HASHGACHA **PRATIS**

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



Parshs Pesach 5784

Issue 137

HEART TO HEART

Duties of the Heart, Shaar Bitachon, given on the Hotline

I Tried, and...

We've always been accustomed to saying "Im yirtzeh Hashem." A child understands that this refers to an unknown time, and adults understand that this expresses a true desire to do what one was asked to do; but only those who think into the expression grasp its true significance: This thing will come about only if Hashem visbarach wants it to happen.

When we are asked to do something for someone else, there are two possible outcomes: Either we'll succeed in actually doing it, and the other person will benefit, or we won't, and the other person will not benefit through us.

Rabbenu Bachvai directs us regarding how to act when we are asked for a favor. The first stage is to remember Who decided whether this favor will be done, and to say, "Im yirtzeh Hashem." We are only messengers, and He Alone does everything. All that we can give is generosity of heart, desire, and effort. The results are not in our hands.

When we achieve the hoped-for result, we are happy that we were zocheh to be the messengers to do something good for another person. If we were zocheh and succeeded, then we give thanks to the Creator of the world Who enabled the success of the mission, so that the other person benefited through us. We remember well that He is the Navigator of all circumstances, and He is the One Who brought us the opportunity that enabled us to achieve

Offering deep thanks to Hashem yisbarach saves us from pride. We then don't expect anything in return from the other person, and we don't anticipate his gratitude. We know we have done our mission, and that is enough. Rabbenu Bachyai's instructions bring us a great deal of serenity. How much pain and agmas nefesh do people experience when they anticipate certain responses from others, but the reactions they receive differ from their expectations.

Certainly, if someone did me a favor, I am obligated to show hakaras hatov to that messenger of the Creator, but when I do a favor for someone, I remember that I am only a part of the chain of circumstances that Hashem orchestrated, and I thank Hashem for the zechus that I was granted. This is as Rabbenu Bachyai taught (Chapter 4): If the favor was completed through him, and he became a part of the circumstances that benefited another, he should give thanks for this.

And what happens when we want to do another

person a favor and we don't succeed? I wanted to bring a package from Bnei Brak to Yerushalavim, but today in particular there were severe problems with transportation, and when the bus finally arrived, there was traffic on the way, and the package did not arrive at its destination on time. Or, I wanted to help someone get his son accepted in a yeshivah, and I made a few phone calls to important people, and even embarrassed myself a bit, but the bachur was not accepted in the yeshivah his father wanted; or the clothing was not altered to the other's satisfaction, or the shidduch didn't close, or the renovations didn't end, or the information was not passed on, or the price didn't go down, or the account remained in the red, or the apartment wasn't sold...

Often the yetzer hara tries to cause a person to stumble through feelings of guilt. Look, he tells the person severely, what a klutz you are, how worthless you are. You can't even succeed in doing a Yid a favor. He plagues the person with thoughts that weaken him and prevent him from trying to do his friend a favor the next time. Rabbenu Bachyai tells us: And if he is prevented from doing a favor because the opportunity didn't come his way, he should not blame himself. Feelings of guilt are absolutely extraneous. The reason the favor did not come about was that "Hashem had a reason." This was the decree of the King above! It may seem that this happened because of transportation problems or because of the mashgiach or the neighbor or the mistake, but the true reason is that this was Hashem's will! As we said, when we want to do something, we say "Im yirtzeh Hashem." Sometimes Hashem will want it to happen, and sometimes He will not.

Therefore, we should remain calm in the face of failure, and never forget Rabbenu Bachyai's directive to tell the person that you tried to help him in every way possible. We should tell the person in the most direct way that we did everything we could. If the other person believes that we truly tried, he'll understand and will forgive us and even thank us.

How proper it is to act in accordance with the instructions of Shaar Habitachon. How many difficult feelings we are spared when we act as we should, without pride, anger, hard feelings, insult, lack of respect, or guilt. Rather, we live lives of emunah, lives of serenity and true joy. Ashrei ha'am shekacha lo.

FROM THE EDITOR

One Hundred Floors at Once

"Patience!" the father tells his young son. "You're only three years old. First you'll learn the aleph-beis and nekudos, and only afterwards you'll learn Chumash and Mishnayos. You don't start learning from the big Gemara in one second.'

We have to do things in order. Step by step. You can't jump instantly to the highest level. This applies not only to children. An adult Yid who has only begun to know his Creator still has a ways to go. We don't expect him to get to the highest level in one shot.

But on Pesach something extraordinary occurred. The word pesach means that Hakadosh Baruch Hu went from one Egyptian home to another while skipping over the homes of Am Yisrael. The Ari Hakadosh reveals (Pri Etz Chaim 21) that the name Pesach symbolizes the internal essence of the Yom Tov, which is skipping over all the natural processes and making a leap

Klal Yisrael was in a very difficult spiritual state. Chazal tell us that Bnei Yisrael were stripped of all mitzvos. And then, in one shot, Hashem skipped the regular process. Bnei Yisrael reached such high levels, and they were drawn to Hakadosh Baruch Hu heart and soul. They skipped over all the processes, and in one shot they were lifted from the lowest place to the loftiest heights of dveikus in Hashem.

And this leap takes place every year!

Sometimes a Yid is in a certain situation and he feels, I can't do this. Who am I to rise? I'm in such a terrible state, even if I make every possible effort, I'll have to go through so much.... Despair threatens to overwhelm him.

This Yid is correct. A person cannot do anything. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu is kol yachol. In one moment He can lift every person to the loftiest heights.

The *heilige* Reb Yoel of Satmar *zy"a* compared this to a person who asked his friend, "Please come to my home, to the hundredth floor." The friend could not understand - how do you want me to walk up one hundred floors? Then the person went on to say, "I want you to do this within sixty seconds."

Here his friend could not remain silent. "How do you think I could possibly go up one hundred floors - something that should take at least two hours - within one minute?"

But if the friend is wise, he understands that all he needs to do is take one step and press one button. Go into an elevator and press 100.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't ask us to raise ourselves through our own weak efforts; all He wants is for us to take that one step and press the button.

We can say that the one step into the elevator is emunah, and the pressing of the button is tefillah. Once a Yid believes that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can take him to the highest place in a mere second, he davens for each and every thing, without limits or bounds.

Let us believe and ask, this Yom Tov, that Hashem raise us to the highest and best place, both spiritually and physically.

> Pesach kasher v'sameiach! Pinchas Shefer

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Another Mitzvah Before the Wedding

Baruch Hashem, I had the zechus to have a house full of good, tzniusdig girls. People say that girls are a great find on Erev Pesach, which is true not only for us but for everyone around us. People know to ask our girls for help, and if they can, the girls help out happily.

One day I got a call from an *avreich* in the neighborhood. He apologized profusely and explained that the situation in his home was complicated. His wife was not feeling well. She could not prepare for Pesach, and he was really at a loss. In addition, he had a very important guest coming that evening, and they had to get the house organized. He did not have the means to pay for cleaning help, and he wanted to ask, if possible, that I send one of my daughters to make Pesach for him.

I told him, "Don't worry. *Im yirtzeh Hashem*, I'll send someone to help you."

I went over to one of my daughters and told her about the family that needed help, but she was exhausted. That day she'd worked very hard cleaning parts of our house that demanded a great deal of effort. She was simply unable to fulfill my request.

I saw this and approached my oldest daughter, who is already a *kallah*, *baruch Hashem*, and told her, "Come catch a mitzvah before your wedding. There's a family here that's stuck; they're not able to clean for Pesach. Please go over to them, and you'll know what to do there..."

She agreed happily, and she left right away.

As soon as she got there she understood the situation, and she started working immediately – clearing up, cleaning, organizing, shining, polishing. A few hours later the house was sparkling.

A few minutes before she was to leave, someone knocked at the door. The guest had arrived – a Yid from Antwerp. He greeted everyone, and he asked, "Who is this girl?" It didn't make sense to him that she was part of the family.

My daughter felt acutely uncomfortable. She wanted to slip away and leave, but the guest was interested in knowing what she was doing there, and the *ba'al habayis* said she had come to help, and she was the one who had cleaned and shined the house.

Later, I heard the rest of the story. The *avreich* related to the guest that this "cleaning lady" was a *kallah*, and her wedding was supposed to take place in Sivan.

"If so," the guest said after a brief moment of thought, "I want to give this *kallah* ten thousand dollars, for *hachnassas kallah*."

When I heard this I thought these were mere words. A dream. Probably the guest was excited to see that someone was helping his family and wanted to give the impression that he was super-generous.

But I was amazed to see that, indeed, af-

He Doesn't Travel During the Zman

I am from Yerushalayim, an *avreich* in the Mir, and Torah is my life. I own an apartment in Be'er Sheva, which I rent out, and the rent money is a very significant part of my *parnassah*.

I rented the apartment to one person for many years, and one day the tenant informed me that he was leaving. Now I had to start from scratch, finding a new tenant

This did not disturb me much, since I don't deal with it myself. I have a phone number of a reliable real estate agent in the area, so I called and told him briefly the entire undramatic story: My tenant is leaving; please find me a new tenant.

The agent advertised the apartment and brought people to see it. At that point all the potential tenants backed off. They only had to smell the leftover food of the previous tenant, and they fled.

The agent called me and said, "Listen, the way this apartment looks, no one will want to take it. If you want to rent out the apartment you'll need to come to clean and organize it, and then people will want to live in it."

I called the tenant who left. He claimed he'd left the apartment in reasonable condition. Apparently, what he considered reasonable was not considered reasonable at all by anyone who came to view it for a moment. While I hadn't imagined that he'd left me an apartment that was clean for Pesach, in fact he'd left it in a state that was not livable even before Pesach.

It seemed I had to travel from Yerushalayim to Beer Sheva, but how was I to do such a thing? I learn in *kolle!*! Torah is my full-time occupation, not just a title. It is the simple truth of my life. I am not willing to miss learning in *kollel*, come what may. Traveling to Beer Sheva takes time; taking care of the apartment takes time; and this would mean missing hours of my learning in *kollel*. This was not happening – simply not happening.

I decided that throughout the *zman* I would not go to Beer Sheva. I would go during *bein hazmanim* and take care of things. Until then, either people would understand that the problem in the apartment was simply a need for organization, and it would be worthwhile for them to rent it and organize it themselves, or the apartment would wait. In the meantime, I asked someone to advertise the apartment for rent, so that when the time came, I'd be able to rent it out.

On the first day of *bein hazmanim*, the tenth of Av, I traveled to Beer Sheva, but not before begging the Creator of the world to help me. *Ribbono shel Olam*, I said, when the grocer opens his grocery store, You send him parnassah through the grocery. Now I am opening my "grocery store," so please, send me hatzlachah, and help me find the proper tenant. I asked Hashem to help it happen quickly, since it was unpleasant for me to walk around near the apartment, where extra *shemiras einayim* was necessary.

When I arrived at the apartment I discovered that the agent hadn't exaggerated in the least. The apartment was a huge mess. Mattresses, utensils, dirt, and all sorts of other unidentifiable objects filled it. The apartment needed a solid and most basic cleansing.

I rolled up my sleeves and got started. I worked quickly, and from one hour to the next, the apartment started looking habitable. I washed it down with scented cleaning products until it was ready for potential tenants to see it.

Exactly at that moment I got a call from a woman who wanted to rent out the apartment.

I told her she could come and see it, preferably that same day, since I live in Yerushalayim and I didn't know when I'd be back in Beer Sheva. The clock told me it was time for Minchah, and a minyan would be starting soon in the nearby shul, so I arranged for her to come in another hour. Why in an hour? Because I wanted to do a few more things. I would have to daven, say *Parshas Ha'man*, and complete a few other things that I don't compromise on. Hakadosh Baruch Hu arranges everything – the apartment and the tenants – and I had only to do my part and fulfill my obligations to Him. I wasn't afraid that the tenant would run away. Either she'd have the patience to wait, or someone else would come instead of her. I was doing what I had to do. This is the constant argument between the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer tov*. Both of them say: *If not now, when*? The *yetzer hara*

On the giving end

I went through a very complex medical situation. The prognosis was frightening, and the treatment I received was not helping. I told myself, I need physical strength, and there are many Jews who need spiritual chizuk. I'll do something to bring chizuk to other Yidden, and with Hashem's help I will be strengthened phys-

chizuk to other Yidden, and with Hashem's help I will be strengthened physically. I committed to spreading emunah in Hashem by donating toward the dissemination of the pamphlets in a certain place for a full year. Today, several months after my initial donation, there is an amazing improvement in my medical condition. According to the doctors, within a short time everything will pass.

On the receiving end

I am a 24-year-old bachur. Almost all my friends are already married, and some already have children; all my cousins who are the same age as me are married, and some have children. Younger cousins are already engaged, and in yeshivah I see younger bachurim getting engaged and married. My younger sister is already married, and I don't know how I would hold up if not for your holy phone line, which I listen to every day. There was a time when I did not listen and almost despaired of my situation. I have no words to thank you for the phone line and for your newsletters. You have no idea how much this is helping Am Yisrael.

says, "If you don't answer the tenant now, you'll pay a heavy price for delaying," but the *yetzer tov* says, "If you don't daven now, when will you daven?" And I had to decide who to listen to.

You can understand what I decided.

After davening I went back to the apartment, and the woman arrived and was very excited about it. She signed a contract on the spot, not for a year, but for two years. Not for the 1300 shekels a month that the last tenant had paid, but for 1400 shekels, and all this without any agent's fees.

But that's not all. The previous tenant was sued for having left the apartment the way he did, and he paid up. The new tenant asked me to put a gate around the yard, and then she herself added grass and upgraded the whole look of the apartment. A year later she had to leave, but since she had signed a two-year contract, she had to bring a new tenant herself.

I told her that since she'd invested in the apartment, she could ask the new tenant for a higher price and take the difference for herself throughout the coming year. This is how it is when you are a *ma'amin*. You can let someone else gain as well. With this behavior I had the *zechus* of making a *kiddush Hashem*.

And so the apartment in Beer Sheva – located right near the ancient tent of Avraham Avinu, the first disseminator of *emunah* – was rented out.

After Giving an Envelope, He Took Out Something Else

I arrived at a wedding and heard the voice of a dear friend singing in the background. His pleasant voice gets everyone dancing, his singing is uplifting, and his excitement seems to come from another world. You could truly feel that he is not only doing his job, he is singing from a place of true inner joy. I thought to myself that since we both found ourselves in the same place, it would be proper for me to talk to him a bit.

I waited for a break and went over to him to say hello. After a short, friendly exchange, my friend related the story behind his singing. Then I understood how, indeed, this was not the standard type of singing, rather it was the singing of the angels who do Hashem's will.

This is what he related:

When they invited me to sing at this *chasunah*, the wedding of an orphaned bride, I decided not to take money. This would be my contribution toward *hachnassas kallah*. While this is a truly large contribution -I would be giving up on \$4000 -I hoped I would be able to follow through. I very much wanted to do so.

Yesterday, on Tuesday, I thought about the wedding that was to take place today — Wednesday, and I felt that the decision was indeed not simple for me to carry out. Going out for an entire night and singing to the ends of your *kochos* is not an easy thing. While seeing the singer on the stage makes a nice impression, in truth, like any other job, it has its difficulties and requires a great deal of exertion. People are willing to do a lot for money; so am I.

I want to do for my *neshamah* as well, and therefore, when I sing I don't think about money, but rather about the joy of the *chassan* and *kallah*, and in general, about causing *Yidden* to rejoice. It's a great mitzvah to be happy, and if I help other *Yidden* achieve happiness, then this is truly *zikui harabbim*.

From time to time I love doing pure *chessed*. Singing in honor of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, singing in honor of the holy *Shechinah* – to sing at the time when we pick up a fragment of the ruins of Yerushalayim and bring the *geulah* closer – just like that, without any financial calculations.

You should just know that it's difficult. Something inside you wakes up immediately and tells you, Hashem gave you this talent so that you can make money from it. What gives you the right to forgo the money? You need to bring bread home for your children. It's not a simple matter to decide that you're not going to take money.

The voices that rose inside me left me completely confused. I no longer knew who was the *yetzer hara* and who was the *yetzer tov*, but I felt that my desire to sing without receiving payment was the most proper desire. I davened to Hashem and said: "Ribbono shel Olam, I want very much to sing tomorrow at the wedding for free. Please, bring me the money from another source!"

So yesterday at the wedding, the dancing ended and I started gathering my instruments, wiping off my sweat, and waiting to get paid. The *mechutan* arrived, all beaming, took out an envelope, and told me, "This is the payment we spoke about." Then he took out another wad of bills. "And this is the tip! Your singing is so special that you deserve it. You made me very happy!"

I blushed a bit – which was not so discernable because of the way I look after singing for three hours. I thanked him with all my heart, and later I counted the money he gave me as a tip. It was a really large tip: three thousand dollars!

I felt that my *tefillah* had been received. Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent me the money from another source.

After my friend told me this incredible story, he continued singing in his beautiful voice, "Yodu LaHashem chasdo, Yodu... v'nifle'osav livnei adam..."

ter Shavuos, just before the wedding, this Yid from Antwerp sent us ten thousand dollars!

Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give this to us, and He brought about the circumstances in such a special way.

Yesterday's Celebration and Today's Refuah

I work as a supervisor in a *cheder*, walking the hall-ways, overseeing things, and from time to time speaking with the children. Sometimes when there is a need, I speak to the *melamdim* about my impressions. Sometimes it's necessary to involve the *menahel*. My focus is mostly on recess-time, when most of the *melamdim* are in the teachers' room, and there is a need for supervision.

This was on Taanis Esther. On the previous day there had been some wild behavior that went beyond the norm of joy during Chodesh Adar, and I wanted to find out details about what had happened. I decided to question a certain boy. This was a good, gentle boy who was probably not connected at all to what had happened.

I went to the classroom and asked some *talmidim* to call the boy, whom, for the purpose of this story, we'll call Shmulik.

Shmulik came out to me, and I saw that he was a bit afraid. What does the supervisor want from me? I imagined that it must be a bit scary for him, so I started making small talk with him. "You have new glasses," I told him. "They're really nice! When did you get them?" He answered pleasantly, and while he was speaking I noticed that he had a cut above his forehead, in the place where one puts tefillin. It looked like a fresh cut, and it was still bleeding.

"When did that happen?" I asked him.

"Before, at recess," he said.

"How?

"I fell off the chair and bumped into the table."

"And did you take care of the cut?"

"Yes. I put a tissue on it."

I wasn't pleased. The cut looked too deep. I called one of the *melamdim* who knows first-aid, and he told me, "That cut doesn't look good. Get his mother to come take him to the clinic. A doctor should see this."

I called his mother, and she came to pick him up.

A few days later I called Shmulik's father to ask how he was doing, and his father told me, "Yasher koach! It's great that you advised us to get to a doctor quickly. The cut was very deep, and he needed five stitches!"

I was very emotional. I thanked Hashem, Who had put it in my heart to call out Shmulik in particular in order to ask him about something that was totally unconnected to him. It's hard to imagine what would have happened if we had discovered the cut much later. The boy is so quiet and takes care of things himself; he doesn't talk much and doesn't complain.

Hashem watches over a boy like Shmulik as well. If he doesn't hurry to tell the supervisor about his cut, the supervisor calls him over and asks him to talk about it!

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Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

Emunah Is the Root of the Entire Torah

Through *emunah* a person cleaves to the eternal Creator and will merit life in *Olam Haba*, even if he had been lost in the depths of sin. This is as it says (*Tehillim* 92:3), "...*emunah* in You during the nights," meaning that even when a person is in the depths of the darkness and depravity of

this world, which is comparable to night, which darkens and conceals the light, by strengthening himself in *emunah* he is *zocheh* to feel that Hashem is a light for him. Regarding this it is said (*Yeshayahu* 60:21), "And your nation are all *tzaddikim.*" *Am Yisrael* are *maaminim bnei maaminim*, and through *emunah* they can reach all the highest *madreigos...* and the future *geulah* will come about through *emunah*.

(Pri Tzaddik, Kedushas Hashabbos, 7)

Not to Delay the Geulah

The fourth zechus that brought about redemption for our fathers was that they placed their trust in Hashem.

But now I see, due to our many

sins, that only one person in a thousand places his trust in Hashem. Most people in the world place their trust in money, and in human beings... and the cause of this is seeing the poor as lowly beings and the wealthy as powerful, and as a result, a person does not place his trust in Hashem but rather becomes part of the group of people who flatter the wealthy. This group does not think

about the destruction of the *Mikdash* and the long, bitter *galus*, and they don't realize that they need to daven for this. On the other hand, those who place their trust in Hashem are always aware of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and of the long

galus. Therefore, a person needs to gain knowledge and awareness so that he does not push off the geulah and so that he will place his trust in Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

(Kav Hayashar ch. 82)

Through Emunah One Enters the Domain of Hakadosh Baruch Hu

The *Mechilta* tells us that we will be redeemed from exile in the *zechus* of *emunah*. When a person loses him *emunah* and distances his *neshamah* from Hashem, he has placed his *neshamah*

in *galus*, and that is manifested by his being taken into physical exile. Once a person reestablishes his firm *emunah* in Hashem, he has redeemed his *neshamah* from *galus*, and then, automatically, he will be redeemed physically.

(Maharal, Netzach Yisrael ch. 29)

As Reward for Their Emunah, Am Yisrael left Mitzrayim

Anyone who fulfills one mitzvah with emunah is worthy of having ruach hakodesh.

We find that our forefathers merited ruach hakodesh through their emunah in Hashem, and then they said shirah.

We also find that Avraham Avinu inherited this world and the Next as a result of his *emunah*.... And *Am Yisrael* was redeemed from Mitzrayim as a result of their *emunah*....

There is a gate through which all baalei emunah will pass....

As a result of our *emunah* through the nights – during difficult times – we are *zocheh* to come to *Olam Haba*, which is comparable to the morning....

And we also find that all those who are in exile will be returned as reward for *emunah*....

(Mechilta, Beshalach 15)

A Thought on Bitachon
From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

It is brought in the holy Zohar (Shemos 40b) that when a person retells the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim and rejoices, he is prepared to rejoice with Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the World to Come...and Hashem rejoices in his words. He gathers all His Heavenly entourage and tells them: Listen to the words of praise that My sons are saying, and how they are rejoicing in My salvation....

It is also brought there that as a result of our telling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, the angels on High also thank Hashem yisbarach for the miracles and for His Am kadosh. It is incumbent upon every person to thank Hashem and to relate the miracles he was zocheh to

On the night of the Seder, we want to be uplifted and come closer and to feel the Presence of the Shechinah. The best way to achieve this is through love of Hashem and love of Am Yisrael – by respecting people, especially our family members, not bearing a grudge or, chas v'shalom, becoming angry. Rather, a person needs to be happy and to thank Hashem by telling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim with humility and joy. As the Zohar says, this is what brings the Shechinah. It is very

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

The Night of the Seder – Bnei Chorin and Happy

important to read the Haggadah with emotion. This is a time for closeness to Hashem with a heart filled with humility, joy and thanks. Along with this, we need to feel hakaras hatov to our parents and family members. In Tehillim (78) Dovid Hamelech says that the reason we tell the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim for all generations is so that "they will place their trust in Hashem and will not forget Hashem's deeds, and they will observe His mitzvos." The mefarshim explain that we will trust in Hashem through remembering the miracles that He performed for us, and through that we will be inspired to keep His mitzvos.

This is the main reason we are bnei chorin on the night of the Seder – so that we come to the recognition that Hashem takes care of every detail for us today as well, and we rely only on Him. The real meaning of a ben chorin is someone who has the inner peace and serenity of one who trusts in Hashem. As described in Shaar Habitachon (ch. 1), the essence of bitachon is being free of all worries and living with Hashem in joy! This is the reason we lean to the left – because we "lean" – we rely totally – on our Father in Shamayim!



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