

Israel and a Hebrew Blessing ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 What did you chant at the end of the loving kindness?

00:00:04 A couple people asked what I chanted at the end of the loving kindness today.

00:00:10 That was Hebrew. That was a Hebrew blessing.

00:00:13 I guess you probably figured it was Hebrew when you heard the word shalom over and over again

00:00:17 and the word Israel.

00:00:20 So for me the word Israel, there's like Medinat Israel.

00:00:27 There's the country, the modern nation state of Israel.

00:00:30 Then there's Eretz Israel, the land of Israel, just what that land does.

00:00:37 Then there's Am Israel, the Jewish people.

00:00:43 But then when I think of the word Israel, just that word alone,

00:00:47 I don't think of a particular ethnic group or a country or even a region of the world.

00:00:56 If you go back historically to where the word Israel came from,

00:01:02 it was a name given to the third patriarch, not the Zen patriarchs,

00:01:09 the third patriarch in the Jewish lineage.

00:01:12 Who was?

00:01:15 Well, there was Avraham, Yitzhak, Yaakov, Yaakov, Jacob.

00:01:22 So Jacob was struggled with the forces that were making it difficult to climb the ladder to the source.

00:01:40 So anybody who's struggling to go up that ladder, which is all of humanity,

00:01:45 that's Israel to me anyway when I think of that word.

00:01:50 So that was a famous blessing that,

00:01:53 Oseh shalom bimromav hu yaaseh shalom, alenu ve'al kol Yisrael, ve'imru amen, is what I chanted.

00:02:03 So what's cool about it is that, I won't go into a whole discussion,

00:02:10 but the way that words are formed in Semitic languages like Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic,

00:02:17 which is the language that Jesus spoke, they're formed from tri-consonantal roots, typically.

00:02:25 That means there are three consonants that carry a general sense of meaning,

00:02:30 and then you stick vowels and other consonants in there to form verbs, nouns, and to make nuances of meaning.

00:02:43 So shin, lamed, mem, those three Hebrew letters, they mean the peace that comes through completing.

00:02:59 Shalem means complete, and shalom is peace.

00:03:04 It's related concepts. You complete something, and then there is a peace that comes.

00:03:12 And that's exactly how it works, isn't it?

00:03:15 When you have a complete experience, there is this extraordinary piece of the divine nothingness.

00:03:24 That is, when you complete the sensory experience, it goes from particle to wave,

00:03:33 and then when the wave returns to the source, in that nothingness is true, absolute rest.

00:03:44 But it's a rich nothingness because it has all this completeness about it.

00:03:51 And the word nirvana has that sort of connotation.

00:03:54 It's like ultimate rest, cessation, but also total fulfillment.

00:04:02 So I gave an entire dharma talk in Israel on shin, lamed, mem,

00:04:10 taking it through many of the different permutations that it has in the Hebrew language.

00:04:16 And this is very much, by the way, in the mode of rabbis.

00:04:19 This is how they do their teaching. They play with the words and so forth.

00:04:29 So it was really cool because you can explain the entire practice of the dharma in terms of those three letters.

00:04:38 So anyway, ose shalom bimromav hu ya'ase shalom.

00:04:45 May he or that which creates the peace of heaven make peace upon you and all Israel.

00:05:00 Ose shalom bimromav hu ya'ase shalom, aleinu, upon you, ve'en, al kol Yisrael, all of Israel,

00:05:07 which as I say I understand is all of humanity because we're all struggling to get up that ladder to the source.

00:05:15 Ve'imru and say amen. You probably recognize that word. It's the origin of the English word amen.

00:05:23 So anyway, that's what that was. My rabbi used to say that a lot.

00:05:30 I remember it from a kid. So I thought it's a nice, makes a nice thing for the, at the end of the loving kindness practice.

00:06:01 Ose shalom bimromav hu ya'ase shalom, aleinu, upon you, ve'en, al kol Yisrael, all of Israel,

00:06:09 which as I say I understand is all of humanity because we're all struggling to get up that ladder to the source.

00:06:17 Ve'imru and say amen. You probably recognize that word. It's the origin of the English word amen.

00:06:25 So anyway, that's what that was.

00:06:55 Ve'imru

00:07:26 Ve'imru

00:07:32 Amen.