The mission of **Torah Is Geshmack** is to bring out the richness and enjoyment of Torah for everyone, and in doing so bring them closer to Hashem.

תשפ״ו

Desire, Identity, and Teshuva

Dovid Kopel

I am sharing this to address a recent question regarding the Jewish perspective. A desire itself is not an עבירה (*sin*), but acting on it is. Having a temptation does not make it an identity; like any other impulse, the goal is not to legitimize it, but to maintain control.

If a person stumbles, that is human. It does not make the act permissible, and it does not mean he is lost. He has to do תשובה and move forward. And, as with every other עבירה, if a person knows he has a weakness, he should put safeguards in place so he does not come to fail. That is not cruelty. That is how a Yid lives.

The real question is whether the goal of תשובה is to erase the desire completely, or simply to live with discipline even when the desire remains. I am not sure. חז״ל seem to indicate that there are times when a person can say, "Yes, I want it, but the Ribbono Shel Olam said no." But whichever way you learn it, the conclusion is the same: we do not celebrate איסור (*prohibition*), we do not legitimize it, and we do not redefine Torah around a person's impulses. At the same time, every Yid is still entitled to love, dignity, and respect. We reject the עבירה, not the person.

However, we do not define ourselves by the עבירות we do. If one were to let that עבירה define him, or build a community around it, that would certainly conflict with Torah ideals and principles. May we all be זוכה to overcome our יצר הרע (*evil inclination*) and not succumb to the struggles we encounter daily.

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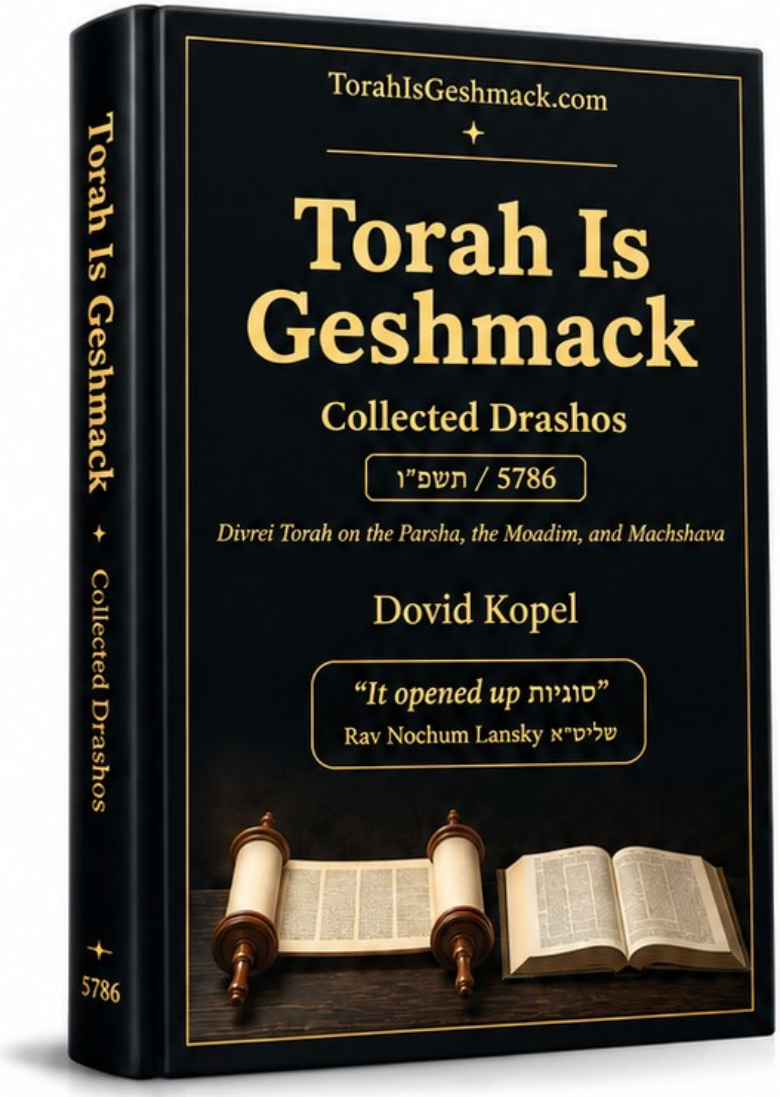
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