

LIGHT

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PROPHECY AND FREE-WILL THEORY WHICH AVOIDS BELIEF IN PRE-DETERMINISM

By "SINIM"

MANY sensible people feel distrust of the very idea of Prophecy, whether it be in the form of mere fortune-telling, of clairvoyant utterances, or of the allegedly-inspired forecasts of Biblical characters. Their reasoning is, I think, along the following lines:

"If prophecy is possible, the future must be fixed, as otherwise it could not be foreseen. If the future is fixed, we must be mere automatons; we cannot be held responsible for our actions; right and wrong do not exist so far as we are concerned. This revolts our reason. We know that we exercise free-will; we believe we are responsible for what we do; we believe this is the basis of all that is progressive and good in human relations. Therefore we cannot believe that the future is pre-ordained. Prophecy must be a delusion and we refuse to waste time on anything of the sort."

This robust attitude is certainly a far healthier one than that of the more credulous folk who too often find in the fixity of the future a good reason for not exerting themselves (most Spiritualistic societies know the type), but it does not dispose of the awkward fact that prophecies do come true in sufficient numbers and in such detail as to convince any honest investigator that prevision and not coincidence is the only explanation.

Here then is the problem: *Admitting that prophecy is a fact, how can it be explained without conceding that the future is predestined?*

The problem is one which has, in one form or another, attracted the attention of philosophers, and impressive volumes have been written to prove that Time is something quite different to what it seems to the ordinary man. And yet, as it seems to me, we can readily construct a theory which will cover all the observed facts relating to prevision, which does not violate our everyday conception of Time and which gets rid of the bugbear of a pre-ordained universe. The terms in which I formulate the theory are as follows:—

The human mind in some circumstances is capable of getting a glimpse, not of a pre-ordained future, but of the pattern composed of *all the probabilities* relating to the event foreseen, as they exist at the moment of observation.

No psychologist, I think, and certainly no one who has seriously investigated psychic phenomena will dispute the statement that the mind has powers which it cannot exercise at will in the ordinary conscious state. The sole assumption that we have to investigate is that the glimpses ahead, the vision seen, or the message received deal with *probabilities only*, and not with events determined by inexorable fate.

For the sake of simplicity I shall, in what follows, use illustrations drawn from dreams only. The arguments will, however, be found applicable to prophecy through reputable Mediums in trance, to psychometry (hateful word), or to the occasional successes of fortune-tellers, palmists and others of that ilk.

Let it be observed at this point that our hypothesis attributes no new faculty to the mind, but only an extension of powers in normal use. We are constantly predicting; and, if we have sufficient data, and if the event is near in point of time, we expect to be correct in the great majority of cases. Thus, I can predict that I shall go to my place of business to-morrow and much that will happen there. It is, however, not a certainty but an overwhelming probability. Such prophecies do not surprise us when they come true. On the other hand, if a prediction of an event twenty years ahead comes true, it attracts

Light

All communications for the EDITOR should be addressed: "The Editor of Light, 16 Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7." 'Phone Kensington 3292-3.

EDITOR

GEORGE H. LETHAM

TO OUR READERS

AS this is being written, the Battle of Britain continues with undiminished ferocity on the part of the enemy, and with undiminished heroism on the part of the defenders on land and sea and air. The spectacular combats over and around London have attracted most attention in the Press at home and abroad; but, as residents in other parts of the country know, the strain of the struggle has been equally great in North and South, and East and West.

Meanwhile, restrictions due to the progress of the struggle—especially as it affects the London district in which it is produced—make it impossible to keep LIGHT up to its normal standards either of size or contents.

With this issue, there is a further reduction in size to eight pages; and, as the contents must be decided long before the date of publication, the news side must necessarily be adversely affected.

Still, we believe it to be the desire of Readers—not only in Great Britain, but in many other parts of the world—that the flame of LIGHT should be kept alive, however low it may have to be trimmed; and we are therefore confident that they will make every allowance for our difficulties and support us in our efforts to overcome them.

There never was a time when the message and witness of LIGHT were more needed than now, and the need will increase as the ravages and tragedies and terrors of the war go on.

People already convinced of the all-important fact of human Survival need encouragement to enable them bravely to face the physical dangers by which they are surrounded; people whose belief in Survival has no other foundation than a hazy emotional belief need the help that direct evidence alone can give; and those who have come to regard hope of Survival as nothing more than a vain religious dream need to be assured that real authenticated modern evidence exists of continuance of conscious personality beyond physical death and that it can be made available to them if they will but give it rational consideration.

In all these respects, LIGHT aims at being helpful now as it always has been during the sixty years of its existence.

To those already convinced of Survival, LIGHT recalls the facts which make continuance of personal life possible when the physical body has been left behind: That Man is a spiritual being, manifesting through a physical body, but possessed, all through his life, of a Soul-body which is his true vehicle of consciousness, and which cannot be killed or maimed by physical bombs or physical disease. Thus, should bombs or disease bring death to the physical body, the Man is not extinguished—he lives on in his Soul-body, complete in all that constitutes personality and ensures its continuance in the new phase of life on which he enters, in which he will meet and know his loved ones who have "gone before" him.

To those who need support for their religious belief in another and better world, it can be pointed out that modern evidence of Survival and of the conditions to which it leads corroborates the evidence on which the Christian "good news" was based; and to those who have lost all confidence in religious assurances of the existence of a higher order of life, it can be pointed out that the modern evidence need not be taken on trust, but can, on the contrary, be subjected to the keenest scrutiny.

POSITIVE ACCEPTANCE

ONE of the mistakes we make in trying to overcome the difficulties of daily life is to give them a false importance. We fall into the error that we must oppose them with all our might, and in so doing we waste our energies in fruitless endeavours. By wrong attitude of mind we endow our difficulties or troubles with a power they should not possess, so that at last we strive not against the difficulty or trouble but against ourselves. We get in our own way.

Now, I do not say we should not strive, for it is our nature so to do; but we ought to try to find out the best way of striving. For this, we must choose the mental and moral ground upon which we enter the combat against any trouble. And here, if we are wise in remembrance, we shall call to mind that we are eternal, and that the trouble or adversity is temporal. If we grasp these essentials, we shall see that, though the struggle be prolonged even to death, we shall win—because we survive death and in the new environment of a higher realm the things of earth will cease to trouble us.

We should face every problem of life in this spirit, the problem can be solved, the trouble can be overcome.

It is significant that when Jesus asked anyone to follow Him He said: "Take up *your* cross and follow Me." That means, "accept life as you find it." Do not shirk your responsibility, shoulder it manfully. By accepting it you prove your moral superiority to what you accept.

This is not always clear to people. Often it is imagined that acceptance means sitting down and doing nothing; that is a false conception of it. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed that if possible the cup might pass from Him. There was the natural shrinking from pain common to our being. But He added: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done." In that acceptance He proved His moral and spiritual superiority to the cross. This superiority is shown right through the subsequent events. So great was He, so above the power of circumstance that sought by violent means to destroy His mission, that He never troubled to defend Himself. His attitude was His best defence; His silence was His eloquent advocate. And in the end He triumphed. The cross was a temporary shadow, the resurrection the eternal light.

Now, if we regard acceptance, not as a spineless acquiescence in, but as an evidence of our moral superiority over circumstance and environment, we are the conquerors. We rob what opposes us of the false power with which our fears have endowed it.

Why do we fight difficulties and get frantic in so doing? Because we fear them, and fear begets anger. We put forth valiant efforts which do nothing to right the wrong condition and exhaust our energies. There is a thrill in the effort, for anger is a temporary energiser, but the cost is excessive.

Acceptance means that we choose the method of overcoming with calmness and reason. Like a wrestler using ju-jitsu, we give way to overcome; we alter the balance so that the weight of resistance is in our favour, and not in that of the opposition. Keep alive the sense of humour. Spiritualism shows that we are eternal, and an immortal being can afford to laugh even at the trials and troubles of life.

Now, each one has his trouble and special worries. Each finds that the relationships of life run out in all directions; each finds he cannot live to himself alone. Accept the fact that life is such, and learn to use it, not letting it tyrannise over you, and life loses its worry and trouble.

There is no circumstance or trouble in life that cannot be made to minister to us. Knowing this makes the difference between joyous or miserable living; between having the spirit of a conqueror, sure of ourselves and our ultimate triumph, and the defeatist attitude that credits everything that opposes us with a power it does not possess.

W. H. EVANS.

THE PSYCHIC THREAD

ELVES AND FAIRIES

THERE has been much discourse of Elves and Fairies in the columns of *LIGHT* during the last few weeks, but the method adopted, fragmentary, personal, and little-informed as to the subject discussed, is not likely to lead to any particular illumination. There is only one way to examine any question of this kind, and that is, by the way of folk-lore, running back as far as we can, comparing the traditions of various times and races, and finally comparing these with the statements of living persons of authority who have had personal experiences connected with such beings. Nothing, indeed, can be more frivolous or more foolish, than the attitude of some people in the face of these problems, people who affect to despise the amassed scholarship of generations, with all its data and analysis, and who nevertheless are ready to snap up any scrap of so-called evidence from any unknown contemporary who asserts that he has "seen a fairy." Let us, then, recognise that there is only one sane method of examining the question, and of learning anything

"Of airy elves by moonlight seen,
The silver token, and the circled green."

ETYMOLOGY

The word *Fairy* or *Faerie* is probably derived from the Oriental, the *Peri* of the Persian poets. It doubtless came to us through the Crusaders, who learned it of the Arabs, hence our pronunciation of the word, for there is no letter *p* in the Arabian alphabet, and the Saracens pronounced the word *faery*. It is worth noting that *Faerie* was throughout the Middle Ages, and later, a general term for *illusion*: Chaucer employs it in this sense. In England the word *Elf* is of older use: it is of Gothic origin.* To explain this use of the word *illusion* is not easy, yet its sense is comprehensible. It denotes a state of mind, and one which admits the *ego* governing that mind to communication with a sphere of existence that is uninterrestrial, or more properly *extra-terrestrial*.

SCOTTISH TRADITION

There can be no doubt that the belief in Elves was formerly almost universal. Scott has accurately defined these beings as "spirits of a limited power, and subordinate nature, dwelling among the woods and mountains," where, in remoter regions, they may still be perceived, with what we may call the *psychic* sense, by all moderately sensitive persons. From Iceland to Provence, from Persia to Finland, folk-lore abounds in faerie-lore. Greece had her *nymphs*—*Hamadryad* in her oakwoods, the *Naiades* in her streams; the Gaelic race of Ireland and Scotland has its "Hidden People" (the *Sidhe*, *Shee*, or *Sheean*). Perhaps no part of the world is more propitious for a study of *Faerie* than Scotland. Certainly Scottish scholars, from Walter Scott to Lewis Spence, have devoted much labour to its study, and have thrown much light upon it. Reliques of early Scottish literature are rich in faerie-lore, and Scotland abounds everywhere in faerie tradition and faerie landmarks.

"Fairy Mounds" are to be found in many parts, both of the mainland and islands. It is from these, and around them, that fairy music is chiefly heard. It was into these that the Little People spirited away their human captives—not infrequently some youth or maiden of whom they were enamoured. In Scotland such stories are widespread, from *Thomas of Ercildoune* to *Kilmeny*. Years later, the stolen one would perhaps return to his kindred, but he would often remain under the fairy spell, and, when the call came, would return to Elfin. Tales like *Tamlane* (*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*) are mines of information regarding faerie-lore, William Sharp's ("Fiona Macleod's") *Immortal Hour* is a poetic epitome of the entire theme.

GOBLIN RACES

Alongside the fairies, the "little people," everywhere in popular tradition exists a sinister elfin race, dwarfish, wicked, and of hideous aspect. These are the *Dives* of the Persians, the *bogles* and *goblins* of our own folklore, and (swelled to gigantic proportions) the *Trols* of Norse legend and *ogres* of Romance. These latter types are very unpleasant creatures, of cannibal habits. Vastly exaggerated by popular fancy, they possess doubtless some actual element of fact. To admit the beneficent or harmless fairy as fact, and to reject the malefic goblin as pure fancy, were obviously absurd. The Elfin folk, occupying a material place somewhere between the visible and invisible (I reject all theosophic terminology in this respect) must be accepted entire, or not at all. There is no room for sentimental preferences here, any more than elsewhere in matters of occult investigation.

CHARACTER OF FAERYLAND

Lewis Spence in *The Faerie Faith*† has given a very striking description of that state of mind and environment (and the two must coincide) in which a temporary contact may be made with Faerie, an "extra-terrestrial sphere," which he believes "to be peopled with beings as different from the dead as from the living."

"Some influence uninterrestrial (says Mr. Spence, writing autobiographically of his early years) appeared to outline, to halo every object, to interpenetrate most things, and give them a semblance other than the ordinarily material. It is difficult extremely to describe such a state in ordinary language. I came to the conclusion that this potency swung earthward, like a water-spout, wherever I chanced to be, drenching all things within its ambit with its peculiar magic. In these careless and unguarded days it came often, particularly when the mind was free from the cares of school. Never do I recall it coming on a Sunday at any time in my life.‡ Too much sunlight invariably destroys it, as does the almost entire lack of the same. Firelight assists it, complete darkness drives it utterly away. It flourishes in woody places, by lone sea-beaches, in long meadows, by still lakes—in such places, indeed, as Elfin is known to haunt. Yet never did I espy visually the least trace of Faerie, nor hear a note of it in youth. My one sensual intimation, save through the 'illusion' I have described, was vouchsafed in later years, and in the hours of early morning, when for many nights on end I assuredly heard Faerie singing, wordless, and of wonderful harmony." The singing was not 'evoked by a mental trick.' It came unbidden, and aroused intense surprise, while it awoke also the most decided recognition. It was only after some considerable experience of it that I recalled several instances of it in the Folklore of Faerie."

This passage is very remarkable. It fulfils whatever we know of Faeryland from folk-lore. It tallies very accurately with the experiences of those best qualified to judge of the matter at first hand. I know intimately an eminent Scottish painter and scholar whose intercourse with Faerie was at one time extraordinary. Furthermore, I recognise the phenomena described by Mr. Spence from my own experience absolutely. Faerie is there where what we call reality and illusion meet, co-mingle, and are one. It is as real as dream, and dream is as real as waking. C. R. CAMMELL.

*Sir Walter Scott: *On the Fairies of Popular Superstition*.

†*The Atlantis Quarterly*, vol. I., No. 4, and vol. II., No. 1, 1933.

‡This is clearly due to the oppressive effect of the austere Scottish Sabbath on the poet's subconscious mind in childhood.

"THE SEA GAVE UP ITS DEAD"

A TRUE STORY

By ETHEL MARY WALLER

MANY years ago, a near relation of the writer, a Mrs. T., had to make a long sea voyage to rejoin her husband, a Government official in a distant part of our far-flung Empire.

She was one of those "sensible" people who "do not believe in ghosts." Moreover, she was very fond of sea-travel and was an excellent sailor; therefore her experience could not in any way have been attributable to an upset state of body or nerves.

The time of year at which she was making her voyage being a very favourite one, and great numbers of passengers being on board, Mrs. T. was considerably surprised at finding allotted to her a large three-berth cabin for her sole use. She was the more surprised as, having applied very late for her passage, she had half expected to hear she was unable to be accommodated with a berth in that steamer at all. However, she was the last person to find fault with fortune for being so kind; and as an old and experienced traveller, she at once set to work to shake down and make herself comfortable.

The first thing she observed was that the stewardess had made up the bed on one of the inner berths.

This did not suit her at all. In a "stuffy" cabin she liked to have all the sea-breeze she could get; and she meant to have it, as the choice lay open to her. Lifting the compactly folded bedding from the inner berth, she transferred it bodily to the berth under the port-hole.

She threw the latter open wide and noted with satisfaction what a very large one it was; it was scarcely above the level of the berth when the bed-clothes had been placed there.

Just before Mrs. T. was about to undress, the stewardess looked in to see that all was right.

Instantly she noticed the change that had been made in the arrangement of the cabin, and appeared to be anything but pleased at it.

"Why has Madam altered the bed when I had made it up for her on the best and most comfortable berth?" she inquired, as she advanced to the port-berth with the evident intention of transferring the bed back to its original position.

"But Mrs. T. quickly interfered.

"I moved the bed because I wished to be under the port-hole," she said, laying a peremptory hand upon the clothes; "and that is the berth upon which I intend to sleep, so please leave the bed where it is and do not move it any more."

"But, Madam," remonstrated the stewardess, "I assure you that this is a most uncomfortable berth upon which to sleep. I know this ship well, and I tell you that that upper, inner berth, upon which I had made the bed at first, is by far the most comfortable berth in this cabin."

"That is immaterial to me," answered Mrs. T., "I don't care what the berth is like, but I must have fresh air, and this is where I shall get it."

"But, Madam," argued the stewardess eagerly, "that is the very point. The port-hole is so large, and so slightly above the level of the bed, that this berth is practically unfit for use—in fact, we never do use it. Whenever there is the least rough weather the sea surges in, soaking the berth and everything on it. I implore you to allow me to return the bed to its original position."

"I really cannot allow anything of the kind," answered Mrs. T. firmly, "this berth is the one upon which I intend to sleep."

The stewardess shrugged her shoulders.

"If you will, Madam, you will!" she remarked resignedly, "but I am convinced you will not be at all comfortable. At least I will do what I can to make

you as little uncomfortable as possible and will re-make the bed, which has become greatly disarranged by being moved from one berth to another."

Mrs. T. could not see that the cleverly folded bed had been at all disarranged by the transit; but if the unnecessary trouble of re-making it pacified the stewardess, by all means let her do it, she thought.

She noticed that the woman, in re-making the bed, changed the head, putting the pillow at the end where, previously, the foot of the bed had been. However, as long as Mrs. T. was directly under the port-hole it was immaterial to her which way her head or her feet lay.

She undressed, climbed into her berth, and in a few minutes fell into a dreamless sleep.

How long she had slept she could not tell, but she was suddenly roused by some pressure on her feet. She started up, awake and alert in an instant.

Directly facing her at the foot of the bed knelt a little child, apparently a year or two old. Clad in a white nightdress, with golden curls falling about its shoulders, and eyes reverently closed, it knelt upon the berth, its tiny hands devoutly clasped, praying fervently.

It was a beautiful spectacle, this golden-tressed, white-robed little worshipper kneeling there oblivious of all except its own devotions; but somehow it was a spectacle that caused Mrs. T.'s hair slowly to rise upon her head. Her creeping flesh told her that that was no living child, that, with closed eyes, was facing her there.

With gaze rivetted ever on the apparition, Mrs. T. crept tremblingly from the bed she had occupied and groped her way to the edge of the opposite berth, where she sat herself down.

It was not until afterwards that she wondered how it was, when the rest of the cabin was plunged in darkness, the apparition itself was as visible as if in the full light of day.

Thus, through what seemed to Mrs. T. the interminably long hours of the night, they remained: Mrs. T. seated on the edge of the inner berth, with eyes fixed on the opposite berth, where, taking not the slightest notice of her, knelt, motionless, the golden-curled child, absorbed in prayer.

At last the first faint streaks of dawn glimmered through the port-hole. Mrs. T. turned thankful eyes to welcome it, for an instant removing in doing so her glance from the apparition.

That instant the child vanished.

When Mrs. T. looked back again there was nothing to be seen. The port-berth was empty. There was not a trace or vestige of a child anywhere.

She rang her bell loudly.

In hurried the stewardess in answer to the summons.

"Where is that golden-haired child that has just run out of my cabin?" inquired Mrs. T. in as ordinary a tone as she could command.

The stewardess looked queer.

"No child has run out of your cabin, Madam."

"Nonsense! I tell you one was here in its nightgown a minute ago. It is not here now, so it must have run out and passed you."

"But I assure you it has not," reiterated the stewardess. "If any child had run out into the passage I should have been aware of it, for I have been going to and fro attending to the sick for the last hour or more, and no child have I seen."

Mrs. T. looked the stewardess steadily between the eyes.

"A golden-curled child, in a white nightgown, has been in this cabin the whole night. You say it has not run out; therefore it must still be here in hiding somewhere. Search the cabin and find it."

The stewardess gave an apprehensive glance around and shook her head.

"If I searched all day, Madam, and every day, I

should never find *that child*—neither would anyone. *It only walks at night.*"

"What rubbish! What do you mean?"

"I mean, Madam, that that is no living child that has spent the night in this cabin with you."

"You think it is a 'ghost'?" laughed Mrs. T. The laugh sounded a little forced.

"I know it, Madam. Everybody who sleeps in this cabin tells the same tale—sees praying at the end of this port-berth this golden-haired child, who has no living existence, but has been dead for years."

"What child is it supposed to be?" asked Mrs. T., with more curiosity than a day previously she would have believed possible to have been awakened in her by the subject of any "ghost." "Do you know if there is any story connected with it?"

"Yes, I know the story well, Madam, as do many others of this ship's company; but we are not permitted to talk about it to the passengers on board. You cannot say that I ever mentioned anything to you to put the idea into your head and to make you see the child because you were expecting to see it. But, as you have seen it—and everyone sees the same, without knowing what the others have seen here—my advice to you is, if you want to hear the whole truth, go and speak to the Captain on the subject."

The Captain gave the following account:

Three or four years previously, a lady had been travelling home to England in that ship with her baby, the golden-curl'd little child that Mrs. T. and so many others had since seen.

They occupied the cabin in which Mrs. T. had slept the preceding night.

Very early one morning, before the mother was up,

PASSING OF CAPTAIN A. A. CARNELL

ON Wednesday, the 11th September, 1940, Capt. Arthur Ashton Carnell, the Hon. Treasurer of the London Spiritualist Alliance, passed away at the age of 78 after a relatively short illness which concluded a long life of industry and adventure.

He came of a Devonshire family and loved that country and would at times delight his friends by speaking in its dialect.

In his youth he was an ardent Volunteer, and held a commission in that Force. He was a crack rifle shot, and carried off many trophies, including the Gold Medal for the World's Championship at the Olympic Games in 1908.

He excelled in micro-photography, and to-day some of his work is to be seen at the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital, and also at a London hospital.

He spent some years in Australia and experienced life in the Bush.

During the 1914-18 War he held a Staff Appointment as Musketry Instructor, and served at both Aldershot and Salisbury camps.

It was during that war that his interest in Spiritualism was aroused by a careful study of the Vale Owen Script. This he indexed for the Rev. G. Vale Owen, and as a consequence, the two became great friends. It was through his friendship with G.V.O. that he came to the office of LIGHT and gave voluntary service to the paper. In 1925 he added to these voluntary labours by becoming associated with the London Spiritualist Alliance. The first work he undertook was the preparation of the Catalogue for the Exhibition of Objects of Psychic Interest, which was held at the Caxton Hall in May, 1925, by the Alliance in connection with a Bazaar, etc., for funds.

Shortly after this he became Hon. Treasurer of the Alliance, and carried on this work without interruption until the week of his passing.

Rarely does a Society benefit by such constant and faithful voluntary work. It is difficult to give full expression to the indebtedness of the Alliance to Capt. Carnell and to the extent of its loss the Council and staff of the Alliance have suffered not only the loss of a valued voluntary worker, but of a loyal and much-loved friend.

M.P.

The FIFTH

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RIDER

DIMENSION

the baby, in its nightdress, was playing on its mother's berth—that berth under the port-hole.

The port-hole was open; the weather was rough and squally.

The child, as children will, was pulling itself up by the bed-clothes unsteadily to its feet.

The ship at that moment gave a sudden, unexpected lurch.

Instantly the baby was shot forward, head first, through the port-hole and engulfed by the waves. All efforts to rescue it were futile; neither was its body ever recovered.

"Since that time," concluded the Captain, "its ghost has persistently haunted that cabin. No one knows why it comes or what it wants. It takes not the slightest notice of anybody. Always it kneels in the same position on that same berth, praying silently throughout the night."

"That is all I can tell you about the matter, further explanation there is none."

Mrs. T. the next evening did not remain in that cabin; in spite of the crowding on board, she managed to get squeezed in somewhere else.

So she never saw the white-robed baby again, and when she had left the ship and the occurrence had somewhat faded from her mind, she came to the conclusion that she must, that night, have been the victim of an hallucination.

Who can tell what is the truth?

Did Mrs. T. and the ship's Captain and various stewardesses, and innumerable other independent witnesses, all suffer from precisely the same hallucination that would have been the last sort of one the majority would have been expecting to see or conjure up? Or, as the gallant ship in which the tragedy had occurred ploughed the waves on its many voyages to and fro across the ocean, did nightly, the sea give up its dead?

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