

Meditation:

Awake my soul
Be still and know
There is no place
I need to go
With open eyes
I long to see
The good in all, the good in me,
The hope in all, the hope in me
The grace in all, the grace in me
The light in all, the light in me
The peace in all, the peace in me
The God in all
The God in me

Message:

Seeing the path of NOW by looking back, over our shoulders at the wisdom of our ancestors and our own awakenings. I'll begin with bell hooks ***all about love***, then move Emilie Cady's ***Lessons in Truth***, and then move to the ancient and NOW of both Isaiah and the teachings of Jesus.

From the National Museum of African-American History and Culture [website](#):
Born Gloria Jean Watkins to working-class parents in 1952, bell hooks grew up in the segregated city of Hopkinsville, Kentucky...As she pursued writing, she decided to take the name "bell hooks" after her great-grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks, who was known to have sharp opinions. She chose to spell her name in lowercase to shift attention toward her ideas rather than toward her identity... Creating over 70 pieces of published work...hooks displayed to the world that the best way to make an impact is by "talking back." And she desired that all people, female and male, be liberated from sexist patterns, domination and oppression."

From bell hooks in *all about love: new visions* (written in 2000):

“Living life in touch with Divine Spirit lets us see the light of love in all living beings. That light is a resurrecting life force. A culture that is dead to love can only be resurrected by spiritual awakening. On the surface it appears that our nation has gone so far down the road of secular individualism, worshiping the twin gods of money and power, that there seems to be no place for spiritual life. ...Imagine how different our lives would be if all the individuals... who claim to be religious, were setting an example for everyone by being loving...

...A commitment to a spiritual life requires us to do more than read a good book or go on a restful retreat. It requires conscious practice, a willingness to unite the way we think with the way we act. Spiritual life is first and foremost about commitment to a way of thinking and behaving that honors principles of inter-being and interconnectedness.

...Society's collective fear of love must be faced if we are to lay claim to a love ethic that can inspire us and give us the courage to make necessary changes ...Faith enables us to move past fear. We can collectively regain our faith in the **transformative** power of love by cultivating courage, the strength to stand up for what we believe in, to be accountable both in word and deed.

LESSONS IN TRUTH Emilie Cady

25. Keep ever in mind that **each living person in all God's universe is a radiating center of the same perfect One**, some radiating more and some less, *according to the awakened consciousness* of the individual. If you have become conscious of this radiation in yourself, keep your thought **[I would add, keep your heart and spiritual practices]** centered right there, and the Spirit of the living God will radiate from you in all directions with mighty power, doing without noise or words a great work in lifting others up.

If you want to help others who are not yet awakened to this knowledge, center your thoughts on this same idea of them--that they are radiating centers of the All-Perfect. Keep your eye "single" for them, ... and Spirit will teach them more in a day than you could in years.

Spirit will teach them... and of course, will teach you and teach me— because on any given day, at any given moment, it might be me, or you, who forgets that we are radiating the Spirit of the Living God. And it was ever thus!

Both Isaiah and Jesus, in the gospel of Luke, are addressing communities that have relied too much on the **performative** ways of doing good in the world— fasting, keeping the sabbath, following the commandments. They have forgotten, just as we sometimes do, that the real work of Spirit, of love, of the Holy Mystery is **transformative**! Can we hear these words as the gift from our ancestors, AND let them ring with the call to **NOW** is the awakening?

Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10-12:

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places

and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus begins his ministry in Nazareth, teaching about Isaiah from the scroll. His audience is at first amazed at this person they've known since he was a kid. Then they start to hear his challenge: "*how are you living this out, my friends? Are you letting this good news transform your hearts AND actions?*" According to Luke, the people turn against Jesus.

How are WE hearing this message? How are we responding to this message that echoes through centuries, echoes through all of human history?

Let's hear this passage from bell hooks again:

...Society's collective fear of love must be faced if we are to lay claim to a love ethic that can inspire us and give us the courage to make necessary changes ...Faith enables us to move past fear. We can collectively regain our faith in the **transformative power of love by cultivating courage, the strength to stand up for what we believe in, to be accountable both in word and deed.**

When times are tough, love harder! Love softer and more tenderly! Radiate the light of truth! Cultivate the courage to face this moment in our culture, this moment in our country, this moment in the world. Strengthened by each other, strengthened by the Divine we embody, we are called to love. **AWAKE MY SOUL!** NOW is the awakening. Moment by moment, choice by choice.

PRAYER from Lessons in Truth: *The glory of the Christ consciousness, now awakened in my soul, quickens, illumines, and heals me.* And so it is. Amen.