

"Remember what Amalek did to you... and he did not fear Hashem." (25:17,18)

The *Brisker Rav*, z.l., asserts that in the words, "*And he did not fear Hashem*," lies the key to Amalek's iniquity over that of all other nations who fought us. His lack of *yiraas Elokim*, fear of Hashem, is sufficient reason for earning him the title of archenemy of Hashem. What specific aspect of his miscreant behavior emphasizes his lack of fear of Hashem?

The *Talmud*, *Bava Kamma 79b*, distinguishes between a *ganov* and a *gazlan*. The *ganov* is a robber who demonstrates fear of man, by virtue of the fact that he performs his invidious behavior only at night when he will not be noticed. He does not seem to be concerned with the fact that Hashem sees everything he does. On the other hand, the *gazlan* has no compunction whatsoever about stealing during the day, his actions exposed to the public view. The *gazlan* does not make a distinction between fear of Hashem and fear of man. The punishment of the *ganov* is greater than that of the *gazlan*. This does not seem consistent, however, with the transgression. One would think that he who rejects everything, who is totally obsessed with his desire to steal, should receive the greater and more exacting punishment. This is not true. The *Torah* does not view the *gazlan* in as negative a light as the *ganov*. Apparently, the *ganov's* form of evil is more reprehensible than that of the *gazlan*. Why is this ?

The *Brisker Rav* explains that the *gazlan* is a robber who steals as a response to his present need. He makes no "*cheshbonos*," well thought out calculations, as to when and where he should steal and what the consequences will be. He simply has a desire that must be satisfied. He is not concerned about the consequences. In contrast, the *ganov* prepares himself well. He selects his victim, prepares his plan, and maps out an escape route. He is extremely meticulous in his effort to do evil. It is almost an art to observe the *ganov* in action! This is *chutzpah* at its apex! A person who acts with a *cheshbon*, plan, and yet disregards the ever watchful eye of Hashem, blatantly demonstrates his lack of *yiraas Elokim*. The *gazlan*, on the other hand, is simply a *baal taavah*, one overwhelmed by his desires.

Amalek did not simply attack the Jews. He carefully selected the right place and the right time. He chose their moment of spiritual weakness, when they had slackened in their *Torah* learning. He knew this would be the most propitious time to destroy them. Other nations simply attacked when they saw *Bnei Yisrael*. No so Amalek! He waited, and guilefully planned an attack that would succeed. He knew that there was a G-d who protected them. He simply did not care, because he has no *yiraas Elokim*. This arrogance set him apart in his evil and earned him the distinction of being considered the archenemy of Hashem and *Bnei Yisrael*.