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.

ברוך שפטרני מענשו של זה תשפ״ו

Dovid Kopel

Chazal list a father's responsibilities to his son, and three of them are the **classic d'Oraisa** obligations we all know: **bris milah**, **pidyon ha'ben**, and ללמדו תורה.

On the surface, they look like three separate mitzvos. But maybe they're really one idea in three forms: a father's job is to bring his son into the bris with the Ribono Shel Olam — with his גוף (*milah*), with his ייעוד/קדושה (*pidyon*), and with his נשמה ושכל (*Torah*).

Because the deepest continuity of Yiddishkeit isn't genetics and it isn't culture. It's מסורה.

That's why the ברכה said at bar mitzvah is so striking: ברוך שפטרני מענשו של זה. People often hear it as: "Baruch Hashem, I'm off the hook." But it can be read much deeper. Not a celebration of stepping away — but of a transition: now the son is becoming the one who must carry his own עול תורה ומצוות.

And this may be hinted in a very sharp Rambam.

The Rambam writes in Hilchos Talmud Torah (Perek 1) that the father's obligation begins unbelievably early:

> מאימתי אביו חייב ללמדו תורה? משיתחיל לדבר מלמדו תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב...
>
> *Roughly: From when is a father obligated to teach his son Torah? From when the child begins to speak...*
>
> (רמב״ם, הל׳ תלמוד תורה פ״א ה״ו)

And then a few halachos earlier the Rambam writes:

> מי שלא למדו אביו חייב ללמד את עצמו כשיכיר...
>
> *One whom his father did not teach is obligated to teach himself when he recognizes...*
>
> (רמב״ם, הל׳ תלמוד תורה פ״א ה״ג)

That one phrase — כשיכיר — is everything.

Why does the Rambam say "when he recognizes"? Why not simply: when he becomes bar mitzvah, he's חייב, finished?

Because Torah is not only another mitzvah on the list. Torah is עול. It requires דעת; it requires הכרה. It's not just "to do" — it's "to carry," to internalize, to live with.

So maybe the pshat is: Torah doesn't "wait" for thirteen like a switch. The moment a child can truly **recognize** that he has a responsibility — the moment he can feel what it means to be obligated — that itself is the beginning of his personal חיוב of תלמוד תורה.

Now read the bar mitzvah bracha again: ברוך שפטרני מענשו של זה. Not “I’m done,” but “a new phase has begun.” Until now, the father carried the primary weight of placing Torah on his child’s shoulders. Now the son enters the עולם החיוב in a fuller way — he must begin to carry it himself, with awareness.

And yet, even then, the father’s role never really ends.

Yes, there is a shift in responsibility at bar mitzvah — but the father must continue to be a **beacon of light**, showing with his own חיים what Torah looks like: its sweetness, its beauty, its weight, its joy. Teaching begins when the child can speak — but **in a certain sense it never stops**, because the greatest lessons aren’t only in words. They’re in what the son sees day after day: what a Yid treasures, what he makes time for, what he lives for.

Milah brings a child into the bris. Pidyon marks his kedushah. But Torah is what keeps the bris alive — by ensuring the masorah continues, not only in information, but in the heart.

That is the father’s avodah: to pass on Torah until the child is ready to recognize it — and then to keep shining, so the child will want to carry it forever.

May we all be זוכה to be a beacon for our children. To help continue to share our beautiful history as Yiddin. The מסורה that we have, how to live our lives. Not a life of emptiness and physical pursuits. But, one full of life and excitement with learning תורה and keeping מצות!

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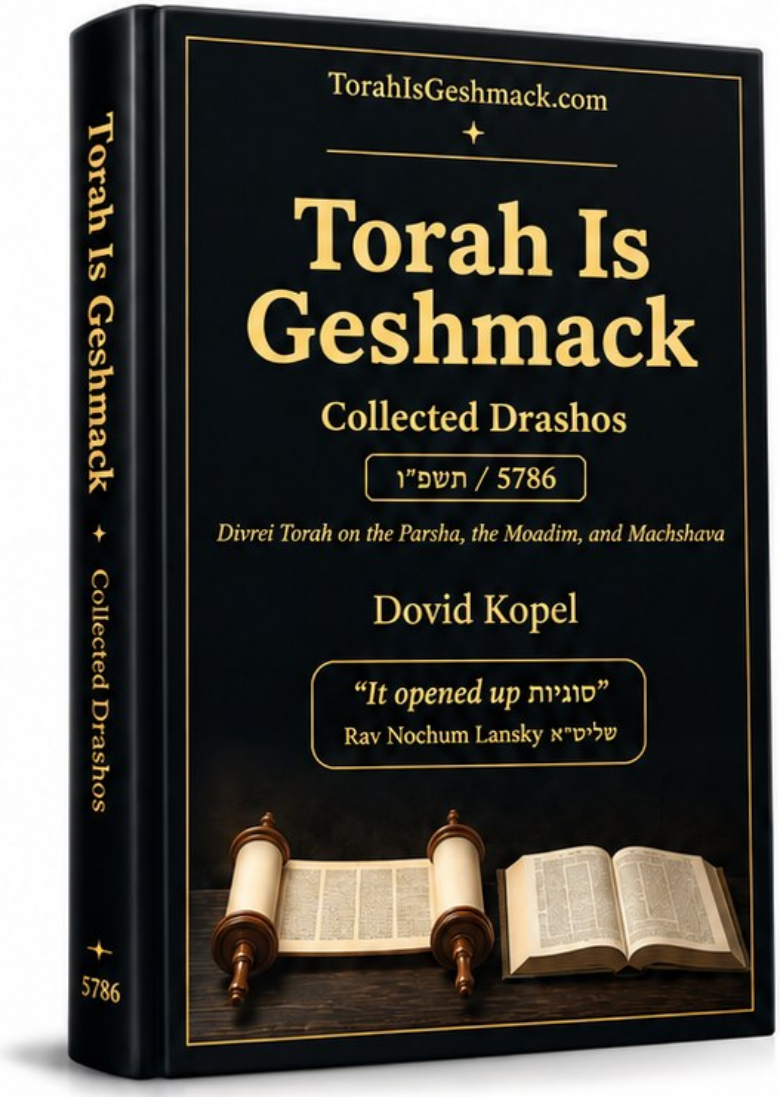
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