בעזהשי"ת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum shlita

Chayei Sara



The Way of Emunah

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Parshas Chayei Sara

The Strategies of the Yeitzer Hara/Efron's Desire for Money/Blessed With Hashem/ Eliezer Was in Charge of His Money/Using His Money for Merchandise/The Camels Rose in Level/Proven by Middos, Not by Miracles/Mitzvah Haba B'Aveirah/ Forbidden by the Kaneh, Permitted by the Veshet/The Malach of Tzedakah Preceded the Accusers/One Merit/Greeting the Shechinah in the Merit of Tzedakah/Meriting Many Things/The Reward for a Mitzvah/Tzedakah Atones for all Sins/Avrohom Held His Hand in the Merit of Tzedakah/The Malach of Tzedakah/Planting Tzedakah in Gan Eden/Shlach Lachmecha al Pnei Hamayim/Reviving the Hearts of the Broken/ The Reward for Tzedakah/A Mitzvah Done With Toil/Not Eating Before the Shidduch is Finalized/Hashem Makes Shidduchim/The Loan That Made a Shidduch

וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע וגו' וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לִסְפֹּד לְשָׂרָה וְלִבְכֹּתָהּ (כג, ב)

And Sarah died in Kiryas Arbah... and Avrohom came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her. (23:2)

The Strategies of the Yeitzer Hara:

The Yalkut Shimoni (Remez 102) states: "And Avrohom came to eulogize Sarah: When Avrohom returned from Har Hamoriah in peace, the Satan got angry because he saw that he had failed in his plan to obstruct Avrohom's *korban*. What did he do? He went and told Sarah, "Did you hear what happened?" She said, "No." He told her, "Avrohom took Yitzchok, your son, and he slaughtered him and brought him as an Olah on the fire." She began to cry and wail. She cried three times like the three tekios, and she wailed three times like the three '*yabavos'*, and her soul left her, and she died."

The *yeitzer hara* intended to break Avrohom's spirit. After passing the great test of the *Akeidah* and returning home to find his wife dead, the Satan thought that Avrohom would regret going through with it. But his plan failed.

This is the way of the *yeitzer hara*. When it wants to cause a person to stumble, it will do whatever it takes. It will even kill his relatives if it thinks that will help him reach his goal. A person's job is to continue fighting, no matter what the *yeitzer hara* throws at him.

When the famed gaon, Rav Yosef of Slutzk *zt"l,* was a young man, his father passed away. His widowed mother sent him to learn in the great yeshiva of Volozhin, where he studied all day and all night with great diligence and became recognized as one of the finest talmidim in the yeshiva.

One day, his mother sent a letter to the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Chaim of Volozhin *zt"l.* She wrote that it was hard for her to run the family business on her own. She asked that her son come home to help her. Rav Chaim hid the letter and did not tell his student about it.

A few weeks later, his mother sent another letter. In this letter, she complained that her son had ignored her first letter and was not helping her. Again, Rav Chaim hid the letter.

A few months later, the mother sent another letter. This time, she wrote that a fire had burned down the business, leaving her with nothing. She now needed to start over from scratch and really needed help. Once more, Rav

Chaim hid the letter.

A while later, his older sister wrote a letter, informing him that his mother was very sick and he should return home immediately. Rav Chaim hid this letter too.

A short while later, a letter arrived with the news that the mother had passed away. The family asked Rav Yosef to return home to take care of the young orphans. Yet again, Rav Chaim hid the letter.

A few years later, Rav Yosef was acclaimed as an accomplished young *talmid chochom*, and an appropriate *shidduch* was arranged for him. As he prepared to leave the yeshiva for his wedding, Rav Chaim handed him the letters. When Rav Yosef read them, he tore *kriyah* and fainted.

When he was revived, he asked his teacher why he hid the letters from him for so long. Rav Chaim said, "**This was all the work of the Satan. He saw that you were destined to become a *gadol hador*. It was willing to burn down an entire city, to kill people, and to destroy a family, all with the goal of getting you to stop learning. I did not want his plans to succeed!"**

אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מַה הִוא וגו' (כג, טו)

My lord, listen to me; a land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is it between me and you? (23:15)

Efron's Desire for Money:

Efron first said that he would give the property to Avrohom for free. This seems to indicate that he was a giving, kind, humble person. Almost immediately thereafter, he changed his tone and pompously asked for 400 *shekel kesef*. What caused this sudden change of heart?

The Alter of Kelm *zt"l* answers with a story regarding the Rambam (some say this story about Rav Yonason Eibeschutz *zt"l*): The Rambam was once debating a group of non-Jewish scholars. They claimed that proper etiquette and behavior could be taught to a cat. They said that, with enough training, a cat could change its nature and act like a human being. The Rambam disagreed and said that it is impossible to change the nature of any animal. The non-Jewish wise men said that they would prove that they were right. They said that they only needed a few months to train a cat, and, at the end of that time, they would show off their success.

The day arrived for the scholars to display what they had done. They arranged a meal, with the cat serving as the waiter. To everyone's amazement, it set the tables, bowed to each guest, and seated them at their designated spots.

The cat-waiter then served a glass of wine to each guest. As it was serving the wine, the Rambam opened a small container he had with him. Inside the container was a small mouse, which he threw onto the serving tray that the cat was holding. As soon as the cat saw the mouse, it dropped the tray and began to chase it. All the glasses broke,

and wine spilled everywhere. The wise men then were forced to admit that an animal cannot change its nature.

Efron was just like that cat. Before he saw the money, he was a refined gentleman. However, once Avrohom showed him the money, he was just like the cat seeing the mouse. He reverted to his true nature and focused solely on the money.

וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן וגו' וה' בֵּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בַּכֹּל (כד, א)

And Avrohom was old, advanced in days, and Hashem blessed Avrohom with everything. (24:1)

Blessed With Hashem:

We recite in Birchas Hamazon: "And over everything (*v'al hakol),* Hashem our G-d, we thank you." Rav Boruch of Mezhibozh *zy"a* explains this to mean that above all, we thank Hashem for being "our G-d".

The Imrei Chaim uses this idea to explain the *pasuk* that says that Hashem blessed Avrohom "with everything (*kol*)." This can be understood to mean that **Hashem gave him the greatest blessing of being his G-d.**

He also uses this concept to explain the subsequent verse (24:3): "And I will swear (*v'asbiacha*) you by Hashem, the G-d." The word "*v'asbiacha*" can also mean to be full (*sovea*). Thus, Hashem was saying: **"I will make you full with Me as your G-d."**

We may add that this also is stated by Dovid Hamelech (Tehillim 144:15): "Fortunate is the nation that Hashem is their G-d." The main good fortune we have is that Hashem is our G-d.

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ זְקַן בֵּיתוֹ הַמֹּשֵׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ שִׂים נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי (כד, ב)

And Avrohom said to his servant, the elder of his house, the one who ruled over all that he had. (24:2)

Eliezer Was in Charge of His Money:

The Chasam Sofer *zt"l* explains that many people are ruled by their money, to the extent that they are willing to go to dangerous places just to make more of it. *Tzadikim*, on the other hand, rule over their money. Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that Eliezer ruled over his money; **it did not rule over him.**

Using His Money for Merchandise:

Rav Boruch of Kosov *zy"a* (Sefer Yesod Hatorah) quotes the Toldos Yitzchok as saying that Efron had purchased merchandise from a wholesaler for 400 *shekel kesef,* and he asked Avrohom to give the 400 *shekel kesef* for the Me'aras Hamachpeilah to that man in order to pay his debt. The reason he wanted it done this way is that he suspected that Avrohom might have counterfeit money. He didn't want to accuse him, so he instead told him to give the money to the man he owed money to.

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֲשָׂרָה גְמַלִּים מִגְּמַלֵּי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל טוּב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ וגו' (כד, י)

And the servant took 10 camels from the camels of his master, and he went with all the goodness of his master in his hand… (24:10)

The Camels Rose in Level:

Sefer Sifsei Tzadik explains why it is necessary for us to know about the camels Eliezer took with him by quoting the *pasuk* (1 Shmuel 6:2) that says that the cows that were carrying the Aron Hakodesh sang *shira*. Since they were engaged in a holy task, they were imbued with wisdom and were able to speak and sing. So too, being chosen for a holy task uplifted the camels to a higher level of spirituality, which is why they are mentioned numerous times.

וַיָּרָץ הָעֶבֶד לִקְרָאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְמִיאִינִי נָא מְעַט מַיִם וגו' (כד, יז)

And the servant ran towards her. And he said, "Give me to sip a little water… (24:17)

Proven by Middos, Not by Miracles:

Rashi states that he ran because he saw the water rising to her. The Divrei Yisroel asks why he still needed to test her by asking her to give him water. Why wasn't the water rising enough of a sign?

He answers that **the main way to prove a person's righteousness is by their *middos*, not by miracles.**

Mitzvah Haba B'Aveirah:

The Bnei Yissochor *zy"a* said, "People sometimes say about specific men that it is an *aveirah* to give them money and a mitzvah to destroy them. **I am willing to commit this *aveirah* and to give up this mitzvah."**

Forbidden by the Kaneh, Permitted by the Veshet:

Sefer Likutei Reshimos U'Masios (Ois 184) relates that during the times of the Baal Hatanya *zy"a*, there was a Rov in the city of Mohliav who was a tremendous ta*lmid chochom* and *tzadik* but had no money whatsoever. This was because he refused to take a salary from his *kehillah*, as he didn't want to benefit financially from his Torah knowledge.

When the poverty in his home got so bad that he had no food for his children, he asked Baal Hatanya if he should start taking money from his community. He wrote that he was concerned about the Sefer Hakaneh, which rules that one may not take money for being a Rov. The Baal Hatanya wrote him back that it is permitted. Amongst his words, he wrote, "**It may be forbidden by the Kaneh (**windpipe**), but it is permitted by the Veshet (**food pipe**)."**

The Malach of Tzedakah Preceded the Accusers:

Sefer Me'il Tzedakah (Siman 262) states: "It is stated in Aggadah that the angel appointed over *tzedakah* and chesed has light feet and runs quickly. When prosecutorial angels arise to make claims against a person, the angel of *tzedakah* and *chesed* runs ahead of them to defend the man."

One Merit:

In his old age, Rav Moshe Leib of Sosov *zy"a* was very weak and sickly. Despite his frailty, he would go from door to door to

collect money for *tzedakah*. His family members asked him why he had to do this himself. Couldn't he find someone else to do it for him? He answered with a smile, "**You're worried about my health? I am only alive due to one merit that I possess – the merit of *tzedakah*. Do you want to take that from me?**

Greeting the Shechinah in the Merit of Tzedakah:

Chazal say (Medrash Tehillim 17): "It is stated (Tehillim 17:15): 'And I will see Your face with *tzedek*.' Why did Dovid specifically describe the power of *tzedakah*? **To teach us that even if a wicked person only has the merit of *tzedakah*, and nothing else, he can merit seeing the face of the Shechinah."**

The Gemara states (Shabbos 127A): "Greeting guests is greater than greeting the face of the Shechinah." The Me'or Einayim explains that the Shechinah is not hungry. It can wait. A human being, however, is hungry and must be fed right away.

Meriting Many Things:

It is stated in Tana D'Bei Eliyahu (Zuta 1): "*Tzedakah* is great, as it saves a person from death. *Tzedakah* is great, as it lengthens the life of a person. *Tzedakah* is great, as it brings a person to life in Olam Haba. *Tzedakah* is great, as it is equal to Torah. *Tzedakah* is great, as Torah is (praised by being) compared to it. *Tzedakah* is great, as it hastens the arrival of Moshiach and the days of redemption. *Tzedakah* is great, as it uplifts the giver to the Throne of Glory."

The Reward for a Mitzvah:

Rav Yisroel Peretz of Lobertov *zt"l,* the son-in-law of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov *zy"a,* had many guests in his house. Rav Levi Yitzchok himself would take care of the guests and bring straw for them to sleep on. Rav Yisroel Peretz asked him why he troubled himself so much. Why couldn't he hire a non-Jew for a few dollars to do it? Rav Levi Yitzchok answered, **Do you really think I would give this mitzvah to a gentile?"**

Tzedakah Atones for all Sins:

The Medrash (Devarim Rabbah 5:3) states: *Tzedakah* is so great that it atones even for deliberate sins."

It is stated in Sefer Chasidim (Siman 56) that even though Micha made an idol, Hashem said to leave him alone because he welcomed guests. The Gemara also says (Sanhedrin 102) that although Achav served idols, he was left in peace because he welcomed *talmidei chochomim* into his home.

We thus see that the merit of *tzedakah* works even for idol worshippers.

Avrohom Held His Hand in the Merit of Tzedakah:

The Megaleh Amukos (Va'eschonon, Oifen 159) notes that the Gemara (Sanhedrin 102A) says that Hashem grabbed Yeravam by his garment and told him that if he does *teshuva*, He will walk with him and Dovid in Gan Eden. While He grabbed

Yeravam by his garment, the Medrash says (Eicha Rabbah 1:20) that He held Avrohom by the hand and strolled with him. The reason for this is that Avrohom used his hands to do *chesed*, thereby sanctifying them. Therefore, Hashem was willing to hold his hand. Yeravam, however, was a great *talmid chochom*. Torah was his garment, so Hashem was willing to hold him by that garment.

The Malach of Tzedakah:

The Maharam Rottenberg (Shu"t, Siman 1023) writes: "There are three things that rip up a decree against a person – *teshuva, tefillah* and *tzedakah* (Rosh Hashanah 16B). The *pasuk* says that: 'He wore *tzedakah* like a coat of armor.' Just like a coat of armor is made up of many pieces of metal, so too every coin that one gives to *tzedakah* joins together to become one big account…

"If one gives *tzedakah*, even if the angel of destruction has permission to take payment from him (to punish him for his sins), the angel of *tzedakah* does not permit it. It runs between the other angels, who allow him to pass. It stands before Hashem and defends him by saying, "**Master of the World, this man who is facing destruction has the great merit of giving charity."** The angel of destruction says, 'But he did many sins!' The angel of tzedakah replies, '**This mitzvah outweighs all of that.'** At that time, Hashem says, '**Do not lay a hand on him, for he has a merit.'"**

Planting Tzedakah in Gan Eden:

It is stated in Sefer Chasidim (Siman 221): "If one gives *tzedakah l'sheim shomayim*, Hashem plants it in Gan Eden. How does He do this? If one gives money or any form of pleasure to a poor person, it is more valuable than giving a lot of money to a rich person. Hashem plants it in Gan Eden in accordance with the amount of food that can be bought with that money. The 'crops' that grow in Gan Eden are harvested every year and brought into the Heavenly storage house, and he derives enjoyment from it in Olam Haba…"

Shlach Lachmecha al Pnei Hamayim:

The Medrash states (Koheles Rabbah 11:1): "Rav Elazar ben Shamua was strolling by the shore of the great sea. He saw a ship capsize in the sea, and in an instant everything on it fell into the water. He saw one Edomite man who was on a board of the ship. He went from wave to wave until he came to dry land. He had lost his clothes, and he covered himself with the sand. This happened while Klal Yisroel was being Oleh Regel. The Edomite said to them, 'I am one of your brothers. Give me some clothing to wear. I lost everything in the sea, and I have nothing left!' The Jews said to him, 'Every member of your nation should be as unclothed as you.'

"He then saw Rav Elazar ben Shamua walking amongst the Jews. He said to him, 'I see that you are an old, respected man.

Give me some clothes to cover myself. Rav Elazar was wearing seven garments of honor. He took off one of them and gave it to him. He took him to his house and gave him food and drink. He then gave him 200 dinars and escorted him home with great honor for a distance of 14 *parsah*.

"A few days later, the wicked Caesar died. That Edomite was appointed to replace him. The new Caesar decreed that all the men of that city should be killed and all the women should be sent into captivity because they had not helped him. The people asked Rav Elazar ben Shamua to speak on their behalf. He told them, 'Don't you know that the ruler doesn't do anything for free?' They gave him 4,000 dinar, and he went and stood before the palace gates and said, 'Go tell the king that there is a Jew outside who wants to wish him well.'

"The king allowed him to enter. When he saw who it was, he dropped down to the floor and bowed to him. He asked, 'My master, why did you trouble yourself to come here?'

"He said, 'I came to ask you to have mercy on this place and cancel the decree.'

"The king said, 'Doesn't it say in your Torah (Devarim 23:8) that you shouldn't cause pain to someone from Edom because he is your brother? I am from Edom, and they did not act kindly to me. Since they transgressed your Torah, they deserve to be killed.'

"Rav Elazar ben Shamua said, 'Even though they deserve to be punished, please have mercy on them.'

"The king said, 'Don't you know that this kingdom doesn't do anything for free?'

"He said, 'I have 4,000 dinars with me. Take it and have mercy upon them.'

"The king said, 'You can keep this money as a gift in return for what you did for me, and you can also go to my treasure house and take 70 garments in exchange for the garment you gave me.'

"The Chochomim correlated this story to the verse (Koheles 11:1): 'Send your bread upon the face of the water.'"

Reviving the Hearts of the Broken:

There was a poor blind man who would sit outside the home of Rav Yeshaya of Praga *zy"a* every day, selling cakes. One day, a policeman came along and confiscated his cakes because he was doing business without a license. He began to cry bitterly, and Rav Yeshaya felt terrible for him. He went and gave him the full amount he would have made had he sold all his cakes.

From that day on, Rav Yeshaya would wait every day for the blind man to arrive. When he would come with his basket full of cakes, he would buy them all. His family members asked him, "You don't need those cakes. Why don't you just give him a stipend every month? This would save him the trouble of making the cakes and carrying them here."

Rav Yeshaya replied, "This blind man thinks he is a good businessman who is earning a living through his work. He has

already lost his eyesight. I don't want him to lose his pride and joy in life as well."

The Reward for Tzedakah:

The Medrash states (Vayikroh Rabbah 34:8): "Avrohom performed *chesed* with angels, who don't need his *chesed*, and Hashem repaid his children with the *mann*, the *be'er*, and the clouds of glory. If one does *chesed* with those who need it, he will certainly be rewarded even more."

וְהַנַּעֲרָה טֹבַת מַרְאֶה מְאֹד וגו' וַתֵּרֶד הָעַיְנָה וַתְּמַלֵּא כַדָּהּ וַתָּעַל (כד, טז)

And the maiden had a very good appearance... and she went down to the well and filled the pitcher and drew... (24:16)

A Mitzvah Done With Toil:

Chazal say that the water rose towards Rivkah the first time she went to draw it, but not the second time, as the *pasuk* says that this time she drew it herself. The Bais Avrohom explains that the first time she went to the well, she was getting water for herself, which was not a mitzvah. Since she was a *tzadeikes*, the water rose to her. The second time, she was doing the mitzvah of *gemilus chasadim*. Since a mitzvah done with toil and exertion is more valuable, the water did not rise on its own.

וַיִּישָׂם לְפָנָיו לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֹכַל עַד אִם דִּבַּרְתִּי דְּבָרָי וגו' (כד, לג)

And he said, "I will not eat until I say my words." And they said, "Speak." (24:33)

Not Eating Before the Shidduch is Finalized:

A story is told of a miserly man who owned an inn. One day, he invited his friend over to make a shidduch between their children. He first put out a meal, and then the shidduch was finalized. When his friend got up to go home, the innkeeper handed him a bill for the meal. He said, "When you ate, you weren't my *mechutan* yet. You were just a regular customer, so you must pay!"

The Dubno Magid *zt"l* uses this story to explain why Eliezer didn't want to eat before finalizing the shidduch. He knew that if he ate first, Lavan would make him pay for the food.

וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וגו' מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ טוֹב (כד, נ)

And Lavan and Besuel answered... "The thing is from Hashem. We cannot speak to you badly or well. (24:50)

Hashem Makes Shidduchim:

It is related that Sultan from Istanbul once told the Rov of the city, "You Jews believe that G-d makes matches, and a person can't do this. I disagree."

The Rov said, "If you think you can do it, go ahead. But I promise you that it won't work."

A few days later, the Sultan met a girl and handed her a letter, instructing her to deliver it to one of his ministers, who was single, and telling her that he'd give her 100 coins for her efforts. He then sent a message to the minister that he commands him

to marry the girl bringing him the letter, and saying that he would also give him 100 coins.

As the maiden was walking to the minister's house, she bumped into an old, poor woman, who asked her to lend her 100 coins for food. She felt so bad for her that she gave her the letter and told her, "Give this to the minister. He will give you 100 coins."

The old woman went to the minister and gave him the letter. Since he had to obey the Sultan, he married her.

A short while later, the Sultan made a big feast and invited all his ministers. The table was loaded with delicacies, and this minister took a simple, soft piece of bread and put it in his pocket. The king asked why he did that, and he said, "My old wife has no teeth. She can only eat very soft food, so I took this for her."

The Sultan asked, "What do you mean? I sent you a young wife."

The minister replied, "My lord, I married the old woman you sent with the letter."

The Sultan investigated the matter and discovered what happened. He then went back to the Rov and said, "Your Torah is correct. Only G-d can make matches."

The Loan That Made a Shidduch

The Rashash *zt"l* ran a Gemach, and he kept track of all the loans he gave out in a special notebook. When borrowers would return the money, he would make a mark in the

notebook to signify it had been paid.

One day, a tailor came to repay a loan. The Rashash was immersed in learning when the man handed him the money. He took the bundle of bills and put it in the back of the Sefer HaRif he was learning from, and then continued learning, failing to mark in his notebook that the loan had been paid.

A while later, the Rashash was looking through his notebook, and he noted that the tailor had not paid his debt. He summoned him and asked him when he would be paying. The tailor was shocked and said that he had already paid it. The Rashash told him that if that were true, he would have made a note of it. When the tailor insisted that he had paid, the Rashash said that he had no choice but to take him to a *din Torah*.

The *bais din* ruled that the tailor must swear that he paid. The tailor got up to swear, but the Rashash stopped him and said he forgave the debt, as he didn't want him to swear falsely. The rumor quickly spread that the tailor was a thief and a liar. Everyone stopped giving him work, and he became very poor.

Some time later, the Rashash opened his Sefer HaRif and found the money. He realized what it was and felt terribly for having wrongly accused the tailor. He immediately ran out to the street and asked where the tailor was. He was told that he had been so ashamed by the rumors about him that he had moved away.

He asked around and found the tailor's new residence. He went

there and tearfully said to him, "Please forgive me. You were right. You did pay me back."

The tailor replied, "I can't forgive you. You caused me so much pain and embarrassment. Everyone now thinks that I am a thief and a liar."

The Rashash said, "You are right. I will go to every shul in town and tell everyone that I was wrong and you were right."

The tailor still said, "That won't work. Everyone will say that you are such a *tzadik* that you felt bad for me and tried to help me."

The Rashash agreed but said, "I have a better solution. You have a son, and I have a daughter. Let's make a shidduch between them. Once we do this, everyone will believe that you are an honest, upright man."

When the tailor heard this idea, he agreed to forgive the Rashash, and their children did indeed get married.



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under the auspicious of Harav Meir Isomer Rosenbaum shlita, sends large Shabbos packages full of meat, chicken, fish, challos, cake, kugels, candies and gifts for the orphans directly to their doors.

FOR $250

You can sponsor a Shabbos package for a needy widow and her children.
Donations can be submitted **24** hours a day to the anonymous hotline

845-286-1007

Or sent through Quickpay
3875090@gmail.com

Or through the Donor's Fund, OJC, Fletcher, etc.
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