

Time is Not Money!—It Is a Providence of Opportunities

Amos Avny

Omnidev International Consultants, Yehud, Israel

To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years.
To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day.

—Winston Churchill

The essay discusses the interrelations between Time and Money and the right ways for managing them. Additionally it discusses other aspects of life and time, such as: definition of time, smart use of time, use of time as distincting between men and animals, time, age and responsibility, time and the “meaning of life”, quality and quantity of lifetime, social aspects of time and science, technology and time. The author clearly expresses his opinion, that Time is a neutral abstract entity, exists in free democratic regimes and in less-liberated autocracies. It is the explicit responsibility of every man and woman, anywhere, and everywhere, to prepare and train themselves for a smart use of the time awarded to them. On the other hand, Time is available for everyone and everything. The busy diligent hard-working person always seeks more challenging missions, while the less-energetic idle person, is always busy and tired of doing nothing. The author also claims that Time is an opportunity. It is available and inviting every active person, a thinker, a doer, and an entrepreneur to use and have it to achieve their goals. The author advises: Do not complain I have no time—dare to make the first step and “the other will come, tumbling after”. Active individuals have time for every challenging initiative; passive ones have no time for anything.

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Introduction

The future starts today, not tomorrow.

—Pope John Paul II

Two hundred fifty years ago, in 1748, the aphorism “Time is Money” was originated by Benjamin Franklin¹ (2022) in George Fisher’s book *The American Instructor*.

This essay intended to explain the “monetary cost of laziness” (Benjamin, 2022). Since then, much has been changed but lazy people, still exist. Some are so because they lost their jobs, some because they like this type of life but some because they look for a different style of life. On the other hand, “Time is Money” has changed its proponents. Mostly because it became the logo of the orthodox capitalists, who tend saying that they have no time since they are permanently busy in *Making Money*. The “rush for money” and the “rat-run for wealth”, which characterize most parts of the Western Hemisphere for the past half a century did not result with joy and

Amos Avny, PhD, Virginia Tech, VA, USA; Omnidev International Consultants, Yehud, Israel.

¹ Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), a well-known American statesman and writer in the 18th Century.

happiness. Despite the “per capita GNP” increase, not too many people feel today satisfied or happy. The question of who feels happier—the baby-boomers, or their sophisticated grand-children? is still relevant. While exploring this point we found out that many work hard, struggling to make their living, but on the way lose pleasure and still are unhappy, for those who have, this run became an excuse for disregarding the poor and running away from having some social responsibilities. In our essay, however, we try to evoke and convinces people to try other ways. We mainly try to convince readers that Money is neither the only valuable reward and nor is it the exclusive promise for satisfaction and pleasure.

World order at present days, is among the issues that arouses our attention today, at the embarkment of year 2023. It is an impossible mission to ask every one of the eight billion world inhabitants upon their opinion about their satisfaction from the contemporary world order. Many, of course, the simple ordinary and honorable laymen, will reply that they do not know. But for those who know, what would be their answer? Economists and politicians, from both sides of the Ile, those who pretend “to know it all”, what may be their answer? We refer to these two groups mainly because they often claim that they act and speak rationally. It seems in addition, that their behavior and decision-making processes also rest on logical considerations. But, unfortunately, almost always their answers are very predictable. Those who are in power, will always express positive and very positive answers. In contrary, the oppositions will always express their dissatisfaction. So, for finding some reasonable answers we have no choice but to dig a little deeper in this bottomless treasure of knowledge.

What Is Time?

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.

—Socrates

“Time is Money” is among the most popular buzz sentences, expressed permanently by supposing to be Capitalism’s advisers and business consultants. Fortunately, or not, Satisfaction, Happiness, and Joy promoters, rarely will dare to express such a meaningless expression. As a matter of fact, many who have time have no money, while many who have money, rarely have time to enjoy it.

Scholars observe three aspects of time: Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual. However, others have many other definitions and expressions. For having a better and more concrete and comprehensible term we turn to the Britannica Encyclopedia for help. However, heir definitions, also are quite general, as presented below: According to them:

Time is—,

1. The thing that is measured as seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc.

2 a: a particular minute or hour shown by a clock

b: the time in a particular area or part of the world

3 a: The part of a day, week, month, or year, when something usually happens or is scheduled to happen

b: a particular part of a day, week, month, or year

4: an occurrence of an action or event: an instance of something happening or of someone doing something. (Wikipedia)

As seen above, the mission is not so easy. So, we decided to add our own version. For complying with the scholars’ three aspects of time, we offer the following definition: “Time is a kind of a Boundless and Intangible Framework, an Infinite Conceptual Structure or a Theoretical and Abstract Instance, that for practical uses, is outlined by seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc.”

It is interesting to find out that although time seems to be neutral it is a very precise and an accurate expression. In real life, in daily connotation, time is assessed in accordance with the user's, the listener's, or the orator's expectations or wishes. For waiting people, time always, even minutes, seems too long; whereas for those who play, enjoy, or are pleased, usually, time is too short. As a rule of thumb, remaining politically corrected, we may say that very busy diligent and resourceful people have the time they need, while, lazy and slothful ones have never enough time.

Naturally, it is quite complicated and sometime even impossible, finding out what is the right time for satisfying a normal heterogenous group of people, that combines several types of people. We also may add, based on our observation, that men and women who are very busy and "have no time", usually can find extra time for doing what they really want. Those who are always in a hurry, have neither time for themselves, nor for others.

As said, time belongs to nobody and nobody can demand tenure upon it. Every human-being has the right to have his/her own piece of Time. And time is large enough for accommodating all the global eight billion inhabitants. That is, according to our belief, the proper meaning of "equal opportunities". The liberal democracy should allow and enable its citizens to find, choose, or select their own preferred occupation. This is, and maybe should be, the real practical basis for equality, where everyone has similar opening conditions for life. For able and competent people such an opening platform can provide an appropriate opportunity for taking-off and flying further. For less-able and less-fortunate ones, because of their own personal limits, these best opening conditions can become a source of frustration, anger, and jealousy. It seems that these preliminary opening emotions of envy and resentment are the early signs of hatred, social disorders, and violent activities. Hostility and violence that were born in the intimate covered mysteries of an individual's inner-self, are later grown and expand to be a cause for local and international disaster. But, and despite it, nobody, neither an individual, nor a group, neither an organization, nor a government have the right to terminate anybody's use of time.

So, eventually, what is time? We know that it is expressed by precise measures—minutes, hours, and days, but what could be achieved within these specific units of time is un-assessable. One can earn \$10 USD an hour, another can make \$50 USD an hour, while the third may be paid \$100 USD per hour. Thus, Time is a good supporting platform for everyone, an engineer, a football player, a medical doctor, or a ballet dancer. In a liberal democracy, everyone is entitled to do or to use time for meeting his/her needs or desires. Time, therefore, is neither something specific as money, as the logo states, nor is it an abstract useless expression. Time, as a supporting platform, or an enveloping balloon, accepts its meaning or value from the function it fulfills and the role it plays in the sequence of life. Everybody needs time, however, the proper question to ask is: how an individual or a community utilizes the piece of time available for them. Thus, in concluding this section we move to ask the more appropriate queries—What is the right way for using time? And how should an intelligent person run his/her time?

How to Utilize Time Smartly

Diligent persons have the time they need for everything, Idles, have no time for anything.

—Amos Avny

When Time is evaluated according to its use, another absurd suddenly appears. As being measured by very precise means, it indicates that time acts as an objective entity. However, when as claimed, its functioning deepens on every singular user, it indicates that it is a subjective thing. In fact, every person has, or behaves like

he/she has, their own private time. Thus, Time simultaneously belongs to private singles and public entities. The obvious conclusion from this dichotomy is quite clear; some individuals feel bad when the rest feel well and vice versa, some will feel well when the majority will feel bad. This is a very weird reality, but it exists every day, somewhere on the globe. As a logical inference from this situation, it is fair assuming that Time is among those things that cannot be given, provided, or granted equally. Individuals have their own private time, given to them by their parents, nature, or God. How they utilize their time is their own business.

In the post-modern era, in the 2020s, more people feel free, and after the COVID-19 pandemic even more. They have been emancipated from many social and communal limits that they followed for years. At present they are willing and ready to try new ways while participating in novel experiences. In short, people at present are ready to embrace new approaches and ways for experiencing another use of time. The relevant social, intellectual, and national leadership, should, therefore, look around, understand the changes, and smartly and bravely pose a new vision and the missions derived from it.

Thinking and Doing: Distinct People From Animals

Concern for man [and woman] and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors.
Never forget this in the midst of your diagrams and equations.

—Albert Einstein

Deeper exploration of the meaning of time evokes some interesting points. The list of activities that distinct between human-beings and animals indicates that they are firmly connected with time. They occur sometime in real time, yesterday, today, or tomorrow. They are neither abstract hallucinations nor wishful dreams and not mind-boggling hopes. Time, the transcendental hard-to-understand and infinite platform, is a safe haven and a launching platform for all activities that demarcate human beings. Time's firm link to reality, also can be used for evaluating and assessing the relative low value of people's, orators', and political leaders' speeches. Speeches may recruit people in wartime, they may convince them not to give in or give up (see Winston Churchill speeches), but they cannot build even one little house. As previously said, every human-being received with his/her birth their own share of time. From now on, it is their own, or their parent's task to smartly utilize it. Society or community may assist in meeting this challenge but, eventually, the primary responsibility rests upon the individual.

As citizens of a liberal democracy, based on the essential human and civil rights, people are free to say what they want. They are allowed to choose what to do, when and where, and how to behave. All these rights are granted to them provided they do not interfere or disturb their neighbors' normal life. Similarly, citizens are free to decide how to utilize their private time. This open-ended option, introduces us to a very critical and principal issue—the Intrinsic-Genetic vs. the External-Educational complex. Resting on the assumption that all babies are born innocent, we have to agree that with regard to the proper use of time, most burden lays on the external environment—family, schools, and social organizations. A moderate family that takes life easy, undoubtedly will raise their children accordingly. A strict and disciplinary school may face a problem regarding the behavior of its students. It is almost clear that membership in a sport club, for example, easily can affect and shape its members' social behavior.

Consequently, as we believe that doing and working, thinking and creating, playing and entertaining etc. are the things that distinct human-beings from animals, we hold that permanently it is necessary to promote and develop these types of human activities. As open-minded writers we cannot deny people's right to do nothing.

We cannot negate their wish to choose another way of spending their time. The only question remains is: what differs them from wild animals. However, emerging from our wish to develop youngsters and to direct them to be positive and resourceful citizens in future's societies, we allow ourselves to offer some helpful advises for maximizing youngsters' rewards from using smartly the time reserved for them.

- Be a honest realistic and an active person. The simple meaning of these words is that one can and should actively participate in his/her family life, and in their community or nation's life.
- Aim high. Don't be afraid of dreaming and aspiring. Achieving part of high expectation is more than achieving much of low ones.
- Never give in. Negotiation can always yield better results than total loss. Be sure of yourself, before asking others to trust you.
- Every problem has some resolution. Not always satisfying, not always fully favorable, but at least some reward at hand. An issue without a solution is not a problem, even if it seems as a philosophical contemplation.
- Mostly, strive to reach a win-win solution. A none balanced resolution may be the reason for the next conflict.
- In daily life you are an ordinary person. Never buy somebody's promise, even it is a rose garden. Do not fool yourself by somebody's complement.
- Love yourself, because only those who love themselves are able to love others. Full-contained people can give more because they have hearts full of integrity, honesty, and compassion.

The freedom of choice, which is one of the citizens' basic rights, prevents us from recommending on the order or the ranking of the above advises. Everyone is allowed to act in accordance with his/her private preference. The only thing we ask is just stop hesitating and start doing. It is important to add that the above advises also help to meet Viktor Frankel's² challenge as he calls to find meaning to life. Based on his experience as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration Camps, during World War II, Frankel had deducted about the important role of meaning and purposes in people's ability to survive. Further, he called people, specifically citizens of the Western Hemisphere, to permanently look for meaning, pursue concrete goals and actual purposes for their daily life.

When connecting Frankel teaching to the Time complex, some bizarre findings are found. First, many, if not the majority, have no time to think about intangible issues like goals, objectives, or purposes. Secondly, those who have the time, have not been raised to look for those aims. Moreover, they do not know or do not understand why a person needs to look for meaning for his/her life. Unfortunately, there are many who prefer to enjoy life without spending time and energy on thinking and wondering. Thirdly, many of those who tend to pursue meaning for life, incline to follow traditional leaders and politicians as they pose before them unrealistic fantasies or wishful dreams. With all respect to the involved social organizations, it is quite sad to find out how small the number of those who really think about the world future is.

Time, Age, and Responsibility

The price of greatness is responsibility.

—Winston Churchill

Another, a very interesting linkage exists between time, age, and responsibility. At the minus time (-), at pregnancy, actually the parents are those who are responsible for everything that may happen to the expected

² Viktor Frankel (1905-1997), an Austrian psychologist that moved to US after World War II.

baby. However, from birth on the responsibility to the baby development, wellbeing is divided between several external factors.

Only after graduation from elementary school, part of the responsibilities is laid on the growing child. This act of the beginning of adulthood and sharing in responsibility of the growing child, is celebrated by Jews as the Bat-Mitzva for 12 years old girls, and Bar-Mitzva for 13 years old boys. 10 or 15 years later, after graduation from the College or the University, students finally should accept all the responsibility for their life. This responsibility lasts until demise or having demotion.

All along this line of time, or a person's life span, many talk on responsibility but only few are ready to specifically explain the meaning of this expression. And this fact also is understandable, because every adult person has his own interpretation of the term responsibility. This situation, which, characterizes the post-modern era, arises another contradiction. Today, more freedom means more responsibility and more compliance with rules and regulations. Responsibility is not only the price of greatness, as Churchill claims, but rather, it is also the price for genuine freedom. Prisoners have unlimited time, but have almost no responsibility. On the other hand, pilots have almost unlimited freedom but strictly must comply with very precise rules and regulations.

A deeper observation on the time-responsibility complex, points out on some other conflicts. According to the Normal Distribution model, about one quarter of a normal free population will oppose having any limited responsibility. They will do it because of many reasons, mostly because this is the nature of their personality. On the other side, about another quarter of the population will fully accept almost all the commitments that spring from being responsible. They will behave like that because that is what they were taught at home, in school, and by the social environment. The remaining 50 to 60 percent of the population will be divided into several fractions, each with a little different opinion about the issue. Eventually, so many opinions exist that the final decision could be made only through negotiation and based on some kind of compromises. Thus, as a matter of prudence and experience, we have to know, agree, and realize, that, most social-economic decisions are made in a liberal democracy, through negotiations and compromises that are finally reached. However, even in these cases, some opponents or antagonists always will appear. On the other hand, history taught that time spent on tiresome and boredom negotiations can save and spare many lives. The mere fact that time is neutral, it belongs to nobody and at the same time, belongs to everybody, makes it so helpful in critical situations. Unfortunately, not too many people know how to use Time smartly.

Time and the “Meaning of Life”

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.

—Aristotle

After discussing some aspects of Time, while understanding how complicated this issue is, we have to go back to the “meaning of life” topic, since this should be the ultimate goal of our being. Time could be seemed as unending complexed railways, going from the early past days to the unforeseen future. Trains are moving on these rails in different directions and frequencies. An airport terminal fits also for such a demonstration. We, the people, are the passengers who wish to travel. Thus, it is our explicit duty to choose our destination and the exact goal of our trip. We can go to one direction or to another, we can go at the morning or at night. We can go either by A, B, or C classes, by train or by air, we also can delay the trip or even delete it. All options are open for us, we just have to choose. Those who are afraid to choose, those who do not know what to choose, and those who

prefer to run away from the whole situation, all these individuals will be left behind while the traffic will continue to move. This case can also be compared with a real case of a person who dwells within an airport terminal without trying to fly anywhere. He is undergoing the airport terminal experience without being forced to fly.

With time, the situation is similar. In liberal real democracy, nobody can replace citizens in making their decisions. Similarly, no one can be excused and released from making some primary decisions. Everyone, (between the age of twenty to thirty years), a man or a woman, faces in their life, a turning point, where they have to decide on their future prospects. They have to decide whether they seek “a meaning to their life” and what should it be. In this point we completely support Viktor Frankel, who claims that: “Everyone should pose some meaning and purposes to his/her life. Life without meaning is almost like a prison without walls.” We do not recommend a specific goal or a concrete meaning because this is the person’s exclusive duty. It could be in arts or in culture, it can be either a physical, an intellectual, or a spiritual achievement. It also may be done as a soloist or as a member of a group. We, at the end, express the “meaning of life” to all activities that are based on the caring, doing, and teaching terms. Very rarely, speaking and talking, speechifying and orating could be added to this list.

For concluding this point, we are ready to claim that—Time is the ultimate proponent of doing and the painful nemesis of small-talking—it is the final tester of what many irresponsible individuals tend easily to say and what responsible ones promise and do.

Quality and Quantity of Lifetime

It is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly used false standards of measurement—that they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and that they underestimate what is of true value in life.

—Sigmund Freud (Civilization and Its Discontents)

When discussing people’s behavior, it is important to understand that it is wrong to use the former way of seeing all people as equal or as homogeneous persons on the chess-mate board. They are not so because even the largest group is combined of many single individuals. And we have to remember that every individual is almost a whole world. Thus, we have to use other more sophisticated methods for exploring groups or populations. For demonstrating this problematic issue, some examples are described below. Thus, we further explore another two points of time or more exactly of lifetime—the quality of life and its longevity. For quality, two variables are assessed: meaningless for the lower category and meaningful for the upper one. For the quantity, two categories also are in use: a short lifetime and a long one. When the total population, divided into the above four variables, are arranged on a matrix of two, four groups of people appear, as demonstrated in the matrix below. This formula also connotes with the Normal Distribution model of two extreme minority groups, each with about one quarter of the total population and two intermediate groups which represent 50% to 60% of the population.

Table 1

A Four-Variable Matrix of Quality vs. Quantity of Lifetime

		Quantity of time	
		Short lifetime	Long lifetime
Quality of life	Meaningless	Group A	Group B
	Meaningful	Group C	Group D

The above Matrix in Table 1 indicates that by matching the Quality vis-à-vis the Quantity variables four groups are formed:

Group A—Meaningless Short Lifetime—the *worst case*,

Group B—Meaningless Long Lifetime—the intermediate case,

Group C—Meaningful Short Lifetime—the intermediate case,

Group D—Meaningful Long lifetime—the *best case*.

The whole picture becomes more complicated when we use three categories for measuring the different values. In such a case the results create nine groups with smaller differences between them.

The results here as presented by Table 2, are as follows:

Groups A and B—Meaningless, Short, and Medium Lifetime are *the worst ones*.

Groups F, G and H—Meaningful, Short, Medium, and long Lifetime are *the best ones*.

The Others, Group C—Meaningless Long Lifetime, Groups D, E, and E—Some Meaning and Short, Medium and Long Lifetime, are the intermediate groups.

Table 2

A Nine-Variable Matrix of Quality vs. Quantity of Lifetime

		Quantity of time		
		Short	Medium	Long
Quality of life	Meaningless	Group A	Group B	Group C
	Some meaning	Group D	Group E	Group E
	Meaningful	Group F	Group G	Group H

The above short matrix calculation just demonstrates how difficult and complicated is it to calculate and propose a fair distribution of anything in a heterogeneous society, as the population is today in the Western Hemisphere. People differ in so many attributes that continuing advocating equality is frequently unreasonable. When we offer better quality of life, or more meaningful way of life, we should know that these two simple descriptions of future goals or desires have many clear and unclear forms and expressions.

The Social Aspects of Time

The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.

—Abraham Lincoln

Although Time is an abstract intangible instance, it could be referred as a public good or a public commodity. Paul Samuelson (1956) teaches upon that: “The benefits from a public or social good, unlike those from a purely private goods, are seen to involve external consumption effects on more than one individual.” (p. 160).

Like air or water, Time belongs to nobody and at the same time, it belongs to everyone and everybody. Despite this intangibility, Time could be measured and evaluated by quantitative measures. That feature makes it useful and helpful in daily life. In a way, some kinds of time pieces, like hours or days are sold or traded and have a given value. The decision on how many man-hours or machine-hours, will be invested in one project or another, depends on social, economic, or political considerations. This specific feature of having some value enables to trade man-hours, to accumulate them and move them from one place to another. Thus, it makes time-

oriented goods enslaved to ideological or political policies. The positive effect of this capacity enables governments and communities to use it for changing and improving less-developed areas, towns, and people. In a way military and police, which in essence are manpower-oriented forces, could also be included in the same category.

In the 21st Century, at the post-modern era, almost all over the globe, most world inhabitants feel themselves more liberated, they are stronger in their demand for a better division of wealth and many of them are willing and ready even to struggle for that right. It is better, therefore that Governments, international bodies, and transnational organization will listen and follow these demands.

Time, Science, and Technology

Every great advance in science has issued from a new of imagination.

—John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*

At the end of the discussion, we reach the quest of what are the Time's reflections on future developments. It seems that in both parts, the liberal democrat world, and the autocratic countries, most progress depends on advancing research and development (R&D) of science and technology. Time will be just a neutral platform for promoting and enabling this effort. What really matters in this endeavor is the people—the scientists and the engineers who will carry on the job. They must feel safe and free and steered by inner-self to dream, dare, and imagine. It was Albert Einstein, who, in addition to the above John Dewey, claimed on the importance of imagination: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited, imagination encircles the world.” Unfortunately, it is not so easy for people in autocratic regimes, to dream and imagine, on things other than freedom and liberty.

However, going back to the essay's opening, Time, in the free world gives almost everyone the opportunity to initiate, found, invent, and establish, new entities on the face of the Earth. Eventually they are invited to take part in the act of Creation. In other words, we think that this is the proper interpretation of Benjamin Franklin, who in 1754, called youngsters to take advantage of the situation and to start working, because Time enables it. It was the appropriate time for starting work and getting paid for that.

In today “convoluted realty” (Amos, 2021) in days when many are confused and frustrated, others are angry and upset, Time, like air and water, still is free and available for every person to use and consume it. Almost every man and woman have their own private time. How and when they will turn themselves toward meeting their challenges and goals mostly depends on them, on their will, capacity, devotion. Almost always, Doing, with mistakes, is better than correctly Undoing.

The final point to make referrers to the pace of moving forward, the tempo of the advancement. We do not count the passing-by years since we are not historians. As social sciences thinkers we really are sorry to see how time passes on and many don't know how properly to use it. In the past, people regarded time very seriously. They invested much energy and many hours in looking for the right profession, they spent many years acquiring knowledge, and they stayed years at the same work-place. Capital, human work, science and technology resulted in many substantial changes in the 21st Century. But now everything happens faster. The former Economics-of-Scarcity is replaced by today's Economics-of-Affluence. The results are, that many have much more than they need. However, many do not know how to enjoy this affluent situation. Many continue their Rat-run—to get more and more things that they eventually do not need. The former capitalist competition still motivates people

to increase their materialistic consumption, rather than increasing life satisfaction, enjoying more family life, reading books, and participating in cultural or spiritual events.

Conclusion: Epilogue of a Never-Ending Optimist

Happiness springs from doing good and helping others.

—Plato

We conclude our essay at the eve of year 2023, as the weather drive us crazy, demonstrating how little really we know and how serious Nature's threats are, still, we remain optimistic. Winston Churchill, in 1941, was in a much frightening situation. To say the truth, he was almost alone, as very few people has shared his vision. Thus, all along the essay an effort was done to convince caring and honest readers that Time is with them, ready to help them. Although, Time is neutral, by definition it is, an intangible instance that escorts processes, without being involved in them. We know that doors for positive initiatives are always open. It may take few years or a full decade, but it will come. Thus, we call open-minded readers, freedom-fighters of all kinds and all that seek more satisfying life, come and join the struggle against these dangerous unhuman rulers and dictators. It may take years or decades but salvation will eventually come and people will learn to use their time properly. In short, Time is open for use together with other good things.

Caring and concerned people are around and available. We just have to wait for the proper opportunity. History teaches that at the end, even after years, freedom and justice will prevail. However, it is nice ending a work, realizing who you are and how little you know, as Socrate said: "I know that I am intelligent, because I know that I know nothing."

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