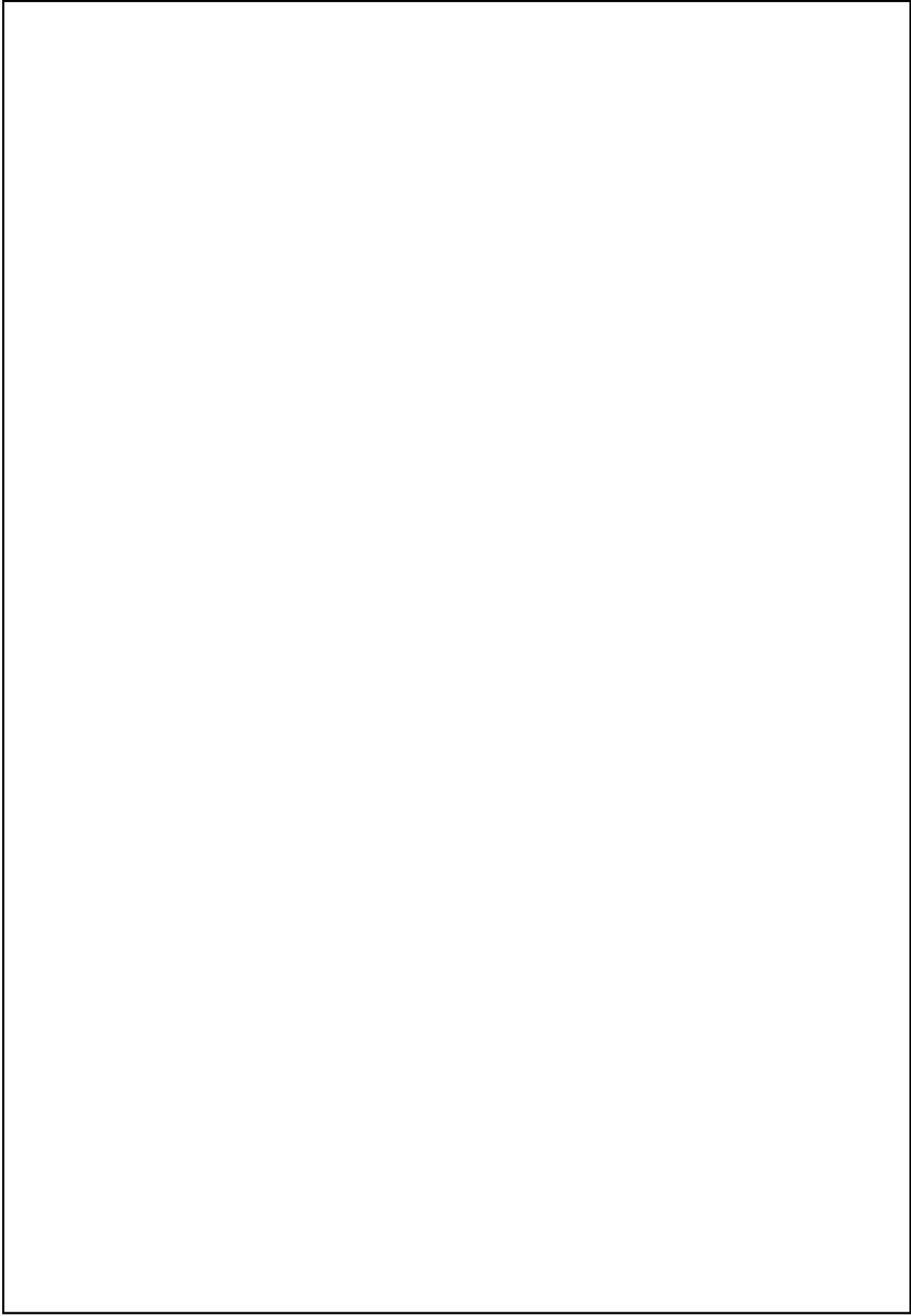


Vladimir Tsivkin

**In the Footsteps of Legendary Personalities in  
Jerusalem and Haifa  
Tours**

**with Forward by Amikam Yasoor**

**Jerusalem 2019**



## Foreward

Despite that so much has been written about Jerusalem, in his new book the author succeeds in surprising us. During my last ten years as a bibliographer in the Shmuel Pevsner Municipal Library in Haifa, I was witness to the effort he invested in searching for material and illustrations for his book, an unending collation of data and illustrative matter that tell about his heroes.

Like in his previous book, the author offers tours that follow in the footsteps of Jewish and non-Jewish personalities whose presence in Jerusalem or Haifa played a meaningful role in their lives. He focuses on sites in these two cities related to the presence there of his heroes. The profusion of ca. 380 pictures, photos, maps, and drawings, especially the combination of pictures, photos, and drawings into one photomontage, all point to the author's intent to help the reader learn about the persons and sites. What also stands out is his ability to present this information in a dynamic and fascinating narrative. The tours provide the reader with deeper insight into the personages and their deeds, and with fuller knowledge of historical events that occurred in various periods.

This book is more than just another tour guide. The author opens a wide portal on life in Eretz Israel and Jerusalem, especially during ancient times. Jerusalem and Haifa are the main protagonists of all the chapters. In each tour, which is a chapter unto itself, we read about a renowned figure from a certain period. Among those dealt with are King David and Elijah the prophet, King Herod and the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate, Jesus and Muhammad, Laurence Oliphant and poet Naftali Hertz Imber. The book is well-written, and therefore pleasant reading. It is all the more enjoyable thanks to the attention given to aesthetic matters, beginning with the cover and on to the many illustrations.

I found especially interesting the chapters on Elijah and Imber that are set in Haifa, my beloved city in which I have lived all my life. Residents of Haifa will be especially interested in a fascinating station on the tour devoted to Elijah that tells a story about his appearance... during Israel's War of Independence. The tour also includes interesting information about Elijah in Christian and Muslim traditions. The chapter on Muhammad describes the development of the tradition about his mythical night journey to Jerusalem, and how that tradition has been subject to alteration according to political needs. The chapter about Pontius Pilate is based on the description of events in Mikhail Bulgakov's novel, *The Master and Margarita*. The author draws a parallel (which is concealed in the novel) between the overall atmosphere of fear during the reign of Caesar Tiberius and the days of Stalin, and demonstrates just how much Pilatus's fear that the High Priest would inform on him (in "the gospel according to Bulgakov") sealed the fate of Jesus.

The book has several more virtues; it is written in an appealing and flowing literary style; despite the wealth of information supplied, it does not weary the reader; the author exhibits a broad cultural interpretation that presents many aspects of any historical period; and he has found a proper balance between his description of the individual and that of the city. But

even that is not all: the author has the ability to point out the exotic aspect of any subject. He does not flaunt his erudition, for though he is obviously a scholar he remains modest, and the reader gains the impression that he is presenting only part of what he knows. He treats each subject seriously, without being tempted to use gimmicks. Last, but not least, the personalities he discusses are not only leading political and religious figures, but also thinkers, men of intellect. The propitious combination of persons, events, and sites adds to the value of this book as a means of inculcating historical consciousness and creating a cultural identity. An important aspect of the book is that it wonderfully presents the international character of Jerusalem and its sacredness to the three monotheistic faiths. In sum, this volume is an invitation to set out on a voyage.

The detailed index of personal and place names, as well as events, is of immense value during a walking tour in Jerusalem or Haifa. Thus, one can easily locate every name or historic event without having to leaf through pages that are irrelevant to the topic at hand. Even someone who does not follow the tour route on foot can make an enriching journey by just reading the book, which so successfully has avoided being solely a catalogue of sites. In sum, this is a unique, enlightening, well-prepared, and important book that makes an important contribution to the study of the history of Eretz Israel.

## Preface

Historic legendary figures who lived in or visited the Land of Israel in different times and left their impression on the history of the People of Israel and many other nations, inspired the writing of this book which presents the reader with a sequence of stories and a handful of historic sites testifying to each figure's connection to Jerusalem or Haifa and their surroundings. Many famous personalities that lived hundreds or thousands of years ago, left us only scarce stories based on historic facts, but in time legends were created consisting the bulk of the information about them. Sometimes the knowledge regarding the connection between what happened and the historic site with real findings is lost as, for instance, in the case of King David. This obstacle is somehow balanced by local popular legends suitable for creating a tour. This rule applies to many sites connecting King David, Jesus, and Muhammad to Jerusalem, and Elijah to Jerusalem and Mount Carmel.

It was strongly recommended to me to name the book "In the footsteps of prominent personalities..." but after a second thought I chose "In the footsteps of legendary figures..." because in my opinion the first title underrates the value of figures like King David, Elijah, Jesus, King Herod, Pilate, and Muhammad...

Authors, artists, and scientists as well as many kings and public figures were definitely prominent personalities at their time. Here I use the term 'persons of legend' or 'legendary figures' meaning figures from the past who left a trail of legends after them. I hope that no reader will think that the book tells about mythical figures, imaginary creatures which never existed, like centaurs, mermaids, or monsters. Hebrew is an evolving language and it will not take long for a new word to appear distinguishing between the two meanings attributed today to the words 'mythical' and 'legendary'.

Many books, movies, researches, works of art, and exhibitions were devoted to the legendary figures mentioned and other prominent figures. Each nation has its own heroes connected to its soil, its capital city, historic sites and a special burial site. Sometimes its called 'Pantheon' or a regular cemetery, like the 'Arlington' national cemetery in Washington, 'Père-Lachaise' and 'Montparnasse' cemeteries in Paris, 'Devichie' cemetery in Moscow, 'Necropol' museum-cemetery in Saint-Petersburg, or the old cemetery on Trumpeldor Street in Tel-Aviv, in which many prominent figures are buried. Tours in the footsteps of prominent figures are quite popular in big cities in Europe and America, especially in London and Paris, Berlin and New York, Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, where famous authors and poets, world-renowned artists and composers, famous statesmen and commanders lived and worked... most of these tours are conducted only orally. If a book recommending walking in the footsteps of a famous figure is published in some language, usually it tells the readers about exhibits in a museum founded in the figure's home, or an establishment he founded himself.

The history of the Land of Israel and Jerusalem are particularly long and rich in footprints of prominent figures of many nationalities. Among others, rulers and commanders of ancient times, and also intellectuals, visited here during more than 3,000 years. The editors

of the Bible, famous pilgrims, and known inhabitants of the country, supply wonderful stories for creating fascinating tours. On Mount Zion in Jerusalem, near the south-western corner of the old city's wall, there is a Protestant graveyard of many prominent figures who contributed to the development of the Land of Israel in the XIX century and the first half of the XX century. Also there exists a cemetery for prominent figures of the Jewish people on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, which was founded after the establishment of the state of Israel, when the city was divided between two states – Israel and Jordan.

The impact made by prominent figures on Jerusalem and Mount Carmel is unforgettable and is maintained in the memory of a large part of humanity. Most legends about important figures were created after their death and usually the connection between them and urban sites is imaginary. Likewise, legends connecting Jesus and Muhammad to Jerusalem were created after they died and became the founders of religions which spread around the world and attracted billions of believers. Some of those legends caused fostering and preservation of sacred sites where religious ceremonies are performed. The connection between Jesus and Muhammad to Jerusalem and the relation of Elijah to Mount Carmel are portrayed in detail in the holy books and some midrashim. Ceremonies and worship are devoted in the monotheistic religions to Jesus and Muhammad, and also to Elijah.

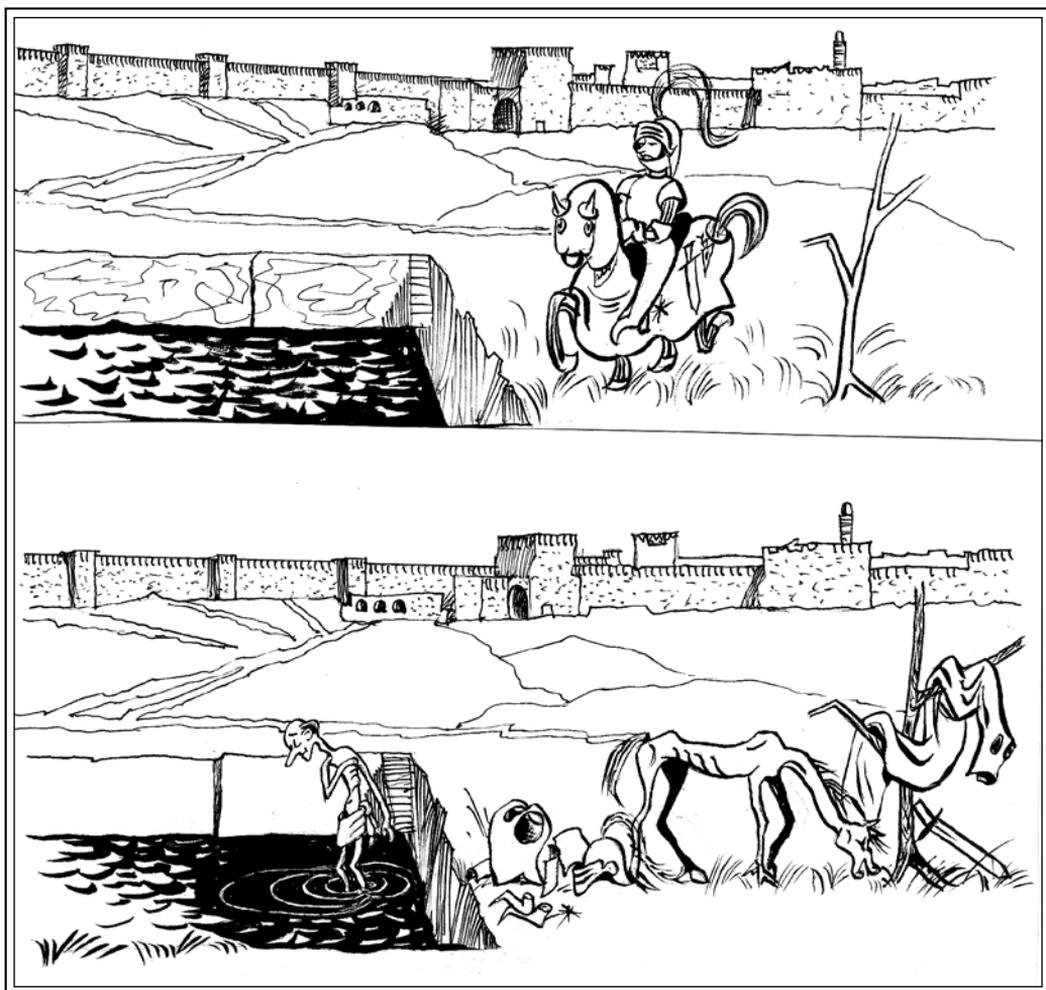
Some chapters in this book also tell about King David, King Herod, the procurator Pilate, the British Sir Laurence Oliphant, and the Hebrew poet Naftali Hertz Imber, who lived and worked, at least for some time, in the Land of Israel, especially in Jerusalem or Haifa. Some chapters and stations tell about figures who merely visited those cities, like Elijah, Jesus, Muhammad, the evangelist Matthew, Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab and Colonel Albert Goldsmid (prototype for the hero in the novel 'Daniel Deronda'). Even though these personalities spent short periods of time in the said cities, the political, religious, and national conditions in different times caused their deeds and words to be remembered in popular traditions and literature.

The chapters in this book are built as tours consisting of a sequence of stations in various scattered urban sites, and make it possible to tell the general story of each figure and reveal its relation to those sites. The purpose of each tour is to revive the legendary figure who is the hero of the tour in the hearts of the readers or walkers, tell about his place in international, national or local history or culture and of his relation to the specific city. A visit to such sites accompanied by the related stories – arouses positive feelings towards the hero of the tour.

Outstanding among the tours are those considered impossible because they revolve around figures who never visited the said city, or for other reasons. For example, a tour following Muhammad the prophet of Islam, who never came to Jerusalem but managed to leave there his footprint, preserved in a 1,300-years old building; a tour in the footsteps of Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea who sentenced Jesus – according to Russian-Ukrainian author Mikhail Bulgakov's novel, published in Hebrew for the first time as "Satan in Moscow" and then as "Master and Margarita"; a tour following Elijah in Haifa and its surroundings; a tour in the footsteps of Sir Oliphant and the Jewish poet Naftali Hertz Imber.

Great historic figures have, as is well known, their faults and flaws – together with their greatness – and they also experienced failures and were involved in many affairs.

It makes sense that intriguing spicy stories like the affair between David and Bath-Sheba or Naftali Imber and Lady Oliphant – were not the only affairs that happened – such things were surely a part of the lives of many other personalities.



The common reader must be curious to learn about such scandals. Many would love to learn about such scandalous stories even if they happened hundreds of years ago. For instance, if it would turn out that Tancred (1072-1112), one of the crusaders' leaders in the First Crusade, who was the first to charge into Jerusalem (according to a legend of the time) and looks like a hero in his armor – was really a weak and feeble man, as he is pictured in a caricature – it would surely have added some succulence to his historic figure...

Such tales or assumptions are scarcely mentioned in this book, because they belittle the historic dimensions of each famous figure. The chapters were written out of respect and empathy on my part to all my heroes, and not for the purpose of smashing myths or criticising.

The book offers all lovers of the Land of Israel, and especially lovers of Jerusalem and Haifa with Mount Carmel, a chance to learn about the history of their cities from a new perspective by making an acquaintance with the vision or the activity of those legendary figures.

This book is not an ordinary guide book which can be used for guiding a tour through continuous reading. It is more educational material about the prominent figures and their relation to the specific city. A tour guide would have to prepare on the basis of each chapter a simple suitable tour. Nonetheless, every educated person or guide can go through a whole tour step by step with the book in his hands.

There is an abundance of knowledge, legends, and traditions about each of the fascinating figures featured in this book, and on their relation to Jerusalem or Haifa and Mount Carmel – and blessed will be anyone who will be able to guide an interesting and attractive tour in their footsteps.

## Prologue

This book is based on historical research done for the purpose of writing each chapter. Each tour in the footsteps of a known figure demanded search and study, plunging into the abundant information existing but scattered in books, magazines, newspapers, student and doctorate papers... It was necessary to learn all the scholars' disagreements regarding those figures; to collect every small item of information about the history of the city, which can be connected – based on some historical or legendary, conceptual or metaphorical detail – to the certain figure. Each item of information detected was examined in order to weave it into a tour. Every detail and description were taken from apparently reliable sources.

Different legends and traditions, collected during the XXth century and published by diligent scholars, especially in Prof. Zeev Vilnay's works – helped me overcome difficulties deriving from lack of information. I think that the late Prof. Vilnay was the first Israeli scholar which gathered all pieces of information about the Land of Israel in every language; was almost the sole writer who developed professional literature for tour guides and Bible Land lovers for many years. As happens with pioneers in many fields, errors can be found in Vilnay's books but these flaws do not diminish the importance of the immense work he has done! only relying on works of pioneers like Prof. Vilnay – could younger scholars mend their predecessors' errors and continue forward.

I labored on these tours, on and off, for more than 20 years and each chapter had more than 15 versions. In many cases, discovering a new connection between one of the figures in the book and some urban site, enabled perfecting the tour and demanded alterations in other

stations. Each new item found about one of the book's figures – required amending and correcting every line written time and again. Each chapter of the book contains 100-200 accurate quotations, testifying to the credibility of the facts and stories presented. Only now, at the age of 80 years, I decided to finish the masterwork of improving the tours.

In certain cases, for example when looking for information about the painting on the facade of the central synagogue in Haifa, or about the efforts made by Haifa's residents to bring Hertzl's coffin to their city – a search was made in Haifa's municipal archives. When there are a few known versions of a certain detail of an important historical event, such as speculations regarding the place where it happened (for example, the place where Pilate sentenced Jesus), or when I disagreed with the accepted opinion and upheld the old opinion (for example, regarding King David's grave location) – I explained the different opinions and gave the reasons to my inclination.

Each tour following a certain figure is composed of a number of urban stations in which is told only about some part of the figure's life or a certain field of action he took on, which can be connected to one of the sites in the tour. Some stations tell the story of the figure's personality or of one important event in his life. In every tour I aspired to create a sequence of small stories turning into a kind of a short biography of the figure, 'on one foot' as they say. The sequence turns each tour into a hole story with a beginning and an end. The small story told in each station is part of the big legendary story of the figure.

I presumed that the reader will not necessarily read the hole tour telling about a figure – maybe only one or two stations which are of interest to him. Also, in some cases, a certain event can be interpreted in different ways. This is why some information is repeated in several stations, in order to give the reader the full understanding of important issues, even if he reads only sporadically. Repeated mentioning of a detail or a site allows to show it from a different angle and add some knowledge. For instance, in the story of King David, which all we know about him is taken from the Bible, and only a few sites found are connected to him – I divided the tour into a few stations and sometimes went back to a topic or a place in order to add and complete his story.

The appearance of the cities Jerusalem and Haifa is changing more rapidly in our days than ever. Each historic site was chosen only after careful deliberation regarding its relation to the figure. Very often, even essential details of historic events or the figure's behaviour during those events – are missing, making it difficult to connect the figure to a place in the city. Also an effort was needed to identify historic sites in the modern city.

There is an abundance of local and popular traditions connecting important events to a certain place, some of which mentioned in the holy books. Still, even those references do not automatically turn such stories into historic certainties. Sometimes it's clear that the supposed connection is imaginary, but it can still be used to create a fascinating tour. In many cases it's possible that an event depicted in the holy books or a popular tradition – if happened at all – actually happened in the said place.

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