**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Noach 5773**

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**Why Hashem Wants Us to Make an Effort to Save a**

**Life that Only He Can Save**

**By Rabbi Shmuel Choueka**

“*And tar it inside and out with pitch*.” (Beresheet 6:14)

 Hashem instructed Noah how to build the ark. The ark was to be coated with tar inside and out. Rashi explains that the ark of Moshe, that was floated on the Nile River was only coated on the outside. One reason for the difference was that the waters of the Nile were tranquil. Therefore, one coating was enough. But here, due to the force of the water, tar was needed in and out to keep out the water.

**Nothing Could Be Further From the Truth**

 When reading this explanation of Rashi, one gets the feeling that the construction of the ark was strong and able to weather the storm. But, nothing could be further from the truth. The flood was so powerful that no man-made structure survived. The surface of the earth was pulverized. Only an open miracle from Hashem protected the ark. If so, why the tar; it didn’t make any difference? The fundamental answer is that Noah was required to do his due diligence as much as he could to save himself and his passengers. The rest is up to Hashem. This is what we call hishtadlut, effort, which is always required, and not merely leaning back and relying on a miracle.

 A year ago at this time the famous prisoner Gilad Shalit was freed after five years of captivity in the hands of Hamas. The government of Israel is to be commended for all of their efforts to get his release. The hard decision to free the many terrorists was difficult to make. They negotiated tenaciously for two and a half years, and achieved what they believed was the best possible deal. And believing that the window of opportunity would not long remain open, they decided to go ahead with it. All of this was required effort on the part of Israel. It was the G-d of Israel Who saved Gilad Shalit. It was the G-d of Israel Who saved him in that initial attack on his tank, which two of his fellow soldiers did not survive. The same G-d of Israel watched over him during those 1,942 days of captivity and the complex and delicate arrangement for his return. He is the G-d of Israel Who neither slumbers nor sleeps, Who will watch over the Jewish people in Eress Yisrael and all over the world.

**An Amazing Article in NY Times**

 At that time an amazing article appeared in the NY Times. It went on at length to explain the misvah of pidyon shebuyim, the freeing of a Jewish captive, and how the Torah requires us to go to all lengths to free a captive. At the end of the article a crucial statement was made, “And Israel remains vulnerable to further kidnappings.”

 I say that that vulnerability is our strength. That weakness forces us to come to the realization that Ein lanu elah Abinu Shebashamayim, we have no one else but our Father in Heaven. All the very strong nations are gone, and only we who are weak, remain. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"In the middle of the day, Noah went into the Tebah." (Beresheet 7:13)

**The People of Noah’s Generation**

 Rashi tells us that Hashem heard the people of the generation saying, "If we see Noah enter the ark we will harm him and break the ark." Therefore, Hashem allowed Noah to enter in the middle of the day as if to say, "Let's see what anyone will really do." And indeed, nothing was done to Noah.

 The question is obvious: the people didn't believe that a flood would take place and they used to mock Noah while he was building the Tebah. If so, why would they care if he went into the Tebah right before the flood, if according to their understanding there would be no flood? Noah would have to come out of the ark in humiliation and they would be vindicated! The answer is, although they didn't think the flood would really come, deep down in their hearts they thought perhaps they were wrong and maybe there would be a flood.

 When a person does something wrong and rationalizes that it's OK, he doesn't want to believe that there will be retribution and he might even challenge those who say there will be punishment. But in his heart of hearts he will question himself and say maybe they're right and he is wrong, and so he may try to prevent those who warn him against his deeds, rather than accept their words. The human mind is very complex and there can be very contradictory feelings inside of us. Only through Torah and mussar can we unravel our emotions and feelings and get them where they are supposed to be.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**A Special Desire for Soup**

 Reb Mordechai Dov Twersky, known as Reb Mottel Hornisteipler was a holy man who was known to eat very little. Once, however, when Reb Mottel stopped at an inn for a meal while traveling, the holy man tasted his soup and then ate the entire bowlful. To the further surprise of his Chassidim, Reb Mottel asked the innkeeper if there was any more soup.

 The innkeeper was delighted that the distinguished Rebbe was enjoying the soup so much, and so the host hurried to serve Reb Mottel another bowl. When that bowl was finished, Reb Mottel asked if he could have more, and after the next serving was finished, Reb Mottel asked if perhaps there was any more soup to be had. Finally, the innkeeper returned from the kitchen and apologetically told the Rebbe that the pot was empty.

**An Explanation for the**

**Rebbe’s Hearty Appetite**

 When the Rebbe and his Chassidim resumed their travels, the Rebbe explained how he had suddenly developed such a hearty appetite. "When I tasted the soup, I realized that they [the kitchen staff] had mistakenly put kerosene (a fluid for burning) in the pot! I knew that if the innkeeper would have tasted it and realized that they had served such soup to me, the innkeeper would have been very angry with the cook. I did not want her [the cook] to be distressed on my account..."(Gut Voch, Rabbi A. Barash p.50)

 From this amazing story, we see how the righteous eat for the right reasons. As the verse in Proverbs states "A righteous person eats to satisfy his soul..."(Mishlei 13:25) Reb Mottel ate not because he loved the taste of the soup. Reb Mottel ate in order to save someone from embarrassment. Reb Mottel ate with the pure intent of doing a mitzvah and serving Hashem.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Simcha’s Torah Stories – Noach**

**Your Mitzvos,**

**Your Children**

 "Grandpa, I always love coming to your home."

 "Avi, the pleasure is all mine. You are a wonderful grandson and a joy to be with. What do you want to do today?"

 "Can we look at pictures Grandpa?"

 "Of course Avi. I have many photo albums. Which pictures would you like to see?"

 "How about the ones of your father and mother. I like to see how they looked when they arrived in America, 100 years ago."

 "Avi, you give me such nachas. Do you know how many boys do not even want to visit their grandparents? When they do visit, they go straight to the television and all but ignore them. But you are different. Not only do you come to visit me, but you take the time to sit together with me and learn about our family history."

 "Thank you so much, Grandpa."

**Looks Like a Different World**

 "Here are the pictures of Great-grandpa and Great-grandma."

 "Everything is so old. It looks like a different world."

 "It was a different world, Avi. In many ways."

 "Really? Can you tell me about it Grandpa?"

 "My pleasure, Avi. When my father arrived in America, it was very difficult for a Jew to observe Shabbos. Everyone worked six days a week and was off on Sunday. If you told your boss that you wanted to take off from work on Shabbos, he would fire you on the spot."

 "What did Great-grandpa do?"

 "He got a different job every week."

 "That's unbelievable."

 "He would work five days and then not come on Shabbos. When he returned Monday morning, he received his pay and was told to leave."

 "That must have been so difficult, Grandpa."

 "It was not easy, Avi. But two things kept Great-grandpa going. His love of G-d and the mitzvos, and his love of Great-grandma and the kids. He knew that keeping the mitzvos, and especially the Shabbos was the most important thing in the world. He also knew that his wife and children were dependent upon him to support them. Therefore he kept the Shabbos, and he kept working."

**One of Many Unsung**

**Heroes in America**

 "What a hero he was."

 "True, Avi. There were many unsung heroes like him in America then. They kept the flame of Torah burning in those difficult days."

 "He loved the mitzvos, and he loved his children. Was Great-grandpa related to Rav Moshe Feinstein?"

 "I don't think so. Why do you ask, Avi?"

 "Because Rav Moshe writes about loving mitzvos and loving you children in this week's parsha."

 "How fascinating, Avi. Please tell me about it."

 "The verse says, 'These are the offspring of Noach. Noach was a *tsaddik* (righteous person),perfect in his generation' (Bereshis 6:9). Rashi comments that the main offspring of *tsaddikim* are their good deeds. The Torah could have used a different example to illustrate the point that good deeds are very important. Why did it compare them to offspring?"

 "That is a good question, Avi."

**We Should Love Our Good Deeds**

 "Rav Moshe explains that we should love our good deeds (mitzvos) as we love our children. Sometimes a person takes a mitzvah lightly or does not perform it at all because he feels that it is not so important. Would he take the same attitude toward his child? Of course not. A person makes sure that his children have the very best that he can possibly give them. He should take equal care to make sure he performs his mitzvos with his very best efforts."

 "Avi, that is exactly how Great-grandpa lived his life. He took wonderful care of us, and he took great care to perform the mitzvos to the best of his abilities. Now, look at the fruits of his labors. He has merited to have a wonderful great grandson."

 "That is how G-d rewarded him. He loved the mitzvos like children, and he merited to have children, grand-children, and great- grand-children who love the mitzvos just as he did."

 "Avi, I am sure that this very moment he is smiling down upon you from Heaven."

 "Grandpa, you're wonderful."

"Avi, so are you."

Written by Simcha Groffman

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**Up and Down the Ladder**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

 The Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Tzfat, of blessed memory) once stayed at the home of a pious and G‑d-fearing man, who welcomed him with great honor and fulfilled the mitzvah of hospitality with a lavish hand. The Arizal remained in his home for several days, and his host’s devotion moved him deeply.

 As he prepared to leave, the Arizal said to his host: “How can I repay you for the abundant kindness and affection you have showered on me while I was your guest? Ask me what you will, and I will bless you!”

**“Only One Thing I Need”**

 The man sighed. After a short silence, he said brokenly, “What can I ask for, Rebbe? I have everything, thanks to G‑d. I have money and do not have to worry about my livelihood, and I am also healthy. There is only one thing I need.

 “My wife, may she live long, has borne several children. But many years have passed, and she has not been able to bear any more children. We have asked doctors what the problem is, but they have found nothing wrong.”

 His holy guest contemplated for a moment, and then said, “I see the reason. Know this, my friend: The trait of compassion, which is a mark of the descendants of our forefather Avraham, is very important. A person must be extremely careful not to cause suffering to his friends, to other people, or to any living creature.

**Distressing the Little Chicks**

 “On your property is a chicken coop. In the past, a small ladder was fixed at its entrance, so that the chicks might go down to find bowls of food and water for their nourishment. When your wife noticed that the ladder and the ground beneath it were becoming dirty, she instructed the maid to place the food and water directly into the coop, and to remove the ladder. From that day on, the chicks have been greatly distressed. Being young and small, they find it hard to fly, and now the pleasure of going up and down the ladder has been taken away from them.

**An Accusation Against Your Wife**

 “In their distress, the chicks have cheeped and chirped, and the sounds of their sorrow have risen to the Throne of Glory, where they stand as an accusation against your wife. Since then, she has been prevented from bearing children.”

 The host listened to this revelation with amazement. At once, he ran to find the ladder that had stood by the chicken coop. He quickly picked it up and returned it to its original place, at the entrance to the coop.

 It was not long before G‑d blessed the man’s wife, and she began to bear children as before.

 Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Stories My Grandfather Told Me*, by Zev Greenwald, published by Mesorah.

 *Biographical note:* Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534–5 Av 1572), known as “the holy Ari,” revolutionized the study of Kabbalah and its integration into mainstream Judaism during the two years he spent in Tzfat before his death at 38. Much of chassidic thought is based on the Ari’s teachings, as recorded by his main disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital.

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**It Once Happened**

**A Rabbi in Prison**

 The Rabbi was sitting at his desk, immersed in study, when the knock on the door disturbed him. Opening it, he saw a Jew clutching a bundle of money in his hand. The man explained that he was on his way to a nearby village on business. Now that it was almost nightfall, however, he was afraid to travel with so much ready cash. As a special favor, he asked if he could leave the money with the Rabbi until his return trip.

**A Very Large Sum of Money**

 At first the Rabbi hesitated, as it was very large sum of money. But the man begged and implored him, and in the end he agreed. The Rabbi put the bundle in a safe place and resumed his study.

 A short time later there was another knock at the door. This time it was a Jew from his own town, who begged the Rabbi to lend him five rubles to buy a cow that was being offered for sale very inexpensively. The man said he would return the money the following morning after he had sold the cow at the market.

 "I would gladly help," the Rabbi said, "but I don't have five rubles to lend."

**The Rebbetzin’s Question to Her Husband**

 The Rebbetzin, who had overheard the conversation, came over and whispered into her husband's ear: "What about the thousands of rubles in that bundle? Surely you can lend this man five rubles overnight."

 The Rabbi hesitated. The Torah prohibits tampering with a pledge. But the Rebbetzin pleaded the man's case so fervently that the Rabbi gave in. The man promised to leave the cow in the Rabbi's courtyard overnight.

 Early the next morning, well before dawn, an angry banging awakened the Rabbi. It was the police. Pointing to the cow in the courtyard, they informed the Rabbi that the animal had recently been stolen from its rightful owner. The Rabbi realized that he had fallen into a trap, but it was too late. He was led off to the police station in shackles.

 Foremost on the Rabbi's mind was the disgrace this could bring upon the Jewish community. G-d forbid that the affair should become public knowledge! Considering the thousands of rubles still in his possession, he convinced himself that in an emergency situation like this, surely he was allowed to use some of the money. And so, by bribing the prison guards handsomely, the Rabbi was quietly released before word could spread.

 Much to the Rabbi's surprise, however, the man who had deposited the money with him for safekeeping came back earlier than anticipated. He arrived that very day to reclaim it.

**Ashamedly Admits He No**

**Longer Had the Man’s Money**

 When the Rabbi muttered ashamedly that he no longer had the money, the man turned white. Despite the Rabbi's assurances that he would find the money, the man became increasingly agitated until he suddenly toppled over and fell to the floor. A doctor who was summoned confirmed that he was dead.

 For the second time in a day the police led the Rabbi off to jail. But this time the charges against him were worse. The investigation that ensued revealed his tampering with the original pledge, his bribery of the prison guards, and his role in causing the depositor's death. The Rabbi was sentenced to ten years in jail.

 Overnight, the Rabbi was reduced from a respected leader of the community to a common criminal. Even his cell mate, a young Jewish man who was also serving a ten-year sentence, felt pity for him.

**The Village Priest Visits the Inmates**

 Time passed, and the Christians celebrated their holiday. The village priest paid a visit to the hapless inmates. Addressing his words to the younger Jew, the priest promised his freedom if he renounced his faith. The young man rejected the offer adamantly.

 After the priest left, the young man brooded for awhile before revealing what was troubling him. "Maybe I made a mistake. I could always run away to another country and resume my Judaism there..."

**The Rabbi is Shocked by**

**His Fellow Prisoner’s Regret**

 "How could you even consider it?" the Rabbi replied, aghast. "How many Jews have willingly given up their lives rather than renounce G-d's Name for even a single moment?"

 The following year the priest returned and repeated his offer. This time the young man took him up on it, and he was freed.

 Another year passed, and the priest returned. Again the Rabbi pushed him away with both hands, but this time the priest would not be deterred. All the Rabbi had to do was accept Christianity in his presence, and freedom was his.

 Deep in his heart the Rabbi knew that it was forbidden by Jewish law, but he was so despondent that he agreed. Surely it was preferable to transgress for a single moment than to remain in prison for years...

 At that moment the Rabbi awoke from his dream, shaken to the depths of his soul. He could not believe that he, an esteemed Rabbi, had entertained such a notion even in a nightmare.

**“How Could it be Possible?”**

 Then he broke out in a sweat. A few days before he had been present at the deathbed of an elderly Jewish man, and had helped him recite his final confession. When he got to the part which states that if the dying person utters anything against G-d in his final moments, his words should be considered null and void, the Rabbi had wondered: How could it be possible for an 80-year-old Torah scholar to deny G-d, even in his final moments?

 "Now I have my answer," the Rabbi whispered to himself. "Our Sages were certainly justified when they said, 'Do not be sure of yourself until the day you die.'"

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Felix Baumgartner’s Amazing Feat

**By** [**Sara Debbie Gutfreund**](http://www.aish.com/search/?author=48867522)

***Lessons from Breaking the Speed of Sound.***

 On October 14, 2012 Felix Baumgartner rose in a helium balloon to an altitude of 128,100 feet, and in a highly specialized space suit broke the world record by jumping and reaching a maximum speed of 833.9 miles per hour, or Mach 1.24.

**“You Become So Humble”**

 "Trust me,” Felix said after the jump, “when you stand up there on top of the world, you become so humble. It's not about breaking records anymore. It’s not about getting scientific data. It's all about coming home."

 As millions watched the daredevil jumper exit his capsule and gaze at the earth, the RedBull Stratos project was actualized. It took five years of preparing for this mission, and the project involved 300 people including seventy engineers, scientists and physicians.



Felix Baumgartner

 Felix had to be in "aerodynamic" shape in order to break the sound barrier; throughout the free fall he had to constantly stabilize his body into a headfirst position. This took so much concentration that Felix remarked that he didn't even notice the sonic boom when he broke the sound barrier.

 What can we learn from this?

**The Power We Have**

**When Focused on a Goal**

 The first message that hits me is the incredible amount of planning we are capable of when focused on a goal. There is no limit to the time, the money, the team work. Felix’s team involved experts from a wide range of fields from medicine to meteorology to psychology.

 But the most amazing member was the previous record breaker, Joe Kittinger, an 84-year old retired Air Force colonel. It was his calming voice from mission control that guided Felix through the ascent to the stratosphere. Instead of wanting his record to remain unbroken, Kittinger became an integral, inspiring mentor to the next generation. He passed on the torch, wanting mankind to go further and faster than he was able to go.

 We see what a team can do when each member is focused on the goal instead of his own ego. Watching the expression of joy on Kittinger's face when Felix landed was beautiful. If only I could be that selfless for someone else's success.

**More than Just “Grit”**

 And there's another lesson I took from this. For the past decade, the positive psychology movement has been telling us that practice and perseverance matters more than innate talent and strength. There is a trait called "grit" that Wikipedia defines as "an individual's passion for a particular long term goal coupled with a powerful motivation to achieve their respective objective."

 Clearly, Baumgartner has 'grit' as evidenced by his years of training and focus on breaking world jumping records. But there's more to grit. It also involves one's ability to continue to get up no matter how many times he falls. To wipe off the mud and the frustration and decide to keep persevering despite the myriad obstacles that can and do appear.

**Confronting a New Unexpected Fear**

 For instance, during the training for this mission Felix discovered that despite his fearlessness of heights, he had to face a new, unexpected fear in his tiny capsule: claustrophobia. He was so afraid of the closed, tight quarters of the capsule that in 2010 he left the United States and almost gave up entirely. But he didn't.

 And then during the second hour of the ascent, Baumgartner's visor began fogging up and continued to be blurry into his leap in space. Despite the terror, which we cannot possibly comprehend, Felix did not give up and use the high tech drogue chute that would have slowed him down, preventing him from breaking the sound barrier.

**The Road is Not Always Clear**

 When the road is not always clear, when we’re afraid and feel completely lost, there is a way to keep going. G-d gives each of us this power inside of us to jump even when our visors are blurry, to stay focused even when we are frightened to make that final leap towards our goal.

 My daughters and I once did a freefall from the SkyCoaster in Superland, Israel. That was 165 feet in the air, and when we had to release the latch and fall straight towards the ground, there were two thoughts that raced through my mind. There was no way down except to fall. And secondly there is nothing more frightening than the complete loss of control. For Felix, it was a bit different (besides the difference of around 127, 935 feet) because he had to work the entire time at stabilizing his body so that it would be aerodynamic. We were just free falling, but there is something about flying straight towards the ground that is innately humbling. The sense of freedom is exhilarating, and the vulnerability so terrifying.

 I also discovered in that short free fall that no one ascends or descends to such heights without praying. Even a daredevil prays. That’s what Felix was doing on his climb up into the stratosphere.

**The Most Powerful Lesson of All**

 But I think the most powerful lesson of all is in Felix's own poignant words after the jump. "It's all about coming home." Stronger than our need to jump, more powerful than our yearning to fly is our inherent connection to the preciousness of life. We all want to come home, to connect to those we love and to G-d who gives us the courage to jump past the edge of our fears.

 Focus on the goal. Keep training. Jump even when your visors are all fogged up. Pray for strength. Pray for courage. And pray for Him to bring you home.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Aish.com from their website.*

**A Legend in His Time:**

**Rabbi Shmuel Kunda z”l**

 It is with great sadness that we report the passing [on October 16th] of Rabbi Shmuel Kunda z”l, a legendary mechanech who, in original and uplifting ways, inspired generations of youngsters and adults with his creative chinuch presentations and productions.



 He was 66 years old.

 Rav Shmuel, together with his wife Naomi, built a beautiful family of bnei and bnos Torah.

 Rav Shmuel, formerly of Boro Park, Brooklyn, resided for the last while in Lakewood, NJ, and then Cleveland. He was born in Shaghai and later came over to the United States.

 Starting his career as a Pirchei leader in Boro Park, Rabbi Kunda became a world-renowned mechanech, who over the years released books and tapes that inspired both children and adults around the world.

 Rabbi Kunda was a son of Rav Zalman Kunda zt”l, a prominent Alter Mirrer who married his rebbetzin, of Mishpachas Podrabinik, in Shanghai where Rav Shmuel was born in 1946 before they left for America.

 Rav Shmuel was a leader of the Boro Park Pirchei (14th Avenue branch) and founder of the Zeirei minyan led by Rav Baruch Saks for many years.

**A Talmid of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Flatbush**

 A talmid of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Flatbush, Rav Shmuel was especially close to the rosh yeshiva, Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, and the mashgiach Rav Hirsh Feldman, zichronam livracha.

 Upon his marriage in 1970, Rav Shmuel began his teaching career as fifth grade rebbi at Yeshiva Tiferes Torah of Boro Park led by Rabbi Shaya Jacobson. Those early talmidim can attest to his energy and spirit which, combined with his artistic talents and storytelling abilities, lifted them out of their adolescent daydreaming and imbued in them the cheishek to grow in Torah.

**Able to Connect with Kids of All Ages**

 A born mechanech, Rav Shmuel was able to connect to kids of all ages, and whether it was through his tapes and storybooks, at his summer camp, or in his classroom, the humorous man with the passion for Torah always connected.

 He personified the ben Torah who revels in learning yet can joke about life and personify normality. He helped mold the Torah world of today and we owe him a great debt.

 A man of truly unparalleled talent, Rav Shmuel was a trailblazer in his field. His works have never been duplicated and they continue to inspire and uplift countless people to this day.

**His Wife Passed Away Two Years Ago**

 Mrs. Kunda, who passed away two years ago, was an integral partner of Rav Shmuel’s work, serving as the consummate eizer kenegdo to her husband.

 Rabbi Kunda will be sorely missed by the many people whose hearts he touched and who he inspired with his smile, his good cheer, his warm words of chizuk, and his creativity.

 Rabbi Kunda’s many albums and children’s tapes include When Zaidy Was Young Part 1 and 2, Boruch Learns His Brochos, The Magic Yarmulke, A Ton of Mon, Boruch Learns About Shabbos, The Longest Pesach, There’s Zaidy, Zaidy’s Great Idea, Where’s Zaidy, The Talking Coins, The Royal Rescue, and The Miraculous Menorah.

 Rabbi Kunda was the indisputable leader in Jewish entertainment for children, also authoring many famous and acclaimed titles.

 Rabbi Kunda was a remarkable artist, author, composer, lyricist and actor, and he utilized the gifts granted to him by the Ribono Shel Olam to imbue children and adults with an appreciation of Torah and mitzvos.

**Directed Camp Ne’arim**

In the Pocono Mountains

 In addition, Rabbi Kunda also inspired and educated many youngsters during his years as director of Camp Ne’arim in the Pocono Mountains.

Rav Shmuel is survived by his children and grandchildren who follow in his ways.

 The levaya (funeral) was first yesterday (Wednesday), at 1 p.m., at the Seventh Street Holocaust Memorial Chapel of Congregation Sons of Israel in Lakewood, NJ. A second funeral service was held at the El Al Cargo Terminal at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York before a flight that brought the nifter to Eretz Yisroel where a final levaya was held at Har Hamenuchos cemetery in Yerushalayim today (Thursday.)

 Yehi zichro boruch.

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