



**THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION OF THE PESULAP MERAH IN TACKLING OCCULT ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE ACCORDING TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGION**

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***Abstract***

*Occult alternative medicine is a treatment of human health using strange things that are not by reason or methods of treatment in scientific medicine. One of the figures who overcome supernatural medicine by dismantling the actions of shamans under the guise of ustad is the Pesulap Merah on his youtube account "PESULAP MERAH OFFICIAL". Does this research want to reveal how the concept of communication is carried out by the Pesulap Merah in tackling shamans under the guise of religion according to the perspective of Islam? The purpose of this study is to find out the concept of communication carried out by the Pesulap Merah in overcoming alternative occult medicine according to the perspective of Islam. The method used in this study is qualitative. The data source uses descriptive results from the observations of the Youtube channel as well as comments from netizens. The results of this study show that the concept of proselytizing communication carried out by the Pesulap Merah wants to reveal the action of occult alternative medicine under the guise of Islam so that people do not fall into misguidance.*

***Keywords:*** *Occult Alternative Medicine, Pesulap Merah, Magic*

**Background**

The Pesulap Merah is one of the phenomenal figures at the end of August 2022 in the Indonesian virtual universe today. The Pesulap Merah is a character who has the ability in magic, magic, and things that are considered beyond reason by the ordinary abilities of the human brain. This is influenced by the ability to magic the eyes which is sometimes a trick from the speed of hand movement or using tools that support magic performances so that the audience can be fooled. The action of the Pesulap Merah has a characteristic that makes him famous in the virtual universe where in the last incident he is feuding against one of the figures of supernatural alternative medicine.

Occult alternative medicine is a treatment of human health using strange things that are not by reason or methods of treatment in scientific medicine. This supernatural alternative medicine by the people of Indonesia is still often believed to be an option for curing all kinds of diseases. This can be caused by several factors that Indonesian society still holds confidence in the supernatural. The history of the Indonesian people cannot be separated from the invisible tradition of belief because in ancient times the ancestors of the Indonesians held the beliefs of "Animism" and "Dynamism". Then, in the development of the times until now a large number of parts of Indonesian history were influenced by ancient kingdoms that formed beliefs now. One of them is the Islamic kingdom "Demak Kingdom", etc. the Hindu kingdom "Majapahit Kingdom" (the largest kingdom in Java at that time).

Occult alternative medicine according to the Islamic perspective is defined as one of the treatments combined with reciting or thinking about mentioning the name of God and the mention of praise in Islam. Occult alternative medicine techniques can be in the form of *ruqyah*, drinking a potion, consuming a potion, removing/cleansing supernatural objects, etc. Occult alternative medicine that is carried out usually by smart people or commonly called *ustad* in Islam practice is not uncommon to use the Arabic language and the mention of *suwuk* taken from the Qur'an. Alternative Medicine in Islam which is in charge of being a therapist/medicine is called by the Indonesian people such as *Ustad*, *Kyai*, *Gus*, etc., meanwhile, the term *shaman* is a negative meaningful designation because it is widely interpreted as a handyman. Shamans called by the community are juxtaposed not infrequently with lambing shamans, massage shamans, witch doctors, and healer shamans (medicine, *jampi* shamans, *pesugihan* shamans<sup>1</sup>).

The *Pesulap Merah* who is a magician is a figure who has a campaign in every content to fight shamans under the guise of *ustadz*. The role played in cyberspace in terms of the tendency of messages that can be taken is to be careful in believing mystical/supernatural things done by some shamans under the guise of *ustadz*. The existence of content created by red magicians opens the minds of *netizens* to know the techniques that are usually done under the guise of alternative medicine or things that are mystical, it turns out to be just a trick or magic action simply because it uses certain tools, tricks, strategies and performance techniques.

The problem in this study focuses on how the concept of communication is carried out by the *Pesulap Merah* in tackling shamans under the guise of religion according to the perspective of the Islamic religion. Can the concept of communication carried out by red magicians reduce the frequency of people believing mystical & occult things that tend to deviate from the *aqidah* of the Islam religion? How has society changed regarding the communication attitude that has been carried out by the *Pesulap Merah* in tackling shamans under the guise of religion according to the perspective of the Islamic religion?.

The purpose of this study reveals to find out the concept of communication carried out by the *Pesulap Merah* in overcoming alternative occult medicine

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<sup>1</sup> Batoro et al., "Knowledge of the Fauna (Ethnozoology) of the Tengger Community in Bromo Tengger Semeru, East Java."

according to the Islamic perspective. To find out the concept of communication carried out by red magicians can reduce the frequency of people believing mystical things that tend to deviate even towards the aqidah of Islam. To find out the changes in society regarding the communication attitudes that have been carried out by the Pesulap Merah in tackling alternative occult medicine according to the Islamic perspective.

## **Literature Review**

### **Psychological Theory of Cognitive Communication**

In carrying out proselytizing activities or actions that have been carried out by red magicians can be categorized in the form of proselytizing actions by inviting to see a trick or trick of the eyes. The theory of cognitive psychology mentions that the human being as a being capable of actively interacting with his environment through a way of thinking. Man tries to understand the surrounding environment and reacts with thoughts. Cognitive psychology studies how the flow of information captured by the senses is then processed in the human psyche before it connects with consciousness or manifests itself in the form of behavior. This theory is in line with the actions carried out by the Pesulap Merah himself who wants to show the action that the so-called occult alternative medicine is misleading or incompatible with Islamic sharia. Reactions to stimuli are not always actual behaviors but can be memories or confusion such as anxiety, frustration, and others. Or processed into an attitude of likes and dislikes. Therefore, according to this psychological point of view, people are like computers, where they collect information, process it, store it or give it in a behavioral form.

Cognitive psychology is often merged/equated with the notion of psychology in general. Psychology comes from the Greek word "Psyche" which means soul and logos which means word. The definition of psychology itself is a science that studies behavior and mental/mental processes. Cognitive psychology is one of the sciences of psychology. The term cognitive psychology is an attempt to understand various systematic empirical observation tools or data derived from human observation and later developed into theory. Cognitive psychology deals with the processes of information perception, understanding, the flow of thought, and problem-solving.

In cognitive psychology, we recall what we often asked as children. We often ask about the use of language, but now it has been answered by this cognitive psychology. The answer is, of course, it is this cognitive psychology that regulates how we communicate using the language we need. However, despite all of that we as humans are required to understand and process the information that exists, therefore this cognitive ability is needed. We as human beings must think logically, critically, and rationally.

The scope of cognitive psychology is quite broad. The broad scope of cognitive psychology includes observation, memory, attention, pattern recognition, problem-solving, language psychology, and cognitive development. In addition, cognitive psychology studies thinking, consciousness, perception, memory, imagination, language, problem-solving, creativity, decision-making, reasoning,

cognitive development throughout the lifespan, human intelligence, artificial intelligence, and many aspects of the human mind.

In its development, cog intuitiveness is also known by several models as follows:

1. There are three assumptions in the information processing model, first, cognition can be understood by analyzing cognition into several stages, which are usually sequential. Second, each step processes the incoming information. The final answer is evaluated as a result of several steps and activities. All three phases receive information from the previous phase and then perform their functions.
2. The connectionist model, says that psychology rejects information-processing models. Psychology uses another model, namely the connectionist model or parallel distributed processing. The PDP model uses the human brain as a metaphor to describe the human mind.
3. Evolutionary theory, evolutionary psychology is a psychological approach that applies the knowledge and principles of evolutionary biology to the study of the structure of the human mind. Developmental psychology has become one of the most important perspectives in the field of psychology such as social psychology, developmental psychology, learning psychology, personality psychology, and cognitive psychology<sup>2</sup>.

### **Magical/ Magic**

Magical/magic is a performance art that displays a combination of various existing arts such as fine arts, dance, music, and others. Magic also uses a combination of various sciences (Interdisciplinary) such as chemistry, physics, biology, psychology, communication, and others. Magic displays the speed or shrewdness of the magician's hand, manipulation, chemical reaction effects, or the work of technology and magician equipment and equipment that we usually know as magic tricks<sup>3</sup>.

Magic games continue to evolve along with advances in science and technology. Until now, various types or genres of magic continue to add color to the art of magic performance. However, classic magic remains present in every modern magic show today. In magic shows, especially classical magic, magicians communicate through their magic games. The success of the magic show is how the magician can communicate through his magic game and is acceptable to the audience.

A magician performing a magic show has a script or script that must be rehearsed regularly and repeatedly. This is because a magician must be able to convey a message to the audience in a magic show through his magic game. The magic game itself contains a series of non-verbal messages. If you don't practice regularly and repeatedly, it can cause movements outside the script or script so that

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<sup>2</sup> Ramadanti, Patda Sary, and Suarni, "Cognitive Psychology (A Study of Mental Processes and the Human Mind.)"

<sup>3</sup> Princess, "Magician's Non-Verbal Communication (Kinesic Meaning) In Classical Magic Performances."

the non-verbal message cannot be conveyed properly and can create failure in magic performances. In this study, researchers focused more on kinesic messages than non-verbal messages. This is because, in classical magic performances, it is more dominant to use kinesics in conveying messages to the audience.

## **Healer**

Shaman is a profession that is related to supernatural things or not scientifically, therefore the shaman profession is also often referred to as a place of alternative medicine. Medicine in Indonesia recognizes two treatment systems: medical medicine and traditional medicine. Medical treatment often uses drugs, carried out by personnel who receive formal health education using methods, tools, or materials that have received medical/medical standards. Traditional medicine is a treatment that is carried out traditionally, for generations, based on ancestral recipes, customs, beliefs, or local customs, both magic and traditional knowledge<sup>4</sup>.

Shamans are understood to signify customs, traditions, and practices of animism. However, in the 19th century, shamans could imply more heinous practices, stating that shamans were 'sorcerers' who worked with demons. Shaman, thus, began as a neutral term and switched to a negatively rated term, then back again, and so on for centuries. Shamans used to appear in Bowrey's 1701 English and Malay dictionary which translates as 'doctor, surgeon, or pharmacist'. This dictionary serves as an alignment, marking a point before the derogatory characterization of the word shaman. In Bowrey the terms doctor and pharmacy are positive. Bowrey's dictionary has no negative reference to nineteenth-century dictionaries, which call shamans 'shamans', 'sorcerers', and 'shamans'. In the mid-19th century, Europeans used the term shamans repeatedly in public forums such as newspapers, urging colonial governments to bring Western medicine to the rural population of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. They argue that 'indigenous peoples are detained' by their indigenous shamans with their 'superstitious practices and nonsense' establishing the subject and world they speak of, legitimizing the extant position of power.<sup>5</sup>

## **Occult Alternative Medicine**

The most sought-after treatment by the public is a treatment that has a high cure rate which is proven after the patient has done the treatment. Some people still think that medical treatment uses many chemical drugs that are not good for the body. People also consider that medical treatment requires expensive costs and healing for a long time. In contrast, alternative medicine is chosen to dissatisfaction with the usual medical treatment. The two have a fundamental difference, namely that medical treatment is applied based on scientific research while alternative medicine is based on the experience and subjective judgment of the patient without the basics of the object<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Togobu, "A DESCRIPTION OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE KARAMPUNGAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN SEEKING TREATMENT FOR SHAMANS (MA'SANRO)."

<sup>5</sup> Nourse, "The Meaning of Dukun and Allure of Sufi Healers: How Persian Cosmopolitans Transformed Malay-Indonesian History."

<sup>6</sup> Salamiyah, "RAJAHAN: THE SCIENTIFIC SIDE OF NAUTICAL CULTURE IN ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE."

Treatment in a supernatural way is usually related to the same thing and usually easily drags the common people to the mystical. Almost all shamans and psychics are in the name of religion, emphasizing to the treated that the only one who gives healing is God. Such models are not carried out by doctors. The practice of supernatural medicine is carried out by a shaman or psychic who is considered to have the power or advantages of God that others do not have aims and positions himself as a helper. The practice of supernatural medicine is often associated with supernatural and mystical things, so the healing obtained through this treatment is irrational. The alternative medicine <sup>78</sup>methods that people use in alternative medicine are sometimes very illogical because they are very incompatible with modern concepts of medicine, such as the use of animal media for disease transfer, the use of supernatural powers, prayer water, and others.

The treatment method that has been known in Indonesia uses two approaches, namely medical treatment and non-medical treatment or alternative medicine. One type of alternative medicine that is widespread and popular with the public is alternative medicine carried out by psychics. This alternative treatment method carried out by psychics uses media that are sometimes considered irrational if they are associated with the disease suffered by the patient<sup>9</sup>. The word "treatment" can be interpreted as a process, deed, and way of treating, while the word "alternative" can be interpreted as a choice between two or several possibilities. Thus, alternative medicine can be defined as a form of treatment service that uses methods, tools, or materials that are not included in the standard of modern medical medicine (standard medical services) and are used as alternatives or complements to modern medical treatment. Meanwhile, the word "supernatural" comes from the word "supernatural", which means "above" and "nature", which means "nature", so the supernatural is used to name events that cannot be explained by the laws of nature or are above and beyond nature. Therefore, supernatural alternative medicine is a treatment that is usually related to supernatural things and usually easily drags ordinary people to things of a mystical nature. Supernatural medicine is often associated with the paranormal and the occult. Almost all psychics are in the name of religion. In carrying out their treatment practices, it is not uncommon for psychics to ask patients for conditions or rewards in the form of offerings, for example asking patients to slaughter white or black chickens, bring chicken eggs, sprinkle flowers, and other strange things accompanied by various taboos and sacred admonitions.<sup>10</sup>

### **Occult Alternative Medicine According to Islam**

The world of medicine has always gone hand in hand with the life of mankind. As living things, humans are very familiar with various kinds of minor and severe diseases. The desire to escape from all kinds of diseases is what drives humans to seek to uncover various treatment methods, ranging from consuming

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<sup>7</sup> Sunardi and Sujito, "Explanatory Of Supernatural Alternative Medicine Based On A Review Of Brainwave Theory And Hypnosis."

<sup>8</sup> Syamsuddin, "SUPERNATURAL ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC LAW (Clinic Studies That Are Important To Recover Attack)."

<sup>9</sup> Prasetya, *Patients and psychics*.

<sup>10</sup> Sunardi and Sujito, "Explanatory Of Supernatural Alternative Medicine Based On A Review Of Brainwave Theory And Hypnosis."

various types of plants singly or that have been composed, which are believed to be efficacious in curing certain types of diseases, or massage systems, deepening to surgery and surgery. Everything is done with *try and error*<sup>11</sup>.

Following the instructions of Prophet SAW in the process of treatment and maintenance of health based on love for him will bring its blessings. Here are some of his recommendations about the treatment process, as narrated by al-Bukhari. The Messenger of Allah SAW said, "Healing is found in three things, cupping besets, drinking honey, and with hot (al-kay), and I forbid my people to use hot iron". (H.r. al-Bukhâri). From the hadith above, it can be understood that cupping is a system of medical treatment as an external treatment that was often done by Prophet Saw to get healing when he was sick, and also he advocated for his people. Meanwhile, honey itself is used as a nutrient for healing the body as well as neutralizing toxins in the body. The use of al-kay (hot iron) was already very popular among the people during the time of the Prophet Saw., but in some cases, it caused disability in patients, therefore it was forbidden by the Prophet Saw. In this case, the Prophet Saw. himself had undergone al-kay 1 (one) time in his entire life. While modern medicine has not yet discovered the secret behind this al-kay.<sup>12</sup>

Treatment of Prophet Saw. on the issue of drug use must pay attention to 9 important things, including:

1. Treatment should start with improving nutrition.
2. If it is not cured used natural remedies.
3. Other methods of treatment are allowed according to the recommendations of the healer (read: doctor).
4. Not treating illicit goods. Because Allah Swt. does not make illegitimate goods such as medicine.
5. Deepening is a medical treatment for the health of the body.
6. In some circumstances ruqyah can be used as a treatment both physical and spiritual, sometimes standing alone and often mixed with other methods.
7. There is no over-the-counter drug term, all medications must be administered by an expert (healer/doctor) who knows the procedure, the dosage of the drug, and side effects.
8. A firm belief that no one can heal the sick except Allah Swt.
9. The use of toxic and hazardous materials should only be if the circumstances are urged and under close supervision by an expert (doctor/healer) who knows the ins and outs of the drug<sup>13</sup>.

## Research Methodology

The research method used is qualitative. Qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words of people and observable behaviors. The reason used in using the research method

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<sup>11</sup> Ali, "Alternative Medicine In The Perspective Of Islamic Law."

<sup>12</sup> WAHYU, "Religious Rituals in Alternative Medicine for Banyu Biru Padepokan in Surakarta City, Central Java."

<sup>13</sup> Syamsuddin, "SUPERNATURAL ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC LAW (Clinic Studies That Are Important To Recover Attack)."

above is because communication is a process of meaning construction that will undergo changes or a series of actions and events over some time and that lead to a certain result.

The object of this study is the attraction carried out by Pesulap Merah on his Youtube account in doing magic content or proving the existence of fake alternative medicine magic. The selected data source is a red magician's Youtube channel account named "Official Red Magician". Data collection techniques in this study used descriptive techniques, observation, and document review. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique in this study uses three activity channels, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification.

## **Results & Discussion**

### **The Communication Concept of the Red Magician**

Communication carried out by the Pesulap Merah is a form of one-way communication carried out on his Youtube channel. The Pesulap Merah himself is a figure built in the digital world to show the art of magic with the concept of dismantling magic tricks or supernatural things that are connected with alternative medicine. Behind the Pesulap Merah, he is a figure familiarly called by the name Marcel Radhival. Youtube channel that makes the figure of the Pesulap Merah who is dismantling many tricks - magic tricks under the guise of mysticism or medicine. Sometime in 2022, there is an incident that is very shocking to the world of the digital universe and the real world related to the fierce hostility of one of the figures who carries alternative occult medicine. This is an interesting phenomenon to be discussed in the view of communication science and proselytizing, because in the concept of communication messages brought by the Pesulap Merah or Marcel Radival who wants to give a message to the public not to easily believe in the tricks of tricks – cheap tricks carried out by people - people of occult alternative medicine/shamans.

### **Da'wah Pesulap Merah on Youtube**

In a video that has been aired on Youtube belonging to the channel "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo" it is stated that the Pesulap Merah has the motive to carry out the act of dismantling tricks – supernatural alternative medicine tricks that are abusive because they want to warn the public that what the shaman does is a magic trick only. The strongest reason for the Pesulap Merah in the action of dismantling tricks – the tricks of shamans disguised as alternative medicine was revealed in the message of one of the videos on youtube because it was to avoid shirking to Allah Almighty. The dismantling of the magic tricks is shown in some of the actions that show simple tricks that are used with materials and time settings to trick alternative medicine patients into believing in the shamanic practice that is being carried out.

The purpose of proselytizing that is being carried out by the Pesulap Merah has also expressed through the description/caption "This channel contains education according to FACTS so that the Indonesian people are no longer fooled/deceived with horror/shamanic themed things. ANTI-EDUCATIONAL ANTI-BULLYING SETTINGS WITH FULL HONESTY." Some messages in



channel descriptions using capital letter punctuation can indicate that they are important to pay attention to.

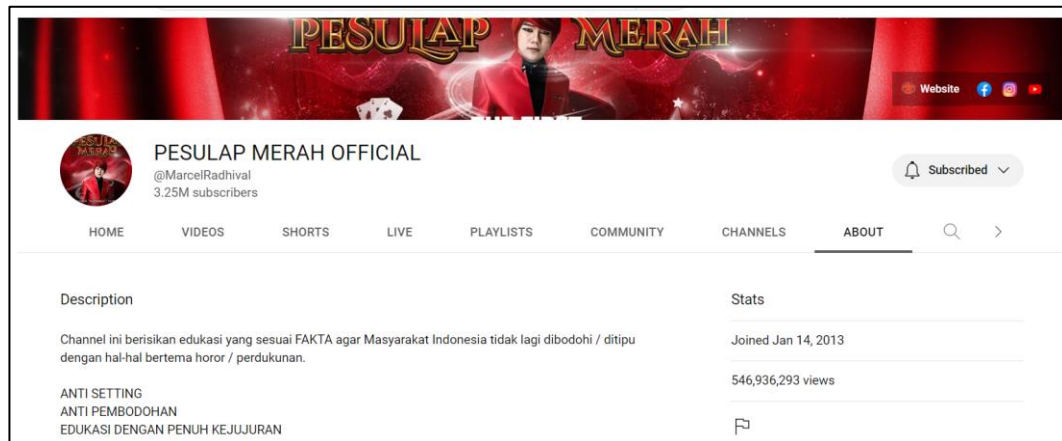


Figure 1. Pesulap Merah Youtube Channel Description

Some of the most phenomenal acts were when the Pesulap Merah unmasked alternative medicine from one of the people, namely "Gus Samsudin". This action is highly debated due to a feud between supporters of alternative medicine figure Gus Samsudin and the Red Magician. Proof of the dislike by Gus Samsudin and his followers was when the Pesulap Merah Team was heading to the location where Gus Samsudin was kept away from entering his padepokan. This makes it even more exciting by the existence of a scene that seems to imply a refusal from Gus Samsudin to show that the alternative medicine he is doing is by Islamic sharia.

In Islam, alternative medicine has been arranged by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Spiritual medicine that believes directly in the Supreme Creator of Allah Almighty has been written in the Word of Allah in the Qur'an. Medicine is used to cure diseases experienced by humans. In the Islamic religious view, the disease is a matter that has been destined and ordained by Allah with a pearl of wisdom known only to Him. It could be that the ailments were cast as a test and trial of a servant's convictions and attitudes, or to investigate the extent of his patience and firmness in carrying unwelcome burdens. Sometimes, too, those illnesses are shed as a cleanser from the sins he has committed<sup>14</sup>.

Islamic alternative medicine, such as Ruqyah syar'iyah, is one of the media for how the discourse of Islamism is produced, transmitted, and disseminated in the public sphere. They buzzed the spirit of "sunnah" in the process of treatment. All treatment processes are based on nash sources, both Quranic and hadith. Starting from identifying the source of the disease (mapping problem), the treatment process, and post-treatment<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Ali, "Alternative Medicine In The Perspective Of Islamic Law."

<sup>15</sup> Triantoro, "Ruqyah Syar'iyah: Alternative Medicine, Piety, Islamism and Islamic Markets."

## Tackling Occult Alternative Medicine

What the Pesulap Merah did in his action to overcome supernatural medicine was to dismantle the practices of ustadz or kyai in the name of religion doing supernatural healing deeds. Treatment under the guise of spices coupled with supernatural things is a means that can bring about musyrikan because it believes in other than the Lord Allah SAW in Islam. This is among other things showing that the tricks carried out by shamans under the guise of being an ustad are disassembled with similar tools that can be operated with supporting magic tools that can be found in special markets for mystical items, such as daggers, jenglot dolls, nails, agates and items supporting supernatural healing actions.



Figure 2. Tackling Occult Alternative Medicine with Trick Reveal Content

## Conclusion

Pesulap Merah takes action to overcome supernatural alternative medicine to change people's mindset so that it is not easy to believe the attraction of a supernatural medicine under the guise of being an ustad. His actions show that the occult treatment carried out by a person can be dismantled by showing scientific evidence that can be explained by the explanation of reason and mind because the use of tools and materials is an arrangement that has been arranged by the ustad/shaman in curing his patients. Existence of this research is expected that people in Indonesia will be more literate and educated in seeing actions and natural phenomena that usually occur in daily life so that they are not easily deceived by the phenomenon of supernatural alternative medicine that is not based on reason and can distance a person's level of faith in Allah SWT for doing mushrik things by trusting more than God who heals.

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