



**TORAH-ADONAI (תּוֹרַת־אֲדוֹנָי) AS THE SECRET OF  
ISAIAH'S VISION OF PEACE (ISA 2:2-4):  
AN ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE**

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**Abstract:**

Peace is an ever enduring objective of life sought after by all rational beings. Faith men of all times cling to peace as God's cardinal teaching for societal building and stability. Isa 2:2-4 makes the link between the observance of Yahweh's torah and the enthronement of peace in the society. Using the prophetic 'far-off' (futurism) and historicism models of interpreting Isaiah's vision, the study points up the torah as the (תּוֹרַת) secret of peace, the instrument of right judgment (מִשְׁפָּט) , the foundation of the new social order and as a moral guide, directing people to higher values now and in the future time. Before the law there was chaos and no peace; under the law, it was fractional and half-done peace but under the messiah, whose period marks the last and final dispensation in Jewish division of the times, it is all encompassing peace for everyone. This universal religion of Isaiah's vision of peace, as the study shows, has the truths and nuclei of *torah-adonai* as its bottom line. It is prophetically designed for the transformation of man by God for the peace of all and it will continue until the accomplishment of all things.

**Keywords:** *torah-adonai*, secret, vision, peace, eschatological, and discourse

**1. Introduction**

Peace among humans is the supreme desire of the Old Testament God, Yahweh. In the midst of violence and upheaval in our world, God offers us a vision of hope and a prospect of peace. Isaiah envisions a time when the nations of the earth would reject

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war and violence and seek a common way of peace. This is the main thrust of Isaiah's oracle of peace in Isa 2:2-4. Isaiah proclaims the gospel of peace and non-violence among the nations. The *torah* (תּוֹרַת) is an expression of God's will. It is pertinent to peace. Yahweh's *torah* when assimilated and acted upon has an effect on people. Yahweh's *torah* guides the decisions of men. The result always brings peace and a change of mind-set.

This change of mind-set leads to rejection of war and the embrace of peace. Yahweh's *torah* offers a non-violent way to resolve disputes. Isaiah portrays Yahweh's *torah* as the agent of transformation and the anchor for a future world peace. Peace is enthroned when the nations act upon God's instruction (*torah*). Peace is enthroned when the nations act upon God's instruction (*torah*). Peace results if the nations conduct their lives in accordance with God's *torah*. This peace is all-inclusive to the extent that weapons of war are to be reshaped so that they would be utilized for peaceful pursuits.

Different people with diverse experiences in various disciplines pursue peace consistently in many ways using many strategies. No society can survive without peace, that's why myriads of techniques from various perspectives are deployed to achieve it. The *torah adonai* of prophet Isaiah has not been investigated as a secret for peace building and sustenance in the society, hence the need for this study. There are secrets to solving jaw-dropping problems. Those who are exposed to these secrets excel more in providing positive answers to difficult questions. Isaiah's *torah-adonai* is exquisitely imbued with power to transform and sustain man for peace in the society.

Eschatological discourse does not necessarily refer to the Olivet-conversation of Jesus in the synoptic gospel. It is a theological dialogue concerning doctrines or teachings about the now and the last things with particular reference to Isaiah's vision of peace in the passage. Combination of prophetic historicism and futurism are used here as approaches for the interpretation of the passage. The first sees visionary texts as symbolic prophecies that have their realization in the past, present and the future. Futurism may draw from historical events but its emphasis is on eschatological prophecies referring to events which have not been fulfilled but would take place at the end of all things without being mindful of the present circumstances.

## 2. Context of the Text

The passage under study may be dated sometime during the reigns of the four kings listed in 1:1, or between 740-701 B.C (Bright, 1972). Uzziah ruled effectively from ca. 790-739 B.C. According to Milgrom (1964), Uzziah's long reign was a materialistic and militaristic success. Uzziah is credited with a vast network of fortifications and military installations whose very profusion and power were offensive to Isaiah as an index of man's reliance on military equipment. Though war was a constant and brutal fact of daily life in the time of the prophets, many of the biblical prophets condemned Israel's militarism.

Isaiah criticized Israel and Judah for their militarized foreign policies. War-weary Israelites longed for peace, but instead instituted policies and developed a mindset that made war inevitable. Isaiah declared that true peace hinged on the people leaning on God and submitting to his torah (instruction). Isaiah's breathtaking oracle of peace (Isa 2:2-4; cf. 9:5; 11:1-9) was given in the light of the constant threat of warfare that hung like a dark shadow over the land.

The background of this *pericope* is the Syro-Ephraimitish war (735-733 B. C.). This was a politically troubled period during which four Assyrian kings, Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (726-722 B.C.), Sargon II (721-705 B.C.), and Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), sought to conquer the Syro-Palestinian states (Fohrer, 1968). To halt the Assyrian advance, Pekah, king of Israel and Rezin, king of Syria formed an anti-Assyrian coalition in order to throw off the Assyrian domination. When Ahaz, king of Judah, refused to join the coalition, Pekah and Rezin mustered up forces to invade Judah in order to dethrone Ahaz and to install a more cooperative and war-minded ruler in his place (Ceresko, 1992). Isaiah lived at a time of this crisis. The Syro-Ephraimitish war (735-733 B.C.) formed the historical background of Isa 2:2-4 (Dampsey, 2000; Motyer, 1993; Eissfeldt, 1965; Haeffele, 2017). Isaiah emphasized that peace is vital to the survival of Judah or any other nation.

As far as the covenantal requirement is concerned, Israel is dependent on Yahweh for everything including option of waging war against any nation. Yahweh is Israel's source and sustenance while the covenant regulates and moderates the relationship between the two. Prophets are the defenders of Israel's covenant faith and are always attracted when there is violation of the dictates of the covenant (בְּרִית). The people's choice of war and dependence on militarism instead of Yahweh is not in keeping with covenant faith. Their preference for war and not the peace desired by Yahweh prompted Isaiah's prophetic intervention. It is the covenant – *the torah adonai* – that dictates and prescribes Israel's beliefs and their corresponding behavior.

### 3. Close Reading of the Passage (Isa 2:2-4)

Isa 2:2-5 presents Isaiah's vision of peace. In this *pericope* Isaiah employs brilliant imageries and metaphors to convey his message (Haeffele, 2017; Kicker, 2009; Helyer, 2016). Verse 2 begins this oracle with a temporal clause וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים (“*And it shall come to pass in days to come.*”). Young (1996) and Ogden (1971) suggest that this abruptness gives the word, peace a future force. Isa 2:2a speaks of what will happen to the “mountain of the house of the Lord” (הַר בֵּית יְהוָה) “in days to come” (בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים). The noun feminine construct אַחֲרַיִת; refers to what comes afterwards, which suggests an event “in the future”, but not necessarily the end of time.

The feminine prepositional construct בְּאַחֲרַיִת; means “afterwards” (McNamara, 1961; Jenni, 1997; Blass and Debrunner, 1961). The phrase בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים; has an eschatological import. The phrase בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים; does not necessarily refer to ‘the last days’ only (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) as the Septuagint (LXX) translation suggests. The phrase

points to the future, but this future is not definitive enough to place it in a specific time. The eschatological and futuristic implication of this phrase is supported by many other biblical versions. The NRSV renders בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים as “in days to come”, thus suggesting an indefinite future time. This agrees with the RSV’s translation “in the latter days”. Scholars like Blenkinsopp (2000), Motyer (1993), Groenewald (2016), Kaiser (1983) and Herbert (1973) unanimously agree that the formula, בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים in 2:2a points to an undated future, neither necessarily far nor certainly near.

Isaiah envisioned a time when the “mountain of the house of the Lord” (בֵּית־יְהוָה) shall be “firmly established” (נִבְנוֹן יְהוָה, v. 2b) as the “head” (רֹאשׁ) or “highest of the mountains”. The expression, הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה (“mountain of the house of the Lord”) occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible - in Isa 2:2, Mic 4:1 and 2 Chron 33:15. In each case the expression refers to the temple mount (Mount Zion) and the temple (Tucker, 2001). Literally, the simple designation, רֹאשׁ “head”, suggests a position of height (Magonet, 1991). Isa 2:2 employs a poetic metaphor to emphasize Zion’s forthcoming significance and supremacy. Zion is accorded the status of pre-eminence over other mountains and hills because on it is situated the temple of Yahweh, the visible symbol of Yahweh’s presence with his people.

In the Old Testament, the term “mountain” (הַר) was sometimes used as a prophetic symbol indicating either a kingdom or a rule (e.g. Dan 2:35, 44-45; Amos 4:1). In Ps 30:7, the term “mountain” was used figuratively as a symbol of divine presence, power and stability (McGuire, 1967; Reed, 1962; Richards, 1985). Isaiah uses the term “mountain of the Lord’s house” (הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה) here as a metaphor for the Lord’s kingdom that would be exalted above all other kingdoms. If Isaiah was using “mountain” as a figure of speech, he meant that Israel and her God would be the most highly exalted in the earth eventually.

Isaiah declares that this “mountain of the Lord” (הַר־יְהוָה) shall be established as the highest of the mountains. “Highest” (בְּרֹאשׁ) here probably means most exalted in honour, not actually physically highest. The phrase “shall be established” (נִבְנוֹן יְהוָה) points to a specific event that would happen in the future. When Zion is said to be raised as the head (רֹאשׁ) or highest of the mountains, what is stressed is the strategic importance of Mount Zion as the mountain on which the temple of the Lord (בֵּית־יְהוָה) is situated. The primacy of Zion is first of all spiritual – other nations will voluntarily come to learn Yahweh’s ways. Isaiah’s oracle of Mount Zion towering as the highest of the mountains seems to be influenced by the Zion tradition (Roberts, 1982; Motyer, 1993; Miller and Hayes, 1986).

In the ancient world, mountains (הָרִים) were believed to be the abode of the gods (cf. Lev 26:30; Num 33:52; Deut 12:2; 2 Sam 1:19; Ps 48:2-3, etc.), they were also believed to be a place where humans encountered God (Neusner, 1996; McGuire, 1967, Johnson, 1979; Moriarty, 1968). Accordingly, the temples were built on the heights. The elevation of Mount Zion as the highest of the mountains is symbolic of its dignity as Yahweh’s chosen seat (Jensen, 1984). The author of Isa 2:1-5 made creative use of this Zion

tradition in order to assert that the time is coming when the superiority of Zion's God and his truth would be seen and recognized universally (Blenkinsopp, 2000).

The irony is that Zion is not really a high mountain when compared with other mountains and hills in the immediate neighbourhood of Israel (Tucker, 2001; McKee, 2017). When Isaiah speaks of the elevation of the mountain of the Lord as the highest of the mountains (בְּרֵאשׁ הַהָרִים), what is intended is not geophysical elevation. Mount Zion derives its significance not because of its height, but because the temple of Yahweh (בְּיַהוָה) is situated on it (Wilderberger, 1991; Boadt, 1984). Yahweh's presence on mount Zion lifts Zion's importance to supremacy, compared with other mountains and hills (Watts, 1985; Kaiser, 1983; Gray, 1975). This is purely because Yahweh is there and for this reason Zion attracts other nations. Yahweh's attraction to the nations and peoples is so great that they "flow" uphill (נָהָרוּ אֵלָיו) to the summit of Yahweh's mountain to learn from the God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב) the lessons which eliminate war among them and would lead to peace (Watts, 1985).

Isa 2:2d states that all nations (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם) shall flow up to Mount Zion. The construct, כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם (all nations), strikes a universalistic note. The phrase "all the nations shall flow to it" provides a vivid imagery of its importance. Not only is Mount Zion the highest of the mountains; it is also the focal point of mankind. The noun construct, כָּל, is inclusive – all nations shall "flow" to it. These nations (גּוֹיִם) stream to God's high mountain moved by the desire for peace.

The use of the verb נָהָרוּ in v.2d is unusual, especially as applied to human movement. The verb rhn is a denominative verb related to the noun rh'n" ("river"). The verb Wrh]n" ("will flow") evokes a river imagery (Fabry, 1998; Wildberger, 1957; Roberts, 1992; Martens, 2007). Isaiah employs this river imagery to paint the picture of the movement of the nations to mount Zion (Isa 2:2). In contrast to physical waters flowing from Jerusalem (Zech 14:8; Ezek 47), all nations would flow uphill to mount Zion to seek the God of Jacob. Motyer (1993) writes that "the incongruity of a stream flowing upwards to earth's highest point is intentional; a supernatural magnetism is at work" (p.54). The ascent is in keeping with the actual temple which was located on a mount. Here the natural laws of gravity are overcome by the magnetic hill of Zion. Such is the attraction of Yahweh to the peoples. Zion is portrayed as a place of the peaceful gathering of the nations (Isa 2:2-4; 18:7) (Otto, 2003). This irenic picture of Zion which Isaiah portrays here is, however, a far cry from the Jerusalem of David's time which was marked by warfare. Isa 2:1-5 describes a sharp reversal of policy and goal, from the culture of war to a desire for peace.

Verse 3 presents the motive behind the upward flow of the nations to mount Zion. The nations (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם) stream up to the mountain of the Lord (אֶל־הַר־יְהוָה) and to the "house of the God of Jacob" (אֶל־בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב). The phrase, "mountain of the Lord," הַר־יְהוָה, is in apposition to "house of the God of Jacob," בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. Yahweh is also referred to here as "God of Jacob" (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב). The conjunction particle כִּי ("that", "because", "for") in v.3 introduces the motive or purpose for the nations streaming up to Mount Zion

(koehler and Baumgartner, 2001; Frankfort, 1960). The purpose of the journey of the nations to Mount Zion is expressed in parallel structure in v.3b:

That he may teach us his ways (וְיִלְמְנוּ מִדְרָכָיו)  
And that we may walk in his paths. (וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו)

The nations come to Zion, not to wage war (מִלְחָמָה) (Isa 17:12) but to learn the *torah* and to hear the word of the Lord (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) (Herbert, 1973). The peoples come so that Yahweh “may teach us his ways’, literally, ‘from his ways’ (מִדְרָכָיו). Zion/Jerusalem is here portrayed as a cosmic mountain; the locus where God’s purposes for humanity are made available to the nations. Structurally, the phrase, “that he may teach us his ways” (וְיִלְמְנוּ מִדְרָכָיו) parallels “that we may walk in his paths” (וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו). And the expression “that we may walk in his paths” (וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו) is cohortative in meaning. It expresses positive intention. The nations come to Zion to seek the God of Jacob and to seek instruction (תּוֹרָה) so that they may conduct their lives in accordance with God’s (תּוֹרָה).

As the Isaian text implies, the divine way (דְּרָכָיו) is taught by Yahweh himself. The nations go up to Zion to learn the *torah* and Yahweh’s word (דְּבַר־יְהוָה). The nations stream to Jerusalem because in Jerusalem Yahweh makes available to the nations the secret of peace and the clue to the new world order (Gray, 1975; Groenewald, 2016).

The *torah* is portrayed as the way of righteousness. The nations pour out to Zion, because they can no longer endure the desperate condition in which they live. Therefore, they come to Zion in order to learn the conduct which Yahweh prescribes and approves (Gray 1975; Childs, 1985; Gerstenberger, 2002; Von Rad, 1975; Miscall, 1993; Winkle, 1985). The encounter with the God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב) can effect a lasting change of mind-set. The change of mind-set leads the nations to put an end to the practice of war; then the mentality of war (train for/‘learn’ war) disappears. “Learning war” is replaced by “learning *torah*” and practicing peace. The peace that the nations are unable to find amongst themselves is now obtained from Zion’s God. It is the peace that comes only through God when people submit to the rule of Yahweh. Isaiah portrays Yahweh’s *torah* as the agent of transformation and the anchor for a future world peace. Peace is enthroned when the nations act upon God’s instruction (*torah*).

Isaiah presents Zion/Jerusalem as “the spiritual center of the world” (Anderson, 1966). Just as the Israelites journeyed to Mount Sinai to receive the *torah* from the Lord, so also, the nations will journey to Mount Zion to receive the *torah* and to learn the word of God (Kaiser, 1983). The nations coming to Zion to learn the ways of righteousness and peace transcend nationalism; they acknowledge the God of a single nation, “the God of Jacob,” as the God of all nations (Motyer, 1993; Van Winkle, 1985). The teaching of Yahweh which they learn from Zion moves the nations to drop their weapons of war and embrace peace. Peace is the main thrust of Isaiah’s oracle in Isa 2:1-5. This is explicitly contained in v.4

By streaming to Zion to learn the *torah* of Yahweh, the nations turn from their idols to worship the living God (cf. Isa 45:23). Instead of turning to their gods, the

nations come to the 'God of Jacob' to learn the secret of peace. In so doing, as Kaiser (1983) said, they follow the old custom of going to a god to seek instruction in the decisive questions of life. By accepting Yahweh's *torah* they acknowledge the God of a single nation, "the God of Jacob," as the God of all nations (Motyer, 1993; Childs, 1985, Van Winkle, 1985; Gerstenberger, 2002). Isaiah suggests here that in latter days the nations would abandon their worldviews and ideologies of warfare and seek the peace teaching of Yahweh (תּוֹרַת־יְהוָה) – a teaching like no other, implanted in the heart instead of the brain.

#### 4. The Significance of the Torah in the passage

In the Old Testament, the term תּוֹרָה has a number of connotations. The Hebrew word *torah* is usually translated into the English word "Law". This is a misunderstanding of the word *torah*. Etymologically the Hebrew word comes from the Hebrew root word ירה, a verb which means "to instruct, to teach". The term means more than the Mosaic Legislation. Koehler and Baumgartner (2001) translate the word as "teaching" or "instruction". According to Fantuzzo (2012), *torah* may also be understood as the "instruction of our God" (תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ) mediated by a prophet (Isa 1:2, 10, 20). In the context of Isa 2:1-5, *torah* has the general sense of "instruction" or "teaching" of God which provides guidance to humans (Brueggemann, 1997; Harrelson, 1962; Gutbrod, 1967; Hulst, 1960). The *torah* is also portrayed as a model for the instruction of the nations and the expression of Yahweh's will. This is the sense the word is used in Isa 2:2-4.

In prophetic speech, *torah* is used as a synonym for Yahweh's word (דְּבַר־יְהוָה). Thus the term *torah* in Isa 2:3 is used as a synonymous term for the phrase (דְּבַר־יְהוָה). The two terms, *torah* and "word of the Lord" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה), are used synonymously for the same teaching in Isa 2:3. The word of God is the vehicle for the divine will (Gerleman, 1997; Schmidt, 1978; Myers, 1987; McKenzie, 2002). Taken together these terms encompass the entirety of the will of God for mankind which has implications for their wellbeing (שְׁלוֹמ). Both the "torah from Zion" (תּוֹרַת מְצִיּוֹן) and the "word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם) are expressions of Yahweh's will for the people, both religious and civil (Moriarty, 1968; Dillon, 1979; Plaut, 1981; Neusner, 1996; Leibowitz, 2005; Liedke and Petersen, 1997). Jerusalem is portrayed as the center of world unity and peace, because in Jerusalem is found God's gift of instruction (תּוֹרַת). If the nations listen to God's *torah* they would not only be transformed by it, they would also transform the world (Stuhlmüller, 1976).

The expression, "For out of Zion shall go forth instruction" (כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה) and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם) emphasizes the source of the teaching. It is from Zion/Jerusalem. The new law which Isaiah envisions shall go forth from Zion/Jerusalem. Zion/Jerusalem is presented here as the center of the divine activity. Here "Zion" is equated with "Jerusalem", and "instruction" *torah* is equated with "word of the Lord" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה). No human mediator is suggested by the passage. As

the Isaian text implies, the divine way is taught by Yahweh himself. The teaching comes “out of “his way” i.e., Yahweh’s ways (מִדְרָכָיו).

The nations run to Mount Zion-Jerusalem, motivated by the desire to learn Yahweh’s *torah*. What is more, the people would realize that heeding the *torah* is the only way to end global strife and to achieve peace. Yahweh’s *torah* is portrayed here as the only non-violent way for nations to resolve their disputes (Fantuzzo, 2012). The *torah* is the true instruction which God gives to mankind. From the perspective of Isa 2:3, the Torah is not only for Israel, it is also for the nations. In Isa 42:1-4 and 51:4, the *torah* is also portrayed both as an oracular word from Zion and as the foundation of social order (מִשְׁפָּט). In Isa 51:4, the nations are invited to give heed to the *torah* which is further portrayed as a light to the nations (לְאֹרֶךְ עַמִּים) - in short as *lux in tenebris*

## 5. Torah-Education Secret to Global Peace and Righteousness

God’s word and instruction have an effect on those who assimilate them. Owing to the divine teaching (תורה־יהוה) that they have learnt, the nations are motivated to redirect their lives in the light of the *torah*. Such a new found knowledge leads them to change their mentalities, to reject war and embrace peace. In verse 4, Yahweh is depicted as rendering justice to the nations and giving them the way of peace by his *torah* (Scott and Kilpatrick, 1956). Yahweh’s *torah* guides the decisions of men and the results are peace. This peace is so all-encompassing that the weapons of war are reshaped so that they can be utilized for peaceful pursuits.

The *torah* is portrayed as the way of righteousness. It gives guidance to humans for right living. It directs one to do what is right. Yahweh’s *torah* functions as an instrument of right judgment or justice (מִשְׁפָּט) for the nations. The *torah* in the community is the source of righteousness (צְדָקָה), the foundation of justice or right judgment (מִשְׁפָּט) and the secret of peace. It is Yahweh’s *torah* which teaches peace as the ideal and the only reasonable way. The well-being of the society can only be realized through obedience to the divine *torah*. Isaiah implies that their acceptance of Yahweh’s *torah* and making it the rule of their lives would bring about a reign of universal peace.

The *torah* is a guide which directs people’s lives. Yahweh’s *torah* is compared to a lamp or a light that illumines one’s life (Prov 6:23). Yahweh’s *torah* teaches the principle of right living; it nurtures the mind. In Psa 19:7, the *torah* is said to have the power to revive the soul (תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נַפְשׁ). It transforms people’s mentality. As a moral principle, the *torah* guides humans in the way of righteousness. It teaches humans how to live together in harmony. The *torah* is a foundation of peaceful co-existence.

Yahweh’s *torah* guides people to the way of righteousness. The *torah* is both a command and an instruction which provides guidance for Israel and the nations (Brueggemann, 1997; Dahlberg, 1990; Sanders, 1976). It directs one to do what is right and guides humans to the way of peace (דְרֹךְ שְׁלוֹמִים). The *torah* may be used for all types of divine revelation relevant to the proper conduct of one’s life. Thus we may interpret the *torah* as the principle of right conduct and, therefore, the foundation of righteousness. In

Isa 2:3-4, the nations which were formerly at war with each other, now open up to each other in brotherhood and harmony, having been transformed by Yahweh's *torah*.

The result of the submission of the peoples to the direction of Yahweh's *torah* is universal peace. The *torah* thus functions as both preventative medicine and cure for every global problem of conflicts and war. Such peace, according to Delitzsch (1991) and Jensen (1984), is not an armed peace, but a true God-given and blessed peace.

The prophet Isaiah underlines the link between the *torah* and social order. The *torah* is pertinent to peace. When the nations accept and live by Yahweh's instruction (תורה), violence (הַמָּוֶה) comes to an end, and war (מִלְחָמָה) is abolished (cf. 60:18; 65:25). Isaiah proposes that abiding by Yahweh's *torah* is paramount to establishing peace (Dempsey, 2000). In this new order, God's teaching settles disputes and enthrones justice and righteousness. Yahweh's *torah* is the secret of peace and the foundation of a new world order. Isaiah looks past his own time of war and violence to the coming Kingdom of God, the extension of God's rule over the whole of creation. In Isa 2:2-4, the *torah* is the rule of life given to humans by Yahweh.

The *torah* is an expression of God's will. As Yahweh's instruction to man, the *torah* is the greatest manifestation or revelation of God to mankind. The law thus demonstrates the will of God for the people. Among the prophets, the term *torah* is sometimes used for the word of God given through the prophets (cf. Isa 8:16) or the written commandment of Yahweh (cf. Hos 8:12). The *torah* is interpreted as a divinely revealed way of life, a complete set of directions which contain all the rules for living in accordance with the will of God (McKenzie, 1979). This fact is indicated in Isa 2:2d-3.

The *torah* has a transformative power on the society. It regulates the life of the people. As a body of revealed teachings of Yahweh, the *torah* is a moral guide, directing people to higher values. Thus, we may see why the Psalmist prayed: "Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth" (Psa 86:11). Apparently, the Psalmist recognizes Yahweh's *torah* as a guide, a principle that teaches one to conduct his life in an orderly manner. The *torah* here expresses the broader concept of "the way" (Isa 2:3), the moral demands and the ethics of behaviour (Jensen, 1984). The observance of the *hr'At* leads the nations to embrace peace.

Peace is arguably the noblest goal anyone can pursue, not only in global politics, but also in our very relationships, be they in marriage, family or self. When Yahwe's *torah* is observed by all, peace becomes the natural outcome. Perhaps, that is what the Psalmist implied when he said: "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble" (Psa 119:165). As Isa 2:2-3 indicates, the learning of the *torah* motivates the nations to give up war and violence, to re-forged their weapons of war into the implements of peace (וּכְתַתּוּ חַרְבֹתָם לְאֵתִים וְחַנְיֹתָיִקָם לְמִזְמֵלוֹת). Unlike the Mosaic *torah* which permitted war against the nations which stood against their socio-political interests (Num 33:51-56), the *torah* that goes forth from Zion teaches peace as the only way of human co-existence.

Yahweh's *torah* is profitable for the maintenance of justice and peace. In v.4b, Isaiah uses two sets of parallel statements to describe the worldwide peace. In the first

parallel structure (v.4b), the passage expresses that Yahweh's *torah* learnt on Mount Zion would lead to the transformation of the nations.

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares וְכָתְתוּ חַרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים  
and their spears into pruning knives. וְהִנִּיתוּתְחִיבֵיהֶם לְמִזְמֵלוֹת

Isaiah shows that the ramification of such a transformation is enormous. The nations would so much be transformed by Yahweh's *torah* that they transform their swords (חֶרֶב) and spears (תְּחִיבָה) used for war into ploughshares (אֵתִים) and pruning hooks (מִזְמֵלוֹת) used for agriculture. "Sword" and "spear" together represent the entire military arsenal. The transformation of implements of war into implements of agriculture serves as synecdoche for the whole of the disarmament process and a return to the era of peace.

In the second parallel structure in v.4c the *pericope* continues the description of peace by contrasting what the nations would do with what they would no longer do:

v.4c. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, לֹא־יָשָׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב  
and they will no longer learn war: וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה:

"Swords" are changed so dramatically that they would not be used as weapons for war any more, and the nations would be so tremendously changed by being taught the *torah* that they would not learn the techniques (יִלְמְדוּ) about war (מִלְחָמָה) any longer. Since nations would no longer attack their neighbours, there would be no more need to stockpile weapons of war; nor would there be need to train for war any more. The art and study of war would be removed entirely. Consequently, the customary practices of equipping the army for war would be reversed. Such a voluntary disarmament can only take place when a complete change of mind has taken place. Furthermore, the instruments which desolated the world, and filled it with blood would now be turned into instruments of agriculture and human wellbeing. It is not enough that men learn war no more; it is also important they put in place structures that forestall conflicts and violence.

Isaiah presents the *torah* as the secret of peace, the instrument of right judgment, and the foundation of the new social order founded on justice and righteousness (hq'd'c.). Yahweh's *torah* teaches peace as the ideal and the only reasonable way for a fraternal co-existence among humans. The love of peace and the pursuit of peace are among the key teachings of the *torah*. Isa 2:3-4 makes the link between the observance of Yahweh's *torah* and the enthronement of peace in the society. Peace comes when people are guided by the ethics of Yahweh's *torah*. The result of submitting to Yahweh's *torah* is peace (McKee, 2017; Kaiser (1983). The wellbeing of humans, as well as world peace, can only be realized through obedience to the divine *torah* (Groenewald, 2016).

## 6. Eschatological Feature of Isaiah's Vision of Peace

The term eschatology is derived from two Greek words: ἔσχατος (meaning "end" or "last") and λόγος (meaning "word," and by extension "doctrine"). In the narrow sense or traditional sense, "eschatology" is the teaching or doctrine of the last or final events of history or "end time" (Robinson, 1996). In the broad sense, eschatology is a doctrine that deals with the events that would take place in a remote or undisclosed future.

Jewish eschatology is concerned with events that would happen "in days to come" (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים). Such events include the eschatological gathering of all peoples and the inauguration of the era of universal peace. The dawn of universal peace which Isaiah "saw" (אֲשֶׁר חָזָה וַיִּשְׁעֶהוּ) is one that would take place in an undetermined future ("in days to come", בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים). It must be noted that there is no single word for eschatology in the Hebrew Bible, but there is a phrase בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים. The phrase, בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים is translated "in days to come," or "in the end of the days." In Jewish eschatology, the phrase "in days to come" refers to an indefinite time or period in the future. The prophets speak of "the latter days" (אַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים) and what God would do "in that day" (Seitz, 1999). Isaiah 2:2-4 is a good example of such a speech. Other passages include: 9:1-6; 11:1-10; 24-27; 56:1-8; 65:17-25; 66:18-24.

Davies (1980) defines *eschaton* as "the point ... the moment at which God acts definitively in history to fulfill his purpose for it" (p.39). The *eschaton* may sometimes be seen as an event "in the process of happening," or a moment in the future. Whether in the immediate or distant future, it is described in sharp contrast to the present circumstances but in continuity with them. Eschatology in the narrow sense refers to events that would occur at the end of history. Eschatology may sometimes refer to events that would occur at a moment within history or in an undisclosed future. When Isaiah speaks about peace that would materialize when the nations submit themselves to the direction of Yahweh's torah, and consequently reject war and embrace peace (Isa 2:2d-4).

Isaiah is not merely referring to an end-time event, but rather an event that has a fundamental continuity with the present. Such a peace which Isaiah foresees is eschatological in the sense that it points to what would happen at an unspecified time in the future, but such a moment is possible within history. While the fullness of the peace which Isaiah points to is "a not yet" reality, it is at the same time in continuity with the present (Grelot, 1967). While Isa 2:2-4 is eschatological, it is not apocalyptic. It is true that Isa 2:2-4 speaks of the transformation of the present order, but such event is envisioned as happening, not outside of history, but within history, through human agency.

Isaiah proclaimed that one day God would establish Jerusalem as a world center. "Jerusalem" (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם), city of peace, would become a place where the nations would converge to learn the secret of peace (שְׁלוֹמִים). Prophetic eschatology envisions God accomplishing divine plans within the context of human history and by means of human agents. While the fulfillment of Isa 2:2-4 looks towards the future, it emphasizes

what would happen, not outside of history, but at an undetermined time within history. Redditt (1990) regards Isa 2:2-4 as an oracle of restoration of Zion. The center of Jewish hope was the city of Jerusalem in the hey days of Old Testament Judaism. He went further to say that the restoration of Zion served as the center around which eschatological hope grew. The city was conceived as the navel of the earth. Indeed such an idea is outstanding in Isa 2:2-4. Isaiah does not suggest that the event which he saw (תִּדְבַר אֲשֶׁר תִּזְוֶה) would happen outside of history, but within history.

Peace is a goal which humans seek. True, undisturbed peace is an eschatological reality. Gross (1970) emphasized that God is the one who guarantees this kind of peace (Isa 2: 2-4; 32:17; Zech 2: 4f.). According to Musija (2011), the new age which Isaiah envisions is characterized by moral and spiritual transformation, peace and nonviolence. People would be so transformed by the *torah* and the word of the Lord learnt on Mount Zion that they would seek peace and not war. One of the strongest emphases in Isaiah's description of the end time (eschaton) is the picture of peace, nonviolence and justice.

This idea is central in 2:2-4. Instead of war (מִלְחָמָה) and conflicts (רִיב), nations would come together in mutual cooperation. In relation to end time doctrine this prophecy relates to the days of messiah, the last days when his kingdom would be built at the later part of mosaic economy. A new kingdom of peace, a heavenly Jerusalem would be erected just before the destruction of the earthly one.

## 7. Conclusion

Prophet Isaiah hinges global peace on a universal dissemination and assimilation of Yahweh's *torah* and the application of this *torah* to the realm of life. *Torah* as the secret of peace, and the foundation of a new societal order characterized by peace, justice and fraternal co-existence. This universal peace is premised on comprehensive disarmament. This mystery of peace of God would outshine all the wisdom of this world, all its philosophy and politics. The spiritual peace shall put down the idolatries of the heathen and all war institutions of religion would appear despicable in comparison with it.

The peace which Isaiah preaches is an eschatological reality. He situates the dawn of the era of peace which he saw in an undisclosed future, "in days to come" (הַיָּמִים הַבָּאֵתִידִיתִים). While Isaiah speaks of the transformation of the present order, he envisions the event as happening, not outside of history and the circumstances of the present, but at an undetermined future time within history. When Yahweh's *torah* permeates the minds and hearts of humans, then the nations would no longer use power and force of arms to dominate, control, overpower, or oppress other nations. Rather there would be peace and a harmonious co-existence among nations.

The main effect of the *torah* on the nations is a complete change of mindset. In actual sense, no human mediator is needed because the power of transformation belongs to Yahweh alone and lies outside the capacity of man. *Torah-adonai* is the secret

for this transformation. It is initiated and bestowed by Yahweh unaided. Zion is the centre from where it flows to other places – out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of God from Jerusalem. Zion is equated with Jerusalem and instruction is equated with word of God. The entire components of *torah-adonai* are here listed and filled with all types of divine revelation relevant to the proper conduct of a life transformed by Yahweh. Only the transformed one can transform his society.

Prophetic peace eschatology envisions divine plans within the context of human history and it operates by means of human agency. Loving the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength (Deut 6: 5) serve as the summary of human responsibility in this peace eschatology operation. This means acting, understudying and meditating upon the *torah-adonai* repeatedly. This is not a condition for God to bring about the eschatological peace but obedience and submission of man to God's will.

Transformation happens in the heart of man. In Hebrew 'heart' means spirit (לֵב or לֵבָב). Heart is the centre of human thought and spiritual life. God can only contact the spirit of man, not the flesh. It is the contact point, the communication point, the seat of transformation. Man's heart must be spiritual for that is the only medium through which God expresses himself in man. Growth in this divine-human relationship is necessary for peace. Physical maturity is as a result of time, intellectual maturity is as a result of learning, this spiritual maturity comes only as a result of obedience to *torah-adonai* as the secret of peace. Peace of heart is the greatest achievement of a transformed faith man and it is the true measure of spiritual enrichment.

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