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״ז

From the Earth — How High Can We Rise?

Dovid Kopel

חז״ל (*the Sages*) teach us that the אוכלי המן, those who ate the מן (*the manna*) in the מדבר (*wilderness*), had no waste from their food. The מן was entirely absorbed into their bodies, sustaining them completely.

> לֶחֶם אַבִּירִים אָכַל אִישׁ צֵידָה שָׁלַח לָהֶם לָשֹׂבַע (תהלים עח:כה)
>
> *Man ate the bread of the mighty.*
>
> לחם שנבלע במאתים וארבעים ושמונה אברים (יומא עה ע״ב)
>
> *Bread that was absorbed into all two hundred and forty-eight limbs.*

At first glance, this seems like another remarkable detail about the miraculous מן. But perhaps there is something much deeper here.

It is not enough that we depend upon food to sustain our bodies. Even the food we eat cannot be utilized in its entirety. Our bodies take what they can and discard the rest.

And this is true even of the greatest צדיקים (*righteous people*). A person may eat only the simplest bread, taking no pleasure in the physical enjoyment of food, seeking only the strength to serve Hashem. He may elevate his eating through the loftiest כוונות. Yet his body remains a body of flesh and blood, incapable of absorbing everything it consumes.

There is a profound humility in this realization.

We are not מלאכים (*angels*). We are human beings, formed מן האדמה, from the earth itself. We are capable of extraordinary spiritual greatness, yet we remain bound by the physical realities of our creation.

But this should not discourage us. Quite the opposite.

Our עבודה (*service*) is not to escape גשמיות (*physicality*), but to elevate it. We cannot change the material from which we were created, but we can determine what we make of it.

Perhaps this gives us another perspective on the ברכה (*blessing*) of אשר יצר. Every time we relieve ourselves, we are reminded of the limitations of our physical existence. Our bodies cannot retain everything we consume. And at that very moment, we turn to Hashem and recite a ברכה, recognizing the wondrous wisdom with which He created us.

Even our most ordinary bodily functions become an opportunity for רוחניות (*spirituality*).

We need גשמיות. We depend upon it. But that does not mean that our physical limitations define the heights we can reach.

The עָפָר מִן הָאֲדָמָה tells us where we began. It does not tell us how high we can rise.

We cannot choose the material from which we were created. But we can choose what we make of it.

Our starting line has already been determined. Our finish line has not.

What is your end state? How high can you go?

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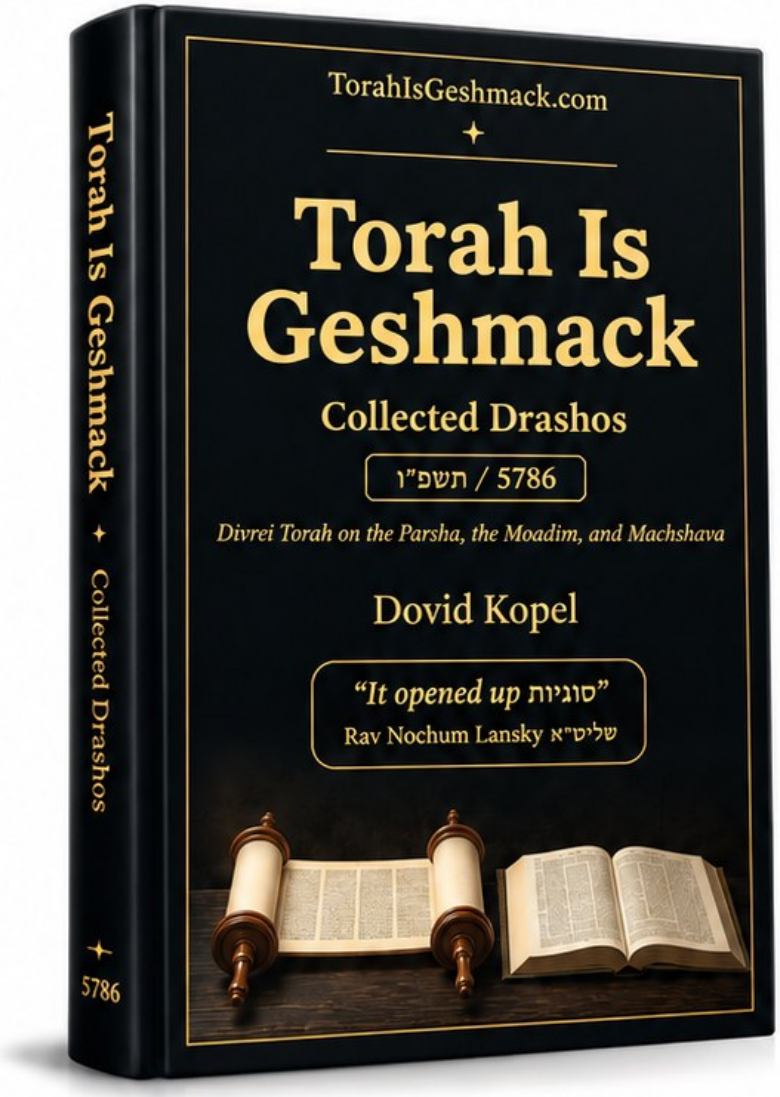
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