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

The Autograph: Legacy over Celebrity

Dovid Kopel

I was privileged to attend a lovely מסיבה פורים (*party*) at my son's yeshiva this year. It was lovely and כבודיק (*dignified*). There was a wonderful singer who did an excellent job creating such a חשוב atmosphere for the special, holy time. At the conclusion of the performance, some of the boys wished to take pictures with the entertainer, including my son. I didn't dissuade him. Some went even further and wanted autographs of this individual. I'm glad my son didn't ask for that — I probably would have gone into a full shmooze then and there.

It is a beautiful thing to get inspired by an entertainer. Many of them are wonderful people, and even תלמידי חכמים. But as I've written in the past, let us not get caught up in notions of "celebrity status." This is a waste of time and not a Jewish ideal. You want a ברכה from a צדיק or a גדול — that is beautiful. You want a picture with them — also a wonderful thing. But a signature of an entertainer? Why? Are you going to sell it on eBay?

This child was mimicking a learned behavior. The גוישע וועלט (*non-Jewish world*) places tremendous value on popularity and fame — getting your name in the paper, big headlines. These are the goals of many. They want to be known, to be recognized. This is not a Jewish ideal. We are צנוע (*modest*). We are private. Most of our גדולים much prefer sitting alone and learning to large gatherings. But they do what they must for כלל ישראל.

Again, if you are inspired by these people — great. But keep yourself in check. What do we value? Being popular, being famous? No. We want a legacy. That doesn't have to be ego. I daven almost daily for the strength to leave this world having made a difference. I've told this to my daughter — how much I wish to share Torah and inspire others. She looks at me and says, "Tatty, you teach me and inspire me… that's not enough?" Who am I to say?

My Rebbe, HaRav Nochum Lansky שליט״א, is a tremendous גדול בתורה ובמעשים, but never had a large following. Does that make him any less accomplished? Certainly not. Rebbe Akiva had 24,000 talmidim at one time, only to be reduced to 5 — but then those 5 became the pillars of all of Jewry.

You never know whom you will inspire. It is worthy to inspire a single Yid — to share a vort with one person, a single talmid. Leave your legacy. It doesn't have to be big and grand. You don't have to be famous. Make your mark, whatever it looks like. We don't have נביאים (*prophets*) at this time; a נביא used to be able to give personal direction, not just for the ציבור (*community*). We must daven for direction. May we all find our own personal legacy. Walk those steps. Fill your shoes — because no one else will!

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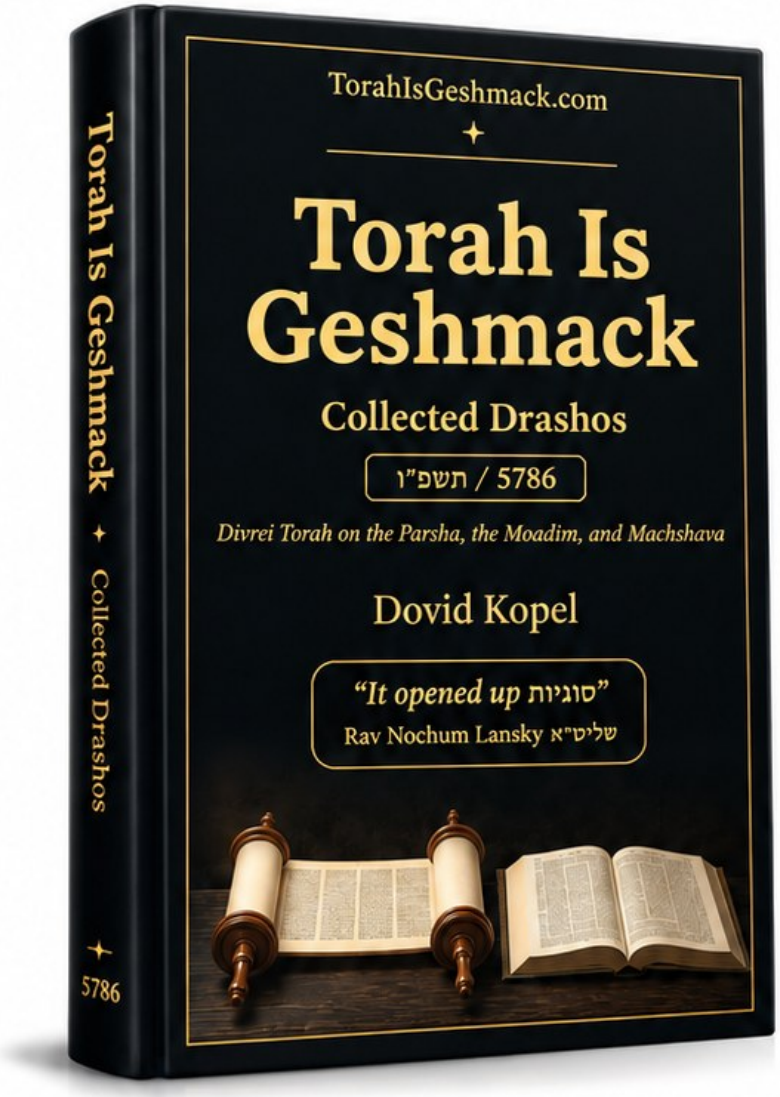
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