

Transformation of Ibn 'Arabi's Spiritual Values in Contemporary Life

Haqiqatullahil Kholidah¹, Fathiyaturrahmah², Siti Raudhatul Jannah³

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The development of science and technology in the contemporary era has brought significant convenience to human life, yet it has also triggered a spiritual crisis marked by weakening moral values, growing materialism, and psychological anxiety. The dominance of rationalism distances individuals from the transcendental dimension, leading to a loss of life's deeper meaning. This situation highlights the urgency of a spiritual approach capable of balancing intellectual advancement with inner fulfillment. This study explores the spiritual values in *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* by Ibn 'Arabi as a response to the spiritual challenges of modern society. The objectives are: (1) to analyze the concept of spiritual values in the work; (2) to examine the social settings influencing Ibn 'Arabi's thought; and (3) to investigate the transformation of these values in contemporary life. The research employs a qualitative approach using a character study through library research. Data are collected through symbolic and semantic reading and analyzed using Margrit Schreier's theory. The findings reveal key spiritual concepts: *Wahdat al-Wujud*, *Insan Kamil*, and *al-Hubb al-Ilahi*. Influencing social factors include class, social roles, cultural norms, religiosity, and political-economic conditions. In modern life, these values transform into moral formation, spiritual awareness, meaningful living, and harmonious relationships between humans, nature, and God.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Haqiqatullahil Kholidah

Institution: Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

Email: hildakhal@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is everything spiritual or spiritual that exists within a living human being. Spirituality is the awakening or enlightenment of oneself in achieving the goals and meaning of life. One aspect of being spiritual is having a sense of direction, which is to continually increase one's wisdom and willpower, achieving a closer relationship with divinity and the universe [1]. So,

spirituality is a spiritual or mental nature that exists within humans in an effort to continuously get closer to God in achieving the goals and meaning of life.

Spirituality from a Sufi perspective teaches a select few individuals who desire a deeper understanding of self-identity, with an approach that permeates and transforms their entire existence. The path of Sufism is a path within the framework of Islam that aims to

find solutions to fundamental questions and reveal the true nature of human identity [2]. Throughout history, religion has attempted to provide teaching about the nature of the human self through its inner teachings, providing a path to achieving one's true self.

Ibn 'Arabi's spirituality is crucial in seeking answers to the spiritual emptiness of this contemporary era, which is rife with materialism, skepticism, and rigid dogmatism, as is the case with interfaith fundamentalism. It is not fair to call this spiritual decline a modern achievement. In reality, the spiritual emptiness of modern humans has left them disoriented, with a narrow orientation in life, and a worldview that overemphasizes the material nature of everything.

Among the Sufi figures who have had a tremendous influence on the development of Islamic thought to this day is Ibn 'Arabi. His knowledge and thought were truly imaginative, as seen in his many works, which readers continue to study tirelessly. Ibn 'Arabi's Sufism is not only dominated by his personal mystical experiences, but is also accompanied by experiences in traveling to meet pious people and visiting holy places.

Thus, after much travel, he accepted an invitation from al-'Adil (a ruler descended from Saladin) to reside in Damascus. After al-'Adil's death, his son al-Ashraf continued to support Ibn 'Arabi. The teacher used his time to complete his *Kitab Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* (The Revelations Received in Mecca) and his major collection of poetry, *ad-Diwan* [3].

The book *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* is one of the important works in the Islamic Sufism tradition written by Ibn 'Arabi, a famous Sufi figure who lived in the 12th century. This book is a collection of treatises containing various views and thoughts on the nature of human existence and relationship with God and with their environment. However, over time, the *Book of Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* has often been seen as discussing only metaphysical values, even though it also contains spiritual values [4].

This view is evident, for example, in Henri Corbin, a French orientalist, who in his

work, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, focuses more on the metaphysical and cosmological aspects of Ibn 'Arabi, particularly the concept of *wahdat al-wujūd* and creative imagination. Similarly, Louis Massignon views Ibn 'Arabi primarily as a complex metaphysical figure, so that the practical-spiritual dimension of his work is often overlooked [5].

If analyzed through Islamic Studies, the spiritual values in the *Book of Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* can be understood as an effort to expand human understanding and experience of the spiritual dimensions of human life. Spirituality here is not just a religious ritual or worship practice, but is an effort to deepen the relationship with God and recognize and explore the inner potential that exists within humans as individual beings [3].

Spiritualitas dalam *Kitab Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* is not just a religious ritual or worship practice, but is an effort to deepen your relationship with God and recognize and explore the inner potential that exists within humans. One of the important values in this book is the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* or the unity of existence. Ibn 'Arabi argued that everything in this universe is a manifestation of one God. In the context of Islamic studies, this concept teaches the importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of oneself, fellow human beings, and God. In this way, one can develop a sense of universal brotherhood, compassion, and empathy for all of God's creation [6].

The meaning of spirituality in the *Book of Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* is also related to the process of self-transformation and the search for ultimate truth. Ibn 'Arabi emphasized the importance of introspection and self-knowledge as the first step in achieving a deeper understanding of the nature of God [7]. This matter can be understood as an effort to recognize the strength and potential of oneself that comes from God and overcome egoism and lust that hinder spiritual growth [1].

Within the framework of Ibn 'Arabi's Sufism, this condition can be understood as a form of human alienation from the divine source. Ibn 'Arabi emphasized the importance

of awareness of *wahdat al-wujūd* (the unity of being), which teaches that all reality is rooted in God. Losing this awareness means losing one's orientation in life, which then gives rise to moral and social chaos. Spirituality, in Ibn 'Arabi's view, is not merely a ritual practice, but a path to unite oneself with the divine will, control one's desires, and build a life based on love.

Furthermore, the value of social piety is also an important part of the book. Ibn 'Arabi emphasized that spirituality is not limited to the relationship between the individual as a creature and the Creator, but also involves social obligations towards fellow human beings [1]. Regarding the various descriptions, the researcher is interested in carrying out research so that he can find out the various spiritual values that have been initiated by Ibn 'Arabi in the book *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* which contains his spiritual journey along with knowing the social settings that influence his thinking and its relevance to the development of Islam in the contemporary era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Transformation of Spiritual Values*

Value transformation is a process of change aimed at preserving or developing values (such as culture, morals, or principles) so that they remain relevant and can answer the complex challenges of the times. This process can be carried out through various means, such as education, communication, or adaptation in organizational change management to ensure that these values remain alive and provide a positive contribution to society or the organization, while spirituality is a deep relationship with Allah SWT, centered on perfecting worship, inner purity, and noble morals to achieve His pleasure [8].

The concept of spirituality in Islamic terminology is directly related to the Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith, which relate to spiritual practices and meanings. Both the Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith teach various ways to attain the highest spiritual life. From a

Sufi perspective, spirituality is closely related in all its aspects, as Sufis believe more in the spiritual world than in the material world, thus tending to draw closer to God and avoid physical influences [9].

Al-Ghazali defines Islamic spirituality as *tazkiyah al-nafs* which is a concept of spiritual mental development, the formation of the soul with Islamic values, this concept is centered on the purification of the soul which aims to get closer to God through direct experience [10]. This matter is reinforced by the statement of Mustakim who quoted Ibn Taymiyyah that humans achieve perfection through spiritual education based on monotheism, strong faith, and the application of sharia in all aspects of life, which is integrated in the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul).

Meanwhile, according to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, the spiritual concept is rooted in the view that humans are dualistic creatures (physical and spiritual) whose spirituality is instilled through *ta'dib*, namely the process of sowing and planting *adab*. [11] According to Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, quoted by Mustakim, he stated that spirituality to form love for Allah (*mahabbah*) is rooted in ten causes that can bring about and strengthen that love. *Mahabbah* is a means to be united and close to Allah, based on submission, obedience and sincere longing for Him.

Based on this understanding, it can be seen that the transformation of spiritual values is a process of changing and developing religious spiritual values that existed in the past, making them relevant to addressing the challenges of today. This process can be carried out through various means, such as life journeys, education, communication, adaptation, and so on, leading to a tendency to draw closer to God and avoid physical or worldly influences.

2.2 *Contemporary Life*

Contemporary life is a form of life experience in the modern era that is

influenced by technological developments and the currents of globalization, resulting in a shift or transformation from life values from the past to life values in the present. This concept refers not only to time, but also to a way of thinking, working, and living that is in line with current developments, which is flexible, innovative, and not bound by rigid rules from the past.

Fazlur Rahman's contemporary Islamic theory focuses on a double hermeneutic method (double movement) to interpret the Qur'an to make it relevant to the modern era. This method consists of two steps: first, understanding the Qur'an in the historical and social context in which the revelation was revealed and second, applying this understanding to contemporary social reality with the help of social science and ethics. The goal is to discover universal moral and legal principles in the Qur'an and integrate them with modern life in a rational and contextual manner.

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-explanatory design to explore the spiritual values contained in *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* by Ibn 'Arabi and their relevance to contemporary life. A character study approach is applied to systematically examine Ibn 'Arabi's intellectual background, socio-historical context, and spiritual contributions. The research is categorized as library research, relying on textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. The primary data source is *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah*, while secondary sources include scholarly books, journal articles, and other academic works related to Ibn 'Arabi's thought and Islamic spirituality. Data collection is conducted through documentation techniques, including in-depth textual reading, symbolic and semantic interpretation, and systematic note-taking [12].

Data analysis employs qualitative content analysis based on Margrit Schreier's framework. The process includes formulating

research questions, selecting relevant textual materials, constructing and revising a coding frame, categorizing themes, and interpreting findings. The coding process identifies key spiritual concepts and their transformation in contemporary contexts. The findings are presented qualitatively through thematic explanation and analytical matrices to demonstrate how Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual values contribute to modern Islamic spiritual discourse [13].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *The Concept of Spiritual Values in the Book of Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah*

The concept of spiritual values is related to spiritual growth, inner confidence, and connection with something greater than oneself. This encompasses the meaning of life, ethics, self-development, and inner experience, as distinct from materialism. These values encourage individuals to seek wholeness, meaning, and a higher purpose in life, such as love, peace, and harmony.

The concept of spiritual values in the *Futuhāt Makiyah* book can be reached through *maqam syari'at*, *maqam thariqah*, *maqam essence* and *maqam ma'rifah*, all of which require practices that must be completed so that they can increase the spirituality of a Muslim and become *wahdat al-wujud* so that he becomes a *rabbāni* human being through a person who is always in a state of oneness with God as conveyed by Ibn 'Arabi through *insan kamil*.

1. Unity of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujud*)

Ibn Arabi did not directly use the term *wahdah al-wujud* (unity of being) in his works, although his ideas about the relationship between God and the universe are often associated with it. The term was first introduced by Ibn Taymiyyah, who later associated it with Ibn Arabi's thinking after examining his ideas and finding it compatible with the view of *wahdah al-wujud* (unity of existence).[14]

Based on the research results, it was revealed that Ibn 'Arabi believed that the highest peak of a servant's life is when he has reached the stage of union with God (*wahdat al-wujud*), because when someone has reached this stage, it has made him a complete human being through a person who is always in a state of union with God.

The form of recognition and knowledge of a servant begins with knowing and realizing one's true self so that one can know and realize one's creator. *Musyahadah* means mutual witnessing, in the Sufi *maqamat*, this stage is called the *maqam* of knowledge. Knowledge begins with knowing and realizing one's true self. By knowing and realizing one's true self, a Sufi will undoubtedly know and realize his God. Awareness of God's existence means knowing God as the absolute true being, while all other beings are relative shadows. Shadows are actually mere images, so what truly exists is God's being.

Musyahadah can be experienced after going through all the stations until the Sufi reaches the mortal state'. In such a situation, humans return to their original form, namely absolute existence. *Fana'* is the disappearance of human awareness of all natural phenomena, and even of the names and attributes of God (*fana'an alam al-haqq*), so that what really exists essentially and eternally (*baqa'*) in his consciousness is absolute existence.

When a Sufi reaches the sixth stage of *fana'* he realizes that what really exists is the absolute existence that is *mujarrad* from all the qualities of names and attributes as at the beginning of his existence. This is the Sufi's long journey to its origin. This kind of mystical peak consciousness is achieved by *rabbāni* humans, in the *Futuhāt Al-Makkiyah* discussion of *musyahadah*,

2. Perfect Man (*Insan Kamil*)

Insan kamil according to Ibn 'Arabi is a human being who can become a place for Allah's *tajalli*, not just any human being but a human being who has been recognized as a human being (*Insan Rabbāni*), where the human being has arrived at perfect knowledge. Humans who have reached the highest level of human dignity, in whom there is *Haqiqah Muhammadiyyah* or *Nur Muhammad*, hereinafter referred to as *Insan Kamil*.

Based on the research results, it indicates that in order to be included in the category of perfect human beings as expressed by Ibn 'Arabi's perspective, the human being must have passed through all the stages of *maqamat* contained in the teachings of Islamic Sufism, starting from the *maqam* of *shari'ah*, *thariqah*, *hakikat* and *ma'rifat* so that he can become a perfect human being who is free from worldly matters and contains *Haqiqah Muhammadiyyah* or *Nur Muhammad*.

3. Divine Love (*al-Hubb al-Ilahi*)

Ibn Arabi followed the school of divine love espoused by earlier Sufis and pioneered by *Rabiah al-Adawiyah*. Ibn Arabi's theory of divine love refers to *wahdat al wujud*. Ibn Arabi conveyed his love in poems collected in his work *Turjuman al-Ashwaq*, composed while he was in Mecca. *Al-Hubb al-Ilahi* is an Arabic term in Sufism meaning Divine Love or Love for God, the highest peak of a Muslim's spiritual journey, beyond fear or hope of heaven, towards a pure, selfless love relationship with Allah SWT.

Mahabbah, or love, is the heart's inclination toward something pleasant. When that inclination grows stronger, it is no longer called *mahabbah* but becomes *'isyq* (*asyiq-masyuq*). In this sense, love becomes a secret known to the public, and only

the lover knows the actions and feelings toward the thing they love.

Humans who have no power and no effort in living life with various obstacles and worldly storms that accompany them every second and every place, make them fall to the reality that cannot be denied, that humans are weak creatures. As created beings, it should be a necessity for humans to serve themselves to God, this can be realized through love for fellow humans and the natural world around them.

Based on the research results, it is revealed that the process of serving oneself to God as a created being who always worships and praises God in all his glory, the concept of mahabbah is an important way for humans to get to know their creator better, starting from recognizing themselves as creatures created by Allah and getting to know and love the environment as part of Allah SWT's creation.

4.2 Transformation of Spiritual Values in the Book of *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* in Contemporary Life

The various spiritual values conveyed by Ibn 'Arabi are to be his caliph, not a caliph based on lust, or driven by other forces such as Satan, Iblis, or Dajjal. The contemporary era is a time where thinking is characterized by empirical reason, setting aside spirituality and direct intuition (*kashf*), so that they easily reject intuitive knowledge, because for them, intuitive knowledge is something that cannot be proven by the senses.

Muhaimin explained that the process of internalizing values can be carried out in the following stages;

1. The value transformation stage is the stage of informing about various good and bad values and is solely in the form of verbal communication.

2. Value transactions are educational stages that are carried out through two-way communication.
3. Transinternalization of values is a further stage of the transaction, namely related to characteristics and personality.

The form of transformation of spiritual values in the book *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah* in contemporary life has transformed in several ways as follows;

- a. Awareness and How to Understand Life

Awareness and a way of understanding life as part of a person's process of deep understanding in living life to always get closer to Allah SWT is an important part that must be done by every human being so that they realize with full awareness that in this worldly life a human being was only created to worship. Awareness and a way of understanding life according to Islam is realizing that life is a worship to Allah SWT, a test to test good deeds, and a bridge to the eternal afterlife, so that every worldly activity is intended to seek His pleasure.

The presence of an individual's awareness and understanding of their life is certainly inseparable from the origin of human creation on earth, which is for no other purpose than to worship Allah SWT. This necessitates piety in every human behavior practiced in daily life. This piety is an essential part that must be present in every human being and must always be implemented in every word and deed, thereby fostering integrity in work.

Based on the research results, it can be seen that the *ubudiyah* referred to by Ibn 'Arabi directs him to the concept of '*ubudiyah* to Allah, a human being must enslave himself to Allah by offering his whole body and soul to his Lord, obeying all his

wishes like a slave who obeys all the orders of his master. Meanwhile, piety is a manifestation of the basic level of spirituality for a servant, this is because the basis for the creation of humans on earth is nothing but to worship and worship, so the basic thing to become a devout person is that you have to look for an intermediary, namely worshiping and worshiping Allah SWT consciously.

b. Spiritual and Morals

The inner self is a state of the soul that is not visible to a person, while morals are the outward manifestations that can be known from that soul, namely a person's behavior and character or habits. The inner self and morals refer to traits that are embedded in the soul which are then manifested in actions that are easy and automatic to do without the need for much consideration.

The mind is the deepest spiritual or soul condition that is the source of motivation, while the morals are the outward manifestation or behavior (actions, words, attitudes) that originate from that inner condition, both praiseworthy (mahmudah) and reprehensible (mazmumah), as a reflection of the quality of a person's relationship with God and fellow humans.

Efforts to achieve a calm soul and good behavior can be obtained from self-introspection activities or khalwat, this indirectly corrects various behaviors that have been carried out and improves a person's mental state, especially in worshiping Allah SWT.

Based on the results of the research, it is revealed that the form of the process of character formation through a person's morals is carried out through seclusion activities under the guidance and supervision of a teacher as a form of effort to be able to build morality or human character in

accordance with religious recommendations so that they do not go astray on the wrong path.

Research analysis shows that the form of self-isolation activities under the guidance of teachers is an effort to introspect the various actions that have been carried out so that it can improve morality in the future through the formation of character both physically and mentally in accordance with religious teachings, this matter if carried out without guidance can be led astray by the whispers of Satan and become a lost person so that it requires the guidance of a polytheist or teacher to be able to survive and be enjoyed by the next generation, so that it has characteristics that are in harmony with the existing socio-culture and continue to be sustainable into the future.

c. Practice and Lifestyle

Islamic practices and lifestyles are comprehensive methods or ways of living based on Islamic teachings to achieve spiritual, moral, and physical balance. These principles emphasize worship, ethics, and social responsibility in human life. These principles require proper management, leading to humble behavior and a simple lifestyle without arrogance. Implementation can be achieved through self-training to purify the body and soul from all things other than Allah SWT.

Based on the research results, it was revealed that the form of implementation process or practice and lifestyle recommended in Islamic teachings is to balance a person's spirituality, morals and physicality well, this can be achieved through riyadhah, especially in relation to manners.

Riyadhah adab is to discard all human traits to become divine traits, while riyadhah thalab is the piety of a student in seeking

knowledge by emphasizing the practice of dhikr (remembering and mentioning the name of Allah) and riyadhah (spiritual practice carried out consistently to control lust) as a means to purify the heart and maintain the natural disposition to always be with him through the guidance of a teacher. This is a form of effort to be able to form character and develop self-potential in accordance with religious teachings.

This can help a person stay connected to their spiritual and divine dimensions. Because within humans, there is lust or the natural instinct of hayyawaniyah, which is a subconscious aspect of human consciousness that has the power of conation or will that can lead humans to become unnatural beings (*insan hawaniyah*). Therefore, it needs to be suppressed to avoid greed through character that is in accordance with Islamic teachings, as befits humans to live in the world as caliphs.¹

Research analysis indicates that in Islamic worship, it is necessary to emphasize the control of desires and worldly pursuits so that we can implement the various principles established by Allah SWT. This serves as a means to purify the heart and maintain its purity, thereby consistently receiving God's protection and guidance, thus fostering a personality that behaves in accordance with religious teachings.

To maintain the natural morality, one must control one's desires to avoid doing things forbidden by religion by merging oneself with the divine element within oneself (*wahdat al-wujud*), thereby reducing the desire for desire and becoming pure through being absorbed and radiating with the divine light. Pure desires can lead one to deeper spiritual growth, where

they feel content with all the difficulties and trials of life because they realize God's love that always surrounds them. However, this requires strength and effort that is not easy.

Based on the above explanation, Ibn 'Arabi explained that a person who is an expert in 'uzlah' is someone who isolates himself from everything other than Allah, including isolating himself from all names and attributes that are not the names and attributes of Allah. This method is expected to lead someone to become a perfect human being.

According to Ibn 'Arabi, *uzlah* is divided into two types: First, *'Uzlah dhohiriyah*, is the behavior of separating oneself from the crowd to purify oneself which is done physically. Second, *'Uzlah ma'nawiyah*, is the behavior of separating oneself from the crowd which is done spiritually, meaning that the physical is still together with other humans, but the spiritual is not with them, because the heart is only with Allah alone and the *'uzlah* of the scholars' billah is *'uzlah ma'nawi*, because the scholars' billah have the task of being *khalifatullah*, which in fact they are only divine vessels in human form, who provide direct guidance to humans to go to Allah.

Based on the results of the research analysis, it can be seen that in the spiritual *maqam thariqah* that is generally taken by someone to be able to live a better religious life through the guidance of a *mursyid* or spiritual teacher, while the form of activities carried out can be through *dhikr* and doing *uzlah*, this matter is a form of effort to be able to present Allah SWT as the creator without the presence of anything, especially in worldly affairs.

¹ [15] Juz 4, 166-167

5. CONCLUSION

The transformation of spiritual values in Ibn 'Arabi's Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah in contemporary life is manifested in three main areas. First, awareness and ways of interpreting life, namely strengthening the concepts of 'ubudiyah and piety as the foundation of human existence. Life is understood as worship and a path to the pleasure of Allah SWT. This transformation demands sincerity, integrity, and the awareness that every worldly activity has spiritual value. In the modern context full of materialism, piety serves as a moral fortress and the basis for developing a work ethic of integrity. Second, inner and moral, namely the development of the spiritual dimension through dhikr, seclusion, and self-reflection that impact character formation. Inner peace gives birth to noble morals as an outward manifestation of spiritual qualities. This transformation makes religion not merely a ritual, but an ethical force that shapes personality and social relations. Third, practice and lifestyle, namely the application of riyadhah, control of desires, and 'uzlah

both outwardly and inwardly to maintain the purity of the heart. Spirituality doesn't stop at inner experience, but is implemented in a simple, humble, and responsible lifestyle. Thus, Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual values are relevant as a paradigm for developing moral, balanced, and God-oriented individuals in the contemporary era.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

	<p>Haqiqatullahil Kholidah    I earned my bachelor's degree in Quranic Studies and Exegesis from the State Islamic University Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember completing my undergraduate studies from 2018 to 2022. I then continued my studies in the Master's program at the State Islamic University Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, focusing on Islamic studies from 2023 to the present. My interest lies in conducting research to complete my learning process in the master's program and to broaden my academic knowledge. email: hildakhal@gmail.com</p>
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