

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MASONRY - PART II

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by

Brother Roscoe Pound

Professor of Jurisprudence in Harvard University

II KRAUSE.

EXCEPT as he builds upon the old charges and so uses older materials, Preston speaks so completely from the eighteenth century that one needs but understand the thinking of eighteenth-century England to appreciate him fully. In the case of our next Masonic philosopher, there is another story. He was in the main current of the philosophical thought of his day. But that current, along with the current of Masonic thought, had been flowing without break from the seventeenth century. Hence to appraise his philosophy of Masonry it is not enough to consider the man and the time. We must begin farther back.

The beginning of the seventeenth century was a period of great mental activity. The awakening of the Reformation had brought in an era of fresh and vigorous religious thought. Political ideas foreshadowing those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were taking form. The downfall of scholasticism had set philosophy free from Aristotle. Grotius was about to emancipate Jurisprudence from Theology. Conring was about to deliver Law from Justinian. In consequence a new theory of law and government arose. Men went back to the classical Roman jurists and their law of nature founded on reason--applicable to men, not as citizens, nor as members of civilized society, but simply and solely as men--and the philosophical school which resulted and maintained itself during the two succeeding centuries, produced the great succession of publicists, who built up the system of international law, launched the ever-growing movement for humanity in war and ultimate peace, and stimulated that interest in legal and political philosophy, of which the democratic ideas of our own time, and the humanizing and rationalizing of law in the nineteenth century, were to be the fruit. The renaissance of Masonry, complete in the next century, had its roots in this period. "There was always," says Sir Henry Maine, "a close association between Natural Law and humanity." In such a time, with the very air full of ideas of human brotherhood and of the rational claims of humanity, the notion of an organization of all men, for the general welfare of mankind, was to be looked for. It

may be seen, indeed, in the opening years of the century; and we need not doubt that the writings of Andreae and the well-known Rosicrucian controversy were a symptom rather than a cause. But the idea was slow in attaining its maturity. In the seventeenth century, it struggled beneath a load of alchemy and mysticism, bequeathed to it by an obsolete era of ignorance and superstition. In the eighteenth century, it was retarded by the absorbing interest in political philosophy. Hence it was not till the first decade of the nineteenth century that the possibilities of this phase of the new thought were perceived entirely. Then, for the first time, the idea of general organization of mankind was treated in scientific method, referred to a definite end, and made part of a philosophical system of human activities. Perhaps no better theme could be chosen as an introduction to Masonic philosophy, than the life and work of that learned and eminent man and Mason, in his time at once the first of Masonic philosophers and the foremost of philosophers of law, who rendered this service to humanity and to the Craft.

Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, one of the founders of a new Masonic literature, and the founder of a school of legal thought, was born at Eisenberg, not far from Leipzig, in 1781. He was educated at Jena, where he taught for some time, till, in 1805, he removed to Dresden. In this same year, he became a Mason; and at once, with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, he entered upon a critical and philosophical study of the institution, reading every Masonic work accessible. As a result of his studies, he delivered twelve lectures before his lodge in Dresden, which were published in 1809, under the title: "Hoehere Vergeistung der echtuberlieferten Grundsymbole der Freirmaurerei," or "Higher Spiritualization of the True Symbols of Masonry." A year later, he published the first volume of his great work, "Die drei aeltesten Kunsturkunden der Freimaurerbruderschaft," or "The Three Oldest Professional Records of the Masonic Fraternity." This book, in the words of Dr. Mackey, "one of the most learned that ever issued from the Masonic press," unhappily fell upon evil days. The limits of permissible public discussion of Masonic symbols were then uncertain, and the liberty of the individual Mason to interpret them for himself, since expounded so eloquently by Albert Pike, was not wholly conceded by the German Masons of that day. In consequence he met the fate which has befallen so many of the great scholars of the Craft. His name, even more than those of Preston and Dalcho and Crucefix and Oliver, warns us that honest ignorance, zealous bigotry, and well-meaning intolerance are to be found even among sincere and fraternal seekers for the light. The very rumor of Krause's book produced great agitation. Extraordinary efforts were made to prevent its publication,

and, when these failed, the mistaken zeal of his contemporaries was exerted toward expelling him from the order. Not only was he excommunicated by his lodge, but the persecution to which his Masonic publications gave rise clung to him all his life, and prevented him from receiving public recognition of the position he occupied among the thinkers of his day. It has been said, indeed, that he was too far in advance of the time to be understood fully beyond a small circle of friends and disciples. Yet there seems no doubt that the bitterness engendered by the Masonic controversies over his book was chiefly instrumental in preventing him from attaining a professorship. Happily, he was not a man to yield to persecution or misfortune. Like the poet, he might have said, " *** I seek not good-fortune, I myself am good fortune."

Undaunted by miscomprehension of his teachings, unembittered by the seeming success of his energies, he labored steadily, as a lecturer at the University of Goettingen, in the development and dissemination of the system of legal and political philosophy from which his fame is derived. Roeder has recorded the deep impression which his lectures left upon the hearers, and the common opinion which placed him far above the respectable mediocrities who held professorships in the institution, where he was a simple docent. As we read the accounts of his work as a lecturer, and turn over the earnest, devout, and tolerant pages of his books, full of faith in the perfectibility of man, and of zeal discovering and furthering the conditions of human progress, we must needs feel that here was one prepared in his heart and made by nature, from whom no judgment of a lodge could permanently divide us. He died in 1832 at the relatively early age of 51.

Krause did not leave us a complete or systematic exposition of his general philosophical system. Nor can it be said that he achieved much of moment in the field of philosophy at large, though some historians of philosophy accord him a notable place. It is rather in the special fields of the philosophy of Masonry, to which he devoted the enthusiasm of youth, and of the philosophy of law, to which he turned his maturer energies, that he will be remembered. In the latter field, indeed, he is still a force. Two able and zealous disciples, Ahrens and Roeder, labored for more than a generation in expounding and spreading his doctrines. The great work of Ahrens, published five years after his master's death, has gone through twenty-four editions, in seven languages. Thus Krause became recognized as the founder of a school of legal and political philosophers, and his followers, not merely by writings, but by meetings and congresses, developed and disseminated his ideas. Until the rise of the military spirit in Germany

and the shifting of the growing point of German law to legislation, produced a new order of ideas, the influence of his doctrines was almost dominant. Outside of Germany, especially in lands where the philosophy of law is yet a virgin field, they still have a useful and fruitful future before them, and he has been pronounced the "leader of the latest and largest thought" in the sphere of legal philosophy. In view of the social-philosophical and sociological movements in the last generation, this characterization is no longer accurate. But it is true that until the rise of the great names of the social-philosophical school of legal thought in the past decade, Krause's was the greatest name in modern legal philosophy. His great Masonic work is disfigured by the uncritical voracity, characteristic of Masonic writers until a very recent period, which led him to give an unhesitating credence to tradition, and to accept, as genuine, documents of doubtful authenticity, or even down-right fabrications. Hence his historical and philological investigations, in which he minutely examines the so-called Leland MS., the Entered Apprentice Lecture, and the so-called York Constitutions, as well as his dissertation on the form of government and administration in the Masonic order, must be read with caution, and with many allowances for over-credulity. But in spite of these blemishes--and they unhappily disfigure too large a portion of the historical and critical literature of the Craft--his Masonic writings are invaluable.

In a time and among a people in which the nineteenth-century indifference to philosophy is exceptionally strong, and threatens to deprive Law and Government, Jurisprudence and Politics of all basis, other than popular caprice, a teaching which sets them on a surer and more enduring ground, which seeks to direct them to a definite place and to give them definite work in a general scheme of human progress, cannot fail to be tonic. For the Mason, however, Krause's system of legal philosophy has a further and higher value. It is not merely that his works on the philosophy of law, written, for the most part, after his period of Masonic research and Masonic authorship was at an end, afford us, at many points, memorable examples of the practical possibilities of Masonic studies. Nor is it merely that he enforces so strenuously the social, political, and legal applications of the principles of our lectures. His great achievement, his chiefest title to our enduring gratitude, is the organic theory of law and the state, in which he develops the seventeenth-century notion of a general organization of mankind into a practical doctrine, seeks to unite the state with all other groups and organizations--high or low, whatever their immediate scope or purpose--in a harmonious system of men's activities, and points out the station and the objective of our world-

wide brotherhood in the line of battle of human progress. Let me indicate to you some of the leading points of his Masonic and of his legal philosophy, and the relation of the one to the other.

Law is but "the skeleton of social order, clothed upon by the flesh and blood of morality." Among primitive peoples, it is no more than a device to keep the peace, and to regulate, so far as may be, the archaic remedy of private war. In time it is taken over by the state, and is able to put down violence, where originally it could go no farther than to limit it. This done, it may aspire to a better end, and seek not only to preserve order but to do justice. Thus far it has come at present. But beyond all this, says Krause, there is a higher and nobler goal, which is, he says, "The perfection of man and of society." The law, singly, is by no means adequate to this task. Rightly understood, it is one of many agencies, which are to operate harmoniously, each in its own sphere, toward that great end. The state organizes and wields but one of these agencies. Morals, religion, science, the arts, industry and commerce--all these, in his view, are co-workers, and must be organized also. But the state, or the political organization, being charged with the duty of maintaining the development of justice, has the special function of assuring to the other forms of organized human activity the means of perfecting themselves. It must "mediate between the individual and the social destiny." Thus it is but an organ in the whole social organism. He looks upon human society as an organic whole, made up of many diverse institutions, each related to an important phase of human life, and all destined, at an epoch of maturity, to compose a superior unity. Relatively, they are independent. In a wider view and looked at with an eye to the ultimate result, they are parts of a single mechanism. All operate in one direction and to one end-- the achievement of the destiny of humanity, which is perfection. Nor is this idle speculation. Krause seeks to animate these several phases of human activity, these varied institutions evolved as organs of the social body, with a new spirit. He impresses upon us that we are not on the decline, but are rather in a period of youth. Humanity, he insists, is but beginning to acquire the consciousness of its social aim. Knowing its aim, conscious of the high perfection that awaits it, he calls upon mankind, by harmonious development of its institutions, to reach the ideal through conscious development of the real.

This insistence upon perfection as a social aim and upon conscious striving to that end is of capital importance in contrast with the ideas which prevailed so generally in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Under the influence of the positivists and of the mechanical

sociologists for a time there was a condition of social, political and juristic pessimism. Men thought of society as governed by the inflexible operation of fixed social laws, whose workings we might observe, as we may observe the workings of the law of gravitation in the motions of the heavenly bodies, but might no more influence in the one case than in the other. Krause's social philosophy, on the other hand, to use a recent phrase, gives us faith in the efficacy of effort and thus accords with the best tendencies of social and political thought in the present.

Krause's philosophy of Masonry and his philosophy of law require us to distinguish the natural order, the social order and the moral order. The distinction may be developed as follows.

Scientists tell us that nature exhibits a ceaseless and relentless strife-- a struggle for existence, though this way of putting it had not been invented in Krause's day--in which all individuals, races, and species are inevitably involved. The very weeds by the roadside are not only at war with one another for room to grow, but must contend for their existence against the ravages of insects, the voracity of grazing animals, and the implements of men. Thus, the staple of life, under purely natural conditions, is conflict. If we turn to the artificial conditions of a garden, the contrast is extreme. Exotics, which could not maintain themselves a moment, in an alien soil and an unwonted climate, against the competition of hardy native weeds, thrive luxuriantly. Planted carefully, so as not to interfere with each other, carefully tended, so as to eliminate the competition of native vegetation, supplied with the best of soil, watered whenever the natural supply is deficient, the individual plants, freed from the natural necessity of caring for themselves in the struggle for existence, turn their whole energies to more perfect development, and produce forms and varieties of which their rude, uncultivated originals scarcely convey a hint. All struggle for existence is not eliminated, indeed, in the garden. But the burden of it is shifted. Instead of each plant struggling with every other for a precarious existence the gardener contends with nature for the existence of his garden. He covers his plants to protect from frosts, he waters them to mitigate drought, he sprays them to prevent injury by insects, and he hoes to keep down the competition of weeds. Instead of leaving each plant to propagate itself as it may, he gathers and selects the seed, prepares the ground, and sows so as to insure the best results. The whole proceeding is at variance with nature; and it is maintained only by continual strife with nature, and at the price of vigilance and diligence. If these are relaxed,

insects, drought, and weeds soon gain the day, and the artificial order of the garden is at an end.

Society and civilization are, in like manner, an artificial order, maintained at the price of vigilance and diligence in opposition to natural forces. As in the garden, so in society, the characteristic feature is elimination of the struggle for existence, by removal or amelioration of the conditions which give rise to it. On the other hand, in savage or primitive society, as in the natural plant society of the wayside, the characteristic feature is the intense and unending competition of the struggle for existence. In the wayside weed patch, nature exerts herself to adjust the forms of life to the conditions of existence. In the garden, the gardener strives to adjust the conditions of existence to the forms of life he intends to cultivate. Similarly, among savage and uncivilized races, men adjust themselves as they may to a harsh environment. With the advent and development of society and civilization, men create an artificial environment, adjusted to their needs and furthering their continued progress. Thus, the social and moral ordeal are, in a sense, artificial; they have been set up in opposition to the natural order, and they are maintained and maintainable only by strife with nature, and the repression of natural instincts and primitive desires. It has been said that nature is morally indifferent. Morality is a conception which belongs to the social, not to the natural existence. The course of conduct which the member of civilized society pursues would be fatal to the savage; and the course followed by the savage would be fatal to society. The savage, like any wild animal, fights out the struggle for existence relentlessly. The civilized man joins his best energies to those of his fellows, in the endeavor to limit and eliminate that struggle.

The social ordeal, then, is, as it were, an artificial order, set up and maintained by the co-operation of numbers of individuals through successive generations. Just as the garden demands vigilance and diligence on the part of the gardener, to prevent the encroachment and re-establishment of the natural order, so the social order requires continual struggle with natural surroundings, as well as with other societies and with individuals, wherewith its interests or necessities come in conflict. Consequently, in addition to the instincts of self and species preservation, there is required an instinct or intuition of preserving and maintaining the social order. Whether we regard this as acquired in an orderly process of evolution, or as implanted in man at creation, it stands as the basis of right and justice, bringing about as a moral habit, "that tendency of the will and mode of conduct which refrains from disturbing the lives and interests of others, and, as far as

possible, hinders such interference on the part of others." The mere knowledge by individuals, however, that the welfare, and even the continuance, of society require each to limit his activities somewhat with reference to the activities of others, does not suffice to keep within the bounds required by-right and justice. The more primitive and powerful selfish instincts tend to prevail in action. Hence private war was an ordinary process of archaic society. The competing activities of individuals could not be brought into harmony and were left to adjust themselves. But peace, order, and security are essential to civilization. Every individual must be relieved from the necessity of guarding his interests against encroachment, and set free to pursue some special end with his whole energies. As civilization advances, this is done by substituting the force of society for that of the individual, and thus putting an end to private war. Historically, law grew up to this demand.

The maintenance of society and the promotion of its welfare, however, as has been seen, depend upon much besides the law. Even in its original and more humble role of preserving the peace, the law was by no means the first in importance. The germs of legal institutions are to be seen in ancient religions, and religion and morals held men in check while law was yet in embryo. Beginning as one, religion, morals and law have slowly differentiated into the three regulating and controlling agencies by which right and justice are upheld and society is made possible. In many respects their aim is common, in many respects they cover the same field, among some peoples they are still confused, in whole or in part. But today, among enlightened peoples, they stand as three great systems; with their own aims, their own fields, their own organization, and their own methods; each keeping down the atavistic tendencies toward wrong-doing and private war, and each bearing its share in the support of the artificial social order, by maintaining right and justice. Religion governs men, so far as it is a regulating agency, supernatural sanctions; morality by the sanction of private conscience, fortified by public opinion; law by the sanction of the force of organized society. Each, therefore, to be able to employ its sanctions systematically and effectively in maintaining society, must be directed or wielded by an organization. Accordingly we find the church giving regulative and coercive force to religion and the state taking over and putting itself behind the law. But what is behind the third of these great agencies? What and where is the organization that gives system and effectiveness to the regulative force of morality?

Here, Krause tells us, is the post of the Masonic order. World-wide; respecting every honest creed, requiring adherence to none; teaching

obedience to states, but confining itself to no one of them; it looks to religion on the one side and to law upon the other, and, standing upon the solid middle-ground of the universal moral sentiments of mankind, puts behind them the force of tradition and precept, and organizes the mighty sanction of human disapproval. Thus, he conceives that Masonry is working hand in hand with church and state, in organizing the conditions of social progress; and that all societies and organizations, local or cosmopolitan, which seek to unify men's energies in any sphere-- whether science, or art, or labor, or commerce --have their part also; since each and all, held up by the three pillars of the social order--Religion, Law, and Morals; Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty--are making for human perfection.

But, in the attainment of human perfection, we must go beyond the strict limits of the social order. Morality, as we have seen, is an institution of social man. Nevertheless it has possibilities of its own, surpassing the essential requirements of a society. There is a moral order, above and developed out of the social order, as the social order is above the natural. The natural order is maintained by the instincts of self and species preservation. These instincts, unrestrained, take no account of other existences, and make struggle for existence the rule. In the social order, men have learned to adjust act to end in maintaining their own lives without hindering others from doing the like. In the moral order, men have learned not merely to live without hindering the lives of others, but to live so as to aid others in attaining a more complete and perfect life. When the life of every individual is full and complete, not merely without hindering other lives from like completeness, but while helping them to attain it, perfection will have been reached. Then will the individual, "In hand and foot and soul four-square, fashioned without fault," fit closely into the moral order, as the perfect ashler. Instinct maintains the natural order. Law must stand chiefly behind the social order. Masonry will find its sphere, for the most part, in maintaining and developing the moral order. So that, while it reminds us of our natural duties to ourselves, and of the duties we owe our country, as the embodiment of the social order, it insists, above and beyond them all, upon our duties to our neighbor and to God, through which alone the perfection of the moral order may be attained.

Krause does not believe, however, that law and the state should limit their scope and purpose to keeping up the social order. They maintain right and justice in order to uphold society. But they uphold society in order to liberate men's energies so that they may make for the moral order. Hence the ultimate aim is human perfection. If by any act

intended to maintain the social order, they retard the moral order, they are going counter to their ends. Law and morals are distinct; but their aim is one, and the distinction is in the fields in which they may act effectively and in the means of action, rather than in the ideas themselves. The lawgiver must never forget the ultimate purpose, and must seek to advance rather than to hinder the organization and harmonious development of all human activities. "Law," he tells us, "is the sum of the external conditions of life measured by reason." So far as perfection may be reached by limitation of the external acts of men, whereby each may live a complete life, unhindered by his fellows, the law is effective. More than this, the external conditions of the life measured by reason are, indirectly, conditions of the fuller and completer life of the moral order; for men must be free to exercise their best energies without hindrance, before they can employ them to much purpose in aiding others to a larger life. Here, however, law exhausts its possibilities. It upholds the social order, whereon the moral order rests. The development and maintenance of the moral order depend on internal conditions. And these are without the domain of law. Nevertheless, as law prepares the way for the moral order, morals make more easy the task of law. The more thoroughly each individual, of his own motion, measures his life by reason, the more completely does law cease to be merely regulative and restraining, and attains its higher role of an organized human freedom. Here is one of the prime functions of the symbols of the Craft. As one reflects upon these symbols, the idea of life measured by reason is everywhere borne in upon him. The twenty-four inch gauge, the plumb, the level, the square and compass, and the trestle board are eloquent of measurement and restraint.

There is nothing measured in the life of the savage. He may kill sufficient for his needs, or, from mere caprice or wanton love of slaughter, may kill beyond his needs at the risk of future want. His acts have little or no relation to one another. He does not sow at one season that he may reap at another, much less does he plant or build in one generation that another generation may be nourished or sheltered. The exigencies or the desires of the moment control his actions. On the other hand, the acts of civilized man are connected, related to one another, and, to a great extent, parts of a harmonious and intelligent scheme of activity. Even more is this true of conduct which is called moral. Its prime characteristic is certainty. We know today what it will be tomorrow. The unprincipled may or may not keep promises, may or may not pay debts, may or may not be constant in political or family relations. The man whose conduct is moral, we call trustworthy. We repose entire confidence in his steadfast adherence to

a regular and orderly course of life. Hence we speak of rectitude of conduct, under the figure of adjustment to a straight line; and our whole nomenclature of ethics is based upon such figures of speech. Excess, which is indefinite and unmeasured, is immoral; moderation, which implies adherence to a definite and ascertainable medium, we feel to be moral. The social man, as distinguished from the savage, and even more the moral man, as distinguished from him who merely takes care not to infringe the law, measures and lays out his life, and the symbols of the Craft serve as continual monitors to the weak or thoughtless of what must distinguish them from the savage and the unprincipled.

The allegory of the house not built with hands, into which we are to be fitted as living stones, suggests reflections still more inspiring. Here we see symbolized the organic conception of society and of human activities, upon which Krause insists so strongly. Social and individual progress, he says, are inseparable. Nothing is to be kept back or hindered in the march toward human perfection. The social order conserves the end of self and race maintenance more perfectly than the natural order, which aims at nothing higher; and the moral order accomplishes the end of maintaining society more fully than a system that attempts no more. The complete life is a complete life of the units, as well as of the whole, and the progress of humanity is a harmonizing of the interests of each with each other and with all. Nature is wasteful. Myriads of seeds are produced that a few plants may struggle to maturity. Multitudes of lives are lost in the struggle for existence, that a few may survive. As men advance in social and moral development, this sacrifice of individuals becomes continually less. The most perfect state, in consequence, is that in which the welfare of each citizen and that of all citizens have become identical, where the interests of state and subject are one, where the feelings of each accord with those of all. In this era of universal organization, when Krause's chapters seem almost prophetic, there is much to console us in his belief that the organic must prove harmonious, and that organizations which now conflict will in the end work consciously and unerringly, as they now work unconsciously and imperfectly, toward a common end. If, as his illustrious pupil tells us, "human society is but a solid bundle of organic institutions, a federation of particular organizations, through which the fundamental aims of humanity are realized," we may confidently hope for unity where now is discord. And we may hope for most of all, in this work of unification, from that world-wide Brotherhood, which has for its mission to organize morals and to bring them home as realities to every man.

To sum up, how does Krause answer the three problems of Masonic philosophy?

(1) What is the purpose for which Masonry exists? What does it seek to do? Krause answers that in common with all other human institutions its ultimate purpose is the perfection of humanity. But its immediate purpose is to organize the universal moral sentiments of mankind; to organize the sanction of human disapproval.

(2) What is the relation of Masonry to other human institutions, especially to government and religion, state and church? Krause answers that these aim also at human perfection. Immediately each seeks to organize some particular branch of human activity. But they do this as means to a common end. Hence, he says, each of these organizations should work in harmony and even in co-operation with the others toward the great end of all of them. In this spirit expounds the well-known exhortations in our charges with respect to the attitude of the Mason toward the government and the religion of his country.

(3) What are the fundamental principles by which Masonry is governed in attaining the end it seeks? Krause answers: Masonry has to deal with the internal conditions of life governed by reason. Hence its fundamental principles are measurement and restraint-- measurement by reason and restraint by reason--and it teaches these as a means of achieving perfection.

Such, in brief and meager outline, is the relation of Masonry to the philosophy of law and government, as conceived by one who has left his mark on the history of each. Think what we may of some of his doctrines, differ with him as we may at many points, hold, as we may, that our Order has other ends, we must needs be stirred by the noble aim he has set before us; we must needs be animated by a higher spirit and more strenuous purpose, as one of the chiefest of the organic societies composing the "solid bundle" that makes for human perfection.

A KNIGHT'S PRAYER.

"Keep, in Thy pierced hands,
Still the bruised helmet;
Let not their hostile bands
Wholly o'erwhelm it!
Bless my poor shield for me,
Christ, King of Chivalry.
Keep Thou the sullied mail,

Lord, that I tender Here, at Thine altar-rail!
Then--let Thy splendor
Touch it once--and I go
Stainless to meet the foe!"
--Alfred Noyes. Sheerwood.

SO MOTE IT BE.

The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Fire,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.
One stone the more swings to her place
In that dread Temple of Thy Worth-
It is enough that through Thy Grace
I saw naught common on Thy earth.
Take not that vision from my ken;
Oh whatsoe'r may spoil or speed,
Help me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need.
--Rudyard Kipling. "My New Cut Ashlar."

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