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

It Takes a Big Person: Working on Middos with Others

Dovid Kopel

I make mistakes all the time. I stumble with my wife, my kids, my friends, and my parents. Sometimes it's my fault, sometimes it's their fault, and often it's a mix of both. With my children, I make a strong point of teaching them that usually, at some point, both people did something wrong.

It takes a big person to acknowledge his mistakes and apologize. Don't turn that apology into another attack, like: "I'm sorry I said this, but you started it all…" Say it sincerely, mean it, and take responsibility for your part. Even if it was not entirely your fault — maybe you escalated the situation, maybe you could have handled it better. That does not mean you should lie or excuse someone who truly did wrong. But it does mean humbling yourself and acknowledging how you could have responded differently. Learn from the experience. Working on one's מידות (*character traits*) is a lifelong journey, not something accomplished overnight.

I once had a negative encounter with someone. I was probably rude and unfiltered, and I upset the person. I went to the Mashgiach, HaRav Beryl Weisbord שליט״א, and asked him, "Why can't I just lock myself in my room for a few years, learn תורה nonstop, and turn myself into a mensch? I don't want to hurt people."

He told me, "Dovidyl, we aren't רבי שמעון בר יוחאי. Hashem wants us to work on our מידות with other people, not in a cave."

Hashem does not expect us to be perfect. That is why תשובה (*repentance*) was created before the world was. We will falter, and we will fall. The עבודה is to get back up, brush ourselves off, and move forward — but also to learn from the experience and do better next time. That is what Hashem wants from us: to do תשובה. May we all be זוכה to learn from our mistakes.

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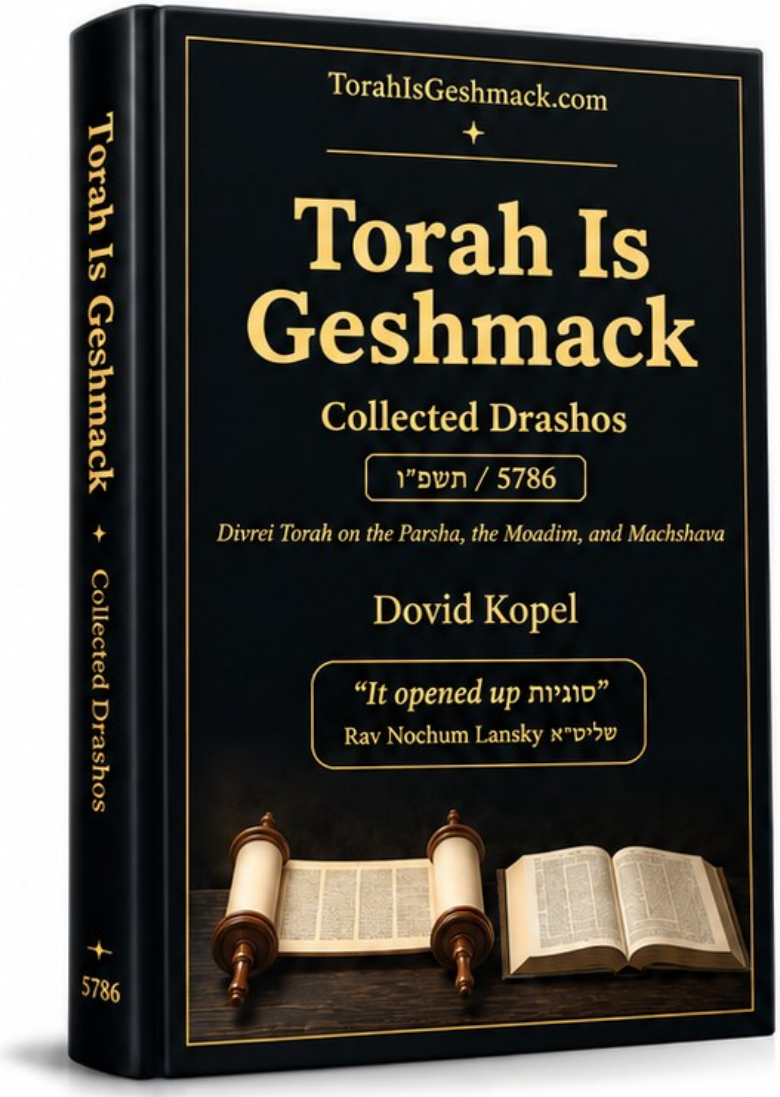
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