

"If you walk in My laws/follow My decrees." (26:3)

The *Midrash* cites the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 119, "I contemplated my path and my feet returned me to Your testimony." It also presents Dovid *Ha'Melech's* explanation of his allusion in the *pasuk*. Dovid *Ha'Melech* explained that every day he organized his activities and decided where to go. He would begin on his way, but instead of proceeding to his intended destination, his feet literally propelled him to the *Bais Ha'Midrash*.

This *Midrash* begs further explanation. First, what connection is there between the *pasuk*, "If you will walk in My laws," and Dovid *Ha'Melech's* statement? Second, Dovid *Ha'Melech's* original statement must be clarified. He obviously did not plan imprudent outings only to be overruled by his more disciplined body, which returned him to the *Bais Ha'Midrash*. Undoubtedly, Dovid *Ha'Melech* had important matters which demanded his presence. Nonetheless, his plans were changed, and he ended up seated in the *Bais Ha'Midrash*. We still must endeavor to comprehend; if his activities were important, why did he find himself in the *Bais Ha'Midrash*? If they were not that pressing, why did he plan to leave his studies to attend to those matters?

Horav A.H. Lebovitz, Shlita, derives a noteworthy lesson from this *pasuk*. Dovid *Ha'Melech* certainly executed his responsibilities in the most exemplary fashion. Any pressing matter would receive his undivided attention for as long as needed. His challenge was to establish his priorities, to differentiate between what was absolutely essential and what was not. The *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, attempted to persuade Dovid *Ha'Melech* that more things needed to be done, more "*mitzvos*" and acts of *chesed* had to be performed, all at the expense of *Torah* study. Dovid's remarkable focus and all encompassing desire to study *Torah*, however, enabled him to neutralize the insidious *yetzer hara* and return to his beloved *Torah* study.

We are confronted with a constant need to balance our mundane responsibilities with our spiritual obligations. We are charged to study *Torah* at all times. Yet, as human beings living in contemporary society, we have responsibilities to fulfill, schedules to keep, and even *Torah*-oriented endeavors in which to participate. How do we prioritize our time? When do we perform the actual endeavor ourselves, and when do we delegate its fulfillment to others?

The clarity of mind needed to render an appropriate decision emanates from *Torah* study, which hones the mind and balances the senses. One must develop within himself a strong desire to study *Torah*. Without a relentless yearning for *Torah*, its actual study produces nothing more than a complacency which has little enduring value. Without a positive attitude, even Dovid *Ha'Melech* would have succumbed to his daily pressures and occupied his valuable time with what he perceived to be more critical matters.

This is representative of the guileful method employed by the *yetzer hara* to lure us away from *Torah* study. Regrettably, we defer to the *yetzer hara's* deceitful arguments, because, after all, "we have responsibilities." To counteract this argument, we must imbue within ourselves a love for

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Torah study to the point that it becomes integrated into our very being. Only through such a "natural" yearning for *Torah* will we discipline ourselves to realize that we really have more time for spiritual pursuits than we had envisioned.