

An Exposition of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Their Yearnings for his *Barakah*

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Abstract: The paper dwells on the concept of *Barakah* (blessing) reiterating its origin and the position of the Prophet as the most blessed of all the creations. The concept of *Barakah* as explored in the paper belongs to Allah who allots it to His creatures according to His will and mercy. The paper focuses mainly on how the companions of the Prophet acquired the *Barakah* of the Prophet. Reference is made to authentic Prophetic traditions on how the companions of the Prophet yearned for the blessing in his hair and in the fragrance of his sweat. The companions had also contested for left-over water of his ablution in order to gain *Barakah*. It is in the light of this that that the paper discusses the emphasis of the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* on the relevance of the *barakah* of the Prophet in averting the wrath of Allah as well as the effect of the blessings of the Prophet on food and water. As states in the paper, strict compliance with the teachings of the Prophet accorded the companions of the Prophet his blessings. The paper recommends to the Muslims the need to believe that the Prophet is a mercy to mankind and his blessing could be acquired through invocation of blessing on him and compliance with his teachings.

Keywords: Prophet Muhammad, Companions, *Barakah*.

INTRODUCTION

In a bid to appreciate this discourse, it is germane to comprehend the meaning of the word *barakah* an Arabic word which connotes blessing. *Barakah* according to Anis I, Muntazir A, As-Saramiyu A, & Ahmad M [1] is all about increase in something good or its advancement.

It is the presence of Divine goodness in a thing. This presence brings about a multiple effect on a thing or in other words enhances the realization of more than expected benefits from it. *Barakah* entails attainment or increase in goodness either in this world or the hereafter. The above definition is further corroborated by Jum'ah [2] who added that originally, *barakah* is solemnly from Allah.

Some synonyms of the word *barakah* bring out more illustration of the concept and point to the origin of the term. The word *barakah* is synonymous to the term *Ni'mah*. This is clearly spelt out in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an. *And ye have no (ni'matun) good thing but is from Allah...Q: (16:53)*. It also connotes the term *Khair* (good things). The Qur'an says: *"O Allah! Lord of Power [And Rule], Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou endues with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all (Khair) good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power. Q: (3:26.)*

Another synonym of *Barakah* is the word *Rahmah* (Mercy) which implies Allah's blessing or

Barakah. What Allah out of his (Rahmah) Mercy doth bestow on mankind there is none who can withhold: what He doth withhold, there is none who can grant, apart from Him: and He is the Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom. Q: (35:2). Barakah is also synonymous to Fadlah which means bounties. Say: "All (Fadlah) bounties are in the hand of Allah: He granteth them to whom He pleaseth. Qur'an (3:73)

As can be seen in all the aforementioned verses of the Glorious Qur'an, there is an affirmation that *Barakah* is from Allah. *Barakah* (Allah's blessing) is categorized into worldly or eternal blessing. This is worldly goodness and the goodness of the hereafter. This is captured in the following verse. *And there are men who say: "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, Q: (2:201)* In his exegesis of the above verse Ibn Kathir [3] states that the good aspect of this life entails all forms of material benefit such as the benefit of well-being, spacious dwelling place, sound and good means of transportation and others. The pick of the good of the hereafter he affirms is gaining admission into paradise.

Allotment of the Blessings of Allah

Out of His divine wisdom, Allah allots His blessings to His creations according to His will. Through these blessed people, beings and things, man is made to seek for the favour of Allah. For example, the Glorious Qur'an is a blessed book through which man derives the blessing of Allah when properly read, understood and internalised. The Qur'an says: *And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing: so follow it and be righteous, that ye may receive mercy,* Q: (6:155).

Allah's blessings vary among men and messengers of Allah. He allotted His blessings to each according to His will and mercy. The Glorious Qur'an says: *Those messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others: To one of them Allah spoke; others He raised to degrees [of honour]... Q:(2:253).* For example, among the Prophets of Allah, Prophet Isa (AS) was one of those that greatly received the blessings of Allah. In his defense of the moral sanctity of his mother, exposition of his miracle as a speaking Prophet at cradle as well as explanation of his mission to the people, he says: *"I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be..., Q: (19:31).*

With reference to places, the city of Makkah is the most blessed of all places on earth. This is explicated in the speech of the Prophet (SAW) while he was about to unwillingly migrate to Madina as a result of the insecurity of his life before his enemy. The Hadith is reported by Abdullāh bin 'Ad' Bin Hamrā' [Az-Zuhri] who said:

I saw the Messenger of Allah standing at Al-Hazwah, and he said: "By Allah! You are the best of Allah's earth, and the most beloved of Allah's earth to Allah, and if it were not that I was expelled from you I would not have left, Tirmidhi [4].

Makkah is honoured for being both the birth place of the most blessed of all creations, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and the city which houses the Ka'bah the most sacred house of Allah on earth. It is an incontrovertible fact that prayer observed within the vicinity of the Ka'bah is 100,000 times better than the one observed in other places. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

It was narrated from Jabir that the Messenger of Allah said: "One prayer in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except the Sacred Mosque, and one prayer in the Sacred Mosque is better than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere," Ibn Majah [5].

In addition and still counting the purest of all water on earth is the water of Zamzam in Makkah. In view of its significance, it is carried by people to all the nooks and crannies of the world as instructed by the Prophet in Tirmidhi [6]. The Prophet also says: *The water of Zamzam is for whatever it is drunk for,*" Ibn Majah [7]. With regards to food, olive stands out as the Prophet (SAW) accentuates that: *Eat olive and use its oil, for indeed it is a blessed tree* Tirmidhi [8].

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that *Barakah* (blessing) belongs to Allah, who allots it to whomsoever and whatsoever He wishes in the proportion He desires. This is also validated by the following Qur'anic verses:

It is never the wish of those without Faith among the People of the Book, nor of the Pagans, that anything good should come down to you from your Lord. But Allah will choose for His special Mercy whom He will - for Allah is Lord of grace abounding, Q (2:105).

For His Mercy He specially chooseth whom He pleaseth; for Allah is the Lord of bounties unbounded. Q: (3:74).

All the above actually affirms that the concept of (*barakah*) blessing belongs to Allah and He allots it to people and things according to His will and desire. Among of creations, Allah in His divine wisdom, made the Prophet (SAW) to be the most blessed of all creations and it is through him that the creations could attain the favour of Allah. This declaration is contained in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an. *We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures,* Q: (21:107). In his explanation of the above verse, Al-Kawlakhi [9] relates that in an occasion, Prophet (SAW) asked Angel Jibril (A.S) whether he has also benefitted from this mercy. Jibril replied in affirmation and further clarified that the dreadful and ill-fated end of the devil always terrifies him. This is as a result of the fact that he himself (Angel Jibril) did not know his own faith. With the revelation of Q: (81:21) which described Angel Jibril as obedient and trustworthy servant, Jibril became comforted. This came about through the Prophet. Ibn Fodio [10] also avows that the mercy of the Prophet covers all forms of creations.

The companions of Prophet (SAW) and their quest for his blessings

Blessing from blessed the hair of the Prophet

During and after his life, the companions adopted different method in the bid to receive the blessing of the Prophet (SAW). For example, there is plethora of narrations on how they sought for the blessing of the Prophet in his blessed hair. The companions regarded very highly, the possession of the hair of the Prophet. They also see it as once in a life

time opportunity to benefit from the abundant blessing in the hair of the Prophet. In the following hadith, Ibn Sirin narrated that:

I said to Abida "I have some of the hair of the Prophet which I got from Anas or from his family." Abida replied. "No doubt if I had a single hair of that it would have been dearer to me than the whole world and whatever is in it, Bukhari [11].

The following prophetic tradition provides an exposition of the healing effect of the hair of the noble Prophet due to its blessing:

Narrated Isrā'il: 'Uthman bin 'Abdullah bin Mauhab said, "My people sent me with a bowl of water to Umm Salam." Isra'il approximated three fingers (indicating the small size of the container in which there was some hair of the Prophet. 'Uthmān added, "If any person suffered from evil eye or some other disease, he would send a vessel (containing water) to Umm Salama. I looked into the container (in which there was the hair of the Prophet ;) and saw a few red hair in it" Bukhari [12].

Because of the magnitude of the blessing of the hair of the Prophet SAW, the companions competed among themselves in order to have a share of it whenever the Prophet SAW had it shaved. Anas narrated that:

I saw the Messenger of Allah when the barber was cutting his hair, and his Companions were walking around him, not wanting any hair to fall except into a man's hand. Muslim [13].

To further clarify the nobility of the task of seeking for the *Barakah* of the Prophet, Prophet's had in an occasion personally distributed his hair among his companions. This is evidenced in the following Prophetic tradition.

Ibn Sirin, from Anas bin Mālik, that the Messenger of Allah stoned the *Jamrat Al-'Aqabah* on the Day of Sacrifice, then returned to his tent in Mind, called for a butcher, and then slaughtered (his animals). He then called for a barber, who began shaving from his right side. The Prophet then started distributing it to those who were around him - a hair or two (to each person). Then, (the barber) began shaving his left side. After he had done so, the Prophet said: 'Abu Talbah, come here!' and he gave it all to him," Dawud [14].

The above explanation further has further provided evidence that the companions truly sought for the blessings of Allah through the Prophet (SAW) during his lifetime, and through his relics after his demise.

Blessing in the fragrance of his sweat

The hadith of Anas bn. Malik relates how the Prophet (SAW) used to sleep on the bed of Umm Sulaim when she was not around. At a particular period, the Prophet slept on her bed and she was informed as soon as she came back. When she hurried into her room, she found the Prophet sleeping on the bed. She noticed that his sweat had soaked onto the leather cloth that was on the bed. She quickly brought out her jewelry box, opened it and started to wipe up the sweat, squeezing it into her bottles. When the Prophet woke up and saw her doing this, he was astonished and said: '*What are you doing, O Umm Sulaim?'* She said: '*O Messenger of Allah, we hope for blessing for our children.'* He said: '*You have done right,*' Muslim [15].

Contest for left over water after the Prophet's ablution

The chronicle of the early period of Islam shows that the companions did not leave out any opportunity that presented itself in a bid to acquire the blessings of the Prophet during his life time. The above engendered the contest they were recorded to have in order to be the first to take hold of the remnant of the Prophet's ablution water. In one of the Prophetic tradition, it was reported that *Whenever the Prophet performed ablution; his Companions were nearly fighting for the remains of that water*, Bukhari [16].

In another narration by Abu Juhaifa, he says:

Allah's Messenger came to us at noon and water for ablution was brought to him. After he had performed ablution, the remaining water was taken by the people and they started smearing their bodies with it (as a blessed thing), Bukhari [17].

The following prophetic tradition is of great importance towards realization of how the Prophet himself taught his companions to seek for his blessing.

Abu Musa said: The Prophet asked for a tumbler containing water and washed both his hands and face in it and then threw a mouthful of water in the tumbler and said to both of us (Abu Musā and Bilāl), "Drink from the tumbler and pour some of its water on your faces and chest, Bukhari [18].

The blessing of the Prophet in averting the wrath of Allah

Prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, many generations were destroyed on account of

their disobedience to Allah and their messengers. The Qur'an says:

Each one of them we seized for his crime: of them, against some we sent a violent tornado [with showers of stones]; some were caught by a [mighty] Blast; some we caused the earth to swallow up; and some we drowned [in the waters]: It was not Allah Who injured [or oppressed] them:" They injured [and oppressed] their own souls. Q: (29:40).

The companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were honoured by virtue of the presence of the Prophet among them and they were promised never to be destroyed even if they committed acts of disobedience as was done to the past Prophets. For the rest of Muslims who were not opportune to witness the prophetic era, they also enjoy a generic blessing of this kind of security from obliteration so long as they seek for Allah's forgiveness. This is The Qur'an says:

But Allah was not going to send them a penalty whilst thou wast amongst them; nor was He going to send it whilst they could ask for pardon. Q: (8:33).

After the death of a person, the soul is subjected to trepidation with regards to its faith about accountability of his deeds. In recognition of his position as a mercy to mankind and in the bid to avert the wrath of Allah for the corpse of Abdullah bin Ubay the Prophet rub his saliva on it, Bukhari in his collection narrates the following.

Narrated Jabir. The Prophet came to (the grave of) 'Abdullāh bin Ubay after his body was buried. The body was brought out and then the Prophet it' put his saliva over the body and clothed it in his shirt, Bukhari [19].

Acquiring the blessing in the sputum of the Prophet

In the following hadith, Urwah bin Mas'ud an unbeliever of Makkah relates to the Makkans his experience when he visited the Prophet during the treaty of Udaybiyyah. The hadith explains how the companions of the Prophet sought for the blessing in his sputum and explicate how they conducted themselves in his presence in their bid to earn his pleasure.

Urwa returned to his people and said, "O people! By Allah, I have been to the kings and to Caesar, Khosrau and An- Najāshi, yet I have never seen any of them respected by his courtiers as much as Muhammad (SAW) is respected by his companions. By Allah, if he spitted, the spittle would fall in the hand of one of them (i.e., the Prophet's companions) who would rub it on his face and skin; if he ordered them, they would carry out his order

immediately; if he performed ablution, they would struggle to take the remaining water; and when they spoke, they would lower their voices and would not look at his face constantly out of respect. Bukhari [20].

Acquiring the blessing of the Prophet by virtue of his physical body

His physical body is blessed and as such whatever he wore remained blessed by virtue of his blessed body. In addition, wherever he went, or stayed even for a while is blessed by virtue of his blessing. The following prophetic tradition further substantiates this fact:

It was narrated from 'Abdur- Rahmān bin Abi Lailā that while Usaid bin Hudair, an *Ansārt* man, was talking to the people and joking to make them laugh, the Prophet poked him in the ribs with a stick. He said: 'Let me retaliate.' He said: 'Retaliate.' He said: 'You are wearing a *Qamis* but I am not wearing a *Qamis*.' The Prophet lifted his shirt and he embraced him and kissed his side. He said: 'This is all I wanted, O Messenger of Allah,' Dawud [21].

A gift of *Burda* (Sheet of wear) was given to the Prophet to wear. He admired and wore it onto his body. After a while, a companion requested for it from the Prophet who did not hesitate to hand it over to him. As soon as the Prophet left, other companion present denounced the man who had begged for the *Burda* from the Prophet saying:

It was not nice on your part to ask the Prophet; for it while you know that he took it because he was in need of it, and you also know that he (the Prophet) j never turns down anybody's request that he might be asked for." That man said, "I just wanted to have its blessings as the Prophet; had put it on, so I hoped that I might be shrouded in it." Bukhari [22].

In the sight of the noble companions of the Prophet, whatever he touched and wherever he stayed is blessed by the virtue of his blessing. As a result of this the companions sought to acquire the blessing of staying wherever the Prophet stayed. In the following prophetic tradition, Abu Burda narrates that:

Narrated Abu Burda: When I came to Al-Madina, I met 'Abdullāh bin Salam. He said, "Will you come to me so that I may serve you with *Sawiq* (i.e., powdered barley) and dates, and let you enter a (blessed) house that in which the Prophet entered?," Bukhari [23].

Blessing on food and water

There are several narrations buttressing how through the blessing of the Prophet (SAW), small quantity of water or food were blessed to go round a large number of the companions.

The experience of the Muslims at the battle of Tabük is of great relevance in this respect. The Muslims had ran out of food and sought for permission from the Prophet to slaughter their camels. After the permission was granted to them, 'Umar approached the Prophet cautioning that such action could result to availability of few mounts for them. Instead of that, he suggested calling for whatever provisions they have with them so that the Prophet could bless it with prayer. The hadith sheds more light on it as follows:

One man brought a handful of corn, another brought a handful of dates, and another brought a piece of bread, until a little food had been collected on the leather mat. Then the Messenger of Allah O, prayed for blessing for it, then he said: 'Put it in your vessels.' They filled their vessels until there was no vessel left in the camp that was not filled. They ate until they were full, and there was plenty left over. Muslim [24].

In the hadith below, Abu Hurairah narrated how the blessing of the Prophet played a multiplying effect on some dates palm which were there after eaten and given out as charity for years even after the death of the Prophet.

Abu Hurairah said: "I came to the Prophet with some dates and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, supplicate to Allah to bless them. So he took them and supplicated for me for blessing in them, and then said to me: 'Take them and put them in this bag of yours – or this bag - and whenever you intend to take any from it, then put your hand in it and take it, and do not scatter them all about.' So I carried such and such *Wasq* of those dates in the cause of Allah. We used to eat from it, and give others to eat, and it (the bag) would not part from my waist until the day 'Uthman was killed, for they had run out," (Hasan). Tirmidhi [25].

The Prophet was compassionate with his companions and as such responded to their problems promptly. This exposition is illustrated in the hadith below where he prayed on heaps of dates-palm which became abundant so that Jabir was able to pay off the debt of his father and was still left with virtually a large quantity equal to that given out.

Narrated Jabir;: My father had died in debt. So, I came to the Prophet Ad and said, "My father

(died) leaving unpaid debts, and I have nothing except the yield of his date-palms; and their yield for many years will not cover his debts. So, please come with me, so that the creditors may not misbehave with me." The Prophet went round one of the heaps of dates and invoked (Allah), and then did the same with another heap and sat on it and said, "Measure (for them)." He paid them their rights and what remained was as much as had been paid to them. Bukhari [26].

On one occasion, the Muslims ran short of water while on a journey with the Prophet, a utensil containing the little water with them was brought before the Prophet (SAW) on his request. Thereafter, he placed his hand in it and said:

"Come to the blessed water, and the Blessing is from Allah." I saw the water flowing from among the fingers of Allah's Messenger, and no doubt, we used to hear the meals (food) glorifying Allah, when it was being eaten (by him). Bukhari [27].

In the following hadith, Al-Barā explained how the blessed water from the rinsed mouth of the Prophet thrown into a well brought about a blessing effect on the well. This dried well was bless with abundant water which quenched their thirst, and even their beast of burden drank water to their satisfaction.

Narrated Al-Barā We were one thousand and four hundred persons on the day of *Al-Judaibiya* (Treaty), and (at) *Al-Iudaibiya* (there) was a well. We drew out its water not leaving even a single drop. The Prophet sat at the edge of the well and asked for some water with which he rinsed his mouth, and then he threw it out into the well. We stayed for a short while and then drew water from the well and quenched our thirst, and even our riding animals drank water to their satisfaction. Bukhari [28].

The following hadith by Jabir bin Abdullah collaborated the above with a similar event at a different occasion.

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah was with the Prophet and the time for the *'Asr* prayer became due. We had no water with us except a little which was put in a vessel and was brought to the Prophet He put his hand into it and spread out his fingers and then said, "Come along! Hurry up! All those who want to perform ablution. The blessing is from Allah." I saw the water gushing out from his fingers. So the people performed the ablution and

drank, and I tried to drink more of that water (beyond my thirst and capacity), for I knew that it was a blessing. The sub narrator said: I asked Jabir, "How many persons were you then?" He replied, "We were one thousand and four hundred men." Sālim said: Jābir said, "1500." Bukhari [29].

It is apposite to construe that quite a number of hadith shows that the companions of the Prophet actually yearned for the blessings of the Prophet and acquired it through various means. From another dimension invocation of blessing on the Prophet is full of blessing for a Muslim who engages in it. Such action is accompanied with accomplishment of desire and forgiveness of sins, spiritual advancement and hope for salvation in the eternal life. Tirmidhi [30], Nasai [31], Tirmidhi Vol 6. Tirmidhi [32]. The companions did not waste time in taking advantage of the opportunity of being in the Prophet's presence and company.

Intercession with him by virtue of his blessing

The greatness of his status in the sight of Allah accorded him a position of honour of an intercessor between man and his creator. This is granted to him in this world and a special one reserved for him in the hereafter. For example, the hadith of Uthman bin Hunaif narrated the case of a blind man who came to the Prophet requesting him to pray to Allah to heal him. The Prophet provided him with options. Firstly for him to be patient with the calamity for great reward in the hereafter or secondly to have his desire accomplished by virtue of his supplication in this world in place of the reward. The man opted for the second option and was commanded to perform ablution very well. After the ablution, he was asked to pray two *Rak'ah*, and to, say this supplication:

(O Allah, I ask of You and I turn my face towards You by virtue of the intercession of Muhammad the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I have turned to my Lord by virtue of you; intercession concerning this need of mine so that it may be met. O Allah, accept his intercession concerning me)". Ibn Majah [33].

Strict compliance with his instructions as a way of earning blessing

In addition to the earlier clarification on how the companions earned the blessing of the Prophet. It is pertinent that they equally embraced all his instructions and abstained from all the things he considered as abomination. This was because of their realization of the fact that the Prophet is a blessing to all creatures; and the book revealed to him is meant to guide man towards the attainment of blessing. Added to the above, they appreciated the fact that, their success in this world and salvation in the eternal life both of which translate

into the attainment of *barakah*, hinge on total submission to him. The following Qur'anic verses shed more light: *We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.* Q: (21:107). *And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing: so follow it and be righteous, that ye may receive mercy.* Q: (6:155). *Say: "If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* Q: (3:21).

The companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) excelled in all ramifications and were exalted in virtue above all other members of his generation. Much of this was the result of their being opportune to live and acquire his blessing through their interaction with him and by their total submission to the teachings brought by him. In one of the narration of Hammâm bin Munabbih from Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said to the latter that:

"By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, there will come to one of you a day when he cannot see me, then seeing me will become dearer to him than his family and his wealth together." Muslim [34].

The following Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions explore the virtues of the companions of the Prophet.

Narrated 'Abdullāh' The Prophet said: "The best people are the people of my century (generation), then those coming after them, and then those coming after the latter. After that there will come some people whose witness will precede their oaths, and their oaths will precede their witness." Ibrāhim (a subnarrator) said, "We used to be beaten for taking oaths by saying, 'I bear witness by the Name of Allah or by the Covenant of Allah'." Bukhari [35].

"Do not abuse my Companions, for if anyone of you spent gold equal to Uhud (mountain) (in Allah's Cause) it would not be equal to a *Mudd* (two third of a kilogram) or even a half *Mudd* spent by one of them. Bukhari [36].

CONCLUSION

This paper examined and extensively the concept of *barakah* and related how the companions of the Prophet through various means acquired the blessing of the Prophet. It can be concluded from the treatise that the concept of *barakah* which entails blessing is from the sole Creator. In essence it means Allah is the sole giver of blessing. Out of His will and divine wisdom, Allah apportioned it to His creatures in accordance with His freewill and desire. Among the creatures of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW is the most blessed of all.

During his Prophet's lifetime, his companions exploited all avenues to seek for his blessing. Personally, the Prophet established the legality of seeking for his blessing. After his demise, the companions of the Prophet sought for his blessing through his relics and invocation of blessing on him. Furthermore, the companions of the Prophet excelled above all other followers of their generation by virtue of their total submission to the Prophet. They therefore received the blessing of Allah through him.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above deductions from the paper, the following points are highly recommended to the Muslims to make them appreciate more, the position of the Prophet in the sight of Allah.

Muslims should believe that the Prophet is a special mercy to mankind and most especially to his generation.

- Muslims should seek for the Prophet's blessing through invocation of blessing on him.
- Muslims should strictly adhere to the book of blessing (Al-Qur'an) and hold with high esteem the *Sunnah* of the Prophet both of which are legacy left for them to continuously attain the blessing of Allah.
- Muslims should honour, respect and give regard to the companions of the Prophet at all time.

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