameable/omniamable Presence**

I came across an article from the Unity archives written by James Dillet Freeman about the birth and illusion of the beloved "Prayer for Protection."

"Silent Unity has always written a special Christmas Prayer Service just for Silent Unity workers. And in 1940 I was asked to prepare this service. [With World War II raging in Europe, we received many letters and phone calls from people caught in the conflict, asking for a prayer for protection. In 1940 I wrote a little four-line verse to go with the Christmas service.

"The light of Christ directs me; The love of Christ enfolds me; The power of Christ protects me; The presence of Christ upholds me."

I had hardly finished this Christmas service before Silent Unity... asked me to write a protection pamphlet [His Protecting Spirit] with affirmative prayers for protection on the back page. Among these was the verse from the 23rd Psalm: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Ps. 23:4 KJV).

One of the young women who worked in Silent Unity was reading my manuscript as I wrote it, and as she finished it, she came up to me and said: "Jim, if I were a woman in England and they were dropping bombs on

my roof, or if I were a soldier and someone was pointing a loaded gun at me, I wouldn't want to feel like I was walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Can't you do better than that?"

I thought, You want me to do better than the 23rd Psalm? You have to be out of your mind. But rolling around in the back of my mind was the little verse I had written as a prayer for protection at Christmas. I had written it just for Silent Unity, but now it came rolling up to the front of my mind and demanded that I pay attention to it. It enticed me to see what I could make of it... the little prayer became:

"The light of God surrounds me, The love of God enfolds me, The power of God protects me, The presence of God watches over me."

That is the way we first printed it. Then a line came to me that would make the prayer even more powerful:

"Wherever I am, God is."

In 2024, we are fortunate to not have bombs raging overhead, as many of our siblings do across the sea. Yet it is clear we live in a time when many of us feel the perils of THIS age in our own country. The divides, the fears, the anger are impossible to deny. What is it about our humanness that makes us forget we are ONE in the shelter of the Holy One Beyond All Names?

Preparing for my week of study coming up, I've been reading *Lessons in Truth* by Emilie Cady.

From ***Lessons in Truth***, by H. Emilie Cady

Lesson 1

We have come to a place now where our search for Truth...must be our living a life... Every right thought that we think, our every unselfish word or action, is bound by immutable laws to be fraught with good results. But in our walk we must learn to lose sight of results...We must rather seek to be

the Truth consciously, to be love, to be wisdom, to be life (as we really are unconsciously,) and let results take care of themselves.

Lesson 9

Beloved, that which you so earnestly desire will never be found by your seeking it through the mental side alone, any more than it has heretofore been found through the emotional side alone. Intuition and intellect are meant to travel together, intuition always holding the reins to guide intellect. ... If you have been thus far on the way cultivating and enlarging only the mental side of Truth... you need.. to let the mental, reasoning side rest awhile....and learning how to be still, listen to that which [God] will say to you through the intuitional part of your being. The light that you so crave will come out of the deep silence and become manifest to you from within yourself, if you will but keep still and look for it from that source.

So perhaps here is *our* simple lesson. Yes, study and think and learn the mental side of Truth. But learn how to spend time in stillness, spend time listening to that which God will say to you through your heart. Listen to voice of the Holy One in morning birdsong, in neighborhood noises, in the barks and purrs of beloved 4-legged friends. In the face of all this joy, all this sorrow, all this promise, all this pain, take shelter– and offer shelter– in the warmth of community. And if–when– community does not feel warm, ask “what now” rather than “why me.”

Live the Truth that we are wisdom. We are love. We are light. And so it is!

Amen.