

PART ONE



SHALOM. The word "shalom" is far more than a simple greeting in Hebrew. **It carries a profound invocation of wellness, goodness, prosperity, and completeness.** More than just a salutation, shalom embodies a blessing, a state of wholeness, and a divine harmony that surpasses mere peace in the conventional sense. As a yoga practitioner, I have chosen to replace the traditional Om chant with "shalom" during meditation. The resonance of this word evokes an unparalleled sense of calm, healing, and spiritual connection. Unlike the vast and often undefined concept of the Universe, shalom anchors me directly to the Shamayim—the heavens—connecting me with the divine, ordered, and completeness. In many ways, the essence of the Om practice aligns deeply with the meaning of shalom, as both invoke a sense of unity, balance, and restoration. Many people do not realize that there is no concept of day or night in Heaven, for it is a realm of infinite light. As a result, common time-bound greetings like "Boker Tov" (Good morning), "Erev Tov" (Good evening), or "Laila Tov" (Good night) are unnecessary. Instead, the singular and timeless greeting exchanged in the heavenly realm is simply "Shalom." In English, shalom is often translated as "peace," which is typically understood as the absence of war, conflict, or strife. However, in Hebrew, shalom encompasses a far more expansive meaning. **It signifies not just peace but a state of total completeness, wholeness, and well-being.** If Heaven is already a place of perfect peace, then why is shalom the primary greeting? The answer lies in its deeper meaning—a recognition of divine perfection and fulfillment. Where I come from in the South Pacific, we greet each other with "Talofa," and in Hawaii, people say "Aloha." Much like shalom, these greetings are more than mere words; they serve as blessings and impartations. Talofa and Aloha both mean "my love to you," conveying an offering of love. Yeshua instructed His disciples to greet every home with "Shalom," saying, *"And into whatever bayit you enter, first say, Shalom to this bayit. If a son of shalom is there, your shalom shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you"* (Luka (Luke) 10:5-6). He recognized shalom as more than just a greeting—it **is a blessing, a tangible expression of divine grace that remains with those who receive it.** After His resurrection, Yeshua reaffirmed this when He appeared to His disciples and greeted them with, "Peace be to you" (Luke 24:36), underscoring the sacred power of shalom. This same understanding carries into our Sabbath greeting, *Shabbat Shalom*. Despite the challenges of the week, *Shabbat Shalom* is a way of saying, "May you end this week with a rest that restores your inner peace and recenters you on the One who gives it." It is also a blessing for the days ahead: "May your next week begin with a deep sense of rest and completeness, where nothing is lacking." This is the idea in the first usage of the word in the Torah. The root of shalom is the word "shalam," which carries a profound significance beyond a simple greeting. One of the earliest appearances of "shalam" in the Torah occurs in Shemoth (Exodus) 21 and 22, where it is mentioned fourteen times in the context of justice and restitution. Moses instructs the people on handling material loss or theft, emphasizing that they become incomplete when someone experiences loss or injury. The responsible party must "shalam"—to make amends, restore, and bring back wholeness. In these passages, "shalam" is translated as "make it good," "shall surely pay," "make full restitution," or "restore." **The ancient Hebrew meaning of "shalam" is "to make whole," this fundamental concept extends beyond material compensation to embody a complete sense of well-being, encompassing mind, body, and estate.** This same depth of meaning is carried into the word "shalom." In Beresheeth (Genesis) 43:27-28, when Joseph, still unrecognized by his brothers, inquires about their welfare and the health of their father, the Hebrew words translated as "welfare," "well," and "in good health" all stem from the same root—shalom. In the same way the word is used in Schmueel Bet (Second Samuel) 11:7, we read: "Va-yish'al David...li-shlom ha-milhamah"; "David asked of him...how the war prospered." The usage of the term is thus

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not restricted to international, intergroup, or interpersonal relations; it signifies a state of prosperity and blessed harmony on multiple levels—physical and spiritual. This reveals that shalom is not just a greeting or a wish for peace but **a profound blessing of completeness, restoration, and divine harmony. It is an invitation to experience the fullness of life as intended by the Creator.** Furthermore, "shalom" is not only a quality but also a name of Eloah found in the Torah. The name YHWH-Shalom appears in Shophtim (Judges) 6:24: *"Then Gideon built an altar there to YHWH and called it YHWH-Shalom."* **This highlights that shalom is intrinsically linked to the divine nature of Elohim that He is primarily the Elohim of true and lasting peace.** The Torah integrates all these meanings—well-being (Beresheeth (Genesis) 43:27), peaceful relations (Melechim Alef (First Kings) 5:12), and divine completeness. In Jewish literature, the concept of shalom is deeply intertwined with "shelemut," or perfection. **Shalom is the pathway to perfection.** The Talmud describes the Torah as being defined by the phrase: "Its ways are pleasant ways, and all its paths are shalom" (Mishle (Proverbs) 3:17). Much like how "rest" on Shabbat is not merely about relaxation but about deep spiritual rejuvenation, shalom is not simply the absence of strife; **it represents a higher state of being, a harmony that results from alignment with divine teachings. Being at peace with oneself, with others, and with the world means being in a state of shalom.** Hebrew has other words that can be translated as "peace," such as "raguah" (relax) and "menucha" (rest, calm), but none carry the same depth and holistic meaning as shalom. The word "shalom" is deeply connected to Aharon haKohen (Aaron the Priest). In the Mishnah, one of the highest forms of Oral Law, he is described as a **"rodef shalom"**—a pursuer of peace. As Hillel teaches: *"Be among the disciples of Aharon—loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them close to the Torah."* (Pirkei Avot 1:12) Aharon's love for peace was not passive; it was active, requiring effort, self-sacrifice, and a steadfast commitment to resolution. True peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of divine order and wholeness. Shalom, in its fullest sense, encompasses the commandments, the teachings, and our relationship with Elohim. It is the truest and most enduring form of peace. If the Torah and its ways are shalom, and YHWH Himself is Shalom, then all that is divine and meant for our betterment follows in its path. Shalom is not just a greeting or a simple wish for peace—it **is a profound blessing of wholeness, restoration, and divine harmony.** This is the heart of the Aaronic blessing in Bamidbar (Numbers) 6:23-26, where the High Priest was commanded to bless Yisra'el with shalom. Moreover, the power of shalom is not just in words, but in the life it calls us to lead—a **life of a peacemaker** (Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:9). According to this passage, they shall be called a **Benai Shalom**—a Son of Peace, an exalted title. Shalom also represents the opposite of war, as seen in "a time for war, and a time for peace" (Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) 3:8). The absence of war, however, is not enough; it also places upon us the responsibility to bring peace to the nations. In several scriptural passages, peace is not just a state but a value—used in the sense of equity and loyalty (cf. Zechariah (Zechariah) 8:16; Malachi (Malaki) 2:6). The Sages held peace in the highest regard, considering it the ultimate purpose of the Torah itself: *"All that is written in the Torah was written for the sake of peace."* (Tanhuma Shofetim 18) It is also the essence of the prophetic message: *"The prophets have planted in the mouth of all people nothing so much as peace."* (Bamidbar Rabah Naso 11:7). Furthermore, redemption itself is tied to peace: *"YHWH announces to Jerusalem that they (Yisra'el) will be redeemed only through peace."* (Deuteronomy Rabah 5:15) When **Mashiach Ben Dawid** returns, He will be known as **Sar Shalom**—the **Prince of Peace** (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 9:6), ushering in the Kingdom of Peace. Praying Tehillim (Psalm) 122 for the peace of Yerushalayim is more than a request for safety and security—it is a heartfelt plea for Yisra'el's Messiah to return and establish true Shalom on Earth. Amein.