

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

# בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
RE'EH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

## BACK TO BASICS

In this week's *Parshah*, we find a list of various *Mitzvos* that *Klal Yisrael* are instructed to keep, including a warning not to eat blood.<sup>1</sup> In fact, this admonition is stated twice in this *Parshah*, and the second time the words, "רק חזק," "Be strong [in your resistance to eating blood]," are added. It seems odd that the *Bnei Yisrael* need to be bolstered in their refusal to eat blood. This is something that would naturally disgust any person, why would the *Bnei Yisrael* be any different?

Rashi,<sup>2</sup> quoting the *Sifri*, explains that though the *Bnei Yisrael* would be disgusted by eating blood, they still needed to be strongly cautioned not to consume blood. This is because the *Yetzer Horah* is constantly looking for ways to make people fall, even if it includes doing something that would normally go against their natural instincts. Thus, even the 'easy' *Mitzvos* need to be guarded, as they too are prey for the *Yetzer Horah*.<sup>3</sup>

As we enter the month of *Elul*, and prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we may feel overwhelmed, and wonder, "Where do we start?" Reb Yisrael Salanter<sup>4</sup> (1809-1883) advises one to start with the easier areas - each person according to their personal situation. This is because the easier a *Mitzvah* is, the greater our obligation is in fulfilling it. Additionally, success breeds success - if a person can conquer the 'easy' *Yetzer Horah*, that person will feel motivated to continue and conquer the 'hard' *Yetzer Horah* as well. Lastly, as a person becomes experienced in setting up goals and systems to fight the easier battles, they can use that knowledge to properly assail the more difficult areas in one's life.

This is not to say that one should ignore other areas of one's life where they can improve. Nevertheless, we see from this *Chazal* that it is not a small thing to focus on 'easy' *Mitzvos*. In fact, it is a very important starting point, as those areas are the gateway to greatness.

**Even the 'easy' *Mitzvos* need to be guarded, as they too are prey for the *Yetzer Horah*.**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

With the approach of Rosh Hashanah, it is time to start thinking of areas where we can improve. A good idea would be to find an area where one can start out small, but expand as one grows proficient.

For example, suppose one wants to have greater concentration during *Tefillah*. Attempting to jump in and concentrate during the entire *Davening* can be very difficult. A better idea may be to focus on a smaller amount of *Tefillah*, but with a greater chance of success. For example, choose to concentrate during the first *Bracha* of *Shemonah Esrei*, twice a week.

When deciding what to improve, one should make it reasonable, and have a plan of action. Just thinking, "Boy, I really wish I focused on what I was saying!" will not change anything - what makes this time different than the other times? An actual plan - learning about *Tefillah*, a reward system, etc. is needed to accomplish one's goals.

Once one has tracked their progress and has had a period of success, it is time to expand the program by adding another day, or another *Bracha*, etc. Doing this will help build success after success.

1 *Devarim* 12:16, 23

2 *Devarim* 12:23, s.v. רק חזק

3 *Sifsei Chachamim ibid.* s.v. אתה צריך

4 *Ohr Yisrael*, Letter 6

Sponsored Anonymously

לרפואה שלמה חיים דוד בן רבקה

To sponsor, or to receive Beshivticha by email, please contact us  
at [info@ohr-yisrael.com](mailto:info@ohr-yisrael.com) or call 732-451-GROW (4769)



**Take care not to underestimate the worth of any pure deed, even if it's just a word or a look. For that which seems small in our eyes is actually highly valued by Hashem.**

- *Chovos HaLevovos, Sha'ar Cheshbon HaNefesh, Perek 5*

# BROKEN WINDOWS

New York City in the early nineties felt like a war zone. People were fed up with the rampant crime, and had voted in a new mayor, Rudy Giuliani, who had promised to clean up the streets.

To fight crime, Mayor Giuliani used an innovative approach put forth by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling,<sup>1</sup> known as "Broken Windows." The idea was that crime festers in an area where there is general disorder - an area that has graffiti and broken windows is more likely to engender more serious crimes. In the words of George Kelling, "Indeed, the Broken Windows metaphor is one of deterioration: a building where a broken window goes unrepaired will soon be subject to far more extensive vandalism - because it sends a message that the building owners (and, by extension, the police) cannot or will not control minor crimes, and thus will be unable to deter more serious ones."

Using this idea, Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Bratton instructed their officers to focus on minor offenses. From fare beating to loitering, petty crime was diminished. As a result, serious crime had also been curtailed, having the greatest drop in crime rates in a decade. This turnaround continued even after Mayor Giuliani left office, as his successor, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, continued and strengthened the effort.<sup>2</sup>

The question remained, though - was the drop in crime truly due to the "Broken Windows" policy? To put this to rest, in 2008, Kees Keizer of the University of Groningen published a paper in *Science* that demonstrated that disorderly conditions led to more serious levels of disorderly conduct.

In our own lives as well, if one wishes to cease his or her more serious behavior, it seems prudent and wise to start with the smaller offenses. Doing so will inevitably lead to better conduct overall.

**A building where a broken window goes unrepaired will soon be subject to far more extensive vandalism...**

---

1 Wilson and Kelling, "Broken Windows." *The Atlantic* March 1982 Print

2 Kelling, G. "How New York Became Safe: The Full Story." *City Journal* Special Edition 2009 Print

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The earlier one prepares for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the more likely one will merit a good judgment.<sup>1</sup>
- When we take the initial steps of *Teshuvah*, Hashem facilitates the process beyond our natural abilities and we can attain incredible levels of *Ahavas Hashem*.<sup>2</sup>
- Dovid *HaMelech* was afraid of the Day of Judgment - not because of the more difficult commandments, but because of the easy ones.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 *Kochvei Ohr*, 4

2 *Shaarei Teshuva*, 1:1

3 *Medrash Tanchuma, Eikav* 1