

# Song of Solomon 6:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

## Analysis

**Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.**

The chorus calls for the Shulamite's return, met with defensive question. The Hebrew *shuvi shuvi hashulammit shuvi shuvi venechez-bakh mah-techezu bashulammit kimcholat hamachanayim* (שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשּׁוֹלָמִיט שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי וְנִחְזֶה-בָּךְ מַה-תִּחְזִיזוּ בַשּׁוֹלָמִיט כִּמְחֹלַת הַמַּחֲנָיִם) introduces the bride as "Shulamite" and employs military imagery.

"Shulamite" (Shulammit, שׁוֹלָמִיט) appears only here in Scripture. Etymology debated: feminine form of Solomon (Shelomo), meaning she belongs to Solomon? Reference to Shunem (hometown of Abishag, 1 Kings 1:3)? Or from shalom (peace), making her "the peaceful one"? The fourfold repetition "return, return" (*shuvi shuvi*) expresses urgent desire to behold her, possibly calling her back from dance or procession. "That we may look upon thee" (*venechez-bakh*) uses *chazah* (חָזָה), meaning to gaze, perceive, contemplate—intense visual focus.

The question "What will ye see?" challenges the gaze—why this intense scrutiny? The answer: "as it were the company of two armies" (*kimcholat hamachanayim*). *Macholat* (מַחֲלָת) means dance; *machanayim* (מַחֲנָיִם) means two camps/armies. Is this the "dance of Mahanaim" (place name from Genesis 32:2 where Jacob saw two camps of angels)? Or dance resembling two armies in formation? Either way, the bride's beauty and grace command attention like impressive military display. The

church's corporate worship and unified beauty similarly displays Christ's glory before watching world (John 17:21-23, Ephesians 3:10).

## Historical Context

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Mahanaim was significant biblical location east of Jordan River where Jacob encountered angels (Genesis 32:1-2), later serving as capital during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 17:24-27). The name means "two camps," referring to Jacob's company and angelic host. If the verse references this location's traditional dance, it suggests processional or celebratory movement involving coordinated groups. Ancient Near Eastern victory celebrations often included women's dances (Exodus 15:20, Judges 11:34, 1 Samuel 18:6-7). The Shulamite's dance might be wedding procession, victory celebration, or simply joyful expression of love, but observers are captivated by its beauty and coordination.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the fourfold call "return, return" reflect Christ's persistent invitation to His church to draw near and fellowship with Him?
2. What does the image of the Shulamite as "two armies" teach about the church's calling to be both beautiful (bride) and formidable (army) against spiritual enemies?
3. In what ways should the church's corporate life and worship command the attention of watching world like an impressive, coordinated display?

## Interlinear Text

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שׁ וְבִי	שׁ וְבִי	בִּשׁ וּלְמָ יֵת	שׁ וְבִי	שׁ וְבִי	תִּתְּחִזּוּ	מָה בְּךָ	מָה
Return	Return	O Shulamite	Return	Return	that we may look	H0	H4100
H7725	H7725	H7759	H7725	H7725	H2372		
תִּתְּחִזּוּ	בִּשׁ וּלְמָ יֵת	כְּמַחֲלֵ ת	הַמַּחֲנִיִּם:				
that we may look	O Shulamite	As it were the company	of two armies				
H2372	H7759	H4246	H4264				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 32:2:** And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.