

## LIMITATIONS CREATED THROUGH ILLUSORY ALTERNATIVES

Greetings, my dearest friends, God bless all of you. Blessed be this lecture. Blessed be your understanding, so that you can properly assimilate the contents.

I should like to begin tonight's lecture with a short description of spiritual reality and contrast it with the picture humanity represents when viewed from a higher vantage point. This perspective has a bearing on the topic we shall discuss.

In reality, the universe is wide open, and all human beings can move freely in it. The universe is truly at your disposal, with its infinitely rich variety of experience, fulfillment and energy. You can make use of all this. You can truly explore the blissful possibilities open to you. You can indeed be master of this wonderful world in which you forever expand into more blissful experience, into greater wisdom and power, into wider scopes and depths of being. However, due to a number of circumstances, you simply do not realize this fact. You assume that you are bound and imprisoned in a limited world, where you are fenced in by boundaries you cannot penetrate or control. In this assumption of a limited universe, you make no use of the universal powers within you, destined for your pleasure and expansion, for your growth and experience. Not making use of these forces, you inactivate yourself and thus create imaginary fences that need not exist at all.

Imagine wide open spaces, containing all the beauty of the world, all that an individual could possibly require for his or her enjoyment. But people do not see these wide open spaces. They do not see the powers, forces, assets, beauties surrounding them. They close their eyes in fear and believe they live behind fenced-in walls. Although there is no prison, and there are no fences in reality, if you believe and act as though you cannot move from the spot, the effect will be the same. You may wait a long time to be delivered from this helpless, passive position, but as long as you do not discover that all you have to do is recognize your freedom, you will remain fenced in. This is the relationship between reality and illusion. Illusion appears real, but only as long as you believe in it.

The fences could be instantly removed, with one gesture. But because you don't know this, you must find your own way to discovering the nonexistence of the fences. There is no other possibility. Others can tell you that this is so, and you may even believe what you hear: that you could open your eyes and start moving out, using your inborn faculties. Yet, you are afraid to try. You may listen, but dare not do what is necessary to move out into the great and safe freedom. You fear the freedom and, rather, choose unnecessary suffering. But one day you discover to your astonishment the ease of reality: its generosity, its abundance, its stimulating peace, and you wonder why you had feared it, why you rather chose self-inflicted prohibitions.

The fences are rarely just simple constructs. They are mazes, complicated labyrinths -- products of your false assumptions and the contradictory attitudes you collect. It is your job on

earth to find the way out of these labyrinthine byways to the freedom and liberation this path promises. Some of my friends have occasionally gained some glimpses of this already.

How does this description of spiritual forms have a personal bearing on your problems, your current attitudes or blocks? The most immediate freedom you are to discover on a path such as this is the realization of your far-reaching sphere of influence. When a person finally recognizes the significance of cause and effect in his or her own life, the result is a tremendously changed attitude to life. Usually preliminary work has to be undertaken before the pathwork brings you to this understanding. You may have discovered many an image, have understood a number of inner problems and conflicts, and yet you have no inkling of the immediate causes and effects, hence the independent role you play in your fate, in what seems like unalterable circumstances. For the moment, I do not refer to mystical connections of a more far-reaching nature, karmic conditions, causes and effects that are once, twice or ten times removed, but direct, visible links of cause and effect, that is, visible if one chooses to see and understand.

How many times do all of you feel and think and fear and wish, as though your attitude and behavior had no bearing on the desired outcome! For instance, you fear you may not be liked and helplessly hope that perhaps you might be. Meanwhile, what escapes you is that your actions could easily bring about what you truly want. How often do you fear you may not succeed in a venture, passively, helplessly waiting for fate to determine the desired outcome? It does not occur to you that there are many ways in which you, and you alone, can bring about what you want. All your energies are geared to creating the appearance that what you want exists in your life. But deep down, you are convinced that you cannot really have it. You are ashamed to admit this, so you pretend you possess what you do not. You could have what you want if you spent your energies, not on make-believe, but on truly obtaining it. This may be success in any given field, it may be a happy relationship, being loved and fulfilled on all levels of your being, or it may be being a certain kind of person.

The first wall in the maze, then, is your belief that you cannot have what you so easily might have. The second wall, resulting from the first, is your shame about a non-existent and unnecessary deprivation. The third twisted corridor in the labyrinth of the mind is the pretense that you have what you want or could have if you wanted to, while you believe the opposite. In spite of believing that you cannot have it, nevertheless hopes for fate to deliver you from your deprivation. So you have fears and hopes, all based on false premises.

You even fear yourself, your own unconscious mind -- as though it contained a monster you have no control over, separated from your volitional processes. Moreover, you foolishly seem to assume that by pretending it does not exist, it will remain tame, but if you looked at it, it would act up, forcing you into actions you have no way of stopping. You completely forget that your unconscious mind is the monster; that once the unconscious is conscious, you are not a slave to it, but its master. You stubbornly insist that you are at the mercy of the workings of this secret mind. You are plagued with superfluous fears of whether or not you will succeed in growing, shedding an unwelcome trait, acting constructively -- as though all this had nothing to do with your choices, but was caused by a power over which you have has no influence. Even those of you who have already experienced considerable insights on this path still do not recognize how often you feel this way. You neglect to notice it. If only you would check such reactions and immediately correct the faulty thinking that has such far-reaching effects on your entire evolution, on your very existence! All you

need to do after such a detection is to forcefully assert that you, and you alone, determine your actions, your behavior, your decisions. The moment you do this, something begins to happen within, and heretofore unused faculties begin to manifest, first giving you still deeper understanding, and then strengthening you so that you begin to act in a new and more productive way, and are geared to accomplish your goal. In other words, you set new causes in motion by refusing to be the prey of your own destructive aspects.

When you finally come into your own and discover that the solution is so simple, a major transition occurs. It rests on your willingness to dispense with the subtle pretenses that cover up your unnecessary limitations. Then, when you dispense with the limitation itself, you can go out and obtain what you wish. Instead of withdrawing and pulling back from people, you will reach out for them. Hence, you will never worry about not being liked. Instead of causing a paralysis of your best faculties, you will discover and use them. Instead of saying no to life, you will say yes. Instead of helplessly waiting for others, or fate, or life, to make you into an acceptable person, meanwhile hiding in fear from yourself, you will determine what you wish, how to obtain it, what to do about tendencies you do not like. The change lies in doing your best, rather than giving the best impression. If you look at all your past discoveries in that light, you can determine the vast difference between giving the best impression, so that the best will be thought of you, and actually doing the best in order to obtain a particular desired result. This is the very key that determines the real success you want in a vocation, in a rewarding relationship, in growth and in self-unfoldment.

Regardless of how much of you have progressed, you there still maintain an imagined helplessness toward living, growing, and toward what life is supposed to give you. Observe and pinpoint it. Finding it is winning half the battle. You cannot make a decisive switch before first clearly seeing the state you must leave behind. If you do not see that you live with a fence around you, you cannot discover that the fence is imaginary and unnecessary. You can only go out into the great freedom fearlessly after discovering that you had not dared to do so before.

It is important, in this connection, that you discover (a) the feeling of helplessness, vague hope and fear that something should or should not happen, while not seeing how you can influence it; (b) the exact cause of your unfulfillment: how you act as a consequence of your misconceptions and images, how your negative emotions make you react, what they emanate, and how this affects others; (c) how you pretend to have or be what you think you could not genuinely get or become. Clear realizations applied to specific areas of your inner and outer life will enable thoughts and intentions to issue forth from you in a constructive, healthy direction. This is how you remove the first, immediate fences. It is an important transition. The direct cause and effect is observable without mystical faith in occult matters.

You often just say, "I have a resistance," letting it go at that, as though you had no other recourse and had to passively wait until the resistance vanished by itself. It seldom occurs to you to add, "Here is my resistance. Now that I know and see it, I reject it. I do not give in to it. Regardless of what I ignorantly and erroneously fear, I wish to penetrate behind the resistance. I am in power, not my resistance. My will for truth and growth is in power, is real, and not my vague, childish fears that cause the resistance." Another prevalent attitude expresses, "I am afraid of being rejected. I just hope for the best, but I am afraid, for I feel powerless to influence others to like me." After ascertaining such an attitude, it will be comparatively simple to declare to yourself, "Why should I not be liked? It is important to me to be liked. My inner resources will furnish me with all

the qualities I need. I will go out and be genuinely concerned for the other person, rather than merely pretending. When I am willing to like others as much as I wish to be liked, I shall like myself better, because there will be no unfair exchange, demand, or pretense on my part. Hence I will believe in the possibility of being loved. I sincerely wish to become acutely aware of whatever is lacking in me, and change. Since I am the determining factor, this wish must come true to the extent of the sincerity of my desire."

Such inner action means taking the reins of life into your hands. In some respects, you are all still within the primary fence wherein which you do not see immediate cause and effect. You are helpless because you believe yourself to be, not because you actually are. When you become aware of all this and begin formulating clear strong thoughts and will currents, when you deliberately express your intent to change, you will pass through this decisive threshold.

Formulating clear-cut thoughts and expressing the intent of the change within and without, does not mean that you are suppressing or repressing your negative, destructive helplessness. Repression is merely another word for deception. But when you see that you believe yourself to be helpless, that your desire is hopeless, and that therefore you must pretend and live in make-believe, you can then start to make the change and live in earnest, striving for real goals and dispensing with the need to be concerned about what others think.

You may assume that to express the intent to no longer feel and react according to a destructive trend means repressing it and superimposing a constructiveness that is not yet natural. However, acknowledging a negative finding does not mean remaining in it or waiting until a miracle happens. So express the will to grow out of destructive patterns and take active leadership of your life and development; realize that you have the last word to determine whether or not, and when, you are going to change.

This has nothing to do with superimposition or wishful thinking. Declare, for example, that you wish this kind of relationship instead of that kind of relationship. Declare that you wish a specific kind of self-expression, vocation, profession, set the goal you really desire to achieve. Then you may ask yourself what you intend to do for it. Also question yourself as to whether or not you believe in the possibility of attaining the goal. If not, why do you doubt? Here is the direct link of cause and effect that must be clearly recognized before the more remote links can be seen. When cause and effect cannot be linked immediately, where they are once, or several times, removed, the status quo must be temporarily accepted -- but only as long as cause and effect remain obscure. The instant the more remote links surface, the effect is the same as with the obviously direct links of cause and effect: the negative result dissolves instantly and new effects are created. But how can you come to see the further removed, that is, karmic, results, when you do not see the obvious, immediate connections, accessible to anybody with common sense who is willing to drop the resistance? If you do not see what you can do right now to change what it is in you that constantly creates undesirable results, how can you come to a wider view of cause and effect, so often ascribed to an unfathomable fate?

The first phase, the phase where cause and effect is obvious if one chooses to see it, has nothing to do with spiritual faith, with metaphysical factors. All that is necessary is seeing what is there to see, what even your nearest and dearest know but dare not tell you because they rightly feel you may be hurt and may not wish to accept what they observed. Due to your self-inflicted, fearful

blindness, you are paralyzed; you do not move where you should move. To compensate, you struggle and move too much where you could be serenely quiet. I am speaking of inner soul movements. In proper balance there is calmness; without strain, you let the result of your efforts come to you.

A major distinguishing point in the evolution of a human being is a person's attitude toward effort. Free, voluntary and joyful effort is the result of spiritual awakening. Effort made against one's will, forced on the individual because life requires it, is the result of still being fenced in by a limited understanding of spiritual reality. Yes, that requires effort, too, for the person who ceases effort ceases to live. But that kind of effort is always labored, always against the stream. Inwardly, such people would rather not make any effort. Their idea of bliss, their final goal of fulfillment, is non-effort, in a stagnating sense. Their outlook amounts to a belief that there is a finished state in which one does absolutely nothing. They dread to even hear otherwise, because they imagine the truth to be laborious and fraught with the forced effort they are used to. They hanker after a state of complete stagnation, of non-movement. This would, indeed, be death.

People in this stage are particularly afraid of death. To those who have already attained the realization that effort is bliss, movement is no chore but happiness itself; such people do not fear death because they do not wish it. At this stage effort becomes effortless. It is joyful movement in beautiful rhythm. It spreads more joy, fulfillment, peace, accomplishment, relaxation. At the very beginning, one may have to overcome a certain resistance, but one voluntarily does so, as a free choice, because the desired result is worth the effort. Overcoming the resistance quickly leads to a state where energy becomes self-generating. The effort becomes free-flowing and soon ceases to feel like effort. It becomes perfect movement, swinging on and on into constructive further unfoldment and self-expression.

Effort, against one's will, in order to conform, to get approval or ward off disapproval, or just to survive, creates resentment and fatigue, and thus causes greater resentment by making every further effort even more laborious. Free and voluntary effort, accepted in fairness, never makes one tired.

If you look at your individual path from this point of view and question your soul movements, my friends, you may discover some very important answers. How do you feel about the effort required for any of your daily chores, for the effort of this pathwork, for the effort of living as such? Do you have to be constantly pushed, perhaps by yourself as well as by life, while still another part of you resists? If this is so, resentment against life itself must be much stronger than you think. It is important to ascertain it. Or have you arrived, at least in certain areas, to where your effort is free-flowing, where you have already brought yourself into the momentum, where the self-generated effort carries you and you no longer have to exert discipline? In this case, you no longer feel effort, but feel movement and you enjoy it. Then you are truly over a major threshold. But the voluntary effort has to be exerted first, by the self, to generate sufficient momentum so that it becomes free-flowing. When this is happening, all blocks, all problems, all fences, can be removed with the greatest of ease. To want, and to express to want to put in sufficient effort, without resentment, is possible only when it is understood that this effort does not lead to hardship, slavery and suffering, but to happy experience, freedom and pleasure.

In the course of the years, we have amply discussed that misconceptions are responsible for all suffering. This includes the illusory fences and the labored, resented, tiring effort. People put themselves in the paradoxical position of wearing themselves out in a non-existent prison. They labor and slave and chafe with the effort of rattling the illusory prison bars, while they refuse to step outside and move freely toward further expansion, joyful mastery of self, and universal bliss.

In the search for images, in self-discovery, you are continuing to find any number of general and personal misconceptions. Now, my dearest friends, if you take all these misconceptions, put them together, and search for a common denominator, you must inevitably find that any wrong conclusion points to a limited concept of life, creation, the universe, and the self. You suffer because you believe suffering is necessary and inevitable. If you believe that you must bleed, you will cut yourself. You then find your misconception confirmed. This is the nature of all images. The limitation one ascribes to life and to one's relationship to life always amounts to an arbitrary either/or attitude. This we have also discussed at various times.

The either/or attitude, gravely and falsely limits spiritual reality, the cosmic forces at your disposal. Apart from the general misconception that suffering is necessary, and therefore should be sought, the either/or attitude has three important subdivisions, contained in all mass and personal images: (1) If this is good, then that is bad, everything is either black or white, right or wrong. (2) There are but two equally undesirable alternatives; no other possibility seems open. (3) Only one, or at best only a limited amount of desirable forms of self-expression and fulfillment can be had; other choices have to be given up. It is either this or that fulfillment, not both. Let us now see, in this context, why these limitations are false and damaging.

When you seek clarity in an issue and you consider it merely from the point of view of right or wrong, good or bad, this is a shallow and insufficient evaluation, leaving out many aspects of importance, many considerations of reality that cannot be found on the narrow level of either/or. The scope and depth of reality is much wider. This happens only because you do not question the issue in a spirit of really wanting to see whether or not it is constructive, productive, life-affirming and growth-producing for all concerned -- and this, after all, is the central question of all life issues -- or limiting and destructive. Ask, what is constructive about it and why, and what destructive?

You are used to quickly assuming a ready-made rule, without questioning it. You echo something blindly, without quite knowing why. And if you are challenged, you feel cornered and lean on authority; you conform, without ever using your own resources and your mind to find out why you adopt or reject, why you condone, and why you condemn. It does not occur to you that considerations other than right or wrong may apply to an issue. When you miss questioning the real issues, you overlook the greater scope, which would carry you way beyond the fence of unquestioned standards. This fence seems a protection against disapproval or rejection. But you imprison yourself, and the result is that you have to constantly deal with wrong choices -- choices that do not exist in reality. Adopting views and standards without questioning and probing, without getting to the real issues, or even the will to see what is really important and true, stems from the concern to gain approval, ward off disapproval, and not from a sincere concern for the issue itself. Here we find again what I mentioned first: living in integrity versus living in pretense.

Let us now look at the second either/or, the choice between two equally undesirable alternatives. Such a limited and negative outlook must, of course, be the result of an equally limited

and negative wrong conclusion. Untruth can only breed further error; it cannot breed truth. Wrong conclusions are always the result of stale, stagnant, obsolete ideas that remain unquestioned. If you dare not question your own taboos, you cannot widen the horizon of your life and discover that there are so many beautiful possibilities. Then you are doomed to making choices between equally undesirable and painful alternatives.

The third either/or is the assumption that only a limited degree of fulfillment and happiness exists. You have to choose between either this or that goal, the fulfillment of this or that wish. You also believe that your happiness or fulfillment takes away someone else's, so you dare not wish for your own, in the fear of being selfish. Within the fence, the universe is so limited that there is not enough room for a full life for each created being, and your fulfillment in one area seems to deprive another of this particular fulfillment. But beyond the fence, where no envy and jealousy exist, there is no such limitation. There the universe is seen for what it really is -- unlimited. Within the fence, you think you have to make choices. Beyond the fence no such choices need to be made.

You cannot step beyond the fence unless you discover that you are a free creature with self-responsibility. Part of this is the willingness and eagerness to question all doctrines, rules, regulations, and opinions handed down to you. Such questioning must be done thoroughly and independently, deeply probing into the truly important questions of living and growing. You must refuse to accept a view unless you, yourself, have arrived at its validity. You, yourself, must learn to determine yourself what you want, what to think, how much you are willing to invest to obtain what you wish, and whether what you expect for your investment is fair. You must learn to delve into yourself to summon the necessary resources and strength from within, in order to obtain what you wish. If you declare that you wish it and want to establish the necessary precondition within yourself, the answer must come from your higher self. You will find the capabilities you need. Clear-cut, concise formulation and articulation of what you wish, in what way you need to grow, and where you need help, will bring forth answers from the deepest source of truth and wisdom within, from the cosmic forces inside yourself.

When you fully understand the most accessible cause-and-effect connections which are within the first fences, the closest sections of your private maze, you will then be able to remove fences which are the results of more remote connections. How can you understand a karmic condition if you do not first fully experience the truth of immediate cause and effect? For example, you have a disharmonious relationship, but you do not see how you constantly contribute to it with your actions, thoughts and feelings. After you become aware of this, you have the ability to immediately change the relationship. But when you go on and on in blindness, you will come to the point where you find yourself alone, where you have no relationship, where you live in conditions in which it seems almost impossible to create a new relationship. This condition, then, is an effect not so easily perceived. But when the more immediate connections have been worked through, you will also come to understand and experience the more remote ones.

In order to deal with the less obvious cause-and-effect situations, it is important to understand an apparent contradiction. On the one hand, through a deeper understanding of yourself and spiritual law you begin to realize that suffering is unnecessary. On the other hand, the acceptance of what is, and the relinquishing of your selfwill are both necessary to be in inner harmony. This seems, indeed, like a contradiction which may give rise to puzzlement and confusion. Now, when I speak of acceptance, do I mean acceptance of suffering? Of course not. In an indirect sense it may

temporarily appear so, but the emphasis is entirely different. You have to learn to accept your limitations and their results. If you rebel against your present hardship, which is the result of your past ignorance, you obstruct the removal of the cause that created the hardship in the first place.

Accepting your limitations does not mean resignation to a limited state. Rather, it means true self-responsibility. It means to be aware that your freedom is not interfered with, that you are a free creature even before you become conscious of your own strength and freedom. It is indeed wonderful that it is that way. When you cannot accept your limitations, you do not accept self-responsibility, therefore you cannot step across the fence. The consequences of your past ignorance have to be accepted, but only as long as you persist in retaining the particular ignorance or misconception that has created the suffering. The moment you truly decide to change -- and that requires the courage of ruthless self-honesty -- the past negative cause dissolves and you feel the inner freedom to express happiness, to fully desire it, without tension, without urgency, without guilt, without the fear of unhappiness. Calmly, and with certainty, you will know that you can have all the happiness you wish, that your happiness does not interfere with any constructive issue in the world, nor does it deprive anyone. Nothing stands in the way. This will be your soul-condition the moment you are truly willing to change the cause that has brought the effect of unhappiness. When this decision is fully made, then further removed cause-and-effect connections also become immediately accessible.

The more you establish and experience the links between cause and effect, the more secure you must become, and the more trusting you will be in the nature of the universe and its benign character. As you remove fence after fence, you will emanate a current of trust which will have its positive effect. In other words, when you find yourself in a position that is evidently the result of a long chain reaction of negative beliefs and misconceptions, you will no longer feel hopeless about your condition. As your inner consciousness changes, you trustingly express your wish for fulfillment, in the knowledge that this is in keeping with spiritual reality. Thus you build a new condition. Such expression of trust is possible after experiencing again and again your true selfhood and its results, as opposed to self-imprisonment and its results. The knowingness that the law of cause and effect must fulfill itself will bring its proof. The trust you send out must come back to you. You will deeply know, without a doubt, that as your limited concepts bred their limited results, so your expanded concepts of the abundance of creation will breed, correspondingly, its own rewarding fulfillment. This knowingness is a ray that reaches out and must come back in fullness.

I realize that this has not been an easy lecture. It will require very intensive inner study and, above all, application to yourself, so that your understanding will not be general and theoretical only. You must determine where you limit yourself to an either/or concept in the belief that suffering is inevitable, in ignorance of the power inherent in your knowing, and by not having a concise formulation of your intentions. Thus your universe is closed, and your fences are up. Institute your own momentum, so that you swing into effortless effort to further your development, the removal of your fences, your self-unfoldment and self-expression. Effortless effort should become the movement of this path itself.

Now, are there any questions?

QUESTION: My daughter needs a little guidance and further help. Last summer you helped with some advice concerning her guilts. She has found it to be so, but she hasn't been able to



connect to it emotionally. She has tried and used a lot of effort, but it was not effortless -- I can see that. She was frantic in trying. And whether that blocks the outcome or not, I don't know. She cannot switch to the yes-current. What is the next step?

ANSWER: Sometimes it is impossible to indicate a specific next step, for it depends on how the person responds. Any number of aspects might lead to the same problem. The next step might be wherever an inner response occurs. So one has to try until one finds an approach to which she can respond. It makes no difference what the angle is. The answer lies in searching for the approach where she is at the moment least resisting, least fearful.

One of her great stumbling blocks is a tremendously strong either/or. It is unusually strong in her case. It is, "Either I am happy or unhappy. If I am happy, there must be perfection on all counts. Then I will live. If I am unhappy, I must die." There is nothing in-between perfect bliss and absolute annihilation. This is what makes her so frantic.

The advice that may help her over the present muddle is that she try to contact the unlimited cosmic intelligence inside and around her, to help her see that this either/or is false, illusory. As long as humans desire positive experiences out of fear of the negative opposite, they are in confusion and error -- hence their thoughts and emotions are cluttered with debris, and are an obstruction rather than a help toward attaining what is beneficial. This is what I explained about the apparent contradiction between acceptance and the knowledge that suffering is not necessary. It is difficult to reach the state of expressing a yes-current for happiness when one fears its opposite.

It makes no difference by which road you arrive at the truth. The truth is that there is nothing to fear, there is no suffering. You may arrive at this conclusion by finding it unnecessary to accept suffering, and you may succeed in shedding the fear. Or you may arrive at the same conclusion by having to go through the fear in order to find out that it was an illusion. Behind the wall of apparent suffering, or annihilation and fear, stands the spiritual reality of eternal, unchanging bliss. In her meditation she should work on this factor, expressing the wish to acquire a truthful concept about her frantic fear. Then the blocks will disappear, the way will be open. If she truly desires to remove the imaginary threat, to concisely formulate what it is she fears, and then desires to become convinced of its unreality, the answer must come. Whenever one meditates in such a fashion, in good faith and sincerity, in fullness of will, answers come.

If you can only halfway utilize and apply to yourself what I have said tonight, you indeed begin to dissolve the fences into the thin air of which they are actually made. They have no real substance. When you discover the freedom, when you find out that there are no chains, no fences, no prison walls, that you are not helpless, that you can constantly influence and mold your fate, your immediate life, then yours is a happiness you cannot imagine. It is in the fearlessness of living, the beauty of experiencing, the rich variety of experience without feeling harassed, and the bliss of effortlessly, steadily growing. This happiness cannot be described. All this awaits you. It is right there, where you are now.

I bless you once again, my friends, with all the love that exists in the universe, with all the strength. Make it your own, for this strength is an effortless strength. By knowing the truth, you must discover that you are indeed free to use the riches God has for you. Be in peace, be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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