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An overview on Six essential pre-requisites or Asbab e sitta Zarooriya in preservation of diseases and its correlation with tabiat

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ABSTRACT

Unani system of medicine recognizes the influence of surroundings and ecological conditions on the state of health of human beings. This system aims at restoring the equilibrium of various elements and faculties of the human body. It has laid down six essential pre-requisites for the prevention of diseases and places great emphasis, on the maintenance of proper ecological balance and, on the other, on keeping water, food and air free from pollution. These essentials, known as 'Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriya' and are as follows, air, food and drinks, bodily movement and repose, psychic movement and repose, sleep and wakefulness, and exertion and retention etc. In this article we will discuss on these six essentials, how they play an important role in preservation of health and how these are correlated with tabiat in maintenance of health.

Keywords: six essentials, food and drinks, tabiat etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Unani system of medicine is an age-old, time-tested system of medicine dating back 5000 years to Greece. Like any other form of medical science, Unani medicine strives to find the best possible ways by which a person can lead a healthy life with the least or zero sickness. Unani scholars believe that diseases can be kept at bay by using clean and fresh water, breathing clean air and consuming fresh food. Likewise, a balance should be maintained between the mind and the body so that the metabolic process can take place easily and the body waste evacuated. Unani medicine believes in promotion of health, prevention of diseases and cure through regimental and diet therapies.

Health is a common theme in most cultures. In fact, all communities have their concept of health, as part of their culture. Among definitions still used, probably the oldest is that health is the absence of diseases. According to WHO, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It can be construed as a feeling of wholeness and a happy frame of mind. It is not mainly an issue of doctors, social services and hospitals but an issue of social justice and is not perceived in the same way by all members of a community including various professional groups (e.g. biomedical scientists, social science scientists, health administrators, ecologists, etc.) giving rise to confusion about the concept of health. The holistic concept recognizes the strength of social, economic, political and environmental influences on health. It implies that all sectors of society have an effect on health, in particular, agriculture, animal husbandry, food, industry, education, housing, public works, communications and other sectors. The emphasis is on the promotion and protection of health.^{1,2}

The best possible ways of health promotion in this holistic system of medicine are improvement of Tabiyat (Medicatrix naturae or Immunity) by immunomodulators, restoration of balanced temperament, maintenance of balance in the quality and quantity of humours, moderation of Asbabe Sitta Zarooriya (six essential factors for life) and adoption of Ilaj Bil Tadabeer (Regimental therapy), Munzij wa Mushil (concoctive and purgative) therapy and Ilaj bil ghiza (Dieto-therapy).^{3,4}

Six Essentials or Pre-Requisites of Life

According to definition of unani medicine “*Asbab*” are the factors which are precursors and by its own have an influence on human body, to generate a new state or maintain an

old state (Hamdani, 1998). *Asbabe Sitta zarooriya* are basically that six essentials of life without which life of humans is unimaginable (Ameen, 2006) (Qarshi, 2010).

The six essentials are:

1. Fresh Air (*Hawae Muheet*)
2. Food and Drink (*Makool Mashroob*)
3. Body Movement and Repose (*Harkat wa Sukoone Badania*)
4. Mental Movement and Repose (*Harkat wa Sukoone Nafsania*)
5. Sleep and Wakefulness (*Naum wa Yaqzah*)
6. Retention and Evacuation (*Ehtibas wa Istafraagh*) (Hamdani, 1998) (Ameen, 2006) (Qarshi, 2010) (IbnSina, 2010) (IbnSina, YNM).

Meaning of Six Essentials

The word sitta stands for six and because they essentially influence each and every human Body is known as asbab-e-sitta zaruriyya. Asba b-e-Sitta Zaruriyya are amongst the important Regimens for health preservation and restoration, if lost⁵ . When all the six factors are in equilibrium, health is maintained; otherwise it needs moderation and modification.

Different seasons have different quality and impacts on the human body and any change in environmental air may significantly affect the temperament of human beings. there are four kind of seasons and are as follows:

1-Fasal E Rabi (Spring Season)

This season is perspective of health to improve it, as *Mizaj* (Temperament) of *Khilt Dam* is like that of this season i.e. *Har Ratab* (hot wet) and in spring season there are chances of many diseases development because some diseases like *Falij* (Paralysis), Melancholia, Arthritis, Pharyngitis, Haemoptysis etc. Unani physicians had also given elegant views regarding the cause of above said diseases; Stressful life, Anger, Fearfulness and over intake of spicy foods are amongst them⁹.

2-Fasl E Shita (Winter Season)

It is having cold and moist temperament which becomes contributing cause of phlegmatic diseases *viz.* joint pain, Pneumonia, Rhynorrhoea, Cough, Lypoma, and Rhinitis etc.⁹

3-Fasal E Saif (Summer Season)

Because of hot and dry temperament of this season, production of *Safra* (yellow bile) increases and induces *Safrawi* (Bilious) diseases like Measles, Vomiting, Nettle rash, Chicken pox, Ascites, Conjunctivitis etc. Therefore one should consume cold

temperament beverages, bath with cold water, avoidance from sun light and also increase intake of water.⁹

4-Fasal E Kharif (Autumn Season)

Safrawi diseases like Ring worm, Pruritis, Sciatica, Tonsillitis, Intestinal worms etc are because of its coldness which increases the chances of retention of *Safrawi Khilt* (yellow bile) occurs in the body; these problems occur due to indigestion. So one have to get better the digestion and take plenty of water⁹.

Fresh Air (Hawae Muheet)

As we know our life almost depend on atmospheric air. Human beings need a continuous supply of air to breath and to make his existence⁶. as oxygen is a vital rukn of ruh (pneuma) and bodies. It constantly reaches to ruh and become a source of its optimization and results in tadil-e-ruh (moderation of ruh)⁷. Ruh posses quwa (faculties)⁸.

Definition of Air Born Diseases¹⁰

A disease is classified as airborne when respiratory droplets from one person can easily contaminate the next person. Viruses, bacteria and fungus may be to blame for causing such diseases. Airborne transmission happens when the bacteria or virus travel on respiratory droplets or dust. Simply washing the hands and covering the mouth when sneezing can decrease the prevalence of contracting an airborne disease.

There are many diseases which occur due to contamination of air i.e.(polluted air) and are as follows..

Pulmonary Tuberculosis¹⁰

Pulmonary tuberculosis is an airborne disease that affects 10 people out of every 100,000 people in the United States, says MedlinePlus. This disease occurs when a person inhales infected respiratory droplets. Symptoms of pulmonary tuberculosis include coughing up blood or phlegm, excessive night sweats, fever, weight loss and tiredness. This disease can also lead to chest pain, wheezing and problems breathing. The exact cause for pulmonary tuberculosis is the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria. MedlinePlus says that the elderly, infants and those people with a weakened immune systems have a risk for getting tuberculosis.

H1N1 Flu¹⁰

The H1N1 flu, commonly called the swine flu, is another airborne disease passed via respiratory droplets. The H1N1 flu became a household name in the spring of 2009 when

an epidemic of this type of flu arose. Specifically, the H1N1 influenza viruses causes this type of flu.

MEASLES¹⁰

Measles is a very contagious disease that spreads via contact with droplets from an infected person, states MedlinePlus. Specific symptoms of the measles includes a cough, fever, muscle pain, light sensitivity and a rash.

There are two types of changes which occur in the atmospheric air¹¹

1-Tagayyurat Gair Tabiya Gair Muzadah¹¹

These are those active changes in the atmospheric air which are not much against the tabiat .mean to say here is that , these are those changes which when occur do not influenced life at all.

2-Tagayyurat Gair Tabiya Muzadah¹¹

These are those active changes in the atmospheric air which are too much against the tabiat and influenced life to very much extent. These changes occur in the air either by altering the composition of the air or by changing the quality of the air.

When changes i.e. (infective agents) occur in the air it causes many complications inside the body and results in infective humours. These infection first occur in those humours which occur inside the heart.¹²

So from the above discussion it is obvious that the environment in which we are living should be free from any kind of contamination to maintain the health and to keep normality in the temperament.

Makool Wa Mashroob(Food And Drink)

Food provides us with more than the sum of its nutrients - protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins, and minerals. Food is condensed and transformed energy. Eating is a way to extract life sustaining energy from food. When you eat, you process and absorb the forces of nature stored in your food. For example, plants store light through photosynthesis. Eating food releases the energies and nutrients stored in food for your body to absorb. In assimilating your food, the physical and energetic forces of your food interact with you on physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels - and in turn determine your health and the quality of your life.¹⁴

The foods and drinks act upon the body in three ways: by their kaifiyat (quality), by their madda (matter) and by their surat-e-naueia (morph) or vise versa.⁸Therefore, foods and drinks with the help of their quality, madda and morph are believed to ensure healthy

state, if taken judiciously. Foods are categorized mainly into three categories such as ghiza latif (light foods) produces thin blood; ghiza kaseef (heavy foods) produces thick blood and ghiza mutadil (moderate foods). They are further subdivided according to their properties either rich or poor in nutrition and of bad chyme or of good chyme⁸. The word makool stands for foods and mashroob for drinks⁴. In healthy condition food is taken for the preservation of health and for aid of tabiyat but the aim is different in abnormal circumstances.¹³The World Health Organization found our standard American diet results in dramatic increases of chronic and degenerative disease when it is introduced into other countries. The excess sugar, salt, fat, and protein, and lack of fiber, vitamins, and minerals of artificial, junk, and processed food are major contributing factors in heart disease, cancer, diabetes, AIDS, and chronic fatigue. For example, due to processing, white rice loses 70% of the nutrients in found in brown rice. In addition to lacking nutrients, white flour affects your body differently than whole grains, raising your triglyceride levels and creating imbalances and cravings.¹⁴Water drinking immediately following meal, should be avoided because it hinders with digestive process. Water must be taken after descending of foods from upper digestive tracts or on severe thirst; this may prove beneficial to digestive process¹³. The water intake with foods either in little or in more quantity is a very common among the people due to lack of knowledge.

EFFECTS OF FAST FOOD AND SOFT DRINKS ON THE BODY¹⁵

Food is fuel for your body. It has a direct impact on how you feel as well as on your overall health. Fast food isn't necessarily bad, but in many cases it's highly processed and contains large amounts of carbohydrates, added sugar, unhealthy fats, and salt (sodium). These foods are often high in calories yet offer little or no nutritional value. When fast food frequently replaces nutritious foods in your diet, it can lead to poor nutrition, poor health, and weight gain.

Test in lab animals have even shown a negative effect in short duration diets. Being overweight is a risk factor for a variety of chronic health problems including heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.¹⁵A study published in the journal Public Health Nutrition showed that eating commercial baked goods (doughnuts, croissants, and, yes, even bran muffins) and fast food (pizza, hamburgers, and hot dogs) may be linked to depression. and greasy foods are often blamed for acne, but they're not the real culprits. It's carbs

that are to blame. According to the Mayo Clinic, because foods that are high in carbohydrates increase blood sugar levels, they may also trigger acne¹⁵

As fast foods and other unhealthy foods which are non beneficial to health affects body in many ways, same way some drinks if taken in large amount also affects body and causes many disruptions in the body like After water, coffee and tea are the two most commonly consumed beverages on the planet. They are brimming with antioxidants, flavonoids, and other biologically active substances that may be good for health. Research suggests that drinking at least three cups of either black or green tea per day reduces the risk of stroke¹⁶ and cancer¹⁷.

HARKAT WA SUKOON BADNI(REST AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY)

To maintain the health, rest and physical activity is the third category in asbab e sitta zarooriya .According to Burhaanuddin Nafis, When matter come in action from the power it is called as harkat and the meaning of rest is to remain in action or in the power.¹⁹ Whatever an individual executes the movements result in liberation of hararat (heat)²⁰

Science shows that physical activity can reduce your risk of dying early from the leading causes of death, like heart disease and some cancers. Only a few lifestyle choices have as large an impact on your health as physical activity. People who are physically active for about 7 hours a week have a 40 percent lower risk of dying early than those who are active for less than 30 minutes a week.¹⁸ In Unani medicine, it is believed that hararat is the tool of all quwa (faculties) especially, quwa tabaiyah (vegetative faculties). Vegetative faculties perform the action of processing in food, metabolism and finally, expel the waste materials out of the body⁸. If these waste materials are getting accumulated and not expelled out of the body regularly, it leads the extinction of hararat-e-ghareeziyah. So, the hararat liberated by physical activity stimulate hararat-e-ghareeziyah⁸ and finally, quwa performs the appropriate action either for assimilation or elimination. Rest, after movement is very essential for health preservation. Because regular movement without rest result in dissolution of ratubat (fluid) and finally, the innate heat becomes affected⁸. Once the innate heat becomes subnormal, the normal metabolic process cannot occur. Rest favour the excellent process of digestion which results in formation of good quality of humour and health depends on humoral balance. But excess in anyone or in both produces baroodat (cold)⁸ which affects the action of

faculties and finally, the function of the body becomes abnormal. Therefore, the balanced rest and movement exert the optimistic effects on individual health.

The Benefits of Physical Activity¹⁸

- Control your weight
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you're an older adult

Benefits of Rest²¹

- a day or two off per week is required to allow bone, muscle, tendons and ligaments the time to recover and repair themselves. Muscle growth occurs during rest periods, not during exercise;
- avoids the risk of the immune response being compromised due to over-training;
- adequate sleep allows the mind to repair itself and develop new connections (useful when learning new skills, adaptations)
- decreases abnormal levels of cortisol (stress hormone): This will allow alertness, productivity and general health to be maintained
- allows for better concentration and focus.

HARKAT WA SUKOON E NAFSANI (PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND REPOSE)

As we know there are two faculties in our body i.e. sensory and motor, which govern the internal and external functions of the body and unani scholars explained these faculties as quwwat e mudirrikah and quwwat e muharrikah etc. By these two faculties all psychological are carried normally. By the movement of ruh(pneuma), dam(blood), and hararat e gharizyah, all psychic states whether it is internal or external are governed. the dissolution of ruh occurs by the excessive psychic movements and this results in debilitated faculties and thus function of the body becomes abnormal. After the psychic movement, rest is needed for gaining the substitute for the lost substances⁸. This clearly indicates that the psychic movements cannot be performed continuously. Body is also influenced by psychic states such as anger, sorrow, fear, worry, happiness etc²⁰. The

emotional state of a person plays an important role in health maintenance because the negative emotions make a person physically sick and positive emotions boost the immune system²². Therefore, balance with emotions, psychic rest and movement is essential for preservation of existing health or for restoration, if health is lost.

So excessive anger, anxiety, and depression may disrupt our daily life routine and harm the person in many ways. Individuals who have trouble controlling anger or who experience anger outside of a normal emotional scope can present with different types of anger disorders. Chronic anger, which is prolonged, can impact the immune system and be the cause of other mental disorders. Passive anger, which doesn't always come across as anger and can be difficult to identify. Overwhelmed anger, which is caused by life demands that are too much for an individual to cope with.²³

NAUM WA YAQZAH (SLEEP AND WAKEFULNESS)

Sleep and wakefulness is the 5th factor which comes under *asbaab e sitta zarooriya*. Sleep is analogous to rest and wakefulness to movement. Eight hours sleep is very essential for health as sleep strengthens the vital faculty, *pneuma*, and promotes digestion, by retaining *harat e gharizyah* (*Zakariya Razi*). Sleep also works as a great restorer of lost substances during day time⁸. Therefore, proper sleep prepares the individual for next day performance by energy conservation. When sleep meets a substance ready for digestion and *nuzj* (coction), it turns it into the blood. If sleep discovers emptiness or a *khilt* (humour) which is not primed to digestive faculty it disperses it. Excessive sleep causes dullness of the psychic faculties, cold diseases and heaviness of head. On the other hand, excessive wakefulness produces dryness, impairs digestion etc²⁰.

Today's life persons are running very busy so do not have time to sleep adequately and this becomes the major cause for health deterioration because of this imbalance in routine.

ISTIFRAGH WA IHTIBAS (ELIMINATION AND RETENTION)

For maintenance of health there must be balance between *istifragh* and *ihtibas* of substances. *Istifragh* means the elimination of unnecessary substances out of the body because retention of these substances inside the body produces disease.²⁴ In the same way, elimination of the substances which must be retained²⁰. causes the abnormal condition. Elimination is carried through normal channels such as passage of urine, stools, sweat, menstrual blood etc. but excess excretion results in abnormal condition²⁵. The excess loss of fluid, salts, and nutrients in the stools, causes abnormalities. The

excessive elimination of any matter always causes the coldness and dryness of temperament, directly²⁰. therefore elimination and retention are beneficial and maintain health if these are balanced and occur at the time when they are needed.

So from the above discussion it is predicted that, to achieve the aim of fitness for a long period this is necessary to maintain an equilibrium in these six essentials of life .as a routine, life keeps on changing, therefore basic knowledge of asbab e sitta zarooriya should be imparted as a part of syllabus at school level to maintain the fitness and healthy condition. So each and every individual becomes skilled to adopt the healthy life style and may stay healthy as long as possible.

CONCEPT OF TABIAT IN UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

Unani medicine describes the concept of Tabiyat, which is a supreme planner of the body to create the healthy environment within the body and prepare to fight against the disease. If Tabiyat is strong, then a man does not suffer from a disease easily: if it weakens, a man becomes prone to disease easily. The Tabiyat may be defined as the sum total of structural, functional and psychological character of the human being. According to Hippocrates, there is a special ability hidden in every individual called the defensive mechanism of the body or in the language of Unani Tabiyate Muddabare Badan. This Tabiyat is the best physician, and maintains the equilibrium of four body humours. For the maintenance of health, the quantity and quality of these humours should be as per the natural chemical composition of the body. Broadly speaking Tabiyat is considered as the real healer of the body and the role of the Tabeeb (physician) is to aid this Tabiyat ²⁶

ROLE OF PHYSICIAN IN MAINTAINING TABIAT

As *ṭabīat* performs its own role in different stages of disease. The role of physician is to adopts such regimens which favour the action of *ṭabī'at*. If any adopted regimen is against the urge of *ṭabī'at* that may prove fatal for patients. If *ṭabī'at* is overwhelmed then the disease process is evolved²⁷. Therefore, in such state it needs assistance from physician. The physician assists *ṭabī'at* by adopting appropriate treatment modalities which are of three types:

- Regimen and diet
- Use of drugs
- Manual operation²⁸

The word regimens stand for the supervision of the asbab-esittah Zarooriyah (six essential factors)²⁸. Therefore, the regimenal management includes the modification in

six essential factors because when these six factors are in favour of *ṭabī'at*, health is maintained otherwise abnormalities can arise.

These six essential factors either directly or indirectly influences the *ṭabī'at*. In relation with these factors *Galen* delineates that *sue tadbir* i.e. any malpractice in any essential factor may be the causative of “*Fasaade ṭabī'at*”²⁹. Therefore, the role of physician is to supervise and modify these factors according to the requirement of the body, so that *ṭabī'at* can easily maintain the normalcy.

RELATION OF TABIAT (IMMUNITY) WITH FRESH AIR (FIRST FACTOR OF SIX ESSENTIALS OF LIFE)

Fresh air is vital to health and provides you with a steady supply of oxygen which is needed by your brain and every single cell of your body. You can go for days - even weeks - without food, but can't go for more than a few minutes without fresh air. If you are feeling ill or are suffering from any kind of disease, then fresh, oxygenated air is even more important for you.³⁰

Here's a list of just some of the many health benefits of fresh air.

- Helps the airways of your lungs to dilate more fully and improves the cleansing action of your lungs
- Helps to improve your heart rate, blood pressure, and metabolic rate
- Helps your immune system fight off disease more effectively
- Helps to clear your mind, improves your concentration, and helps you to think more clearly
- Alters your brain levels of serotonin which helps to improve your mood and promote a sense of happiness and well-being
- Helps your body get rid of accumulated impurities
- Strengthens your immune system by supplying it with the oxygen it needs³⁰

FOOD THE SECOND FACTOR OF SIX ESSENTIALS AND ITS AID IN THE MAINTAINENCE OF TABIAT

In the treatment of any disease food management play very important role. Because, in the healthy condition food is taken for the preservation of health and for aid of *ṭabī'at*, but in diseased state the purpose is not the same³². Therefore, the physicians recommended the dietary regimen in healthy or in disease state which are favourable for *ṭabī'at*. In dietary recommendation sometimes physician desires to stop food or increased or reduced or allow in moderate quantity. All these recommendation are based on

strength of patients with the aims to prevent the divergence of *ṭabī'at* from the disease and to prevent the indulgence of *ṭabī'at* in the process of digestion of food²⁸. The stoppage or reduction of food is recommended in acute disease but it may be reduced in chronic disease if patients strength allow because in chronic disease the chief plan of physician is to preserve the strength (*quwa*) of the body³³ because for each functions there is a *quwat* (faculty) and where there is *quwat* (faculty) there are functions³¹. Therefore, *quwa* (faculties) and *af'al* (functions) are complementary with each other's. The above discussion indicates that the physicians with their experience and skills can manipulate the dietary regimens as per condition of the body.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND IMMUNE SYSTEM

Epidemiologists have linked The incidence of specific infections to bouts of heavy training or strenuous competition, but it is important to remember that exercise can modify the risk of infection through mechanisms other than a change of immune function^{34,35}

LEUCOCYTOSIS AND LYMPHOCYTOSIS AFTER EXERCISE

Acute exercise provokes an increase of peripheral venous leucocytes count that is roughly proportional to the intensity and duration of activity. However if the activity is very prolonged, TLC may decrease because monocytes and NK cells are migrating into injured muscle. A delayed leucocytosis may be seen 30 min to 3h following strenuous exercise, due to cortisol stimulated release of white cells from the bone marrow .the functional significance of these remain unclear, but non specific immunity may be enhanced.³⁶

PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND IMMUNE RESPONSES³⁷

When we're stressed, the immune system's ability to fight off antigens is reduced. That is why we are more susceptible to infections. The stress hormone corticosteroid can suppress the effectiveness of the immune system (e.g. lowers the number of lymphocytes). Stress can also have an indirect effect on the immune system as a person may use unhealthy behavioral coping strategies to reduce their stress, such as drinking and smoking.

Stress is linked to: headaches; infectious illness (e.g. 'flu); cardiovascular disease; diabetes, asthma and gastric ulcers

Stress responses have an effect on **digestive system**. During stress digestion is inhibited. After stress digestive activity increases. This may affect the health of digestive system

and cause ulcers. Adrenaline released during a stress response may also cause ulcers. Stress responses increase strain upon circulatory system due to **increased heart rate** etc. Stress can also affect the immune system by raising blood pressure.

SLEEP AND WAKEFULNESS IMPACT ON IMMUNITY³⁸

Not getting enough sleep has been linked to a laundry list of mental and physical health problems, including those that stem from an impaired immune system. A lot of studies show our T-cells go down if we are sleep deprived,” And inflammatory cytokines go up. This could potentially lead to the greater risk of developing a cold or flu. In simple terms, sleep deprivation suppresses immune system function. our bodies fight infection with fevers. “One of the things that happens when we sleep is that we can get a better fever response,” our bodies fight infection with fevers. Research suggests that sleep-deprived people are at higher risk of dying from heart disease, The more sleep loss, the higher your levels of C-reactive protein (CRP). will be, CRP is a marker of inflammation, and inflammation may play a role in heart disease.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the above discussion that there are many illnesses or disorders which developed due to imbalances that occur in *asbab-e-sitta zaroorya* and in immune system of the body. Improvement of immunity by immunomodulators, and moderation of 6 essential factors of life maintain and promotes positive health as well as prevent the diseases to get develops. It is also, concluded that *ṭabīat* plays an important role in preservation and restoration of health. The disease is the consequence of defeat of *ṭabīat* because when *ṭabīat* is strong, it can easily combat the causative matter and maintain normalcy and it has direct or indirect relationship with the six essential pre-requisites in the restoration of health.

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