

# DO NOT COVET AND DO NOT DESIRE PART 4

*by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen*

As we approach the end of the laws concerning the commandment of 'Do Not Covet'[1] , it is instructive to summarize and clarify which forms of 'coveting' are forbidden and which are permitted.

We noted in the first part in the series that there is no prohibition to merely want someone else's item.[2] Rather, the word, 'tachmod' implies cajoling, pressuring, or embarrassing someone into selling him something that the owner really did not want to sell.

However, it is also forbidden to think and scheme about how to pressure one's fellow into selling him the item. Thus, even if one only plans how to attain the item in such a fashion and never proceeds, he nonetheless transgresses the Torah commandment of 'loh titaveh' which is stated in the second version of the Ten Commandments.[3]

It is also important to recognize that it is permissible to want the same item as one's friend, as long as it is not the specific item that his friend owns. For example, Sarah likes Keren's shoes, plans to buy similar shoes, and does indeed buy such shoes.. This is totally permissible. If, however, Sarah planned how to cajole Keren into selling her the shoes, then she would transgress 'loh titaveh'. And if she actually succeeded in acquiring the shoes through these methods, then she transgresses 'loh tachmod'.

In a similar vein, one may ask a Rabbi for a blessing to attain an item that is similar to the one owned by his friend. If, for example, Jon wants a house that is very similar to that of David, then he may ask a Rabbi for a blessing to attain such a house[4].

Finally, it is allowed for one who anticipates receiving gifts on a certain occasion[5] to ask for specific gifts. It would only be forbidden if he pressure someone into giving a specific item that he does not want to part with.

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1.'Loh tachmod' n Hebrew.

2. Although it is certainly not an attitude that is in line with the Torah outlook, as will be discussed in future articles.

3. Va'eschanan, 5:18.

4. It should be stressed that perhaps there are more important things that one should ask for a blessing for -such as righteous children and health.

5. Such as a bride and groom, a boy approaching Bar Mitzvo or a girl approaching Bat Mitzvo.

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