



ARE YOU LIVING IN THE WORLD OF REALITY?

HOW COULD AMALEK ATTACK AFTER ALL THE NISSIM?

The Torah relates that after Klal Yisrael came out of Mitzrayim, they witnessed the greatest historical event and the greatest revelation up to that point in the history of the world. They saw myriads of *makkos*, hundreds of *makkos*. They saw Hashem taking apart Mitzrayim brick by brick. They saw Hashem playing with the *Mitzri'im*. They saw *krias Yam Suf*. They were able to point with their finger and say *זֶה קְלִי וְאֲנֹהוּ*, “this is My God, and I will glorify Him” (Shemos 15:2). They saw *ananei hakavod*, clouds of glory. And suddenly, as a fledgling nation, they are attacked by Amalek, a nation that came not from close by, but from afar. It is extremely unusual to go attack another nation that doesn't live on your borders and to start up with them after they witnessed such miraculous events. The Torah testifies *וְלֹא יִרָא אֶלְקִים*, that Amalek had no fear of Hashem (Devarim 25:18).

Now, *yarei* has another meaning. It means they did not “see” Hashem. And the question is, what are they, lunatics?! They didn't see Hashem?! How could you not see Hashem after everything He did for the Jewish people?!

THE WORLD OF SEICHEL AND THE WORLD OF DIMYON

In order to understand this, we need to know the following idea. Every single person operates and is motivated in two different dimensions. You live in two worlds. You live in a world of *seichel*. *Seichel* means your intellect, which sees and processes reality. In the world of *seichel* there's nothing physical. It's amazing if you take note of that. The other world is the world of *dimyon*. You know what *dimyon* is? Imagination. People live an imaginary existence, and in the world of imagination the one thing that's missing is *seichel*. What does that mean to say? That means in the world of *dimyon*, things don't have to add up. Things don't have to make sense. Things don't have to be real. For example, you read about science fiction. You read about one-eyed animals, six-legged beasts, dinosaurs, and Martians. This all has no basis in intellect. It only has a basis in *dimyon*, and in *dimyon* you are free to imagine any single thing that you like, and everything becomes your perceived reality in that world.

At night, people dream crazy dreams. It has nothing to do with reality. You're flying around. You're here one minute, somewhere else another minute. People that are dead are there. All kinds of the strangest things that have nothing to do with reality. Where does it come from? It comes from your *dimyon*. You see, at night when you're sleeping, your *seichel* is “put away.” The *seichel* is shut down, so now you're living in a complete world of *dimyon*, and in the world of *dimyon* anything goes and anything is imaginable. The world of *seichel*, on the other hand, is completely dominated by *emes*, by reality. You could see if something is *shayach*, or if it's not *shayach*, if it's *emes* or it's *sheker*.

BEING RULED BY THE YETZER HARA AND DIMYON

Now, obviously, the challenge that every single one of us faces is to live in a world of reality. And we don't. Do you know why? Because when we're born, we don't have any *seichel*. All we have is imagination and the *yetzer hara* *כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו*, “the inclination of a person's heart is evil from youth” (Bereishis 8:21). The *yetzer hara* of a person dominates and tells you that you can do whatever you want and there are no consequences. Why do kids engage in dangerous behavior sometimes? Because their *seichel* is not developed and their imagination leads them to believe they can jump off ten steps, jump from high places, play with fire, etc. It's all games. It's all nonsense.

The Ramchal in *sefer Deretz Eitz Chaim* writes that if a person knows the *emes*, that knowledge of the *emes* strengthens his *neshamah* and creates a distance between himself and his *yetzer hara*. He explains that there is nothing that weakens the *koach* of the *neshamah* more than a lack of *da'as*. *Da'as* means you have an awareness of reality. When you have *da'as*, you have reality. If you don't have *da'as* you're living in the world of the *yetzer hara*. If a person would have a clear *yediah*, a broad knowledge, he would never sin. It wouldn't be possible to get him to sin. Just like you can't get a *malach* to sin, you wouldn't be able to get a person who has *da'as* to sin. But because a person doesn't have *da'as*, a person lacks the *da'as*, or the *da'as* weak, it is possible to sin. So you have to know you exist in the world of *dimyon*.

DRIVEN BY A RUACH SHTUS

The *gemara* (Sotah 3a) says regarding someone who does an *aveirah*, *אִין אָדָם עוֹבֵר עֲבִירָה אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן נִכְנַס בּוֹ רוּחַ שְׁטוּת* - A man commits a transgression only if a spirit of folly (*shtus*) enters him. What does *ruach shtus* mean? *Ruach shtus* means that his *seichel* gets shut down. He becomes dominated by a *ruach* of *shtus*, craziness, of no semblance of *da'as*.

Let us picture the following scenario. A person is driving on the road, and he's trying to make a flight, and it's an important flight for him because he has to go to a wedding, and it's important for him to be at this wedding. He notices there's a car in front of him and the car is going very slow so he decides he has to pass this car up and cut him off. All of a sudden, he goes oops, it's a one-lane road. It's a country road, with a lot of twists and turns. You don't know what's up ahead. He goes a bit to the side. He tries to give the guy a hint. He puts the lights on. He figures this might be a guy 90 years old or a 90 year old lady driving a car. He's telling himself, “Why don't they take away her license. What's she doing on the road?” But he doesn't have a field of vision. He can't see clearly past the other car. It's not worth it for him to cut the guy off. Maybe another car is going to come against him!

You understand, when it's impossible for you to know whether another car is coming, you don't even attempt to cut the guy off because you don't want to be the late Mr. Jones. You'd rather be Mr. Jones, who arrived late. You don't chance it!

So he slows his car down. He pulls behind the guy. He tries to get on the guy's tail to give the guy hints, *gornisht*.

Then, all of a sudden, he starts to have thoughts. What's the next thought that comes into his mind? You know what he thinks? "What are the actual chances that when I'm going to cut the guy off, at that minute, a car is going to come? What are the actual chances? I didn't see a car here in the last two minutes." He thinks, "If I see a car, I'll pull back right away." But it's a curvy road.

He continues along. He tells himself, "If I would try a little, if I would go fast and cut the guy off in a hurry, I'd probably be safe. It would not be a problem. I know the chances of anything happening are very, very low." He goes, and he convinces himself that he's able to cut the guy off. In the end, you know what he does? He says, "Here goes. One, two, three..." And he beeps on his horn, blinks his headlights, and tries to cut the guy off.

Now, let's understand what this guy just did. If we think about it, the guy just endangered his entire future existence, let alone ever going to the *chasunah*. The guy must be completely removed from the *metzius*. Otherwise, a normal person would never do such a thing. Your life is worth much more than a flight. To get to a *chasunah* is very nice, no doubt. What you just did is a *safeik*. You have no idea. You can't see in front of the car. People die in such cases. Many people have died in such scenarios, and deep down you know it! There are many tragic stories of people who died this way.

So what happened to him?! You know what happened? He left the world of reality, and joined the world of *dimyon*. He shut down his *seichel* and he went to sleep, and ignored and denied the danger like a child would do.

SEE-SAWING BETWEEN EMES AND DIMYON

But the *emes* is this fellow is not alone in his actions. Many people would do exactly what he did if they were in his situation. Especially if the level of traffic on that road wasn't very great, he would say the chances of danger are much less, and he would try to make all kinds of *cheshbonos*. What you have to realize is that people live constantly traveling between the world of *emes* and the world of *dimyon* and what motivates my *dimyon* are my *reztonos*, my will.

Let me give you an example. I was involved many years ago with a very big *gvir*, a very successful fellow who became *frum*. He had a very large financial organization. He kept on telling me that his oldest son was brilliant. His oldest son was really something special. I said to him one day, "My dear friend, let me ask you a question. Who says he's brilliant?" He said, "I used to say before I was religious, 'he has my wife's brains plus my brains. He's a genius. Very smart.'" He said, "but now I understand that Hashem gave him the brains." I said, "Why do you think that Hashem gave him these brains?" He said, "I never thought about it." I said, "Do you think that Hashem expects him to develop something in an area where one needs a lot of brain power? In what area you may ask? To become a *talmid chacham*. Knowledge of Torah, the written Torah, the oral Torah, *halachah*. Torah is very vast, as you know," I told him. "Have you ever considered that it is Hashem's destiny for your son to be a *talmid chacham*? *Ela mai*, what are you going to tell me? 'How is he going to have *parnasah*?' So I said, "Do you have any doubt that your financial organization could not support your son for as many years as he would develop? If he would tell you he wants to go to the biggest university, *lehavdil*, in the world that costs \$100,000 a year, or \$150,000 a year, would you have any hesitations about sending him there? No. So maybe you should attempt to make your kid a *talmid chacham*."

Now, I wasn't so sure that this kid was as smart as he thought he was. After dealing with so many people, I came to a realization that most people think their kids are geniuses, and I wondered why. At first, I thought, "Wow, you guys are really smart. You have such smart kids. Amazing!" Then I realized that being smart is a relative term. If you're not too smart, when you meet a smart person, you think he's a genius. If I can't read the *alef beis* and I meet a kid that could read the *alef beis*, you know what I think? Oh, this kid is a genius. And if he knows *alef beis* plus math, whew! He's an Einstein.

I told the father, "If you really believe your kid could be a genius and Hashem gave you the money to make your kid develop and you don't do that, you should know you're an abusive father. You're a very evil person. Just because you weren't educated in the Torah system and you only found religion later in life, you could still give your child the best of the best."

But he always used to ask, "How is he going to make *parnasah*?" I said, "I keep telling you the same answer. You told me yourself you have enough money in your organization, enough real estate, to keep him financially stable for many, many years to come." He started telling me one day, "But what will be with my son's kids?"

This story illustrates how most people live in the *olam hadimyon*. People create for themselves this *dimyon*. I told him, "You should know that someday you're going to come to Hashem, and Hashem is going to say, 'I made you aware of your son, that he's a very smart kid.'"

This kid grew up. I have followed his development since then. I now consider him an absolute failure in life. He went to *yeshivah*, a little modern, Zionist type of place. He did the "Israeli thing." Then he went into the food business. He opened up a restaurant. This is what you went to school for?! This is why Hashem gave you great brains, to know how to make vegetables?! How to cook eggs?! Are you out of your cotton-picking mind? You don't have to be smart for that. We're not talking about a world-famous culinary chef. We're talking about a guy who *shvitzes* over cutting up lettuce and making believe he cleaned them, which he doesn't know how to do well.

DENYING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

It *pashut* boggles my mind! But you know how people are? *Dimyon*. People actually think that Hashem could give you *keilim*, and you're not responsible to utilize them for anything valuable.

Let's say Hashem gives you a nice *parnasah*, and He gives you healthy children. What is the reason you wouldn't make your children great? Why not give your children the best education? Because your father was an ignoramus and he was uneducated, that's why you're going to make your kid uneducated?! Everybody knows that parents want their children to be better than them. Why don't you give the kid the best?! Ay, you tell me you can't afford it? Okay, we'll argue the point. But if you can afford it, what are you doing?

I once met a Bucharian Jew. I started talking to him to try to get him interested in Yiddishkeit. He said he very much follows his father. He reveres his father. I said, "That's a wonderful *mitzvah*, *כיבוד אב ואם*. Was your father religious?" "No." I said, "Do you keep kosher?" "No." "Do you have any interest or leanings to keep kosher?" "No." "You don't keep kosher? You keep nothing kosher?" He says, "I eat dog meat." I said, "Excuse me? You're joking, right?" He said, "No. In China, they eat dog meat." He said, "I have no qualms about eating dog meat." I said, "Are you crazy?! That's like, on the gross level, on the disgusting meter that's the worst!" I said, "Why would you do that?" He looks me straight in the face and says, "My father did that, and that's what I do."

I've seen people all the time doing crazy things. They live in the *olam hadimyon*. They think, "My father didn't do it, so I'm not going to do it, so my kid won't do it." You're going to perpetuate stupidity and illiteracy and foolish behavior only because your father and your grandfather were like that?! It doesn't make any sense! Everybody wants their child to be better. So the answer is you're not able to. But what I'm talking about is if you are able to. If you live in a world of reality, why do you create this imaginary world?

People create imagination. Here is a guy I was talking to. I said, "Are you aware of religion?" "Yes." "Are you aware of *mitzvos*?" "Yes." "What do you think is going to happen when you go to *shamayim*? What do you think Hashem is thinking about you? He thinks you're a sweetie pie? What do you think Hashem thinks about you?" "I don't know. I've never thought about it." I said, "You know you're not going to live here forever. What are you going to tell Hashem? You knew about *mitzvos*. You didn't keep them. You'll say it wasn't my family's thing. Is that crazy? What are you going to tell Hashem? He gave you health. He gave you wealth. He gave you so many things." That's called the *olam hadimyon*. You shut off your *seichel* and you imagine that you could exist in this world without doing the will of Hashem and there's no consequences.

A SOCIETY OF IMAGINATION

And then I ask people, "Do you know of any business where you can do whatever you want, come whenever you want, go whenever you want, and while you're there, act however you want? And do you honestly think that if you act this way, they're going to compensate you more and more, and there are not going to be any consequences?" I don't know of any society or anything in the world that has that. It doesn't make any sense. It's not logical. Yet, a person believes that he could be a Jew who doesn't observe the *mitzvos*.

What if the guy says to me, like many people have said, "But I pray three times a day. I pay my dues." To this I say, "If you had an employee who just paid his dues, would you give him raises?" If a person has the ability to do better and he chooses not to do better, if a person has the ability to give his kids a better education and he chooses not to because it may make him uncomfortable, does the person really believe for one moment that Hashem is not going to hold him responsible for that? Your child may one day grow up and say, "Dad, why did you do it to me? You could have given me a good education. Why did you give me an education that doesn't give me any inspiration, knowledge, appreciation, or interest in Yiddishkeit?! Why did you do that to me?!" And you're going to come up with some story and say, "Because that's what my father did. That was our way. Our way was the way of perpetuating stupidity, illiteracy, and perpetuating being ignoramuses." It's *mamash* unbelievable!

A person has to understand that this is the challenge that he faces. Reality versus imagination.

THE ENEMY OF REALITY AND EMES

Now, let's come back to the beginning of our discussion. Amalek was the quintessential enemy of reality and *emes*. After all of the *emes*, after Hashem demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that He dominates the world and He controls the world, and after the will of Hashem was demonstrated, that Hashem wants us to do certain behaviors and He doesn't want us to do other behaviors, He wants us to worship Him and to serve Him and to commit to Him - after all of this came along Amalek and said, "I don't see Hashem." *ולא ירא אלוקים* means they don't see Hashem.

As a matter of fact, it says that Amalek would catch the stragglers from the Jewish people and cut off their *milos* and throw them to *shamayim* and say to Hashem, "Here. Here is what You want. Keep it upstairs. Don't bring it downstairs. You stay up there." *השמים שמים* אדם *לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם*, "The heavens belong to G-d, but the earth He gave over to man" (Tehillim 115:16).

STRENGTHEN YOUR GRIP ON WHAT IS REAL

That's what a person has to understand. And has to constantly reiterate and strengthen his awareness. He has to make constant reality checks, "How am I doing? How am I doing? How am I doing?" Reality should become so real to you that you have no choice but to do it. Just like when you see a car coming down the street, you jump out of the way. When you see the *ratzon* of Hashem, and you're aware of the *ratzon* of Hashem, a person has to develop and create a reality for himself that is absolutely real. We have no choice. It's obvious.

We think that when we learn Torah or do *mitzvos*, we're doing favors for Hashem, and we don't think that it's something we have to do. When a car is coming down the street, and the guy slams on his brakes and avoids an accident, the guy doesn't say, "Wow! That was a great move!" No. The guy says, "Thank the good L-rd! I just saved my life." He doesn't think he's a hero.

A person has to realize that we have to develop choices, *bechirah*, to see Hashem and the *emes* of reality to such a degree that you say, "קלי ואנוהו".

TO CHOOSE NOT TO HAVE A CHOICE

The *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* (Part 1, pg.117-118) brings down from somebody he refers to as *המעמיקים בגדולי* אחד המיוחד, from the great ones who delved into the depths, *אשר ידעתי*, whom I knew, *בדורי*, in my generation. He calls him a *chacham vekadosh*. You want to guess who he was referring to? He's saying something that he heard from him. You know what kind of titles those are? He says the *חכם וקדוש רב* *ירוחם הלוי זצ"ל מדמיר*. You know what kind of *haskamah* that is from a great mind, Rav Eliyahu Dessler on Rav Yerucham?! He calls him

such titles! *Moradik*. And he says that he heard from him a *moradige vort* that the whole *vort* of *bechirah*, the whole *avodah* of *bechirah* is to choose to make yourself not have a choice! To develop yourself to the point that you put on *tefillin* in the morning because you don't have a choice not to put on *tefillin*. When a person feels his bladder is full and he has to go to the bathroom, he doesn't say, "Should I? Shouldn't I? Should I? Shouldn't I?" Sometimes, if he's a little kid, he has no *seichel* so he thinks, "Ah, I'll wait." And he's going eh eh eh, because there's candy or he's playing and he's jumping around holding himself and grabbing himself. His Mommy says, "What are you doing? Do you have to go to the bathroom?" He says, "No." "Go to the bathroom." "Okay." And he runs to the bathroom. Because he has no *seichel*. He lives in the *olam hadimyon*. But most people who have basic *seichel* understand that you're a *muchrach*.¹

Rav Yerucham says the *avodah* of *bechirah* is for a person to develop himself, to make himself see it so clearly that he's a *muchrach*, he has no choice!

Every person knows that there are certain things that if he doesn't do, he's going to suffer a lot. So he works very hard to do them. That's how it is. He works very hard to do them because he knows the consequences. There are certain things a person does because of *hakarah*, recognition. He recognizes. He's aware of what's waiting for him if he doesn't do them.

And that's what a person has to do to make himself a *yarei Elokim*. The whole job we came to this world for, טוהרה ב' טוהרה, Hashem gave me my *neschama* and enabled me to live in the world of *seichel*, the world of reality - to understand clearly what's *emes* and what's *sheker*, and what I must do.

NOT FRUM BY CHOICE

Growing up, I couldn't imagine anybody who grew up *frum* not putting on *tefillin*. It was the most mind-boggling thing to imagine not putting on *tefillin*. It's not *shayach*. You're a *muchrach*. Then I met people who missed *tefillin*. I said, "*Tefillin*? It's like basic." They said, "Maybe to you it's basic. To me, it's not basic anymore." Then I asked them if it used to be basic to them, and most of them told me yes. But a person could shut down his *seichel* and be in the category of שטות וכנס רוח שטות, he could invite a *ruach shtut* into his mind and the person then is not a *muchrach*, and he feels like he's living *be'olam hadimyon*, and he thinks he can do what he wants.

I remember asking a *talmid* of mine who was very *frum* and went off the *derech*, *rachmana litzlan*. I had a friend of his call him up and ask him why he was doing it. He said, "It's because I can." His friend asked, "Why are you eating *treif* if you can

eat kosher?" He said, "I'm doing it because I can." He continued, "The only reason I didn't eat *treif* beforehand is because I was afraid. Now I have decided all that fear is complete nonsense. There's nothing to be afraid of! Trust me! I've eaten *treif*, and I have nothing to fear." I'm thinking, "*Shrek*, is he going to pay the price someday for this behavior! Is he going to get cancer of his stomach someday, and they're going to cut out a *shtick* of his intestine, and he's going to wonder why." There's no such thing as a freebie. You're a *muchrach*.

Now, Hashem is *ma'arich apo*. Hashem is very patient. He delays and withholds His anger. But He is going to eventually collect His dues from us, *rabbosai*.

So let us strengthen our sense of reality now, and if we made mistakes, let's do *teshuvah*. And if we grew up in a world of *dimyon* because our parents or our environment was one of *dimyones*, one of imagination, let's strengthen our reality now and understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us *seichel* and let our *seichel* dominate us, to guide us to the right path to be true *yarei Elokim*.

¹ שמעתי מאחד המיוחד בגדולי המעמיקים אשר ידעתי בדוריי, חכם וקדוש, ר' ירוחם הלוי זצ"ל מדמיר, כי ענין הבחירה הטובה הוא שהאדם יבחר לשום את עצמו למוכרח. והיי שכייר וידע כי באמת מוכרח הוא לעשות רצון קונו. הלא בכל דבר אשר ידע האדם שאם לא יעשה אותו יסבול קשה, ייגע את עצמו לעשותו. יש הכרח טכני, כמו הזורק את חברו על אדם אחר והרגו, שבדאי הנורק מוכרח הוא לפול על האחר. ויש הכרח מתוך בירור ההכרה, כמו הנגול ע"י לסטים מזויין, שאם לא ימסור בעצמו את אשר לו ליד הגולן ירצחנו נפש. אך עכ"פ גם כזה נקרא הכרח. לפ"ז מי שיודע היטב, וברור הוא בלבו, דבר גדולת רבונו ומכיר את עוצם צרת הממרה את פיו, הלא בדאי ימצא את עצמו מוכרח למלאות רצון קונו. והנה מצאתי כתוב בשם הגר"א ז"ל בזה דבר נפלא מאד. בכל פעולה יש רצון קודם לה, ויש היכולת למלאות הרצון ההוא, והיי שהיכולת כלי הוא הרצון להוציא לפועל, אמנם רצון השי"ת הוא שנקיים את מצוותיו, אך את היכולת שלו (שביכולתו להכריחנו לקיימם) מסר לנו, והיא הבחירה אשר ביכולתנו לעשות כאשר נבחר אנו. מעתה מחוייבים אנו להחזיר לו ית, את יכולתו, היי שנעשה את עצמו מוכרחים לעשות כרצון בוראנו ית. והו ממש כדברי הר"י ירוחם זצ"ל. [אמנם הראוני דבר זה מפורש בדי' רז"ל (בראשית רבה ס"ז) א"ר לוי ששה דברים משמשים את האדם; ג' ברשותו וג' שלא ברשותו; העין והאוזן והחוטם שלא ברשותו... הפה והיד והרגל ברשותו... ובשעה שהוא זוכה הקב"ה עושה אותן שברשותו שלא ברשותו...]. מכאן שיש גדר בס"ד לסייע לאדם לעשות עצמו מוכרח. ובחי' ההתעלות אל השלמות היא, אשר עושה האדם את עצמו מוכרח בכל עניניו, שיהי' כולו מיוחד אך לעבודתו ית, ואין בו שיוך כלל מ'עצמו', וזלת הנצרך לגילוי כבודו ית, והיי גדר אמרם ז"ל האבות הן הן המרכבה... והיי בחי' הצדיקים שנקראו מלאכים, שהמלאך אינו בוחר אלא מוכרח, בגדר לא יסבו בלכתן... וערך גדול בענין זה יש להתכללות בתוך הכלל, כי הוא הדרך המצויין אשר בו נוכל לעשות את עצמו מוכרחים. ונבאר הענין: אז"ל כי ואהבת לרעך כלל גדול הוא בתורה, והלל אמר מאי דעלך סני כו' ואידך פירושה הוא כו'. והיי שבעל החסד הנה שאיפתו היא לתת את עצמו לאחרים, היי לבטל את עצמו בהם (היפך החטפן ששואף למשוך את הכל אל עצמו ולבטלם בתוכו). זה ירגיש כי כל הכלל כולו הוא כמו גוף א' וירגיש את עצמו כמו צפורן של אצבע קטנה מגוף הכללי, ולא ירגיש את האחרים בבחי' נפרדת ממנו אלא בהתאחדות כחאד ממש, והיי ואהבת לרעך כמוך - כמוך בלי הפרש כלל (מסלת ישרים פ"א). וכשם שבגוף האדם א"א שיהי' לאיזה חלק מן הגוף רצון פרטי נפרד, אלא כל אשר יחפץ הוא חפץ האדם כולו, ואת אשר לא יחפץ האדם כולו לא שייך שיחפץ האצבע, כך מי שירגיש את עצמו בבחי' חלק מן הכלל, ולא בשום התפרדות, אי אפשר שיהי' ממש לו רצון שיבא מצד ההתפרדות. והנה היח"א"ר כל טענותיו באים תמיד רק מצד הפרטיות. ואפי' אם יבא בערמה להטעות את האדם, בהלבישו את טענותיו בלבושי תיקון הכלל, אבל הלא כל מבין דבר יראה ברור, כי תוכן הרצונות ההם בקרב הלב ממש אינו אלא פרטי. מעתה אם ילמד האדם להתכלל בתוך הכלל ממש ממש, הרי עשה את עצמו למוכרח לעשות כצורך האמתי של הכלל, ורצונו הפרטי כבר נתבטל.

THE BOTTOM LINE

For people who live in a world of a *dimyon* (imagination), things don't need to make sense or be real since they view their imaginary world as *their* reality. They effectively shut off their *seichel* (intelligence), which should be dominated by *emes*. In youth we are often ruled by our imagination and *yetzer hara*, since their *seichel* (i.e. *da'as*) is not yet fully developed. Unfortunately, living in this youthful state of imagination - ruled by the *yetzer hara* - continues for many people well into their adulthood. The Ramchal teaches us that nothing weakens the *koach* of the *neschama* more than the lack of *da'as*, which is an awareness of reality. Without well-developed *da'as*, we will continue to live in the world of the *yetzer hara*, be ruled by our *dimyon* and be susceptible to sin. When people try to justify their reckless actions - like in the example of a driver taking a chance to pass another car on a winding road and endangering his entire life - they oscillate between the state or the world of *da'as* and *dimyon*. Translated into practical terms, then, how could a Jew who instinctively knows the *emes* not follow the laws of Torah and not observe mitzvos if it wasn't for the fact that he's living in a world of imagination? This is why Amalek is our quintessential enemy, because he denies reality and *emes*, and thus the Jewish nation. To extricate ourselves from the clutches of our *dimyonos*, we need to constantly do self-checks of "where we stand" vis-a-vis the reality of Hashem's existence, His *ratzon* and His Torah. We also need to develop our *bechira* to see this reality and our obligation to serve Him, to the degree of choosing to be *muchrach*, feeling ourselves to be obligated - because ultimately, the realization of living with the *emes* will help build ourselves as true *yarei Hashem*!