



Indian National Movement In The Role Of Muslim League

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Abstract

The history of origin and growth of political parties in India can be traced from the days of freedom movement of India. The Indian National Congress and Muslim league both are important political parties. It was an inevitable and sad fact that the partition happened due to the split in the Indian National Congress and the differences between Hindus and Muslims. Muslim communities feel that they are neglected and poorly represented in comparison to majority. Hence it was the same feeling and ideology that led to the formation of Muslim league with the support of British government. The British had always been accepting, fanning and supporting such Muslim demands that divide the Indian people. However, the support of the British government to the political Islamists in their non-secular intention as well as contemptuous attitude towards majority rule helped the league to become the sole representative body of Indian Muslims. Jinnah who played an important role during that period, Jinnah and Muslim league led the struggle for the partition of British India in to separate Hindu and Muslim states, and after the partition of Pakistan in 1947 the league became Pakistan's dominant political party. It had a mass-based pressure group in British India, and hence it gradually declined in popularity and cohesion. Before the partition of India, in Indian politics, generally, there were two main schools of politics, the Indian National Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha which had been described as one of the most militant Hindu organizations of that period. So far as the Indian National Congress was concerned, it had been realized that without the Hindu Muslim unity, there was no hope of any constitutional reforms in British India. However, there was a group within the Congress party which believed that the Indian Muslims were not patriotic so far as the Indian Nationalism was concerned. The Congress party was established in 1885 with a view to represent all the communities of India; its claim was to be the sole-representative of Indian opinion. But as soon as some national issues such as the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the Partition of Bengal, (1905), and the issue of separate electorates for Muslims arose, the Congress Party adopted anti-Muslim attitude. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of two-nation theory had been giving the message all along that when it will come to choosing one party the Congress Party will always support the Hindu community.

Keywords: Muslim league, British Government, Indian National Congress, deputation, Movement

Introduction

The growth and emergence of political parties were closely related with parliamentary democracy and electoral system. The history of origin and growth of political parties in India could be traced from the days of freedom movement of India. The mass social awakening eventually crystallized into the framework of party system, initiated by the twin factor of socio-religious reforms and political reactions to colonialism. The colonialism and its natural product of nationalist movements tended to strengthen and reinforced the essential spirit of politics, basic to imperial traditions. The most significant direct impact of colonialism was the sphere of public administration, law and order, as well as the introduction of some social welfare measures. These patterns gave some room to the creation of political parties in colonial countries. During the Indian independence movement, millions of people of all classes and ideologies joined hands together to bring to its submission the mighty British Empire. India's freedom struggle was primarily the result of a fundamental inconsistency between the interests of the Indian people and that of British colonialism. The national movement also played a pioneering role in the historical process through which the people of India got formed into a nation. Political parties, according to Harold Laski, "were predominantly organizations which seek to determine the economic Constitutions of the State." Viewed as such there was no political party in the pre-independence stage which sought to determine the economic constitution of the State, although there existed three important parties-the Indian National Congress established in March 1885 on the initiative of Allan Otavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, the All-India Muslim League founded in 1906.

The birth of the Indian National Congress was an unprecedented phenomenon in the political history of India and was the culminating point of India's political awakening in the nineteenth century. It was the first all-India association of a permanent nature, and with it began a new era in the political life of India. The Congress brought together different points of view, ideologies and processes, functioning as composite party system. Prior to that there were some groups such as Servants of India Society, East India Association, Bombay Presidency Association, Madras Mahajan Sabha, the Deccan Society formed by patriotic Indians, but they did not converge itself in a political party. The Indian National

Congress was composed of diverse elements and its main aim was to secure India's freedom from the alien rule. The Congress, in fact, was a national platform on the march to obtain freedom from the yoke of British rule in India. It was natural and inevitable for such an organization spearheading national movement to bring together different shades of people and to consolidate all possible forces under the banner of nationalism for the achievement of India's freedom.

The Indian National Congress was already a fully developed political organization when, in 1906, the All-India Muslim League was founded at Dacca by a small group of Muslim leaders subscribing to the Aligarh school of thought, with the triple objective of promoting loyalty to the British Government, protecting and furthering the interests of the Muslim community and fostering inter-communal unity. Practically the first task which the newly formed body was called upon to undertake brought it, most ominously, into direct conflict with interests which Congress represented. The Minto-Morley reforms scheme was at that time in the making and the Muslim League put forward the demand that statutory provision should be made for separate electorates in the new constitution. There was a great deal of Congress opposition to this demand — opposition which has persisted to the present day — but Congress objections were ultimately withdrawn and, in the Council Act which came into force in 1909, the principle of separate electorates was formally recognized and enforced. Thus, in the first round of the battle which was destined to rage in the Indian political world with increasing fierceness in years to come, the Muslim League scored an easy victory over Congress.

The years immediately following 1909 were, however, a period of increasing collaboration between the two organizations. Many causes contributed to this development. The principal factor which drew the League within the agitation orbit of Congress was the hostility towards Britain (and other European powers) aroused amongst Indian Muslims generally as a result of the Balkan War, the Italian conquest of Turkey's African empire, Turkey's participation against the Allied Powers in the Great War, and the Khilafat agitation that followed its termination. By 1912, the "loyalty" clause was dropped from the statement of aims and objects of the League. In 1913, the League adopted a new constitution embodying in it a near variant of the then Congress objective, namely, the "attainment under the aegis of the British Crown of a system of self-government suitable to India through constitutional means." The climax of Congress-League collaboration was reached in 1916 when a scheme of constitutional reforms was formulated by the leaders of two organizations on the principles embodied in the Lucknow Pact. This Pact provided, firstly, that no measure affecting the vital interests of a community should be undertaken if opposed by three-fourths of the members of that community in a legislative body and, secondly, that one-third of the Indian elected members of legislatures must be Muslims elected by separate electorates.

It was in the later twenties that M.A. Jinnah made his first appearance on the Indian political stage as the "star" champion of the Muslim cause. Jinnah began his political career as an ardent nationalist with Congress inclinations, but he severed his connexion with Congress in 1920 on the issue of Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation sanctioned, by Congress at the Calcutta Special Session in September of that year. In 1927, immediately after the appointment of the Simon Commission had been announced and the various parties had begun taking stock of their respective positions, Jinnah convened a Conference of Muslim leaders at Delhi, and placed before it his famous Fourteen Points which, although several of them have since been conceded or otherwise, become obsolete, constituted for a long time the charter of Muslim political rights. Besides restating the two important principles of separate electorates and communal legislation by consent embodied in the Lucknow Pact, the Fourteen Points included demands for a federal Indian government with residuary powers vested in the provinces; uniform provincial autonomy; adequate and effective representation of minorities in legislatures and other elected bodies, without reducing the majority to a minority or even an equality; at least one-third Muslim representation in the Central Legislature and in Central and Provincial cabinets; preservation of the territorial integrity of the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province; the separation of Sind; the grant of "reforms" to Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province; guarantees of religious liberty; safeguards for the protection of Muslim religion, culture and personal law; statutory provision for adequate Muslim representation in the Services; and a constitution alterable only with the concurrence of the federating States. It was by his insistence on the more contentious of these demands that Jinnah succeeded in torpedoing the Nehru Report at the All-Parties National Convention. In 1929, to the further discomfiture of Congress, the programme outlined in Jinnah's Fourteen Points was formally adopted by the Muslim League.

Congress was quick to recognize the note of challenge in the Lucknow deliberations and to realize the need for an early settlement of Congress-League differences if a serious deterioration of political relations was to be avoided. In February, 1938, Gandhi wrote to Jinnah suggesting a personal discussion between him and a Congress representative on the Hindu-Muslim question. Jinnah replied agreeing to the discussion but, at the same time, advanced a proposition which became, and has remained to this day, the most fruitful source of friction between Congress and the Muslim League. "We have reached a stage", he observed, "when no doubt should be left that you recognize the All-India Muslim-League as the one authoritative and representative organization of the Muslims of India and on the other hand you represent Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. It is only on that basis that we can devise machinery of approach". In full appreciation of the real implications of Jinnah's stipulation, Gandhi answered: "You expect me to be able to speak on behalf of 'the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country'. I am afraid I cannot fulfill the test. I cannot represent either the Congress or the Hindus in the sense you mean. But I would exert to the utmost all the moral influence. I could, have with them in order to secure an honorable settlement". Simultaneously, at Gandhi's suggestion Jawaharlal Nehru, in his capacity as Congress President, opened a long correspondence, with Jinnah with a view to ascertaining and answering the League case against Congress. Throughout the correspondence, which began in January and ended in April 1938, Jinnah's tone was distinctly irascible and blustering, while Nehru maintained a pose

of studied reasonableness and conciliation. In a carefully considered letter dated April 6th, which deserves more than a passing mention, Nehru drew up a statement of points of difference between Congress and the Muslim League and proceeded to indicate the Congress attitude towards them. He explained, firstly, that many of Jinnah's Fourteen Points had already been given effect to by means of the Communal Award and in other ways; some others were entirely acceptable to Congress but required constitutional changes which were beyond the competence of Congress; and the remaining few points, which remained unsettled, were contentious in the extreme. Secondly, Congress regarded the Communal Award as anti-national and reactionary but was prepared to seek its alteration only on the basis of mutual consent and goodwill of the parties concerned. Thirdly, statutory fixation of the Muslim share in the State services must involve the fixing of shares of other groups and communities in a rigid and compartmental manner likely to impede administrative development. Fourthly, Congress was fully prepared to ensure the protection of Muslim culture by making a suitable provision in the fundamental laws of the constitution. Fifthly, Congress had already guaranteed the right to perform religious ceremonies to all communities. Sixthly, Congress had no intention of undertaking legislative action to restrict the established rights of Muslims in the matter of cow slaughter. Seventhly, the question of territorial re-distribution of Provinces had not arisen but when it arose, it would be settled by mutual agreement and in a manner not likely to affect the Muslim majorities in Provinces.

Meanwhile the Congress Working Committee had decided to make an earnest and final attempt "to reach a settlement with the Muslim League and had appointed Nehru to discuss the communal problem with Jinnah at the earliest opportunity. But before negotiations could be resumed, an event took place which made fresh peace moves wholly impracticable. Under Gandhi's instructions, the Congress Ministries tendered their resignations in October-November, 1939, as a protest against the association of India with Britain's war policy; with the result that provincial autonomy was suspended in all Provinces where Congress governments had been functioning. Thereupon Jinnah promptly ordered that the Muslim League should, on December 22nd, observe a "Day of Deliverance and Thanksgiving" to mark the extreme satisfaction of the Muslim community on the disappearance of (as he put it) the tyrannical, oppressive and unjust Congress governments, which had done their utmost to destroy Muslim culture and suppress Muslim rights, and to pray that these governments might never return to power. In the circumstances created by Jinnah's action, Nehru felt that to approach Jinnah with proposals for a communal settlement could serve no useful purpose; Rajendra Prasad agreed that further conversations with Jinnah were liable to be gravely misunderstood not only by Congressmen but also by those outside Congress; and even Gandhi remarked, in anger and despair: "Let the Muslims spoil the position: we will allow them to spoil it". Henceforward, no direct approaches were made by Congress to the Muslim League for a settlement of the communal problem. Nehru, writing to Krishna Menon at the time summed up the position succinctly: "It is true that for the moment the communal issue is dominant in the people's mind. All question of talks with Jinnah is off. It seems to me that he has deliberately brought this about as he has nothing to talk about and wanted to avoid coming to a political decision".

The need for the party was strongly felt following the Indian National Congress' backing of Bengal's partition in 1905, which sparked significant Hindu resistance. At the annual meeting of the All India Muslim Education Conference held at Ahsan Manzil in the same year, the Nawab of Dhaka, Khwaja Salimullah, proposed the establishment of a political organization dedicated to safeguarding the rights of Muslims in British India.

The Muslim League became well known for its unwavering support, starting in 1930, for the establishment of a separate nation-state with a Muslim majority, Pakistan, which ultimately led to the partition of India by the British Empire in 1947.

Contribution to the Indian National Movement

The Indian Muslim League, established in 1906 in Dhaka, was a political organization aimed at protecting the political rights and interests of Muslims in India. The League played a significant role in the Indian National Movement by:

Advocating for Separate Electorate

The Muslim League made a historic demand for separate electorates for Muslims during the All India Muslim Educational Conference in 1906. They maintained that a different political representation was required to protect the interests of the Muslim minority, as they feared Hindu dominance in the Indian political process.

With the passage of time, this demand gathered support, and in 1909, the British government provided separate electorates not only to Muslims but also to Sikhs and other minority communities, under the Government of India Act. The establishment of separate electorates for Muslims was a defining moment in Indian politics since it recognized the Muslim community's separate character and assured that their voices were heard in the political process. This demand for distinct electorates, however, played a crucial role in the communalization of Indian politics; ultimately contributing to India's split in 1947.

Participating in Non-Cooperation Movement

Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the League supported the Non-Cooperation Movement and encouraged its members to boycott British institutions and goods. The League, which had previously been viewed as being somewhat separated from the greater Indian national movement, took a brave step in this regard. The Organization, however, was able to break down religious barriers and establish a sense of togetherness among Indians of all origins by collaborating with other organizations.

Supporting the Khilafat Movement

In response to the Ottoman Empire's defeat in World War I and the ensuing threat to the establishment of the caliphate, the Khilafat Movement was a pan-Islamic organization. The League backed the Khilafat Movement, which was led by well-known Muslim figures like Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Ali brothers, as a way to bring Muslims throughout India together and work towards a shared objective of independence.

The League organized sizable protests and rallies in support of the Khilafat Movement and Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, which sought to boycott British products and institutions. Ultimately, when the caliphate was overthrown by the Turkish government in 1924, the goals of the Khilafat Movement were finally defeated.

Formation of All India Muslim League (1906)

The All India Muslim League (also known as the Muslim League) was a political party founded in British India in 1906. Its strong advocacy, beginning in 1930, for the establishment of a separate Muslim majority nation-state, Pakistan, resulted in the British Empire partitioning India in 1947. The party arose from the need for political representation of Muslims in British India, particularly in the event of massive Hindu opposition to Bengal's partition in 1905, which was sponsored by the Indian National Congress. During the annual meeting of the All India Muslim Education Conference in Ahsan Manzil in 1906, the Nawab of Dhaka, Khwaja Salimullah, proposed the formation of a political party to protect the interests of Muslims in British India. All India Muslim League, was a political organization that led the movement for the establishment of a separate Muslim nation during the partition of British India (1947). Initially encouraged by the British and generally supportive of their rule, the league adopted self-government for India as its goal in 1913. For decades, the league and its leaders, most notably Mohammed Ali Jinnah, advocated Hindu-Muslim unity in a united and independent India. It wasn't until 1940 that the League of Nations called for the establishment of a separate Muslim state from India's planned independent state. Because it feared that an independent India would be dominated by Hindus, the league advocated for a separate nation for India's Muslims. Jinnah and the Muslim League led the fight for the partition of British India into separate Hindu and Muslim states, and the league became Pakistan's dominant political party after the country's independence in 1947.

The End of the War and Montague- Chelmsford Reforms

By this time the War had reached its most decisive point due to withdrawal of Bolshevik Russia from the War. The only way to keep India calm in the midst of mounting War pressure, economic strain and political trouble was to divert their attention towards Montague- Chelmsford reform plan. By this they hoped to control dissent, defuse, tension and channel the obvious political potential being generated among Indians into constructive use of power, particularly at provincial level. The Montague – Chelmsford reforms announced in July 1918 were thus a significant departure. As soon as it became known that the official report was due to appear shortly, Ramaswamy Ayer of the Congress asked the Muslim League Secretary to take steps for a meeting so that the content of the report could be discussed. Finally, the League did call a special session at Bombay along with the Congress on 31 August 1918 and passed a resolution, in defense to Congress wishes, promising to take part in a deputation to be sent at England to discuss further with the Government the question of reforms. The proposals were rejected both by the Muslim League and the Congress at Bombay session. With victory for the Great Britain and her allies the First World War came to an end in the second week of November 1918. In India political trends took a radical turn and Indians became more determined in their opposition to the Reform proposals. Muslims too becoming more anti- British in their attitude at the end of the War. The dismemberment of Turkish territories and the uncertain future of the Caliph after the defeat of Turkey in the War had created anxiety in their mind. Thus, the role if Indian Muslims had become a matter of concern for the Government.

Review of Literature

Kishwar Sultana (2016) outlined a narrative account of Jinnah's role in the political development of the Muslim League during 1924- 1940. This period remained of crucial importance for understanding the achievement of Pakistan. While most studies had focused on the closing stages of the freedom movement, this book revealed significant influence of Jinnah in the reorganization of the Muslim League throughout a period when it faced major challenges to establish its political importance. The narrative drew on new sources in order to challenge some of the interpretations of key developments such as the 1937 Jinnah-Sikander Pact and to draw out the significance of Jinnah's role in the organization of the Muslim League. The author discussed the evolution of the All-India Muslim League through the years from its birth to the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 and was useful in understanding the development of the Muslim League in the closing decades of British rule.

Saeed Naqvi (2016) explained that the principal excuse given for partition is the two nation theory credited to Muslim League leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. However, what was not widely known is that it was first articulated by colonial theorist James Mill. In fact, as K.M. Munshi pointed out, „it was (Jinnah) who warned Gandhi ji not to encourage the fanaticism of Muslim religious leaders,“ explained Naqvi. According to him more than anyone else, Nehru and Patel were responsible for the partition of the country and to substantiate his claim, he cited various communications and meetings between Mountbatten, Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad. To him, after partition, the Babri Masjid demolition was the biggest shock and eye-opener for Muslims in India.

M. Rafique Afzal (2013) had superbly researched and provided a holistic account of the struggles of the Muslim League as an organization and a national movement. The account was also exhaustive and provided a tremendous amount of information about the League, its inner workings, and leadership of Jinnah. To the author, until 1940s, the League was, in organizational terms, an inconsequential entity. During its heady ascent in the 1940s as the crisis of British imperial succession deepened, the League was plagued by factionalism and infighting. It could barely keep the League in balance was Jinnah and his followers at the central level. During its early years, the League was an elitist party that, though it claimed to act in the best interests of the Muslims of India, primarily represented only the wealthiest segment of Indian Muslim society.

Kamran Shahid (2005) concentrated on the historical contingencies arising from Gandhi's leadership of the INC and the impact on Muslim opinion of the period of Congress provincial rule during the period 1937-39. The author argued that leadership style of Gandhi, his constant deployment of the concept of Ram Rajya and his close ties with the Hindu capitalist class alienated the politically alert Muslim elites. They were further troubled by his response to the untouchable's demand for separate electorate. Instead of political and material interests of Muslims, Gandhi dealt in terms of Hindu-Muslim religious solidarity, which exacerbated underlying communal tensions.

Objectives of the study

1. To trace the origin and causes of Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League.
2. To study the various techniques adopted by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League in the struggle for the freedom of India.

Research Methodology

For the completion of this study the data would be mainly concentrated on textual approach. While conducting study on secondary sources, besides books written by eminent scholars, and articles and research papers published in national and international journals of repute would be consulted.

Reasons for the Establishment of All India Muslim League

1. Establishment of Indian National Congress: INC is a broadly-based political party in India founded in 1885. Its first president was an Indian and Mr. Hume was its first general secretary. The main purpose for the creation of this organization was to provide a "safety valve". The formation of INC was lauded by the press and was described as an important chapter in the history of British rule in India. Indu Prakash wrote "It marks the beginning of a new life". The Congress was the central organ of the new society which had evolved as a result of Economic, Social and cultural changes taking place during the hundred years since Plassey. The growing importance and strength of INC made the Muslim community as a whole fear that representative government would mean the rule of the majority community or Hindu raj. Gradually the league's antagonism led to the enunciation of the "Two Nation theory" and demand for separate home for Muslims.

2. Hindu Extremism and Urdu-Hindu Controversy: The Urdu Hindu Controversy began with the demand of Hindus to replace Urdu by Hindi as official language, in Deva Nagari Script in 1867. To fulfil this demand Hindus of Banaras started a movement during the same period. Hindu Extremists started programs like ARYASAMAJ with a purpose to reconvert the Muslims into Hindu religion etc. So, there was also the cause of creation of Muslim League.

3. Education and economic backwardness: Muslims had lagged far behind from the Hindus in education and economic progress. Muslims largely remained aloof from modern western education since the British also regarded them as responsible for the 1857 rebellion, they were discriminated against. Muslims were not involved in the growth of any organized industry and did not take advantage of western education to enter government services as a result they did not get any benefit as compared to Hindu.

4. Role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan: He was a great intellectual, a radical thinker, keen historian, an enlightened and forward-looking educationist. He asked the Muslims not to join INC. He declared that if the British were made to withdraw from India, the Hindu majority would dominate over them and such a state of affair would be very unfair to Muslims and the Islam. He also encouraged the Muslims to demand separate electorate, even a separate Muslim majority state. Even partition of Bengal was the first step in that direction. Thus, the communal problem in India was not merely religious in character as styled by the rulers; it was propped up for political gains.

5. Aligarh Movement: The Aligarh Movement was based on liberal interpretation of the Quarn. It tried to harmonize Islam with the modern liberal culture. It was the first national awaking movement among the Muslims. This movement which aimed at making the Indian Muslim politically conscious and spreading modern education among them. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the founder of this movement. He played a significant role in bringing about an intellectual revolution among the Muslims. His efforts earned Sir Syed the title "Prophet of Education".

Conclusion

Thus, Muslim League exhibits a unique experimentation of religion-based mobilization for democratic politics, which has played a significant role in the political mainstreaming of the Muslim. The engagement of religion with politics that emerge out of the specific historical and cultural context, the problem of Congress League relations is, in its essence, the political problem of India. For good or ill, the present direction of Indian political thought lies largely in the hands of the two great adversaries, Gandhi and Jinnah: vainglorious, determined, domineering men, impatient of opposition, clever in their various ways but completely obsessed with conflicting ideals which they are pursuing with an almost appalling relentlessness. Gandhi's stand is nationalistic, although Congress is primarily a Hindu organization; Jinnah's stand is essentially communal, although by his recent advocacy of "Dravidistan" as the homeland of the South Indian non-Brahmins, he has sought to 'impart a non-communal character to his separatist schemes. The first consideration of Gandhi, and of all Hindus, is the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country; the principal aim of Jinnah, and of many Muslims, is to resist the realization of the Hindu conception of that unity. Organizationally, the Congress position is well-nigh unassailable, although fissiparous tendencies have been appearing of late and, as a result largely of Congress demission of office in Provinces and the present ineffective and ill-advised disobedience movement, the Congress (as distinct from Gandhi's) hold on the Country has weakened appreciably... The Muslim League, built up by Jinnah with infinite care from a dead-alive organization into a political body of first-class importance, lacks cohesion and unity of purpose and its hold on the community it represents is precarious, though by no means negligible. While the Muslim League, therefore, is at present in no position to damage Congress effectively, the best hope of Congress lies in a split in the Muslim League which will immediately lower, if not altogether destroy, its bargaining power vis-à-vis Congress as well as the British Government. Both Gandhi and Jinnah are playing for high stakes and whoever loses will lose heavily.

As seen earlier, the unity of Hindus and Muslims was disturbed by stress, conflicts and aggressiveness on an unpredictable level. The most affected areas were Uttar Pradesh and Punjab where tussle rouse among the Hindu-Muslim community with the Hindu and Muslim societal schedules of Shuddhi and Sangathan and their Muslim communities baptized movements like Tabligh and Tanzeem. The swing of politics had lifted to provinces which took masses of Muslim community, mainly the provinces of Bengal and Punjab wherever the capsizal of the whole India's majority minority reckoning gave a dissimilar turn to the on-going tussle between nationalism and colonialism. The claim that Muslims constituted a „nation“ was perfectly compatible with a federal or nonfederal state structure covering the whole of India. That is why Jinnah and the League remained implacably opposed to the division of the Punjab and Bengal along religious lines. It was the veritable absence of an all-India Muslim Communalism. This did not translate into a secessionist demand for a Muslim nation-state, but was intended as the building block for a nonfederal arrangement with the Hindu majority provinces.

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