

# HEBREW PRAYER a la SHINZEN YOUNG

00:00:00 So, sometimes during the Metta, I like to do a chant.  
00:00:13 This is the chant that I do.  
00:00:17 So I wanted to explain what it means.  
00:00:21 Like I say, I'm not sure whether I do it or not.  
00:00:25 It's sort of like spur of the moment.  
00:00:27 But if you ever hear me do this chant, I want to make sure everybody understands that it's  
00:00:35 a spiritual, not political statement.  
00:00:40 This is one of the main Hebrew prayers that my rabbi used to say all the time.  
00:00:49 That's why I internalized it when I was a little boy.  
00:00:53 But I like it because it can be given a really deep interpretation.  
00:01:02 Excuse me while I let my whistle.  
00:01:06 Shintzen, are you using that instead of the whiteboard?  
00:01:11 It was just lighter to carry over.  
00:01:16 Can people see it?  
00:01:17 If not, I guess you'll have to ...  
00:01:20 This particular thing, unless you read Hebrew, may not be all that relevant.  
00:01:28 You know, if you sort of squint your eyes a little bit, it looks like Tibetan.  
00:01:34 That's not a coincidence.  
00:01:36 Can you believe that?  
00:01:38 That is not a coincidence.  
00:01:41 Tibetan is derived from Devanagari script of India.  
00:01:46 Devanagari script of India is derived from the Aramaic script, which has its origin in  
00:01:55 what is now called Lebanon.  
00:01:58 And so does Hebrew, and so does Greek, and therefore Latin, and therefore our alphabet  
00:02:05 also.  
00:02:06 Alphabet was only invented once.  
00:02:09 It's one of the most extraordinary cases of cultural diffusion known.  
00:02:14 Some years ago, some very clever people in what is now Lebanon figured out the concept  
00:02:21 of alphabet.  
00:02:22 And it spread by diffusion all the way to Japan and Indonesia, and all the way to England.

00:02:35 Just went around the whole eastern hemisphere, basically.

00:02:39 They all go back to one source.

00:02:41 That's why alphabet from alpha, beta, gamma, delta, in Greek, aleph, bet, gimel, daled.

00:02:50 Okay, ain't a coincidence.

00:02:53 Anyway, this is Hebrew letters.

00:02:59 And it says, I hope I didn't screw it up.

00:03:04 I did it from memory.

00:03:08 Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu ve'al kol Yisrael ve'imru.

00:03:19 Amen.

00:03:20 So this has this word, shin-lamet-men.

00:03:29 This is a really, really interesting three syllables.

00:03:40 The Arabic pronunciation is shalom.

00:03:45 The Hebrew pronunciation is shalom.

00:03:48 Usually understood as peace, but it means a lot more.

00:03:53 A lot more.

00:03:55 I'm not going to do it now, but in the past I've given an entire talk about how the entire

00:04:03 path can be described in terms of permutations of these three letters.

00:04:12 Essentially it's not just peace.

00:04:16 It's peace that comes through completeness.

00:04:20 Shalom means complete as an adjective.

00:04:28 And so when you have a complete experience of something, okay, when you are complete

00:04:39 with it, where does that lead to?

00:04:43 It leads to the absolute peace of zero.

00:04:48 So the process of completing leads to this peace.

00:04:54 And furthermore, it has a connotation of safety and well-being.

00:05:00 It's all sort of there.

00:05:06 The Afro-Asiatic languages, of which Hebrew is one, and so is Arabic, and so is Ancient

00:05:13 Egyptian, they have a very different structure.

00:05:19 There's three consonants, and then vowels and other consonants are permuted around that

00:05:26 or positioned around that to create words and grammatical forms.

00:05:35 So just the shilam alone, and then you could put vowels in different places.

00:05:45 You can make shalom, you can make Islam, Muslim, and so forth.

00:05:54 So anyway, this is a special kind of peace that comes about in my way of thinking through

00:06:03 doing the activity of whatever it is.

00:06:09 And sure enough, okay, this means doing, okay?

00:06:18 So may he or it who creates absolute peace, who is creating, actually this is

a present

00:06:34 participle, may the one who is creating the peace of heaven bring peace to you, ve'al

00:06:50 kol Yisrael, that's the part I wanted to talk about, and upon all of Israel's.

00:07:00 So in my way of understanding, which is the way I choose to understand, Yisrael doesn't

00:07:11 refer to a tribe or a nation.

00:07:18 I like to think of it as the sangha, the community who struggles for spirituality, because actually

00:07:28 Yisrael, if you remember the story of Jacob's ladder, et cetera, Yisrael is from a root

00:07:39 that means to struggle.

00:07:41 So I interpret this as meaning to struggle to get to God, okay?

00:07:49 So it has no political or ethnic connotations for me whatsoever within this statement, because

00:07:56 I cannot imagine any kind of blessing that is limited to one nation or one ethnos.

00:08:04 So just wanted to make that clear.

00:08:06 Ve'al kol Yisrael, ve'imru and say, that should be over there, amen, which you know

00:08:16 from English, amen, so be it, something like that.

00:08:21 So if you ever hear me sing this during the Metta, you'll know what it refers to, because

00:08:27 it has a lot of deep meaning.

00:08:32 So just wanted to mention that.