

# THE REMEMBRANCE □ CHAPTER 5

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

Then it will happen, at last -- the Holy Temple will be rebuilt, and the Shechina will emerge out of the dust to return to her rightful place there! For, recall that one of the worst consequences of our having been in exile was the fact that the Shechina had been cast there along with us. But as we'd learned, a certain sequence of events would manifest itself from the heavens in order for her to resurface, and it will begin to happen by this point.

This raises a fundamental question, though, which we'll take this opportunity to respond to. How can G-d's presence be said to dwell in any one place alone, even if it's the Holy Temple? After all, as Solomon himself put it when he had the Holy Temple built, "Behold, heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house that I have built?" (1 Kings 8:27).

The quick answer is that G-d had in fact fixed His presence in other places and at other times. He did so on Mount Sinai, for example; for as we're told that, "Moses went up into the mountain, and ... G-d's glory abided on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it over for six days .... The sight of G-d's glory (exhibited then) was like a devouring fire" (Exodus 24:15-17). G-d's presence was manifest in the Tabernacle in the desert, as well; for as we're told, "Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud abided on it, and G-d's glory filled the Tabernacle" (Exodus 40:35). The Land of Israel itself exhibited it, for we were warned not to "defile the land that you will inhabit, in which I dwell" (Numbers 35:34). And it's said, "Thus says the High and Lofty One ... I dwell in the high and holy place", and likewise "with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15).

But the deeper response is that G-d's presence is actually \*everywhere\*, as Solomon noted above, and as Isaiah did too when he declared, "Holy, holy, holy is the L-rd of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:3). It's just that His Presence can be especially sensed and experienced in certain locations and times, and that's what the Torah is alluding to. So the point of the matter is that while we only rarely experience G-d's Presence in the course of the exile, we'll experience it ever so much more after the great redemption.

In any event, this is how Solomon was told that G-d's presence was to exhibit itself in the first Holy Temple: "G-d's word came to Solomon, saying, As to this Temple that you are building, if you will walk in my statutes, execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments ... (then) I will dwell among the children of Israel .... So Solomon began building the Temple and completed it" (1 Kings 6:11-13). And, indeed, "it came to pass that when the Kohanim had come out of the holy place" at a later point, that "a cloud filled G-d's house, and the Kohanim could not stand to serve (there)

because of the cloud: as G-d's glory had filled G-d's house" (1 Kings 8:10-12).

All that ended -- for the meanwhile, at least -- when the first Holy Temple was destroyed, and "G-d's glory went up from the midst of the city, and stood on the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezekiel 11:23) in exile. In fact though, that didn't happen in one fell-swoop, as whoever could have endured that! It happened in ten stages. The Shechina went "from the Ark-cover to the Cherub, from the Cherub to the threshold, from the threshold to the courtyard, from the courtyard to the altar, from the altar to the roof, from the roof to the wall, from the wall to the town, from the town to the mountain, from the mountain to the wilderness, and from the wilderness it ascended and abided in its own place" (Rosh Hashanah 31A).

In fact, the Shechina didn't manifest itself at all in the second Holy Temple (Yoma 21B)! But that will all reverse itself, in this, the fifth stage of The Remembrance.

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