



**WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS IN THE QUR'AN QURAISH
SHIHAB'S PERSPECTIVE IN TAFSIR AL-MISBAH**

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Abstract

In the study of Islamic exegesis, the issue of gender equality—particularly regarding women's economic rights—often receives insufficient attention. Most traditional interpretations tend to uphold patriarchal views that limit women's roles in the economic sphere. Using a library research method, this study finds that Quraish Shihab's approach differs from traditional interpretations, which tend to be literal and ignore the socio-cultural context of the time. Through his moderate and contextual approach, Quraish Shihab allows for a reinterpretation of Qur'anic verses so they remain relevant to contemporary developments. This enables the application of just and inclusive Islamic values across various aspects of life, including in the economic domain. His interpretation does not advocate for absolute equality but rather aligns rights and responsibilities according to individual capacities, making it more relevant to modern social dynamics. The findings show that Islam provides space for women to participate in economic activities, own property, work, and manage assets independently, while upholding the principle of justice rather than absolute equality. Therefore, women's economic rights must be recognized and protected in accordance with their capacities and responsibilities.

Keywords: Women's economic rights, gender justice, Quraish Shihab

Abstract

Dalam studi tafsir Islam, isu kesetaraan gender—khususnya mengenai hak ekonomi perempuan—seringkali kurang mendapat perhatian. Sebagian besar interpretasi tradisional cenderung menjunjung tinggi pandangan patriarki yang membatasi peran perempuan di bidang ekonomi. Dengan menggunakan metode riset pustaka, studi ini menemukan bahwa pendekatan Quraish Shihab berbeda dari interpretasi tradisional yang cenderung literal dan mengabaikan konteks sosial budaya pada masanya. Melalui pendekatannya yang moderat dan kontekstual, Quraish Shihab memungkinkan penafsiran ulang ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an agar tetap relevan dengan perkembangan kontemporer. Hal ini memungkinkan penerapan nilai-nilai Islam yang adil dan inklusif di berbagai aspek kehidupan, termasuk di bidang ekonomi. Interpretasinya tidak menganjurkan kesetaraan absolut, melainkan menyelaraskan hak dan tanggung jawab sesuai dengan kemampuan individu, sehingga lebih relevan dengan dinamika sosial modern. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Islam memberikan ruang bagi perempuan untuk berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan ekonomi, memiliki harta benda, bekerja, dan mengelola aset secara mandiri, sambil tetap menjunjung tinggi prinsip keadilan daripada kesetaraan absolut. Oleh karena itu, hak-hak ekonomi perempuan harus diakui dan dilindungi sesuai dengan kemampuan dan tanggung jawab mereka.

Kata kunci: Hak-hak ekonomi perempuan, keadilan gender, Quraish Shihab

I. INTRODUCTION

Islam truly honors women, long before feminist activists championed their rights and established the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Quran provides solutions to achieve human rights for women, as outlined in various messages and verses. When we examine Islamic law, we find that it does not differentiate between men and women in various financial transactions, such as ownership rights, buying and selling, leasing, gifts, endowments, guarantees, and various other transactions.

Economically, Muslim-majority countries have relatively lower rates of female economic participation compared to non-Muslim countries with similar levels of economic growth. Economic indicators show that among the ten countries with the highest rates of job compression between men and women, among them are the Arab countries of Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which ranks first in terms of job compression between men and women. Gender equality and women's economic empowerment are crucial factors for achieving economic growth and sustainable development. Globally, addressing the gender gap would increase GDP by \$12 billion by 2025. The view that Islam grants equal rights to men often contrasts with the empirical reality regarding women's status in the Muslim world, including in the economic sphere, as demonstrated by the data above.

However, interpretations of Islamic texts regarding women's rights often exhibit a patriarchal bias. Al-Na'im argues that the concept of qawamah in Q.S. al-Nisa [4]: 34 was often interpreted by classical scholars as male guardianship over women. This concept then had further implications for women's status and rights in both the private and public spheres. This concept was used by historical Islamic law to justify men's authority and superiority over women not only within the family but also within the community. However, this is distorted by biased patriarchal interpretations and reinforced by a deeply patriarchal political and societal system.

Similarly, Nasaruddin Umar seeks to encourage society to critically examine normative assumptions about male superiority over women, based on religious evidence. There is also wisdom in his interpretation, which truly considers women's rights and obligations without discrimination based on social status. In fact, many figures hold moderate views regarding

women's economic rights in Islam, and feminist figure Yusuf al-Qaradawi demonstrates particularly strong characteristics of moderation. The ability of women to work outside the home under certain conditions demonstrates the comprehensiveness and moderation of Yusuf al-Qaradawi's jurisprudential thinking, while adhering to moral values that represent the fundamental vision of Islam.

However, Quraish Shihab's opinion demonstrates that women are equal and have the same opportunities as men, according to their respective natures. He also does not demand absolute equality between men and women, as he believes that women's true independence can be achieved by respecting their identity as women, not by making them like men. Women must also be themselves. To achieve dignity and independence and safeguard their rights, nature, and identity, women must not only feel equal to men but, more than that, they must prove it through their abilities in the real world.

Therefore, we will explain Quraish Shihab's interpretation of verses related to women's economic rights and analyze Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Quranic verses that discuss Women's Economic Rights.

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

General Concept of Women's Economic Rights in Islam and Its Social Context

Before the advent of Islam, women's economic rights were very limited and virtually unrecognized in various civilizations. In Greek civilization, women were considered mere instruments to meet men's needs and lacked independent economic rights. In Rome, women were completely under the control of their fathers or husbands, so all the fruits of their labor belonged to the men. Hindu and Chinese civilizations were more extreme, where a woman had no right to survive after her husband's death. In Judaism and Christianity, women were often considered the source of sin and denied the right to own their own wealth. Women did not begin to gain recognition for their economic rights until the advent of Islam.

Islam grants women the right to own property, whether through inheritance, dowry, or the fruits of their own labor. This right also extends to managing their property without interference from their husbands or guardians, something that was unheard of in previous civilizations. In Islam, women also have the right to work and trade, as exemplified by Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, a successful businesswoman, and more. Islam emphasizes that women are not obligated to provide for their families, but they do have the right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. If a woman works, her earnings are hers, unlike men who must provide for their families.

The difference in inheritance distribution between men and women is often a matter of debate. However, Islam states that men receive a larger share because they bear greater economic responsibility. Men are obligated to provide for their wives, children, and families, while women do not have this obligation. Therefore, although women receive a smaller share of the inheritance, they still enjoy economic security from various other sources, including dowries, living expenses, and the right to the fruits of their own labor. Thus, the Islamic economic system does not arbitrarily discriminate between men and women, but is based on justice and balance.

Allah says in Q.S An-Nisa/4:32:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا أَكْتَسَبُوا ۖ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا أَكْتَسَبْنَ

Meaning: "...And do not envy the bounty which Allah has bestowed upon some of you above others..." (QS An-Nisa/4:32)

This verse emphasizes that one should not be deceived by what Allah has given to humanity, including the economic aspect. Everyone receives their sustenance according to Allah's will and destiny. Therefore, envying the privileges of others will only lead to injustice and hatred. In the context of women's economic rights, Islam provides a fair distribution for men and women according to their responsibilities and roles. Women have the right to manage their own businesses, whether in the form of ownership, inheritance, or a dowry from their husbands. This verse also emphasizes that women should not be jealous of men who have more inherited wealth, because they have other economic rights guaranteed by Islam, such as the husband's obligation to provide for them.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The right to a dowry as a symbol of commitment and honor

وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدَقَتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبَّنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَّرِيًّا

Meaning: "Give a dowry to the woman (who you marry) as a willing gift. Then, if they hand over to you part of it (the dowry) happily, accept it and enjoy the gift with pleasure" (Q. S An-Nisa/4: 4)

Quraish Shihab in his interpretation of Al-Misbah interprets that this verse emphasizes the importance of giving a dowry to the woman he marries as a form of loyalty and responsibility of the husband. The dowry must be given sincerely and without coercion, and the wife has full rights over it, including if she wants to return it to her husband. The word "sadaqat" (truth) is mentioned in this verse, because the dowry is proof of the husband's promise and his sincerity in marriage. The dowry also symbolizes the husband's willingness to

fulfill his wife's needs and his sincerity in keeping family secrets. In Surah Al-Baqarah verse 236 it is stated that the dowry is the husband's obligation and is not part of the marriage contract. The marriage remains valid even if the dowry is not mentioned in the marriage contract. The giving of a dowry reflects the natural human instinct, where a man is responsible for providing for his wife and family, just as in the lives of animals, where men are the ones who feed and protect women.

Islam has commanded fathers and guardians not to seize a wife's property without right. The dowry is a wife's personal right, not a family right. Therefore, the dowry is interpreted as a husband's commitment to his wife, a sign of seriousness, and a symbol of the man's love for the woman within the marriage bond.

On the other hand, the dowry can also be understood as a form of respect for a person's humanity and a symbol of honesty in maintaining her dignity. Thus, Islam restores the dignity and financial rights of women that were violated during the period of ignorance (jahiliyyah).

The primary purpose of the dowry in Islam is to maintain a woman's honor and ensure marital responsibility. The dowry is not merely a material gift, but also a symbol of the husband's commitment and respect for his wife. However, in practice, there is inequality in determining the dowry amount. Some increase the dowry to the point of being burdensome for the prospective husband, while others lower it below the appropriate limit. In such circumstances, a balance must be struck in determining the dowry, taking into account the man's capabilities without diminishing the woman's rights and dignity. Furthermore, excessive parental interference in determining the dowry can hinder the marriage process and even lead to social problems such as adultery. Therefore, all parties must be aware that determining the dowry must be done wisely and fairly, without unduly burdening either party, so that the marriage can be carried out harmoniously and in accordance with Islamic values.

The right to maintenance and financial responsibility within the family

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّاهُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ
Meaning: "Men (husbands) are responsible for women (wives), because Allah has made some of them excel others (women), and because they (men) have spent out of their wealth..." (QS An-Nisa/4:34)

Quraish Shihab interprets this verse regarding family support, stating that husbands must provide support to their wives and children, whether willingly or unwillingly. It remains the husband's obligation as head of the family to provide support, not only in monetary terms. It

can also take the form of other things, such as housing, food, clothing, education, healthcare, and so on, which are basic needs.

The law of providing family support is obligatory because a contract has been established between husband and wife that creates rights and obligations between them. This law is obligatory for a divorced wife, even if she is pregnant and the divorce is irrevocable. The husband is obligated to provide support during pregnancy until delivery. If the wife wishes to breastfeed her child, the husband is obligated to provide support to her. This support is in accordance with the husband's circumstances, conditions, and abilities, as there are no specific provisions regarding family support. This is due to the conditions and customs existing in society, which naturally vary from one society to another.

If we look at the current family context, the situation is completely different from the past. Women today are given the same space and opportunities as men, in terms of education, employment, social and political roles, and so on. This has resulted in equality between women and men in all areas, and in fact, women can outperform men in some areas. In the domestic context: wives have higher education than their husbands, wives earn more than their husbands, and their social and political roles outweigh their husbands.

The limitations on the wife's role stem from an unequal understanding of the primary role of women (wives) in society. Society considers the wife's duty as a housewife to be natural and God-given. This ignores the partial understanding of traditional translators and Islamic legal experts and the influence of the patriarchal system at that time. They view the status of women (wives) as little different from that of servants whose only duty is to serve their husbands' wishes. This is what is strongly opposed by Contemporary feminists and Islamic thinkers have focused on the family. The relationship between husband and wife should be mutually beneficial, complementing each other.

The relationship between husband and wife should be based on cooperation and mutual understanding. Just as the husband bears the responsibility of providing a living and protecting the family, the wife also plays a role in caring for the family and managing household affairs. When husband and wife work together in a spirit of love and respect, harmony and happiness will be achieved in their married life, making the family strong and stable.

Furthermore, women who work should continue to receive financial support from their husbands. Conversely, if the woman earns a substantial income, there should be a balance between husband and wife regarding financial responsibilities. In many cases, agreement can be reached between husband and wife regarding the division of economic responsibilities

within the family, as long as it is based on the principles of justice and reciprocity. The interpretation of verses related to livelihood paves the way for a more flexible and relevant interpretation in addressing modern family dynamics.

In conclusion, Islam strongly emphasizes the husband's responsibility to provide for his wife and family, regardless of whether the wife works or has her own income. This demonstrates that women still have respected economic rights within marriage. However, in practice, the concept of the family breadwinner is often influenced by social norms and gender perceptions that still position men as the sole breadwinners.

Inheritance rights and the principle of justice in the distribution of assets

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

This means: "For men there is a right to a share of what parents and relatives leave, and for women there is a right to a share of what parents and relatives leave, whether it be small or large, according to a predetermined share." (Quran 4:7)

In this verse, the terms "men" and "women" refer to adults and children. This indicates that inheritance rights are granted regardless of age, so that even girls have the right to inherit. The word "obligatory" comes from the word "obligatory," which means a mandatory decree that comes from God Almighty. Therefore, these decrees are absolute and cannot be changed or ignored by humans.

Inheritance rights for women in Islam are part of social justice regulated by Allah SWT. The distribution of inheritance aims to maintain balance within the family and prevent women from experiencing economic disadvantage. This verse also introduces more detailed rules regarding inheritance, which will be explained later in Islamic law. Therefore, rejecting or changing these inheritance provisions is considered a violation of God's law. Islam emphasizes that men and women have clear rights to inheritance, so there is no discrimination in the ownership and distribution of inheritance.

Islam is an ideal religion that regulates all aspects of human life, including the distribution of inheritance. In Islamic law, the distribution of inheritance is regulated based on existing provisions as outlined in the verses on inheritance in the Quran, thus serving as guidance and direction for Muslims.

Inheritance law is also a crucial issue in Islam, as inheritance is a right of every human being, and God has determined its distribution based on justice and wisdom to ensure a balanced and equitable distribution of inheritance between generations. Inheritance in Islam is

not merely the distribution of property, but also a means of achieving social balance and maintaining family unity, as each person receives their share according to their degree of kinship with the deceased and their role and responsibilities within the family.

Islamic law has established a specific portion for each heir, which cannot be violated, either by increasing it for those who are not entitled or decreasing it for those who are entitled. The Islamic inheritance system is distinguished by the principle of divine justice, not absolute equality. Justice means giving everyone their rights according to their needs and obligations.

The concept of justice in inheritance law, particularly regarding the 1:2 division between men and women, is often discussed in feminist studies because it is considered unfair in a modern social context. Before Islam, women did not receive a share in inheritance but were instead assigned a share of the estate. Islam then made changes by granting women inheritance rights, albeit in smaller amounts than men. This difference is due to men's responsibilities as the primary breadwinners of the family.

Al-Qasimi also outlined the rationale for dividing inheritance by giving men twice the share of women. First, men have greater needs to support their families than women. Second, the burden of earning a living through work or trade is typically borne by men. Therefore, men receive a larger share of the inheritance as compensation for their greater responsibility for care. Therefore, although women's inheritance shares are smaller, this does not mean that they are deprived of their rights. Rather, it reflects a broader principle of justice, where inheritance distribution is adjusted to the obligations and responsibilities of each individual in society.

However, the rationale for dividing inheritance by giving men twice the share of women is disputed by Amina Wadud, who argues that inheritance distribution should take into account three crucial considerations. First, the distribution between men and women, considering the needs of both, is very relative, so women can receive a larger share than men when their needs are greater. Second, wealth should be inherited equally, without discrimination between men and women because of the equality of life they enjoy. Third, considerations must be based on the sense of loss experienced by the heirs, their contributions to the deceased, and their contributions to the inheritance itself.

However, Islam emphasizes that women can manage their inheritance rights independently. With developments in law and gender awareness, women's inheritance rights must be implemented more fairly in accordance with Islamic principles of justice. Changes to the inheritance system must take Islamic values into account to remain relevant to current

developments. Thus, the Islamic inheritance system can still uphold the values of justice for both men and women.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that Islam regulates the distribution of inheritance based on the principle of justice and a balance of the rights and responsibilities of each individual within the family. Although men receive a larger share of the inheritance, this does not constitute discrimination against women, but rather serves as compensation for the financial responsibilities they must bear. On the other hand, women continue to enjoy inheritance rights and full freedom over their property without the obligation to support their families. This reflects justice in the social and economic context according to Islamic teachings, which aims to maintain prosperity and balance in social life.

Women's Rights to Work and Contribution to Society

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

This means: "Whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, We will certainly give them a good life and We will certainly reward them with the best of what they did." (Quran 16:97)

Quraish Shihab explains in his commentary on Al-Misbah that this verse emphasizes the principle of justice in assessing human actions, without discrimination between men and women. Both men and women who perform righteous deeds based on faith will attain a good life in this world and a better reward in the hereafter.

In Islam, women not only have the right to work but are also required to contribute to beneficial activities. Any act performed by women, as long as it does not conflict with religious values, is considered a righteous deed. The Quran emphasizes that women can play an active role in various areas of life without losing the values of their faith.

Scholars differ in their definition of righteous deeds, but the basic principle encompasses any act that is beneficial and does not cause harm. Examples of righteous deeds include striving to protect the environment, being honest in business, and avoiding actions that harm others.

Furthermore, women who work and perform righteous deeds will gain satisfaction and benefit themselves and society. Islam does not restrict women's participation in the workforce, as long as they uphold moral values. Therefore, this verse is an important basis for affirming women's right to work and contribute to social life and community development.

Islam does not prohibit women from working; instead, it encourages them to play an effective role in building society and achieving development. Work is an honor for everyone, both men and women, and is a means of earning a lawful income and meeting one's needs.

Women worked during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in various fields, demonstrating that Islam does not prohibit women from working within the bounds of the law. Many female companions also excelled in fields such as nursing, such as Rufaidah Al-Aslamiah (may Allah be pleased with her), who cared for the wounded in battle. Furthermore, women worked in education, and we find Sayyidah Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) as one of the greatest female jurists of her time, who passed on knowledge to generations of men and women. Women also participated in agriculture and handicrafts, making positive contributions to the Islamic economy.

In the Quran, men are recognized as the "supporters" of the family, but this does not mean that women are not allowed to work. Women who work have various motivations, ranging from contributing to the family's finances to developing careers and hobbies. Women's right to work must be respected as part of the human rights guaranteed by Islam. Therefore, policies are needed that support a balance between women's roles in work and domestic life. With proper support, women can pursue careers without sacrificing their family roles. In conclusion, Islam does not prohibit women from working, but emphasizes the balance between professional and family responsibilities as the key to a harmonious life.

It is fair for women to have job opportunities that match their skills and abilities, without unfair discrimination between women and men, as long as the work does not conflict with their nature or role in building a family. A woman is capable of achieving success and excellence in any field, whether she is a doctor, engineer, teacher, or entrepreneur.

The presence of women in the workplace enhances the economic and social development of Islamic states. Islam also advocates fairness in the distribution of opportunities between the sexes and encourages women to achieve financial independence without neglecting other duties. Employment for women, provided it remains within the legal framework, is not only permitted in Islam but also part of the development and progress of society, contributing to a balance between family life and the economy. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of balancing family and work responsibilities for working women. He stated that although women have the ability to pursue careers, they must ensure that they do not neglect their domestic responsibilities.

In fact, the negative impact on working women lies in how they manage their time as wives and mothers, according to Islamic teachings. We must not forget the role of women, particularly as homemakers. Therefore, women's attention to family development is crucial, as this is one of the most important tasks in the development of society in general. The progress and decline of a society and the fall of a nation are closely related to the condition of the family units that make up that society. The problem facing working women is that their work, especially as wives, hinders the realization of the rights of their husbands and children, and causes women (wives) to neglect their responsibilities. This is feared to occur and negatively impact the well-being of the family and the development of children who are allowed to work. However, if these concerns can be addressed and the presence of working women truly helps strengthen the family economy, it would be beneficial if women were given the freedom and space to work.

Families and communities should support working women in every possible way. Husbands and children should provide a comfortable environment for working women to balance work and home. The workplace should also provide appropriate conditions that respect women's rights. Supporting women in the workplace contributes to improving the economic situation of families and communities, and cooperation between husband and wife helps reduce the burden on working women. Society must recognize that a woman's success in her work is a success for the entire community. Encouraging women to work increases their independence and decision-making abilities, and when women receive appropriate support, they become more capable of creativity and productivity. Couples and families should support each other to achieve this balance. Society should be more open and supportive of women in their professional advancement, as long as this is done with consideration and respect for religious and family values.

IV. CONCLUSION

Quraish Shihab's commentary explains that Islam grants women the right to own property, whether through inheritance, a dowry, or the proceeds of their own labor. This includes the right to manage their property without interference from their husbands or guardians, something that did not exist in previous civilizations. In Islam, women also have the right to work and trade. Differences in the distribution of property are not discrimination, but part of the balance of economic responsibilities between men and women.

One of these rights for women is the right to a dowry. The primary purpose of a dowry in Islam is to maintain a woman's honor and ensure marital responsibilities. A dowry is not

merely a material gift, but also a symbol of a husband's commitment and respect for his wife. Determining the dowry must be done wisely and fairly, and must not be excessively burdensome to either party, so that the marriage can be harmonious and in accordance with Islamic values.

The second right for women is the right to maintenance. A husband is obligated to provide maintenance to his wife and children. Maintenance is not limited to money. It can also take the form of other things, such as housing, food, clothing, education, healthcare, and so on, which are basic needs. Providing for one's family is obligatory because a contract has been established between husband and wife, creating rights and obligations between them. Furthermore, a working woman must continue to receive financial support from her husband. Conversely, if the woman earns a substantial income, there must be a balance between husband and wife regarding financial responsibility. In many cases, an agreement can be reached between husband and wife regarding the division of economic responsibilities within the family, provided it is based on the principles of justice and reciprocity.

The next right is inheritance rights for women. Women's rights in inheritance in Islam were established by Allah SWT to ensure justice in the distribution of inheritance. Before the revelation of verses regarding inheritance, women often did not receive a share of inheritance because they did not play a role in war or in earning a living. However, Islam has emphasized that women, both young and old, have the same rights to inheritance as men, albeit in smaller amounts. This difference is due to men's responsibilities as the primary breadwinners of the family.

And the final economic right for women is the right to work. In Islam, women not only have the right to work but are also required to contribute to beneficial activities. Actions performed by women, as long as they do not conflict with religious values, are considered pious deeds. Islam does not prohibit women from working; instead, it encourages them to play an effective role in building society and achieving development. Work is an honor for everyone, both men and women, and is a means of earning a lawful income and meeting one's needs. Women worked during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in various fields, demonstrating that Islam does not prohibit women from working as long as it remains within the bounds of the law.

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