

# HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Vayeitzei - Vayishlach, 5786 ■ Issue 176

## HEART TO HEART

Based on shiurim in  
Duties of the Heart, Shaar Bitachon, given on the Hotline

### A Tzaddik's Joy

Two-year-old Yankele discovers a surprise in the depths of the closet: Shining candies! These are in fact mothballs, pills made of very dangerous poison that were placed in closets in order to drive away cockroaches and ants. He is excited about his find, brings the "candy" to his mouth ... and at the last second, *b'hashgachah pratis*, his mother notices and miraculously pulls the dangerous poison away from his mouth and hurries to wash off his hands.

Yankele cries and screams while his mother mouths the words of *Mizmor L'sodah*. What a miracle! The Master of the world watched over her son! Yankele continues to kick and scream, asking for the candy, while his mother calms him, and in exchange for the poison, she gives him a whole package of pretzels. Ordinarily he would get only a few pretzels, but now the whole bag is his. He calms down, yet one cannot say he isn't disappointed that his mother did not agree to give him the candy.

This *meshal* demonstrates the words of Rabbeinu Yonah on the *passuk* (*Mishlei* 10:28), "The hope of tzaddikim is a source of joy."

Rabbeinu Yonah brings two explanations. One is that when the tzaddik hopes for a *yeshuah*, he davens and asks and speaks to Hashem, and he invokes many *segulos* and *zechuyos*, and this situation in which he is connected to Hashem when he is busy asking for mercy is in itself a source of joy. The mere hope and anticipation of Hashem's *yeshuah* is his joy, even though he has not yet been saved. He has gratification from the *tefillah* he merited to say from the depths of his heart, and from the closeness to Hashem and from anticipating His *yeshuah*.

But this time we will focus on his second explanation: There are times when a person anticipates a *yeshuah* and asks Hashem to send him his desire. It is possible that he is waiting for his *shidduch* for many years and nothing is moving. There are couples who are waiting to have a child, or a Yid who is begging for good health, but his tests show that he needs more treatments, *l'a* – and how intensely he and all those who know him are praying for him!

There are situations when a person feels his *tefillos* have not been answered. The truth is that according to the Heavenly plan, it is not for his good right now that his desire be given to him. The Ari Hakadosh would reveal to people their *tikkun*, but nowadays we have not been *zocheh* to have the Ari in our midst, and we have nothing to do but believe that, just as back then they knew they had to make specific *tikkunim*, it is the same today. While we do not know the reasons,

it is clear that all of Hashem's actions are just and true, for the eternal good of each and every one of us. As we are taught (*Tehillim* 33:4), "Hashem's Word is straightforward, and everything He does is in good faith."

And nonetheless, these *tefillos* are not lost. Each *tefillah* is used for other matters. As Rabbeinu Yonah beautifully explains: Their salvation is close at hand, and if the matter they are hoping for does not come, their hopes will serve the purpose of bringing about *chassadim* that are greater and of greater quality than what they asked for, as it says (*Tehillim* 32:10), "He who trusts in Hashem, kindness will surround him."

Consider, for example, a Yid who is asking and begging for his health, but it was decreed upon him in *Shamayim* that he go through a *tikkun* that involves his physical health. Nonetheless, his *tefillos* are not for naught, for Hashem might repay all His debts, and He will have no financial problems. While the request this Yid made was not fulfilled, he was *zocheh* to tremendous relief from his *yisurim* through the fact that he is relieved from the worry of *parnassah*!

His neighbor, on the other hand, is dealing with debts upon debts, going from one *gemach* to the next, and seeing no end to the cycle. He does all his *hishtadlus*, and how many *tefillos* he pours out to the Creator about this issue. He does not know, and he will not know, that on Rosh Hashanah it was decreed for him that he would fall and break his leg, *l'a*, go through a difficult surgery, and be laid up in bed for months. Now, with all the *tefillos* that he davened and the *teshuvah* he did as he begged to get out of debt, the decree was annulled, and both he and his family are healthy and whole, while they have no idea of the danger that was hanging over their heads.

The *tefillos* that we daven from the depths of our hearts – they all go up, and they all accomplish something. This is a great source of joy to the person who trusts in Hashem. To know that even if he hasn't seen the *yeshuah* – because it is not for his good to receive it now – he is *zocheh* to tremendous *chassadim*, even greater ones than the matter that he is davening for so strongly.

Thus, even if he is still awaiting his *yeshuah*, he can sense the *chesed* and mercy of Hashem surrounding him, the good and the gifts that Hashem grants him as a result of his requests regarding that which is still missing.

May we be *zocheh* to see great and revealed *chassadim*, and may we all see general and personal *yeshuos*, in good health and bountiful *parnassah*; amen.

## FROM THE EDITOR

### The Secret of the Rich – Seichel

A friend met me this week and told me, "Do you want to get rich? I have a secret revealed by one of the wealthiest people in the world – whoever acts upon it will make a lot of money."

It just so happened that on that day I learned about Chazal's secret to wealth, and I decided that this was a sign from Heaven that I should share this secret with you. The secret ingredient for a person who wants to get rich, Chazal tell us, is "*seichel*."

A person who wants to be rich needs to have *seichel*. Rabi Elazar said: "Anyone who possesses *de'ah* will end up becoming wealthy" (*Sanhedrin* 92a).

What is this *seichel*?

The Maharsha explains that *de'ah*, as used in this *gemara*, certainly doesn't refer to what people normally call *seichel*, for it says, "The wise will not necessarily have bread."

Rather, Rabi Elazar's words about *seichel* are based on the words of the Gemara (*Niddah* 70b):

What should a man do to become wealthy? He told them: He should engage exceedingly in business, but he must do so honestly. They told him: Many people tried that method and failed! Instead, he should pray to the One to Whom all wealth belongs.

The Gemara concludes that one needs both – business dealings and prayer.

And here the Maharsha reveals the secret of wealth: A person who has the desire to be wealthy starts to make business deals and "engages exceedingly in business." He tries to open a business, invest in real estate, and tries all sorts of other ideas.

But then he starts to see that not everything goes according to his plans and dreams. He didn't calculate right, there are no buyers, the market is down, and many things totally didn't enter his mind.

And then he gets it.

The "secret" they told him for how to get rich doesn't really work, and he begins to see the real secret.

And this secret is prayer – "He should seek mercy from the One to Whom wealth belongs."

This is exactly what Rabi Elazar said: "Anyone who possesses *de'ah* will end up becoming wealthy," meaning, someone who truly understands that wealth is only in the Hands of Hakadosh Baruch Hu – he is the one who becomes rich.

With all his *hishtadlus* in increasing the amount of business dealings he had, he knows and understands that the wealth is really in the Hands of his Father in Heaven. And he who davens a lot and asks for *parnassah* and wealth – becomes truly wealthy.

Gut Shabbat  
Pinchas Shefer

The shiur is aired on Mon. and Thurs. - menu 4 (Yiddish and Hebrew)

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# THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

## He Waited Several Years

One day, I was cleaning out the *kollel's* storage room. I was not expecting to find anything special there. I imagined that I would find a few sweaters belonging to people who had long ago purchased replacements for them, towels whose owners had despaired of finding them, and of course old *sefarim*, which I would be able to put at the disposal of the people learning in the *kollel*. I did not think I would find a pair of tefillin there, but that is exactly what happened.

People guard their tefillin, and even if they forget them one day in *kollel*, they come to retrieve them the following day. Nonetheless, an old, dusty tefillin bag revealed itself before my eyes, literally calling out to me to find out to whom it belonged.

I took the bag, dusted it off, and then I saw clearly the name of the owner of the tefillin. I did not know him. I took the bag and asked the *avreichim* learning in the *kollel* whether they knew who this person was.

"This Yid," one of the old-timers in the *kollel* told me, "passed away several years ago."

I told myself that while this Yid had already moved on to a different world, he had certainly left heirs. I did some investigating and found his daughter's phone number.

When I called, she answered the phone. "I am calling from such and such *kollel*," I said. "We found a pair of tefillin that used to belong to your father z"l in the storage room."

"What?! Really?!" The woman was very excited. "I don't believe it. That is ... just now!"

Her words came pouring out, and I could hardly make out what she was saying and why she was so excited. Finally, I understood that her son, the grandson of the tefillin's owner, was going to have his bar mitzvah very soon. His parents had little means, and they were concerned – and clueless – about how to cover this large expense of purchasing tefillin for their son. They really did not know what to do.

And then, such a *yeshuah*! Her father's tefillin were discovered, and the bar mitzvah boy would don his grandfather's tefillin, *be'ezras Hashem*!

It is incredible that the tefillin were lying in the storage room for several years until just the right moment came along.

## Sifting for Hours Once Again

Reb Chaim from Yerushalayim relates: My friend has a home that is like an oasis in a huge desert some-

## A Minchah for Abba

I live in Yerushalayim, and my net is spread all the way to Ashkelon, where I rent out an apartment that I purchased as an investment. Last summer I made my way to Ashkelon in order to do some repairs in the apartment. Upon completing those tasks, I left the apartment and met a neighbor who lives in the same building. He understood that I was the owner of the apartment and told me, "You should know that I clean the building every week, and no one pays me."

The truth is that I had never even thought about the cleanliness of the building. This is a matter that has to do with the residents of the building. As we all know, it is not the owner of the apartment who has to pay the *va'ad bayit*; it is the tenant who rents out the apartment and enjoys the clean elevator.

But I did not get into a petty argument. I told the neighbor, "You're right! You need to be paid, and I want to pay you. I just have a small problem: I don't have cash on me. If you want, you can come with me to the nearest ATM and I'll withdraw money and give it to you."

"Fine," the neighbor responded. "I'll come with you."

We walked together in the direction of the bank, and then I saw a shul. I told the neighbor, "I haven't yet davened *Minchah*. Do you mind coming in with me for *Minchah*?"

"Why not?" he said. "I never daven, but it's definitely a good idea."

We headed in the direction of the shul, and the neighbor told me candidly. "You know what? It was in this shul that I had my bar mitzvah. Since then I haven't set foot in here."

I wanted the spark of *Yiddishkeit* to be ignited in him, and I was excited that in my *zechus* a Yid would stand and daven *Minchah* for the first time since his bar mitzvah.

We joined the minyan, and when we reached "*Hashiveinu*" I thought about him, my tenant's neighbor, and about others who hadn't been *zocheh* to walk with some chareidi *avreich* in the direction of the nearest cashpoint and enter a shul on the way.

The big surprise came at the end of the davening; this neighbor said *kaddish yasom*!

What happened? What was the story?

We left the shul and continued on our way. The next moment I discovered that I had thought that the only reason he came with me was in order to get payment for his work. The real reason was totally different, the amazing reason brought about by Hashem, because, the neighbor told me, his eyes gleaming, "Today is my father's *yahrzeit*..."

## Long Before Erev Pesach

In my bookcase there is an especially valuable *sefer* – the notebook where I record my *chiddushei Torah*. This *sefer* is valuable because it is rare – there is only one copy of it in existence, and it is also the only *sefer* that I myself wrote. Over the course of half a year, one line added to another, page followed page, one matter after the next, and thus I brought up pearls of *chiddushim*, the fruits of in-depth learning. You can imagine what sort of connection I have to this notebook, which is an expression of my personal portion in Hashem's Torah. So you can understand how great my pain and anguish was when the notebook got lost. I looked for it in every possible and impossible place, but it disappeared as though it had never been. I was deeply pained, and I sought comfort for the loss.

One day, I was organizing the bookshelves and I saw that one of the newsletters from the previous Shabbos, a newsletter that *contains divrei Torah*, had fallen behind the bookcase. This newsletter needed to go into *sheimos*, and I would have to pick it up and put it away properly.

This was not easy, and it felt a bit strange to move the entire bookcase in the middle of the year and not on Erev Pesach, but I did it for the sake of the Torah's honor, in order to pick up the newsletter that had to be put into *sheimos*.

When I moved the closet over, I discovered my beloved notebook! The valuable notebook of my *chiddushei Torah* was resting peacefully behind the closet!

If the newsletter had not fallen there, or if I had been lazy about picking it up, then it would have continued lying here, soaking up water when we washed the floor each week, and it would have gotten completely ruined. In the *zechus* of Torah, this notebook of *chiddushei Torah* was returned to us!

## On the giving end

I work as a shochet. Recently I went through a very difficult time, without work and without *pamassah*. The situation was very worrisome. For a long time I've wanted to become a partner in the dissemination of *emunah* and to participate in this very important and holy project of *Hashgacha Pratis*. Now, despite my strained financial situation, I decided to sign on an automatic monthly donation from my account for a small sum. Literally the day after I signed, something amazing happened. I got a call with an offer to work in *shechitah* abroad. This is a job that should, *be'ezras Hashem*, put us back on our feet.

## On the receiving end

Your holy phone line spreads peace and serenity and ingrains *emunah* and *bitachon* into the hearts of all of Am Yisrael. Indeed, we cannot stop praising this incredible initiative. I wanted to tell you about a nice thought I had: In recent years we've seen all types of difficulties plaguing Am Yisrael – corona, wars, and other tragedies and events that have never been seen in the past, and never have they occurred in such high concentration and such a short span of time. And this phone line is truly a balm and a healing for this *makkah*. Hashem brought this phone line into being before these events took place, a line that could be an address for all those who seek *emunah*, a place where one could listen to the words of *gedolei Yisrael*, to be strengthened and enlivened. *Yasher koach* for your blessed work!



## The Customers Keep on Coming

A Yid from up North relates: I have a store that provides for me. Over the course of many years I've worked hard all day, from 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock in the evening. I had to keep the store open for so many hours because I needed *parnassah*. If I'd have closed earlier, a potential customer might have come to my store and seen that it was closed and gone to the competition, where he would discover that the other store was just as good as mine. Then he'd continue doing his shopping there, and thus I would lose him. I had to keep the store open twelve hours a day so as not to miss out on any customer.

That's what I thought, and that's what I did, and in the meantime I was growing old. A fifty-year-old man is no longer thirty, and since I choose not to reveal my true age, I am simply telling you that my strength is not what it once was.

My question was, what would be with the store? What would be? What would be??

People who read this newsletter cannot understand how I was walking around with all sorts of worries and questions, since, obviously, it is the Creator of the world, not the store, that provides for me. But this happened before I started working on my *bitachon*, and this was my line of thought.

*Baruch Hashem*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu enlightened me. I started learning *Shaar Habitachon*, and I discovered that I can certainly put aside my worries and do what I had to do without extra effort. I saw that the learning strengthened me and gave me new insights, but learning it once was not enough for me. I learned each section again and again; I learned through *Shaar Habitachon* five times!

From time to time I strengthened myself even more, until I came to the conclusion that I can keep the store open for only ten hours a day and close it calmly at 6 p.m.

Since I started doing so, my financial situation has only improved. I don't know how to explain it, but the fact is that since I started closing the store at 6 p.m. I've been making more money!

## What Does a Slug Say?

One morning I got up and discovered an uninvited guest – a snail. It might be nice for children to learn how a snail stretches out of its shell and carries its home on its back, but it is not so pleasant to meet one up close, in our house instead of on some green leaf.

If it was only a single snail, we could bear it. But an entire group of snails showed up, and it was quite unappetizing. I swept them out of the house, never imagining that at that moment a new chapter was beginning in our lives.

The next morning I discovered them again, as though they couldn't take the hint, or as though friends of the first group had come to seek revenge for them. I hurried to dispose of them as well, before the children would wake up and scream in fear.

On the third morning it was really upsetting, and on the fourth morning I was fed up. What did the snails want in our home? What was attracting them? What food that they like did I need to hide from them? What was there on our tiles that was inviting to them?

We really didn't know what to do. We tried exterminating substances and a few other tricks, but nothing helped. The snails were stubborn, and they embittered our lives.

"This is something extraordinary," I said to my wife. "We need to understand what Hashem is telling us." I opened *Perek Shirah* and looked for what the snail says. I did not find an entry for *chilazon*, but I did find one for *shablul*. And indeed, the *shablul* – the slug – said, "Like the slug ... that never sees the sun" (*Tehillim* 58:8) The *mefarshim* describe the slug, which melts when the sun shines upon it. Who is likened to the *shablul*? The people who incited Shaul against Dovid and spoke *lashon hara* about him. This is brought in the Midrash *Yalkut Shimoni*: Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to them: You spoke *lashon hara*; you will go to Gehinnom and the fire will consume you, as it says, "like the *shablul* you will melt ... and they will never see the sun."

The message was clear: We needed to improve our speech, and I knew exactly which topic caused us to speak a lot of *lashon hara*. My wife suffered a lot at work from her boss. She would share with me what had happened to her over the course of the day, and that's how she dealt with her pain. But these words had become more than just letting go of pain; they had turned into real *lashon hara*.

I called a *rav* who is well-versed in laws of *shemiras halashon*, and I asked him what I could do. On the one hand, my wife could not leave her workplace, and on the other hand, she was suffering and had to unburden her heart. The *rav* told me that we should not speak badly about her boss at all. We should only describe the difficulty. We were to speak on the basis of understanding that her difficulty was not because the boss was bad, but rather because it was difficult for my wife to deal with certain characteristics of her boss.

The following day, when we spoke about work, we were careful to refrain from any *lashon hara*, and many fewer snails invaded our home. There were only two.

We saw how Hashem saw our efforts, and we strengthened ourselves more and more. We got an exact mirror of our behavior: When we would guard our speech while talking, the snails did not come, and when we slackened our guard they would show up again.

We continued improving and changing, and we stubbornly worked on seeing things positively and judging favorably. I am now relating what happened after two whole weeks that our home had been free of snails.

May Hashem continue to help us guard our tongue and bring the *brachah* to our home.

where out yonder, in a place

filled with non-Jews. This is an

area where Jewish tourists abound.

They come to see the world, to breathe the

mountain air, and to see the strangest sights.

Specifically there, in that confusing place where there

is an abundance of false beliefs, the travelers suddenly

recall where they come from. They are very excited to meet

friends from Eretz Yisrael and to sense how every Yid is a pre-

cious treasure for Am Yisrael.

My friend's home serves as a meeting place where tourists

meet their friends and also where they meet up with their own

Jewish identity. There they meet up with their Torah and mitz-

vos and with their connection to Hashem. Many guests who

passed through there have started keeping Torah and mitzvot

as a result of my friend's influence. He offers his guests every-

thing a Yid needs: Tzitzis, Tefillin, davening with a minyan, a

*sefer Torah*, and kosher food.

The food is obviously the greatest attraction to these travelers.

They come for the food and stay for the *brachos* recited before

and after.

The following story took place on a Thursday. The anticipated

number of Shabbos guests was 700! In the midst of all the

preparations, in order to ensure that there would be enough

cooked chickpeas for everyone, the owner had a few of the

visiting *bachurim* sit down and sift through huge amounts of

chickpeas.

They sifted the chickpeas for hours, placing them all in the

bowls that were prepared nearby.

When they finished working, they poured all the bowls of

chickpeas into one huge pot. Several minutes later, their eyes

opened in shock: Among the chickpeas there were ants, just

walking around!

How did it happen? How could it be?! Probably before they put

the chickpeas there, while the pot was waiting on the floor, the

ants had come.

What to do? There was no question. My friend instructed them

to pour everything back, wash the pot very well, place it in a

secure place, and start sifting through the chickpeas once

again...

One of the *bachurim* became very emotional. "You don't know

what you're doing to me," he told my friend. "I don't keep any-

thing. I know that is not good, but that's how it is now. I only

keep *kashrus*, and it is very hard. Yesterday, I fasted all day

because I didn't find kosher food. I almost decided to give

up. Then I came here, and I see how much you invest in the

*kashrus*. This is giving me strength to keep on eating only ko-

sher!"

It was worth all the difficult work of re-sifting the chickpeas in

order to be *mechazeik* another Yid. And if you gain *chizuk* as

well, then it is even more worthwhile!

## Seize the Opportunity

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## Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

### Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

#### In Order to Increase His Reward

Hashem tests tzaddikim by placing obstacles in their way when they try to do mitzvos, so that when they struggle and exert themselves to fulfill His will, their reward is increased. Why does Hashem test them if He already knows whether or not they will do His will? Because a person's reward for his deeds is much greater than the reward for his willingness to perform them, and thus Hashem enables the person to bring forth his latent potential and earn his full reward.

(Based on Shaar Hagemul by Ramban, ch. 2)

#### A Person Is Not Tested Beyond His Abilities

A Jew is never burdened or forced to toil unless he is given the possibility in advance of avoiding it [or handling it]. Likewise, Hashem never brings suffering on anyone unless he is capable of bearing it, and Hashem never hides Himself from a person unless that person is

strong enough to make it over the hurdle.

(Chiddushei HaRim)

#### Nisyonos of Tzaddikim

David Hamelech taught (*Tehillim* 11:5), "Hashem tests the tzaddik, but He despises a wicked person who loves larceny." The *passuk* seems inconsistent, for it should state that Hashem "loves the tzaddik," just as it says that He "despises" the wicked one. Therefore, the midrash explains that Hashem tests a tzaddik, but He despises testing a wicked person.

Rabi Yonasan said: This is comparable to a potter who makes earthenware: When he inspects his products, he doesn't test those that are imperfect, with thin walls or with cracks, for they would break after tapping on them even once. So which utensils does He test? Those barrels that are whole and strong, those that he expects not to break even if he raps on them repeatedly. In the same way, Hashem does not bother testing the wicked, who cannot pass such a test; rather, He tests the righteous ones who can pass it, in order to reveal their righteousness. This is the meaning of the *passuk*, "Hashem tests the tzaddik" – just as the potter raps on pots to demonstrate that they are strong and will not break. And the Torah states (*Bereishis* 22:1), "And Hashem tested Avraham."

Rabi Yosi ben Chanina taught that the goal of a *nisayon* is for the tzaddik to improve. This is comparable to a flax dealer: When he knows that his stalks of flax are of good quality, the more he beats them, the better they become. With each strike, the flax increases in value. And when he knows that his flax is not good, he cannot beat it even once without its breaking apart. In the same way, Hashem does not test the wicked but only the tzaddikim, as it says, "Hashem tests the tzaddik."

Rabi Elazar said: *Nisyonos* come to the tzaddik, since he has the power to protect his generation, like a farmer who hitches a yoke only on a strong ox. If a farmer had two oxen, one strong and the other weak, on which one does he place a yoke? Wouldn't he place it on the stronger one? Likewise, Hashem tests the tzaddikim, as it says, "Hashem tests the tzaddik."

(Midrash Rabbah, Bereishis 32:3)

bear.

(Based on Ohr Hachaim, Ha'azinu)

#### A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

Do you want to succeed in life? To see *shefa*? To do away with stress and anger?

This is the big secret:

Don't think about yourself, think of others.

The idea is very simple: Do *chessed* – but not regular *chessed*; *real chessed*: Give over yourself, your whole self, for the sake of others.

If we think about it, we'll find that a person's emotional difficulties – his anger, stress, feeling of missing out ... most of these feelings come from one point, which is that a person thinks that everything belongs to him and that everything is coming to him. When he lives with the feeling that "I didn't get what I deserve," then he always feels that he is lacking; he feels that something was taken from him, and he is always hurt and angry.

But the moment a person grows accustomed to thinking differently, to understanding that not everything belongs to him, that he is not the boss, but rather that his

whole purpose is to give of himself to others; the more he understands this and grows accustomed to it, the calmer and more serene his life will become.

When Avraham Avinu sent his servant Eliezer to find a wife for his son Yitzchak, he warned him, "Do not take a wife ... from the daughter of Canaan among whom I (*anochi*) dwell" (*Bereishis* 24:3). Avraham Avinu emphasized the "self" (*anochi*) because the daughters of Canaan – selfishness (*anochius*) dwells among them. They see only themselves and not others. And this is exactly the test that Eliezer set up for Rivka, to determine whether she was a true *baalas chessed*, prepared to give of herself for others.

When a person lives this way, nullifying his "self" for the sake of Hashem and for others, the gates of blessing, bounty, *parnassah*, and everything good open up for him.

Excerpts from the popular shiur by

Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit"a

#### The Key to Peace and Bounty



# Listen in to the line And you'll get it

**Hundreds of  
thousands the  
world over  
have transformed  
their lives into an  
oasis of peace and  
serenity.**

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