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

Seven, Eight, and the Rain

Dovid Kopel

As I was sitting in shul listening to the קריאה of קהלת, two פסוקים (*verses*) that I might have read a million times suddenly jumped out at me.

> תֵּן־חֵלֶק לְשִׁבְעָה וְגַם לִשְׁמוֹנָה כִּי לֹא תֵדַע מַה־יִּהְיֶה רָעָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ: (קהלת יא:ב)

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may come upon the earth.

And then immediately:

> אִם־יִמָּלְאוּ הֶעָבִים גֶּשֶׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ יָרִיקוּ וְאִם־יִפֹּל עֵץ בַּדָּרוֹם וְאִם בַּצָּפוֹן מְקוֹם שֶׁיִּפֹּל הָעֵץ שָׁם יִהְוֶא: (קהלת יא:ג)

If the clouds are filled with rain, they pour it upon the earth; and whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall be.

The words **שבעה** and **שמונה** immediately struck me. Seven days of סוכות, followed by the eighth day, שמיני עצרת.

And then the very next פסוק speaks about **גשם** (*rain*).

That is, of course, precisely where סוכות leads us. After the seven days comes שמיני עצרת, when we turn our attention to גשם and begin תפילת גשם (*the prayer for rain*).

After looking into it, I found that חז״ל (*the Sages*) explicitly identify **שבעה** with the seven days of סוכות and **שמונה** with שמיני עצרת. Other sources also connect this passage with the judgment for rain on סוכות and with תפילת גשם.

But I have not yet found a source that puts the entire sequence together exactly this way: first **שבעה**, then **שמונה**, and immediately afterward **גשם**, as one continuous רמז (*hint*).

We read קהלת on חול המועד סוכות, and this year we read it on שמיני עצרת itself.

There is something beautiful about sitting in shul and suddenly seeing something in פסוקים you have read again and again. Sometimes the pieces are already there in חז״ל and the מפרשים. Then one day they suddenly line up in your own mind and become alive.

It is moments like these that remind us that life is not merely הבל הבלים (*vanity of vanities*). Torah can always become new again.

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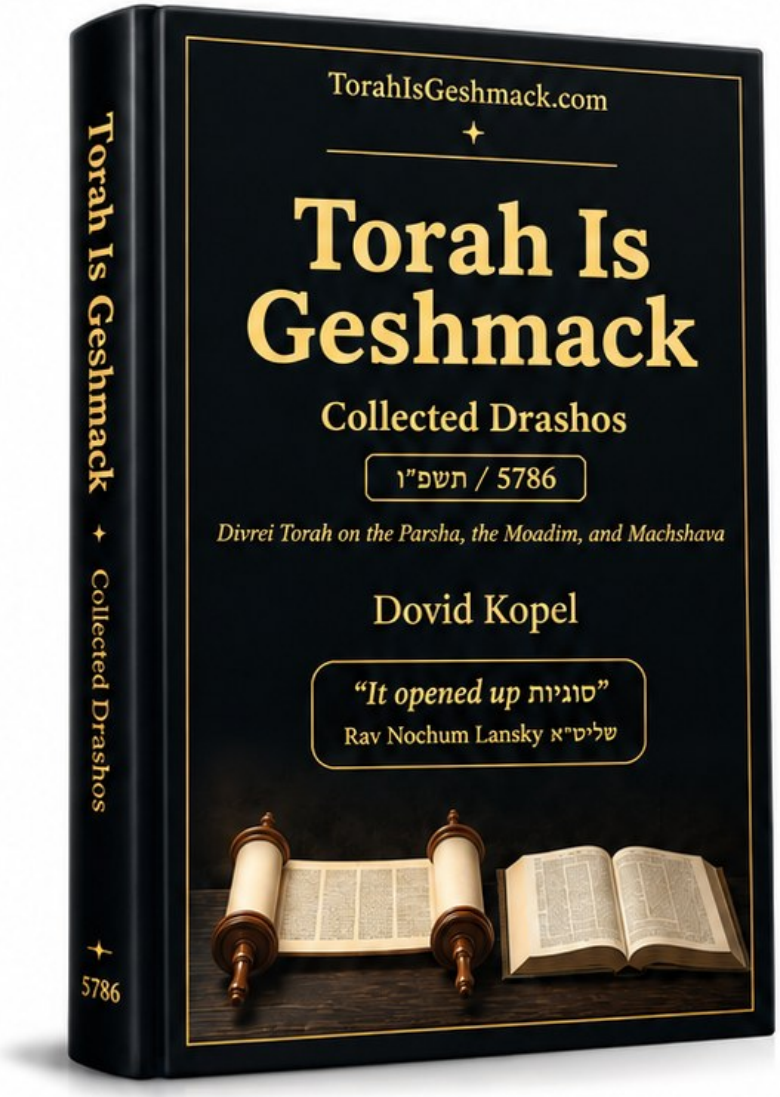
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