

The 'Final Stage' and Service ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 All the spiritual traditions of the world have a mystical core.

00:00:24 In the mystical core of these traditions, there is the final stage, if you want to

00:00:33 talk about stages, which is very dangerous.

00:00:37 But the final stage is described as a sense, as you go about ordinary life, that you and

00:00:49 the world are one, and that together, you, the world, and the source of you and the world

00:00:59 are one, or not fundamentally separate.

00:01:03 And this is just there in ordinary life.

00:01:07 So if you consider prayer, as T.S.

00:01:13 Eliot would have defined it as an experience of oneness, d'vakut, d'vakut in Hebrew, then

00:01:21 St. Paul's exhortation to pray without ceasing can be realized.

00:01:31 You can pray without ceasing.

00:01:32 Literally, every sense experience has now become a prayer.

00:01:37 In the yogic tradition, that's called sahaja samadhi, samadhi on the natch.

00:01:45 That's what sahaja means, natural.

00:01:50 In certain Hindu traditions, it's called non-dual awareness, advaita, meaning not two-ness.

00:01:59 There's not a two-ness between the source and the world.

00:02:03 As an actual experience, not as a philosophy, as a philosophy, that's a waste of time.

00:02:09 As an actual sensory experience, this is a wonderful way to live your life.

00:02:18 So sahaja samadhi, non-dual awareness, advaita.

00:02:24 If I properly understand Ken Wilber, that's what he's talking about when he's talking

00:02:28 about non-dual awareness.

00:02:29 He's talking not about a philosophy or even an experience of enlightenment, but an experience

00:02:35 of moment by moment, self and world as you look here, look there, scratch your nose,

00:02:44 button your shirt.

00:02:48 There's not a separation between that and the source.

00:02:52 In the Christian tradition, it was sometimes called the practice of the presence of God.

00:02:57 Once that has happened, you can't go to church anymore, strictly speaking, logically, because

00:03:06 you can't leave church.

00:03:08 So there's no church to go to.

00:03:10 You're in church all the time.

00:03:13 In the Jewish tradition, it's called bri'ayesh me'ayin, participation in the arising of things

00:03:25 from the divine nothing.

00:03:27 In the Sufi tradition, it's called baka, which means this abiding contact.

00:03:37 In the Christian tradition, if you read the Cloud of Unknowing, it's a very amazing book,

00:03:47 very short, written by an anonymous Augustinian monk in the 15th century in English.

00:03:56 He compares that experience to Aaron, Aharon, who was Aaron in the Old Testament.

00:04:10 He was the brother of someone.

00:04:11 Moses.

00:04:12 Yeah, Moses, Moses' brother.

00:04:14 So Moses saw God a couple times, the burning bush kind of thing, but he was up on a mountain

00:04:21 and he wasn't really quite sure what he saw and it was just sporadic.

00:04:26 On the other hand, Aaron was in charge of the Ark of the Covenant, the tabernacle, where

00:04:40 the shekhinah, the presence of God, actually resided, according to their belief.

00:04:50 So basically, he could look anytime he wanted and experience God directly, anytime.

00:04:57 He didn't have to be up on a mountain, didn't have to be a burning bush, didn't have to

00:05:01 have his senses suspended or altered, in any way, it's just anytime you want to pee, here

00:05:08 I am.

00:05:09 Tomorrow, we're going to do a sweat lodge.

00:05:13 There's a song that's often sung at the beginning of a sweat lodge.

00:05:21 Maybe we'll sing it.

00:05:24 But it's called the Four Direction Song, but actually it's the Six Direction Song, because

00:05:32 you know there's six sacred directions, right?

00:05:35 North, south, east, west, up and down.

00:05:39 Actually seven.

00:05:40 The seventh is, those are the expansive directions, the seventh is the center.

00:05:46 Contraction.

00:05:47 It's all there.

00:05:48 It's all there in their ceremonies.

00:05:51 The whole paradigm of expansion and contraction, symbolically, completely informs the Native

00:06:00 American ceremonies.

00:06:03 It's natural.

00:06:06 Anyway, what the song says, it goes through each of the directions.

00:06:23 Look to the east.

00:06:25 Your grandfather is there, looking back at you.

00:06:31 Pray to him, pray to him.

00:06:32 He's right over there looking at you, and then it goes, say, east, north, south, west,

00:06:36 up, down.

00:06:37 No matter what direction you look, the source is there.

00:06:42 In the way that I was taught, the way you come to that experience is by locally, with

00:06:50 regards to touch, sight, sound, feel, image, talk, and globally, with regards to the whole

00:06:54 picture at once, developing a sensitivity to this, in the very beginnings, already the

00:07:03 end is there.

00:07:04 As soon as the time-space volume of that experience is arising, it's already passing.

00:07:10 That molds that moment of sensory experience.

00:07:16 Then the expansion and contraction flatlines.

00:07:21 Where that flatline is, enfolded the entire richness of all of creation.

00:07:28 Hence, nihil par excellentiam, the nothing par excellence of the source.

00:07:35 Remember the line from T.S.

00:07:37 Eliot, I can only say there we have been.

00:07:43 He didn't say there I have been.

00:07:45 He said, I can only say there we have been.

00:07:49 I cannot say where.

00:07:51 Or for how long.

00:07:53 For to do so would be to place it in time.

00:07:57 Time-space.

00:07:58 He weaves time-space together.

00:08:02 Like Einstein.

00:08:05 Einstein did it mathematically.

00:08:07 T.S.

00:08:08 Eliot does it poetically.

00:08:11 There we have been.

00:08:17 There is zero.

00:08:21 Absolute time.

00:08:24 Because we have been there, when past and future come apart again, one looks out and

00:08:37 has a sense of caring for one's larger identity.

00:08:44 Brother or sister, in Greek, a delphos, is from a, which means share.

00:08:53 And delphos is womb, the one you have shared the womb with.

00:08:57 If you actually experience sharing the zero womb, then from that comes a sense of wanting

00:09:05 to serve, be of service to the larger identity.

00:09:10 So there is a link in this way between the themes of going beyond the world and the themes

00:09:27 of improving the world.

00:09:29 There is an intimate link in this way.