

# DO NOT STEAL PART 22

*by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen*

After several months of discussing the numerous laws relating to stealing, it is important to also understand the philosophical side to why stealing is such a serious sin.

We live in a time of Exile when HaShem's presence is hidden (hester panim). One of the leading Rabbis in the world today, Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon Shlita<sup>[1]</sup> suggests that carelessness in monetary matters (mamonos) is a direct cause of hester panim: The Torah commands us to use accurate and honest weights and measures<sup>[2]</sup>. Directly following this section comes the portion that recalls the time when the evil nation of Amalek attacked the Jewish people<sup>[3]</sup>? What is the connection between these seemingly disparate topics?

The great 19th Century commentary the Netsiv<sup>[4]</sup> explains that cheating in business undermines the basic tenets of faith (Emuna) and trust (bitachon) in G-d. One who trusts that Hashem will provide for his livelihood will have no desire to break the Torah laws pertaining to stealing, in order to acquire money. However, a person who is willing to cheat and be rationalize questionable behavior in order to support himself demonstrates that he is not living with a belief that G-d is looking over him. Measure for measure, Hashem says, 'if you are acting as if I am not around then I will no longer be in your midst and protect you.' Without heavenly protection we are open prey to our enemies. This explains why the section discussing honesty is followed by that of Amalek. When a person steals he implicitly denies Divine Providence. Accordingly, Hashem steps back and leaves him prey to the numerous threats around him.

May we all merit to recognize that Hashem is constantly looking over us and will provide for us.

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[1] He is the mas

[2] Devarim 25, 13-16.

[3] Devarim 25, 17-19.

[4] His full name was Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin.

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