

FATHER KNOWS BEST

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

The Ten Commandments are the basis for our religious belief system. Imbedded in this brief portion of the Torah are the directives that require one to believe in Hashem, keep the Shabbat and honor our parents. There are also restrictions on the behavior of humans forbidding one to steal or kill. The last one is the command "Do not covet" that which belongs to another. The great Sefardic poet and sage Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, zt'l, wrote that many people are confused and don't comprehend how it is possible for a person to be told that it is a sin to want. One can comply when told not to steal or kill but how can one be told not to desire something beautiful that one sees?

There once was a burly peasant who visited the capital city. There he had the unique opportunity to view the beautiful daughter of the king. Although the princess was of marriageable age, the peasant did not even fantasize about a life together with her as man and wife. He knew that she was from a different world than the one he lived in. The social barriers - financial discrepancies and learned tastes and manners were so different that he saw her as an angel and himself as a horse. Everyone, he thought to himself, knows that an angel does not marry a horse. The bottom line was he could look and he could appreciate her beauty and desirability without wanting her for himself. She just didn't belong to him.

I have two friends who love to smoke cigarettes. They probably consume two packs a day apiece. When Shabbat is about to end their craving builds to a crescendo of desire and with the last blessing of Havdallah they light up and smile. Strangely enough, until a few moments before Shabbat ends they don't need that cigarette at all. On Shabbat they don't even think about smoking. No - not even with their coffee or after their meal. I was curious enough to ask: "How come you smoke so much during the week but don't even think about cigarettes on Shabbat?"

"Oh, that's easy they both jumped in to answer. On Shabbat I know I can't have one so I don't want one. During the week, when I know I am permitted to have one I can't wait to light another."

The Torah expects us to understand that G-d does not ask of the human being what is impossible to do. Hashem only asks us to do the possible. Therefore, to not desire that which belongs to another is a real possibility. One simply has to train one self to accept that Hashem distributes everything in this World to the one that needs it for his or her service to G-d. The command to avoid jealousy is a command that requires that one believe that Hashem does not err, h'v, and knows clearly how to give out money, possessions, talents, wives, children and all else that a person may need or want. Once one sees that someone else has something one should immediately conclude that that item

was given to that other person by G-d. That possession is best suited for the other and not for him. Hashem knows best, therefore, I should not even desire that which was given to another.

Do not covet is not impossible it is just a matter of accepting the All Knowing King as a perfect distributor and supplier of all that everyone needs. Farther knows best.

Shabbat Shalom Text Copyright © 2007 by [Rabbi Raymond Beyda](#) and **[Torah.org](#)**.