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The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



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# Beyond the letter of the law

By Gavriel Aharon, 10th Grade

n this week's Parsha, Avraham Avinu goes to battle to rescue his nephew Lot and in the process retrieves the captives and possessions taken from Sodom. The Kinga of Sodom offers to reward Avraham with the spoils of war. Avraham raises his hand as a vow and states, "Neither a thread nor a shoelace will I take from whatever is yours, so that you should not say, 'I have made Avram wealthy." The Gemara in Sotah says that as a reward for Avraham saying "not a thread nor a shoe lace" his descendants merited two Mitzvos, the thread of Techeles for Tzizis and the retzuos, the straps of Tefillin.

The Meforshim are confused by this connection. Why did Avraham choose to mention these trivial articles? Why wasn't it enough to say that he would take nothing at all? That certainly would have been perfectly clear. Furthermore, why indeed did he refuse to take them?

The answer lies in Avraham's attitude toward his great wealth. Rabbi Naftali Reich explains that Avraham never thought he had been blessed with wealth for his own personal benefit. Rather, he believed that Hashem had provided him with wealth so that he could spread sweetness and light in the world and draw people closer to Hashem. Even the most trivial things can be used to bring honor to Hashem's name.

Avraham, therefore, specifically mentioned threads and shoelaces to show that

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# The Challenges of Lech Lecha

By Eitan Perlysky, 12th Grade

Rabbi Frand mentioned that the Medrash Rabbah on this week's Parsha says in the name of Rav Levi that there are two times that "Lech Lecha" is written in the Chumash. One is "Lech Lecha" from the first pasuk of our parsha, Lech Lecha "Go out from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you." The second time "Lech Lecha" is said is by Akeidas Yitzchok when Avraham is told "Go out to the Land of Moriah and offer Yitzchak there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you." Rav Levi concludes that Akeidas Yitzchok was a greater test than the test of Avraham leaving his homeland and thus the second mentioning of "Lech Lecha" is "more precious to G-d".

Rabbi Frand asks, isn't it strange that Rav Levi was even puzzled by this question. Why would anyone think that the test of leaving one's homeland would be comparable to the test of the Akeida? The Akeida would be most difficult for any parent – particularly such a person as Avraham, who was known for his Chessed.

The Nesivos Shalom answers that the Akeida was a very difficult test for Avraham, but it was a "one shot affair".

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### Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

# Parshas Lech Lecha Ouestions

- 1. Aside from this parsha, where else does Hashem command Avraham with the words *Lech Lecha* "Go for yourself"?
- 2. Which two people are called brothers but weren't?
- 3. Which *Brit* ("covenant/treaty") was made between people, and not with Hashem?
- 4. Which body of water, found in Israel, is mentioned in this parsha?
- 5. Which birds are mentioned in this parsha? (3 answers)
- 6. Who was both a king and a *Kohen* (priest)? Who else in the book of Genesis is called a *Kohen*?

### Answers

- 1. When Hashem tells Avraham to sacrifice his son, He says *Lech Lecha* "And go to the land of Moriah" (Genesis 22:2).
- 2. Avraham refers to Lot and himself as "brothers" (Genesis 13:8). Avraham was actually the uncle of Lot (Genesis 11:27).
- 3. Avraham makes a *Brit* with three men in Genesis 14:13.
- 4. The Dead Sea, is mentioned in conjunction with the war of the four and the five kings (Genesis 14:3).
- 5. Three birds appear in the parsha: turtle-dove, young dove and vulture (Genesis 15:9, 11). The first two were used as part of the Brit Bein HaBetarim, and the last one came to eat the carcasses of the dead animals and birds.
- 6. Malchei-Tzedek was both the king of Shalem and "a priest to the G-d above" (14:18). Later, Yosef marries the daughter of Poti-Phera who was the "priest of On" (Genesis 41:45).



1st Aliyah- The parsha begins with Hashem telling Avram to leave his father's house and travel to the land which I (Hashem) will show him. Avram listened and took his household which consisted of his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot. As a reward for Avram listening to Hashem's words, God promises Avram that he will be a father and leader of a great nation, Bnei Yisrael. Once they arrived to the land that Hashem showed them, Eretz Canaan, Hashem told Avram that when the day comes, He will hand over this land to Bnei Yisrael. Avram travels the land until a famine forces him and his family to travel to Mitzrayim. Avram feared that they would kill him in order to take his wife Sarai so he pretended to be Sarai's brother.

2nd Aliyah- Sarai was taken to Pharaoh because of her beauty. Hashem made a miracle occur and struck Pharaoh and his household with a plague which forced Pharaoh to release Sarai from captivity. After the plague, Pharaoh gave Avram and Sarai gifts and escorted them out of Mitzrayim at which point they happily returned to Canaan.

3rd Aliyah- Throughout the past 2 Aliyos we have been talking about Avram and Sarai. But what about Lot? Lot comes into the picture now, and we learn that he is quite a wealthy man. One day, Lot's shepherds got into a fight with Avram's shepherds and as a result the two parted ways. Lot chose the way of Sodom, a city known for it's evil. After Lot left to Sodom, Hashem spoke to Avram and reiterates the promise He made him that the land will go to your generations to come and Hashem promise Avram that he will make sure the Jewish nation is numerous like the soil of the earth.

4th Aliyah- In this Aliyah, we learn about the southern part of Eretz Canaan. This part of the land where a major war involving many different kings took place. After the war, the kings that won the war took all the citizens of Sodom captive, which in-

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The complete edition of
Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers
is available on AMAZON
(keyword Torah Teasers)

# 10-Minute Given by Room Shiur Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on vutorah.org Transcribed by Chezky Rothman

# Which Days May One Recite Kiddush Levana?

When is the latest time to say Kiddush Levana?

Sanhedrin 41b: You can say Kiddush Levana until the illumination of the moon is filled in.

When is that?

1. Rav Yehuda: 7 days

• The moon has to be mostly illuminated

2. Nahardai: 16 days

The moon has to be fully illuminated

<u>Does that mean "up until and including" those days or is it only "up until" those days?</u>

- 1. Aruch Hashulchan Siman 426 Seif 11: Almost all Poskim say it does not mean including that day, because if it did, then you would be able to say Kiddush Levana on the 16th day, which doesn't make any sense.
  - You are only allowed to say it for half the month, so saying it until the 15th is already pushing it because really a month is shorter than 30 days, certainly you can't say it for 16
- 2. Shiurei Knesses Hagedolah: Really it means "up until and including" and therefore you can say it on the 16th.
  - a) Biur Halacha 426: You can rely on this leniency but you can't say it with Hashem's name.
  - "up until and including" when counting 16 and Yom Tov. days from the Moled.

What if the last night to say Kiddush Levana is Shabbos or Yom Tov?

Rav Ovadia Yosef Sefer Yabia Omer Chelek 8 Siman 41: Why don't we say Kiddush Levana on Shabbos and Yom Tov?

- 1. Maharil Hilchos Chag Hashavuos: There are techumim, boundaries, in the skies, and if you were to say Kiddush Levana you would be going outside the techum to "greet" Hashem.
  - Rashba Chelek 4 Siman 48: What Levanah! You aren't jumping to the Levana? going anywhere!
- 2. Maharil: Kiddush Levana is a bakasha and we

- shouldn't make requests on Shabbos, so we don't say Kiddush Levana
- Teshuvos Rabbeinu Avraham bar Yitzchok Av Beis din: Just like you can say the Harachamans, and Elokai Nitzor on Shabbos you can also conclude Kiddush Levana with the
- 3. Pri Chadash Siman 426: You shouldn't mix the simcha of coming before Hashem and the Simcha of Shabbos

Is there such a thing as Simchas Shabbos? Oneg Shabbat yes, Simchas Yom Tov yes, but Simchas Shabbat?

- a) Tosofos Moed Kattan 23: Simcha isn't mentioned anywhere in relation to Shabbos.
  - Shita Mekubetzes Kesubos 7: The reason not to marry on Shabbos is not because of mixing Simchos, there is no source for Simcha on Shabbos.
- b) Machzor Vitrei: Quotes a Medrash: The day of Simcha is Shabbos - so we see that Shabbos is associated with Simcha.

All these reasons are not so strong, but nevertheless it is b) Klausenberger Rebbe Siman 179: Can rely on still a Minhag not to say Kiddush Levana on Shabbos

- 1. Bach Siman 426: None of these reasons are enough to prevent you from saying Kiddush Levana, if Shabbos or Yom tov is the last night, then you should say it.
  - a) Teshuvos Rav Poalim Siman 38: That is only if it the last possible night, but if it is 2 nights before, then you should wait until after Shabbos or Yom Tov to say it.
  - b) Rav Dovid Openheim: Even if the second to last night is Shabbos do it then in order not to risk missing it.

does techum have to do with Kiddush When is the earliest time in the month to say Kiddush

moon to say the Bracha! You're not 1. Rambam Hilchos Brachos Perek 10: Really you should say Kiddush Leavana on the first day of the

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# When Is A Name Change Not A Name Change?

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Towards the end of the Parsha, Hashem changes Avram's name to Avraham (Bereshis 17:5). The Vilna Gaon cites the Gemara in Brachos (13a) in which Bar Kappara says: Whoever calls Avraham by the name of Avram transgresses a positive commandment, as it says: "And your name shall be Avraham". Rebbe Eliezer says: He transgressed a negative commandment, as it says: "Your name shall no longer be Avram".

The Gemara asks: If that is the case that we cannot call someone by their original name, one who calls Yaakov by his original name of Yaakov should be considered to be transgressing this prohibition because the Torah says: "Your name shall no longer be Yaakov" (Bereishis 35:10). The Gemara answers that there is a difference, because the Torah itself then calls Yaakov by his original name of Yaakov, as it says, "Hashem spoke to Yisroel in the night and He said: Yaakov, Yaakov (Bereishis 46:2)."

The G"RA was very precise in analyzing pessukim. He points out that this Gemara begs the question of why does the Torah call Yaakov by his original name. Moreover, maybe we should learn from Yaakov that Avraham's original name should be permitted to be used. The G"RA explains that we learn in a Midrash, that every place that the word "VeHaya" is found, it means that whatever that passuk is telling us will occur, will occur immediately. However, each time the word "Yehiye", is found, it means that the event described in that passuk will occur after some time. By Avraham, it says "VeHaya shimcha Avraham", indicating that his name was immediately changed to Avraham and he is therefore no longer called Avram. By Yaakov, it says "Ki im Yisroel yehiye shemecha. This implies that only in the future will his name be established as Yisroel and therefore it is not forbidden to call him Yaakov.

(Eitan Perlysky- Continued from page 1)

Avraham was called to climb up the mountain, sacrifice Yitzchak, and then the test would be over. However, the nisayon of Lech Lecha in our parsha is a test that will affect Avraham for the rest of his life.

Rabbi Frand continued that everyone has his own personal path in life. Each person is given a mission and a goal in life which may require us to grow in sometimes difficult ways. This type of challenge is not a one shot deal. Rather, it is with us every day. Such a lifelong challenge may be a greater test than one requiring only a momentary rise to the occasion

Rabbi Pelcovitz from the White Shul said something that during the Holocaust and at various times in Jewish history, non-religious Jews would sacrifice themselves for a Kiddush Hashem. He felt that a greater test is not necessarily that one momentary decision to sacrifice yourself for a moment, but rather the decision to spend a lifetime, day after day, doing what is right in the eyes of Hashem.



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# Menschlichkeit

שמע אברם כּי נשׁבּה אחיו, וירק את חניכיו...

When Avram heard that his relative was captured, he armed his disciples (14:14)

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky Zt'l notes that surely Avraham was not bound by halacha to rescue lot at that time, as one is not obligated to risk his own life in order to save someone else's life. Having established that, what in fact \$\frac{x}{2}\$ was Avraham's motivation in doing so? The Avos, says R' Yaakov, were called yesharim, upright, because they \{\frac{1}{2}} acted according to what they perceived as proper and decent, what is referred to in yiddish as behaving with "menschlichkeit." Lot's father, Charan, had died when king Nimrod hurled him into a fiery furnace for declaring his belief in the G-d of Avraham. Avraham, therefore, felt that it was only "menschlich" for him to do everything in his power to save Lot's life.

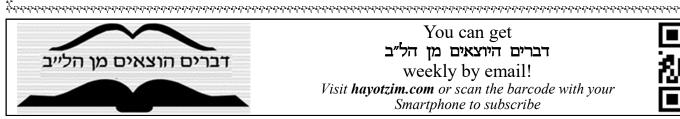
It was very appropriate for someone like Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky to offer this insight, for he excelled in his consideration of and thoughtfulness to all human beings.

Some time after he moved to Monsey, a minyan was formed which davened all the shabbos tefillos in R' 🖁 Yaakov's basement. R' Yaakov rejected the suggestion that the minyan meet on weekdays as well. He explained 🕻 that his neighbors would not appreciate the flow of cars and accompanying noise that is common when people? come and go on weekdays.

Once, R' Yaakov was to meet someone at Penn Station at 7:00 a.m. for a trip out of town. R' Yaakov arrived at the station looking exhausted, apparently having spent a sleepless night. He explained to his companion \{\frac{1}{2}} that when he had gone to set up his alarm clock before retiring for the night, he remembered that his non-Jewish \$\frac{1}{2}\$ neighbor worked the night shift and would have just gone to sleep at the time the alarm clock was set to go off. It was a hot summer night when everyone slept with their windows open and the neighbor would quite possibly be awakened by the alarm. Therefore, R' Yaakov did not set the clock; instead, he stayed up all night learning to § make sure that he would be on time for his early departure.

Once, a chasan had an appointment to speak with R' Yaakov shortly before his wedding. R' Yaakov phoned him to postpone the appointment by half an hour. When the chasan arrived, he told R' Yaakov that it was not necessary for the Rosh Yeshiva to have phoned him; he would have been happy to sit and wait in the Rosh Yeshiva's house until he was available.

R' Yaakov replied, "That may be, but I knew that during the week of your wedding, a shomer would be accompa-🖁 nying you. It would not have been right for me to make to make the shomer wait the half hour."



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יברים היוצאים מן הל"יב

# NOAH KRANZ, 10TH GRADE

# Little Actions Go a Long Way

In this week's Parsha we learn of the war between the four kings and the five kings. A man referred to as "the one who escaped from the war" (14:13) tells Avraham that Lot has been captured and that he should go save him. We learn out that "the one who escaped from the war" is Og. Many years later Og, now the king of Bashan is waging war against B'nai Yisrael. The Pasuk in Bamidbar (21:34) tells us that Moshe feared Og. Even after Hashem performed the Ten Plagues, had taken B'nai Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, and done so many miracles, Moshe was scared of Og. But why? Rashi tells us that Moshe didn't actually fear Og's might, rather Moshe feared Og's merit because of his telling Avraham that Lot was taken captive. In a similar vein, some say the reason Og lived so long was because of this act that he did. From here we can see the great reward one may receive from doing even the smallest acts of kindness.

(Aliyot Summary- Continued from page 2)

cluded Lot. When Avram was informed of this, he rushed to Sodom to rescue Lot. Avram took men with him and attacked the victorious kings and defeated them, saving Lot and all the others held captive. As a result of this, all the captives were released.

5th Aliyah- Avram was offered the spoils of the war but he turned down the reward. Hashem then reassures Avram that he will be greatly rewarded for his righteousness. When Hashem mentions this, Avram starts to ask Hashem what the point of all of this is if I have no heirs to inherit it? (hinting to his childlessness) Hashem then tells him that he will indeed have a child and your descendants will be as numerous as the stars.

6th Aliyah- Avram asked Hashem in this Aliyah to see a sign that Bnei Yisrael will inherit the land and we get to see the famous "bris bein habisarim". Hashem told Avram that Bnei Yisrael will be in galus for 400 years. At the end of that period, Bnei Yisrael will leave the galus with great wealth, Hashem will punish the nation who enslaved them (mitzrim), and they will inherit the great land of Canaan. After this bris, Sarai suggests to Avram that he should father a child with their maid Hagar since they were childless. Hagar had conceived a child but mistreated Sarai, and therefore Sarai forced Hagar to leave and run away. Hagar encountered an angel on the way which encouraged her to go back to Sarai and told her that her offspring will be great and she listened. She then gave birth to Yishma'el. At the very end of the Aliyah, we see a name change- Hashem changed Avram's name to Avraham.

7th Aliyah- In the last Aliyah, Hashem sealed a bris with Avraham and his offspring. The sign of the bris is a circumcision- all males when they are 8 days old must receive a bris milah. We see the last name change of the parsha from Sarai to Sarah, and Hashem promises Avraham that he will father another son but this time with Sarah. At the age of 99, Avraham gave himself a bris milah, gave his son Yishma'el, and all the members of his household.

(Stories Of Greatness- Continued from page 8)

back, Avraham refused any payment. He only cared for the Mitzvah and to get back his nephew. In today's time we all have to learn the right priorities; physical attributes are important, but just like Yitzchak, a Mitzvah is more important.

Good Shabbos.

(Gavriel Aharon- Continued from page 1)

everything must be seen as a gift from Hashem. And he refused to accept these things from the king of Sodom, because he was concerned that the king would claim the credit for having given these gifts to Avraham. This would cause a Chilul Hashem, because Hashem had already promised to Avraham that He would make him wealthy. Hashem therefore rewarded Avraham's descendants with the tzitzis strings and the tefillin straps.

But how do these specific rewards of tefillin straps and techeiles tzizis strings relate to Avraham's act? Rabbi Baruch Shulman explains that Tzizis and tefillin are worn externally and easily identify us as Jews. This carries with it a great responsibility because we are representing Hashem to the rest of the world. Even though this is a great responsibility, we are up to the challenge, because we follow Avraham's precedent, just as he indicated his complete reliance on Hashem when he rejected the offer of the king of Sodom.

The mitzvah of tzitzis is to tie strings to the corners of a four-cornered garment in order to remind oneself constantly of the 613 mitzvos. The mitzvah of the techeiles thread of the tzitzis is an added bonus, which reminds us of G-d Himself: its blue color alludes to the Kisay hakavod. Blue is the color of the sea, which reflects the sky and resembles a sapphire, which is reminiscent of the Kisay Hakavod. This continually reminds us of our reliance on Hashem.

Similarly, it seems that without Avraham we would have had tefillin without retzuos, without straps. The retzuos allow the tefillin to be tied to the front of our heads, for all to see, and fear us. This is our true power against our enemies, not our physical strength. The retzuos on our arms reinforce that idea. We tie them on our weaker arm to emphasize the weakness of our hands and our recognition that our strength is from *Hashem*. Just as Avraham went beyond the letter of the law by returning the spoils of war in order to make a Kiddush Hashem, so too the strands of techeiles and the straps of the tefillin are enhancements of the primary mitzvos which go beyond the letter of the law.

[] (10.	Minute Halacha- Continued from page 3)	
	month, but if you don't you can still say it until 15th of the month.	
<u> </u>	Beis Yosef Siman 426: Quotes Talmeidi Rabeinu Yonah: Kiddush Levana is like a Chupa, so you should wait	
П	until the moon expands a little bit, to benefit from it, which is 3 days into the month because before this there	
	is no light to benefit from	
3.	Mikubalim: Wait 7 days, the only way the moon represents the Shechina is when it had 7 days of light	
Sh	ulchan Aruch holds to wait until 7 days into the month	
П	Q: Why doesn't the Shulchan Aruch Paskin like the Rambam?	
П	A: Chida: The Shulchan Aruch knew that if the Rambam would have known what the Mikubalim said, he	
	would agree.	
│ A.	Bier Yaakov Quoting the Rosh: Whenever there is a Machlokes and we Paskin one way, even if that way is	
	lenient, we should specifically Paskin that way to show that we know how to Paskin Halacha.	
∏ B.	Zohar Chai Parsha Vaeira: the opinion of 7 days is a misinterpretation of Kabbalah.	
П	<ul> <li>Rav Ovadia Yichavei Das Siman 24: It is hard to say that the Beis Yosef misunderstood Kabbalah.</li> </ul>	
□ C.	Radvas Chelek 4 Siman 36: When have Kabbalah versus Halacha, you should follow Kabbalah as long as it	
	doesn't violate the Halacha. So in this case you can start 7 days into the month.	
	doesn't violate the Halacha. So in this case you can start 7 days into the month.  Halacha L'meisa:	
□ 1.	Shulchan Aruch Siman 426 Seif 4: Wait 7 days	
П	• Aruch Hashulchan Seif 13: It is strange for the Shulchan Aruch to ignore all the other Rishonim to	
П	Paskin like one Mikubal, but he does it anyway.	
	Chida: Sephardim should wait 7 days	
3.	Magen Avraham 426: Mitzah Min Hamuvchar to do it on the first day. But ends up saying you should do it	
	on the 3rd day.	
<u> </u>	Mishna Berurah Siman 426 Seif Kattan 2: Even if you normally follow Mikubalim, in the winter you should	
П П_	do it early in order that you will have time to say it due to snow or rain.	
□ 5.	Yeshuos Yaakov Siman 426 Seif Kattan 6: In the winter you should do it after 3 days in order that it not be	
	blocked by clouds, but in the summer you can do it after 7 days.	

# STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: DOVID BLANK

# What Really Matters

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Lech-lecha, we market place. find Lot, Avraham's nephew, captured in Dejected, Yitzchak sulked to the nearby

victory that was clearly the help of G-d, and the story. Lot was returned to Avraham.

Eisenbach was in Jerusalem, he spotted a Yitzchak had almost secured earlier that day. very valuable gold coin shining in the dis- "I am very proud of you," said the Rebbe. and taken on Shabbos.

He decided to put his foot on top of the coin me the reward for the mitzvah you did." and guard the coin until sunset — a good The boy looked at the Rebbe in utter disbenumber of hours — but worth every moment lief. "You want to trade the coin for the Mitzof the the wait.

An Arab boy saw Yitzchak with his foot The Rebbe nodded, slowly. strangely and obviously strategically placed, "If that's the case, keep the coin. I'll keep the and decided to investigate further.

away. All Yitzchak could do was watch in

horror as his attacker melted into the Arab

Tzcernobel Bais Medrash where he sat in a Now Avraham, the man of peace, was going corner. Normally, Yitzchak would help preto war to save his family. He joined the five pare the Shalosh Seuodot meal, but today he kings, including the King of S'dom, and bat- sat — dejected and depressed — until the tled the four kings. Miraculously, Avraham Sabbath was over. The Rebbe inquired about won the war. He propelled the five kings to a young Yitzchok's sullen mood and was told

Immediately after Shabbos, the Tzcernobel Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells the following sto- Rebbe (1840-1936) summoned Yitzchak into his private study. In his hand he held a gold One Shabbos afternoon when young Yitzchak coin, exactly the same size as the one

tance. The value of the coin was enough to You did not desecrate the Shabbos even for a support his entire family for 2 weeks! But it tremendous monetary gain. In fact," he conwas Shabbos and young Yitzele knew that the tinued, "I am so proud of you that I am willcoin was muktzeh, prohibited to be picked up ing to give you this same coin." The Rebbe halted. "On one condition. I want you to give

mitzvah."

"What's that you're hiding?" the Arab asked. The Rebbe leaned over and kissed the child. "Nothing," replied Yitzchak as he shifted his Avraham underwent tremendous sacrifice to body to hide the fact that he was guarding a fight the battle which had basically nothing to do with him. But he did it for one reason. The It was too late. The Arab boy pushed him, mitzvah of redeeming his own blood. After saw the prize, quickly grabbed it and ran the war when the 5 kings tried to pay him

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