

Adonai Shalom

²³ But Adonai said to him, “Shalom to you. Fear not, you will not die.” ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to Adonai and called it “Adonai-shalom.” To this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrite” (Judges 6:23-24)

♪ *Peace be unto thee, the Lord is near. Peace be unto thee, the Lord is near. Fear not, the Lord is near. And thou shalt not die! Yahweh Shalom. The Lord is Peace.* ♪

Shalom, in the liturgy and in the transcendent message of the Scriptures, means more than the state of mind, a state of being or the state of affairs. Derived from the Hebrew root *shalam* – meaning to be safe or complete, and by implication, to be friendly or to reciprocate. *Shalom*, as term and message, seems to encapsulate a reality and hope of wholeness for the individual, within societal relations, and for the whole world. To say joy and peace, meaning a state of affairs where there is no dispute or war, does not begin to describe the sense of the term. Completeness seems to be at the center of *shalom* as we will see in the meaning of the term itself, in some derivatives from its root, and in some examples of its uses in Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

The noun *shalom* means safe, for example, well and happy. On a more abstract application, its use points to welfare, for example, health, prosperity, and, peace. It is the verb form *shalam*, which provides a deeper understanding of this term in theology, doctrine, and liturgy. Literally translated, *shalam* signals to a state of safety, but figuratively it points to completeness. In its use in Scripture, *shalom* describes the actions that lead to a state of soundness, or better yet wholeness. So to say, *shalom* seems not to merely speak of a state of affairs, but describes a process, an activity, and movement towards fullness. James Strong lists the rendering of *shalom* and *shalam* as: to make amends, to make good, to be (or to make) peace, to restore, peace, prosperity, wellness.

The use of *shalom* in the Scriptures always points towards that transcendent action of wholeness. *Shalom* is seen in reference to the wellbeing of others (Genesis 43:27, Exodus 4:18), to treaties (1 Kings 5:12), and in prayer for the wellbeing of cities or nations (Psalm 122:6, Jeremiah 29:7). Coincidentally, the root *shalem*, found in Jerusalem, means peaceful (*yara* to mean to lay or found). Yet, its transcendence lies in its relationship to truth and justice (Psalm 85:10, Isaiah 48:18, 22, 57:19-21). The wholeness of *shalom*, through justice and truth, inspires the words of hope for the work expected by the Messiah, and to refer to its revelation as the time of peace (Haggai 2:7-9, Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:1-9), and to even grant this anointed one the title Prince of Peace (*Sar Shalom*, Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:4-5a). ¹ *For this Melchizedek was king of Salem, kohen of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,* ² *and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth of everything. First, by the translation of his name, he is “King of Righteousness”; and then also King of Salem, which is “King of Shalom” (Hebrews 7:1-2).* ⁵ *For to us a child is born, a son will be given to us, and the government will be upon His shoulder. His Name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God My Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace (Sar Shalom).* ⁶ *Of the increase of His government and shalom there will be no end...*” (Isa. 9:6-7)

The word *shalom* can be used for all parts of speech: as a noun, adjective, verb, and adverb. It categorizes all forms of *shalom*. *Shalom* is also used in a variety of expressions and contexts in Hebrew speech and writing:

- *Shalom Aleichem* (שלום עליכם, *well-being be upon you or may you be well*), this expression is used to greet others and is a Hebrew equivalent of *hello*. Also, for example *Shabbat Shalom!* The appropriate response to such a greeting is *upon you be well being* (עליכם שלום, *aleichem shalom*). On *Erev Shabbat*, our Jewish people have a custom of singing a song, which is called *Shalom Aleichem*, before the Kiddush over wine of the Shabbat dinner is recited. ♪ *Shalom Aleichem, Mal'achei Ha-sharet, Mal'achei El Elyon. Mi-melech Mal'achei Ham'lachim. Ha-Kadosh, Baruch Hu. Bo'achem L'Shalom, Mal'achei Ha-shalom, Mal'achei El Elyon. Mi-melech Mal'achei Ham'lachim. Ha-Kadosh, Baruch Hu...* ♪
- In the Gospels (Luke 24:36, John 20:19, 21, 26), *Yeshua* uses the greeting *Peace be unto you*, a translation of *Shalom Aleichem*. It is noteworthy that *Yeshua* used this greeting after the resurrection! ²⁷ *“Shalom I leave you, My shalom I give to you; but not as the world gives! Do not let your heart be troubled or afraid” (John 14:27).* ♪ *My peace, I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace that the world cannot understand. Peace to know, Peace to live. My Peace I give unto you* ♪

- *Shalom* by itself is a very common abbreviation and it is used in Modern Israeli Hebrew as a greeting, to which the common reply is, *Shalom, Shalom*. It is also used as a farewell. In this way it is similar to the Hawaiian *aloha*, the English *good evening*. *Shalom* is also used by Jewish people around the world, and even by many non-Jewish people.
- *Shabbat shalom* (שבת שלום) is a common greeting used on Shabbat. This is most prominent in areas with Mizrahi, Sephardi, or modern Israeli influence. Many Ashkenazi communities in the Jewish diaspora use Yiddish *Gut Shabbos* in preference or interchangeably.
- *Ma sh'lom'cha* (מה שלומך; “what is your well-being/peace?”) is a Hebrew equivalent of the English “how are you?” This is the form addressed to a male. The form for addressing a female is *Ma sh'lomech?* For addressing several females, *Ma sh'lomchen?* For males/mixed-gender group, *Ma sh'lomchem?*
- *Oseh shalom* is the part of a passage commonly found as a concluding sentence in much Jewish liturgy (including the *birkat hamazon*, *kaddish*, and *amidah* prayers). The full sentence is (*Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalomaleyenu, ve'al kol Yisrael ve'imru amen*), which translates to English as “He who makes peace in His heights may He make peace upon us and upon all Israel; and say, Amen.” It originates from Job 25:2. ♪*Ose Shalom Bimromav, Chu Ya-a-se Shalom Aleynu, Ve al kol Yisrael, Ve-Imru, Imru Amen! Ya-a-se Shalom, Ya-a-se Shalom, Shalom Aleynu, Ve-al kol Yisrael. Ya-a-se Shalom, Ya-a-se Shalom, Shalom Aleynu, Ve-al kol Yisrael (May He who makes peace in the heavens, May He make peace for us and always. And for all Israel, and let us say, Amen! ♪*
- The word *shalom* is widely used in popular Israeli songs such as *Ratziti Sheteda*, and *Shalom Chaverim*. President Clinton ended his eulogy for *Yitzhak Rabin* with the words *Shalom, Chaver* (goodbye, friend). ♪*Shalom chaverim, shalom chaverim, shalom, shalom. Lehitraot, lehitraot, shalom, shalom. ♪*

How often do you sing of peace? Do you have peace? Do you have peace in your home? Have you asked *Adonai* for His peace? Have you ordained peace in your jurisdiction? This may come as a point of education to us, but if we have been given the authority to ordain peace in houses, how much more in our own house? “⁵ Whatever home you enter, first say, “*Shalom be on this home.*” ⁶ If a son of shalom is there, your shalom will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you” (Luke 10:5). “¹⁰ But there will be glory, honor, and shalom to everyone who does good—to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God” (Ro. 2:10, 11). “¹⁰ But there will be glory, honor, and shalom to everyone who does good—to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God” (Ro. 8:6, 7). “¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for shalom and for the building up of one another” (Ro. 14:19). “³³ for God is not a God of confusion, but shalom” (1 Cor. 14:33).

It should be noted that peace is in the list of Fruit of the *Ruach Elohim* (Holy Spirit). “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace (shalom), longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith*” (Gal. 5:22). It is available for the asking – they are His wages for doing good. “⁹ What gain, then, does the laborer get with his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the task that God has given to the children of men to keep them occupied. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Moreover, He has set eternity in their heart—yet without the possibility that humankind can ever discover the work that God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹² I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and enjoy themselves in their lifetime” (Eccl. 3:9-12). ♪*In His time, in His time. He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me ev'ry day, As You're teaching me Your way, that You do just what You say in Your time. ♪* “¹³ Who is the one who delights in life, and loves to see good days? ¹⁴ Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking treachery. ¹⁵ Depart from evil and do good. Seek shalom and pursue it” (Ps. 34:12-14). ♪*Mi Ha'ish he-cha-fets cha-yim, O-hev ya-mim O-hev ya-mim lir-ot-tov N'tsor l'e-shon'e-cha me-ra us'e-fa-te-cha mi-da-ber mir-ma. Sur me-ra va'e-se tov ba-kesh sha-lom v'e-rod-fe-hu. ♪* A consequence of seeking wisdom is to obtain peace, and thus, obtain God Himself – for His name is Peace. “¹³ Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding... ¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant ways, and all of her paths are shalom” (Prov. 3:13,17). ♪*In Your time, In Your time, You make all things beautiful in Your time. Lord my life to You I bring, may each song I have to sing, be to You a lovely thing in Your time. ♪ Sim shalom tovah uv'rachah (x2) chen vacheshed verachamim. Aleinu ve'al kol Yisrael amecha Sim Shalom. Vetov be'eineicha levarech et amucha Yisrael, bechol et uvechol sha'ah, bish'lomecha. ♪ Ye-va-rechecha HaShem mit-Zion. U-reh bitov Yerusha-la-yim. Ye-va-rechecha HaShem mit-Zion Kol yimey yimey cha-ye-cha. U-rehba-neem le-va-necha, Shalom al Yis-rael. ♪*