

# THE VISITATION □ CHAPTER 2

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

This second stage of The Visitation centers on the resurfacing of the Shechina up out of the dust, so to speak. It's alluded to by the brave proclamation, "Do not rejoice for my sake, my enemy! For though I fell, I arose" (Micha 7:8), and by the prophet's rousing call to "Shake off the dust, Jerusalem (and) arise!" (Isaiah 52:2).

For while, as Ramchal put it, "the Jewish Nation had (indeed) been in darkness and dimness, and there was no one to comfort them for all their sorrows and troubles" in the course of the exile, and they had gotten to the point where "their spirits plummeted to the ground", that will start to come to an end. For "the Shechina will arise from the dust and regain her strength".

The implication of something "arising from the dust" of course is that it gets up on its own, wipes itself off, and moves on. But how does that fit in with the concept of the Shechina as G-d's presence in our midst? It's meant to imply the idea that \*G-d's rule would begin to reassert itself\* in the world after having been "foiled" by the forces that sent off His people to exile. And His original intentions for the world would begin to go back on track. For as Ramchal terms it in our text, the Shechina "will take the (Celestial) light of rule upon herself" -- albeit only demurely, subliminally, and discretely at this stage, and without "yet display(ing) it openly".

But what will enable the Shechina to dust herself off? The fact that "the Shechina has a great Source" which she never ever "veers from" despite circumstances, that "has never fallen into the deep sleep of exile". (We, too, have such a "great Source" which we likewise never ever "veer from" despite our having been cast into exile, by the way.)

The truth is, the Shechina will have begun to arise not a moment too soon. For our people would have been "in the thick of the great darkness and pitch black" of exile, had been "overpowered and ... as far away from the Source as (we) could", had had "a huge vale and terrible barrier (placed) between them and their Father in Heaven", and would have had the sense that "so much darkness has overtaken (us)" for far too long.

Indeed, though, there'll come a time when enough will be enough; when we can no longer deny the angst of exile and when the sensation that the more attuned among us have had that we've been suspended in spirit all this time will overtake the rest of us, too. G-d will have mercy on us by then, we're assured, and "the light of holiness will grow stronger" and will "rip at the barrier" between us and Him "at many points", which will then "act as windows, as lattices upon the barrier" and enable us

to begin to see "lights" -- to experience hope and anticipation -- once again.

In fact, those lights will radiate so intensely and will bestow so high a degree of "great and mighty light upon each and every individual of the Jewish Nation" that we'll "be moved to return to G-d ... and to seek Him" at that point.

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