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

What Are We Really?

Dovid Kopel

I was recently speaking with my Rebbe, HaRav Nochum Lansky שליט״א, about a story involving the גר״א.

Someone once told the גר״א that people referred to him as הגאון החסיד (*the brilliant Torah scholar and the pious man*). The גר״א responded that his brother, the author of מעלות התורה (*The Virtues of Torah*), was the one who should be called a חסיד.

He did not say that the title גאון was appropriate. But it seems that חסיד was the part he felt did not properly describe him — or at least that it belonged more fittingly to his brother.

We had been discussing the difference between a צדיק (*righteous person*) and a חסיד. A צדיק keeps everything exactly as it is meant to be kept. A חסיד goes beyond what is strictly required.

On another occasion, Rebbe remarked that today, if someone is not called a גאון in a הסכמה (*rabbinic approbation*), it sounds as though something is wrong with him. The title has become so common that much of its meaning has been lost.

There is something striking in the contrast. Today, titles are handed out freely. The גר״א heard a great title being used about himself and considered whether it was actually true.

During these days, perhaps we can all ask ourselves the same question.

Not what do people call us, but what are we really?

What are we — and what are we not?

Where are our strengths, and where are our weaknesses?

Part of honest תשובה (*repentance*) is being able to recognize both.

גמר חתימה טובה!

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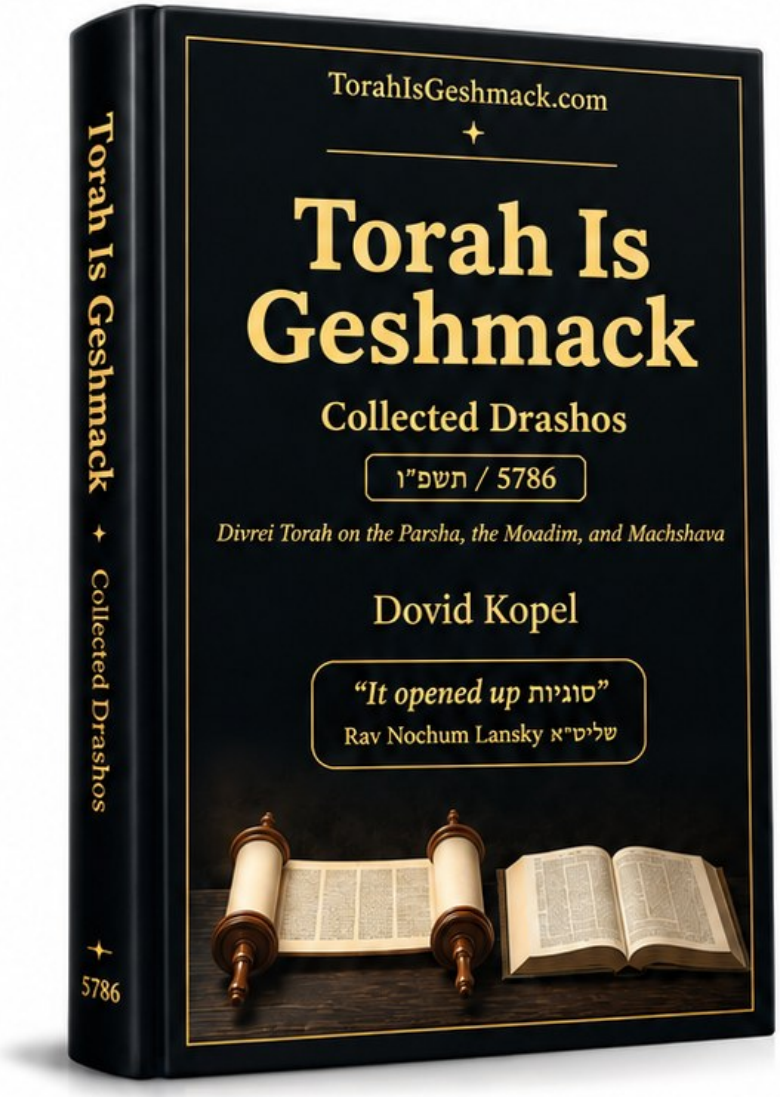
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