

Means of Promoting Environmental Security From an Islamic Perspective: an Analytical Foundational Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the means of promoting environmental security from an Islamic perspective through a foundational analytical approach grounded in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, while highlighting their preventive role in mitigating environmental pollution. The study aims to identify the Islamic legal foundations for waste management, establish the concept of sanitary landfilling in light of the Qur'anic account of the crow, and demonstrate the role of the Prophetic guidance in promoting vegetation cover as one of the most effective means of environmental conservation and the attainment of environmental security.

The research adopts the inductive method to collect relevant Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and the opinions of Muslim jurists, and employs the analytical method to derive their environmental implications and relate them to contemporary environmental concepts. The findings reveal that Islamic legislation not only prohibits corruption and destruction on earth but also provides a comprehensive framework of preventive and remedial measures based on eliminating sources of pollution, ensuring the safe management of waste, and preserving vegetation cover, thereby maintaining ecological balance and safeguarding the well-being of both individuals and society.

The study further demonstrates that these Islamic principles are consistent with many contemporary approaches to waste management and the conservation of natural resources, highlighting the continuing relevance of Islamic law in addressing modern environmental challenges.

Keywords: Environmental Security; Environmental Pollution; Islamic Law (Sharia); Prophetic Sunnah; Sanitary Landfilling; Vegetation Cover.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the world has witnessed an unprecedented escalation in environmental problems resulting from rapid urbanization and industrial expansion, which have led to increasing volumes of waste and the pollution of essential environmental components. Consequently, environmental protection and the promotion of environmental security have become among the most pressing issues attracting the attention of international organizations and scholars across various disciplines.

Addressing environmental pollution is no longer confined to technical and engineering solutions. Contemporary studies increasingly emphasize the significance of ethical and legislative dimensions in fostering environmentally responsible behavior, recognizing that the effectiveness of environmental policies depends not only on technological advancement but also on raising human awareness and reinforcing a sense of responsibility.

Within this context, the Islamic perspective emerges as a comprehensive legislative framework that extends beyond regulating acts of worship to establishing fundamental principles aimed at preserving the order of life and ensuring the sustainable development of the earth. Islam designates human beings as stewards (*khulafā'*) on earth, entrusting them with the responsibility of protecting it from corruption and environmental degradation. Furthermore, environmental conservation is closely linked to the objectives of Islamic law (*Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*), particularly the preservation of life, property, and progeny, as well as to the universal legal principles that advocate the prevention and elimination of harm before its occurrence.

Accordingly, the Islamic legal sources do not address environmental issues partially or temporarily; rather, they establish comprehensive preventive and remedial principles that ensure the sustainability of natural resources and the protection of the various components of the environment. To provide a comprehensive framework for this study, the following sections are presented:

First: Significance of the Study

Environmental security is regarded as one of the contemporary concepts concerned with protecting both human beings and the environment from threats that endanger the integrity of natural ecosystems and the sustainability of their resources. This concept finds its foundations in Islamic legislation through the legal rulings governing waste management, the conservation of natural resources, the protection of vegetation, and the prohibition of all forms of harm and corruption on earth. Accordingly, revisiting the Islamic legal sources in light of this concept is

of considerable importance, as it reveals their preventive and remedial dimensions and demonstrates their potential contribution to addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

Second: Research Problem

The research problem lies in examining how Islamic legislation has contributed to promoting environmental security through the preventive and remedial measures established in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah. It further explores the extent to which these principles can be applied to address contemporary issues of environmental pollution.

Third: Objectives of the Study

This study aims to establish the conceptual foundations of promoting environmental security from an Islamic perspective, to examine the Prophetic guidance concerning waste management, to highlight the environmental implications of the Qur'anic account of the crow in establishing the principle of sanitary landfilling, and to demonstrate the role of Islamic legislation in promoting and protecting vegetation cover as one of the most effective means of environmental conservation and the achievement of sustainable development.

Fourth: Research Methodology

This study adopts the **inductive method** to collect the relevant Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and juristic opinions related to the subject of the study. It also employs the **analytical method** to examine their environmental implications and relate them to contemporary concepts of environmental security. Furthermore, the study draws upon recent environmental research to enrich the comparative analysis and to highlight the areas of convergence between Islamic legislation and contemporary environmental standards.

Fifth: Previous Studies

Safaa Mouza. Protection of the Natural Environment in Islamic Sharia: A Comparative Jurisprudential Study. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Damascus, Syria, 2006.

Benefit to the Present Study: This study examined the general jurisprudential rulings related to environmental protection.

Adnan bin Sadiq Dhahir. Environmental Regulations in Islamic Jurisprudence. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Sharia and Law, Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine, 2009.

Benefit to the Present Study: It focused on Islamic jurisprudential rulings concerning the environment from a comprehensive perspective.

Arshad Mohammed Hassan. Environmental Protection in Islamic Jurisprudence and Positive Law: The Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a Case Study. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Sharia and Law, Omdurman Islamic University, Sudan, 2014.

Benefit to the Present Study: The study adopted a comparative approach between Islamic jurisprudence and positive law.

Fathiyah Jabr Ahmed Al-Arami and Ahmed Abdullah Salah. Means of Environmental Protection considering the Provisions of Islamic Sharia: An Analytical Study. Published Research, Al-Bayda University Journal, 2025.

Review of Previous Studies and the Contribution of the Present Study

The previous studies addressed environmental protection in Islamic law from a general jurisprudential perspective, through comparative analyses with positive law, or by discussing Islamic means of environmental protection in a broad manner. In contrast, the present study offers a distinctive contribution by establishing the foundations of promoting environmental security through three integrated applied themes: **the Prophetic guidance on waste management, sanitary landfilling in light of the Qur'anic account of the crow, and the development of green spaces**, while relating these themes to the contemporary concept of environmental security. This integrated analytical framework has not been addressed in previous studies.

Sixth: Structure of the Study

The study is organized into three main sections. The first examines the Prophetic guidance on waste management and its role in promoting environmental security. The second investigates sanitary landfilling in light of the Qur'anic account of the crow and its significance for environmental protection. The third discusses the Prophetic guidance on the development of green spaces and its contribution to achieving environmental security.

Section One: Following Prophetic Guidance in Waste Management

The Prophetic guidance regarding waste management was not limited merely to prohibiting the improper disposal of waste. Rather, it established a comprehensive practical methodology based on classifying waste according to its nature and distinguishing between materials that should be discarded and those that may be beneficially utilized

without causing harm. This approach closely resembles the contemporary principle of "**source separation**", which constitutes one of the fundamental practices adopted by modern waste management systems.

One of the most significant manifestations of this Prophetic guidance is the narration reported by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"While a man was walking along a road, he found a thorny branch lying in the path. He removed it, and Allah appreciated his deed and forgave him." (Al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH).

Although the apparent subject of this narration concerns the removal of a simple natural obstacle, Islamic scholars have derived from it a comprehensive legal principle stating that everything which obstructs people's movement or causes them harm in public pathways should be removed without delay, whether it is a thorny branch, solid waste, construction debris, or any other harmful object. Islamic law considers this seemingly minor act a cause for divine forgiveness, thereby demonstrating the immense value that Islam places upon preserving the cleanliness and safety of public spaces. (Al-Nawawī, n.d.).

Another important aspect illustrating this guidance is the attention that Islamic jurisprudence devoted to the beneficial utilization of waste whenever such utilization does not result in harm. Classical jurists extensively discussed the permissibility of using animal manure and organic waste as agricultural fertilizers. They generally agreed on the permissibility of benefiting from such materials in fertilizing agricultural land, although they differed regarding the legality of their commercial sale and their juridical purity. The majority of jurists nevertheless permitted their agricultural use because of the evident public interest and agricultural benefit they provide to both the land and society. (Al-Shirbīnī, 1994).

This clearly demonstrates that Islamic jurisprudence did not regard waste as an absolute evil that must invariably be destroyed. Instead, it adopted a functional perspective that distinguishes between waste inherently considered impure or offensive and waste that can be transformed into a valuable resource. Such an approach closely corresponds to the contemporary concept of the **circular economy**, which is defined as "maintaining the value of products, materials, and resources within the economy for as long as possible while minimizing waste generation." (Ghallāb, 2021). Within this framework, waste management emphasizes the reuse and recycling of organic waste rather than its complete disposal (Ghallāb, 2021). This practical historical application demonstrates that Islam did not leave the issue of waste management to individual initiatives alone; rather, it established an institutional regulatory system to ensure the continuous implementation of these principles and to hold violators accountable (Ibn al-Ukhuwwah, 1976). This serves as a valuable foundation for the establishment of modern municipal systems responsible for supervising meat markets, slaughterhouses, and the proper management and disposal of their waste. (Ibn al-Ukhuwwah, 1976).

Moreover, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allah have mercy on him), in his medical writings, discussed the adverse effects of the accumulation of organic waste on air quality. He explained that one of the primary causes of epidemics is the accumulation of foul odors and harmful vapors resulting from the decomposition of waste in densely populated areas. He further emphasized that preventing such harm requires purifying the air from these corrupt and unhealthy emissions (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1994). This observation represents a remarkable early scientific insight that corresponds closely with the findings of modern epidemiology, which recognizes that poor management of organic waste provides an ideal environment for the proliferation of disease-causing microorganisms and disease vectors such as rodents and insects.

Islamic jurists also emphasized that the fundamental principle in dealing with waste is prompt action rather than delay. This principle was derived from the general Islamic texts encouraging cleanliness and urging the immediate removal of harmful objects from public places. The accumulation of waste and postponing its treatment inevitably aggravate environmental damage and make subsequent management increasingly difficult. This preventive approach closely parallels the principles advocated by modern environmental management, which stress the importance of treating waste during its earliest stages before it develops into a serious environmental problem that is difficult to control. (Al-Zuhaylī, n.d.).

Yusuf al-Qaradāwī, in his book *Environmental Care in Islamic Sharia*, states that "the fundamental Islamic principle governing waste management is based on the comprehensive legal maxim of preventing harm before it occurs rather than merely treating it after it has become severe. Consequently, prevention occupies a higher priority than treatment within the Islamic perspective, just as it does in contemporary medical and environmental sciences." (Al-Qaradāwī, 2001).

Furthermore, Islamic jurisprudence distinguished between different categories of waste according to the degree of harm they pose. Waste causing only minor harm, such as sputum and saliva, was to be buried or concealed appropriately, whereas highly hazardous waste, including severe impurities and toxic substances, required stricter methods of disposal to ensure that harm was not transferred from one place to another. (Al-Shātibī, n.d.). This classification reflects the precision and comprehensiveness of Islamic legal thought in addressing varying degrees of environmental harm and corresponds closely with modern environmental legislation, which classifies waste into ordinary and hazardous categories, each governed by specific regulations concerning handling, treatment, transportation, and disposal. (Al-Shātibī, n.d.).

In conclusion, the Prophetic guidance regarding waste management integrates four complementary dimensions: individual responsibility through the prompt removal of minor harmful objects from public spaces; the rational utilization of reusable waste, such as organic fertilizers; institutional supervision through the Hisbah system to regulate pollution generated by markets and various occupations; and preventive measures aimed at addressing waste before its harmful effects become widespread. Collectively, these four dimensions constitute a comprehensive and integrated framework for waste management that deserves careful consideration as a valuable model for addressing the contemporary global waste crisis.(Al-Suḥaybānī, n.d.).

Section Two: Sanitary Landfilling of Waste considering the Qur'anic Account of the Crow and Its Role in Protecting Environmental Security

The principle of sanitary landfilling of waste is regarded as one of the most effective contemporary scientific methods for protecting the environment from pollution. It refers to the systematic burial of waste in a manner that prevents the spread of unpleasant odors, pathogenic microorganisms, and the leakage of contaminants into the soil and groundwater. The Holy Qur'an established the foundation of this principle through a remarkable narrative carrying profound environmental implications, namely the story of the two sons of Adam. Allah Almighty says: "Then Allah sent a crow scratching in the ground to show him how to conceal the body of his brother. He said, 'Woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and conceal the body of my brother?' Then he became one of the regretful."(Ghallāb, 2021).

This scene has attracted the attention of numerous Qur'anic exegetes because of its profound educational significance. Al-Zamakhshari explained in his *Tafsir* that the act of burying the dead was previously unknown to Cain, and that Allah taught him the proper way to dispose of his brother's body—which had begun to decompose and become offensive in both appearance and odor—through a tangible lesson demonstrated by a crow, enabling mankind to learn this essential practice through observation.(Qur'an 5:31).

Al-Razi likewise commented that this story indicates that **Divine Wisdom ordained that human beings should learn from observing the creatures around them the means by which their worldly affairs may be properly managed**. Thus, the crow became the first instructor of mankind in a matter that human reason alone had not yet discovered(Al-Zamakhshari, 1407 AH).

This legislative foundation is not limited merely to the permissibility of burial; rather, it extends to its obligatory nature whenever failure to bury harmful materials is likely to result in public harm. Muslim jurists discussed this issue within the chapters concerning carcasses and ritual impurities. Al-Shirbini and other Shafi'i jurists concluded that the burial of impure carcasses, or the concealment of anything liable to decompose and cause harm, constitutes a collective obligation (*Fard Kifayah*) whenever neglecting it would expose people to evident harm. Furthermore, they held that those capable of performing this duty but who fail to do so bear religious responsibility for such negligence. (Al-Rāzī, 1420 AH). Consequently, the concept of sanitary landfilling in Islamic jurisprudence is not merely an ethical recommendation; in circumstances involving actual harm, it attains the status of a legal obligation.(Al-Shirbīnī, 1994).

Several contemporary scholars have sought to relate this Qur'anic principle to the modern concept of the **waste management hierarchy**, which prioritizes waste reduction, followed by reuse, recycling, and finally safe landfilling as the last available option after all other alternatives have been exhausted.(Al-Shirbīnī, 1994). A significant correspondence can be observed between this contemporary hierarchy and the Qur'anic methodology. Cain resorted to burial only after exhausting every possible means of dealing with his brother's body, indicating that landfilling should likewise represent the final solution after all feasible measures of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling have been implemented, rather than the primary method adopted without consideration of more sustainable alternatives.

Ibn Ashur, in his celebrated Qur'anic commentary *Al-Tahrir wa Al-Tanwir*, emphasized that the story of the crow embodies a comprehensive methodology for learning from the laws governing the natural world. He explained that Allah has endowed animals with instincts through which humans may sometimes learn matters that they themselves have not yet discovered, making this one of the finest examples of deriving practical rulings through observation of creation.(Al-Zuhaylī, n.d.).

This understanding is further reinforced by the opinions of Hanbali jurists, who maintained that the permissibility of burying impure substances and harmful waste is derived from the jurisprudential maxim stating that **necessities permit otherwise prohibited matters** whenever doing so prevents greater harm. Accordingly, burying offensive waste is considered less harmful than allowing it to contaminate the surrounding air and water.(Ibn 'Ashūr, 1984). Among the contemporary juristic applications based upon this principle is the opinion of several scholars who argue that industrial and chemical waste must be treated through secure landfilling in specially designated sites located far from water resources and residential areas. They further stipulate that such disposal sites should be lined with impermeable protective materials capable of preventing contaminants from seeping into the subsurface environment (Ibn Qudāmah, 1968). This approach closely corresponds to the engineering standards currently

adopted in modern sanitary landfill facilities. Likewise, some researchers have recommended that quarrying and mining waste should be managed through gradual landfilling accompanied by land reclamation and terracing, thereby preventing land collapse and minimizing the migration of pollutants into water, air, and soil (Al-Qaradāwī, 2001).

It is also noteworthy that this Qur'anic narrative carries a profound moral dimension. The verse concludes by describing Cain's deep remorse over his inability to emulate the crow. This remorse conveys an important ethical lesson: failure to deal responsibly with the harmful consequences of one's actions constitutes genuine moral disgrace rather than mere negligence. This concept closely parallels the contemporary notion of **environmental ethical responsibility**, which extends beyond mere legal compliance to encompass an inner moral commitment toward protecting the Earth and all living beings upon it. (Al-Shalash, 2013).

In conclusion, the principle of sanitary landfilling represents a firmly established legal foundation rooted in the Qur'anic account of the crow since the earliest days of humanity. Islamic jurisprudence elevated this principle to the level of legal obligation whenever failure to implement it would result in harm. Moreover, this principle harmonizes remarkably with contemporary waste management science, which likewise recognizes sanitary landfilling as the final stage in the waste management hierarchy after exhausting all available options for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. (Al-Sa'dī, 2000).

Section Three: Following Prophetic Guidance in Expanding Green Spaces and Its Role in Achieving Environmental Security

Islam has devoted great attention to the development of vegetation cover and the protection of existing plant life from destruction and misuse. This concern was not confined to times of peace; rather, it extended even to the regulations governing warfare and the sanctity of the holy sites, thereby demonstrating that the preservation of the natural environment constitutes a permanent Islamic principle that remains unchanged regardless of changing circumstances. Among the clearest evidences of this principle is the statement of Allah Almighty concerning the expedition of Banu al-Nadīr:

“Whatever palm trees you cut down or left standing on their roots, it was by Allah’s permission, and so that He might disgrace the defiantly disobedient.” (Al-Qaradāwī, 2001).

The Qur'anic commentators explained that this verse was revealed when the Companions differed regarding the permissibility of cutting down the palm trees of Banu al-Nadīr during the siege. Allah clarified that whatever trees had been cut were only cut by His permission due to the necessities of warfare, while the original ruling remained the preservation of fruitful trees and the prohibition of harming them except in cases of compelling necessity. (Qur'an 59:5).

Al-Shawkani further stated that this verse constitutes **a fundamental legal basis prohibiting the unnecessary destruction of fruit-bearing trees, even during armed conflict**, and that the permission mentioned in the verse represents an exceptional ruling restricted solely to the extent required by military necessity without exceeding its limits. (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964).

This principle is further reinforced by the special protection granted to the vegetation of the Sacred Precinct (Al-Haram). Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that on the day of the Conquest of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) declared:

“It is sacred by the sanctity ordained by Allah until the Day of Resurrection. Its thorny trees are not to be cut down, its game is not to be disturbed, its lost property is not to be picked up except by one who intends to announce it publicly, and its fresh vegetation is not to be cut.” (Al-Shawkānī, 1414 AH).

Scholars explained that the phrase “*its thorny trees are not to be cut down*” refers to the prohibition of cutting all trees and vegetation within the Sacred Precinct, while the phrase “*its fresh vegetation is not to be cut*” prohibits cutting its green grasses and plants. This demonstrates that Islamic law established the concept of **protected environmental areas**, in which any harm to vegetation is prohibited, more than fourteen centuries ago. This concept closely resembles the modern system of protected natural reserves. (Al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH).

The Prophetic Sunnah likewise emphasized the protection of living creatures that perform essential ecological functions in sustaining vegetation and pollinating crops. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“The Prophet prohibited the killing of four creatures: the ant, the bee, the hoopoe, and the shrike.” (Al-Nawawī, n.d.).

Scholars explained that one of the principal wisdoms underlying this prohibition is the preservation of ecological balance. Bees, in particular, perform an indispensable role in pollinating flowers and plants, thereby ensuring agricultural productivity and honey production. Killing them without justification disrupts this delicate ecological balance upon which the continuity and reproduction of vegetation largely depend. (Abū Dāwūd, n.d.).

This Prophetic tradition clearly demonstrates that environmental protection in Islam is not limited to safeguarding plants themselves; rather, it also encompasses the protection of the living organisms that sustain the life cycle of

vegetation. This corresponds closely to the modern concept of protecting **pollinators**, which are now recognized as one of the fundamental pillars of global food security.

The Holy Qur'an also portrays the diversity of vegetation in a manner that inspires reflection and appreciation. Allah Almighty says:

“And We caused to grow therein grain, grapes, fresh herbage, olives, date palms, and luxuriant gardens.” (Al-‘Azīm Ābādī, 1415 AH).

The Qur'anic commentators explained that these verses occur within the context of reminding humanity of Allah's blessings in providing sustenance. The reference to this remarkable botanical diversity indicates that plant biodiversity is among the greatest divine blessings and therefore deserves preservation rather than destruction. (Qur'an 80:27–30). This meaning is further emphasized in the verse:

“Or who created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you water from the sky, whereby We caused to grow splendid gardens full of beauty?” (Ibn ‘Āshūr, 1984).

Ibn Kathir interpreted the phrase “*gardens full of beauty*” as referring to gardens possessing magnificent and pleasing scenery that delights those who behold them. This interpretation indicates that, within the Qur'anic perspective, vegetation possesses not only practical value in providing food and purifying the atmosphere but also aesthetic and psychological value that contributes to human well-being. (Qur'an 27:60).

Islamic jurisprudence further contributed to establishing a sustainable institutional mechanism for protecting green spaces through the concept of the **Green Waqf (Environmental Endowment)**. Throughout Islamic history, numerous charitable endowments were dedicated to planting trees, irrigating orchards, and maintaining public gardens from which travelers and passersby could benefit. Contemporary researchers in Islamic economics have pointed out that this form of endowment represents a sustainable financial model for protecting vegetation cover, as it guarantees the continuous maintenance and preservation of green spaces across successive generations, unlike temporary individual initiatives. (Ibn Kathīr, 1999).

In conclusion, the Prophetic guidance concerning the expansion of green spaces extends far beyond merely encouraging tree planting. It encompasses the protection of existing vegetation even during times of war, the preservation of the vegetation within the Sacred Precincts, the protection of living organisms that sustain plant life—particularly pollinators—and the establishment of sustainable institutional mechanisms, such as environmental endowments, to finance and maintain these efforts. Collectively, these dimensions constitute a comprehensive legislative framework that offers an effective model for addressing the contemporary challenges of vegetation loss, biodiversity degradation, and climate change. (Al-Qarāḍāwī, 2001; Ghallāb, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is presented under two main headings:

First: Findings

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, the following major findings can be summarized:

The study demonstrates that the concept of **environmental security** is firmly rooted in Islamic legislation through a comprehensive set of legal rulings and objectives aimed at protecting the environment and preventing harm to its various components.

The Islamic legal sources establish a comprehensive preventive approach to waste management based on the removal of harmful substances, the beneficial utilization of reusable waste, and the prevention of waste accumulation that may lead to environmental pollution.

The study reveals that the Qur'anic account of the crow constitutes a legal foundation for the principle of burying materials whose continued exposure may cause harm, a concept that corresponds closely to the modern practice of sanitary landfilling when alternative waste-treatment methods are unavailable.

The findings indicate that environmental protection in Islam extends beyond encouraging tree planting to encompass the preservation of vegetation, trees, and the living organisms essential to maintaining ecological balance, thereby promoting the sustainable management of natural resources.

The study confirms a significant degree of consistency between many contemporary environmental principles and Islamic legal teachings, reflecting the comprehensiveness of Islamic legislation and its capacity to contribute effectively to addressing modern environmental challenges.

The study further concludes that Islamic legislation anticipated contemporary concepts of resource recovery by establishing principles governing the beneficial reuse of certain types of waste, an approach that aligns closely with the **circular economy** model, which seeks to minimize waste generation while maximizing resource efficiency.

Second: Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

To incorporate Islamic legal principles into environmental awareness programs in order to promote environmentally responsible behavior and strengthen public commitment to environmental protection.

To encourage interdisciplinary research integrating **Islamic jurisprudence** with **environmental sciences**, thereby highlighting the contribution of Islamic legislation to addressing contemporary environmental issues.

To encourage educational and religious institutions to incorporate concepts of environmental security derived from the **Qur'an** and the **Prophetic Sunnah** into educational and awareness programs in order to foster a culture of environmental responsibility and conservation within society

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