

COVENANT PEACE

שלום

The Universal Foundation of Shalom

A Biblical-Hebrew Study for All Nations, All Peoples, All Generations

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PREAMBLE: A WORD TO ALL PEOPLES

This document is addressed to every human being on earth — to the Muslim and the Hindu, to the Buddhist and the Confucian, to the Shinto practitioner and the animist elder, to the Christian in every branch, to the Jew in every tradition, to the secular philosopher and the political leader, to the Russian and the Chinese, the Japanese and the Iranian, the Latin American and the African, the European and the Australian. We come with a question, not a condemnation.

The question is this: Has your tradition ever articulated a vision of peace that is more than a temporary ceasefire between powers? Has it ever pointed toward something deeper — a harmony rooted not in the balance of weapons, but in the alignment of human beings with a moral and covenantal order that precedes every government and every religion?

If your answer is yes, then we invite you to examine what the Hebrew scriptures — the Tanakh — call **שָׁלוֹם (Shalom)**. We believe you will recognize it. Not because we are asking you to accept our tradition, but because the Creator already placed this recognition in the human conscience at the beginning. Your tradition is a witness. The Tanakh names the source.

We do not speak from political ambition. We do not represent any government or denomination. We stand on covenant ground, and we invite every person to examine that ground with us.

SECTION I: THE HEBREW WORD THE WORLD HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR

The Root: Sh-L-M (שלם)

The entire argument of this document rests on a single Hebrew root: שלם (**Shin-Lamed-Mem**). Before we address any nation or any conflict, we must understand what this root actually means in biblical Hebrew — because the English word "peace" is a drastically inadequate translation.

The trilateral root **Sh-L-M** carries the following core semantic range across the Tanakh:

שָׁלוֹם (*Shalom*) "Completeness, wholeness, safety, welfare, health, prosperity, soundness"

שָׁלַם (*Shalem*) "To be whole, to be complete, to be at peace, to make restitution"

שָׁלַם (*Shillem*) "To repay, to restore, to make right what was broken"

מְשַׁלֵּם (*Meshullam*) "Devoted, given in covenant, dedicated to wholeness"

The root does not primarily mean the absence of conflict. It means the presence of wholeness. This is a crucial distinction. You can have an absence of open warfare and still have a people starving, oppressed, exploited, and broken. That is not Shalom. **Shalom is the condition in which every part of a system — individual, family, community, nation, creation — is functioning as the Creator designed it to function.**

"Seek the shalom of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to Yahweh for it; for in its shalom you will have shalom." — Jeremiah 29:7 (Tanakh)

Notice: Yahweh did not say "tolerate the city" or "survive in the city." He said: invest your life in its wholeness. Work for its completeness. The shalom of the surrounding community and your own shalom are bound together. This is not political advice. It is a covenant principle — the well-being of the part is inseparable from the well-being of the whole.

Shalom as Covenant Category

In the Tanakh, Shalom is never merely a feeling or a diplomatic status. It is a covenant condition. It describes what exists when a people is in right alignment with Yahweh's instruction (תּוֹרָה — Torah) and with one another. When that alignment breaks, Shalom breaks with it.

“There is no shalom for the wicked, says Yahweh.” — Isaiah 48:22

“Yahweh will bless His people with shalom.” — Psalm 29:11

“The work of righteousness (תְּצַדִּיק — tzedaqah) will be shalom, and the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.” — Isaiah 32:17

This last text from Isaiah is the iron axle on which this entire document turns. The work of tzedaqah — righteous covenant conduct, justice in relationship — will be shalom. Not the work of treaties. Not the work of armies. Not the work of economic pressure. The work of righteousness. And righteousness, in the Hebrew understanding, is not merely personal virtue. It is relational faithfulness — acting in the way that preserves and restores the right relationship between all parties.

Brit Shalom: The Covenant of Peace

The phrase that appears in the Tanakh with perhaps the greatest weight for our purposes is בְּרִית שְׁלוֹמִים — **Brit Shalom, the Covenant of Peace**. This is not a human political agreement. It is a divine covenantal establishment — Yahweh Himself as party and guarantor.

“I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause the evil beasts to cease from the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.” — Ezekiel 34:25

“My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall My covenant of peace be removed, says Yahweh who has mercy on you.” — Isaiah 54:10

“I give to him My covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him, a covenant of an everlasting priesthood.” — Numbers 25:12-13

The Brit Shalom is Yahweh's declaration that there exists a covenantal peace — an established, irrevocable order of wholeness — that transcends all human political arrangements. Nations may negotiate treaties. Yahweh established a covenant. Treaties can be broken. A covenant of Yahweh carries His own name and character as its guarantee.

SECTION II: THE MORAL CONSCIENCE OF THE NATIONS — A CROSS-CULTURAL WITNESS

What we will now demonstrate is that the deepest aspirations embedded in the great civilizations of the world — their founding moral frameworks, their highest ethical ideals — are not in conflict with the Tanakh's vision of Shalom. They are witnesses to it. They describe, in the language of their own traditions, the same reality that the Hebrew scriptures name as Brit Shalom.

This is not syncretism. We are not saying all religions are the same. We are saying that the Creator embedded the longing for covenant wholeness into the human conscience across every culture — and that every tradition that has reached toward justice, harmony, and right relationship has been reaching, knowingly or not, toward the source: Yahweh and His covenant order.

The Middle East and Near East

Arab and Islamic Civilization: As-Salaam (السلام)

The Arabic word for peace — As-Salaam — shares the identical Semitic root Sh-L-M with the Hebrew Shalom. This is not a coincidence. Both words descend from the same Proto-Semitic root *šalām-, meaning wholeness and completion. In the Islamic tradition, As-Salaam is one of the 99 names of the Divine — Al-Salam, "The Source of Peace." The very greeting of Islam, As-Salamu Alaykum, is not merely a social nicety. It is a declaration: "May wholeness be upon you."

Islamic Tradition — *As-Salaam / السلام*: The identical Semitic root Sh-L-M unites As-Salaam with Shalom. Both traditions are drawing from the same ancient wellspring. The Quran's declaration that Yahweh (Allah) is Himself Al-Salam — the Source of Peace — resonates directly with Isaiah 54:10: 'My covenant of peace shall not be removed.' The Muslim who greets his neighbor with peace is invoking the same covenantal principle the Tanakh enshrines.

The Islamic legal tradition also developed the concept of Dar as-Salam — the "Abode of Peace" — as the ideal condition of a society living under just covenant order. This aspiration, whatever one's theological differences, describes the same reality Isaiah describes in chapter 32: where righteousness produces shalom, and shalom produces security and confidence for all.

Persian Civilization: Asha and the Covenant of Fire

The ancient Persian tradition — expressed in Zoroastrianism and its influence on Persian civilization for over three millennia — centers on the concept of Asha: cosmic order, truth, righteousness, and right relationship. Asha stands in eternal opposition to Druj, the principle of deception and disorder. The entire Persian moral framework is built on the choice between alignment with Asha (truth-order) and service to Druj (chaos-deception).

Persian / Iranian Civilization — *Asha (cosmic order, truth, righteousness)*: The Tanakh's covenant structure maps directly onto the Persian Asha-Druj axis. Yahweh's Torah is the expression of Asha — the true order of creation. The Tanakh's declaration in Psalm 85 that 'Righteousness and peace have kissed each other' (tzedaqah v'shalom nashaku) describes exactly what Persian civilization called the triumph of Asha: right order producing wholeness for all. The Persian people have carried this longing for cosmic justice and truth-order for 3,000 years. The Tanakh names its source.

Hebrew / Israelite Tradition: The Source Document

The Tanakh is not a Jewish denominational text. It is the original covenant record of Yahweh's engagement with humanity through the sons of Israel, with instruction for all nations. The concept of Shalom in the Tanakh is explicitly universal: Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 both describe a future in which all nations stream to Yahweh's instruction and beat their weapons into tools of cultivation. The covenant of peace is not a tribal document. It is a blueprint for the world.

“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of Yahweh of hosts has spoken.” — Micah 4:3-4

South and East Asia

India — Hindu Civilization: Shanti and Rita

The Sanskrit word Shanti (शान्ति) — often translated as peace, calm, or tranquility — describes not merely a psychological state but the condition of a being, a community, or a cosmos in right alignment with Dharma, the underlying moral order of creation. The triple invocation Shanti, Shanti, Shanti in the Vedic tradition is not repetition for emphasis alone: it addresses peace in the three realms of body, mind, and the cosmic environment — a holistic wholeness that maps directly onto the Hebrew Shalom.

Hindu Civilization (India) — *Shanti (शान्ति) / Rita (cosmic order)*: The Vedic concept of Rita — the cosmic law of right order — is strikingly parallel to the Tanakh's concept of Torah as the structural law of creation. Both traditions understand that peace is not manufactured by human will but flows from alignment with an order that precedes human civilization. The Tanakh calls this alignment 'walking in covenant.' The Vedic tradition calls it living in

accordance with Dharma and Rita. The longing is identical. The Tanakh names the One who established that order by name.

The Upanishadic tradition's concept of Brahman — the ground of all being, from which all existence flows and to which all existence returns — carries a moral dimension: the sage who realizes oneness with Brahman is characterized by Ahimsa (non-harm), Satya (truth), and Dana (generosity). These are covenant values. They describe what a human being looks like who is walking in Shalom.

China — Confucian and Daoist Civilization: He and Dao

Chinese civilization has produced two of the most profound peace philosophies in human history, both converging on a point of contact with the Tanakh's Shalom. The Confucian concept of He (和) — harmony, accord, right relationship — is achieved through Ren (benevolence/humaneness), Yi (righteousness), Li (ritual propriety), and Zhi (moral wisdom). This is not mere social politeness. It is a comprehensive framework for the ordering of relationships at every level: family, community, state, and cosmos.

Chinese Confucian Tradition — He (和 — harmony) / Ren (仁 — benevolence): Confucius taught that when relationships are ordered rightly — when rulers govern with Ren, when families honor their bonds, when scholars pursue truth — harmony (He) flows naturally. This is precisely what the Tanakh describes as the result of covenant righteousness: 'The work of righteousness will be shalom' (Isaiah 32:17). The mechanism is identical: right relationship at every level produces wholeness at every level. The Tanakh locates the origin of this order in Yahweh's covenant design.

The Daoist concept of the Dao (道) — the Way, the underlying principle of natural harmony that pervades all things — offers a further point of contact. The Dao De Jing (attributed to Laozi) teaches that the greatest leaders govern in alignment with Dao, without force, without coercion, producing peace through non-manipulative action (Wu Wei). The Tanakh's vision of Yahweh's sovereignty is similar in its refusal of human force: lasting peace cannot be imposed by armies. It flows from alignment with the Way Yahweh established.

Japan — Shinto and Buddhist Civilization: Wa and Heiwa

Japanese civilization carries two overlapping peace concepts that speak directly to our argument. Wa (和) — the same character used in Chinese for harmony — is one of the oldest and most central values of Japanese culture. It describes the harmony of a community, a family, or a nation when each member fulfills their proper relational role. The Meiji Constitution of 1889 opens with a reference to Wa as the foundational social principle. It is not a political concept. It is a covenantal one.

Japanese Civilization — *Wa* (和 — *harmony*) / *Heiwa* (平和 — *peace and harmony*): The Japanese compound Heiwa (peace) combines Hei (flat, level, equal) with Wa (harmony). It describes a condition of levelness and right relationship — no one elevated by violence over another, all held in proper mutual accord. This is Shalom. The Hebrew root Sh-L-M's emphasis on completion and wholeness, on the restoration of what was broken, maps directly onto the Japanese vision of Wa as the healed, rightly-ordered community. The Tanakh provides the covenantal foundation for what Japanese civilization has always aspired toward.

Buddhist Civilization (India, Southeast Asia, Tibet, East Asia): Nirodha and Ahimsa

The Buddhist tradition — spanning cultures from Sri Lanka to Japan, from Tibet to Vietnam — identifies the root of all conflict in craving (tanha), aversion, and delusion. The Noble Eightfold Path is a systematic dismantling of the internal conditions that produce external violence. The Buddhist concept of Ahimsa (non-harm) and Karuna (compassion) describe the character of a being who no longer generates conflict because the internal conditions for conflict have been transformed.

Buddhist Tradition — *Ahimsa (non-harm) / Karuna (compassion) / Metta (loving-kindness)*: Buddhism's deep analysis of the internal origins of conflict is a profound complement to the Tanakh's covenantal framework. The Tanakh's assessment is consistent: war and oppression flow from covenant unfaithfulness, from the human heart turned away from Yahweh's instruction. The Psalmist asks, 'How long, O Yahweh?' — and the Tanakh's answer is always the same: peace returns when covenant alignment returns. Buddhism describes the interior transformation required; the Tanakh identifies the covenant relationship in which that transformation is anchored and sustained.

Africa

Ubuntu: The African Philosophy of Relational Wholeness

Across sub-Saharan African cultures — Zulu, Xhosa, Nguni, Sotho, and many others — the philosophical framework known as Ubuntu describes the foundational condition of human existence: Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu — "A person is a person through other persons."

Ubuntu is not individualism. It is a covenantal understanding of human identity: you are not complete in isolation. Your wholeness is bound up with the wholeness of the community.

African Ubuntu Philosophy — *Ubuntu: 'I am because we are'*: Ubuntu is arguably the most direct cultural parallel to the Tanakh's covenant framework of Shalom. The Tanakh's covenant is never merely individual — it is communal, generational, and relational. Yahweh's covenant with Israel is a covenant with a people, not simply an aggregation of private individuals. The Tanakh's instruction in Leviticus 19 — 'Love your neighbor as yourself' — is Ubuntu in covenant form. Africa's deepest moral wisdom testifies to the same principle the Tanakh establishes: human wholeness is relational, communal, and covenant-shaped.

Latin America and Indigenous Traditions

Sumak Kawsay: The Andean Vision of Good Living

In the Quechua-speaking traditions of the Andean highlands — spanning Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and beyond — the concept of Sumak Kawsay describes the "good life" or "beautiful living": a condition of harmony between human beings, their communities, and the natural world. It is not measured by GDP. It is measured by relational wholeness and the flourishing of all life. The Aymara equivalent, Suma Qamaña, similarly describes "living well together" as the highest human aspiration.

Andean Indigenous Tradition (Latin America) — *Sumak Kawsay (beautiful / complete living)*: The Tanakh's vision of Shalom includes the land itself: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom' (Isaiah 35:1). Shalom is not only social — it is ecological. It describes the condition of creation when human beings walk in covenant faithfulness with Yahweh, who made the land and sustains it. The Andean traditions' insistence that true peace includes right relationship with the earth is not pagan mysticism — it is a witness to the Tanakh's own creation covenant framework.

European Civilization

Greek Tradition: Eirene and the Logos

The Greek word for peace — Eirene (εἰρήνη) — described not merely the absence of war but the condition of civic and cosmic harmony. In Hesiod and later in the Stoic tradition, peace was understood as the condition of a society ordered according to logos — the rational, moral principle pervading the cosmos. The Stoics — Zeno, Chrysippus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius — taught that inner peace and social harmony were achievable only by living "according to nature," meaning in alignment with the logos that structures the universe.

Greek and Stoic Tradition — *Eirene (εἰρήνη) / Logos (rational cosmic order)*: When the Tanakh says 'Yahweh is Shalom' (Judges 6:24 — Yahweh-Shalom) it makes the identical claim the Greek Stoics approached philosophically but could not anchor historically: that the ground of cosmic order is not an abstract principle but a Person who enters into covenant relationship. The Stoic vision of living according to logos is a philosophical approximation of what the Tanakh describes as walking in covenant with Yahweh. The aspiration is identical; the Tanakh provides the personal, historical, and covenantal grounding that philosophy alone cannot supply.

Russian and Slavic Civilization: Mir

The Russian and Old Slavonic word Mir (Мир) carries a remarkable double meaning: both "peace" and "world / community / village." This is not linguistic accident. It reflects a deep cultural intuition: that peace and community are the same reality. The traditional Russian peasant community — the mir — was not merely a political unit. It was a covenantal one: members were bound to one another's welfare, to shared responsibility for land and survival. The peace of the mir and the community of the mir were inseparable.

Russian / Slavic Civilization — *Mir (Mup — peace / world / community)*: The dual meaning of Mir — peace and community as the same word — is the Russian language's own testimony to the Tanakh's truth: Shalom is not a condition you achieve in isolation. It is the condition of a people in right covenantal relationship. Yahweh's covenant was never with individuals abstracted from community. It was with families, tribes, and nations. The Tanakh's insistence that Shalom flows from covenant faithfulness — that you cannot have peace without justice, and cannot have justice without right relationship — is what Russian civilization has always known in its bones, however imperfectly it has lived it out.

Australia and the Pacific

Aboriginal Australian Tradition: The Dreaming and Relational Land

Aboriginal Australian cultures — the oldest continuous human civilizations on earth, with some oral traditions extending 65,000 years — understand the relationship between human beings and land as covenantal in nature. The Dreaming (called Tjukurpa in some traditions) is not mythology in the Western dismissive sense. It is the account of the original covenant ordering of the world — the establishment of right relationships between people, land, creatures, and the spiritual dimension of existence. To walk in the Dreaming is to walk in alignment with that original order.

Aboriginal Australian Tradition — *The Dreaming / Tjukurpa (original covenant order)*: The Tanakh's creation narratives describe a similar original covenant order — a world in which human beings, created in the image of Yahweh, walked in right relationship with the Creator and with the creation He entrusted to their stewardship. The Aboriginal understanding that violation of the Dreaming — walking out of alignment with the original covenant order — produces sickness, conflict, and ecological harm is a striking witness to what the Tanakh says in Deuteronomy 28-30: covenant faithfulness produces wholeness and life; covenant violation produces fragmentation and death.

SECTION III: WHY DIPLOMACY, FORCE, AND ECONOMICS CANNOT PRODUCE SHALOM

Having established what Shalom is in the Tanakh, and having demonstrated that every major human civilization has borne witness to the same aspiration, we can now address the central claim of the Miqdash Bethel covenant framework: that true and lasting peace cannot be manufactured by diplomacy alone, cannot be imposed by military force, and cannot be purchased by economic pressure.

This is not rhetorical. It is exegetical. The Tanakh makes this argument directly and repeatedly.

The Failure of Treaties Without Covenant

The Tanakh is deeply realistic about political treaties. When Israel made covenants with Egypt or Assyria rather than walking in Yahweh's covenant, the prophets condemned it — not because alliances are inherently evil, but because treaty-making divorced from covenant faithfulness produces a false peace that collapses under pressure.

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from Yahweh.” — Isaiah 31:1

“They have healed the wound of My people lightly, saying ‘Peace, peace’ — when there is no peace.” — Jeremiah 6:14

The prophetic phrase "Peace, peace — when there is no peace" has become one of the most searching critiques in human literature. It describes the fundamental dishonesty of a political announcement of peace that has not addressed the covenant conditions that produce conflict. You can sign a document. You can hold a ceremony. You can announce normalcy. But if the underlying conditions of injustice, exploitation, and covenant violation remain, you have not produced Shalom. You have produced a ceasefire — a temporary suppression of hostility — and called it peace.

History bears witness. The "peace" of Versailles produced World War II. The Cold War's "mutually assured destruction" was not peace — it was terrified paralysis. The Oslo Accords have not produced peace in the Middle East. Every generation, every civilization, has experienced the same cycle: treaties made, treaties broken, wars resumed. The Tanakh names this cycle and identifies its cause: the absence of covenant alignment.

The Failure of Military Force

“Not by army and not by strength, but by My Spirit, says Yahweh of Hosts.” — Zechariah 4:6

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Yahweh our God.” — Psalm 20:7

The Roman Empire imposed Pax Romana by military force. It was real, in a narrow sense — open warfare was suppressed across a vast territory. But it was built on slavery, occupation, extraction, and the constant threat of overwhelming violence. It was not Shalom. It was domination. When the military force receded, the "peace" evaporated with it.

Every military empire in history has made the same claim and experienced the same end. Force can suppress conflict temporarily. It cannot produce the internal transformation of human relationships that Shalom requires. The Tanakh's diagnosis is consistent: "There is no shalom for the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22) — not because Yahweh refuses to bless the violent, but because violence is structurally incapable of producing wholeness. Shalom flows from righteousness. You cannot force righteousness at gunpoint.

The Failure of Economic Pressure

“Better a dry crust with peace than a house full of feasting with strife.” — Proverbs 17:1

The use of economic sanctions, trade incentives, and financial pressure as instruments of peace-making is a modern version of an ancient strategy: buying compliance. The Tanakh does not condemn trade or prosperity — it describes them as blessings that flow from covenant faithfulness. But it is clear-eyed about the limits of material incentives as peace-making tools. Compliance purchased is not covenant made. A nation that modifies its behavior because of economic leverage has not had a change of heart. It has made a calculation. And calculations change when circumstances change.

True covenant peace requires a transformation of values — a reorientation of a people's understanding of what they owe to one another and to the world. Economic instruments cannot produce that transformation. They can create temporary incentives for cooperation. They cannot create the moral and covenantal foundation on which lasting peace stands.

SECTION IV: THE COVENANT SOLUTION — WHAT YAHWEH ESTABLISHED FROM THE BEGINNING

The Structure of Covenant

The Tanakh introduces the concept of *Brit* (ברית — **covenant**) early and sustains it throughout the entire corpus. **A covenant in the biblical sense is not a contract. A contract is a legal exchange of obligations between parties of similar standing, enforced by external sanctions. A covenant is a relational bond — a binding of lives and futures — typically initiated by the greater party toward the lesser, and sealed not merely by agreement but by oath, sign, and blood.**

The structure of Yahweh's covenants in the Tanakh follows a consistent pattern:

1. **Identity:** 'I am Yahweh your God.' The covenant begins with Who Yahweh is.
2. **Historical preamble:** What Yahweh has already done. Covenant is grounded in demonstrated faithfulness.
3. **Stipulations:** How the covenant people are to live. Not rules for earning favor but instructions for maintaining the relationship.
4. **Blessings and curses:** The natural consequences of alignment or misalignment with covenant order.
5. **Sign:** A visible, tangible marker of the covenant relationship — Sabbath, circumcision, rainbow, etc.

This structure is recognizable across cultures because it mirrors the deep structure of all binding relationships. Every culture that has ever formed a serious alliance, sworn an oath of brotherhood, or established a community covenant has used some version of this structure. The Tanakh names and formalizes what human beings already know in their bones: that lasting peace requires a binding relationship, not merely an agreement.

The Covenant of Peace in Ezekiel's Vision

The most comprehensive description of what Yahweh's covenant peace looks like in practice is found in **Ezekiel 34** and the extended vision of **chapters 40-48**. The prophet Ezekiel, writing during the Babylonian exile — at the lowest point of Israel's national life, surrounded by the ruins of their political existence — articulates a vision of restored covenant Shalom that is breathtaking in its scope:

“I will make with them a covenant of peace and eliminate dangerous creatures from the land. Then they will live in safety in the wilderness and sleep in the forests. I will place them near My hill as a blessing; I will send down showers in their season — showers that bring blessing. The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the land will yield its crops; they will be secure on their land.” — Ezekiel 34:25-27

Notice what this covenant of peace encompasses: safety in the land, rest without fear, ecological restoration (dangerous beasts ceasing, rain in season, fruit from trees), and agricultural abundance. This is Shalom as total-system wholeness. It is not a military treaty. It is a description of what creation looks like when covenant alignment is restored.

The great territorial vision of **Ezekiel 47-48** — with the healing river flowing from the threshold of the temple, giving life to everything it touches, causing trees with healing leaves to grow on its banks, transforming the Dead Sea into fresh water teeming with fish — is the Tanakh's most vivid image of Shalom as ecological and covenantal wholeness extended to all the land, with allotments for strangers and foreigners included alongside the native-born (**Ezekiel 47:22-23**).

“You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the strangers who reside among you and who have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. They shall receive an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.” — Ezekiel 47:22

The covenant of peace is explicitly universal. It includes the stranger, the foreigner, the one who was not born into the covenant community but has come to dwell within it. This is not ethnic peace. This is covenant peace — available to all who align themselves with the covenant order Yahweh established.

The Universal Mountain: Isaiah 2 and Micah 4

The most politically charged vision of covenant peace in the entire Tanakh is found in the parallel texts of **Isaiah 2:1-4** and **Micah 4:1-4**. These texts describe what the Tanakh calls the end-state of history — not a fantasy, but a covenant promise:

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established as the highest of the mountains... and all the nations shall flow to it. Many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of

Yahweh from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. —
Isaiah 2:2-4

Three things are essential to note in this text for our purposes.

First: the nations come voluntarily. There is no conqueror, no empire, no force. They come because they recognize that Yahweh's Torah — His instruction in right covenant living — is the answer they have been searching for.

Second: what they receive is instruction, not military subjugation. The Torah goes forth from Zion — a teaching, a showing of the way. Third: the result is disarmament — not as a treaty obligation but as a natural consequence. When you have learned the way of covenant justice and peace, you no longer need weapons, because the conditions that produce conflict have been addressed at their root.

This is the ironclad covenant document. Not because we wrote it. Because Yahweh spoke it through His prophets to all the nations of the earth.

SECTION V: THE SEVEN COVENANT PRINCIPLES OF SHALOM

Drawing from the full testimony of the Tanakh, we identify seven foundational principles that constitute the covenant framework of Shalom. These principles are not denominational. They are not culturally specific. They are the structural requirements for human wholeness, confirmed by the witness of every great civilization on earth.

Principle One: Tzedakah — Covenant Righteousness

תְּדָקָה (*Tzedakah*) "Righteousness / justice / covenant faithfulness"

Tzedakah is not moralistic virtue. It is relational faithfulness — acting in a way that upholds and restores the right relationship between all parties: Yahweh, human beings, and creation. **Isaiah 32:17** establishes the foundational principle: the work of *tzedakah* will be Shalom. There is no shortcut. You cannot have lasting peace without justice. You cannot have justice without covenant faithfulness. And covenant faithfulness begins with acknowledging that there is a moral order that precedes every human institution.

Every civilization that has endured has known this. The Egyptian Ma'at, the Persian Asha, the Chinese Yi (righteousness), the Hindu Dharma, the Greek Dike — all are cultural witnesses to the same principle the Tanakh enshrines as *tzedakah*. **The Creator embedded the demand for justice into the human conscience, and no people can sustain peace while systematically violating it.**

Principle Two: Mishpat — Just Order

מִשְׁפָּט (*Mishpat*) "Justice / right governance / proper order"

Mishpat is the practical, institutional expression of *tzedakah*. It refers to the just ordering of human society — proper governance, fair courts, equitable treatment of the vulnerable, and the protection of the powerless from exploitation. The Tanakh is relentless on this point:

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does Yahweh require of you but to do justice (mishpat), to love kindness (hesed), and to walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8

No peace framework that ignores the claims of the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and the poor can call itself a covenant framework. Yahweh's *mishpat* is specifically biased toward the protection of those who have no power to protect themselves. Any

peace that is purchased at the expense of the vulnerable is not Shalom. It is the peace of the powerful over the powerless — which is not peace at all.

Principle Three: *Hesed* — Covenant Lovingkindness

חֶסֶד (*Hesed*) "Lovingkindness / steadfast covenant love / loyal faithfulness"

Hesed is perhaps the most untranslatable word in the Hebrew lexicon. It describes the quality of loyal, steadfast, covenant-faithful love that Yahweh shows to His covenant people and requires of them in their relationships with one another. It is not sentiment. It is committed covenant loyalty that holds even when the relationship is costly.

Hesed is what distinguishes covenant peace from contractual peace. A contract ends when the terms are violated. *Hesed* continues. Yahweh's *hesed* for Israel continued through centuries of covenant violation — not because violation has no consequences, but because Yahweh's covenant commitment runs deeper than human failure. This quality of loyal, persistent, restorative covenant love is what ultimately sustains Shalom across generations. It is also the quality that every culture recognizes as the highest form of human commitment: the Chinese Ren (benevolence), the Islamic Rahma (mercy), the Buddhist Karuna (compassion), the African Ubuntu (we-ness) are all cultural approximations of what the Tanakh calls *Hesed*.

Principle Four: *Emet* — Truth

אֱמֶת (*Emet*) "Truth / faithfulness / reliability / trustworthiness"

The Hebrew *Emet* does not simply mean factual accuracy. It means the quality of being trustworthy, reliable, and consistent — the quality of a person, institution, or covenant whose word can be trusted absolutely. **Psalm 85:10 declares: "Lovingkindness (*hesed*) and truth (*emet*) have met together; righteousness (*tzedaqah*) and peace (*shalom*) have kissed each other."** These four qualities are bound together: they are not separate virtues but facets of a single covenant character.

There is no Shalom without *Emet*. A peace built on deception — on false promises, on concealed intentions, on the manipulation of information to manage populations — is not Shalom. It is a managed lie. Every civilization that has endured has understood this: the Persian Asha's opposition to Druj (deception), the Chinese Xin (trustworthiness), the Islamic Sidq (truthfulness), the Stoic Logos — all testify to the same covenantal requirement. **Lasting peace requires that parties deal with one another in truth.**

Principle Five: Shabbat — The Covenant of Rest

שַׁבָּת (*Shabbat*) "Rest / cessation / covenant renewal"

The Shabbat — the seventh-day rest — is perhaps the most misunderstood covenant principle in the Tanakh. It is not merely a religious observance. It is a structural covenant mechanism for the prevention of exploitation. The seventh day is the day on which no human being can be worked, no animal can be driven, no land can be exhausted. The Shabbat year (seventh year) releases debts and frees servants. The Yovel (Jubilee, fiftieth year) returns all land to its original covenant-holders.

This is a structural peace mechanism. By building into the social order a mandatory rhythm of release, rest, and restoration, the Torah prevents the accumulation of inequality that always produces conflict. The concentration of wealth, the permanent indebtedness of the poor, the exhaustion of the land — these are the conditions that generate wars, revolutions, and the collapse of civilizations. The Shabbat covenant is Yahweh's structural solution: rest it before it breaks.

Principle Six: Ger — Protection of the Stranger

גֵּר (*Ger*) "Stranger / sojourner / one who dwells among you"

The Tanakh's instruction regarding the *Ger* — the foreigner who dwells within the covenant community — is one of its most striking and politically relevant provisions. The Torah commands:

"You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt." — Exodus 23:9

"The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself." — Leviticus 19:34

There is no covenant peace framework that treats some human beings as inherently less than others. The Tanakh's Brit Shalom is explicitly inclusive of those who come from outside — who are different in origin, language, and background — and who choose to live within the covenant community. This is the basis on which we address all nations: not as threats to be managed, but as potential participants in a covenant of peace that is large enough to hold the whole earth.

Principle Seven: Teshuvah — The Path of Return

תְּשׁוּבָה (*Teshuvah*) "Return / repentance / turning back to covenant alignment"

The final and perhaps most practically important covenant principle for peace-making is *Teshuvah* — the capacity for return. No people, no nation, no leader has maintained perfect covenant alignment. The Tanakh is utterly realistic about this. The entire prophetic tradition is a record of covenant violation followed by a call to return. And the call to return — *Teshuvah* — is always answered by the promise of restoration.

“Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Yahweh of Hosts.” — Malachi 3:7

“If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” — 2 Chronicles 7:14

This principle is perhaps the most universally recognized of all seven. Every major world tradition has a concept of return, renewal, and restoration: the Buddhist path of awakening, the Islamic concept of Tawbah (repentance and return to God), the Hindu concept of Moksha as liberation from the cycle of harmful karma, the Confucian concept of self-correction as the path of the noble person, the African Ubuntu practice of restorative justice. All are witnesses to the Tanakh's *Teshuvah*: the path back to wholeness is always open. It requires honesty about what has been broken and a genuine turning toward the right relationship.

CONCLUSION: THE INVITATION TO ALL NATIONS

We have demonstrated from the Tanakh — using the full weight of biblical Hebrew exegesis — that Shalom is not a Jewish concept, a religious slogan, or a political platform. It is the description of creation functioning as the Creator designed it to function: in covenant alignment, in relational wholeness, in justice that protects the vulnerable, in truth that builds trust, in rest that prevents exploitation, in the welcome of the stranger, and in the open path of return for all who have walked away.

We have shown that every great human civilization — from the Andean highlands to the steppes of Central Asia, from the banks of the Ganges to the shores of the Pacific, from the Nile Valley to the fjords of Scandinavia, from the Amazon basin to the Siberian taiga — has borne witness to this same aspiration. Your tradition has a word for it. Your deepest moral framework reaches toward it. You have always known that this is what peace is supposed to look like.

The Tanakh does not ask you to abandon your culture, your language, or your heritage. It asks you to examine whether the peace you have been seeking can be found by the methods you have been using — by treaties, by armies, by economic leverage. It asks you to consider that the covenant order Yahweh established from the beginning is not alien to your civilization, but is in fact the source from which your civilization's deepest wisdom flows.

We stand on the Brit Shalom — the Covenant of Peace that Yahweh declared through His prophets and established from the beginning. We invite every nation, every people, every leader, every human being to examine this covenant and to consider: Is this not what you have always been looking for?

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who proclaims shalom, who brings good news of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion: ‘Your God reigns!’”
— Isaiah 52:7

“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but My steadfast love (hesed) shall not depart from you, and My covenant of peace (Brit Shalom) shall not be removed, says Yahweh, who has compassion on you.” — Isaiah 54:10

This is not our word. This is Yahweh's word. And it stands!

Peace and Blessings,

Elder Kepha (Peter) Arcemont

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