

TISHREI

By The **REBBE**



In honor of the festive month of Tishrei when so many Bochorim will be traveling to spend these special moments in the Rebbe's *Dalit Amos*, we present the following interview with **Ho-Rav Shloime Zarchi**, Mashpia in Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch at 770, where he discusses what it means to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe today, and how a Bochor in our times can maintain a genuine Hiskashrus with the Rebbe.

Included are many stories and accounts from his own personal experiences with the Rebbe throughout the years.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SPENDING TISHREI WITH THE REBBE

One of the most remarkable things we witness each year during Tishrei is the fact that even today, several years after Gimmel Tammuz, thousands of Bochorim continue to stream into New York to spend this festive month in the Rebbe's presence. How would you explain this phenomenon?

It actually is no wonder for me at all. The Rebbe once said during one of the Yom Tov meals on Shavuos in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment, that if people would have any clue what it means to be in the Rebbe's presence for Rosh Hashonah, there would not be even one Shul in the entire world left with a *Minyan* for Rosh Hashonah; all the congregants would only be here!

One of the Chassidim present at the table, asked: "If that is the case, should I begin to come here for Rosh Hashonah from now on, instead of Shavuos, as I have been doing up until now?" To which the Rebbe responded: "If people would only know what it means to be in the Rebbe's presence for *Matan Torah*, there would not be one Shul left with a *Minyan* for Shavuos!"

That being said, is everyone to travel to the Rebbe for both Rosh Hashonah and Shavuos?

I am reminded of a story about Reb Berel Baumgarten that occurred during one of the first years of his Shlichus in Argentina. He wrote to the Rebbe that in the past, he had always merited to be there when the [Frierdiker Rebbe first, and subsequently our] Rebbe blew the Shofar on Rosh Hashonah, and now as well, he wishes to come back to New York to be by the Rebbe for *Tekios*. The Rebbe replied: "Do you think that while I blow the Shofar I only have those who are present at the moment in my mind? On the contrary! If a Chossid has to be far away on a Shlichus in Argentina, I think about him all the more!"

Indeed, there are those who have a Shlichus to fulfill and must remain at their posts during Tishrei; that is what's expected of them. But on the other hand, someone who is able and comes here for Tishrei must be aware of the great privilege he has. A Bochor who comes to be near the Rebbe for Tishrei is given a great opportunity. The time spent here can have

a positive effect on him, which will remain with him for the rest of his life! Bochorim must come here for Tishrei and spend the entire month near the Rebbe, being cognizant that it is here where they receive "life" to last throughout the year. Their davening here is different than that of the rest of the year, their learning here is different, and even the ordinary conversations here are different. Here they will



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speak and hear "*Chassidishe dvorim b'teilim*" about *Hiskashrus* and Chassidus.

You use the term "to be near the Rebbe". Can you explain that a bit? It's been so many years now that we don't see the Rebbe physically; so what exactly do you mean when you say that Bochorim come here to be with the Reb-

be?

The fact is that today more than ever, we see a more intense and sincere will to *Hiskashrus* from the Bochorim to the Rebbe during the month of Tishrei. I have not a doubt in my mind that a Bochor who comes here for Tishrei and behaves throughout, in an appropriate manner (i.e. learning *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*, especially the Rebbe's *Sichos* and *Ma'amorim*, going to the Ohel, going on *Mivtzoim*, watching videos of the Rebbe, "milking" older Chassidim of the stories and recollections of the years that they merited to see the Rebbe, and so on) strengthens his *Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe in an unparalleled manner.

True; but ultimately he was not able to see the Rebbe?!

Reb Yoel Kahan often quotes the famous *Sicha* said by the Rebbe on Yud Shevat, 5726, in which the Rebbe tells of the Frierdiker Rebbe's departure from Russia at which point he would leave many thousands of Chassidim behind, and he wrote to them that they ought not to feel dejected by the physical distance that separates them. The physical barrier means nothing to me, he assured the Chassidim. We will remain connected just as before!

This was not a nice theory or idea; it was a matter of fact! All those thousands of Chassidim who remained trapped behind the Iron Curtain held steadfast in their connection to the Frierdiker Rebbe, despite the fact that many in the younger generation had never even seen him in their entire life! They managed to connect themselves to the Rebbe with utmost *Mesirus Nefesh* and educated their children in the same manner!

Aren't these exactly the same circumstances which we find ourselves in, today? If the physical barrier between the Chassidim and their Rebbe did not manage to deter the Chassidim then, it will not stop us today either, from maintaining true

Hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

The renowned *Mashpia*, Reb Shmuel Levitin would often repeat a *Vort* from Reb Hillel Paritcher: A *Tzaddik* is "*Bli-Gvul*" (limitless); a *Beinoni* is "*Gvul*" (limited); while a Rebbe is one who brings *Bli-Gvul* into *Gvul* (i.e. a Rebbe has the power to infuse G-dliness even into mundane and ordinary people). Because a

Rebbe is such, nothing stands in his way of connecting with Chassidim.

It is important to think into, and learn about the concept that the Rebbe is a *Neshomah-Klolis*, a true *Nossi* of the generation, and it will then be easier to relate to all of this.

If a Bochur goes to the Ohel and truly prepares himself well, approaching the whole matter seriously and sincerely, saying Krias Shema properly the night before, and so on, he will find it easier to realize and feel that he is indeed connected to the

Rebbe.

But even a Bochur who has a harder time relating to these matters, the Rebbe will find a way to clearly demonstrate that he thinks of him on a personal level, until he too, will understand and feel that the physical barrier does not interrupt anything.

I'll tell you a little secret: I was asked similar questions by Bochurim even before Gimmel Tammuz! Many times, when Bochurim would approach the Rebbe to receive "*Kos Shel Brocha*" or "dollars",

they would come to me later on and say, "Today is not like in the earlier years, when there were only a total fifty Bochurim in 770; then the Rebbe was able to know each one personally. Today, with Lubavitch being so big, is it possible that the Rebbe really knows each one of us?" Then as well, the *Yetzer Hora* crept his way in and planted his skepticism and doubts in the minds of the Bochur, and the Rebbe always found his way of resolving these doubts.

Let me tell you a story that happened to a friend of mine in Yeshivah:

He, like so many others, had these thoughts and doubts troubling his mind, "Does the Rebbe really know me personally?" Just a short while later, the Rebbe spoke at a Farbrengen of the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu knows every single Yid. From then on, my friend knew not to be troubled by such thoughts anymore.

There are hundreds of similar stories. We always saw that whenever a Bochur was faced with these thoughts and truly bothered by them, if he worked on himself and davened properly, the Rebbe did away with his issues in one way or another.

It was incredible. To one, the Rebbe would suddenly call out his name in the midst of a Farbrengen. To another, the Rebbe displayed in a different manner that he really knows the Bochur personally.

Do you believe that the Bochurim who come to the Rebbe today do so because they are told to; or do they truly understand and feel what they are doing and why they are doing it?

Well, even in the "good days" when we were able to see the Rebbe, not everyone came to the Rebbe with the proper intentions in mind.

Reb Shmeryl Gourarie from Eretz Yisroel once approached the Rebbe during a Farbrengen and said a special 'Le'chaim' for those who were not able to come to the Rebbe and remained in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe responded with a 'Le'chaim' for those who were present but had not yet truly "come" to the Rebbe in the true sense of the word.

The main thing though, is to come to the Rebbe, no matter what the reason. A fourteen year-old Bochur might come to the Rebbe because he struggles with *Machshovos-Zaros* and seeks the Rebbe's *Brocha*. Another might come to strengthen his *Emuna*, while others wish to gain in other areas.

It is by the Rebbe where a Bochur can attain whatever it is that he needs. One must only be sure to utilize the precious moments here properly, and he can change himself entirely with the "tools" he's given!

But Tishrei in 770 is always hustling

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and bustling with so much going about. How can one remain focused on what's important? it's not always all that easy!

The Bochorim always knew how to be involved in the right, most important things, namely, learning the Rebbe's *Sichos* and *Ma'amorim*.

True, Tishrei was a time full special

moments by the Rebbe. Beginning with handing over the Pan on Erev Rosh Hashonah, and then, on the day of Rosh Hashonah itself, the Rebbe reciting the *Haftarah*, *Tekios*, the *Farbrengens*, and even "ordinary" davenings.

But the Bochorim always knew that all of this was not enough; it needed to come

along hand-in-hand with learning the Rebbe's *Sichos* and *Ma'amorim*. The Rebbe always demanded this from the Bochorim throughout the years, and particularly from those who had come as guests for Tishrei.

When the Rebbe used to say *Ma'amorim* at *Farbrengens*, he truly appreciated, and even demanded, that the Bochorim should learn and review the *Ma'amorim* that they heard on Rosh Hashonah and Sukkos.

And what about today?

The Bochorim must learn the Rebbe's *Ma'amorim*. In addition to all the benefits of learning the *Ma'amor*, above-all, it is learning and understanding the Rebbe's *Ma'amorim* that establishes the most our *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe.

THE REBBE'S CRIES AT HAFTORAH

Whenever you give over your personal memories of Tishrei with the Rebbe, you manage to relate even the minutest details. Is it true that you almost never missed even one Farbrengen with the Rebbe?

Already from the time I was a young child, I never missed a *Farbrengen* with the Rebbe, and I always remained there until the end. It happened once that I was pushed around at a *Farbrengen* to the point that I began to cry. The Rebbe then called me over to his place, and I stood near his chair until the end of the *Farbrengen*!

When my friends and I were Bar-Mitzvah age, we already understood that we should never leave the Rebbe's *Farbrengen* before they were finished. Leaving a *Farbrengen* was just out of the question for us, even if we were very tired. We used to come to the Shul hours early to reserve a good place for the *Farbrengen*, and after the *Farbrengen* we used to dance near the door of the Rebbe's room, and the Rebbe would come and encourage our song on his way in.

Where did such an intense sense of *Hiskashrus* come to you at such a young age?

Let me give you some background of the time period that we are discussing: Most of the members of our class in Yeshivah (on Bedford Avenue) were from non-Frum homes. We were all together only about five Bochorim or so, who came from Chassidishe homes.

The first thing that really "captured" us and transformed us into Chassidim, were the Rebbe's cries. They made a most profound impact on us. Every Shabbos the Rebbe would receive *Maftir*, and in those years, the Rebbe cried almost each and every week while reciting the *Haftarah*! This was when the Rebbe still davened in the small Shul upstairs and we were able



"תמים כדרוש"

Shortly after completing one year in *Kolel*, I wrote to the Rebbe that I want to go out on *Shlichus*. The Rebbe said to me: "What do you think; *Shlichus* means to pack up your bags and move out to Australia? If you will do your work here in the Yeshivah with the same *Mesirus Nefesh* as you would in Australia; that is also *Shlichus*!"

After the Rebbe's 70th birthday, when the Rebbe began his campaign to establish 71 new institutions, I felt that I could bear it no longer and I really wished to be able to go out on *Shlichus* and take part in this new initiative. I wrote to the Rebbe again, but for three months straight, I received no reply. I was devastated.

At the Rebbe's Yud Kislev *Farbrengen*, I cried silently to myself, hoping to be *zoche* to finally receive an answer from the Rebbe.

The next day, the Rebbe wrote to me:

"האומנם לדעתו ידעה אשר תלמיד תומכי תמימים יהי' תמים כדרוש אינו נוגע לכללות הענין דשנת השבעים!! לכתבו שאין בו חיות- זה מצד חלל השמאלי ולא מצד הענין שבו הוא עוסק."

("Do you reckon that the fact that a student in Tomchei Tmimim should be a [true] 'Tomim' as expected [of him] is not pertinent to the whole idea of 'Shnas Hasiv'im'?! Regarding what you write that you are not enthusiastic about your work - that is only because of your 'left-inclination [i.e. your *Yetzer Hora*], and has nothing to do at all with the actual work your are doing").

to stand quite close to him and hear clearly how he would shed heavy tears non-stop! Scenes as these would literally pierce through our entire beings.

[As a side note, I recall once being invited for a small *Minyan* near the Rebbe's room to hear *Krias HaTorah* with the Rebbe shortly after his heart attack in 5738. It was Shabbos Parshas Toldos, and in the Haftorah, it speaks of Hashem reprimanding the Jewish people, and saying that He is not interested in their offerings. Upon reaching these *Pesukim*, the Rebbe burst out crying terribly, and all of us in the room cried along with him...]

Speaking of the Rebbe's weep, mention must be made of the Rebbe's *Tekios*. We used to come to Shul at five o'clock in the morning to reserve a good place, and

We watched as the Rebbe threw his Tallis over the Pannim and cried; we saw the Rebbe's face change as we heard his holy voice reciting the Pessukim of "Min Hameitzar..."

while the Rebbe blew *Shofar* we would stand right near the Rebbe and observe everything from up close: We watched as the Rebbe threw his *Tallis* over the *Pannim* and cried; we saw the Rebbe's face change as we heard his holy voice reciting the *Pessukim* of "Min Hameitzar..." We were young children at the time, but these scenes remain engraved in our memories until today. Being with the Rebbe at these lofty moments transformed us entirely from the inside-out!

When we were young boys of fourteen, our Mashpia, Reb Yoel Kahan, farbrenged with us on Yud-Tes Kislev. With tears in his eyes, he said to us, "Why do you think the Rebbe cries while reciting 'Min Hameitzar'?" Pointing towards each of us, he continued: "The Rebbe is crying about your *Machshovos-Zaros*; and about the fact that you don't learn and internalize Chassidus as you should!" He went on and on about this subject throughout the night until he "drilled" it well into our systems.

Truth be told, not all of us were such "*aidele*" Bochorim. Some of us were actually quite "*grub*" to put it mildly. But when we saw the Rebbe during *Tekios*, the powerful sight won over the heart of even the most "*grubbe*" Bochor ... No one was able to remain unmoved at that point.

It was at that moment when we saw the ultimate truth. We saw the Rebbe as he is. It was the most gratifying experience ever, and none of us would be willing to sell one moment of it; not even for all the money in the world!

SPECIAL MOMENTS

What are the most special moments you recall with the Rebbe?

There is no such thing! I have hundreds and thousands of most special moments.



The Rebbe's every move is special, and every Shabbos there were special things happening.

True. But there must be certain moments from all of your years with the Rebbe that stick out in your mind as most extraordinary. Can you share some of those moments with us?

I remember as a young child standing at the Rebbe's Farbrengens and hearing a certain lively *Niggun* sung very often (sometimes sung with the words "*Ve'ata Amarta*"). The Rebbe always encouraged the singing of this *Niggun* very strongly and this left a deep impression on us. Once, while the Rebbe distributed *Kos Shel Brocha*, he asked that the Chassidim sing the *Niggun* with such enthusiasm, to the extent that "*Pokka igra!*" (An expression from the *Gemora* meaning "the roof caved-in").

In the year 5720 the Rebbe once recited a *Ma'amor* entitled "*Kol Dodi*". I recall how the Rebbe cried while reciting the

words from that *Possuk*, especially the words "*Dodi sholach yadoi min hachor...*" The Rebbe's every move had a profound impact on us. As young boys at Bar-Mitzvah age, seeing the Rebbe crying really touched us deeply.

In the year 5724, the fast of *Shiv'ah Asar Be'Tammuz* fell out to be on a Shabbos, and the Rebbe held a very special Farbrengen. Throughout the Farbrengen, the Rebbe took a lot of *Mashke* and farbrenged until seven in the evening. (It was during that Farbrengen that the Rebbe temporarily withdrew the "*ge'zeira*" on *Mashke*).

The Rebbe spoke passionately about the Friediker Rebbe, quoting the *Possuk* from that week's Parsha, ואם אין לו בן נתתם את, "נחלתו לבתי". There were many things said

during the *Sichos* at that Farbrengen that really permeated us very strongly.

In the year 5725 there were many special occurrences. I recall how the Rebbe danced one week at a Shabbos Farbrengen the when they made a "*Siyum*" on one *Sefer of Lekuttei Torah*.

Throughout the year, the Rebbe davened at the *Amud* and recited *Kaddish* for his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. On 21 Kislev, the Rebbe received people in *Yechidus* throughout the night and then davened *Shacharis* early in the morning with a very small *Minyan*. The Rebbe cried profusely while reciting *Chazoras HaShatz*, just on the words "*Boruch ata Hashem!*"

When the Rebbe recited "*Slichos*" at the *Amud* on *Asara B'Teves*, he shattered every heart in the room! The Rebbe was literally banging on the *Amud* while reciting the words, it was just incredible!

In general, the Rebbe used to cry even on an ordinary day while reciting "*Shema*

koleinu". A Bochur seeing the Rebbe at all these times was simply uplifted to a higher realm!

Are there any other Tishrei moments which you can share with us?

It was during the Farbrengen of Vov Tishrei, 5728 (or 5729). Towards the end of the Farbrengen, Rabbi A. M. Zilberstrom of Yerushalayim walked in, along with a group of guests whom he had brought from Israel. It was late, and it seemed as though the Rebbe was going to

ask for a Brocha that they be able to leave, yet now, at this Farbrengen, with just one "*Le'chaim*", we could have freed three million Jews! Why has no one said *Le'chaim* for the Russian Jews? No one here cares enough!

"Tomorrow, they'll each come and ask for a Brocha for their relatives, yet when they have a chance to actually do something affective for the Jews of Russia (by saying *Le'chaim* for them), everyone is busy with their own affairs."

Chossid is expected to be so inherently attached to the Rebbe, to the point that he naturally feels what it is that the Rebbe wants at any given moment. That's why the Rebbe was so disappointed; because Chassidim are too involved in their own personal matters and have no place for the Rebbe in their lives. Hence the *Niggun* "*Essen est zich...*"

Nevertheless, us as Chassidim felt that those few Chassidim who were able to leave Russia in those early stages were



end the Farbrengen, but when the group arrived, the Rebbe suddenly began to sing "*Essen est zich*", and the Farbrengen basically began anew.

For close to half an hour, the crowd sang this *Niggun* and the Rebbe was very serious, emanating a solemn tone to the entire crowd. The atmosphere at that Farbrengen was one of true *Teshuvah*; I suppose that even those who for whatever reason had not yet done *Teshuvah* on Rosh Hashonah, were inspired to do so at that Vov Tishrei Farbrengen.

Once we're on the subject of "*Essen est zich*": At the end of the Farbrengen on Shavuos, 5724, the Rebbe spoke of the hardships endured by the Jews behind the Iron Curtain. All of a sudden, the Rebbe's face grew very serious and he began staring at the Chassidim with a ghastly look, and the startled crowd was unable to decipher what it was that he wanted from them. Finally, the Rebbe began to speak:

"We just mentioned the hardships of the Russian Jews. All those who have relatives stranded there, often come over and

The Rebbe was so distressed that he picked up the pile of napkins from in front of him and threw them across the table!

Then the Rebbe began the *Niggun* of "*Essen est zich*", but when the crowd joined in, the Rebbe asked, "Why is everyone singing?" (It seems that the Rebbe only began this *Niggun* to imply to the Chassidim that they are not involved in the right things; not to have them enjoy themselves with a good *Niggun*...)

Then the Rebbe asked for a child under Bar-Mitzvah to sing the *Niggun* and the Farbrengen ended shortly thereafter.

It seems like this was a heavenly "Eis Ratzon" that the Chassidim were totally unaware of. Why, then, did the Rebbe put so much blame on them? Were they at fault for not knowing about these heavenly affairs?

Reb Shmuel Chefer was in New York at the time, and on his way back to Eretz Yisroel, he stopped off in France and met with the renowned *Mashpia*, Reb Nissan Nemenov, whom he told of this recent Shavuos episode. Reb Nissan explained: A

only able to do so thanks to the Rebbe's *Brochos*. The fact is that those Chassidim who had relatives here in New York that would approach the Rebbe during each Farbrengen and ask for a *Brocha* on their behalf ended up leaving Russia first. For example, Reb Berke Chein who's son, Reb Mottel constantly approached the Rebbe; Reb Mendel Futerfas who's brother, Reb Hendel would approach the Rebbe; Reb Yossel and Reb Mulle Mochkin who's brother, Reb Leibel and father, Reb Peretz would approach the Rebbe, and many others.

THE BOCHUR IN TOMCHEI TMIMIM TODAY

In your position as *Mashpia*, do you believe that the Bochorim of today's day and age are expected to live up to the same *Avoda* as the Bochorim of previous generations?

Absolutely! Whatever the previous Rabbeim demanded of the Bochorim in their generations was demanded unequivocally by our Rebbe. Only that nowadays,

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the Rebbe has brought in new ideas (like the *Mivtzoim* and so on), which to us are even more precious and special, since they were addressed specifically by our Rebbe to our generation.

There was once a group of American Bochorim farbrenging on Tes Adar, and the discussion came up about the role of Tomchei Tmimim in America. One of the Bochorim pointed out that it comes across a bit surprising that the Rebbe doesn't seem to speak about davening and demand that Bochorim daven at length. A short while later, the Rebbe held a Farbrengen and spoke for a long time about the importance of davening at length, and then, turning to this particular Bochor, the Rebbe said: "So, you see? I do speak about *Avodas hatfila*!"

I am reminded of a story: On Gimmel Tammuz, 5729, a few people approached the Rebbe at a Farbrengen to receive bottles of *Mashke*, one of them being Reb Leib Kahan from Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe told him: "I have been distributing bottles of *Mashke* for quite some time now. One person asked for a bottle in honor of an upcoming wedding, another in honor of his new apartment, while others asked for a Bar Mitzvah or *Yohrtzeit*. Yet not one person asked for a *Brocha* regarding spiritual matters. From now on, I shall no longer distribute bottles of *Mashke* at Farbrengens!"

We saw time and again that when a Bochor turned to the Rebbe for insight or for a *Brocha* in his *Avodas Hashem*, the Rebbe took the time during *Yechidus* to

respond to him in great detail.

I once heard from Reb Yoel Kahan that there were Bochorim who were in doubt as to which *Ma'amor* to contemplate upon before davening; would it be better to have one set *Ma'amor* for every single day, or perhaps would it be commendable to think each day about the *Ma'amor* that was learnt most recently.

The Rebbe responded that it is better to think about the *Ma'amor* that was most recently learnt, as doing so would connect together each day's davening and learning. Then the Rebbe added: From each and every *Ma'amor*, one can derive something applicable to his own *Avoda*.

On the other hand, it is important that a Bochor assess his true standing, and know what exactly he is able to handle. This brings me to another story told by Reb Yoel:

The Rebbe once told Reb Yoel not to speak at Farbrengens about levels of *Avoda* that are above the Bochorim's heads. "I had two Bochorim come into *Yechidus* lately" the Rebbe said. "One of them must have heard at a Farbrengen that he is supposed to ask for a '*Tikun*', so he did. I answered him briefly, he was satisfied, and he left the *Yechidus*. Another Bochor asked a similar question, but the issue really bothered him, so he continued to ask about it, it was then that I expounded upon the issue at length."

Additionally, when the Rebbe stopped receiving Bochorim in *Yechidus* (in 5735), he explained that one of the reasons was because they didn't utilize the opportunity

in *Yechidus* properly (i.e. to ask for *Brochos* in *Avoda*, etc.).

But can't it be argued that in the latest years, the Rebbe's main focus was only on *Inyonei Geula U'Moshiach*?

Why must the two conflict one-another? After the Rebbe said the famous *Sicha* on Chof Ches Nissan, 5751, there were many people who wrote to the Rebbe all sorts of ideas as how to bring Moshiach, and the Rebbe said to Rabbi Groner: "I don't understand what they want! Didn't I say clearly that the way to do it is by studying *Inyonei Geula U'Moshiach*? Why are they searching for other answers?"

The basics will always remain the same. Only that in each period, the Rebbe will emphasize what is to be stressed most at this time. In the last years, the Rebbe taught that all of our learning, davening, *Avoda*, and *Hafotzas Hama'ayonos* must all be permeated with the ultimate goal – to bring Moshiach.

Even this was no real news to us. I remember the atmosphere in 770 around the time of Yud Shevat, 5730; the air was full of Moshiach no less than it is today. All Chassidim felt that Moshiach was finally about to be revealed. We felt it so strongly inside of us!

Let us hope that indeed soon we will actually be *zoche* to be reunited with the Rebbe, with the coming of Moshiach, ***Be'karov Mammosh!***

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