

What does shalom mean?



In modern Hebrew, shalom means **hello goodbye peace**

How can it mean a greeting and a farewell – and what do these words have to do with “peace”?

Think of it this way: When you meet someone, can you think of a nicer thing to say than “peace” or to wish them “peace” as they leave?

Why “peace?”

When we wish one another “peace” we are expressing the hope that we experience physical, emotional and psychological peace, that we do not experience any disturbance to our bodies, our hearts or our minds.

The Hebrew term **shalom** gets at that meaning.

The English word for “peace” comes from the Latin root “*pax*” which also gives us the words “*pacific*,” “*pacifier*” and “*pacification*.”

The root of the Hebrew word **shalom** means wholeness, completion, wellness, perfection. When we are “at peace” we feel a sense of “wholeness.” (The Arabic word “*Salaam*” has the same root and meaning.)

Just as we try to achieve a sense of wholeness as individuals, so we seek a feeling of wellness as groups, a condition of “peace.”

shalom begins within ourselves and expands outward to our friends, our communities, our campuses, our nations, our world.

shalom is not just about “peace” – the absence of conflict – it’s about a sense of “wholeness” or “completion.”

What a nice thing to aspire for. What a nice thing to work for.

What a great way to greet people. So: “Shalom.”

The word "shalom" is written in a blue, textured, hand-drawn font. The letter 'o' is replaced by a yellow peace symbol (a circle with three lines radiating from the center). The entire word is set against a white background.

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