

HASHGACHA PRATIS

Inspirational messages and contemporary stories of hashgacha
From the Hashgacha Pratis Hotline



Parsh Behar - Bechukotai 5784 ■ Issue 139

HEART TO HEART

Based on shiurim in
Duties of the Heart, Shaar Bitachon, given on the Hotline

Never for Naught

There are three stages of doing an act of chessed and tzedakah. Perhaps one day and you thought, My friend, who is a very precious Yid who toils in Torah, has reached the exciting stage of marrying off his son, and the poor man has nothing. Feelings of friendship and compassion fill your heart. You think that it would be a zechus for you to make things easier for him, to get hold of a respectable sum of money that could help him. You made the choice to help him, and for this choice alone you will be rewarded from Above.

At this stage you take action – you speak to someone who can help; you send out letters, give recommendations to philanthropists, go from door to door or from person to person, and in this way you do hishtadlus. For this you will also be rewarded from Above.

And there is a third reward as well: the result. Not always do you receive it, and not always do you see it. Sometimes the thought, the deed, and the result go hand in hand. For example: You were on a bus, you saw a Yid approaching, and he wanted to sit on the seat next to you. You noticed the seat was a bit dirty, and his clothing would likely be stained if he sat there. In less than a second you made the choice to clean the seat, to remove the dirt, and you got an immediate result: the chair was clean, the Yid sat down, and all is well.

But even this small act might not conclude successfully. For example, the Yid for whom you cleaned the seat might have continued on and sat on a different seat, where coffee just spilled.

This is what Rabbenu Bachyai instructs in the fourth chapter: A person should try to hide his acts of assistance, of tzedakah, or of chessed. How fortunate is someone who succeeds in helping another person without the other person knowing about it, without advertising his action or seeking honor for it, without telling anyone about it and without getting any admiring glances. A complete act is one that is free of all negios, when the goal of the person doing it is only to come closer to Hashem.

Some people give in order to see their name on a plaque or on a building, with a description of their great and mighty acts of chessed. This is well and good, but the shleimus of a chessed is when it is done without honor. Some people do chessed with the thought that they'll be rewarded. I'm helping you now, and tomorrow you'll help me. They will be rewarded for this act, because the chessed was

done and the other Yid benefitted from it, but this is nothing compared to an act that is done with no hope of being rewarded, without the thought that a day will come when the other person will give me something in return or leave me an inheritance.

Sometimes a person does good out of a desire to control or dominate other people. The act of giving could confuse him. Since he is the one with the money, he might feel he can lord over the person to whom he is giving it. Giving with no intention of controlling others is a great chochmah. Standing off to the side and keeping quiet is a special form of greatness, which makes the act of giving a complete one.

We need to remember that as much as we can make every effort, exert ourselves, and speak well on behalf of another person, the results are not in our hands. We need to trust in Hashem that He will bring the matter to completion according to His desire. Sometimes the result comes immediately, and sometimes it doesn't.

A Yid decides to help his friend and speaks to a philanthropist on his behalf. The rich man heard him out but wasn't moved to give anything. Several years later, once again the philanthropist heard about that same needy person. He recalled that he had heard good things about him a while back, and this time he is moved to give ten thousand dollars – not a thousand dollars, as the man who initially recommended him was hoping for, but ten thousand.

This is just an example of how acts of chessed can come about. We have no idea about the Ribono shel Olam's plans. He wants us to help and assist, to invest thought and to act. We will receive much reward for every good choice we make and for every act we do for the sake of another, but the reward is not always what we think it will be. Sometimes we don't see anything, and sometimes we see results only after several days, weeks, years, or generations.

This is the case even if the act is a complete chessed, without anyone knowing about it. We will never regret a good act that we did. We need to remember: It is never for naught. Let us review the tenth "Ani Ma'amin" – that the Creator yisbarach knows all the deeds of all of mankind and all their thoughts, and Rav Tzadok Hakohen zy" a of Lublin adds, even a small, passing thought is not hidden from Him.

FROM THE EDITOR

It's Not Chizuk, It's Part of Life

It is amazing to witness how a person can live a higher existence. The message that a Yid left this week on the phone line brought all our staff members to tears.

He described all that he is going through in his life. As per his request, we will not provide any details in this public forum. Suffice it to say that he is undergoing bitter and prolonged *nisyonos* that entail much pain and loneliness.

We hear the *chiyus* and joy in his words. He relates his current *nisyon* as though it is an old story that has no relevance to him.

How is it possible to live with such happiness despite everything that is happening to him?

He explains this very well:

There are people who listen to the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line only when they are experiencing *nisyonos*, when they need *chizuk*. But the secret of my joy is that the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line accompanies me all the time, through all situations, including pleasant ones, to the point that it becomes a part of my life. I live the seven principles of the *Chovos Halevavos*, and I often sing the song you composed. [You can hear it on the phone line by pressing 75 after selecting a language.]

This *kvius* brought me to the point that the phone line doesn't just "give me *chizuk*"; rather, it accompanies me all the time. I live with the thought that Hashem is more merciful toward me than any merciful person can be. I breathe the fact that Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows best what is best for me. I am sure that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can bring my *yeshuah* at any moment, whenever He chooses. I feel that my Father in *Shamayim* sees me every second and oversees every detail of my life. I know that no one can harm me or help me other than my Father in *Shamayim*. I give thanks all the time for all the good that Hakadosh Baruch Hu sends me. I know that I have no grasp of the ways of Hashem, and I know that I understand nothing. I live and breathe all of this, and therefore, in times of *nisyon*, I no longer need "*chizuk*," because I am standing strong.

One cannot help but be moved by this message. The heart fills with thanks to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the *he'arah* He brought down to the world exactly six years ago, a light that provided incredible *kochos* – the light of *emunah* and *bitachon* in the hearts of *Am Yisrael*. Let us hope that this light will spread to the entire world, and *Ohr Chadash al Tzion ta'ir*.

Gut Shabbat Pinchas Shefer

The shiur is aired on Mon. and Thurs. - menu 4 (Yiddish and Hebrew)

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

No Payments Necessary

In the home of a certain avreich, the sefarim were weighing heavily on the shelves, which were on the verge of collapse. Several shelves had in fact fallen apart, and the sefarim were then placed ceremoniously on the dining room table. Other sefarim were in cartons, and the woman of the house came to the conclusion that she could not go on this way. They needed a new bookcase.

She went to a furniture store and found a simple bookcase that suited their home. At the register she opened her checkbook and asked to pay in as many installments as possible. "We don't take checks," the seller told her. "You can pay by credit card or cash."

She had neither cash nor a credit card, and so she called my wife and asked her if perhaps she had a credit card and would be able to help her by paying for her in installments. Obviously, she wasn't asking for money, just for a means of payment. She had every intention of giving us the sum we would pay for her on our card.

When I heard what she needed, I told my wife to tell her we'd see what we could do. My credit card could not make the type of payment the company wanted, but Baruch Hashem, a Yid is never left alone, and there are many Yidden who want to do chessed. I thought about who I might ask to pay with his credit card, and I called a Yid whom I know to be someone who loves to help. He heard my request, and he was simply excited by the offer: "Tell them," he told me, "that I have cash for them. This is ma'aser money that I wanted to give to a talmid chacham. And I see that this is the perfect address for the money."

I was so happy to be the agent to connect the giver with the receiver. I saw tangibly how when a Yid needs something, Hakadosh Baruch Hu provides it.

The Least Expensive and the Most Convenient

Reb Chaim Meir Phillip from Yerushalayim relates: My story has no pain or struggle in it, no debts and no seeking forgiveness, only the hidden longings of a heart, which were fulfilled.

Sometimes a Yid thinks to himself, How I wish I could make a Shabbos for the whole family to get together and come away strengthened spiritually and connected to family. But how can I do this if I don't have the money for it? Sometimes we want to beautify the Shabbos table, and sometimes we want something on a higher standard, and we worry that perhaps it was decreed that we not enjoy these things. For people who think this way, I am telling my story, which is one long, enlightening chain of hashgachah pratis. My firstborn was a boy, and he was followed by many girls. My house was filled with blessing, and I thanked Hashem with all my heart for the valuable gifts of good, healthy children. At the same time, I wanted another son. Among the segulos I did, I davened at the kever of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron and promised that I would take my son to Meron for his chalachah.

And indeed, chasdei Hashem ki lo samnu, a son was born to us. Our joy was very great, and the time came to fulfill my promise and take the child up to Meron. Although he was born in Tammuz, we asked our Rebbe and he told us that we could give him his haircut on Lag Ba'omer.

We were filled with joy. Fifteen years after the previous chalachah in our family, we were zocheh to go to Meron with our son and celebrate with him on Lag Ba'omer. That year Lag Ba'omer came out on a Thursday, and I joyfully informed my family that in honor of this great, rare simchah, we would travel to Meron for Lag Ba'omer and stay until after Shabbos.

I am not a wealthy man. Renting an apartment in Meron for Lag Ba'omer is very expensive – way out of my budget, but I davened to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and asked Him to help me. He is the Owner of everything, including the apartments in Meron. I got hold of a list of apartments and guest houses for rent in Meron, but I did not call any of them. First, I worked really hard on my bitachon in the Kol Yachol – that I would find an apartment that would suit me. "Please, Hashem," I asked again and again, "please get us to Meron in the most convenient and least expensive way."

At the beginning of the week of Lag Ba'omer, my family asked me what was happening. We needed to know which apartment we'd be staying in. Suddenly, I had an idea that we might be able to rent an apartment only for the day of Lag Ba'omer, leaving at the end of the day, and then I would be able to rent the apartment from the night following Lag Ba'omer until after Shabbos. The chances of finding an apartment being rented out for a lower price was a definite possibility.

I looked at the list and thought, Where is there a chance of finding a cheaper apartment? In the middle of Kfar Meron, near Rabi Shimon, or at the edge of the Kfar? At the edge, right? I went to the end of the list, but then I stopped myself and said, Where is your bitachon? Why are you being small-minded and choosing one from the end of the list? HaYad Hashem tiktzar? He can give you the best apartment at the best price. I went back to the beginning of the list and made one call, then another, then a third. On the third call, the owner of the apartment responded with exactly what I wanted to hear – and more. "Yes, yes, someone from abroad is coming only for the day of Lag Ba'omer and leaving in the evening. You can come Lag Ba'omer in the afternoon and put your suitcases in the storage room near the apartment. Since you're coming for Friday-Shabbos, after Lag Ba'omer, you'll get the apartment for the regular price. How much? Altogether 2,000 shekels."

That was the beginning of our exciting experience. True, 2,000 shekels is not a small sum, and I would have to figure out how to get hold of it, but bearing in mind that we had waited fifteen years for this event, I would make the effort, with Hashem's help.

The next stage was the trip. A large family, lots of baggage for the night of Lag Ba'omer and another two nights – this was no simple feat. It seemed I would have to order a van to take us to Meron, but it would not be allowed up the mountain, and we would have to shlep all our suitcases and small children on our own. I worried about this. I wanted VIP service for a regular price or less. I gave tzedakah and asked Hashem, using the same words I'd used before: "Please, Hashem, get us to Meron in the most convenient and least expensive way."

As hishtadlus, I called a company that provides travel services for a regular price. They had a prearranged parking spot, along with a shuttle that would bring passengers from the parking lot to the mountain. They told me to come to the station and do what everyone does – no advance reservations. How would we manage with all the suitcases and the food for Friday and Shabbos? They had no answer for me, but we gave tzedakah and set out on our way.

By tzedakah, I mean literally pennies. And that's what I gave each time, all the way to

On the giving end

I felt deeply for my 29-year-old sister's pain. The years were passing by and she was getting older, and still she hadn't found her match. I decided to do something for her. I decided to spread emunah among Yidden who hadn't yet been zocheh to taste emunah; I donated toward the dissemination of the newsletters in an entire neighborhood where they hadn't been distributed before. Incredibly enough, immediately after I made the donation a proposal came in for my sister, and that week she got engaged!

On the receiving end

People ask me all the time: What's your secret? How are you always happy and serene, with a smile on your face? They know that several years have gone by since my chasunah and I haven't yet been blessed with children. They know that my wife has been hospitalized for several months and that I go back and forth, walking through the hospital corridors. They know, and they are amazed by the smile that never leaves my face. My answer is: "The Hashgachah Pratis phone line." It's not that when I need chizuk I call in and listen; not at all. It's that the phone line has instilled in me emunah and bitachon – living with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This is my feeling in life. When you are with Hashem, is it possible not to be happy?! So I thank you, the hanhalah and all those who work on keeping the phone line running. In your zechus I have a good, happy life!

Meron.

We arrived at the bus stop with the entire family, and there was a large van that did not belong to the company. The driver was a handicapped woman who was looking for a family of mostly women and girls to come with her and pay for her gas.

Our family fit the bill perfectly. The cost of gas alone was even less than the cost of travel by public transportation. There was ample room for all the suitcases, and we set out on our way. "I don't have a license to get up the mountain," the driver said, "but I have a handicapped card, so I hope we'll be okay."

The trip went smoothly. The driver asked if she could make a stop at the kever of Rabi Meir Baal Hanes, and this was a wonderful opportunity for us to daven "Elaka d'Meir aneini." The tziyun was empty; only our family was there, and davening there was very emotional for us.

As we drove on, we started passing through the roadblocks on the way up to Meron. "Daven, daven," the driver encouraged us all. She had ways of dodging the police. She told us to say the passuk:

"זאת האנשים אשר פתח הבית הנו בסנוורים... וילאו למצוא הפתח"

At every checkpoint, the policeman saw she was a handicapped driver and they let her pass through, but at the seventh one the officer took too much of an interest. He asked to see her license and then told her, "Go to Ezer Mizion"

The driver didn't give up. She made a U-turn and went in the direction of Meron again. The entire time, she encouraged us to daven and to say segulos. I gave tzedakah, and this time the officer was busy with a phone call, and the young policeman who was with him allowed us through.

At the last blockade they stopped us again, but the driver told the policeman, "I am a handicapped woman. I'm going up to daven by Rabi Shimon. Give me your name and I'll daven for you!"

He gave her his name and his mother's name, and he let her through.

I knew this was not the wisdom of the driver, nor was it my wisdom. All this hatzlachah was the mercy of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

On the mountain, the driver drove us right up to the entrance of the apartment we would start renting that evening, and were already allowed to place our luggage there.

We arrived at 3:30 p.m. The entire mountain was like a huge bonfire. Excited dancing in honor of the holy Tanna Rabi Shimon filled the streets and the area of the tziyun. At this stage people were no longer only in the tziyun itself; the dancing was all around. We cut our son's hair with great emotion, and my family had an excellent, comfortable view of the scene.

It was a very moving scene. My young son was given the appearance of a Yid – two peyos and a kippah, his face shining with overwhelming thanks to Hashem. Tefillah, tefillah, and more tefillah.

Do I need to tell you what was going on there in Meron? Anyone who has been there knows. It's a simchah that comes from the world of neshamos, from the heichalos of song and teshuvah, tears of thanksgiving and prayer. We submerged ourselves there in the Gan Eden of Meron, all comfortably and calmly. We were in no hurry and had no worries, because we were staying on the mountaintop for Shabbos kodesh.

On Motzaei Shabbos, still on a high from the experience, we wanted to get back home to Yerushalayim. We weren't the only ones who were stuck there. Many families came to the stop. On every bus that passed, the passengers converged and rushed in to take the seats inside. I didn't feel that I could push. Here too I asked Hashem with almost the same words: "Please help me get home in the most convenient and least expensive way." I went over to the person in charge and asked him how many busses were supposed to be coming.

"It doesn't matter how many busses; no one will be stranded at this stop. Everyone is going to get home. I'll order a bus to come here even if there's only one person left!"

I told my family, "We're not going to push. We'll wait patiently and go calmly onto the last bus, im yirtzeh Hashem!"

Indeed, it didn't happen immediately, but it was worth the wait. We went like royalty onto the last bus and spread ourselves over the seats, and when I wanted to pay, I found that the bus had no machine that takes payment. It was impossible to validate. And when you can't, the law says you don't have to pay. "The least expensive and the most convenient."

In honor of the simchah my father-in-law gave me \$200. My father also gave us a nice sum as a form of participation in the big day. When we got home after this special event, we felt as though something truly unusual had occurred, a hug from Shamayim. We saw how Hashem watched over us with special hashgachah pratis and took us all the way to Meron and back in the most incredible way. We are so grateful, and I, with my small head, could not hold back from making an accounting and checking how much the whole thing cost us.

Nu, how much? I counted the money I received from my father and from my father-in-law, calculated the expenses I had, and discovered that everything worked out exactly. No pluses or minuses, but one big, precise zero.

The least expensive and the most convenient.

That's how it is – so simple. The passuk "Take pleasure with Hashem, and He will give you the desires of your heart" was fulfilled for us. Rashi explains that one will "take pleasure in tafnukim – luxuries, relying on Hakadosh Baruch Hu."

And that is our story. We reveled in the luxuries Hashem prepared for us.

Whatever

Is Meant to Be

Yours Will Be Yours

Shlomo from Bnei Brak relates: One morning I was invited to a bris. On my way to the hall I noticed a nice-looking chair in good condition set out on the curb in a way that indicated it was hefker. Someone had obviously decided he no longer needed the chair in his home and had placed it outside so that someone else would take it.

We have this type of chairs at home, and this chair would be a perfect match. I decided to take it home.

As I was walking toward the chair, I saw a young avreich who also seemed to be interested in the chair. I thought to myself, If another Yid wants this chair, then I won't take it. I don't want to cause him agmas nefesh or the feeling that he lost out. Let him take the chair and enjoy it in good health.

I gave in, even though I knew I had seen the chair before him. I continued walking in the direction of the bris, and baruch Hashem, I was zocheh to participate in bringing a baby into briso shel Avraham Avinu.

On my way back, I saw that the chair was not there where it had been before, and I understood that the avreich had taken it.

I turned onto another street, where I met up with an old acquaintance. He came over and asked me, "Are you perhaps interested in a nice chair?"

"Yes," I answered, surprised by the question.

"I saw an abandoned chair on this street, and I was afraid the garbage collectors would take it away, so I took it into my building and left it in the entryway. Want to see it?"

I followed him, and there, standing before me in all its glory, was the chair that had caught my attention when I was on my way to the bris. It seems the avreich hadn't ended up taking it after all.

"I really am interested in this chair," I told him. "Thanks so much."

I went over to take it, but he stopped me. "Why should you take it by yourself?" he said. "I have a car."

He loaded the chair onto his car, invited me into the air-conditioned vehicle, and took me and the chair home.

It was exciting to see: Whatever is decreed that a person will receive will come to him. By giving in I had only gained, and I had gotten the chair home in a respectable way, without any exertion at all on my part.

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

He Merits to Support Others from His Own

This seems difficult to understand. While an idol worshipper can indeed become [useless] like the idols he serves, how is it possible for a person created by Hashem to become just like his Creator?

An answer to this question can be found in the *mishnah* at the end of *maseches Pe'ah*, which teaches that if someone is needy but doesn't accept charity, he will end up supporting other people with his own money. Of such a person it is said, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem, and for whom Hashem is the Source of his confidence." This means that someone who trusts in Hashem merits to support other people, which is the *middah* of Hashem, and since he does what Hashem *yisbarach* would need to do – to support the poor – this means that he has become just like Hashem.

(Divrei Yoel)

He Merits to Be Just Like Him

Rabi Shimon said in the name of Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi: Anyone who trusts in Hakadosh Baruch Hu is *zocheh* to be just like Him. How do we know this? Because it says (Yirmeyahu 17), "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem, and for whom Hashem is the Source of his confidence." But anyone who trusts in idols will surely become just like them. How do we know this? Because it says (Tehillim 115), "Like them shall be those who made them."

(Midrash Rabbah, Devarim 5:9)

The wicked are considered dead in their lifetime, as they indeed become like the idols they serve. Even though everything has a life force from a holy source, the wicked man who trusts in nothingness sheds that power of *kedushah*. On the other hand, he who trusts in Hashem sheds the cover of externality and nature and cleaves to *penimiyus*, and an existence of *kedushah* descends upon him. As much as he is *mevatel teva* in order to cleave to Hashem, to that extent *penimiyus* becomes revealed.

(Sefas Emes, Sukkos 5649)

He Has No Yoke of Malchus upon Him

Hashem is the Master of all, the One and Only, Who does not accept the yoke of *malchus* upon Himself because He is the first and foremost of all powers in existence. Similarly, the *baal bitachon* has no yoke of *malchus* upon him at all, not in the heavens above and not on the earth below, for his eyes look toward Hashem alone with the feeling that everything Hashem does is good.

So indeed, one who trusts in Hashem is just like Hashem. But one who trusts in idols becomes like them, subservient and dependent on the powers that are above them.

(Divrei Shaarei Chaim)

He Connects Himself to Divinity and Kedushah

In truth, nothing can be added to or taken away from the portion that Hashem designates for a person. But as we learn in *Chovos Halevavos*, there is a difference between one who trusts in Hashem and depends on Him, and one who wants only whatever Hashem chooses to give him. When a person lives with *bitachon* he gains a spirit of sanctity, and he becomes intrinsically connected to this power of divinity, of giving. This is the meaning of the words, "...and for whom Hashem is the Source of his confidence." That is why it says that he merits to be just like Hashem. Hashem is the Source of all that exists, and in the future, Hashem and His Name will be One. It is only in this world that physicality covers over the *penimiyus*.

His Words Don't Return Empty

Once the *talmidim* of Volozhin visited the Netziv *zt"l* on Purim and asked him for whiskey. He told them he had none in his house. Afterward he said, "Do you believe I can give you whiskey? If so, then I really will be able to give it to you! Because it says in the Midrash: He merits to be just like Him. While they were talking, someone opened the door and handed the Netziv a bottle of whiskey as *mishloach manos*. The Netziv told them that this is the meaning of that *midrash*: When someone trusts in Hashem, his words do not go unfulfilled.

(Otzar Peninim V'uvdos)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

We are in the midst of the days of sefiras ha'omer, counting the days starting from the sixteenth of Nisan, when the korban ha'omer was offered, until Shavuos, when we bring a korban from the new produce.

Why is it important to base our counting of the days on the day when the korban ha'omer is offered? What is the significance of the korban ha'omer, which is simply a measure of barley flour?

When Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, they received their daily portion of bread from Shamayim – the measure of an omer for each person. During those days Bnei Yisrael received several living lessons. The first is that a person can live with *menuchas hanefesh* – every day they received all their needs. The second is that *hishtadlus* is falsehood; the results are not dependent on how much *hishtadlus* one invests – a person who gathered more manna did not bring home more than a person who gathered less. And the third lesson is that every Jew is equally important in the Eyes of Hashem. All received an equal amount of food from Shamayim – a full omer of manna.

When we instill in our hearts these three lessons, we

Excerpts from the popular shiur by
Harav Yehuda Mandel shlit"l from Lakewood

The Secret of Sefiras Ha'omer

will not be plagued by jealousy, desire, or the need to chase after *kavod*, and we will live with *menuchas hanefesh*, connected to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

At the time when Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, the manna stopped coming down from Shamayim. Then they had to offer the korban ha'omer – an omer-measure of barley, which was brought on the fifteenth of Nisan. Only through this did it become permitted for them to eat the new produce.

Perhaps we can say that the omer-measure of barley comes to remind us of the lessons inherent in the omer of manna in the midbar. Therefore we are commanded and obligated to review, throughout the days between Pesach and Shavuos, again and again each day, the number of the day of the "omer," in order to instill in our hearts these three principles: that a person should live with *menuchas hanefesh*, that *hishtadlus* is falsehood, and that every member of Bnei Yisrael is equally important in Hashem's Eyes. In this way, when we arrive at the exalted Yom Tov of Shavuos, we will be *zocheh* to receive the holy Torah as part of Hashem's Chosen People.



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