

The Theme of Attachment-Detachment in *Shree Madhbhagavad Gita:* A Study from Linguistic and Philosophical Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The teachings of Bhagavad Gita (Hindu scripture), which are profoundly founded in Vedanta philosophy, assert the innate divinity of all beings. It claims that the foundation of each person is based on holding a wellspring of purity and bliss, which encourages the pursuit of happiness beyond despair. However, as people age, the shadows of ignorance frequently obscure their actual foundation, causing them to lose sight of their authentic identity. It is all too easy to become trapped in the illusion of transient desires (Maya), straying away from the eternal reality (Omnipresent). Realizing one's inner self necessitates a voyage of intense contemplation, surrounded by strict penance, austere observances, and the endurance of worldly adversities. The core cause of suffering is often a misplaced attachment to the fruits of one's deeds (Karmphaleshu). It contradicts the inherent goal of human beings, which is to participate in righteous conduct (Karma yoga). Departing from this path eventually results in sorrow and disharmony. Bhagavad Gita shines as a beacon of practical wisdom, providing profound insights into the complexities of human life. Its verses, like divine melodies, ring with emotional strength, urging seekers to dive deeper into the nature of attachment and detachment. Sanskrit language's rationality lends itself to both logical analysis and intuitive understanding, making it an ideal platform for learning. This study aims to expand the comprehension of these emotive words like Sangah (attachment) and Vairagya and Asakti (detachment), meticulously analyzing their morphological structure that dissects the constituent elements of these words, elucidating their formation and the relationships between root (dhatu), prefixes (upsarga), and suffixes (pratyay), providing insights into linguistic mechanism to shape their meaning. Furthermore, an etymological investigation uncovers their origins and interpretations, while a semantic analysis unveils their denotative and connotative meanings for understanding this philosophical scripture.

KEYWORDS: attachment, detachment, morphological analysis, etymological analysis, semantic analysis, philosophical analysis

In the intricate weave of life's journey, where the strands of happiness and despair are woven together, Bhagavad Gita rises like a radiant guiding star, illuminating the way to inner exploration and divine realization. This ancient Sanskrit text, born from the wisdom of the ages, speaks to the heart of every individual, transcending the boundaries of time and culture. Through the poignant dialogue between the divine Lord Krishna and the perplexed warrior Arjuna, Gita unveils the profound truths that lie at the core of our being, inviting us to embark on a journey of self-exploration and transformation. Gita highlights three key attachments to overcome: results of actions, actions themselves, and one's body/ego. Detachment involves surrendering fruits of actions, selfless service, and recognizing impermanence. By focusing inward through meditation and devotion, one can gradually transcend the illusion of attachment and attain lasting peace and enlightenment. "By recognizing the temporary nature of the material world, we can shift our focus towards the eternal and find fulfilment in spiritual growth rather than external acquisitions" (Khajgiwale 2023).

Central to the Gita's teachings is the delicate balance between attachment and detachment that every soul must master in the voyage of life. The text beckons us to delve into the depths of our own hearts, to unravel the mysteries that reside within, and to embark on a quest for true understanding. It is in this spirit of self-discovery that we immerse ourselves in the rich tapestry of Gita's words, seeking to uncover the essence of three pivotal concepts: 'vairagya'

(detachment), 'asakti' (non-attachment), and 'sangah' (attachment). Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu scripture, can be seen as a palimpsest of attachment and detachment. Like an ancient manuscript with layers of writing, Gita's teachings on attachment and detachment are interwoven, each layer revealing deeper truths. The text acknowledges the human tendency to form attachments to worldly pleasures, relationships, and outcomes, while also emphasizing the importance of cultivating detachment. Through the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, Gita offers a path to navigate the complexities of attachment and detachment, encouraging individuals to perform their duties without being attached to the fruits of their actions, to love without clinging, and to find peace in the midst of life's challenges. Gita paints a vivid picture of the human condition, using the brushstrokes of emotive words to convey the subtleties of the soul's journey. Through the lens of morphology, etymology, and philosophy of these words (vairagya, asakti and sangh), one can embark on the journey of exploration, unravelling the layers of meaning that reside within each word. 'Vairagya', with its roots firmly planted in the soil of detachment, emerges as a guiding light, urging us to release our grip on the fleeting pleasures of the world and to embrace the eternal truth that lies within. It is a call to cultivate a state of equanimity, to perform our duties without attachment, and to strive for victory in the path of righteousness.

As we navigate the labyrinth of life, Gita's wisdom whispers to us, reminding us of the perils of 'sangah', the attachment that binds us to the illusions of the material realm. Like a gentle breeze, the concept of 'asakti' caresses our souls, inviting us to detach ourselves from the shackles of worldly relationships and to find solace in the embrace of the Divine. It is a reminder that true freedom lies in the ability to love without attachment, to care without expectations, and to find joy in the present moment. Through the prism of language, we unravel the intricacies of these concepts, each word a key that unlocks the doors to self-realization. The morphological structure of 'vairagya' reveals the interplay of prefix and suffix, highlighting the process of detachment and the abandonment of worldly desires. The etymological origins of 'asakti' shed light on the significance of non-attachment in the pursuit of spiritual growth, while the philosophical implications of 'sangah' serve as a potent reminder of the dangers of attachment and the cycle of desire and anger it perpetuates.

As a palimpsest, Gita's wisdom on attachment and detachment has been interpreted and applied in various ways throughout history, each layer offering new insights and guidance for those seeking to unravel the mysteries of the self and the world. In the pages that follow, we embark on a journey of discovery, delving into the depths of Gita's wisdom. With each step, we peel back the layers of meaning, revealing the profound insights that have the power to transform our lives. Through the analysis of 'vairagya', 'asakti', and 'sangah', we uncover the timeless truths that resonate within the hearts of all seekers, guiding us towards the path of inner peace and spiritual enlightenment. Bhagavad Gita points us towards the ultimate goal of self-realization. It reminds that the journey of life is not about the destination, but about the lessons learned along the way. By cultivating detachment, embracing non-attachment, and releasing the grip of worldly desires, we open ourselves to the infinite possibilities that lie within. We learn to dance with the ebb and flow of life, to find beauty in the impermanence of all things, and to connect with the eternal essence that resides within us all. Krishna Ganesh has reflected on Gita, "Krishna's ultimate message to mankind is, for happiness and Moksha, one should lead a life that looks to be "attached" at the outset but in reality, "detached" from the inside" (Ganesh 2018, 40). The words of this timeless text are the guide of entire humanity and illuminate the path to self-discovery and spiritual awakening. One can find solace in the knowledge that, in the intricate weave of life's journey, every thread has its purpose, every experience its lesson, and every soul its divine destiny. Through the exploration of these profound concepts, one can unravel the mysteries of his/her own being and find the courage to embrace the beauty and chaos of this extraordinary journey called life. Thus, the power of words shapes and guides humans towards a deeper understanding of the self and life. One can harness

this power to create positive change in his/her life and in the world. Gita is full of remarkable words, some of which are analyzed at various levels—morphological, etymological and philosophical—in this paper. Here are the verse numbers from Bhagavad Gita, where the concept of attachment (āsakti) is discussed:

Attachment to the fruits of action (karma-phala):

2.47, 2.48, 2.51, 3.19, 5.12, 12.11

Attachment to sense objects:

2.59, 2.60, 2.62, 2.63, 3.34, 3.36, 5.22

Attachment to possessions and relationships:

2.71, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 5.25, 13.9

Attachment to the mind and senses:

3.34, 3.35, 3.43, 5.23, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26, 6.27

Overcoming attachment:

2.55, 2.56, 2.57, 2.58, 2.64, 2.65, 2.70, 3.37, 3.38, 5.26, 6.35, 12.17, 13.10, 18.49, 18.51, 18.52, 18.53

Following are the Sanskrit words for detachment, along with the verse numbers from the Bhagavad Gita:

Vairagya - Dispassion, detachment

Verse: 18.49

Anasakti - Non-attachment, absence of clinging

Verses: 2.51, 3.7

Nishkama - Without desire, free from selfish motives

Verses: 3.19, 4.20

Tyaga - Renunciation, giving up

Verses: 18.4, 7.20

Samadhi - Complete absorption, equanimity

Verses: 2.64, 6.18

Nishpriha - Free from cravings or desires

Verses: 2.71, 4.19

Virakta - Dispassionate, detached

Verses: 14.26, 18.26

Aparigraha - Non-possessiveness, non-grasping

Verses: 13.8-9

Niraasamsa - Free from expectations, desirelessness

Verses: 4.22, 5.24

‘Vairagya’ is the first word that is taken to understand the essence of Gita through the following sloka:

*asanśhayam mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṃ chalam
abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grihyate 06/34*

Semantic Analysis: ‘Literal meaning’

asanśhayam—undoubtedly (adverb); mahā-bāho—mighty-armed one (vocative noun); manaḥ—the mind (subject); durnigrahaṃ—difficult to restrain adjective for mind); chalam—restless (adjective for mind); abhyāsena—by practice (instrumental noun); tu—but conjunction); kaunteya—Arjun, the son of Kunti (vocative noun for Arjuna); vairāgyeṇa—by detachment (instrumental noun); cha—and (conjunction); grihyate—can be controlled (present passive voice).

“O mighty armed one (Arjuna), undoubtedly the restless mind is difficult to control and but by practice and detachment, it can be restrained, O son of Kunti”

Vairagya carries both literal and spiritual meanings, ranging from physical changes like growing pale to the philosophical concept of detachment from worldly desires and pursuits. In Charak Sanhita, Panchtantra, Mahabharatha, and Gita express its significance within Indian philosophy, religion, ayurveda and literature. In the above mentioned sloka explains the importance of meditation and mental discipline in spiritual practice. Vairagya is used with ‘abhyasena’ (practice), suggesting that both are necessary for controlling mind. Vairagya sense is emphasized to achieve stability, inner peace, and ultimately liberation from this material and sensual world.

Morphological Structure: Vi (prefix) + Raga (root word) + Ya (suffix) = Vairaga

Morphological Analysis: ‘Vairagya’ is a word, which has three morphemes, according to Sanskrit language as: Vi + rag+ya. Vi is here prefix (Upsarga Panini, Siddhanta Kaumudi, 1.4.67-69) which focuses on the action of separation or abandonment and ‘opposite of something (passion or attachment)’ so the meaning is separation or abandon or leaving behind attachment.

Vi prefix is used to change the meaning of the root word in a negative or reverse manner for making noun (Sharma 1998). Its meanings are ‘in to parts, apart, in different directions, to and fro, away from, off, without (Rig Veda). It is specially used as a prefix to verbs or nouns and other parts of speech derived from verbs, ‘to express’, ‘division’, ‘distinction’, ‘distribution’, opposition (vi+ bhid’ ‘to break, split apart and dividing entities into multiple parts. Sometimes gives a meaning opposite to the idea contained in the simple root (e.g. Kri ‘to buy’; Vi+ kri,’ to sell’, or intensifies the idea (e.g. hins,’to injure’, vi+ hins=to injure severely) (Monier-Williams 1988). ‘Raga’ is a root word which is derived from ‘Ranj’ dhatu. If vi pratyey is added to ranj dhatu according to Panini Prefix rule ‘j’ of ‘Saj’ will be changed into ‘g’ (sutra: Chajoh Ku Ghinnyatoh). So ‘Raga’ word will be derived, it carries the meaning, ‘to attach’ colour, hue, tint, dye

‘Ya’ is suffix (syant pratyey); it expresses the sense of, ‘fit for’, ‘worthy of’, ‘deserving’ to create abstract noun and neuter gender. It shows a feeling, sentiment, state of mind and devotional state (bhav). So Vairagya is an abstract noun and neuter gender. Usually, in English, abstract nouns cannot be categorized as masculine or feminine genders. All are considered the same but Sanskrit language has this specific category for all the bhavas or feelings. ‘Vairagya’ is created from the stem ‘vairag’ (masculine gender) + suffix (syant) = ‘Vairagya’ (neuter gender) (Panini, *Siddhanta Kaumudi*, 3.3.105). Thus ‘Vairagya’ word is created but in the above sloka ‘vairagyen’ is used as the part of case three and singular number.

Sanskrit language has eight cases (vibhakti) along with its markers (karak chinnah). These cases have three numbers (vachan): singular, dual and plural. They define their own meanings attached to the word itself, most of them work as prepositions in English. However, in Sanskrit, prepositions are written apart from the main word, using the relevant case and number, as is ‘Vairagyen’ is the singular form used in the thrithiya (third) vibhakti. The term thrithiya means ‘with’. Therefore, Vairagya + en = Vairagyen, which means with vairagya or with/by detachment. The rules of case and number are the following, which clarify the position and meaning of the word ‘Vairagyen’.

Etymological Analysis: The ‘Raga’ word will be derived. It carries multiple meanings: color, hue, tint, dye (esp.), associated with the red color—redness (Mahabharat). It can also refer to inflammation (Charak), any feeling or passion (esp.), love, affection or sympathy for vehement, desire of, interest, joy, or delight (as highlighted in Upanishad and Mahabharat), loveliness, beauty (esp. of voice and song) (Panchtantra), a musical note, harmony, melody (in the later system a musical mode or order of sound, or formula. Bharata enumerates six, viz. Bhairava, Kausika, Hindola, Dipaka, Sri-raga, and Megha. Each of these modes excites affection (as in *Bharata’s Natyashashtra and Sangeet Sarsangrah* by Acharye Ramanuja). It can

also refer to seasoning, and condiment (Charak), a price, king, the sun, the moon (lexicographers, a word or meaning that, although given in native lexicons, has not yet been met with in any published text), second daughter of Angiras (Mahabharatha), charm, gratify, and fall in love (Monier-Williams 1988, 872).

‘Vairagya’ means change or loss of color, growing pale found in the works of Suśruta (an ancient Indian physician) and Kāmandakīya Nītisāra (a treatise on politics and statecraft). The term also conveys disgust, aversion, distaste for, or loathing of (used with locative, ablative, or in compound form) mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, Raghuvamśa (a Sanskrit epic by Kalidasa), and other texts. Furthermore, ‘Vairagya’ signifies freedom from all worldly desires, indifference to worldly objects and to life, asceticism, as discussed in the Upanishads (ancient Sanskrit philosophical texts) and the Mahābhārata (a major Sanskrit epic). Related works include Vairagyashataka, "100 verses on freedom from worldly desires," the third century of Bhartṛhari's moral sentiments, and several other works: Vvairagyapancaka, Vairagyapancashiti, Vairagyaprakarana, Vairagyapradipa, Vairagyaratna (Monier-Williams 1988, 1025)

Philosophical Analysis: ‘Vairagya’ word is used to attain peace through self-realization which directs one towards meditation and cultivation of higher values like compassion and wisdom. Detachment from worldly desires and momentary pleasures can redirect his/her energy towards the real goal (Moksha). It is a crucial aspect of spiritual practice that helps in controlling the restless mind, overcoming ego, and embracing the path of inner peace and enlightenment. In ancient Sanskrit, its meaning was detachment from loved ones, like in Vanprastha and Sanyasa Ashram. In Patanjali’s (2012) *Yoga Sutra*, ‘vairagya means to stop fluctuations or to make mind still so that one can know the real self by overcoming his desires.’ It is the state of yogi who can achieve this. A yogi is one who considers everything the same: happiness, sadness, profit and loss. In ‘*Katha Upanishad*’, only the wise can realize the self and become free from desires and attachment. In Indian culture, it is considered a necessary condition for attaining Moksha. It acquired a modified meaning as freedom from attachment and aversion in relation to desires, and from this illusionary world to get self-knowledge and supreme bliss. In modern times, ‘Vairagya’ provides joy and peace, a concept accepted in both psychology and philosophy fields.

*asaktir anabhiṣhvāṅgaḥ putra-dāra-gṛihādīṣhu
nityam cha sama-chittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣhu 13/09*

Semantic Analysis:

asaktih—non-attachment (noun feminine gender, singular); *anabhiṣhvāṅgaḥ*—absence of craving (noun masculine gender, singular); *putra*—son (noun, masculine gender, singular); *dāra*— wife (noun, feminine gender, singular); *griha-ādīṣhu*—home, etc (noun, neuter gender singular); *nityam*—constant (adjective, neuter gender, singular); *cha*—and (conjunction); *sama-chittatvam*—even-mindedness (even is adjective, neuter gender, singular and chittam is noun, neuter gender, singular); *iṣṭa*—the desirable (past passive participle, neuter gender); *aniṣṭa*—undesirable (Negative prefix and past passive participle, neuter gender); *upapattiṣhu*—having obtained (noun, feminine gender, singular)

“Detachment from son, wife and home etc. and constant equanimity of mind in desirable and undesirable circumstances (lead to moksha)”

Denotative meaning of ‘asakti’ is ‘to detach’ and ‘to be away’.

Connotative meaning of the word ‘asakti’ is to detach from this mortal world. It is defined as a state of mind that is free from all mortal attachments (relationships). The sense of ‘asakti’ here is emotional detachment, which is necessary to maintain a healthy perspective for his relations, especially with children and spouse. Its meaning is not that one should stop caring

them but it presents the idea of inner freedom where one can love more freely and unconditionally. Everyone needs a healthy sense of attachment. It is a state when one can rise above all material attachments and focus only on spiritualism and the real self. Son, wife, and other worldly relations and attachments create obstacles in the way of enlightenment. So, a person should be emotionally stable and unaffected in both the binaries of joy and sorrow, praise and blame, and success and failure, etc.

Morphological Structure: The term ‘Asaktih’ is created as: a prefix (upsarga) + sanj (root verb) Saj sak + ti (ktin pratye, feminine gender).

Morphological Analysis:

Root word: ‘Sak’ is derived from Sanj root verb (dhatu), meaning ‘to adhere’ = Sangah (abstract noun, masculine gender)

Suffix (ktin prtyey): It is added to the root word for converting it into feeling. It makes a feminine abstract noun by adding ‘ti’ at the end of the word (Śāstrī 1970), so finally ‘sakti’ is derived. ‘Panini, *Siddhanta Kaumudi* 3.1.93-08’

A: is a negative prefix which converts the meaning of the given word negatively. As adding a with sakti, it becomes Asakti, which means detachment.

Aa: Adding aa with sakti will add intensity to the meaning of ‘sakti’ as ‘intense feeling of attachment.’

Etymological Analysis: ‘Sak’ means to be attached, fastened, adhere, stick, or cling. To linger, hesitate (Mahabharata and Rig Veda), to cause to stick or cling to, unite or connect with (Bhagwad Gita), to cling or stick or adhere to, be attached to or engaged in or occupied with (locative case, Naishadha-carita) (Monier-Williams 1988, 1132). It is considered an important concept in Buddhist philosophy, where attachment is regarded as one of the main causes of suffering in this mortal world (Sharma 2016). It is used in Gita in relation to ‘Gunas.’ There are three gunas: Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. Attachment to this world is associated with Tamsik and Rajsik, while living without attachment is regarded as Sattvik. Only Satvik can get Moksha.

Philosophical Analysis: ‘Asakti’ means dispassion or detachment from this material world. It is required for spiritual growth and self-realization and allows for a clearer perception of reality that is permanent. Humans have a mind, and it remains always engaged according to its property. To achieve the ultimate goal, humans are expected to control the mind and make it involve and attach with the real (Parmatma). It is natural for one who is attached to materialism to be detached from spiritualism, and conversely, one who is attached to the Supreme definitely will become detached from materialism. It is a natural process, at the same moment, human can never be attached to both aspects due to their opposing entities and natures. Attachment to near and dear ones, such as children and wife, shackles the mind to material consciousness which causes desires and expectations from near and dears, and thinks—these are mine. This feeling originates sadness because it is not true. Due to the failure of these expectations, one leads to mental anguish and finally gets sadness, which keeps humans away from omnipresent because He is ‘Satchitananda’ and humans are part of Him, and his final destination is also to mix with Him (Moksha).

*Dhyāyato viṣhayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣhūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho ’bhijāyate 2/62*

Semantic Analysis:

dhyāyataḥ—contemplating (present participle, masculine); *viṣhayān*—sense objects (plural noun, masculine); *puṁsaḥ*—of a person (singular noun, masculine); *saṅgah*—attachment

(singular noun, masculine); *teshu*—to them (sense objects) (pronoun, plural, masculine); *upajāyate*—arises (verb, IIIrd person, singular passive); *saṅgāt*—from attachment (ablative, singular noun, masculine); *sañjāyate*—develops (verb, singular passive); *kāmah*—desire (singular noun, masculine); *kāmāt*—from desire (singular noun, masculine); *krodhah*—anger (singular noun, masculine); *abhijāyate*—arises (verb, present, singular passive)

“While contemplating the objects of senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from this desire is born and from desire anger is born.”

This sloka emphasizes the cause and effect theory. The passive verbs *upjayate*, *sanjayate* and *abhijayate* show that if previous conditions are met, then these consequences will arise naturally. When one thinks about sensual objects, attachments arise, leading to desires, and consequently, anger is born due to the unfulfilled desires. This serves as a warning to human beings not to attach to the sensuous world and its objects. It creates a circle of desires and anger. If a desire is fulfilled, another will arise; if it is not fulfilled, anger will arise. Therefore, it is an endless process and provides obstacles to spiritual growth and self-realization.

Morphological Structure: Sang (from Sanj dhatu) + suffix (ghan, which adds ‘a’) + (visarga) = Sangah

Morphological Analysis: ‘Sangah’ means ‘attachment’, ‘company’, ‘contact’. There is no prefix (upsarga), only suffix (pratyey) is used in the construction of this word. It is the first case of a singular number and masculine gender.

Root: Sanj root word (dhatu) meaning ‘to adhere’ = Sangah (abstract noun, masculine gender). Panini sutra ‘**Chajoh Ku Ghinnyatoh**’ (Śāstrī 1970) will be applied. According to this sutra for making noun from root word (dhatu) ‘j’ of root word will be changed into ‘g’ so ‘j’ of ‘Sanj’ will be changes into ‘g’ and we get the noun ‘Sanga’ and now for making first case a singular number of masculine gender, according to Panini Sutra 7.1.20 “Tasyachi Niti”. One has to add the suffix ‘su’, and sangas is derived, then s will be changed in: (visarga), according to ‘visarjanīyasya sah’ sutra and finally ‘Sangah’ word is derived.

Etymological Analysis: It is derived from ‘Sanj’ dhatu which means to be attached, fastened, adhere, stick, or cling. To linger, hesitate (Mahabharatha and Rig Veda), to cause to stick or cling to, unite or connect with (Bhagwad Gita), to cling, stick, adhere to, be attached to, engaged in, or occupied with (locative case, Naishadha-carita). It is a masculine noun. Its root word (dhatu) is sanj, and its meaning is ‘to adhere’ (Monier-Williams 1988, 1132).

Philosophical Analysis: Here the word ‘Sangha’ is used in the context of wrong or false attachment, association, and connection. If a person becomes attached to various subjects (vishyon), desires arise for acquiring or fulfilling them, which leads to the feeling that all of this should belong only to them. Such feeling to judge right and wrong becomes obscured by the influence of lust. Everyone wants happiness and attachment is the reason of happiness. However, if a human being becomes detached from God (Parmatma), it is natural to be attached to this mortal or perishable world. This wrong attachment becomes the reason for sadness, and human suffers due to this false attachment. As a result, desires and anger arise, and this anger not only destroys intellect but also leads to downfall.

Conclusion

The timeless wisdom of Bhagwad Gita about the right attachment and detachment paves the way for all humanity to connect with the Ultimate Reality. A beautiful example presented in Gita is that of a lotus leaf that is born from water and floats serenely on its surface without getting wet. Similarly, one should learn how to live in this illusionary world without being

trapped with its false and temporary attachments and desires. Only then can one know his/her real self by attaching to the eternal Divine and detaching from the temporary things. In such a state, freedom and peace can be enjoyed. The mortal and worldly attachments are a mirage which can easily lead astray from the Absolute. Desires are the roots of suffering and sin in this mortal world. Gita reminds us of the real purpose of this life: to serve others and enjoy everything without attachment. The poetic and emotional words seem directly interact with everyone's heart and soul. By diving deep into the metaphorical, and etymological analysis of the words like 'vairagya' (detachment), and 'sangah' (attachment), has uncovered the spiritual truth hidden in this text, which represents the secret of a life well-lived here and hereafter.

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