

Consequences of Conceit

There are many consequences and harms of conceit, and their list is as follows:

1. pride
2. forgetting a sin and underestimating it
3. deprivation of the benefits of admonishment and guidance
4. indifference to people's ways of harm
5. non-belief in the mercy and favor of Allāh

Any of these consequences suffices to render one's perdition and suffering; so, what would you say about all of them combined?!

Pride:

As regarding pride being one of the outcomes of conceit, it is so because both of these characteristics have one and the same root. In other words, if one is conceited and arrogant, and when one sees himself as being great, his heart's eye will be too blind to see the faults and shortcomings in him. In this case, if he wants to show someone the condition of looking at his own self greatly, demonstrating the greatness status, he will then be afflicted by the dangerous ailment of pride.

In other words, the condition of conceit and of one who considers himself to be greater than others, so long as it stays inwardly and has no outward manifestation, it is pride. If it gets out through the senses, it is called arrogance. Both conditions, pride and arrogance, need another person besides the individual himself so the latter may see himself inwardly and innately as being greater than others; it is then that one is characterized by pride.

Or he may demonstrate his attitude of thinking he is greater than others to everyone else, hence this person becomes characterized by pride. At any rate, pride and arrogance need the other party. Not all pride is like that. This is the difference between conceit and pride. A conceited person sees himself and his deeds as being great without discerning the others. That is, if we suppose there is nobody who is not conceited, and that Allāh, Praise to Him, did not create anyone else besides him, so he lives by himself, he can be imagined as being arrogant. The arrogant person is at the verge of the hell of pride. When he finds someone to whom he can demonstrate his pride, he will then be afflicted with pride and arrogance, and his abode will be hell as is clearly stated in the Holy Qurʾān in this verse:

"... Is there no abode in Hell for the haughty?" (Qurʾān, 39:60).

This is one of the dangerous detriments that await the proud. Therefore, all the detriments and afflictions resulting from the sinning characteristic of "pride" can apply to conceit, too; may Allāh grant us refuge from it.

Forgetting about and Underestimating Sins

Conceit causes one to forget many sins which he committed in the claim that he does not need to reform himself, so he does not mend what he had broken. As a result for this heedlessness, he forgets many sins, and he is not concerned about the sins which he still remembers. This condition may drag one into committing new sins.

Perhaps this is the meaning referred to in a tradition quoted in *Wasʿil al-Shaʿa* from Imām al-Sʿdiq (ع) who cites the Messenger of Allāh (ص) in a tradition in which Mousa (Moses) son of Imran (Amram) asks Satan, "Tell me about the sin which, when a son of Adam commits, you overtake him." Satan said, "It is when he is proud of himself, thinks too much of his good deeds and his sin looks small in his eyes."

It is known that when Satan overtakes someone, the result will be more sinning, in addition to underestimating the sin, for this by itself is an insult to the status of the divine greatness which is one of the greatest sins, and it may stop one from being included in the divine mercy, as some traditions point out. In the sacred book *Al-Kʿfi* where Zaid the cooking oil seller cites Imām al-Sʿdiq (ع) saying that Abū Abdullāh said that he had heard Abū Muhammad (ع) saying, "One of the sins which are not forgiven is when a man says, 'Blessed am I had I only not done anything other than this [deed]!' Abū Hashim al-Jaʿfari quotes Imām al-Hassan al-ʿAskari (ع) saying that he heard Abū Muhammad (ع) saying, "Among the sins that are not forgiven is one saying, 'I wish I would not be held accountable except for only this [deed]!'"

Imām al-Khomeini, the mentor, may I be his sacrifice, has explained that conceit obliterates belief and

ruins the rewards for the good deeds, according to a tradition narrated by Ali ibn Suwaid. The imām was asked about the conceit that spoils good deeds, so the imām explained some of its degrees, citing other traditions as well, in this regard. He said the following:

"The conceit tree is bad; its fruit is many major sins and abominations. When its root rests in the heart, one's affair is dragged into disbelief and *shirk* and more than both of these. One of its consequences is underestimating sins; rather, one who is conceited is not in the process of reforming himself claims it is pure and purified. He does not care at any time to purge himself of the filth of committing offenses. The thick curtain of conceit blocks him from seeing his own ills. This catastrophe stops one from achieving perfections, afflicts him with all sorts of shortcomings, brings about eternal perdition, and the doctors of the psyche can find no cure for him."

Deprivation from benefits of Admonition and Guidance

One of the problems with conceit with which one is afflicted as a result of this psychological disease, and as a result of one believing in his own superiority over others and the status which he has with Allāh, he regards others as ignorant, seeing no value for their viewpoint. As a result for this condition, he accepts neither advice from any adviser nor any admonishment from any preacher. One who is deprived of the abundant benefits of admonishment, both the *nafs* and Satan have a free hand in tempting him.

There is a great deal of emphasis in traditions, statements of great men, poets and wise men, on the company of the folks of righteousness and on being in contact with scholars, so much so that even looking at the face of a scholar is adoration, and looking at his house door is adoration, according to traditions. On one hand, the *nafs* and Satan find no room to tempt him because, as a result of keeping the scholars and the wise company, he becomes keenly aware of his faults, seeing himself as being derelict on the path towards Allāh.

But if he stops keeping them company, he will be surrounded with detriments, and he becomes unaware of his faults, so he stops seeking his pursuit, claiming he has already achieved his pursuit and no longer needs to exert any effort. One whose condition is like that is definitely going to perish and will imminently fall.

Imām al-Khomeini, may his blessings endure, says that among the harms of conceit is that one looks askance at Allāh's servants, seeing their good deeds as nothing even if they may be better than his own; this, too, is one of the paths towards the annihilation of man and thorns on his path.

Unawareness of the Servants' Detriments

Among the perils of conceit is that instead of one seeing his faults and shortcomings, he becomes too blind to see these, so he does not examine his deeds, nor does he ascertain his acts of worship. If the *nafs* and Satan find their ways to him through other venues such as pretension and others, one may treat himself before it is too late. But due to this disease [of conceit], one may not correct the conditions required for the soundness of his rituals and acts of adoration, so his good deeds and worship become void even according to obvious religious laws and according to the verdicts of scholars of the Sharḥa.

But since he admires his good deeds, he does not look for such verdicts so he may apply them to the sacred rites. The poor man finds himself in a situation in which the adoration of as long as fifty years of his lifespan is void and was not correct even in a way where he can repeat them and make up for them. What a fault is greater than one being unaware of seeing his faults?! The Prophet (ص) says, "Suffices one for a fault is that he sees people's faults while being too blind to see his own." Imām Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi (ع) has said, "One who is pleased with himself will find many who are displeased with him."

Lord! Enable us to see our faults so such vision may be one of the marks of Your love for us. He, peace be with him, has said, "If Allāh loves a servant, He enables him to see his own faults."

Not Believing in Allah's Mercy and Favor

One of the harms of conceit is that it weakens one's reliance on the favor of Allāh, the most Blessed, the most Exalted. Those who admire their deeds fall into a severe darkness and peril, so much so that if one mentions one of the favors of Allāh and His infinite mercy, they deny it, as if they love that Allāh, Praise to Him and Exaltation, deals with His servants according to His justice, so these admirers may be the ones who receive salvation, according to their claim, and their endeavor in undertaking good deeds will not go to waste.

In other words, the ailment of conceit creates in the conceited persons the ailment of envy, too. If we apply an impossible supposition, that is, if they are saved through Allāh's justice, they do not wish the rest of people to be saved through His favor. Although they are deeply immersed in sins, nay, they are the personification of sins and offenses, if these individuals hear someone saying that Allāh, Praise to Him, forgives whomsoever He pleases and pays no attention to anyone, nor is He concerned about him, instead of being pleased and happy with such a statement, they may deny it inwardly though they may not articulate it.

They thus object to Allāh about why the Praised One should thus forgive! In fact, [according to them] He does not forgive, because if he forgives others, what is the difference between them, those who exhausted themselves on the paths of asceticism and adoration, and those who did not? They are as the Commander of the Faithful (ع) described: "He fears for others on account of what is less than his own sin, hoping to get more than his deed [is worthy of], magnifying the offense of others while underestimating what he himself commits. He magnifies his acts of obedience while underestimating the same when done by others."

As a result of this disease, the admirers reject most narratives on the side of anticipation narrated by Ahl al-Bayt (ع), especially with regard to their Shi'ites. They either reject them or interpret them with some of their own views and interpretation. For this there are many evidences. We would like to state one of them as an example:

The great master, Ibn Tawoos, may Allāh be pleased with him, has stated in his book, *Al-Iqbāl*, a tradition from Imām Ali ibn Mousa al-Rida (ع) about the virtue of the Ghadīr Day. In it, the following is stated: "Allāh orders in it the honored scribes not to record the sins of those who love and follow Ahl al-Bayt for three days starting on the Ghadīr Day, not to record any of their sins in honor of Muhammad, Ali, and the Imāms (peace be with them), all of them."

This tradition is one of hundreds of similar ones the recording en masse from Ahl al-Bayt is definitive, and they have a sequentially narrated meaning, but they are heavy on the taste of those among the worshippers and ascetics who think that they are holy and who admire their deeds, so they cast doubt about them under the guise of defending the creed. They say that such narratives permit some people to commit offenses during the three Ghadīr days, relying on this narrative.

In making such a statement, they really are not concerned about the creed; rather, the root of this confusion, as we pointed out, is the disease of conceit. Since they rely on their deeds, seeing themselves as being in no need for divine care, they feign sorrow for the creed. But they doubt a man of divinity and spirituality, such as Ibn Tawoos, who has a moral contact with the supreme spiritual kingdom, something which is admitted by all scholars and great Muslims, and the same doubt they apply to the great traditionist, al-Majlisi, and other great men of the creed.

But their sectarian fanaticism is actually much greater than their concern. They believe they definitely protect the creed more than these holy men. But these men have recorded this tradition and similar ones in their books and were not concerned about some readers having the "courage" to charge them with offense. These "nurses that are more merciful than the mothers", or the branches that are superfluous to the main root, defend the sanctities of the creed. They claim the recording of this tradition and its likes causes people to dare to transgress.

These vain claimants must be told that the curtain of seeing the soul and its adoration obstructs belief in these facts; otherwise, there is no room to dislike such narratives, and there is no room for confusion.

What, then, is the difference between a written sin being forgiven and not being written in the first place? Are there no clear verses and consecutively reported narratives that say that Allāh Almighty forgives all sins, including the sin of *shirk* when combined with repentance, if He wills, even if one sinned for seventy years?

The One Who forgives the sins of seventy years and wipes them out through a signal from Him, the most Exalted One, does not only wipe out sins but, according to the manifestation of the attribute of "O One Who changes wrong deeds with good deeds!", replaces a sin with a good deed. Allāh changes their sins into good deeds... Should such obvious verses and authentic narratives cause people to dare to sin, let that narrative, too, be as such?!

Any answer which you provide about these verses and narratives we respond to it by contrasting it with this narrative, and what we have stated underscores the scholarly term.

As for the resolving answer and analysis in the issue, one who truly loves Ali (ع) is during the Ghadīr days immersed in an ocean of happiness and elation. Just as one who is immersed in the sea, surrounded by the tumultuous sea waves does not accept any outside filth, nor does filth affect him nor makes him dirty, in the sense that water overwhelms him and surrounds him from all sides, so it does not permit filth to bear any impact on him..., so is the case with the Ghadīr days.

They do not permit room for offense's impact which is in the sense of writing and confirming, nor does it necessitate crossing the borders, either: One who loves Ali (ع) by instinct shies away from transgressing. If a sin is committed by him, it is by virtue of the overpowering nature and external obstacles.

He, having committed a sin, even during committing a sin, is ashamed of it, regretting it, which is one of the important factors for the sin having no effect and necessitating Allāh's forgiveness, not only during those three days but in all days, during the entire life-span. The reality of repentance is nothing but this. Repentance is regret, and this is what our Lord, the Almighty, has decreed. Anyone who does not accept Allāh's decrees and rulings can do whatever he wants, whatever he can.

Based on the above, there is no room in the narrative for any direction, for any affectation, which has been committed by some of those who say that this narrative and its likes is negative because the subject rejects such a conclusion in the sense that one who loves Ali (ع) during these days commits no sin. Or, as some have committed, according to what has been transmitted by observers from among the sects of the difference between a sin and an offense, it is said that the offense is the one that is not recorded. As for the sin, it is recorded.

Based on this trend, they had a problem passing a judgment on al-Majlisi, criticizing him for having interpreted the offenses referred to in the narrative as the sins in his book *Zīd al-Ma'ūd*. The summary of what they say is that they made a distinction between the offense and the sin. They say that the transgression is the sin that is done on purpose, while the offense is the sin that is done unintentionally, unwillingly.

What is stated in the narrative is that what is not recorded during the three Ghadīr days is the offense, the sin that is done unintentionally, unwillingly, not the transgression that is pre-meditated, done on purpose, pre-determined, for it is called a sin, not an offense. But this distinction is unnecessary absurdity because a "sin" in the books of language means the absolute transgression, whether it is on purpose or without. But there is disagreement about the offense: Is it the absolute sin undertaken on purpose, as is stated in *Al-Munjid*? In the latter reference, this text exists: "An offense is a sin, and some say it is done deliberately."

The same exists in *Muntaha al-Arab*; so, one can refer to them if he wishes. What is added to the above is derived from its linguistic meaning. This term, the offense, is used in the Qur'ān in more than twenty places, and most of these places cannot convey the sense of a sin done unintentionally or unwillingly such as these verses of the Almighty:

"... Nor does he have any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds which none eat except those in sin" (Qur'ān, 36-37);

"... And Pharaoh, and those before him, and the overthrown cities, all committed habitual sin" (Qur'ān, 69:9); "... A lying, sinful forelock!" (Qur'ān, 96: 16);

"Surely those who seek gain in evil and are engulfed in their sins are the companions of the Fire: they shall dwell in it (forever)" (Qur'ān, 2:81);

"Because of their sins, they were drowned and were made to enter the Fire (for punishment)" (Qur'ān, 71:25).

So, how can all these places where Allāh, Praised is He, makes such strong threats convey the meaning that an offense is the sin that is done unintentionally or unwillingly?! How could Pharaoh or the people of Noah or other sinners have committed their sins unwillingly, unintentionally?!

Even if you overlook all of these, what is the meaning of forgiveness for an offense that is done unintentionally or unwillingly during these three days although the narrative refers to a status of gratitude, whereas such forgiveness is not restricted to it? It is apparent that these trends and explanations are unacceptable.

They remind one of the Persian axiom which says, "... like one who composes poetry but is unable to come up with a rhyme scheme!" The imām of the nation, the leader of the Islamic revolution, imām al-Khomeini, may his blessings endure, has made statements on the occasion of the narratives cited about the virtue of weeping out of fear of Allāh which I would like to quote for more benefit:

Statement in Point by Imam Khomeini

The imām, may his shade endure, says the following:

"What has to be pointed out is that some of those with weak souls, those whose souls are not at ease, cast doubt about many rewards received for partial matters, being indifferent to the fact that if something seems small in our eyes in the life of this world, it does not mean that its image in the world of the unknown and in the angelic world is also small and insignificant. Perhaps a small being may have in its domain and inwardly the perfection of greatness and glory.

The sacred physique and the bodily form of the Honored Prophet, the seal of prophets, the revered Prophet and the great one, peace of Allāh be with him and his progeny, was one of the small existents in this world, but his holy soul surrounded the domain and the angelic kingdom and was the cause for the existence of the heavens and the earth. Passing a judgment about the "insignificance" and the small size of something according to its hidden and angelic image is a branch of knowledge of the angelic world and of the hidden things, and people like us have no right to make such a judgment.

We have to open our eyes and ears to the words of the scholars of the hereafter world, I mean the prophets and friends of Allāh, peace be with them all. Moreover, that world is based on the Almighty bestowing His favors and infinite mercy, while there is neither an end nor a limit to Allāh's favors. Absolute exclusion from the favor of the most Generous One Who has the infinite mercy originates from extreme ignorance, for all these blessings which He has bestowed upon His servants and which the minds are too incapable of and are too puzzled to count, all came into being without anyone asking for or being worthy of.

So, what is the objection if He bestows many times as many as these boons unto His servants without precedence? Is this too much to expect in a world that was built on the influence of the human will and about which the following verse was revealed:

"There will be all that the souls could desire there, all that the eyes could delight in" (Qurʿān, 43:71),

despite man's desires having neither an end nor a measure?! Allāh, the most Blessed and Exalted One, determined that world and the human will so as man would exist according to His mere will.

"So, my dear one, the narratives and the sacred traditions for these boons are not just one or two or ten so one may have room to deny them. Rather, they are beyond the limit of being consecutively reported, and all the reliable books of traditions are filled with such quotations. These are similar to one hearing with his own ears from the Infallible Ones, peace be with them, and they allow no room for interpretation.

Such a requirement is in total agreement with the consecutively reported texts and not in collision with the evidence, but in agreement with it, backed by evidence. Denying it is a proof for the weakness of one's conviction and an indication of his extreme ignorance. One has to unhesitatingly accept the statements of the prophets and friends of Allāh, peace be with them, and there is nothing better than man submitting to the masters of the truth, especially in the matters where reason cannot reveal, nor is there a way to comprehend them except through the venue of inspiration and message.

If man wants to insert his small mind, his whims and thoughts, in the unknown and the worship matters of the Sharʿa, he will end up denying what is generally accepted and what is necessary. He will gradually be dragged from what is few to what is many, from what is low to what is high. If we suppose that you cast doubts about these narratives and their *isnad*, although there is no room in them for denial, you will be casting doubt about the Glorious Divine Book, the heavenly sacred Qurʿān, for it has many such rewards. An example is this verse:

"The night of power is better than a thousand months" (Qurʿān, 97:3),

and like this verse:

"The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allāh is that of a kernel of corn: It grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred kernels. Allāh gives manifold increase to whomsoever He pleases" (Qurʿān, 2:261).

In my opinion, I the writer, one of the reasons for these exclusions and denials is conceit and the magnifying of deeds. For example, if someone fasts for one day or spends the entire night in adoration, then he hears that there are great rewards for his deed, he will not think it as being far-fetched. Also, this by itself exists had the deed had its own reward, but he magnifies his deed, admires it, so he believes there is such a reward.

"My dear one: "If we suppose that we, in all our lifespan, say fifty or sixty years, undertook all the obligations stated in the Sharʿa, then we moved from this life with a sound belief, with good deeds and sound repentance, what is the measure of the reward for our righteous deeds and conviction? According to the Book and the Sunnah as well as the consensus of all sects, such an individual receives the mercy of the Truthful One, the most Exalted, and he enters Paradise with which he is promised, a garden in which he will remain eternally in bliss and ease, in everlasting mercy, tranquility and fragrance".

Is there room in this for denial, had the basis been the reward for the good deed? Let us erroneously suppose that our righteous deeds are worthy of being rewarded, the reward of this person will be hardly imaginable in quantity and quality. It is understood from this that the matter is based on another premise and revolves on another axis; so, there is no room for exclusion, and there is no venue opening for denial."

Here ends his statement, may his shade prolong: "Among the other harms of conceit is that it forces the

conceited person to be pretentious. This is so because demonstrating what is beautiful of the human instincts and stopping to show off one's beauty is very difficult, just as difficult as it is for a hungry and thirsty person not to eat and drink. The men of knowledge, those who are giants in this field, have very interesting situations and made very precise statements, but it is not suitable to quote them here.

This sense does not distinguish between true beauty and an imagined, fake one. One who admires his deeds, since they look good in his eyes, and since the deeds which he does must be shown to others, finds it very difficult to withstand this psychological inclination. Had he had this will, he would not have been afflicted with conceit in the first place. This is the opposite of one who does not admire his deeds. He does not see them as being anything but as nothing, seeing his manners dismal and his conviction as being unworthy of being demonstrated to others; so, he does not admire himself, his attributes or deeds. Rather, he sees himself as not beautiful at all.

Such a person is in no position to make a show of himself and present his deeds to others. He is just as imām Khomeini, may his shade endure, has said, "The rotten and ugly merchandise is never displayed at the wholesale market." But if he sees himself and his deeds as presentable, he will be in a position to show off his beautiful deeds in their imagined beauty. Therefore, all the harms mentioned in these sheets are definitely counted among the harms of conceit as well. In the field of the harms of conceit, the greatest mentor of manners and spirituality, imām Khomeini, may his blessings last forever, has made a statement, and here is a translation of its text:

Wise Admonishment by Imam Khomeini

"Let the conceited person know that this abomination is the seed of all other abominations and the cause of many matters each one of which independently causes eternal annihilation and lodgment in torment. If he gets to know these harms properly, reviewing them carefully, studying the reports and legacies of the greatest Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt, blessings of Allāh be with them all, he will surely see for himself that he must reform them and purge himself of this abomination, must uproot it from his inner self so he may not leave this world, God forbid, and go to the next carrying this abomination with him.

This is because once the worldly eye is closed, when one sees the power of the *barzakh* and judgment, he will see that the condition of those who committed great transgression is better than his own, for Allāh Almighty permitted them to dive in oceans of His mercy on account of their repentance, or due to their reliance on the favor of Allāh Almighty, while this poor person who saw himself as being independent, seeing inwardly that he had no need for the favor of Allāh Almighty, Allāh, praise to Him, held him to account through the scales of His justice, just as he wanted: Now He informs him that he never intended to truly worship the Truthful One, that all his acts of worship distanced him from the side of the Truthful

One, all his deeds and conviction were not only nil and nothing but necessitated his perdition.

They were seeds for painful torment, a cause for being lodged into hell forever. God forbid that Allāh, praise to Him, should deal with anyone through His justice, for had this tablet been opened, none from the first generations and the last would have had a way to salvation. The imāms of guidance, peace be with them, and the great prophets used to hope, in their silent supplications to Allāh, for His favor, the most Praised One, and they were terrified by His justice and judgment.

"The silent supplication by the elite ones to the Truthful One and to the Infallible Imāms (peace be with them) are full of admission of dereliction, of incapacitation to truly adore. In one place, the one who is the very best of everything in existence declares the following: "We never knew You as You ought to be known, nor did we adore You as You ought to be adored." The condition of the rest of people is well known. Yes, they realized the greatness of the Truthful One, the Almighty, knowledgeable of the ratio of what is possible to what is mandatory.

They knew that had they spent their entire lifespan in the life of this world adoring, being obedient, praising and glorifying Him, they would never have thanked Allāh for His blessings; so, how could they fully meet the requirements for praising Him and His attributes? They knew that nothing exists by itself, on its own, that life, ability, knowledge, power and all the other perfections are but the shadow of His perfection, the Almighty that He is.

What can be is poor, rather, purely poor, living in His shade, never being independent. How can there be any perfection for one by himself so he may display his perfection for sale? What power does he have so he may bargain over his work? The ones who are knowledgeable of Allāh, of the beauty of the Truthful One, of His Greatness, witnessed through vision and sight how imperfect they are, how incapable, how weighty their obligation is, while we, poor souls, are surrounded by the barrier of ignorance, indifference and conceit!

The barrier of inwardly and outwardly transgressions has veiled from our eyes, ears, minds, senses and the rest of faculties, so much so that we display our existence in contrast with the overwhelming authority of the Truthful One, the Almighty, claiming independence, saying we are something.

"So, poor being who has no knowledge about his own self and about his ratio to the Creator! O poor wretch who is unaware of his function compared to the One Who owns the kings! Such ignorance, such lack of knowledge, is the cause of these sufferings. We have been afflicted by them because of the darkness and impurity. The destruction starts from its origin; the water is impure from its source; our eyes are too blind to see the deep knowledge. Our hearts are dead. Such is the reason for all the calamities. Yet we are not in the process to reform them, either...

"Lord! We plead to You to grant us success, acquaint us with our functions, grant us a share of the lights of deep knowledge with which You filled the hearts of those who know and those of Your friends! Show us how Your power and authority overwhelm, how faulty we are, and enable us to understand the

meaning of praising Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. We are the poor ones, the unaware, who attribute all the praiseworthy attributes to the beings; do inform our hearts that not a single good attribute belongs initially to any being, and show us the truth of this verse:

"Anything good (O man!) that happens to you is from Allāh, but whatever evil happens to you is from your (own) nafs (soul)" (Qur'ān, 4:79),

and instill in our cruel hearts, the impure one, the blessed statement of Tawhīd, for we are the people of the barrier, of the dark, of shirk and hypocrisy. We love ourselves, we admire them, so help us take the love for the *nafs* and for this world out of our hearts. Do make us loving Allāh, worshipping Him; surely You can do anything at all."

This is the conclusion of the wise admonishment of imām Khomeini, may his blessings last.

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