



vivEka cintAmaNi

English Translation by Kausalya Hart

விவேக சிந்தாமணி - ஆங்கில மொழிபெயர்ப்பு
கௌசல்யா ஹார்ட்

In Tamil script, unicode/utf-8 format

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vivEka cintAmaNi (author not known)

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NOTE: The source verses in Tamil script (unicode) of vivEka cintAmaNi has been published earlier under PM release # 0059 (opens up in a new webpage!)

Viveka chinthamani contains 135 poems, but only the first 122 poems speak to moral issues.

The poems after 122 describe content from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and other folk literature. Sometimes the meanings are unclear.

If we worship the good god Ganesa in the temple in Arunai,
our troubles will be all gone,
our bad karma will be destroyed,
any troubles that we will have in this birth will go away,
and all troubles that might come in future births will go away.

1. There are seven useless things—
a child who will not help when his parents are in trouble,
food that is not given when one is hungry,
water that does not remove thirst,
women who do not know poverty,
a king who cannot control his anger,
a disciple who does not obey his guru's words,
pilgrimage water that does not remove sins.

2. If a child becomes older,
he will not listen to his father's advice.
If a wife, with beautiful hair is older than her husband
she will not care for him.
If a disciple learns all things,
he will not search for a guru.

If someone's sickness is cured ,
he will not search for a pandit.

3. Even if one catches a cat, locks it in a cage,
and makes it smell good with turmeric powder,
can it become a different thing have a nice smell.
It is a cat and cannot be something else.

4. If someone invites guests happily, with a bright face,
and gives them food even without salt it will be nectar for them.
If someone gives food unhappily even with fruit and milk,
the hunger of the guests will only increase.

5. When clouds see that paddy lands
are dry without water, they go to pour rain in the ocean.
Just like that rich ungenerous people
do not see the faces of poor people.
They give wealth to those who are rich
and will not give to the poor.

6. In a Banian tree if there are flowers and fruit
many birds come to it and live there
and people also come there and worship it.
If the leaves in the tree fall
and the tree has no fruit or shadow,
who will come and stay there?

7. People like to read the Porutpaal in the Thirukkural
but involve themselves in the Kamattuppaal only.
Even when they are dreaming,
they do not think of the chapter on Dharma.

Such people are not wise.

They do not want to be generous to gods,
their teachers, Brahmins or poets
but they give their money to those
who kick them with their sandals.

8. Even though a frog lives in the water with lotuses,
it has never smelled the lotus,
but a bee flying from the forest drinks the nectar of the lotus.
Even if ignorant people see good people
that they know before, they ignore them.
If wise men see educated people,
they are happy and make them friends.

9. A skylark saw a monkey getting wet in the rain
and ask him to build himself a nest like the one he has,
but the monkey was angry at the bird and destroyed its nest.
If someone teaches wisdom, knowledge and books
to stupid people, it will be a waste.

10. Can one give a girl
with fragrant hair swarming with bees,
a beautiful vine-like waist, fish-shaped eyes,
and speech like a parrot's
to the rishis in the sky and tell them
that her saliva is nectar that is mixed with fruit and milk?

11. The crow that goes to a Karpaga tree can eat its nectar.
Those who are smart when they approach a king will survive.
If someone makes friends with bad people,
his life will be bad like a parrot

that waits for the fruit of an ilavam tree to ripen.

12. One can trust terrible poison, a hurricane,
a rutting elephant, a cruel tiger,
the messenger of Yama, and hunters and warriors,
but if someone trusts women who wear saris,
he will stand on the street and suffer.

13. The father of white conch-like lotus is the sun.
If someone plucks and throws it down in the water,
it will become rotten and the water will kill it,
but if someone puts the lotus on the bank, the sun will dry it.
Just like that if someone loses his place and status,
he will become poor and suffer.

14. If someone makes a pen by sharpening a dog's tail,
can he use it to write good Tamil?
If someone cleans a burning ground where a pey lives,
and lights up a big lamp, can it become a house to live in?
If a bad man who does not listen to his mother's advice,
he will not become a good person.
If someone will not give to poor or allow others to be generous,
he will be born as a low person in all seven births.

15. Some women will cry and fall on the floor,
they will eat betel leaf and say they will die.
Such women have cruel eyes that are sharper than arrows.
Those who trust them will suffer like a dog.

16. Women lose their beauty when they become pregnant.
If a king is not criticized his kingdom will be destroyed.

A bad minister will ruin a kingdom.

If the children do not listen to good advice, they will become bad.

If someone gives good advice
mean people will not listen to him
and will only do bad things to others.

If someone is friends with mean people,
he will not be respected.

The benefit of tapas will not stay with a sage if he gets angry.

17. These do not help when someone is in trouble:

a “brother” who was not born with him,
“parents” who did not give birth to him,
wealth from other people,
a courtesan who wants wealth,
education acquired only to earn wealth,
living with a mistress.

18. O friend, listen to me.

Four of something are the same as eight halves.

I went and asked the thalaivan and the priest,
“if you say two fours and three may be the same,
is that right?”

If you listen to what I say
you will think that four and four times six are the same.

O girl, don't talk about this
because you are confusing me like saying
four and ten are the same as fifteen.

19. A girl saw a bee lying still after it drank too much nectar
and thought it is was a champu fruit and took it on her palm.

The bee thought the moon in the sky had risen

and flew away, worrying that her lotus hand might close.

She said, "What is this? Was that a bee that flew away or was it a fruit? What is this strange thing?"

20. Someone who thinks of a good book
but does not learn it, is an idiot,
someone who does not know to calculate is stupid,
someone who does not do any work is a devil,
someone who does not help in anything is lazy,
someone who says nothing and stands like a tree is a devil,
someone who talks lovingly and embraces a girl
is a lecher,
someone who eats without giving food to hungry people
is a sinner.

21. If one becomes poor,
he may be ashamed to talk in an assembly,
his tiger-like heroism will go away,
he will not want to invite guests,
he will be afraid of his vine-like wife,
he will agree to do bad things,
he will not think of right actions and
the whole world will disrespect him.

22. If a bud bends, its fragrance will not be reduced,
but if sugarcane bends, can one make jaggery out of it?
Even if an iron bar is bent one can still conquer an elephant with it,
but if our nerves become weak can we fix them?

23. O friend, you love me like a mother
and you teach me all virtues,

I ask you to tell me a truth—
think and then say:
why do so many men love me and give me joy,
and also give me gold and fall on my feet?

24. O friend, your breasts are so round
that it makes even the god of love faint
and fall when he sees them!

I tell you, the four-headed Brahma, the god of Dharma,
created us together with liquor and dice,
so that the wealth of those who have done no good deeds
would be destroyed.

25. If a low-caste person becomes rich,
his other relatives will come to him, praise him and say,
“I am your relative and I want to marry a girl from your family.”
But someone loses his status even if he is a king,
people will talk about him as if he is a stranger and say, “who knows who he is?”

26. Rain pours three times a month,
one time for the Brahmins who recite the Vedas,
one time for a just king
and one time for chaste women.

27. Rain pours only three times year on the earth:
one time for the Brahmins who sell the rice
they received from their worship,
one time for an unjust king,
and one time for women who kill husbands.

28. Whether they survive or burn up in a forest

these people are useless:

those who do not give to poor,
 those with ears that have never heard good words,
 and those who do not help those
 who protected them when they were suffering.

29. If a person does something good for his body,
 it gives him health,
 if he gives his body to a prostitute, it gives him disease.
 if he gives anything to his relatives it gives him only confusion,
 if he worships god with love it shows him the path to moksha.

30. You can trust a woman devil who obstructs one's way,
 a cruel elephant that is as large as a mountain,
 a young person who laughs and attracts you,
 an accountant who writes wrong accounts,
 a manager who always checks on his workers
 and a crow that wanders to steal—
 but you should not trust a women who laughs,
 fascinating you walking in a seductive way.

31. If there are bees, they will drink honey from flowers,
 If there is wonderful Tamil, there will be a Sangam.
 If there are inauspicious constellations, the stars will give trouble for people,
 If there are many women, there will be fights.

32. Many people will possess these precious things
 after others pass from this world—
 the breasts of chaste women,
 the hair of kavarimaan,
 the skin of an angry tiger,

the sharp spear from the hands of a warrior,
the wealth of mean people.

33. Bad people say even if others wear gold
their ornaments are not true ones,
but if they see rich people wearing false gold
they will say it is real.

People say that even if one drinks milk
staying under a palm tree, he is drinking liquor.

People often will think that what bad people say is the truth.

34. O friend, people make mistakes all the time
and they lose what they have.

If you leave your husband,
it is as if a jackal trying to catch a fish in the water
drops the meat that is already in his mouth.

35. O you who are beautiful like the moon!

You are not smart.

You are like someone who, wanting to catch a fish,
puts his net in the water and then looks at the sky,
or like someone who leaving a king
to be friends with another man.

36. These all are useless like the wheel of a cart without an axle:

a woman who has not come to age,
the heroism of a king who does not get angry at his enemy,
paddy grown without watching it,
a lake without banks,
an ugly person adorning himself,
and knowledge of a disciple without a guru.

37. She walked as the bells on her anklets tinkled,
and the bells on her waistband sounded softly.
Her friends surrounded her carrying fragrant flowers,
and poets said, "Is she a swan or something else?"

38. A girl longing for her lover says,
"I am like a deer that wandering in the empty field
where there is no water,
a stupid parrot that waits for fruits to be ripen on a tree,
a bee that faints after drinking too much nectar.
I think of you as my king and have waisted my whole life."

39. Whenever I think of the king of Tamilnadu
where the conches blow loudly,
the rolling ocean never sleeps,
the day does not dawn,
and even though the moon sleeps
and all the birds sleep and the breeze grows calm,
and even night for a time,
still my two eyes do not sleep.

40. People who do these things will not survive:
protecting a snake, feeding a rutting elephant,
going out at night alone, swimming in an large lake,
loving a mistress and
making an enemy of the king.

41. Do not worry if you become rich.
You should not feel sad if troubles come to you.
If fate comes to make their life rich or poor,

intelligent people do not worry
because they know that fate cannot be changed.
Haven't you seen poor people become rich
and ride on a palanquin?

42. If a girl embraces her husband whom she does not love
because he gives her precious jewels, it is a waste.
Even if the man wears cool fragrant sandal paste,
it is not worth having a relationship with him.

43. Wealth is not a medicine to cure
a rich person who loses his health
but if a poor person gets rich,
he will be happy.

44. Even if a dark crow could become white like an atti flower,
even if the mind of crazy people could be understood by others,
even one could see the feet of the fish in the water,
even if the great Vishnu and Brahma could measure the world,
no one can understand the mind of women
who have beautiful statue-like eyes.

45. Bad people do not want to listen to good people
or be friends with bad people.
Those who listen to bad people will destroy themselves.
If they listen to bad people,
they will be like the cow listened to the fox
and was killed by the tiger.

46. If on a battlefield warriors scold someone
or children scold their parents

or women scold their lovers
it is a pleasure to everyone's ears.

47. An intelligent person will become strong.
If someone does not have wisdom,
all the troubles that can come to him will come.
It is like a strong lion jumping into a well
listening to a small rabbit seeing its own reflection.

48. Those who are disrespected by others will not want to live,
like a deer that does not want to live when its fur falls.
Those without self-respect are like donkeys.

49. When a donkey brayed "kaa,"
a devil heard, thought it was an angel and worshiped it.
That is an idiot who praises another stupid person
without knowing he is doing something stupid.

50. Those who follow all austerities
will be smart and acquire fame.
If they continue to do austerities,
they will be praised as gods on the earth.
If they follow no austerities,
they will become sick and go to hell.

51. If wealth comes to someone
he will not even worship god.
He will not tell the right things to others,
he will not protect his relatives.
His only thought is success
and he does not know his enemy is stronger than him.

He will not think of the bad karma that will come to him.
That is how people live on this earth.

52. The crocodile that pulls the elephant out of water
will not be able to catch a cat on the shore.
If a king loses his army and his generals
he will not be successful in war.

53. If a man wishes to have a relationship
with a bad woman who knows all the arts,
he will only see her and will not be able to embrace her,
like a bee wanting to drink the nectar
of a flower that is painted in a picture.

54. A peacock, a cuckoo, a beautiful swan, a bee, a mirror,
a pig, a spear, a discus, a snake with poisonous fangs,
the moon, the sun, a heron, and a lotus—
those who have the character of these things
will be thought of as gods.

55. The pride of those who have no artistic abilities,
poor people who do not show off,
the silence of scholars who have no kindness,
and the chastity of those who cannot get pregnant
are all the same.

56. A peacock will dance even it sees a cloud far away.
A lotus will bloom even if the sun is distant.
The ambal flower will bloom if it sees the moon far away.
A friend in your mind will never go away from you.

57. A sky without the moon,
a pond without a lotus,
a king without a minister,
an army without elephants,
an assembly without good poets,
people without good children,
and a veena without strings
are like a woman who has no breasts.

58. These five things do not exist:
the ocean becoming dry,
a gypsy telling the truth,
thinking you can become young drinking an elixir,
a prostitute desiring a man,
and a king's love for others.

59. If a bad person kills someone who is lame,
God will kill him.
If a strong person kills someone who is weak,
Yama will kill him.
A stick that can hit a weak person
can also hit a strong person.

60. The poor will have no pleasure or punyam.
They will not have any fame or famous children.
They will not achieve success in their work
and will not attain a good status.
In this world, they will wander around like a corpse.

61. A stone buried in the earth will not shine
even if you clean it in water.

Even if you pour milk for a snake,
it will not do good things for you.

Even if you pour honey on a vembu tree,
it will not yield sweet leaves.

Even if bad people know many books,
they will not become scholars.

62. Do not believe these people:

the uneducated, lords who grow angry,
ministers who do not tell right things in a timely way to the king,
a god who does not help you when you are suffering,
Brahmins who do not learn the Vedas well,
and a woman who pretends to be a good wife when with others
but fights with her husband when alone.

63. If a scorpion falls into a fire, it will not die
and if someone pulls it from the fire, it will still hurt him.
Even if good people help those who are bad,
the bad people will hurt them.

64. If intelligent people respect a king,
they will live without trouble.
Those who are on the earth
live being friendly with others.
If bad things happened to others,
smart people will not treat them badly.

65. The teaching of a guru,
the pleasure that one has with a woman
justice that one follows,
education. age,

charity that one has given,
 a secret spell, worry, manliness—
 if one has these he should not tell others,
 it will destroy him.

66. Those who were poor and have become rich
 should be charitable to others.
 They will live happily.
 If anyone stops them from being charitable,
 that person will become sick and will not have clothes and food.

67. If one tells truth always, he will have good life.
 He will have lands and be respected as gods by others.
 Those who lie will not get food.
 Intelligent people will not respect them
 thinking that they are not good people.

68. Someone who does not listen to his father,
 someone who disrespects his mother,
 or forgets the orders of his guru,
 or does not follow the rules of the Vedas—
 these four will go to hell. This is the truth.

69. Those who understand the good ways of living are pure people.
 They will thrive like a lake filled with water.
 Those who gossip will lose their family and become blind.

70. A woman with red lips was lying on a mattress
 enjoying herself with her husband,
 and she felt as if her breasts had penetrated his chest
 and she looked at his back to see

if there was an arrow there.

71. When a lake becomes full with water,
all the birds will come to live there,
but when the rain does not pour and the lake dries,
can any bird come to live there?

In the same way, if a king rules without kindness,
his citizens will all leave the country.

72. We know some people who eat sitting on a seat
while a dog sleeps under their feet
and beautiful women who words are like music
lovingly feed them rice with milk from a golden dish,
but they will never help poor people and feed them.

73. The sins that citizens commit will also be the king's
the evil that a king does will also be his minister's,
the faults of his disciples will also be the guru's
and the bad actions of a wife will hurt only her husband.

74. These things are like being in heaven on this earth:
praising a good king,
living with a good wife
and reading good books with others

75. Those who worship the feet of sages
and follow them will reach moksha.
Someone who plunges into kama, marrying a young girl
will not be happy for his whole life
after he ties the tali.

76. She walks like a swan, her eyes are like poison
and nectar is not as sweet as her words.
She has round breasts, dark hair and a small waist.
How can I know how she has learned to melt my heart.
It is my fate—I can only pray to God.

77. My house leaks when it rains, making my wife suffer,
my servants cannot manage,
the rain takes away the seeds I plant,
people I borrowed money from chase after me,
the king asks for taxes,
gurus ask for daksina,
poets sing poems and ask for gifts
and I am unable to do anything.

78. A mother becomes an enemy if she has a relationship with others,
a father will become sad if he borrows and becomes poor,
a wife will not respect her husband if she is beautiful,
and if your own child does not want to learn, he will be like a devil.
The books say these become your enemies.

79. If someone's status is gone, relatives will not stay with him,
when there is no water, the sun is death for a lotus,
when a forest burns the wind becomes fire's friend,
and if there is a lamp that wind is Yama for it.

80, Who becomes a poor person just by giving wealth
to beggars, Brahmins and poets?
Even if a forest is dry one summer,
the next summer it will be filled with water.

81. There some who become lame, blind and deaf
and their stomach shrinks as they grow old.
If they run behind a woman who smiles at them,
why shouldn't Kama afflict them?

82. O god, why did you create Brahmins and crows,
why did you create merchants and servants,
why did you create Vatukar and monkeys?
Why did you create women and yama in every home?

83. O friend, you gave me food and adorned me with flowers
and made me happy so that he could come and see me,
but now though you know he's not here, you still
to adorn me. Isn't that stupid?

84. When you went to the forest with him,
he held you on his lap, fed you, carried you on his shoulders
and took care of you, but when you went home
you pushed him into a well. Do not believe those women
with beautiful eyes even in dreams.

85. Shiva is lord of Pattiswara where there is a Ganesha
and Lakshmi on a lotus and Vishnu who sits on a snake.
One can get sick always, can live for a hundred years,
can be caught by a devil but he should not be fond of women.

86. The merchants asked a girl in the hunting village,
"Is modesty your fragrance,
are your words beautiful and meaningful?
If you wear beautiful jewelry on your breasts,
will they become larger?"

Then the merchants left.

87. An eagle is happy flying up to the sky and catching a snake,
a poisonous snake is happy catching a frog,
a frog is happy catching a bee,
a bee is happy drinking nectar from flowers,
people are happy drinking honey made by the bee.

88. If you plant garlic in soil, fertilize and water it,
the garlic will still have a bad smell.
If you tell stupid people you will teach them to be smart,
nothing will come of it.

89. A girl went to a lotus pond,
to take some water
and was coming out saying, "kenthai, kenthai,"
but she did not see a kenthai fish.

90. Even if a woman wears fragrance,
if you think she might be a bad person,
do not embrace her.
Even if you give a lot of jewels and gold
to a proud person, you will not get their friendship.

91. A peacock saw a girl bathing in the water
and flew into the forest, calling out "Coo."
An elephant saw that, and ran away,
thinking the girl was a lion.

92. While a hunter was shooting an arrow at an elephant
a snake bit him and he died, and the elephant died

from the arrow.

A fox there thought it could eat the meat of the elephant
got tangled in the hunter's bowstring and died.

93. People say that being born in the world

as human is very fortunate.

If someone is born as a human,

he should go on pilgrimages

become famous, helping others and solving their problems, and respect others.

If someone does not do these things,

he might as well have been born as a donkey.

94. O Rama, your chest is adorned with ornaments.

You are the king of Ayodhya.

If the ground is wet and a tree grows on it,

how can the leaves wither.

but your brothers are like a tree whose leaves have fallen

and like a family that went to court to ask for justice in vain.

95. The hunter saw a tiger and was afraid of it,

and climbed on a tree.

a monkey that saw him, helped and gave some fruit

and relieved his hunger,

but that hunter killed that monkey.

If one does good to a good person it is good.

but if one does good to bad people, they will hurt them.

96. People think that being respected is like life.

Those who act keeping their honor are good people,

and those who respect themselves

and are respected by others are called patrons.

97. These are stupid people--
 those who praise themselves,
 those who brag about their caste,
 those who save gold and protect it
 without knowing what dharma is,
 those who love a prostitute when they have a wife
 as beautiful as lightning in the house,
 and those who hate their mother, father and poets.

98. Those who listen to women's words are fools,
 and warriors who do not stand in the forefront of fighting
 are not even men.

People who do not want fame,
 and who hurt friends or others coming to them for help
 will destroy themselves.

99. If even bad people become learned, they can become proud.
 If they become rich, they can say anything they want.
 If they want to, they can destroy the families of others.
 But good people will be wise, help others and reach moksha.

100. The black snake that was the line of hair beneath her navel
 looked at the lady's face and thought it was the moon.
 Seeing the way to it was blocked by the Mandira mountains that were her breasts,
 it ran to her red fish-like eyes and told her ears.

101. There was a girl walking on a hillock
 and the moon, thinking, "This is Rahu," came down.
 The girl ran away and a snake, thinking it was a peacock,
 followed her.

102. The ocean will not refuse any water
coming into it thinking, "That is not mine."
In the same way, in an assembly even those
who cannot write good poetry are accepted.

103. The thalaivan put his hand through her dark hair,
touching her eyebrow that was like a bow
and then went to her elephant-like breast
and then the chain-like hair beneath her navel
and touched her alkul.

104. There is a door where you take food.
It is filled with saliva. Seeing that mouth,
young people are very happy and think
it is the door for moksha.

105. A hunter was shooting an arrow at an eagle.
When a dove saw and went to save his mate
the arrow killed the eagle
but at the same time a snake bite the hunter
and he was killed.

106. The thalaivan asked her,
"O girl with fish-shaped eyes like killing spears
and a mouth like a red kovvai,
you are wearing beautiful ornaments,
what are you searching standing on a loft in the field?
She put her hand over her eyes and mouth
and then answered, " I have white pearls in my mouth."

107. My heart melts to go near her,
She has beautiful dark hair,
and looks like a forest peacock,
her breasts are large and she has small waist.
Alas, she stood on the streets like a goddess.

108. She has spear-like eyes,
her beautiful forehead shines,
her thilagam is beautiful,
Cupid who carries a fighting bow
thought “her eyes will fight and give trouble to me”
and placed his five flower arrows on her feet
and bowed to her.

109. A monkey danced with his master in an auditorium
and a dog who saw it sang and danced.
It was like the actions of stupid people
who appreciate bad people seeing their behavior.

110. One should not think these things will not hurt—
a bow bending, an elephant sleeping, a tiger hiding,
and the bull following me that I raised.
You should not think that bad people are afraid of you,
because you scolded them.
They will be poison to you.

111. When a turtle got out of water,
a hunter saw it and put it on the roof.
A deer, rat and crow saw it
and thought they could not fight with the hunter,
but they did a trick and saved their friend the turtle.

112. If a good son is born in a family,
the family and other relatives will all live happily.
He is like a sandalwood tree in the garden.
If a bad son is born in a family,
the family, his relatives and his country will all be destroyed.
He is like the blade of an axe.

113. I understood when he embraced me
that he is also being with another woman.
I told him he was doing two things wrong:
being with me and loving another.
O you with eyes like spears,
I told him that Valluvar said
whatever one tries to do, fate will win
and he is the example of that.

114. These people will become sick and go to hell:
those who cheat their friends,
those who go to other women,
those with fire-like passion in their hearts,
those who are not good to their wives
and warriors who cannot stand in the front of the army.

115. A stupid Brahmin loved the daughter of a king,
and told the king to put the princess in a box and leave it
on a river and the king did what he asked.
Another prince saw the box, opened it, took the princess
and locked a tiger in the box.
When the Brahmin opened the box, the tiger killed him.

116. A goat went into a tiger's cave, threatened the tiger and chased it into the forest.

When a fox attacked the goat, the tiger realized it was just a goat and killed it.

117. Dasarathan who listened to Kaikeyi died.

Rama who listened to Sita chased the deer.

Ravana who listened to his sister died with all his family.

If you listen to women's words, destruction will come.

118. Two kings fought with each other because of gambling.

This is like the prostitute who went to hell after giving the Brahmin poison when he was with her daughter.

119. If people are like Sakuni they will go to hell.

They should know what is good and what brings fame and act.

They are the ones who will be happy.

120. A person has two bodies: a physical body and the fame that the body brings.

Do not destroy your body by enjoying the world.

Live so that your body will bring fame from the people of the world.

121. O king, if a fence wants to eat the crops,
if Yama wants to take life,
or if a mother feeds her children poison,
who is going stop to these things?

122. Those who love prostitutes will have these troubles:

they will not have dharma,
they will not have wealth,
Yama will take them,
they will have no wisdom
and they will go to hell.

The families of merchants, farmers, kings and Brahmins
will be destroyed.

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