

Hold On! The Art of Walking

written by Yossi Katz

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Meshivat Nefesh #1

There are two basic motions in life—*r'tzo* and *shov*—"running" and "returning." Up and down, two steps forward and one step back...we have a lot of ways of talking about the phases that we go through.

Rebbe Nachman spoke of those cycles in terms of walking. I need two kinds of expertise to walk the path toward G-d. I need to know how to run ahead when I'm motivated and energetic, when the road in front of me is smooth and everything comes together. Forward motion then means that I have to *keep moving forward*, that I can't get complacent. I have to stay aware that I've hardly even begun, that the closeness with G-d that I seek is still far ahead of me. "*If I would fly up to heaven, **there** You are...*" When I'm "up," You're *there*, still ahead of me, beckoning me to keep moving forward.

But sometimes I feel so far, I'm caught in the backward pull of "return." At that moment, the expertise that I need is to know that G-d is right here with me, accessible to me exactly where I am, and I just need to hang on and be patient until the road opens up again before me. *"...But if I was to lay my bed in the grave, **here** You are."* When I'm down, here You are at my side, supporting me and strengthening me until I'm ready to move forward again.

(Based on *Likutei Moharan* I:6)