

Making Da'wah a Medium for Critical Educational Transformation against Secularism and Capitalism

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Abstrak

Secularism and capitalism are crucial problems for modern society, and Muslims are no exception. This qualitative research in the form of a literature study aims to describe the role of da'wah as a medium for critical education on the phenomena of secularism and capitalism. A prescriptive analysis approach was used in this study. Meanwhile, social philosophy theory is used as the perspective foundation. The results of the study show that Islamic da'wah has ontological, epistemological, and axiological bases in the transformation of critical educational values towards the problems of secularism and capitalism, so that da'wah can become a medium for spiritual, ethical, and humanitarian internalisation amidst the social problems of modern society. The contribution of this research affirms that Islamic da'wah can be a medium for the transformation of critical educational values in responding to the problems of modernity.

Kata Kunci: Da'wah, Critical Education, Secularism, Capitalism

Abstract

Sekularisme dan kapitalisme menjadi bagian problem krusial bagi masyarakat modern, tidak terkecuali umat Islam. Penelitian kualitatif berupa studi pustaka ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran dakwah sebagai media pendidikan kritis terhadap fenomena sekularisme dan kapitalisme. Pendekatan analisa preskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Sementara itu, teori filsafat sosial dijadikan landasan perspektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dakwah Islam memiliki basis ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis dalam transformasi nilai-nilai pendidikan kritis terhadap problem sekularisme dan kapitalisme, sehingga dakwah dapat menjadi media internalisasi spiritual, etis, dan kemanusiaan di tengah problem sosial masyarakat modern. Kontribusi penelitian ini menegaskan dakwah Islam dapat menjadi medium transformasi nilai-nilai pendidikan kritis dalam merespons problem modernitas.

Keywords: *Dakwah, Pendidikan Kritis, Sekularisme, Kapitalisme*

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern civilisation, driven by secular rationality and the capitalist economic system, has brought about significant changes in the social structure, mindset, and value orientation of global society. Secularism, for example, as an epistemological and ideological framework, has the potential to encourage the separation of religion from the public sphere and reduce religion to a private matter that loses its critical power over social structures (Hudaeri, 2018).

Meanwhile, modern capitalism places capital accumulation, economic efficiency, and market logic as the main principles in regulating social relations, which in turn gives rise to the commodification of values, human exploitation, and structural inequality. This phenomenon not only has an impact on economic and political aspects, but also causes a crisis of meaning, existential alienation, and ethical degradation in social life.

Furthermore, in the context of Muslim life, the penetration of secularism and capitalism often has a negative impact on religious practices, including da'wah. Da'wah can experience a reduction in meaning, from a practice of social transformation to a symbolic, ritualistic activity, or even a media commodity (Pamungkas, 2018). Therefore, messages of da'wah are often trapped in the logic of popularity, the market, and pragmatic interests, thereby losing their power to transform critical educational values against the structures of injustice and moral crisis produced by modern civilisation.

As a result, da'wah risks deviating from its prophetic mandate as an instrument of liberation and enlightenment for the people. In fact, when linked to modern social philosophy, through the thoughts of figures such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and the Frankfurt School, sharp criticism has long been levelled at instrumental rationality, alienation, and structural domination in modern society. However, these critiques are often immanent and detached from the transcendent dimension. It is in this context that Islamic preaching can actually have a strategic position in the transformation of social criticism education values, which are based on the paradigm of tawhid, namely combining structural criticism with a metaphysical foundation and transcendent ethics.

This study aims to describe the role of da'wah as a medium for critical education on the phenomena of secularism and capitalism. Using a descriptive and prescriptive approach, this study employs social philosophy theory as its theoretical foundation. Based on this reality, this study aims to describe how secularism and capitalism as paradigms of modern civilisation have created a crisis of values, meaning, and social justice in contemporary society, and how Islamic da'wah can be understood and positioned as a transformation of critical social education values in modern civilisation from a social philosophy perspective.

Previous relevant studies include Hamzah et al., whose research shows that secular education creates a separation between science and religion, resulting in students potentially experiencing a moral crisis because education loses its connection with Islamic spiritual values (Hamzah dkk., 2021). Hasby's research then states that combining Islamic education with critical pedagogy can enrich educational practices so that they are not merely a transfer of knowledge, but also shape reflective awareness and social

responsibility in facing modern structures of injustice (Hasby, 2025). Furthermore, Suncaka explains in his research that educational capitalism shifts the orientation of education into an economic commodity that is subject to market logic, efficiency, and profit, while neglecting the goals of critical awareness and social justice as emphasised in the Islamic educational perspective (Suncaka, 2023). Both of these tendencies contribute to the humanitarian crisis and social inequality in contemporary society.

A number of other studies, such as Hussein's research, emphasise that efforts to Islamise critical pedagogy are also considered important in responding to the dominance of secular epistemology in Muslim education (Hussien, 2007). Then, Inayati et al., in their research related to the study of Qur'anic liberation philosophy, emphasised that da'wah can play a role as an educational practice that liberates and transforms social values in the face of the hegemony of secularism and modern capitalism (Inayati dkk., 2025).

Unlike the various previous studies mentioned above, this study places greater emphasis on prescriptive analysis of the role of da'wah so that it is not merely positioned as a normative religious activity, but rather as a transformation of critical educational values that are relevant in responding to the crises of modern civilisation, particularly secularism and capitalism.

This study is urgently needed based on the following arguments. First, theoretically, this study is necessary to broaden the scientific horizon of da'wah so that it does not stop at a normative and technical communication approach, but develops as a critical discipline with a solid social philosophical foundation. The integration of da'wah and social philosophy allows for the emergence of a more comprehensive social criticism educational framework in reading the problems of the ummah and civilisation. Second, epistemologically, this research is important to affirm the position of Islamic da'wah as a source of criticism of secularism and capitalism, as well as an alternative paradigm of civilisation (Ma'sa, 2020). Thirdly, in practical terms, this research is relevant for reformulating the orientation of contemporary da'wah so that it is not co-opted by market logic and pragmatic interests, but remains committed to social education values that fight for social justice, defend the oppressed, and foster critical awareness among the people. Therefore, this research is urgent.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilises a qualitative approach with library research. Descriptive and prescriptive approaches are employed in this study. Meanwhile, social philosophy theory serves as the basis for perspective. Research data is obtained through documentation techniques. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data includes major works in social philosophy and da'wah thought, such as writings on secularism, capitalism, and criticism of modernity from social philosophy figures, as well as classical and contemporary literature discussing the concepts of Islamic da'wah, tauhid, amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, and social justice. Secondary data consists of books, scientific

journal articles, proceedings, and other academic documents relevant to the research theme.

Furthermore, data analysis was conducted in several stages, namely in-depth reading of the text, concept mapping, and critical interpretation of the relationship between Islamic preaching and criticism of modern civilisation. A social philosophy approach was used to interpret the reality of modern civilisation as a social construct laden with ideological interests, while an Islamic preaching perspective was used to assess and critique this construct based on the paradigm of tawhid and the values of social justice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Secularism and Capitalism as Paradigm Problems in Modern Society

Secularism and capitalism are the two main pillars that form the paradigm of modern civilisation. According to Bakir, secularism is often regarded as a form of modernity, characterised by rationality as its core identity (Mustakim, 2022). Both do not only function as theoretical concepts or specific social systems, but have also transformed into worldviews that influence the thinking structures, value orientations, and social relationship patterns of modern humans.

From a social philosophy perspective, secularism and capitalism are intertwined to form the ideological foundation that guides the development of modern Western civilisation (Nurhalim dkk., 2023). And, through the process of globalisation, it has influenced societies in various parts of the world, including Muslim societies. By definition, secularism can be understood as a belief that separates religion from public affairs and places religion as a private matter for individuals. Secularism does not necessarily mean rejection of the existence of God, but it affirms that religious values have no authority in regulating social, political, and economic life. In this context, truth and social norms are determined by human rationality, social consensus, and pragmatic interests, not by revelation or transcendent values. Religious arguments must be 'translated' into common language in order to be valid in the public sphere (Kaltsas, 2019). Thinkers such as Max Weber see secularisation as part of the process of modern rationalisation, in which the world is understood mechanistically and freed from sacred meaning (the disenchantment of the world) (Cahn, 2009).

Capitalism is generally defined as an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production, free market mechanisms, and an orientation towards profit accumulation (Venkatesh, 2025). Capitalism operates not only as an economic system, but also as an ideology that shapes the mentality and culture of society. Within the framework of capitalism, values such as efficiency, productivity, competition, and material gain become the main benchmarks for individual and societal success. Karl Marx viewed capitalism as a system that inherently gives rise to exploitative and alienating relationships, in which humans are estranged from their humanity because they are reduced to commodities and labour (Øversveen & Kelly, 2023; Tunderman, 2021).

Furthermore, the historical roots of secularism can be traced back to Europe's historical experiences during the Middle Ages, particularly the conflict between ecclesiastical authority and political power (Casanova, 2006). The dominance of the church, which was considered repressive and anti-science, led to the birth of intellectual liberation movements during the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Many French Revolution reformers sought to remove the influence of religion from education as part of a project to create a 'new man' and a new social order, justified in the name of rationality and science (Cubas Ramacciotti, 2024). The thinking of figures such as René Descartes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant affirmed the supremacy of human reason as the primary source of knowledge and moral legitimacy. In this process, religion was gradually removed from the public sphere and replaced by secular rationality as the basis for the organisation of modern society.

Furthermore, the term capitalism grew alongside the collapse of feudalism and the development of the bourgeois class in Europe. The industrial revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries accelerated economic and social transformation, while consolidating capitalism as the dominant system (Adilah, 2021). Max Weber, in his thesis on Protestant ethics, showed that the values of asceticism, hard work, and economic rationality in the Protestant tradition contributed to the emergence of modern capitalism. However, in its development, capitalism broke away from its ethical-religious roots and developed into an autonomous system subject only to market logic.

In terms of thought, secularism and capitalism are both rooted in anthropocentrism (Curry, 2007), namely, a view that places humans at the centre of reality and as the source of value. Truth is no longer understood as something absolute and transcendent, but rather as relative and contextual. Instrumental rationality—as criticised by the Frankfurt School—has become the dominant paradigm, in which reason is used primarily as a tool to achieve practical and material goals, rather than for the search for meaning and ultimate truth. As a result, ethical and spiritual dimensions tend to be marginalised in modern life.

The impact of secularism and capitalism on modern civilisation is complex and multidimensional. On the one hand, these two paradigms contribute to the advancement of science, technology and the efficiency of social systems. However, on the other hand, they also give rise to various structural crises. Secularism contributes to a crisis of meaning and existential emptiness, as humans lose their transcendent orientation in life. Life is understood in a fragmented and utilitarian way, so that moral values become relative and easily negotiable.

Capitalism, in practice, deepens social and economic inequality (Bresser-Pereira, 2014). The logic of capital accumulation encourages the exploitation of natural and human resources, creating a wide gap between rich and poor groups. Furthermore, capitalism also gives rise to a culture of consumerism and commodification, in which almost all aspects of life—including religion, education, and social relations—are reduced to market commodities. In this context, human values are often sacrificed for economic interests.

Furthermore, the synergy between secularism and capitalism has shaped modern civilisation, which tends to remove the transcendent ethical dimension from the public

sphere (Smith, 2006). Public policy, the education system, and the mass media are controlled more by market logic and pragmatic interests than by values of justice and public welfare. This situation has led to a crisis of moral legitimacy, in which there is no solid foundation of values to correct structural deviations and injustices.

From a critical perspective, modern civilisation built on secularism and capitalism reveals a fundamental paradox: material progress does not always correlate with moral and spiritual progress (Ola Suan, 2025). Modern humans may live in technological abundance, but they experience alienation, anxiety, and identity crises. Therefore, understanding secularism and capitalism as paradigms of modern civilisation is an important step in opening up space for criticism and reflection, as well as a starting point for the search for alternative paradigms of civilisation that are more just, meaningful, and humanistic.

Islamic Da'wah from a Social Philosophy Perspective

Islamic preaching is essentially a prophetic activity that aims to guide humans towards a life that is in accordance with God's will. However, in the context of modern society, which is characterised by the dominance of secularism and capitalism, preaching cannot be understood narrowly as a ritualistic activity or the delivery of individual moral messages alone. Secular modernity is described as relegating religion to the private sphere, weakening the role of divine values in the public sphere and giving rise to a 'crisis of modernity' that has triggered a revival of Islam as a religious correction to secularism and capitalism (Ali, 2022). Dakwah needs to be positioned as a social praxis that directly confronts the structures, ideologies, and power relations that shape the reality of society. This is where the perspective of social philosophy becomes relevant in reading dakwah as an activity that has critical, emancipatory, and transformational dimensions.

Conceptually, Islamic preaching is rooted in the prophetic mission that necessitates a change in consciousness and social order (Said, 2001). The Qur'an describes da'wah as the process of inviting people to the path of Allah with wisdom, good advice, and argumentative dialogue. However, this invitation does not stop at the individual level, but also targets oppressive and unjust social structures. In Islamic history, the da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not only instilled the creed of tawhid, but also challenged the jahiliyyah social system, which was rife with inequality, exploitation, and dehumanisation. Thus, from the outset, da'wah had a strong character of social criticism.

Social philosophy views society as a historical construct shaped by ideology, economic relations, and power structures. From this perspective, social reality is not neutral, but rather fraught with interests and domination. Social philosophers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and the Frankfurt School emphasise that human consciousness is often shaped by hegemonic social systems (Bakri, 2020). False consciousness makes individuals accept injustice as something normal. In this context, Islamic preaching can be understood as an effort to liberate consciousness from misleading ideological domination.

Da'wah in the perspective of social philosophy does not only function as the transmission of normative teachings, but as a process of critical consciousness. Tawhid, as the core of Islamic da'wah, is not merely a theological doctrine, but a principle of liberation that rejects all forms of servitude other than to Allah. Within this framework, secularism and capitalism can be seen as forms of a 'new divinity' that controls the orientation of modern human life. The preaching of monotheism is present to dismantle this illusion and return humans to a complete existential consciousness.

From an ontological perspective, Islamic preaching departs from the view of humans as dignified beings created for the purpose of worship and stewardship. Humans are not reduced to *homo economicus* as in capitalism, or autonomous rational subjects detached from transcendent values as in secularism. Da'wah affirms that human existence is always bound by moral and social responsibilities. This ontological perspective provides a strong basis for da'wah to criticise social structures that oppress and demean human dignity.

Epistemologically, Islamic preaching combines revelation, reason, and social reality as sources of knowledge. Unlike secular epistemology, which removes revelation from the public sphere, Islamic preaching uses revelation as a source of values and orientation in interpreting reality. However, preaching does not reject the role of reason and empirical experience. From a social philosophy perspective, this approach enables da'wah to engage in reflective and contextual criticism without being trapped in ahistorical dogmatism.

In the axiological dimension, Islamic da'wah is oriented towards the values of justice, benefit, and the liberation of humanity from various forms of oppression. *Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* is a key concept that shows that da'wah has a socio-political mandate, not just a spiritual-individual one. In modern society, the practice of *nahi munkar* can be interpreted as a critique of exploitative economic systems, consumerist cultures, and power structures that perpetuate inequality. Thus, da'wah functions as a moral force that corrects the direction of civilisation.

The social philosophy perspective also helps explain why da'wah often encounters resistance in modern society. Secularism tends to view da'wah as a threat to the neutrality of public space, while capitalism attempts to subjugate da'wah to market logic through the commodification of religion. Da'wah is then reduced to religious entertainment, individual motivation, or a symbol of identity, without any critical power against social structures. This analysis shows that the challenges facing da'wah are not only cultural, but also structural and ideological.

In this context, Islamic da'wah needs to be reconstructed as a social praxis that is conscious of power relations and ideology (Masykur, 2019). Dakwah is not enough to simply convey moral messages, but must also be able to critically read the social context. A social philosophy approach enables dakwah to identify the structural roots of poverty, inequality, and moral crisis, and to formulate a more comprehensive and transformative response.

Thus, Islamic da'wah from the perspective of social philosophy and education can be understood as an emancipatory project that aims to free humanity from the domination of secularism and capitalism (Sahin, 2018). Dakwah is not merely a religious activity, but a

movement of awareness that integrates spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions into a single vision of civilisation. This perspective emphasises that Islamic dakwah has strong relevance in responding to the crises of modern civilisation, while offering a philosophical basis for the development of a more just, meaningful social order oriented towards the values of tawhid.

The Potential Role of Da'wah as a Medium for Internalizing Critical Educational Values Towards the Problems of Secularism and Capitalism

The discourse of da'wah as a medium of education in this context is the understanding of Islamic da'wah as a pedagogical process that shapes critical awareness of the structure, ideology, and direction of civilisation's development. Within this framework, dakwah is positioned as a medium for the transformation of critical educational values that serves to guide humans to reflectively read social realities, assess the underlying values, and identify humanitarian problems arising from certain civilisational paradigms. In other words, dakwah can serve as a learning tool that guides the community to understand the relationship between faith, knowledge, and social responsibility in modern life.

As a medium for transforming critical educational values, da'wah is based on the paradigm of tawhid, which rejects secular and materialistic reductionism. Da'wah teaches that civilisation is not neutral, but is built on philosophical assumptions and ideological interests that can give rise to injustice and a crisis of meaning. Therefore, da'wah functions as emancipatory education that frees humans from false consciousness, integrates spiritual, ethical, and intellectual dimensions, and offers an alternative civilisation orientation based on the values of justice, humanity, and transcendence. From this perspective, da'wah becomes a strategic medium for shaping a generation that is not only religious but also critical and responsible for the direction of civilisation.

In the context of modern civilisation dominated by secularism and capitalism, Islamic da'wah has a strategic position not only as a normative religious activity but also as a medium for internalising critical educational values regarding civilisational problems. Civilisational criticism in this case is understood as a reflective and normative effort to assess the direction of modern society's development, identify the structural problems that accompany it, and offer an alternative horizon of values. Therefore, Islamic preaching with tauhid as its main principle will have the capacity to carry out this function comprehensively, so that preaching not only touches on material and social aspects, but also the dimensions of meaning, ethics, and transcendence.

Furthermore, as a medium for critical educational transformation of civilisation, Islamic da'wah departs from the rejection of reductionism, which is a key feature of modernity. In this context, Islamic da'wah faces challenges in academic development and practical implementation in the modern era, with the need to adapt to modern conditions and the potential to criticise the reductionism of modernity (Zulkarnaini, 2015). When secularism reduces reality to its immanent dimension and removes transcendent values from the public sphere, while capitalism reduces humans to economic subjects measured

by productivity and purchasing power. This situation leads to weaknesses such as inequality and injustice, while Islamic economic principles integrate spiritual values to achieve economic justice (Zulaikah, 2011).

From a da'wah perspective, this kind of reductionism contradicts the Islamic view of humans as dignified beings with spiritual and social responsibilities. Therefore, da'wah serves to dismantle the ideological assumptions that underpin modern civilisation and reveal their impact on dehumanisation and the crisis of meaning.

The value of tawhid plays a central role in da'wah as a medium for critical educational transformation regarding civilisational problems. This is because tawhid not only means theological recognition of the oneness of Allah, but also an ontological principle that affirms the unity of reality and the connection of all aspects of life to the divine will. Within this framework, tawhid rejects all forms of absolutisation of worldly entities, including the state, the market, and human rationality. Secularism and capitalism, when positioned as the highest sources of value, can be understood as a new form of servitude that shifts the orientation of human life from transcendent values towards material and pragmatic interests. In this context, the preaching of tawhid is present to correct these distortions and restore the orientation of civilisation towards divine and human values.

From an epistemological perspective, da'wah as a critique of civilisation offers an alternative view of knowledge and truth. Modern rationality tends to place instrumental reason as the sole authority of valid knowledge, thereby viewing ethical and spiritual aspects as subjective and non-scientific. Islamic da'wah, on the other hand, combines revelation, reason, and social reality within a single, comprehensive epistemological framework (Ramadhan dkk., 2024). With this approach, da'wah is able to criticise claims of neutrality and objectivity in modernity, while demonstrating that every knowledge system is always intertwined with certain values and interests.

In the social and educational dimensions, Islamic da'wah functions as a critique of the structures of injustice legitimised by the global capitalist system (Sahin, 2018). Economic inequality, labour exploitation, and the commodification of life are manifestations of the logic of capital accumulation that disregards the principles of justice and welfare. The concept of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* provides a normative basis for da'wah to be actively involved in correcting unjust social practices. Thus, da'wah does not only speak at the level of individual morality, but also targets broader structural changes.

Furthermore, Islamic da'wah does not stop at the function of criticism, but also offers an alternative social paradigm. This paradigm is rooted in the values of tawhid, social justice, and collective responsibility. In the da'wah paradigm, the goal of development is not solely measured by economic growth, but by the achievement of a balance between human material and spiritual needs (Ab Razak dkk., 2023). Well-being is understood holistically, encompassing distributive justice, social solidarity, and moral sustainability. This view provides a fundamental correction to the modern development paradigm, which often sacrifices human values for the sake of efficiency and profit.

Dakwah as an alternative educational paradigm also emphasises the importance of ethics in the public sphere. Unlike secularism, which privatises religion, Islamic dakwah

places moral values as an integral part of social and political life (Mohamed, 2014). This does not mean establishing a theocracy or eliminating plurality, but rather emphasising that the public sphere should not be devoid of ethical values and moral responsibility. In this context, da'wah acts as a prophetic voice reminding society of the importance of justice, honesty, and concern for the disadvantaged.

The implications of understanding da'wah as a critique and alternative civilisation are very significant for contemporary da'wah practices. Da'wah is required to break free from the trap of ritualism and commodification, and develop a more contextual and critical approach. The phenomenon that occurs is that textual da'wah tends to simply provide material without considering whether it is needed or not, or even whether it is already known because it is often heard (Hidayat, 2013). Preachers not only serve as conveyors of moral advice, but also as organic intellectuals who are able to read social realities and offer solutions based on Islamic values. This approach requires mastery of social sciences, philosophy, and a deep understanding of the dynamics of modern society. Thus, Islamic preaching can be understood as a long-term and visionary civilisational project. It is explicitly stated that preaching is a movement to uplift human dignity, targeting economic, cultural, and educational progress (Ansori, 2024). Dakwah is not merely a reactive response to social problems, but a systematic effort to build a way of life based on monotheism and justice. In the face of the crisis of modernity, dakwah offers hope for the birth of an alternative civilisation that is more humane, meaningful, and oriented towards the common good. In this context, it is important to actively engage in missionary work that conveys the values of Islamic teachings in a persuasive and contextual manner (Aini et al., 2026)

Overall, da'wah as a medium for transforming critical educational values regarding civilisational problems affirms the relevance of Islam in responding to the challenges of the times. This perspective broadens the horizon of da'wah from mere religious activity to intellectual and social praxis that contributes significantly to shaping the direction of civilisation. Revitalising the epistemology of tawhid through the integration of education, social and science can help Muslims overcome the identity crisis and build a future civilisation that is just, moral and sustainable, in line with tawhid as a principle of liberation (Husni, 2025). With the foundation of monotheism as a principle of liberation, Islamic preaching has great potential to become a force for transforming critical educational values in response to the crises of modern civilisation, such as the phenomena of secularism and capitalism.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the main discussion of the research, it can be concluded that Islamic preaching, when understood from a social philosophy perspective, has great potential to function as a medium for transforming critical educational values against the phenomena of secularism and capitalism. In this context, da'wah activities cannot be reduced to merely normative-religious or ritualistic activities, but rather are prophetic practices that aim to shape critical awareness and transform social educational values. With the foundation of

tawhid as an ontological, epistemological, and axiological principle, Islamic da'wah is able to criticise the reductionism of secularism and capitalism and dismantle the relations of domination that give rise to dehumanisation and structural injustice.

This study affirms that Islamic da'wah is relevant not only as a religious activity, but also as an intellectual force and a transformative critical educational value capable of responding to the problems of modern society. The limitations of this study are still limited to theoretical-prescriptive studies. Further research is needed to examine case studies of da'wah activities that combine critical educational value transformation with the problems of modernity.

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