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# **AWGP NORTH AMERICA YOUTH NEWSLETTER**

**CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY**

**2022 (January to July)**

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## Introduction

We all seek happy, healthy, fulfilling, and meaningful lives. Our happiness is an amalgamation of multiple factors; it is interwoven with our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The concept of yoga has become increasingly popular, but what does it really mean? Commercially, it is seen as a sequence of exercises that can be completed in studios or in one's home. However, it extends far beyond the physical and encompasses all aspects of life. The balance between its philosophy and practice are critical for a holistic approach to yoga, and to health itself. Without good health, a society cannot prosper. Yoga represents the pinnacle of the Indian wisdom traditions where every facet of our self can reach its greatest potential. This edition is a humble attempt to describe the authentic form/grandeur of yoga while presenting practical learnings that anyone can adopt in their life.



## Excerpts from Indian Wisdom Traditions

1) *"Yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate"*  
- Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 48

**Meaning:** Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjun, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yoga.

2) *"Buddhi-yukto jahatiha ubhe sukrita-dushkrite tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kaushalam"*  
- Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 50

**Meaning:** One who prudently practices the science of work without attachment can get rid of both good and bad reactions in this life itself. Therefore, strive for Yoga, which is the excellence of all actions.

3) *"Yuktahara-viharasya yukta-cheshtasya karmasu yukta-svapnavabodhasya yoga bhavati dukha-ha"*  
- Gita, Chapter 6, Verse 17

**Meaning:** those who are temperate in eating and recreation, balanced in work, and regulated in sleep, can mitigate all sorrows by practicing Yoga.

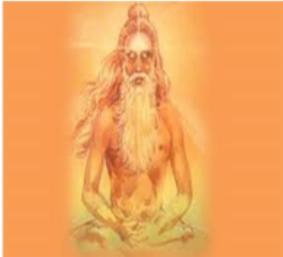
4) *"Yogasya chitta vritti nirodhah"*  
- Patanjali Yoga Sutras, Chapter 1, Verse 2

**Meaning:** Yoga is the banishment/control of all of the "vrittis" (innate tendencies) of the "chitt" (conscience or deeper depths of the mind).



## Overview of Yoga Traditions

Below are the three main branches from which yoga traditions emerged:

	Lord Brahma	Lord Vishnu	Lord Shiva
Originated by:	Raj Yoga	Vedic Yoga	Hatha Yoga
Propounded by:			
	Maharishi Patanjali	Lord Shri Krishna	Gorakhnath
Text:	Patanjali Yoga Sutras	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita	Gherand Samhita, Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Shiv Samhita
Subsets and Branches:	Samadhi Yoga: abhyas & vairagya	Gyan Yoga: where thoughts reach their most illumined potential	The branch which uses physical techniques to preserve the vital force or prana shakti within the yogi. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asanas</li> <li>• Mudras</li> <li>• "bandhs"</li> <li>• Diet control</li> <li>• Meditation, etc</li> </ul>
	Kriya Yoga: tap, swadhyay, ishwar- pranidhan	Karma Yoga: where actions reach their most refined state	
	Ashtanga Yoga: yam, niyam, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi	Bhatki Yoga: where emotions reach absolute perfection with the divine	

## Significance of Pragya Yoga

Before delving into the significance of the pragya yoga system propounded by Pujya Gurudev, it is important to note what it is. Many people believe it only refers to 16 exercise postures (see the next page). While the 16 postures are definitely a part of pragya yoga, they are not its entirety.

Gurudev's concept of pragya yoga was dedicated to refining every aspect of our personality; actions, thoughts, emotions, or physical, mental, and emotional bodies. A very brief outline of pragya yoga is as follows:

- **Mind (Gyan yog):** Swadhyay, "atmabodh" in the morning and "tatvabodh" at night to believe that each morning is a new birth and each night a new death.
- **Emotions (Bhakti yog):** Daily Gayatri Mantra jap and meditation of the rising sun, for self refinement, purification of the subtle environment, and correction of wrongful practices in society.
- **Body (Karma yog):** Pragya yoga asanas, attempt to fast once a week or take no sugar/salt for one meal, practice "maun"/silence on one particular day for 1-2 hours, managing your time, and limiting wasteful expenses.

The significance of pragya yoga is that it encapsulates the essence of all yoga traditions which emerged since the Vedic period. For example, in reading the Gita, there is no mention of asanas. In Raj Yoga there is only one mention of asana, and in Hatha yoga, there is not a significant elaboration of what is found in the Gita or Raj Yoga. However, pragya yoga is perhaps the worlds only tradition that includes, asanas, pranayam, karma yoga, gyan yoga, bhakti yoga, tap, swadhyay, sadhana, seva, and much more.



## Asanas (Poses) of Pragya Yoga

### 1: Tadasan

Stand straight and deeply chant *Om*. Then stand on your toes and chant *Bhooh*. Raise both hands upwards and look towards the sky while inhaling deeply. This exercise helps supply adequate blood to the heart.



### 2: Pad Hastasana

While chanting *Bhuvah*, bring both hands downwards and exhale slowly. Bow down and try to touch palms to the floor. This asana removes gastric troubles and increases vital strength.



### 3: Vajrasan

With the chanting on *Swah* place the toes completely on the floor and sit on the haunches of your feet with a straight spine. This pose is helpful to maintain good digestion, cure gastric trouble and constipation, and strengthen the stomach muscles.



### 4: Ushtrasan

Sit with your shins touching the ground. Bend backwards and place hands on your heels while looking upwards while chanting *Tat* and inhaling deeply. This posture stretches the abdomen, stomach, chest and hands while also augmenting the natural elasticity of the spinal column.



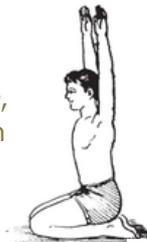
### 5: Yogamudra

Chant *Savituh* while slowly exhaling, clasping both hands together and bringing your head towards the floor with your stomach touching your thighs. This can help reset metabolic activities and awaken the extra sensory energy nucleus by the naval.



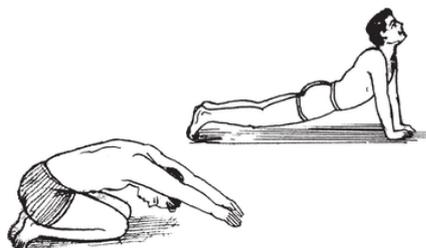
### 6: Ardh Tadasan

Inhale deeply while chanting *Varenyam*, stretching your arms upwards. This asan gives a mild traction to the neck which can improve cervical stiffness.



### 7: Shashankasan

Exhaling while chanting *Bhargo*. Keep arms stretched out, place palms on the floor, and touch your head on the floor. This aids with constipation problems by stretching rectal muscles and relaxing the sciatic nerve.



### 16: Original position

With deep chanting of *Om* inhale slowly and stand straight with arms stretched upward with hands in fist. Bring the fists slowly to your center than to the sides. Feel the empowerment of the vital force within you.

### 15: Tadasan

Chant *Swah* and return to pose 1.

### 14: Pad Hastasan

Chant *Bhuvah* and return to pose 2.

### 13: Utkatasan

Breathe deeply while chanting *Bhuh* and sit on the toes. The heels should not touch the floor. Place hands in Namaskar posture. This asan gives strength to calves and improves body balance.

### 12: Ardh Tadasan

Chant *Prachodayat* while returning to pose number 6.

### 11: Shashankasan

Chant *Yonah* while returning to the pose number 7.

### 9&10: Tiryak Bhujangasan left and right

In this posture, chant *Dhimahi* and exhale slowly while turning the neck towards the left and looking at the heel of the right foot. With exhale bring head to the front, then while chanting *Dhiyo* inhale and turn head towards the right to look at the heel of left foot.

### 8: Bhujangasan

While chanting *Devasya*, inhale deeply and pull your waist upwards to have your knees and thighs touching the floor. Draw your chest upwards and raise your head. This pose helps sooth the lungs, heart and backbone.



## Advice by Dr. Chinmay Pandya

**As the appointed yoga expert for the World Health Organization (WHO), how do you believe the practice of yoga can help us during these ongoing tremulous times?**

These are uncertain and precarious times; we have a challenging environment surrounding us. And if we look for the solution, it's right here in our consciousness. The transformation and transportation of consciousness is what yoga teaches us. The definition of yog as told by Lord Shri Krishna in chapter 2, verse 48 and 50 of the Gita, is that yog is the excellence of all actions. If real yog manifests in our life then all dimensions of our life, physical, spiritual, emotional and social, all facets of our being reach their pinnacle. Yog is nothing but balance within and harmony outside. Gurudev said that if humanity has to find its future together then they have to create the foundation of unity, solidarity, sacredness, and compassion. These four pillars are needed to create a sustainable foundation. Even if the world is going through a period of upheaval, we should not feel that the current time is dark and gloomy, instead we should embrace it because it is the first time that the entirety of humanity has been called upon to accomplish a single goal, which is to bring humanity forward. Yog embodies the unification of individuals reaching a higher consciousness and finding that balance within ourselves.

**There are so many techniques, scriptures, and practices within the realm of yoga, how do we know which one is right for us to follow?**

There are numerous pathways of yoga that are available: Raj Yog which has Kriya Yog, Samadhi Yog, and Asthanga Yog. Then there is the Vedic Yog propounded in the Gita (Gyan, Karma, and Bhakti Yog), Hatha Yog, and 84 other subsets of yog too. To answer the question I'm reminded of a beautiful story. There was king who had a similar question of what is the right life path to follow. He asked all the scholars of his city and they all gave different answers. They all said that their paths were the best. The king became even more confused. He then went to a rishi with the same question. The rishi said I will answer your question in the middle of the forest, but to get there we have to cross a river. To cross the river the king arranged for 30 boats. The rishi started to find flaws in each of the 30 boats and started rejecting all of them. The king got frustrated and said why are you wasting time in selecting a boat, just pick any and let's cross the river. The rishi said then why are you wasting time in selecting your life path, select any righteous path but follow it with full determination and surrender. Therefore, we can select any path of yog but should adhere to it with determination and surrender.

**How should we incorporate the practice of yoga into our everyday routine?**

Patanjali details the necessity of practice to control the easily distractible mind. He says that the effort put into stabilizing our personality is the art of practicing. For you to be the king of yourself, to have unwavering control over your mind, you need to be in regular practice. Practice becomes firmly grounded in your being when it is done for a prolonged period of time, nonstop, with incessant devotion and desperation. If you have a plant with a strong stem then even an elephant cannot shake it. When you begin a practice, it should have no end date, it should be a constant routine that you continue to do with the same commitment and respect as the first day. Only then will it become deeply rooted in your personality.



# Special Updates

## AWGP Youth North America Website

After many months of efforts the youth of North America have come together and created a centralized and dedicated website for North America youth initiatives. The purpose is to:

- Supplement annual youths camps and bring a sense of continuity during the year
- Allow youth members to work together collectively, complementing local/regional efforts
- Allow youth from different regions to share best practices and leverage skills that others have
- To help distil the values, principles, and knowledge that are at the core of the AWGP and apply it to a North American youth context

Website: [click here](#)

AWGP Youth
Home Calendar Initiatives Resources About

### About

The AWGP Youth of North America have come together under the mission of All World Gayatri Pariwar, founded by saint, reformer, writer, philosopher, spiritual guide and visionary Yug Rishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya ji, as a mass movement for Transformation of Era. Under the guided inspiration of respected Dr. Chinmay Pandya, youth connections, events and activities will evolve a community of young leaders that can imbibe the message of P.P. Gurudev and becoming role models that can further spread the message of "Scientific Spirituality".

Stay on the lookout for events by checking the calendar below:

August 2022						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	< Aug			

Don't ever want to miss an event? Join our mailing list and get updates straight to your email!



Gayatri Pariwar, founded by Yug Rishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, is a living model of a futuristic society, being guided by principles of human unity and equality. It's a modern adoption of the age old wisdom of Vedic Rishis, who practiced and propagated the philosophy of Vishuhoive Kumbhakar.

This platform is a means to connect the youth of North America and provide an easy to access resource portal with relevant information and events to support their spiritual journey.

[More about our Objectives](#)

## Youth Spiritual Retreat - Shantivan Ashram - July 22 to 24, 2022



Gayatri Pariwar Western Ontario along with parijans from various other regions across Ontario recently organized a youth spiritual retreat from July 22 to 24, 2022. This retreat was organized during Respected Dr. Chinmay Pandya's eight day visit to Canada. This trip was Dr. Chinmay Pandya's first trip to North America after a span of approximately three years (due to the pandemic).

The theme for this retreat was "Companions of Solitude", which is based on the pivotal book that Pujya Gurudev wrote to describe his travels into the Himalayas. This theme was perfectly suited to the serene environment of Shantivan, which allowed all the participants to delve inwards and assimilate with the surrounding natural habitat.

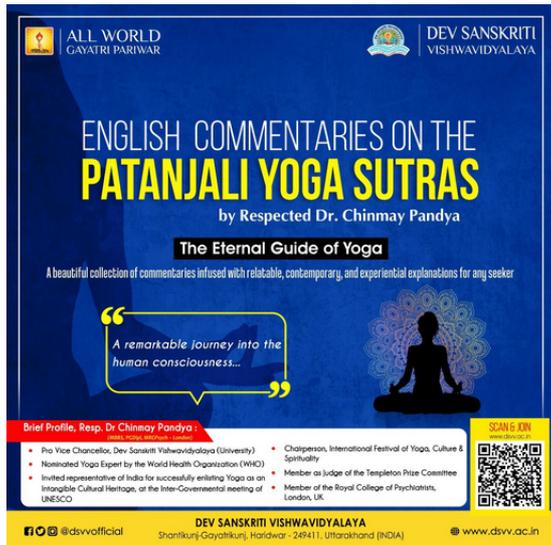
The schedule included an inaugural address, morning meditation, a youth debate, roundtable conversation on what sort of future world the youth aspire to create, one-on-one meetings with Dr. Chinmay Panyda, nature walks, Q&A sessions, and an 108 kundiya Gayatri Yagya.



# Special Highlights

## Gayatri Pariwar's Contribution to Preserving Yoga Culture at UNESCO

The ancient culture of yoga has spread all over the world. This "globalization" was formalized in two prominent ways in recent years. Firstly, when the United Nations accepted India's proposal to declare June 21st as the International Day of Yoga, starting in 2015. While a dedicated day certainly brings global awareness it doesn't necessarily ensure the preservation/protection of its culture. Therefore, it was decided to present a proposal in 2016 at the intergovernmental meeting of UNESCO, an organization dedicated for the same. The Indian government called upon the Gayatri Pariwar and DSVV as representatives of India to the world for this proposal. Resp. Dr. Chinmay Pandya (a valued member of the VIP delegation) represented the country at UNESCO and with a monumental address, secured the unanimous votes of delegates of 170 countries. With this Yoga was formally established as a cultural heritage of India.



## Patanjali Yoga Sutra Commentaries

Many of our regular readers would know that we've showcased a remarkable set of commentaries of the Patanjali Yoga Sutra commentaries, by Resp Dr. Chinmay Pandya, in prior editions. However, we felt it noteworthy to highlight here because of their relevance with the theme, and as a way to present practical learning tools for those interested in furthering their knowledge on the topic of yoga. Secondly, to inform those who may not know, these are a beautiful set of English commentaries which unveil the pristine knowledge given by Patanjali in an easy-to-understand manner.

YouTube: [click here](#) Spotify: [click here](#)

## DSVV's Faculty of Yoga and Health

Of the many accolades of DSVV, it's also regarded as India's finest school of yoga due to the following:

- Rich and authentic courses/curriculum
- Par excellence research journals & papers
- Highest number of Junior Research Fellow titles awarded to DSVV students amongst multiple schools in the National Eligibility Test (NET)
- Alumni invited as professors at other prominent yoga schools such as Patanjali University, Gurukula Kangri, etc.
- Globally spread alumni including: Dubai, Maldives, Singapore, Macao, South America, Ghana, Indonesia, Baltics, North America, etc.
- Invited partner of the Indian government for yoga protocols



**Dev Sanskriti  
Vishwavidyalaya**



# Self Care Corner

## SOOTHE YOUR SOUL

There are numerous benefits of yoga, exercise and movement. Yoga utilizes the synergy between the body and mind to elevate our consciousness into a state of internal bliss. Understanding the power of our being can help us liberate our body's full inner potential.



### Benefits of Surya Namaskar

Surya Namaskar, also known as the sun salutation is performed in the presence of the rising sun. The sequence of these yoga poses, [found here](#), helps prepare your mind and body for the upcoming day. Some of the advantages of performing these yoga poses include improving flexibility and psychological well being. It also increases exposure to vitamin D, an essential nutrient that our bodies can metabolize from the sun. Sunlight also helps elevate mood and wakefulness. Performing the surya namaskar can also metabolize glucose by increasing the uptake of glucose into muscles. Controlled breathing can also stimulate the vagus nerve and help regulate respiratory drive and blood pressure. Surya Namaskar can also improve cognition and mindfulness by focusing on one's internal power.

More information on the benefits of Surya Namaskar are detailed in a literature review [linked here](#).

### Yoga Breathing Techniques

The practice of yoga utilizes slow breathing techniques to synchronize the body and mind. Deep breathing increases oxygen flow to your lungs and the rest of your body. Slow breathing engages the autonomic and central nervous system.

Thus, it can increase alertness by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. One study analyzing fMRIs during slow yogic breathing showed increase in prefrontal, motor and parietal cortices and subcortical areas, including the pons, thalamus and hypothalamus. These areas of our brain are responsible for functions such as executive decision-making, sensory stimuli processing, hormonal balance, sleep-wake cycles, and respiratory drive. Slow breathing also increases alertness.

Read more about the benefits of breath-control in this systematic review [article](#).



# Regional Pariwar Updates

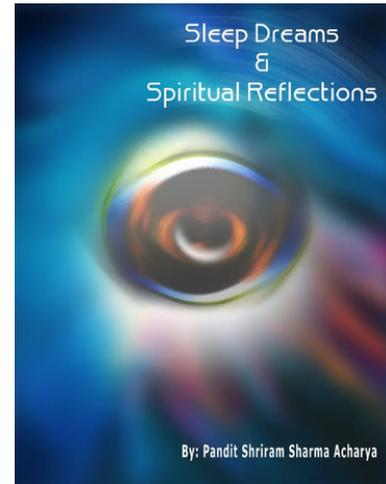
## Toronto Pariwar

**Swadhyay:** Youth from Toronto (as well as others) embarked on reading Pujya Gurudev's book titled "Sleep, Dreams, and Spiritual Reflections" every Wednesday. This book has been quite fascinating to read and has helped us decipher many of our dreams.

**Resources:** Krishna Solanki, who was the lead behind the creation of the [AWGP Youth North America website](#), finally unveiled and inaugurated it for all to use.

**Community:** Many youth from Toronto also participated in the Youth Spiritual Retreat at Shantivaan, which was a remarkable experience.

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## Austin Pariwar

**Education:** We culminated our BSS year during the period wherein the students learned about the theme "Gayatri, Philosophy and Applications".

**Community:** To celebrate the end of a wonderful BSS year we organized a field trip and to the Xiang Yun Buddhist Temple in Austin. This was an amazing day that featured: a guided tour of the premises, a cultural performance, film on the life of Buddha, outdoor meditation, Buddhism 101, Q&A, snack time, and walks. All of the students and parents loved the day as it was a great way to learn about other cultures and religions. Our youth volunteer Rohan Patel also worked behind the scenes to establish partnerships with local volunteer groups to further our chapter's outreach.

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## Western Ontario Pariwar

**Education:** GPWO BSS students along with the older youth team conducted our Vasant Panchami deep yagya event online on February 5, 2022. They also presented a biography of Pujya Gurudev prior to the yagya. Additionally, we facilitated regular BSS classes every other Saturday. **Community:** Our older youth also continued their monthly meetings wherein they read and discuss Pujya Gurudev's literature, as well as plan for upcoming activities. They, along with the adults, were planning for the Youth Spiritual Retreat that took place from July 22-24. They helped to organize the camp as also the 108 kundiya yagya on the last day of the retreat.

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# Regional Pariwar Updates

## Long Island Pariwar



**Education:** Having to go virtual for the 2021-2022 school year was quite the experience since we all missed personal connections. On May 22nd, after a year of virtual classes, we had our **Annual Day event** which was in person. Everyone came into the park and shared big hugs that they missed during the year. We began the day with lovely prayers, after which, advisors gave out student recognitions to those that went the extra mile during the virtual sessions. As the day progressed the Club leaders, such as myself, had organized activities for the kids to be engaged in at the park. Students enjoyed activities such as the cup pong game, mehndi, playing bean bag toss, a trivia game, designing bracelets, and eco-friendly activities from recycled materials. The day ended with pizza and ice cream for everyone! **Submitted by:** Pearl Gupta, GGKLI

**Contact:** [contact@ggkli.org](mailto:contact@ggkli.org)

## New Jersey Pariwar

**Education:** Our BSS successfully completed the 2021-2022 school year. The theme for the year was "Teachings of the Gita". From ages 5-13 years, aspects of the Gita were incorporated into curriculum giving importance to living a life full of the teachings of Gita vs. simply learning the shlokas.

**Sanskar:** the teachers continue their online monthly initiative to celebrate student birthdays with the birthday sanskars.

**Community:** The youth group of GCC-NJ assisted in the grand event of 151 Gurupurnima Yagya (in the presence of Ad. Tripathiji and Ad. Omkarji) by preparing the kunds, puja plates, the main stage and providing water to the participants on the day. The Jersey Pariwar also recently inaugurated an acupuncture park which is located on the temple grounds and is inspired by the original one located at Shantikunj.

**Contact:** [info@gayatricenter.org](mailto:info@gayatricenter.org)



## Dallas Pariwar

**Education:** 1) The BSS celebrated the end of the 2021-2022 year with our BSS Graduation Day in the presence of Gayatri Mata, and Pujya Gurudev and Vandiya Mataji.

We have also started registration for the BSS 2022-2023 year, which will be in hybrid format. Students from all across the USA are welcome to register. 2)

Additionally, we have also continued our "Grihe-Grihe" Gayatri yagya ad kirtan series. 3) We also did a book stall inauguration and Gayatri Pariwar book sale at our

108 kundiya yagya at the DFW Hindu Temple.

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## Other Updates and Initiatives

- **Newsletter Frequency:** The newsletter team along with Chinmayji have decided to release the newsletter on a bi-annual basis. This change was decided in order to allow our team to work in collaboration with more chapters, harness more reflections for conversation and delve further into the literature. We believe it also allows Pariwars to submit more meaningful and longitudinal regional updates
- **Calling All Readers:** Please join us on Wednesdays from 9-10 PM EST as we continue reading the book "Sleep, Dreams and Spiritual Reflections". There is no compulsion to have read every week, and participants can join to listen in as well. Please email us for the call link if you are interested in joining.
- **Feedback and Q&A:** Please fill out this [Google form](#) in order to anonymously ask questions to Respected Dr. Chinmay Pandya for the next newsletter, give feedback on Newsletter improvement, or submit pictures/stories or other original work.

"It is the responsibility of the wise to be physically, mentally and spiritually fit and make others around them aware of the importance of a disciplined lifestyle and balanced exercise of the body-mind system. In view of its enormous benefits, dissemination of knowledge of yoga and training of its practices would be a commendable effort for social welfare."

*- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya  
from Pragya Yog for Happy and Healthy Life pg 49.*



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