



The following is an excerpt from the new
“A Daily Dose of Bitachon”
written by Rabbi David Sutton

JEALOUSY-FREE

The *baal bitachon* is truly free, because, as *Chovos HaLevavos* tells us, one of mankind’s greatest traps can never snare him. **He is not eager for anyone else’s downfall; he doesn’t covet and he’s not jealous. He’s happy with his lot.**

The *Ibn Ezra* asks a famous question about the tenth commandment, “Do not covet.” He asks, it is natural to covet — how can we reign in this normal reaction? We recognize the practical reality of his question: “My neighbor has a nicer house, he has a better car — how can I stop myself from coveting? I can’t help it.”

How can Hashem command us not to be jealous, not to feel what we feel?

The *Ibn Ezra* gives a beautiful *mashal* to explain: He says that a farmer doesn’t strive to marry the princess; she is totally out of his league. Likewise, a person isn’t jealous of a bird’s ability to fly. When things are distant from us, when they don’t pertain to us, we are not jealous of them. So, too, if we realize that what someone has is not meant for us, there is no reason to covet it.

We can look at a modern-day *mashal*:

A man named Chaim owns a new Honda Civic. He makes monthly payments on it, and is grateful that he manages to fit this expense into his budget. However, when he borrows his younger brother’s Toyota Avalon, he feels a little sense of

envy rising up in him. "Wow, he's really making it. I wish I could afford one of these. You can really feel that it's a step up. Maybe my next car," he thinks.

As he drives along the highway, his eyes catch the flash of a red Ferrari shooting past him in the passing lane. His gaze follows it as it grows smaller in the distance. Then traffic backs up and he finds himself at a stand-still, right next to the Ferrari. He studies its contours and steals glances at the man behind the wheel. "What a machine!" he thinks.

What Chaim doesn't think, however, is "How come he gets to drive that Ferrari and I don't? I want that car!" He doesn't put the Ferrari into his "some day" plans as he does his brother's more accessible Avalon. The reason he does not see himself in the Ferrari is because it is far beyond his reach. He admires it, but he doesn't long for it because we don't long for things that have no place in our world.

With strong *emunah*, says the *Ibn Ezra*, we understand that our friend's possession has no place in our world because Hashem assigned it to him, not to us. Just as we see that a bird's wings are not for us, we need to realize our friend's car, house, accomplished children, income, status and so forth are not for us. When we keep reinforcing this deep *emunah*, it reaches into our psyche until our automatic response to others' belongings is, "It's not in my zone. It's not for me."

Another technique in meeting this challenging commandment is to consider the second part of the verse, which states: "Don't be jealous of his house, his wife... and *everything* your friend has." The Rabbis explain that "And everything your friend has" is not just a way of saying, "and so forth."

Rather, it means we have to look at *everything* our neighbor has. We have to look at the whole picture, because what looks perfect on the outside might be far from perfect behind the scenes. Maybe he has a miserable marriage. Maybe he has a sick child. Maybe Hashem has given him the good fortune so he can have a little happiness.

On the other hand, if a person comes home to a welcoming wife and healthy kids who hug him and jump on him... so what if he drives a jalopy? He doesn't need a Ferrari.

PRACTICAL TAKE-AWAY

Become aware of feelings of jealousy that bubble up inside you and ask yourself, "Would I want everything he has?"