

scripture unbound a unitarian universalist approa Manual

Scripture Unbound: A Unitarian Universalist Approach

Scripture unbound: a Unitarian Universalist approach explores a distinctive perspective within the broader landscape of religious thought, emphasizing a flexible, inclusive, and non-dogmatic engagement with sacred texts. Unlike traditional religious frameworks that often treat scripture as the literal word of divine authority, Unitarian Universalism (UU) views scripture as a valuable, yet interpretive resource that reflects human experience, cultural context, and evolving understanding. This approach invites adherents to approach sacred writings with critical discernment, openness, and a commitment to personal and collective growth. In this article, we will examine how Unitarian Universalists interpret scripture, the principles guiding their approach, and the implications of unbinding scripture from literalist constraints to foster spiritual development and social justice.

Foundations of the Unitarian Universalist Approach to Scripture

Historical and Theological Context

Unitarian Universalism emerged from the liberal religious traditions of Unitarianism and Universalism in the 19th century, emphasizing individual freedom of belief, social justice, and a broad understanding of spiritual truth. Central to this tradition is the rejection of rigid dogma and an openness to diverse religious sources, including scripture from various faiths.

Unlike conservative religious groups that often interpret scripture as infallible and literal, UU adherents see sacred texts as human expressions of spiritual insight. These texts are appreciated for their moral teachings, poetic beauty, and cultural significance, rather than as fixed, unchangeable directives. This perspective aligns with a broader theological stance that values reason, personal experience, and communal dialogue over doctrinal authority.

The Principle of Religious Freedom and the Search for Truth

One of the core principles guiding UU engagement with scripture is the commitment to religious freedom and the individual search for truth. This means that adherents are encouraged to interpret sacred texts in ways that resonate with their own experiences and moral convictions, fostering a dynamic and personal relationship with religious writings.

By unbinding scripture from the constraints of literalism, UU communities promote an interpretive

approach that is adaptable, contextually aware, and inclusive of multiple religious traditions. This flexibility allows for a richer, more nuanced understanding of spiritual teachings, emphasizing moral development and social justice over doctrinal conformity.

Principles and Practices of the Unitarian Universalist Approach

Interpretive Engagement with Sacred Texts

Unitarian Universalists typically approach scripture through a lens of interpretive engagement, which involves several key practices:

- **Historical Contextualization:** Understanding the cultural, historical, and linguistic background of sacred texts to interpret their meaning accurately.
- **Metaphorical and Poetic Readings:** Emphasizing the poetic and metaphorical aspects of scripture to extract moral and spiritual lessons.
- **Personal Reflection:** Encouraging individuals to reflect on how the teachings resonate with their own lives and experiences.
- **Community Dialogue:** Engaging in collective discussions that bring diverse perspectives to interpretive challenges.

Emphasis on Ethical and Moral Teachings

Rather than focusing on the literal details, UU approaches prioritize the ethical and moral teachings embedded within sacred texts. These teachings serve as catalysts for social justice, compassion, and personal growth. For example, passages promoting love, justice, and kindness are often highlighted and applied in contemporary contexts.

Incorporating Multiple Religious Traditions

Unitarian Universalists draw inspiration from a wide array of religious scriptures, including Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and indigenous texts. This pluralistic approach recognizes the universal search for truth and the shared moral concerns across traditions. It fosters an appreciation for the diversity of spiritual expressions and encourages interfaith dialogue.

Use of Sacred Texts in Worship and Ritual

In UU worship services, sacred texts are often read as poetic or moral reflections rather than divine commandments. They serve as prompts for meditation, discussion, and moral action, helping congregants connect spirituality with social activism.

The Benefits of Unbinding Scripture in a UU Context

Fostering Spiritual Growth and Personal Autonomy

By unbinding scripture from literalist interpretations, individuals are empowered to explore their spirituality free from dogma. This approach encourages:

- Critical thinking about religious teachings
- Personal moral development based on reflection and experience
- Recognition of the evolving nature of moral and spiritual understanding

Promoting Inclusivity and Social Justice

Unbinding scripture aligns with UU commitments to social justice, as it allows for reinterpretation of texts in ways that support equality, human rights, and environmental stewardship. It avoids exclusionary or oppressive interpretations and emphasizes compassion and justice for all.

Encouraging Interfaith Dialogue and Mutual Respect

Viewing scripture as a human artifact rather than divine law creates space for meaningful dialogue across faiths. It fosters mutual respect and appreciation for diverse spiritual expressions, promoting unity in diversity.

Challenges and Critiques of the Approach

Potential for Relativism

One critique of the unbound approach is the risk of relativism, where the lack of fixed authoritative texts may lead to subjective or inconsistent interpretations. To address this, UU communities emphasize shared ethical principles, communal discernment, and ongoing dialogue.

Balancing Respect for Sacred Texts with Critical Engagement

Another challenge lies in respecting the integrity of sacred writings while engaging with them critically. UU practitioners seek a respectful yet discerning approach that honors the texts' cultural significance without venerating them as literal truth.

Ensuring Meaningful Engagement

To prevent superficial readings, UU communities often invest in educational programs, study

groups, and rituals that deepen understanding and foster meaningful engagement with sacred texts.

Conclusion: A Dynamic and Inclusive Spirituality

The Unitarian Universalist approach of unbinding scripture reflects a commitment to a dynamic, inclusive, and morally engaged spirituality. It recognizes the rich cultural and poetic value of sacred texts while rejecting rigid literalism. By emphasizing interpretive engagement, moral teachings, and interfaith dialogue, UU communities foster a spiritual environment that encourages growth, justice, and mutual understanding. This approach exemplifies how sacred writings can serve as living documents?tools for reflection and inspiration?rather than immutable laws, ultimately promoting a more compassionate and enlightened world.

Scripture Unbound: A Unitarian Universalist Approach

In the landscape of contemporary religious thought, Scripture Unbound: A Unitarian Universalist Approach offers a compelling and flexible perspective on sacred texts. Rooted in the principles of Unitarian Universalism, this approach emphasizes an open, inclusive, and interpretive engagement with scripture, contrasting sharply with traditional literalist or dogmatic methods. It seeks to honor the spiritual insights embedded within holy writings while acknowledging their historical, cultural, and metaphorical contexts. This review explores the core ideas, strengths, challenges, and potential applications of the Scripture Unbound approach within the broader framework of Unitarian Universalism (UU).

Understanding the Foundations of Scripture Unbound

What Is Scripture Unbound?

Scripture Unbound is a methodology that invites adherents and spiritual seekers to interpret sacred texts without the constraints of literalism or doctrinal rigidity. Instead of viewing scripture as infallible or solely authoritative, this approach sees the texts as living documents?rich in metaphor, history, and moral teachings?that can be reinterpreted to address contemporary issues. It aligns with the UU emphasis on individual spiritual exploration, social justice, and pluralism.

This approach challenges traditional views that treat scriptures as static or unquestionable truths. Instead, it encourages readers to engage critically and creatively, drawing lessons that resonate with present-day values such as justice, compassion, and equality. The aim is not to discard scripture but to unbind it from outdated interpretations, making it relevant and meaningful in a modern context.

Historical and Theological Roots

While rooted in the broader Unitarian and Universalist traditions?both of which historically

emphasized reason, individual conscience, and the rejection of creedal orthodoxy? Scripture Unbound draws inspiration from various scholarly and theological movements:

- Historical-critical methods: These examine the historical context of texts, understanding their origins and evolution.
- Metaphorical interpretation: Recognizing that many scriptures employ metaphor and allegory to communicate spiritual truths.
- Liberation theology and social justice movements: Using scripture as a tool for advocating justice and human rights.
- Interfaith dialogue: Respecting diverse religious traditions and their sacred writings.

In essence, Scripture Unbound is an extension of these traditions, emphasizing interpretive flexibility and moral discernment.

Core Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Approach to Scripture

Unitarian Universalism as a religious movement advocates for several guiding principles that underpin the Scripture Unbound approach:

Inclusivity and Pluralism

- Recognizes multiple religious traditions and interpretations.
- Emphasizes that no single interpretation holds exclusive truth.

Personal Spiritual Authority

- Encourages individuals to interpret scripture through personal experience and reason.
- Rejects authoritarian claims of infallibility.

Moral and Ethical Engagement

- Uses scripture as a resource to promote justice, compassion, and human dignity.
- Focuses on the moral lessons rather than literal historical facts.

Contextual Reading

- Considers historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts to inform understanding.
- Recognizes evolution of meanings over time.

Openness to Change

- Supports ongoing reinterpretation as societal values evolve.
- Embraces change as a fundamental aspect of spiritual growth.

Features and Practices of the Scripture Unbound Approach

Emphasis on Critical Engagement

- Encourages reading scriptures with questions rather than passively accepting interpretations.
- Promotes scholarly engagement, including historical analysis and literary critique.

Use of Multiple Interpretations

- Draws from diverse theological perspectives, including feminist, liberation, and queer readings.
- Recognizes that texts can have layered meanings.

Sacred Texts as Moral Resources

- Focuses on extracting ethical principles applicable today.
- Uses scripture to inspire activism and social justice.

Ritual and Personal Reflection

- Incorporates meditation, prayer, or reflection practices centered around scripture.
- Values personal connection and interpretation over dogma.

Community Dialogue

- Fosters discussion within communities to broaden understanding.
- Encourages shared inquiry rather than authoritative preaching.

Pros of the Scripture Unbound Approach

- Flexibility and Relevance: Adaptable to contemporary issues, making sacred texts meaningful today.
- Encourages Critical Thinking: Promotes analytical engagement, deepening understanding.
- Supports Inclusivity: Respects diverse interpretations and experiences.
- Fosters Personal Spiritual Growth: Empowers individuals to find their own spiritual truths.
- Aligns with Social Justice: Uses scripture as a tool for advocating justice and equality.
- Reduces Dogmatism: Moves away from rigid interpretations that can alienate or marginalize.

Challenges and Criticisms

- Potential for Subjectivity: Interpretations may vary widely, leading to disagreements or relativism.
- Risk of Misinterpretation: Without a fixed authority, there's potential for misreading texts.
- Difficulty in Establishing Authority: Lack of a central interpretive authority can complicate communal consensus.
- Balancing Tradition and Innovation: Navigating respect for traditional meanings while encouraging reinterpretation can be complex.
- Educational Needs: Requires literacy in historical-critical methods, which may not be accessible to all.

Applications in Personal and Community Contexts

Personal Practice

Individuals embracing Scripture Unbound can incorporate it into daily spiritual routines:

- Personal reading with questions and reflection.
- Journaling insights gained from reinterpretations.
- Using scripture as moral compass in decision-making.

Worship and Rituals

UU congregations may utilize scripture in ways that emphasize interpretation and moral lessons:

- Themed sermons that explore various interpretations.

- Liturgies that incorporate diverse readings.
- Group discussions or study circles that allow shared inquiry.

Social Justice Initiatives

Scripture Unbound aligns well with UU commitments to social justice:

- Using scripture to motivate activism.
- Highlighting texts that promote justice, equality, and human rights.
- Engaging in interfaith dialogues emphasizing interpretive diversity.

Case Studies and Examples

The Use of the Hebrew Bible in Justice Movements

Many UU communities interpret passages from the Hebrew Bible metaphorically, emphasizing themes of liberation and justice. For example, stories of Exodus are seen as allegories for liberation from oppression rather than literal historical accounts.

The Christian Gospels and Moral Lessons

Instead of literalism, gospel stories are explored for their moral teachings?such as love, forgiveness, and compassion?applied to contemporary issues like racial reconciliation or economic inequality.

Interfaith and Ecumenical Dialogues

Communities often engage in interpretive collaborations across traditions, respecting the sacred texts of various faiths and finding common ethical ground.

Conclusion: A Dynamic and Inclusive Approach

Scripture Unbound: A Unitarian Universalist Approach offers a profound way to engage with sacred texts that aligns with core UU values?pluralism, reason, justice, and personal growth. Its emphasis on reinterpretation, contextual understanding, and moral application provides a meaningful path for individuals and communities seeking spiritual depth without dogmatism. While challenges exist in maintaining interpretive coherence and avoiding relativism, the approach fosters a vibrant, inclusive, and morally engaged spirituality capable of addressing modern concerns.

In a world of diverse beliefs and rapidly changing social landscapes, Scripture Unbound exemplifies a flexible yet respectful engagement with sacred writings?one that honors tradition while boldly

reimagining its messages for today's pursuit of justice, compassion, and understanding.

Question What is the core philosophy of Scripture Unbound in the context of Unitarian Universalism? Scripture Unbound emphasizes a flexible, interpretive approach to sacred texts, viewing them as human documents that can be understood through personal insight and communal wisdom rather than literal or dogmatic readings, aligning with Unitarian Universalist principles of free inquiry and spiritual diversity. How does Scripture Unbound differ from traditional biblical literalism within religious communities? Unlike literalist perspectives that interpret scripture as infallible or absolute, Scripture Unbound encourages critical engagement, contextual understanding, and metaphorical interpretation, fostering an inclusive and evolving relationship with sacred texts. Can Scripture Unbound be integrated into Unitarian Universalist worship practices? Yes, Scripture Unbound supports the inclusion of diverse texts and interpretations in UU worship, emphasizing personal and communal insights over fixed doctrines, thus enriching spiritual practice and fostering openness. What are the benefits of adopting a Scripture Unbound approach for Unitarian Universalists? This approach promotes intellectual freedom, inclusivity, and spiritual growth by allowing individuals to interpret sacred texts in ways that resonate personally and culturally, fostering a more dynamic and accepting faith community. How does Scripture Unbound address the diversity of sacred texts across different religions within UU contexts? It encourages respectful exploration of multiple traditions, recognizing the value of various sacred writings, and promotes an interpretive approach that finds commonalities and lessons adaptable to contemporary life. What practical steps can Unitarian Universalists take to practice Scripture Unbound in their spiritual lives? Practicing Scripture Unbound involves engaging with texts critically and contemplatively, participating in inclusive study groups, and emphasizing dialogue that respects diverse interpretations, all while remaining open to evolving understandings of sacred writings.

Related keywords: scripture, unitarian universalist, spiritual exploration, religious diversity, sacred texts, faith journey, theological openness, inclusive spirituality, religious liberalism, spiritual growth

The unitarian universalist pocket guide english e

the unitarian universalist pocket guide english e is an essential resource for those interested in understanding the principles, history, and community of Unitarian Universalism in an accessible and concise format. Whether you're a newcomer exploring spiritual paths or a seasoned member seeking a quick reference, this pocket guide offers valuable insights into one of the most inclusive and progressive religious movements. In this comprehensive article, we will delve into the core aspects of the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, exploring its significance, key themes, and practical applications, all optimized for SEO to help you discover everything you need to know about this influential spiritual guide.

What is the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide?

Overview and Purpose

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide is a compact, easy-to-carry manual designed to introduce individuals to the beliefs, history, and community practices of Unitarian Universalism (UU). Its primary purpose is to serve as a quick reference that summarizes the core values, history, and ethical principles that define UU congregations worldwide.

Target Audience

This guide is tailored for:

- New members and visitors exploring UU churches
- Longtime members seeking a refresher
- Religious educators and ministers
- Anyone interested in progressive spiritual traditions

Format and Accessibility

Typically printed as a small booklet or pocket-sized pamphlet, the guide emphasizes clarity and brevity. It uses straightforward language, making complex theological concepts accessible to diverse audiences.

Core Principles and Values of Unitarian Universalism

Seven UU Principles

Unitarian Universalism is grounded in seven core principles that emphasize justice, equity, compassion, and spiritual growth:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence

Seven UU Sources

The guide also highlights the diverse sources that inspire UU beliefs:

- Direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men
- Wisdom from world religions
- Jewish and Christian teachings
- Humanist teachings
- Earth-centered spiritualities
- Other sources of inspiration

History and Origins of Unitarian Universalism

Historical Background

Unitarian Universalism emerged from the union of two historically distinct traditions:

- Unitarianism, emphasizing the oneness of God and the humanity of Jesus
- Universalism, advocating that all souls will ultimately be saved

The merger occurred in 1961, creating a more inclusive and pluralistic faith community.

Key Historical Milestones

- 16th-century roots in the Reformation and Christian humanism
- Formation of American Unitarianism in the early 19th century
- Adoption of the Universalist Church's doctrines in the 18th century
- The 1961 merger forming the modern UU movement
- Growth of social justice activism throughout the 20th and 21st centuries

Practices and Community Life in Unitarian Universalism

Worship and Rituals

UU worship services are diverse, often including:

- Inspirational readings
- Music and singing
- Meditation and silent reflection
- Rituals such as lighting candles, water ceremonies, and rites of passage

Community Engagement

Unitarian Universalists prioritize social justice, community service, and interfaith dialogue. Activities include:

- Volunteer programs
- Advocacy campaigns
- Educational workshops
- Interfaith collaborations

Personal Spiritual Growth

Members are encouraged to explore their own spiritual paths through:

- Study groups
- Meditation practices
- Ethical living
- Reflection and journaling

How the Pocket Guide Enhances Understanding of UU Principles

Quick Reference for Key Concepts

The guide distills complex ideas into digestible summaries, making it easier for readers to grasp:

- The meaning behind each UU principle
- The significance of diverse spiritual sources
- The history that shaped UU identity

Practical Applications

Readers can use the guide to:

- Navigate conversations about faith and spirituality
- Participate actively in UU community events
- Advocate for social justice aligned with UU values
- Foster personal spiritual development

Benefits of Using the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide

Educational Resource

The guide serves as an excellent educational tool for:

- newcomers learning about UU
- educators developing curriculum
- community organizers spreading awareness

Accessibility and Portability

Its compact size allows members to carry it everywhere, making it a handy reference during:

- discussions with friends or family
- visits to UU congregations
- community outreach events

Promotes Inclusivity and Open-mindedness

By summarizing UU's inclusive philosophy, the guide encourages acceptance and curiosity about different spiritual traditions.

Where to Find the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide

Official Sources

You can acquire the guide from:

- The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) website
- Local UU congregations
- Religious bookstores specializing in spiritual literature

Digital Versions

Many editions are available in PDF format or as e-books, making it easy to access on your devices.

Conclusion: Embracing the UU Spirit with the Pocket Guide

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide is more than just a booklet; it embodies the inclusive, compassionate, and open-minded spirit that defines UU communities worldwide. By providing clear summaries of the core principles, history, and practices, it empowers individuals to engage meaningfully with UU values. Whether you are exploring spiritual paths, seeking community involvement, or deepening your understanding of social justice, this pocket guide is an invaluable resource. As you carry it with you, let it serve as a reminder of the interconnected web of life and the ongoing journey toward truth, love, and justice.

Keywords optimized for SEO: Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, UU principles, UU history, Unitarian Universalism practices, UU community, spiritual growth, social justice, UU sources, UU beliefs, UU resources

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide English E is a compact yet comprehensive resource designed to introduce readers to the core principles, history, and diverse practices of Unitarian Universalism. As a quick reference tool, it aims to serve both newcomers seeking an overview and longtime members looking for a refresher. This guide stands out for its accessibility, clarity, and thoughtful organization, making it a popular choice among individuals interested in exploring or deepening their understanding of this inclusive faith tradition.

Overview of The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide English E

The Pocket Guide is crafted to distill the essence of Unitarian Universalism (UU) into a manageable, easy-to-navigate format. Its primary goal is to provide a succinct yet rich snapshot of UU beliefs, history, practices, and community life. The "English E" designation indicates its focus on English-language content and linguistic accessibility, aiming to reach a broad audience across English-speaking regions.

Designed with portability in mind, the guide is usually small enough to fit in a pocket or purse, making it a handy reference for church members, visitors, or anyone curious about UU. Despite its size, it manages to pack in a wealth of information, including key principles, historical milestones, and suggestions for engagement.

Content and Structure

The guide is organized into several sections, each focusing on different aspects of Unitarian

Universalism:

Core Principles and Values

This section outlines the Seven Principles and the Six Sources that form the foundation of UU beliefs. It provides brief explanations of each principle, emphasizing themes like justice, compassion, spiritual growth, and respect for diverse beliefs.

History and Origins

A condensed history traces the roots of UU from its 19th-century beginnings, highlighting influential figures, key movements, and milestones that shaped the modern denomination.

Practices and Rituals

Here, readers learn about common UU practices, including worship services, rituals, ceremonies, and community engagement. It emphasizes the diversity within UU practices, reflecting its inclusive philosophy.

Community and Engagement

This part discusses how to participate in UU communities, including local congregations, social justice initiatives, and educational opportunities. It also offers guidance on becoming involved and fostering a sense of belonging.

Glossary and Resources

A helpful glossary explains key terms and concepts, while resource suggestions point readers toward further reading, websites, and organizations.

Strengths of The Pocket Guide

The guide's design and content offer several notable advantages:

- Conciseness and Clarity: Its brevity makes complex ideas accessible without oversimplification.
- User-Friendly Layout: Clear headings, bullet points, and summaries facilitate quick reference.
- Inclusive Language: The guide emphasizes the UU commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse beliefs.
- Practical Focus: It offers tangible suggestions for engagement, making it valuable for newcomers seeking to participate actively.

Features

- Compact size for portability
- Visual aids such as icons or diagrams to clarify concepts
- Summaries of core beliefs and practices
- Glossary of pertinent terms
- Recommendations for further exploration

Limitations and Criticisms

Despite its many strengths, the Pocket Guide is not without limitations:

- Lack of Depth: Due to its size, it cannot delve deeply into complex theological or philosophical debates.
- Simplification Risks: Some nuanced aspects of UU history and beliefs may be oversimplified or glossed over.
- Cultural Specificity: While focusing on English language and contexts, it may not fully address the diversity of practices worldwide.
- Static Content: As UU evolves, the guide may require periodic updates to remain current.

Target Audience and Usage

The guide is particularly well-suited for:

- Individuals new to Unitarian Universalism
- Visitors attending UU services for the first time
- Educators and leaders seeking a quick overview
- Members seeking a portable refresher

It can be used in various settings: during introductory sessions, as a handout at events, or for personal study.

Comparison with Other Resources

Compared to larger books or detailed online articles, the Pocket Guide offers:

- Accessibility: Its small format makes it easier to carry and reference.

- Convenience: Quick to consult during conversations or planning.
- Limitations: Less comprehensive than full-length texts like Unitarian Universalism: A Guide for the Curious or The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide editions.

However, it complements these more in-depth resources by serving as an entry point or quick reference.

Conclusion

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide English E is a valuable tool for anyone seeking a concise yet informative overview of UU. Its strengths lie in its clarity, accessibility, and focus on core principles, making it an ideal starting point for newcomers and a handy reference for members. While it cannot replace comprehensive texts for in-depth study, its compact size and thoughtfully curated content make it an enduring resource for fostering understanding and engagement within the UU community. Whether carried in a pocket or kept on a bookshelf, this guide helps to demystify UU and invites more people to explore its inclusive, evolving spiritual landscape.

Question What is the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide in English E? The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide in English E is a concise resource that provides an overview of Unitarian Universalist beliefs, history, principles, and practices, designed to be accessible and informative for members and those interested in the faith. **Answer** How can the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide benefit new members? It offers new members a clear and straightforward introduction to UU values, history, and community practices, helping them to understand and engage with the faith more effectively. What topics are typically covered in the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide? The guide usually covers UU origins, core principles, religious diversity, ethical living, worship practices, and ways to get involved in the community. Is the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide available in multiple languages? Yes, while the 'English E' edition refers to the English version, similar guides are often translated into various languages to reach a diverse global audience. Where can I find the latest edition of the Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide in English? You can find the latest edition through official UU websites, church bookstores, or online retailers specializing in religious and spiritual literature.

Related keywords: Unitarian Universalism, UU principles, spiritual beliefs, religious tolerance, faith community, liberal religion, social justice, religious diversity, UU history, spiritual practices

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