

SONGVERSATION I AM LIGHT

My Thoughts On The
Skin Bleaching Allegations

A SongVersion on how we can heal.

Part 5, Section 2: The Songversation Practice



SONGVERSATION: I AM LIGHT Part 5.1

THE SONGVERSATION PRACTICE

I said in the very beginning of these essays over a year ago that my goal is to be able to speak spiritual truth and principles to people who live in their heads, and to have very simple words to explain it to people who have yet to step on the spiritual path. Numbing ourselves to our pain and blaming other people and other things is always an option. But the world doesn't give you your power, you generate *that* from within.

That is why I consider this the most important part of the more that 100 pages of the SongVersion I Am Light essays, because what you will read now, is the realization of that aspiration.

Through my own journey, of break down, break through, break the shell, elevate and fly, I naturally began to yearn to understand self care practices.

And after the moment of embodiment on the mountain top, I began to live it. I call this my SongVersion Practice - and I will complete this SongVersion - detailing for the first time ANYWHERE - just how to do the SongVersion Practice that has helped me to sustain my NEW PATH of my awakened destiny.

I PRAY! That this will assist you in your life.

BECOME A SEEKER AND FIND YOU:

Make your "self-work" your hobby.

My main avenues of exploration have been:

Praying - This is just talking to God. Whatever you believe God to be. This is not about religious affiliation, though it can be. I believe there is a God, and when I align myself with that higher power, I am more clear about life. It's really that simple. Prayer has been a great, GREAT, source of comfort for me. I don't pray because I think GOD needs that from me, I pray because it makes me FEEL connected to something meaningful, and it reminds me what REALLY matters in life. On a practical level, prayer helps me to focus my intention. It works EVERYTIME! No matter how scattered I am, when I pray, I am instantly calmed and focused.

Meditating - Prayer is talking to God and meditation is listening to God. I see meditation much like religion, there are many paths to the same place. Find the way that works for you. These days meditation is simple. I just get quiet and still. The activity I take from there is always more focused. I practice a few types of meditation. I won't go into all of it here, but this is a part of MY daily spiritual work.

Journaling - I journal A LOT. Primarily because I need to get things out of my head. My advice is to keep a journal no matter what. Even if you're not a writer, having a place to document your process is important. It's like having a phone book, you need to put the numbers somewhere.

About 10 years ago I sat with my journal and asked, "What are the weak points of my character?". "Nobody, NObody, has ever read this, so let me be honest with myself here." That was a pivotal moment. The things I was able to admit, took me down a path of healing that shaped who I am today. Obviously, MUCH more involved than these few words here, but it's amazing how quickly my life began to change after THAT moment. So, don't be afraid to look at yourself. Bringing something into awareness is the first step to healing it.

Some other things I've done that have helped me are...

A Life Review - When my life hit rock bottom for the 3rd time, I finally stopped and got quiet. I went into myself and took the most honest look I could at HOW I had created this life. A true and honest assessment of who I was, who I REALLY was, who I was right NOW. Not, who I was told I was at 12. Not, who I was when in that relationship. Not, what my ego had been telling me or what people around me had always said about me. It was sobering and SORELY needed. In order to move forward, I had to get clear and real with me.

Therapy - Keep looking until you find the right therapist for you. It's important to have a good fit. This didn't last long for me, but it was a helpful experience.

Interview Process - I learned this at the Landmark Forum. You give your friends permission to speak freely and you ask them how you "occur" (Landmark speak) in the world. Be aware, it can hurt, but I found it was worth it.

Grief Counseling - I thought this was only for when someone dies. After experiencing the grief of a lost dream, and a lost love, and a lost naiveté, I understood how helpful and absolutely necessary this was to help me move forward. I had to grieve the loss of the life I THOUGHT I was going to have. Grief counseling was the final step in the MANY YEARS LONG PROCESS of learning to accept the loss of my naiveté.

Spiritual Counseling - Some people are gifted with deeper insight into life, and I find talking with a wise man or woman sometimes just REALLY put things into perspective. It's important that this person is reputable, and what I learned is you don't take their answers as TRUTH, but rather information to ponder on your own, to run through your own discernment.

Talking to Elders - Old people are a GREAT source of insight. The Song "Break the Shell" was inspired by a conversation I had with Cicely Tyson. "ONE", "I Am Light", and in fact this entire Songversation, were all inspired by Maya Angelou. My Great Grandmother and my Grandmother, just ALWAYS had a point of view I needed to hear.

ASK Questions - Every once in awhile I meet a person that I find impressive for some reason like; being extremely JOYFUL, or emotionally healthy, or successful, or having good skin, or nice hair, or a happy marriage, or NO marriage, or being a mother of many children, etc... AND I JUST ASK THEM HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY.

Transcendental Meditation (or TM for short) - A VERY simple meditation practice that REALLY, truly, does calm the mind, body, and emotions. I've seen it heal migraines, insomnia, anxiety, ADHD, and for ME, it's been a perfect way to get grounded, clear, and it combats fatigue, helpful for when I am in overwhelm from those days of too much activity, noise, and people. I also do TM just before I sit to write songs. It clears my mind. It's simple, it's easy and it works.

Travel - Is the GREAT TEACHER.

Astrology - My parents had astrology books on the shelf and I started reading those books from the time I *could* read. Astrology has been a means to understand MYSELF better, and a window into the psychology of humankind. I am not talking about newspaper horoscopes here. I'm talking about the ancient science of astrology. It's not a perfect science but there is a lot of truth to it. The fundamental tenet is, that all things are interconnected and the electromagnetic field of the celestial bodies interacts with the electromagnetic field of each other and OUR own bodies electromagnetic field. You know, like the moon pulls the tide. You body is %70 water after all.

Numerology - The science of numbers and how they correspond to life cycles. I talk a little bit about that on this podcast: [Denzel is the best actor ever period](#) I Also LOVE this book. [The life you were born to live by Dan Millman](#).

Reading - Just reading. and learning things. special interest, random things, fiction, nonfiction, magazines, newspapers ... just reading to expand your world. Just READ.

Discover / Develop - your spiritual senses so that you can see and understand deeper truths than what is on the surface. This is how you will discover YOUR truth. I believe we all have a deeper sense, we simply need to be open to its development.

The spiritual senses commonly known are:

- - Spiritual sight (Clairvoyant)
- - Spiritual hearing (Clairaudient)
- - Spiritual feeling of emotions/touch (Clairsentient)
- - Spiritual knowing (Claircognizance)
- - Spiritual smell (Clairgustance)

In my early 20's I was surprised to find that there was a name for the THING I felt around people. Clairsentience - THIS is where my songwriting comes from, it's also exhausting sometime, feeling so much of other people's feelings.

Create a Sacred Space based on your nature.

People think Sacred Space and it brings to mind images of Temples, Churches, Yoga studios, candles. And, while these CAN BE SACRED Spaces, none of that is *necessary*. What I mean by Sacred Space is a PERSONAL and periodically visited space, dedicated to the intent of delving into your inner life. A place where you can go to be alone with, you, yourself, and God.

A SongVersion is co created sacred space ...

Sacred Space is dreams...

Sacred Space is where the synchronicities of life are seen, felt and recognized as important...

Sacred Space is where you breathe and when you breathe the body receives all that nature intended...

Sacred Space is where you are still enough to drop into an altered state. Sacred Space is important because it is a foundation for all of your spiritual work and exploration. Whether it is prayer, reading, meditating, writing, even making your daily schedule, your sacred space is like a gym or a office for your spiritual work. It can be a prayer room, a chair in a corner, a closet, for me, it's MY windowsill. Make it YOUR style, use what is available to you, and GO there periodically; it's the soil "the work" you do is planted in. That space quickly becomes like a good friend. And then, if that space is already cultivated, it becomes ESPECIALLY valuable when life brings you to your knees, for it will be a soft place to land when you need it the most.

*I have learned that the art of simplicity is simply making peace with your complexity.
- Wings of Forgiveness from Testimony Vol. 1 Life & Relationship*

There are as many iterations of Sacred Space as there are PEOPLE.

For example, my nature is:

- - highly creative
- - empathic - I absorbed the energy of the world around me.
- - sensitive - easily moved by things
- - sensitive eyes and ears
- - emotional - I respond from a place of feeling first
- - like to move slow and wake up slowly in the morning
- - a thinker and a reader
- - like heat and humidity
- - cerebral and mentally active
- - calm
- - slow burn through my day and stay up very late into the early morning most days

So Sacred Space for me based on my nature is:

My prayer room or my windowsill where I can sit in silence, look out on a beautiful natural vista, and think, and write, and ponder, and pray out loud, and hear the whispers of inspiration in my ears. I can sit there for hours. My house in Georgia was VERY large, and I spent as much time in my little window sill area as I did in the living room and kitchen.

This is why all of my essays and blogs are signed from my windowsill *smile* I'm sitting here now.

- - I especially love being by the water.
- - I like to wear soft colors.
- - When I'm in deep thought I like to drink warm drinks. I am an constant snacker, but I find food distracting in these times.
- - I can have life changing epiphanies, OR sometimes it will be simple things like, I'll think of a person I want to call, or a question I want to ask, or a song concept will come to me, or a melody, or the perfect person will call at the perfect time, etc.
- - Certain places in Hawaii have been Sacred Space for me.
- - Singing all by myself at night time, in my prayer room, is Sacred Space.
- - and counter to ALL of this, being on stage, is sacred space for me. While in the middle of a song, sometimes *literally* forget the audience is there - for MUCH of my life it was the ONLY time, that I wasn't thinking about *anything else but that moment*.

I realize that I fit into the "stereotype" of "spiritual" which brings to mind my Musical Director, Shannon Sanders. He said I could talk about him.

Shannon Sanders is a VERY spiritually connected man but fits none of the stereotypes. He's so connected that I joke that he has an antennae on his head! His nature is MUCH different than mine:

- - He's manly
- - He's a big football player looking guy
- - He's super Southern
- - He loves SOUTHERN Hip-Hop (so many times I've made him turn off 3 Six Mafia on the bus LOL)
- - He's a husband and father of 3
- - He's highly creative
- - He's restless and very SOCIAL
- - He thinks fast
- - He moves fast
- - He has lots of IDEAS FAST
- - He talks a lot, loud and VERY fast LOL! (He is the most country person I know)
- - He will talk to ANYONE from any walk of life, just as country as he pleases. LOL!

When we're writing songs together, he's always moving, even when he's behind the piano, or walking around my house, or looking at books, or taking a walk outside, and he'll have the song done in an hour and answering calls in between.

His Sacred Space, no doubt, looks different than mine. His prayers are fast and to the point. I know he likes to hike and move around. It's just how he's wired.

We've been together 15 years now.

Before we go on stage it looks like this:

He only needs a moment after running sound check all afternoon; he irons his clothes, dresses, and takes a moment to pray all at the same time, and he's ready to go.

I dress slowly, drink tea, do my make up and relax, do vocal warm ups, stretch and dress slowly before I even get to the prayer circle. We have prayer and THEN I pray again silently with myself before I go on. I breathe and get grounded and centered and THEN walk on stage, and ground and center more. It why I like to start my shows with a gentle and sacred song, instead of a BIG HIT OF SOUND AND LIGHTS! It's just how I'm wired.

It's different for everyone.

What does YOUR Sacred Space look like?

When you cultivate your Sacred Space, it becomes a part of you, but first the seed must be planted and watered. This is part of doing the work. spend sacred time periodically in your sacred space.

My Sacred time is what I call my:

MY SONGVERSATION PRACTICE

is part prayer, part meditation, part action, part fellowship.

And here what my DAILY personal SongVersation Practice looks like.

This is not based on religion but rather my own intuition as I am guided by what feels right and in alignment with my truth.

When I am really grounded, and in my flow, this is how I start my day. Not as a matter of ethics or ideals, but because it WORKS. I call it starting my engine. This sacred time, centers you so that as you can move through the world, grounded and centered and full of YOU. It makes my days infinitely more productive. Without this practice I am tired ALL day and moody and so I slowly developed this intuitively and I LOVE it.

Sometimes you gotta be still before you can get ahead, ask the universe for help, chaos isn't good for your health - Slow Down - from the album Voyage To India

1. Preparation: I wake up, shower, drink warm water with a little lemon, and dress in comfortable clothes

2. Pray - (Talk to God) - SongVersation Practice begins with a song as prayer and then spoken prayer. [I Am Light](#) was written for this purpose and *became* something I wanted to also share. This is the ONLY song of mine that I listen to on a regular basis. Then I pray, I speak out loud to that which I call God, a benevolent, loving divine. There is no right or wrong way to pray if you are being sincere. Just do it and, it will grow and YOU will grow.

3. Meditate - (Listen to God)

There are SO many types of meditation. I once heard the analogy, that meditation is like sport. You say I like sports, yes but WHICH kinds? Meditation is like that, there are SO MANY different kinds, find what works for you.

4. Action

Stretch: EVERYday, I stretch as a part of my SongVersation practice. It wakes up and acknowledges my BODY. Usually I do [Sun salutations sequences](#). But what I ALWAYS do, is simply ... stretch in ways that feel good and breathe while I do it.

And/or -

Movement: WHEN I DO IT LOL! Honestly, I have to really make myself MOVE, which is why I spotlight it in my SongVersation practice. Dance, Yoga, Jogging, Jump rope, Walking, Hiking (when I can) are my favorites.

Gratitude move: some days when I am in pain, or lost, or just want to elevate a good day. Most often though, I feel stagnant, like I don't know what to do next, if I'm not working.

What I do is, take a short walk and remember all that I have to be thankful for and I SAY IT OUT LOUD as I WALK. Things as obvious as being able to walk and feel the wind on my face, to things as special as new love in my life. Or the existence of flowers, of music, for my new Niece Harper, my brother, there REALLY is ALWAYS SOMETHING to be grateful for, and that jump starts my creativity when I can't figure out what to do next.

And then I do any combination of these things:

5. Read: Usually Sacred text, or ALWAYS, text that is sacred to ME.

6. Write: Like what you're reading now. Songwriting. Journaling, to process whatever is going on ... ACTION.

7. Sing: This is my life's passion so, I SING. Sometimes it's an ACTUAL SongVersation performance, and that IS the action of the day. I'm so blessed to have found my passion in life. So even when it's not for work, or to an end, I sing. Everyone can't sing good, but everyone CAN sing. LOL!

8. Affirmation: If you are not comfortable singing, you can also speak affirmations, or lyrics to your favorite songs, read sacred text that is meaningful to you, poetry, what ever speaks to you - but the intention here IS to use your voice.

I end my SongVersation practice by...

9. Grounding again: This practice takes me out of my mundane world and into a quiet, higher place, by the time it's done I feel somewhere in between spacey and alert - and I learned that if I go out into the day that way - I can also feel tired, which is the exact opposite of what I want. So, after my practice, the same way I open it with a song and prayer, I end with a song and prayer. I choose the same open and closing songs - because it creates a sense memory - and so my closing song brings me into my body and signals that it's time to move into the day grounded. This final step takes me into my day with focus and in full power.

I have a gift for you! Here is my grounding song

My gift to you. I've been saving it for a LONG time, only for myself and close friends who hear it and ask for a copy - but I want to share it with YOU, if you have come this far with SongVersation consider this a thank you gift.

Give Thanks

10. Fellowship - As a recovering isolationist, I'm learning how much fellowship really matters.

This is a part of my day where I spend time connecting with my tribe. Usually after all of the solitary work of the "SongVersation" practice is done - and I'm grounded and in my body, alert and ready to move into the day -

Most OFTEN, it's over the phone, I have my hand full of like minded friends and elders that I can REALLY talk about my spiritual life with.

Sometimes it's one on one with friends, dinner or just talk time where we talk about the things that matter most.

Fellowship is also intentionally connecting with my tribe - being in the room with like minded people. Like a yoga class, or a musical gathering. For example, I invited myself to this function - I'm happy they said yes LOL!

MLK Day Performance

Fellowship is also connecting *indirectly* to my tribe.

Like listening to podcast that are laser point to my interests, or joining online conversations about my favorite book, or my favorite music. It's basically adding my voice to and listening to the voices of others, about the things I am interested in the most. I do this when I am showering, dressing, cooking and commuting.

Some of my favorite podcasts are:

[Denzel Washington Podcast](#)

[Dear Sugar Podcast](#) (this one is not out yet so you can just click the link and listen to other episodes and find mine when its up)

[Death, Sex and Money](#) is one of my other favorites.

[Untangle meditation podcast](#)

[This American Life](#)

[The Heart](#)

[NY Times Book review](#)

Re Grounding

And some point during the day I start to feel my battery get really low - and I sit for 20 minutes of TM OR, I just go somewhere and recharge. For ME recharging is being quiet and alone for just 20 or 30 minutes and I'm ready to go again.

OTHER TOOLS I USE IN MY SACRED TIME

Another thing I love in my sacred space is:

Incense - In home use, we generally see incense as olfactory beautification like perfume for your space, BUT! I find incense (nearly) indispensable for use in a spiritual context. Using incense to set the tone and energy of my sacred space and sacred time just works for me. It can be grounding, clearing a space, focusing, AND, ALSO! what I really find exciting, is that I have discovered, it creates a sense memory that can help me drop into that quiet meditative prayer space easier and easier. My kit includes: Charcoal for resin incense burning www.shoyeido.com/category/incense-charcoal. A charcoal holder. I use metal chopsticks to place the incense. And Resins: Frankincense, Myrrh, Black Copal, White Copal, Dried leaves and woods: sage, lavender, cedar, and palo santo. I also have the occasional incense stick, but I really love resins and dried leaves.

The more time you spend there and the more consistent that time becomes, the more balanced you become, and the less things outside affect and trigger you, and when you ARE triggered, you have tools to clear and calm yourself.

Eventually, you will get to the place where you can create that space and time wherever you ARE. After thousands of hours of prayer, over the last 20 years, I can pray ANYWHERE and it ALWAYS calms and centers me. Even in a moving van in Turkey. Even in a loud backstage area before a show. I can go to that space in my mind, and I can remember the feeling and call it up at will, almost, anywhere.

And certain things I take with me like:

Color - Consciously choosing what colors I wear. especially on my head, which is considered the center of one's spiritual energy. This is why you see me in so much color, and when I am wearing black it is with discretion and intention.

And of all of the fancy satin and silk, my white cotton feels so good - Little Things - from the album Voyage to India

Essential Oils - Can be used both aromatically and topically. A few examples of aromatic application are: Sage, lavender or frankincense, for meditation or calming or sleep. Clary Sage, rosemary, melaleuca for clearing of my energy field and mind. Rosemary, peppermint, lemon for ENERGY boosting. Jasmine, rose, geranium, to connect to my Feminine and sensual energy. Topical application is a whole other SongVensation - maybe I'll write an essay on that sometime. My Favorite book on the topic is: [Modern Essentials - A Contemporary Guide to the Therapeutic Use of Essential Oils](#). My favorite Oil company is - [Still Point Aromatics and DoTerra](#).

A Final word.

YOU ARE WORTHY!

Worthy: deserving of effort, attention and respect.

Learn to hear the voice of your soul, and let that truth guide you through your life.

DO WHAT EVER YOU MUST, TO HEAL and FORGIVE YOURSELF. Healing and forgiveness is not a destination, it IS a journey. It's like shedding weight; you do it an ounce at a time, and when you reach your goal weight, it's a balancing act to stay there, sometime you gain and loose ... this is LIFE. Never beat up on yourself for not being "perfect" because the TRUTH is, you already are, AND you never will be. Perfect is not the goal, WHOLE is the goal. And that is the definition of healing: to be made whole.

You, as you are, are WORTHY, every single part of you. None of the things that hurt you, or make you feel guilty, are WHO you are, those are things you've experienced, are *not* who you are. As you walk through each day, make your wellness, your elevation, YOU, your hobby. This is a truly unselfish act, because the better YOU ARE, the better the WORLD AROUND YOU IS, for we comprise the world.

On the path, make your healing and elevation your life's work, no one can do it for you.

Trust that you will find your way. Even on the days when you have pain in your heart, ESPECIALLY on those days, MOVE FORWARD, in the truth of who you are.

Know this to be true: You ARE WORTHY, of your voice, and your truth, your gifts, and your expression. Know that the way forward will be challenging at times, and that is just LIFE happening. Keep growing, for that is the nature of life, and keep loving, for that is *the most powerful energy in the universe, and all you have to do is use it, so use it*.

Know, that there is no place your arrive that will all of a sudden make your life perfect. You do the best you can in the moment ... and keep living.

And then those moments will come where you are called to make a *leap*. It is certainly your choice to do so or not, but consider the power of a life fully lived.

For me, having to courage to face myself, and acknowledge the truth, and do what was required to build a life in alignment, was the awakening of my destiny. THAT WILLINGNESS, CHANGED MY LIFE.

Celebrate your triumphs.

And when you inevitably fall down, and have to regroup, start the next journey knowing that THIS IS LIFE, - and you are capable, and indeed WORTHY of starting again. and again. and again. Because there is always, another shell to break and another flight to take.

Breakdown, Break Through, Break the Shell, Elevate & Fly, Breakdown, Break Through, Break the Shell, Elevate & Fly, Breakdown, Break Through, Break the Shell, Elevate & Fly, Breakdown, Break Through, Break the Shell, Elevate & Fly, Breakdown, Break Through, Break the Shell, Elevate & Fly

And we have a choice to live or truly be alive - This is your life - Child it's time, to break the shell, life's gonna hurt but it's meant to be felt, you can not touch the sky from inside yourself, you cannot fly until you Break the Shell, from the album SongVensation.

This essay you are reading ... is a fly moment for me. Thank you for being a witness to my transformation. #SoulBirdsWorldWide

The same way SongVensation begins with a prayer,

SongVersations End with a Prayer.

“ONE”
From the album SongVersation

[Verse 1:]
Billions live their lives
Now Muhammad, Krishna, or the Buddha are the way.
Still some believe it's right to say
In the name of Jesus when you pray.

[Chorus:]
We are a human kind of 7 billion
So many different races and religions
And it all comes down to one

[Verse 2:]
Some say God's a him
Still many believe that He is a Her
Does God Live in our hearts?
Or is She somewhere out there in the universe.

[Chorus:]
We are a human kind of 7 billion
So many different races and religions
And it all comes down to one

[Bridge:]
How far will have to go before we learn the lesson?
Gandhi, was a Hindu
Martin Luther King, a Christian
Regardless of religion, they knew love was the mission
And it all comes down to one.

[Verse 3:]
Is there no God at all?
Or a pantheon of gods up in the sky
We can heal our broken hearts
If we give up the desire to be right.

[Chorus:]
We are a human kind of 7 billion
So many different races and religions
And we all want the same things
Health, Love, Prosperity and Peace
Tolerance is the seed
And the gift of pure acceptance is the tree

We are a human kind of 7 billion
So many different races and religions
And it all comes down to one

Whether you are red, brown, yellow, black, or white
Man with a husband, or a woman with a wife
We can debate until the end of time who is wrong or right
Or we can see ourselves as one
Cause it all comes down to love.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! for your presence in this SongVersation.

May these words, have touched whom ever they are meant, in the way they are meant to be touched. May these words bring, in perpetuity, love, healing, peace and joy, to all who they are meant for. And so it is.

OK NOW WATCH THIS!: SUPER SOUL SESSIONS

With Love, Strength, Courage & Wisdom

India Arie

June 15, 2016

From My Windowsill

New York, NY

LOVE TO ALL!!!!

[#SoulBirdsWorldWide](#)

iamlight@soulbird.com

[#SoulbirdsUnite](#)

One more time as we end this SongVersation!

Give Thanks

AND I THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

LOVE,

INDIA