

# HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Titzaveh - Ki Tisa 5784 ■ Issue 159

## HEART TO HEART

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

### Hashem Longs for Our Praise

One of the advantages of strengthening our *emunah* and *bitachon* is the fact that we become accustomed to giving praise and thanks to Hashem. What is the difference between thanks and praise? Thanks is the basic recognition that goodness has been given to us. If we've received something good, we should say thank you. This is just elementary manners.

Giving praise is the next stage. It means detailing our recognition of the goodness that was done to us.

If a person enters a *simchah* hall and receives a delicious, well-prepared portion, in the first stage there is gratitude; he says thank you for the fact that they served him his food. In the more advanced stage, there is more thanks. He expresses all the details, explains how delicious the food tasted, how crispy the schnitzel was, how the pickles were small and delectable. He says thank you for the cool sweet drinks – both diet and regular, for the clean dishes, for the fine ambience. The *baalei simchah* greeted the guests with smiles and happy hearts. Thanks to the *baalei simchah*, who insisted on a band that would make the *simchah* pleasant with muted music throughout the dinner, so that the *chashuveh* guests would be able to exchange a few words with each other and would not have to shout, "Speak up, I don't hear you." The guest goes down to the smallest details, and the *baalei simchah* enjoy the fact that there is someone who noticed their efforts.

When we come to praise the Creator of the world, we give a similarly detailed account of our gratitude. Not only do we thank Him for His gifts, we give details of all the wonders of the Creator, how much mercy there is here, what amazing exactness and timing. We tell more and more details that emphasize the greatness of the miracle and of Hashem's goodness.

Our praise shows that we pay attention to the small details, from our good Father in *Shamayim* Who does so much for His creations so that it will be best for us, and He waits with longing for this praise, as it says, "He is seated [on] the praises of Yisrael" (*Tehillim* 22).

*Maseches Sotah* in the *Yerushalmi* brings the words of Hillel Hazakein: "Does Hashem need our praise?" Hillel asks. He has hundreds of thousands of *malachim* who sing to Him on High!

The explanation is that there are two *pesukim*. The first is about Dovid Hamelech, who is called "the pleasant [composer of] *zemiros* for Yisrael" (*Shmuel* II, 23:1). The second *pasuk* is about Hashem: "He is seated [on] the praises of Yisrael" (*Tehillim* 22:4).

The *metarshim* explain: It is pleasing to Hashem

that Klal Yisrael sing His praises. And the Midrash brings (*Bereishis Rabbah* 48:7) that *for every bit of praise that Am Yisrael praise Hashem, He rests His Shechinah upon them and protects them.*

These are very exciting words. How much strength is concealed in these words!

A woman, the mainstay of her home, stands there scrubbing pots. She uses this time to thank Hashem and to list in detail all the good that He does for her. For the good food she is *zocheh* to prepare for the members of the household; for the children – both those who are more successful and those who less successful; for the apartment, which is yet to be enlarged; for her baby's playful antics; for the babies who have already grown and want so much more; for the miracles Hashem does for His nation; for the miracles we still await. She stands there and mentions more and more details: How Hashem *yisbarach* leads her and her home with *chesed* and *rachamim*, with attention and love. She gets emotional and tears up. And this moment is an *eis ratzon*! There in her kitchen the *Shechinah* is resting!

She then heads to the laundry room and praises Hashem for clothing her and her family; for sending her so many articles of clothing to take care of. She thanks Him for her sons and daughters, for what there is and for the good that is yet to come. There the *Shechinah* is resting in her laundry room!

The *Midrash Shir Hashirim* (2:9) explains, "My beloved One is similar to an antelope." Just as the antelope leaps from one mountain to another, from one valley to another, from one tree to another, from one sukkah to another, from one gate to another, so too Hakadosh Baruch Hu jumps from one shul to another, from one *beis medrash* to another. Why? In order to bestow blessings on Am Yisrael.

For every bit of praise that Am Yisrael sings to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, He sits among them, as it says, "And You are holy, are seated [on] the praises of Yisrael."

One should become ecstatic when contemplating these sweet words. "Awesome is Your praise, You Who performs wonders." The praise of Am Yisrael connects with the praise of the angels, and we, with our praise, give strength to the Heavenly entourage. Hakadosh Baruch Hu waits for every bit of praise from each and every one of us.

May we be *zocheh* to see Hashem's *chesed* always, and to give Him thanks and praise endlessly, as it says (*Tehillim* 100:4-5), "Give thanks to Him, bless His Name, for Hashem is good, His kindness is forever!"

## FROM THE EDITOR

### It's an Obligation to Publicize This

There are some events that one is forbidden to publicize and some that it's a mitzvah to publicize.

These days, Am Yisrael is occupied with publicizing the miracles and wonders that Hashem performed for His nation in the days of Mordechai and Esther.

We see how vital it is to publicize miracles. The *Alshich Hakadosh* (9:19) tells us that Mordechai wanted to make Purim into a full-fledged Yom Tov, but he knew that those among Am Yisrael who were poor were afraid of having to refrain from earning money on yet another day. In his wisdom, he understood their fears, so he established the mitzvos of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim* – exchanging gifts of food and money, and then everyone was happy with the day of Purim.

In our generation as well, when Hashem performs miracles for us, it is an obligation to publicize them! It is a mitzvah for every Jew, and especially Jews who have the power of influence, to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Let us increase our praise and thanks to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

We were all amazed to hear about the tremendous miracle Hashem performed for us on Thursday night, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Shevat. The enemies of Am Yisrael, *yemach shemam*, meticulously planned a deadly terrorist attack of unfathomable proportions. They placed explosives on five different buses, set to go off at 9 a.m., when the busses are teeming with people. The terrorists waited for 9 a.m. on Friday, hoping to hear that their plans had succeeded.

Our merciful Father in *Shamayim* wanted to show Who is the real Ruler of the world. He wanted to show us the protection that He provides for us, His love for us, His incredible *hashgachah* over Am Yisrael. Three of the busses blew up in the parking lot at 9 p.m. In the other two busses, the explosives were discovered in time and the tragedy was averted.

Several other miracles occurred at the time, some of which they're ashamed to publicize and forbade all publicity.

But we have the obligation to make known that our Father is showing us Who is the true Protector, and in His great love is revealing His special protection over us, a protection that exists over Am Yisrael in general, and in *Eretz Hakodesh* in particular.

May we be *zocheh* to continue seeing miracles and wonders and to give thanks to His great Name.

Gut Shabbat  
Pinchas Shefer

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# THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

## They Waited Four Years

I work as a scribe, a *sofer Stam*, writing *parshiyos* of tefillin. I've been in the field for ten years, and this is the first time a story like this has happened to me.

To make sure that I complete my work on time, when someone orders *parshiyos* for a bar mitzvah *bachur*, I mark on my calendar that the boy's father is to receive the tefillin a month before the bar mitzvah. *Baruch Hashem*, things generally work out and everyone is pleased.

A month ago, I started writing tefillin *parshiyos* for a bar mitzvah *bachur* whose bar mitzvah is to take place in another two months. Logic dictated that I would have them ready on time, but Hashem had other plans for me. I fell ill with a severe case of the flu and was glued to my bed, and I did not manage to write the *parshiyos*. A few days before they were to be ready, the father called and asked me, "How's it going?"

I answered sheepishly that I hadn't been able to write the *parshiyos*. I explained that I had been ill, that the circumstances were beyond my control, and I simply hadn't gotten to it, for a justifiable reason.

For a young boy learning in *cheder*, a *melamed* could accept a late note for a "justifiable reason," but in life, these notes are worthless. When someone orders tefillin, the *klaf* is the main point of interest, and if it is empty, no justifiable reason will help. "Look," the father said, "my son davens to Hashem every day to be able to lay his very own tefillin even before his bar mitzvah."

I told him I would make the effort to get him tefillin, and I went to check if I had something in stock. I found *parshiyos* that were written in *ksav Beis Yosef*. I suggested that the *bachur* take these tefillin for now, and when I'd finish writing the *parshiyos* in *ksav ha'Ari*, I would exchange them for him.

The father wanted to agree to this, but literally a moment before I put the *parshiyos* into the *batim*, he called and told me the *bachur* was determined to have *parshiyos* that were *ksav Arizal* from the very first time he would wear them. He even started talking about looking for a different *sofer*, and this mattered to me, a lot.

I thought, *From where will my help come?* I asked Hashem to send me the solution, and suddenly I recalled that one of my colleagues had a set of my tefillin with *ksav Arizal parshiyos*. He was supposed to sell them and give me a portion of the proceeds, but in the meantime that hadn't happened.

I called him and asked if he still had the tefillin.

"Yes," he said dryly.

"Can you return them to me?"

My friend was not excited about returning the tefillin. He'd planned on selling them at a certain stage, but when I explained the urgency of the matter, he agreed. These were tefillin I had written long ago – four years ago. It was truly strange that the tefillin had not been sold in all that time.

I opened the *batim* to check the *kesav* and per-

## Uninvited Guests

One evening, five years ago, I was shopping in a supermarket. I filled up the shopping cart with 800 shekels worth of products, took a taxi home, and felt really good about myself. I was thinking how pleasant it was that I had a job and was making money, and that I could allow myself all this bounty.

When I walked into my house, it was already late at night. I unpacked my purchases, put everything where it belonged, and closed the doors of the cabinets. Then, just before going to sleep, I heard a squeaking sound coming from the direction of the pantry. This was very strange. A few minutes earlier, when I had been putting away the things I had bought, I hadn't seen anything suspicious, and now, suddenly something was moving in there.

I was so tired that I didn't have the strength or the patience to investigate, and I went to sleep.

The next morning, I went to the pantry to take out some coffee, and I discovered that the package of farfel was open. I remembered that when I was in the store shopping, I had checked to make sure that it was sealed. I had no doubt that it had opened up after I had put it in the pantry. Maybe there was some sort of knife in the pantry, and just when the package landed there, it brushed against the knife and was cut open. That didn't seem likely, but it was possible. If there was a knife, I would find it and remove it so it wouldn't cause further damage.

I cleared out the shelf and set everything on the counter, and then I noticed a strange type of dirt, not the kind I am accustomed to cleaning from time to time. This was something worth looking into, and I decided to try to learn more about it.

I work in one of the large food chains, where I have the chance to speak to many friends from work and also to clients. One of them would certainly enlighten me. My investigation yielded the news that both the open package and the strange dirt were nothing less than the result of a mouse's visit.

I called the owner of the apartment that I rent and complained about the mouse's visit. In the rental contract we had signed it was written explicitly that only I can decide which guests to bring into my home. There is definitely no entry for mice. The owner of the house calmed me down and said he would take care of everything. He told me to buy, at his expense, a mousetrap made of glue, which would catch the mouse – or mice – once and for all.

I set out the trap in the proper place, but no mouse was caught, and, worst of all, by mistake I got my own foot caught in one of these traps. *Ach!* This was really strong glue! How hard I had to work to scratch it off my shoe!

I sought advice from my friends, and they told me to put out poison, which looks like powder of all different colors. Its smell lures mice, and then they taste it, and before they get much of a chance to enjoy its taste, they die. I bought some and spread it in every possible and impossible place. In order to cover all my bases, I used both the glue-traps and the poison. I even sprinkled some poison on the glue trap.

It didn't help! It seemed I had a war on my hands with a whole family of mice, who were probably revealing all the secrets to each other. I saw with my own eyes how a mouse would get close to the trap and then walk around it! Nothing happened to the mouse, but I felt the blood rushing up to my head. The mice had morphed from guests into household members. They went everywhere, even in my bed.

This nightmare lasted for a full month. In Mitzrayim there was only one week of *makkas tzefardeia*, while I lived with those mice for four impossible weeks. My friends shared my sorrow, and each one came up with some sort of joke on my account. They advised me to put up a cage trap, and I did that. During this time, it seems I earned a doctorate in everything connected to the war between man and mice.

One day, I met my chareidi neighbor. We rarely meet, as our schedules are so different, but this time, the Creator had pity on me, and we met, and he asked me, "How are you?"

## On the giving end

Last Shabbos we made a *simchah* and hosted many guests. We had been looking for lodgings for them but were unsuccessful. The pressure was very intense, so we decided to donate a significant amount of money toward the dissemination of *emunah*, as a *zechus* for us to find a solution for hosting our guests. The day after the donation was made, people started calling us to offer their apartments. In light of the big *yeshuah* that took place, we want to donate an additional sum.

## On the receiving end

I was in a financial mess. Our expenses piled up and were choking me, while our income decreased and decreased. I had to take a loan to cover the deficit, but this only made the problem bigger. I felt helpless, in despair. And then, like a ray of light, a good friend directed me to your phone line. There, between the stories and *shlurim*, I found comfort. The rich content gave me *chizuk* and implanted within me *emunah* and *bitachon*. Slowly, I started to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I learned how to deal with the situation, with Hashem's help. I also succeeded in increasing my income. I am filled with gratitude. In your merit my life took a whole new direction.



What's new?"

I told him about the terrible situation in my home, and he responded, "Listen, in the nearby shul they're learning Torah now. Let's wait for the *rav* to finish delivering his *shiur*, and then you can ask him what he says about this."

I nodded, even though I didn't really understand what the *rav* could tell me about the mice. Then my neighbor told me, "Come, let's go in and listen to the *shiur*. You'll enjoy it."

I had nothing else to do while I waited, so I went in to the *shiur*, and just a few seconds after I entered, the *rav* started telling a story from the Gemara about Rabi Pinchas ben Yair, who once came to a city where the people asked him to save them from the plague of mice that had beset their entire city. Rabi Pinchas called over all the mice and asked them to tell him why they were eating from the crops. They responded that the people of the city were not taking *ma'aser* from their food, so they, the mice, had been given permission to take the *ma'aser* from their fields.

I did not understand how the tzaddik had spoken with the mice, but I am a person who believes, and if it says this in the Gemara, it must be that it was so. After the *shiur*, I went over to the *rav* and asked him what to do about the mice in my house, and he told me, "You heard the story. Give 20 percent of your income to *tzedakah*, and the mice will leave you alone." "But why give *tzedakah*?" I asked. "Anyone who doesn't have money should go out to work. Then he'll make money, and he'll have what he needs. How is this connected to me? I don't have extra money.

I am terribly embarrassed to admit that I had never given even one penny to *tzedakah*. No organization of any type had ever received a cent from me. I work, and I buy things for myself. Why should I give my money to others who didn't work for their money? But now I had no choice, and it was very difficult for me. The *rav* told me that there is a mitzvah in the Torah to give *tzedakah* and that Hashem loves me and was showing me that He was waiting for my *tzedakah*.

I was convinced, but I asked the *rav*, "Why 20 percent? Why isn't 10 percent enough?" You need to give 10 percent so that you will not be poor, but now you need a *yeshuah*. You need a *segulah*, a solution to the problem, and therefore 10 percent is not enough. You can donate the 20 percent to this *beis medrash*. There is a *kollel avreichim* here, and it's an excellent place to donate your *tzedakah*.

I saw how the wind had blown the windows off the structure, and how the entire trailer that housed it gave the impression of poverty, but I wanted to be sure the *rav* was not just speaking out of personal interest. After all, this was his *kollel*, so he would certainly be happy to receive money from me. I asked him, "And if I give the 20 percent to someone else, will it help?"

"Of course!" he told me.

That night, the nightmare reached its peak. I don't want to make anyone here nauseous, so I'll spare you the details. The meeting with the mice was horrible, to say the least, and immediately the next morning I decided to bring the money to give to *tzedakah*. I recalled that there was someone I knew who was an *avriech* in *kollel*, who has a very simple home. He lives modestly and barely sustains his family. I went to him and gave him the entire 20 percent of my salary.

That day I didn't work. I returned home after giving him the money, opened the door, and discovered five of the mice that had embittered my life over the previous month, all no longer able to harm me.

I cleared them out of my home, and they never returned. The story was over!

Before I go, I must add another incredible fact.

Eventually, I moved to another apartment and transferred to a workplace in another part of the country. When I opened the door to the storage room, one of the workers told me, "Be careful! You should know that a mouse might jump out at you!"

"I'm not afraid of mice," I told him. I opened the storage room door, and no mouse jumped out. I arranged what had to be arranged and did not meet even one mouse. My friends from work complained that the place was teeming with mice, but I didn't come across even one of them.

After that, I bumped into mice only twice, and both times I knew exactly why it happened. It was when I had already received a salary and was still holding on to the *ma'aser*.

Actually, I'm not talking about *ma'aser*—a tenth, but a fifth. I give 20 percent, and I don't lose out on anything. In fact it's just the opposite. After I give *tzedakah* I have a good feeling, a feeling of inner peace and serenity. I feel how Hakadosh Baruch Hu walks with me everywhere always and reminds me that He is there.

haps also to fix something if necessary, and I discovered, to my surprise, a very special *kesav*. The *parshiyos* were truly *mehudar*, truly *l'chatchillah*.

I was so happy for this dear *bachur*, who had davened from the depths of his heart to don his own tefillin from the very start. Hakadosh Baruch Hu had prepared them for him four years earlier.

## Not a Trace Was Left

Yesterday morning, I did not notice whether I got up on the right side or the left side of bed, but it seemed to me that it was the wrong side. The minute I awoke I felt that my lips were swollen. The feeling was uncomfortable, and the way it looked was even worse. I was very scared, and I davened to Hashem to send me a *refuah*.

I went to the doctor, and his eyes widened when he saw me. "I've never seen anything like this," he said. "I hope the creams I give you will help." He wrote prescriptions for three types of creams and sent me to the pharmacy. I realized that the doctor knew as much as I did about what had happened to me, and he was simply trying things out and waiting to see what the effect would be.

The pharmacist told me that he had serious doubts as to whether the creams the doctor prescribed would help me; so I immediately made an appointment to see a different doctor. Perhaps for him my condition would be nothing new. Perhaps he would already know from his experience how to take care of my puffed lips.

When I got home I shared my sorry findings with my wife, and she added that "your left hand is also swollen." Indeed, it was very conspicuous. My left hand had swelled up badly.

This was truly strange – unnatural, and very scary. What mysterious disease did I have? And how was it that it was attacking only my lips and one hand? I hoped that the rest of my body would be okay and that I wouldn't suddenly discover swelling in another place.

"I think it's connected to something," my wife said. It wasn't easy for her to continue sharing her thoughts, but I urged her to tell me what she had in mind, because this was *pikuach nefesh*; I was ready to deal with any related unpleasantness.

"It might be connected to the fact that sometimes you talk while wearing tefillin."

She worded her rebuke gently; unfortunately, until yesterday, it had happened only very seldom that I did *not* speak idle words while wearing tefillin.

"Maybe if you commit to not speaking when you're wearing tefillin, it will help."

I made a true *kaballah* from the depths of my heart to be careful about this matter. From that moment on – meaning from the next time I would don tefillin – I would not speak at all while wearing tefillin!

The next morning, amazingly enough, there was not a trace of the swelling. Everything had disappeared as though it was never there. I was literally a proof to the *L'shem yichud* prayer we recite before putting on tefillin: "He is the power Who controls the upper and the lower worlds." (Since then, I have been paying much more attention to this prayer every day.)

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## Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

### Through *Bitachon* a Person Spares Himself Work and Toil

The fact that man needs to work for *parnassah* is a result of his sins. To carry out the curse, "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread," it is enough for him to have to gather food right near his home, just as Am Yisrael gathered *mann*. All the work and toil he must endure are a result of his sins.

Because of the mere fact that a person believes his own work and toil are what bring him his *parnassah*, he deserves the punishment of having to work hard for his *parnassah*. The cycle then continues, as this punishment seemingly confirms his mistaken belief in the value of his own work, and his lack of *emunah* goes from bad to worse.

Thus, the person himself takes what could be an incredible state of dependence on Hashem and turns it into a state of rebuke and Gehinom through the fact that he doesn't trust in his Creator. On the other hand, through working on *bitachon*, he can be calm and at peace without any fears about the morrow, and he can spare himself much worry. Hakadosh Baruch Hu can then give him all his needs amply, in accordance with the natural order that He created in the world.

(Based on *Chochmas Hamatzpun*)

### Person Receives Sustenance from A Above, but He Might Deny Himself Access to It

The term "deny himself access" means that although the person receives his sustenance, his bad deeds can make him unable to access it, and it is usurped by forces of evil. Based on this, we can understand a lesson I heard in the name of the holy Reb Bunim of Peshischa zt"l, that every poor person will stand in judgment for the fact that he is poor. But what does that mean? If a person has sinned and therefore he is poor, he has already been punished.

Why should he be judged again for having been punished? Based on what we said above, we can explain that by bringing upon himself the punishment of poverty, the bounty that should have come to him became available to the forces of evil. He is now doubly guilty for having strengthened the evil in the world.

(Based on *Shem MiShmuel*)

### *Parnassah Without Pain*

Rabi Shimon ben Elazar said: I have never seen a deer that was employed to guard figs drying in the field [although a deer is quick and agile, making it well-suited for such work], or a lion that was employed as a porter to carry heavy loads, or a fox that is a merchant [although it is a clever beast]. On the contrary – these animals receive their sustenance from nature without any pain or toil....

If these animals, which were created to serve mankind, receive their sustenance without toil, wouldn't it be right for me to receive my sustenance without toil? Yes! In truth, man too should be sustained effortlessly, but it is decreed that he toil for his *parnassah* due to his sins.

(based on *Maseches Kiddushin 82b*)

### When a Person Eats *L'Shem Shamayim*, His *Parnassah* Is Readily Available

There are four levels of creation: inanimate objects, plant life, animals, and human beings. Everything, on whatever level it may be, naturally strives to be raised to the next higher level. The soil strives to produce plant life, thus converting itself from being an inanimate object to become a living, growing plant. Plants strive to become

animal life, and therefore they offer no resistance to being consumed by animals.

Following this pattern, animals should naturally strive to be eaten by man, thereby raising themselves to a higher level of creation.

Why then do animals flee when people try to catch them and eat them? It is because man often eats without proper intentions. If man eats with proper intentions – *L'Shem Shamayim* – then he accomplishes a great *tikkun* for the food he is eating, and that food is elevated by the human soul, which is a part of Hashem. Naturally, this is how it should be, but man ruined it for himself. That is why the animals run away. And we learn from here that if a person has proper intentions when eating – that is, if he eats in order to raise the level of the food he eats, then his sustenance will reach him effortlessly.

(Based on *Sefer Hamiknah*)

### A Thought on *Bitachon*

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah Pratis

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

### A Lesson from Mordechai Hatzaddik

When someone is afraid of other people, especially those he considers "important," he loses confidence in himself and is unable to truly love others. This fear causes him to fail to appreciate his own worth, and as a result, it is difficult for him to love other Jews.

When a man works on learning about and developing *bitachon*, he feels whole and fortunate and happy with all that he has, to the point that he pities those who are not *zocheh* to his peace of mind concerning his lot in life!

When a person reaches this state, he is able to genuinely love others. He is buoyed by the knowledge that his own spiritual and physical states are best for him, since they were chosen meticulously by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. With this feeling of *bitachon* and joy, he is able to judge others favorably and to see only the good in everyone.

In the beginning of the Megillah we find that Mordechai did not take into account Am Yisrael's view that one must bow to Haman so as not to incite him. He was not

afraid of Haman, and he refused to bow. He also didn't seem at all impacted upon seeing Haman – he neither stood nor moved when Haman passed by.

At the end of the Megillah we find a completely different Mordechai – he was "favored by the majority of his brethren" (*Targum* explains that he sought to increase the greatness of his brethren); he "sought what is good for his nation" (meaning, he sought to do good for everyone, even for those who had not asked for it – Ibn Ezra); and "he spoke of peace for all descendants of his nation" (meaning, despite his royal stature, he remained modest and considered every Jew to be his equal – Ibn Ezra).

In truth, this is the result: When a person is not afraid of other people, he loves them. Fear stands in the way of love, while *bitachon* and being satisfied with what one has enable true love to flourish.



# Listen in to the line And you'll get it

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