

Green with Envy

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Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Dayan Yosef Greenwald

https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/BAM71_02_Nasso_Lo_Sachmod_Thou_Shalt_Not_Covet.mp3

You shall not covet your fellow's house. You shall not covet your fellow's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your fellow.

Shmos 20:14

The Rambam (Sefer Hamitzvos, *Lo Sa'aseh* 265; Hilchos *Gzeilah Va'aveidah* 1:9) explains that *lo sachmod* prohibits desiring something belonging to another and devising a plan to obtain it, but one violates the prohibition only if an act of acquisition follows the feeling—e.g., if he pressures the owner to sell it to the point that he does so, unwillingly. (If he just steals it, he violates *gzeilah* rather than *chemdah*.) The Rambam also writes that *lo sis'aveh* (in the second *Dibros*) includes scheming to coerce someone to sell *without* following through.

The Ra'avad disagrees, maintaining that *chemdah* forbids acquiring the item by brute force, so it is only violated by giving the owner money and seizing the object. If the owner is persuaded, even under duress, *lo sachmod* was not violated.

The Ibn Ezra takes a third approach: One violates *lo sachmod* just by scheming to take another's possessions. This is because a person must realize that Hashem has given him everything he needs, and someone who recognizes this does not covet.