

עֵפֶרֶת הַשָּׁבֹועַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

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ב' תמוז תשס"ה
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Candle Lighting:	9:10
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:44
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:17
Latest שחרית:	10:32
Earliest הבדלה:	10:20

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THE SPOKEN WATERFALL

Reuven Davies, Mesivta Graduate

In this week's parsha we read that the Bnei Yisroel ran short of water in the *midbar*. They then begged Moshe for water, who then prayed to Hashem for guidance. Hashem responded that Moshe should speak to a certain rock for water. After speaking to the rock and receiving no answer, Moshe lifted his arm and struck the rock twice! Hashem then told Moshe that since he deviated from Hashem's exact instructions, he would not be allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel.

It appears here that Moshe received a very harsh punishment for this seemingly small *aveirah*, especially since he only hit the rock as he felt that the Jewish People weren't worthy of a *nes* brought about through just the spoken word. What was the subtle mistake of Moshe and how do we grasp it? What is the Torah teaching future generations from such an error? Rashi explains that hitting the rock as opposed to speaking to it diminished the impact of what had been the potentially far-reaching lesson of the moment. Had he shown them that a rock can obey a word, they would have learned that a human heart, so much softer than stone, can be made to "hear". One of the purposes of all the great miracles that Hashem performed throughout the many lands the Jews traveled through was to show the world his greatness. As the Bnei Yisroel sojourned, hundreds of

non-Jews converted with the realization that Hashem is the true G-d. No matter how hard the heart of a person is, it can surely be penetrated. At this point in time, this was the Jewish message. It was important for each and every Jew themselves to know that Hashem was indeed in their lives and that they should never forsake this. They had to realize that they were a lone beacon of light in a dark

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THE MOURNING OF DARKNESS

Moshe Warsawsky, Mesivta Graduate

ויראו כל העדה כי גוע אהרן ויבנו את אהרן שלשים יום כל בית ישראל

The *gemara* in *Maseches Makos* [יב:] teaches us that during the forty years that Klal Yisrael was in the *Midbar*, *Machane Levi* served as the *Orei Miklat* for those who killed inadvertently. The *mishnah* on the previous *daf* tells us that the mother of the Kohen Gadol would supply various needs, provisions, as well as gifts to the killers in the *Orei Miklat*. The reason for this is because these people shouldn't daven that the Kohen Gadol die prematurely, this being the only means through which they would be allowed to leave the city. The *gemara* there explains that the reason why the murderers leave the *Orei Miklat* at this time is because the Kohen Gadol at the time of the trial should have davened that the person be acquitted of the charges brought against him. Since the Kohen Gadol's *tefillos* weren't successful, he is responsible on some level by Hashem's account, for the murderer being exiled.

Reb Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk explains in his *Meshech Chochmah* that when the *pasuk* says "ויבנו . . . כל בית ישראל", the *pasuk* is telling us something much deeper. Aside from the fact the Aharon was *שלום אוהב שלום*, he merited that *all* of Klal Yisrael mourn for him. This means that not a single person was not in a state of bereavement over their leader's death.

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In this week's parsha we find the death of two great leaders of Klal Yisroel, Aharon HaKohen and Miriam HaNeviyah. These two gedolim along with Moshe Rabbeinu all died in a very special way, known as *misas neshika*. However, there is a big difference between the death of Miriam to that of Moshe and Aharon. By the death of Aharon HaKohen, Hashem gave Moshe specific details as to how to take care of the burial. Moshe was commanded to take Eliezer along with Aharon to Hor Horhar, undress him, and he will die there. Moshe Rabbeinu fulfilled what was told to him, and Klal Yisroel mourned Aharon's death for thirty days.

Furthermore, by Moshe Rabbeinu the Torah says he died with no twinge of pain, was laid to rest by Hashem Himself, and to this day nobody knows where his *kever* is located. He was 120 at the time of his *petirah*, didn't go blind, wasn't plagued with weakness or strain, and Klal Yisroel once again mourned the loss of their leader for thirty days.

We find by Miriam however, that the Torah doesn't even state a full *pasuk* in describing her *petirah*. All we are told is that Miriam died and they buried her.

What was so different about Miriam compared to her brothers? They were all great leaders, and
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IN~DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Avi Lieberman

HaRav Simcha Zissel Ziv zt' The Alter of Kelm 5584 / 1824 - 5658 / 1898

- Simchah Zissel was born in Kelm in 5584 (1824).
- His father, Reb Yisroel, belonged to the well-known Lithuanian Broide family.
- His mother, Chaya, was descended from HaRav Tzvi Ashkenazi zt', author of *Shu"t Chacham Tzvi*.
- Reb Simchah Zissel married Chaya Leah, daughter of R' Mordechai of Vidzh, a small town adjacent to Kelm.
- Following his marriage he travelled to Kovno, where he studied Torah and *mussar* under his foremost mentor, HaRav Yisroel Salanter zt', in R' Tzvi Neviezer's *beis hamedrash*.
- HaRav Yisroel later sent him to Zagor, to reinforce the *beis hamussar* that had been opened there.
- For a short time, Reb Simcha Zissel delivered *shiurim* in the town of Kretinga.
- Years later, Reb Simcha Zissel remarked that Darwin was able to formulate his theory of evolution only because he had never seen a real human being. Thus he could view men as no more than smarter monkeys. "Had he seen my teacher, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, who developed his character traits to a degree of perfection that fully expressed the essence of the Divine Image, he never could have entertained the possibility that human beings evolved from monkeys," said the Alter.
- After he had spent almost a year in St. Petersburg, then the largest city in Czarist Russia, the communal leaders brought Reb Simchah Zissel a signed document of appointment as their rav.
- Despite this, Reb Simcha Zissel was unwilling to accept a rabbinical position. He did however



Reb Nochum Zev Ziv
The Alter's son

propose his friend, with whom he had learned together in Kovno, HaRav Yitzchok Blaser zt', for the position.

- When he was almost forty years old, Reb Simcha Zissel opened his great project, the Talmud Torah of Kelm.
- The Talmud Torah of Kelm was a n antidote to and a sanctuary from the *Haskolah* movement which was gaining influence everywhere and causing a serious danger to religious life in Lithuania.
- The Talmud Torah opened in approximately 5622 (1862) and it attracted young students, mostly thirteen and fourteen year olds.
- The Alter wanted to shape the personalities of his talmidim and develop both their Torah knowledge and their progress in *mussar* so that they would be able to resist the harsh spiritual winds that were then blowing from the treacherous *Haskolah* movement.
- Ten years after its opening, in 5632 (1872), the Alter purchased a plot of land where he erected the building for the Talmud Torah.
- Unfortunately, only four years later in 5636 (1876), trouble began when the institution was denounced to the authorities, who began to watch it closely and to hound it.
- The Alter thereby decided to open his yeshiva elsewhere, choosing Grobin in the Kurland province. He arranged for the purchase of a fine building, situated in a spacious yard that was designed with a main study hall, smaller rooms for *shiurim*, a dining room and dormitories.
- Five years later, the Alter was forced to return to Kelm due to his failing health which began to to

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REUVEN DAVIES (continued from page 1)

world and that they were to shine it into every person, even one with a hard heart, as we saw done to Pharaoh many years before.

When Moshe hit the rock, even though the desired result of the water flowing was achieved, the cost of the lesson lost was tremendous. Indeed the lesson may have been lost but what was lost next was even worse - Moshe was not allowed to go into Eretz Yisroel! Moshe has lost the end of his quest, and Bnei Yisroel has lost their leader. It's true that Moshe didn't properly fulfill Hashem's request - but why such a harsh punishment? Surely, Moshe didn't merit such a decree over this seemingly small thing? Moreover, there appears to be a number of problems with this scenario. What is the difference between this time when Hashem asked Moshe to speak to the rock, and the time almost forty years earlier when the Bnei Yisroel had just left Mitzraim and Hashem told Moshe to hit the rock? Why is speaking to the rock and bringing out water a higher level than hitting the rock and bringing out water from it? Certainly both are supernatural occurrences? What greater fostering of faith in the Almighty would have resulted from speaking to the rock as opposed to hitting it? Why didn't Moshe

speak to the rock, hitting it not once but twice? Finally, how does the punishment of not going into Eretz Yisroel fit the crime?

The Slonimir Rebbe explains that the message of Hashem in this situation was that of speaking. The only way for Bnei Yisroel to enter Eretz Yisroel would be by realizing that Hashem is doing all the work; and their davening and praying specifically to Hashem is what made them the chosen people. Therefore, to speak to the rock was more appropriate than hitting the rock, since hitting was an action of man and it would show that perhaps man was doing part of the job and mislead the people that perhaps Moshe was partly in charge.

Moshe however had different views. He thought the exact opposite. Through his deep understanding of Klal Yisroel, he thought that an action of man was exactly what was needed to keep the people in shape. Moshe thought that the Bnei Yisroel needed to be taught that they too must carry their own. That miracles didn't just happen by themselves and that they needed to do some service of action, rather than sit back and let Hashem do all the work. As for the incident after *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* when he hit the rock, Moshe

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STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

by Avi Lieberman

A rebbe in a certain yeshiva was having conferences one night with parents of the talmidim in the class. As the evening went on, a certain person walked in whom the rebbe couldn't imagine was a parent – perhaps a grandparent? He was amazed to hear that this man was indeed the father of a young child in his class.

“If you don't mind my asking,” the rebbe inquired. “You are a bit older than most of the other parents here tonight – how is this possible?”

The father smiled knowingly at the rebbe and replied, “In truth, it is a pure miracle that brings me here tonight.”

It is well known that since the terrors and destruction of the Holocaust, the Skulener Rebbe *shlit"a* accepted upon himself never to sleep in a bed. He has adhered to this practice his entire life since then, except for a two-year period of sickness. Furthermore, the Rebbe has no set time for sleeping altogether. At random times throughout the day, the Rebbe will occasionally fall asleep for a few moments and then arise to continue with his constant *avodas Hashem*.

With this in mind, the father began telling his son's rebbe how he and his wife had given up on having children a long time ago. One particular day, the Skulener Rebbe *shlit"a* was in the area receiving visitors. This man decided to go for a bracha, and waited on line for a long time until he was eventually only one person away. The person in front of him

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The Skulener Rebbe *shlit"a*

MOSHE WARSAWSKY (continued from page 1)

The reason that the *entire* house of Jewry bewailed the death of Aharon is because there was not even a single inadvertent murder in his time. We know this fact, because had there been one murderer in *Machaneh Levi* he would have at least been happy that Aharon's death allowed him to return home. Emphasizing that all Bnei Yisroel had feelings of sadness and mourning for Aharon HaKohen testifies to his greatness in always davening for the generation during his glorious reign of *kehunah*.

In our times, we aren't *zoche* to a Kohen Gadol, king, or even a *shofeit* to daven for Klal Yisrael and lead us as one nation. We do however have our own *teffilos*, and if we daven for each other our prayers carry much more within them. May we all merit to unify our prayers, causing our voices to be heard as one – ultimately leading us to Hashem's reign over the entire world. Good Shabbos!

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they all died through *misas neshika*? I would like to suggest that the answer might be that the Torah wanted to teach us a lesson in the *inyun* of modesty (see Rashi on *misas Miriam*), which is why the Torah kept the death of Miriam so short. Hashem didn't want us to get caught up and spend a lot of time discussing such intricate details of women. In doing so, the Torah was praising Miriam in great way, using her death as a time to teach such a powerful lesson.

Today, especially during the summer months, some people are not so careful about what they wear, and for most people, their reasoning is based on not being so familiar with the halachos involved. An example of this is the fact that the halachos of modesty apply to men, not only to women. Furthermore, the concept of *tzinus* applies to how we dress, as well as what we say, listen to or even look at. It is this principle that many *seforim* describe as the difference between man and animal.

One domineering example of how powerful this area is, can be found in the works of Rav Amnon Yitzchak *shlit"a*, who has brought hundreds if not thousands of people to the right path. Rav Amnon Yitzchak has been asked by many women what they can do to save them from their dire situations, and are told to take the step of covering their hair and being careful with what they wear. It is also well known that when receiving visitors, the present Sklunerer Rebbe *shlit"a* will usually give a young child a pat on the head, indicating that he should get a bigger yarmulke and be careful of "*lo sasuru acharei einechem*" – to be vigilant in what you look at. It is no wonder that people have pointed out that TV stands for "*time v(w)aster*" – an object to pass the time (actually to kill it) rather than use the time to grow in *yiras shomayim* and *ahavas Hashem*. Through our adherence to these halachos and care regarding this matter, may we merit to strive in our *Yiddishkeit* and succeed in our desired goals and ambitions.

IN-DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

deteriorate in 5641 (1881), and which necessitated his spending long periods in his home, which was in Kelm.

- When the Alter returned to Kelm, *bachurim* from the town and the surrounding areas gathered around him, returning the city to a great *mussar* center.
- From his home in Kelm, the Alter continued operating the Talmud Torah in Grobin, where he put his distinguished son, Reb Nochum Zev Ziv *zt'l*, in charge.
- Running the yeshiva under such conditions proved too difficult and Reb Simchah Zissel decided to close the yeshiva. He sent a member of his family to consult HaRav Yisroel Salanter who was then in Germany.
- HaRav Yisroel dismissed the idea out of hand and the Talmud Torah remained open in Grobin until 5646 (1886), when the Alter's health deteriorated so much that he almost collapsed. His doctors warned him that there was real danger to his life if he would continue making the supreme effort that the continued running of the institution in Grobin demanded.



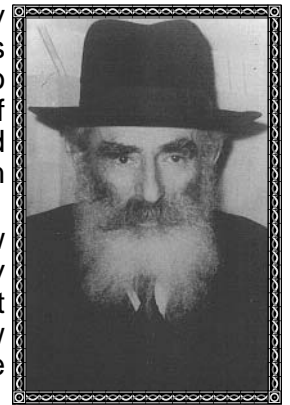
Reb Tzvi Hirsh Braude, Menahel of the Talmud Torah of Kelm, son-in-law and nephew of the Alter

With the closure of Grobin, the focus of the Alter's work shifted back to Kelm, which now reassumed its former prominence.

- The Alter and Reb Leizer Telzer had learned together under HaRav Yisroel Salanter and they knew each other very well. During the period that Reb Leizer had served as rov of Kelm, he would visit the Alter's home every

Shabbos morning following *tefillah*, and would sit for several hours discussing *divrei Torah*.

- Reb Leizer said that his friend had been fluent in three *sedorim* of *Shas*, at a level where he knew every single Rashi and Tosafos word for word. He was also fluent in all four divisions of *Shulchan Oruch*, and could locate any given halacha with pinpoint precision.
- The Alter's love for his fellow man knew no bounds. HaRav Elya Lopian *zt'l* related that once, when the Alter saw some gentiles at a funeral, he sighed and commented, "Until a moment before his death, he could have converted and become a Jew".
- In a similar vein, HaRav Chatzkel Levenstein related that when the Alter was once present at the funeral of a gentile, he said to his companions, "Now though, he sees the truth."
- The Alter established a group that was known as *Devek Tov*, comprised of his foremost *talmidim*. He shared a special relationship with the group's members, and he worked on writing out his discourses for them, which demanded more strength than he had.
- Many illustrious *gedolim* came from the walls of Kelm and went on to build the postwar yeshiva world. Some of them were HaRav Yeruchem Levovitz *zt'l*, HaRav Dessler *zt'l*, HaRav Chatzkel Levenstein *zt'l* and HaRav Elya Lopian *zt'l*.
- A number of the Alter's *talmidim* settled in Eretz Yisroel in 5652 (1892), opening the *Beis*



Rav Chatzkel Levenstein *zt'l*
Mirrer Mashgiach
Talmid of the Alter

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HaMussar in Yerushalayim, under the Alter's aegis and with his support.

- In 5657 (1897), the famous Yeshivas Or Chodosh was opened by the Alter's talmidim in Chotzer Strauss in the Old City. The yeshiva was headed by the rov of Yerushalayim, HaRav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l.
- Reb Yeruchem Levovitz zt'l, the famous Mirrer Mashgiach would tell over how every movement that the Alter made was the result of forethought.
One example of the Alter's self control was that he never let his gaze wander sideways. When he needed to look at something that was to one side of him, he turned his whole body in that direction and looked at it straight on. Generally in Kelm, turning one's head to the side, unless it was for a very good reason, was considered something to be ashamed of.
- The Alter passed away on erev Tisha B'Av 5658 (1898), shortly after having recited the morning *Krias Shema*. He was *niftar* while in the middle of *ezras avoseinu*, bringing the first glorious chapter of the history of Kelm mussar to a close.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM (continued from page 3)

had asked the Rebbe for a bracha for his wife to have children. Yet as the Rebbe began to concentrate on the man's request, he slowly drifted into a slumber. The man waited respectfully for fifteen minutes. Then thirty. Forty-five minutes passed. After a little more than an hour, the man respectfully backed away as he couldn't wait any longer, leaving this older man standing in front of the Rebbe.

Alas! The Rebbe suddenly awoke a few minutes later, looked up and stated to this other person, "Im Yirtzeh Hashem your wife will give birth within a year!"

Now turning to his child's rebbe, the father replied, "Close to a year later, my wife gave birth to our only son, giving me reason to be here with you tonight."

Imagine the power of the words of a tzaddik! A person such as the Skulener Rebbe who is always so careful as to what comes out of his mouth – refraining from *lashon hara*, always careful in his conversations and scrupulous and meticulous in making sure that his words never deviate even the slightest bit from the truth. When such a person states something, how can Hashem make him a liar when he's always so careful not to be?



The Skulener Rebbe *shlit'a* on his recent visit to Queens on behalf of *Chesed L'Avraham*

REUVEN DAVIES (continued from page 3)

reasoned that if many years back after witnessing the greatest miracles on earth they needed to see the rock hit to give water - surely they would need it *now*! Especially with the *eigel* behind them and the problems with the *Miraglim*, Klal Yisroel would now need to put in physical effort - hitting the rock. This was unfortunately another grave miscalculation on Moshe's part. The vast difference between years earlier when Moshe had to hit the rock, and now, when it was appropriate to speak to the rock, is that now the Jewish people had already received the Torah. The Torah is the source and foundation of the world packaged into words, and Hashem wanted to convey to the People their now more appropriate meaning.

This helps us understand the punishment and how it fits with the action. Speaking to the rock was meant to bring all the people closer to Hashem from within. This fostering of faith is not adding something new by doing some external action to ourselves, but rather finding Hashem within us already. Since Moshe hit the rock, he held back this extremely important lesson from the Children of Israel, which was an important component for their entrance into Eretz Yisroel.

Due to this grave unforeseen error on Moshe's part, he thus blocked himself from entering the holy land.

In the road of life we must understand that without following Hashem's instructions we cannot survive. We must remember that we must serve Hashem through tefillah and Torah. By davening to Him daily and learning His Torah we must gain the understanding that Hashem is our sole Provider and Protector - the One who truly makes the world go round. Yet we must also take a lesson from Moshe's mistake and remember that actions can have a strong effect as well, as long as it's done in accordance with Hashem's directive. It is our actions that define our people and show other nations our respect to our forefathers and the immense *mesiras nefesh* displayed by our people throughout history. We must remember through the trials of Moshe to select our options carefully and make sure we are fulfilling both our actions and words with the proper intentions and correct objectives. Through our vigilance and diligence in such actions, may we soon merit to greet our leader in *Eretz HaKedoshah*, with Mashiach's arrival and our ultimate redemption.

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן בְּהַר הָהָר עַל גְּבוּל אֶרֶץ אֲדוֹם לֵאמֹר, יֵאָסֵף אַהֲרֹן אֶל עַמּוּ. . . [כ:כג-כד]
 AND HASHEM SPOKE TO MOSHE AND AHARON AT HOR HA HAR, NEAR THE BORDER OF THE LAND OF EDOM, SAYING, 'AHARON WILL BE GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE...'

Rashi on this *parsha* elucidates the connection between these two *pesukim*. He explains that it was because Bnei Yisroel attempted to become friendly with the nation of *Edom* that they were punished with the loss of Aharon HaKohen, one of their great leaders. HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l explains that when sent an envoy to the king of *Edom* asking for permission to pass through his land, they approached him using the phrase, "כה אמר אחיך ישראל," So says your brother, Bnei Yisroel." The fact that Bnei Yisroel displayed closeness with the wicked nation of *Edom* - as shown by their referral to *Edom* as a brother - was viewed as a mistake which Bnei Yisroel would have to be disciplined for. Their punishment was the loss of Aharon HaKohen, and all the miracles that Bnei Yisroel had merited on his behalf.



nonetheless may not recognize any unique connection with them. The trouble with Bnei Yisroel's actions in the *midbar* was that they related to *Edom* as close relatives, without the detachment that the Torah requires.

Rav Yaakov continues by pointing out why it was necessary for Bnei Yisroel to approach *Edom* in the first place. Obviously, Bnei Yisroel had no expectations of a warm reception, nor would they receive permission to pass through *Edom's* land, so why did they even bother asking? Rav Yaakov explains that this charade was necessary in order to be able to conquer the lands of *Sichon* and *Og* later on. Hashem wanted Bnei Yisroel to be able to overpower these lands, as part of the *mitzvah* of conquering Eretz Yisroel, and keep them as part of their territory. However,

However, there is a question on this Rashi. Elsewhere, the Torah admonishes us not to detest the nation of *Edom*, as they are our brothers. [ספר דברים כג:ח] How then could Bnei Yisroel be found at fault for expressing a relationship with *Edom*?

Rav Yaakov answers that obviously the Torah recognizes the biological connection that we have with *Edom*, and it was for this reason that we are commanded not to despise them. However, it is nevertheless forbidden for any Jew to feel any familial relationship or brotherhood with them, as they are complete *reshaim*. While we still may not hate them, as the Torah has commanded us not to, we

after seeing the miracles that were performed for Bnei Yisroel in *Mitzrayim*, no nation would have dared to start up with Bnei Yisroel. *Sichon* and *Og* would have let Bnei Yisroel pass through their lands without a fight. Therefore, Hashem had Bnei Yisroel approach *Edom* and then back away, as if to show the world that Bnei Yisroel were weak, and could not fight a war. As such, when Bnei Yisroel requested permission to pass through the land of *Sichon*, he responded by coming out to wage war with this supposedly weakened nation. Bnei Yisroel fought back, and was able to conquer the lands that Hashem wished them to have as an inheritance.

Rav Moshe Wolfson *shlit"l* was once sitting in his office together with Rabbi Zev Smith when there was a knock at the door. Many have the habit of knocking on a door and then opening it slightly, but this time it did not open at all. "Whoever is knocking is a *baal derech erez*," Rav Wolfson remarked before saying, "Come in." The door opened and in walked Rav Avraham Pam zt"l.

The *gemara* states that there is but one weapon with which to fight the evil inclination: "I have created the *yetzer hara* and I have created Torah as its antidote [Maseches Kiddushin :30]." The Chofetz Chaim comments, "The *yetzer hara* doesn't mind if a Jew fasts and sheds tears and davens all day long - as long as he doesn't learn Torah!"

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