Investigating The Role Of Acceptance And Tolerance In Religious Communities

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ABSTRACT

In a more heterogeneous and linked world, the merits of embracing and accommodating different religious groups and society as a whole are essential in promoting concord, comprehension, and reciprocal regard among persons with varied views and origins. Swami Vivekananda, a prominent figure in the realm of spiritual ideology, articulated a deep philosophy that beyond the limitations of time, society, and belief systems. At the core of his teachings were the fundamental ideals of acceptance and tolerance, which he saw as essential foundations of a worldwide religion. This study paper examines the teachings of Swami Vivekananda to investigate the deep importance of acceptance and tolerance as fundamental elements of a global religion. By analyzing Vivekananda's works, lectures, and philosophical discourses, this study explains how acceptance goes beyond simple recognition and instead represents a deep embracing of religious diversity, while tolerance involves actively respecting the ideas and viewpoints of others.

Keywords: Acceptance, Tolerance, Universal religion, Communities, Humanity.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda, a notable and important figure in the area of spiritual philosophy, is a guiding light of deep insight. His teachings continually shed light on the quest to grasp the essential essence of religion and its generally applicable principles. Swami Vivekananda is a leader in the field of spiritual philosophy. His birth took place in Kolkata, India, in the year 1863. Vivekananda was first known by the name Narendranath Datta. He rose to popularity as a major champion of Vedanta and Yoga, captivating audiences in his

own nation and all around the globe with his eloquence, intellect, and profound knowledge of the fundamental nature of existence. The concept that acceptance and tolerance are fundamental principles that serve as the basis for a religion that is really worldwide was at the heart of Vivekananda's way of thinking.

It is impossible to place enough emphasis on the significance of acceptance and tolerance in fostering interfaith understanding and harmony in today's globalized society, which is characterized by a growing degree of globalization and cultural exchange. The purpose of this research paper is to evaluate Swami Vivekananda's teachings in order to get a comprehensive understanding of his perspectives on acceptance and tolerance as vital components of a universe-spanning religion. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis of Vivekananda's written works, lectures, and philosophical conversations, our objective is to enhance our comprehension of the profound insight that he offered about these principles and the ways in which they may be used in the contemporary society.

Acceptance, as conceived of by Vivekananda, goes beyond the basic awareness or tolerance of diversity; rather, it comprises a profound acceptance of the fullness and complexity of religious routes and spiritual experiences. The teachings of Vivekananda place an emphasis on the universality of truth and bring attention to the fact that all religious traditions are different representations of the same fundamental reality. Appreciating the intrinsic value of each faith tradition while also comprehending the fundamental similarity that exists between them is what we mean when we talk about acceptance. People may be able to overcome the limitations of sectarianism and cultivate a broader understanding of spirituality that transcends cultural, geographical, and ideological restraints if they embrace diversity with all of their hearts.

Tolerance, according to Vivekananda's worldview, is more than just tolerating individuals; it also involves actively respecting their rights, views, and points of view. Vivekananda emphasized the need of cultivating a mentality that is kind and empathic toward all persons, regardless of the religious affiliations or cultural backgrounds of those

individuals. Through his teachings, Vivekananda advocates for tolerance that encompasses more than merely coexistence; rather, it is a genuine acknowledgment and appreciation of the diverse variety of human experiences. To be able to engage in meaningful discussions, to express empathy while listening, and to demonstrate compassion even when faced with disagreement or variety are all necessary components of this ability.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Naeem, Ayesha & Yousaf, Esha. (2023) Managing religious tolerance in Islamic schools in India is the subject of this research, which investigates the many approaches and difficulties involved in doing so. Both the Dar-ul Madinah International Islamic School System and Al Hira International Islamic School, which adhere to Islamic principles, are the subjects of this research, which focuses primarily on the implementation of education at both of these institutions. For the purpose of gathering information from important stakeholders, such as school administrators, instructors, and students, the research makes use of a descriptive qualitative survey approach. Through the use of this technique, the study endeavors to get an understanding of the Islamic tactics that the school adopts in order to foster religious tolerance and to acknowledge the challenges that they encounter. Because Islam is a faith that is practiced by a minority in India, these schools face a variety of specific obstacles. The results will make a contribution to the current body of information on religious tolerance in the educational landscape of India and will give significant insights for school administrators, policymakers, and educators. Through the implementation of best practices in curriculum design, interfaith dialogue, and the creation of an inclusive environment, Dar-ul Madinah International Islamic School System and Al Hira Islamic School serves as a model for the promotion of religious tolerance with the goal of fostering religious tolerance. Through the implementation of these measures, the educational institution cultivates an atmosphere that allows students to acquire a thorough understanding of Islam, to have constructive interactions with people of other religions, and to experience the advantages of living in a community that is varied and welcoming to everyone. Furthermore, the administration of these institutions places a high priority on

religious tolerance, which enables pupils to adjust to and cohabit peacefully with the Hindu population that constitutes the majority of the student body. In this research, the instructional methods of these institutions are analyzed to see whether or not they are in line with their vision and goal. The document provides a set of recommendations for the implementation of religious tolerance-based education, which may act as a model for Islamic schools in nations where Muslims are underrepresented.

Zalec, Bojan & Pavlikova, Martina. (2019) A The first thing that the writers do is give the reasons that support their thesis, which is that there is not enough political justification for religious tolerance. On the other hand, they claim that there are other, non-political justifications for religious tolerance, despite the fact that they acknowledge the validity of their arguments. The argument from religious ecumenism, as well as arguments from the beliefs of particular faiths themselves, are prominently included in their argument. As for the second, they center their attention on Christianity, which they consider to be the religion of freedom since it prioritizes behaving in accordance with one's own conscience above acting for utilitarian reasons. In the second section of the paper, the writers discuss the application of tolerance and intolerance in the world. The questions of the agent of tolerance and intolerance, as well as the compatibility of global religions with religious freedom and political pluralism, are taken into consideration within this framework. The following are the findings that they reach: 1) We should make every effort to prevent the state from acting as a mediator between intolerance and tolerance; 2) The vast majority of people who subscribe to global religions are the kind of people who believe in religious exclusivism. However, it does not mean that political exclusivism is synonymous with religious exclusivism, and that political pluralism and global religions are compatible with one another. In addition, they possess the resources necessary to serve as significant origins and foundations of political plurality, religious freedom, and, therefore, liberal democracy.

Wijaya Mulya, Teguh & Aditomo, Anindito. (2018) This article proposes that discourse analysis may be a viable alternative technique for creating new information in this subject. To complement the current research on religious tolerance

education, which have mostly assessed interventions using pre–post designs, this paper suggests that discourse analysis can be a viable alternative approach. The article also presents a case study of the application of this methodology in analyzing a religious tolerance education project in Indonesia, which is a country in the Global South that is under-represented. Indonesia is a country where religious conservatism and intolerance are on the rise. The purpose of this case study is to shed light on the potentials of discourse analysis. In accordance with the contact hypothesis, the project had students of various religious backgrounds working together on a filmmaking assignment that was centered on the concept of religious tolerance. Three major discourses that students rely upon in order to give meaning to religious tolerance within these films are identified. These discourses are a discourse of nationalism, tolerant theologies, and romantic love. The consequences of these discourses with relation to the promotion of religious tolerance in education are examined.

Van der Walt, Johannes. (2016) The recent violent anti-social acts committed by individuals and groups who feel deeply committed to some or other religious ideal have brought to light the significance of instilling religious tolerance in young children for the purpose of fostering peaceful coexistence in communities that are becoming increasingly diverse and pluralistic. Education in the most constructive meaning of the term, that is, education described as nurturing, directing, and equipping, is the essential component of such inculcation. It has been shown via research that some young people are being exposed to a sort of negative pedagogy or anti-pedagogy that is causing them to develop a lack of tolerance for religious beliefs. The objective of this essay is to demonstrate how education, in the most positive meaning of the term, may be used to produce such etchings on the souls (personalities) of young people that would mold them to become individuals who are culturally culturally tolerant and religiously tolerant. These individuals have the potential to develop into people who are honest, who are armed with life maps that enable them to live peacefully in communities that are becoming more varied and pluralistic, and who are able and eager to contribute to their own well-being as well as the well-being of all other individuals.

Potgieter, Ferdinand et al., (2014) the last several years, educational institutions and authorities all around the globe have been devoting a growing amount of attention to concerns of religious intolerance and diversity. Regarding the concept of "tolerance," however, there is a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty around it. The purpose of this paper is to make a contribution to the recent academic efforts that have been made to comprehend (religious) tolerance and the word that is used to describe it. A short semantic study of the word "tolerance" is followed by a discussion of the arguments about the onticity of tolerance as a phenomena or thing. By investigating its onticity, we are able to investigate and explain a number of the fundamental characteristics of tolerance. In the last section of the essay, a short discussion is provided on some of the implications that our investigation may have for the field of education pertaining to religion.

Burge, Ryan. (2013) As a consequence of a lack of clarity on the conceptualization of religion and a technique that is unable to effectively disentangle the numerous meanings of religion, the examination of religion in the study of political conduct has generated a variety of conclusions. Using the method of propensity score matching, this paper dissects the three B's in a variety of different studies in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which behavior, belief, and belonging influence political tolerance. According to the findings of this investigation, a belief in biblical literalism is associated with a drop in political tolerance, although attending church is often associated with an increase in tolerance.

III.   ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE WITHIN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETY

Both within religious communities and in society as a whole, acceptance and tolerance are essential principles that foster peace, understanding, and mutual respect among individuals who hold a variety of perspectives and come from a variety of backgrounds. People are encouraged to notice and appreciate the many different expressions of spirituality that may be found in our society via the practice of acceptance, which is a crucial component in the intricate fabric of several religious traditions. The statement encourages us to acknowledge the fact that different religious traditions provide unique points of

view on the quest for transcendence and meaning, and it pushes us to appreciate the diversity of religious traditions. When it comes to sustaining the cohesion of a society, tolerance is absolutely necessary since it fosters mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among people who adhere to a variety of religious beliefs and practices. It is imperative that we cultivate a mentality that is characterized by empathy and compassion, understanding that the spiritual journey of each individual is unique and worthy of respect.

In religious cultures, acceptance and tolerance are sometimes put to the test when members of the society come into conflict with one another about their interpretations of scripture, rituals, and dogma. Confrontations and disagreements may arise inside the group as a consequence of the fact that some persons may stick to traditional ideas with a fervent adherence, while others may embrace views that are more liberal or progressive. Swami Vivekananda, a prominent spiritual leader and philosopher who lived throughout the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, emphasized the need of religious institutions being open to and welcoming of many perspectives and practices. He admitted that there are fundamental and inescapable differences in the ideas and behaviors of different people. He exhorted people to go beyond the concept of sectarianism and to embrace the inherent oneness that binds all living things as manifestations of the divine. The ageless wisdom of India, which places an emphasis on tolerance, compassion, and inclusiveness as fundamental aspects of spiritual life, resonated with the teachings of Vivekananda.

It is necessary for individuals to cultivate characteristics like as humility, patience, and understanding in order to build the capacity to create acceptance and tolerance across different religious groups. It demands a willingness to engage in discourse and engagement with those who have opposing viewpoints, with the objective of finding areas of mutual agreement and concepts that are held in common as a foundation for creating understanding and connection. Despite the fact that disagreements may arise, particularly over theology or religious practice, acceptance and tolerance urge individuals to participate in these talks with an open heart and open mind, recognizing the inherent dignity and worth that is present in every single human person. There

were several instances in which Vivekananda made reference to Sri Ramakrishna, his spiritual mentor. Sri Ramakrishna advocated for the acceptance of all theological approaches and urged his pupils to see divinity in every person and to serve them as if they were God.

When it comes to fostering social cohesion and peaceful collaboration in society, acceptance and tolerance are vital components. This phenomenon extends beyond the confines of religious groups. People of many different faiths need to be able to live peacefully in an age that is defined by an increasing range of religious practices. They must appreciate and honor each other's religious beliefs and rites, while also upholding the basic principles of justice, equal treatment, and human rights. Through his teachings on acceptance and tolerance, Vivekananda offers valuable viewpoints that may be used in the process of navigating the complexities of religious pluralism and developing understanding and respect among individuals who come from a variety of backgrounds. He was of the opinion that real tolerance would result from a deep understanding of the inherent holiness that exists inside each and every person, which would go beyond the superficial disparities that sometimes serve to divide us.

Given the continual growth of religious conflicts and hostilities in many places of the world, the need for acceptance and tolerance in contemporary society is more essential than it has ever been before. The consequences of intolerance, which may range from acts of religious discrimination and persecution to acts of murder and terrorism done under the pretext of religion, have a significant influence not just on individuals but also on society as a whole. People are encouraged to transcend the limitations of restricted sectarianism and accept the universal ideals of love, compassion, and understanding via the teachings of Vivekananda, which offer an effective antidote for the growing intolerance that is occurring. He envisioned a society in which individuals from a variety of religious traditions might come together in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, with the goal of working for the overall well-being of humanity.

IV.   ROLE OF ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE IN THE PRACTICE OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Acceptance and tolerance are the cornerstones around which the practice of global religion is constructed. They are the embodiment of compassion, understanding, and respect for the multifaceted nature of human experiences and beliefs. Individuals are encouraged to recognize and appreciate the many manifestations of spirituality that are present in our society via the use of acceptance as a guiding principle within the complicated tapestry that is religious pluralism. It encourages us to recognize that every religious tradition provides a different perspective on the human search for meaning and transcendence, and it encourages us to open our hearts and minds to the richness of the variety throughout the religious spectrum. Swami Vivekananda, a towering personality in the domain of spiritual philosophy, placed a strong emphasis on the universality of religion. He envisioned a future in which people of different religions may dwell peacefully, while being joined together by a common respect for the divine. One of the most important ideas that Vivekananda imparted to his students was the concept that genuine spirituality goes beyond the confines of dogma and faith. He encouraged us to look beyond the surface differences that divide us and to embrace the fundamental commonality that brings us together as human beings.

Additionally, tolerance plays an essential part in the practice of global religion. It helps to cultivate an environment that is characterized by mutual respect and peaceful cohabitation, which is essential in the context of the wide tapestry of religious beliefs and practices. It is necessary for us to build a spirit of empathy and compassion, acknowledging that the spiritual journey of every single person is unique and deserving of regard. Tolerance acts as a bridge that unites different groups in a society that is characterized by the presence of a wide variety of religious traditions. This bridge makes it possible for conversation and cooperation to develop across cultural and ideological barriers. Not only did Vivekananda's teachings mirror this idea, but they also advocated for a spirit of tolerance that goes beyond simple tolerance of the other, but rather embraces a real respect for the inherent dignity and value of every human being, regardless of their religious affiliation or upbringing.

A deeper knowledge of the interconnection of all life is included in the practice of acceptance and tolerance within

the setting of global religion. This goes beyond the simple acceptance of variety that is an essential component of universal religion. It extends an invitation to us to go beyond the confines of our own viewpoints and to accept the knowledge that is contained within other religious traditions, acknowledging that every path provides a different point of view on the ultimate truth. The idea that global religion acts as a uniting factor that draws individuals from different origins together in a common search for spiritual development and enlightenment is central to Vivekananda's worldview. It encourages an environment that is welcoming and welcoming of belonging, one in which people are free to seek their own spiritual pathways while respecting the beliefs and practices of others.

Furthermore, acceptance and tolerance are not only theoretical abstractions; rather, they exist in the way that we engage with one another on a daily basis and find their actual manifestation in this manner. In order to successfully negotiate the intricacies of human relationships in a society that is distinguished by religious variety, they demand us to practice traits such as humility, patience, and forgiveness. The teachings of Vivekananda stressed the significance of putting these principles into practice in our dealings with other people, regardless of whether they are members of the same religious tradition or come from diverse backgrounds. He had a vision of a society in which people of all religions may have the opportunity to join together in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding, overcoming the boundaries that often separate us and working together for the common benefit of mankind.

V.   ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

On the other hand, Vivekananda's appeal for a worldwide religion is not only a plea for tolerant secularism. His abhorrence of the word "tolerance" stemmed from the fact that it signified an acceptance of wrongdoing. Concerning topics pertaining to religion, Vivekananda contends that tolerance is the only watchword that is significant. When it comes to acceptance, tolerance is not the same thing. He does not support the idea of religious tolerance throughout the world. To put it another way, he said that the spiritual

growth of man requires tolerance and acceptance of all people everywhere. Through his candid proclamation, "Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion," he affirms the legitimacy of all religions. Not just tolerance, but I also disagree with the notion since "tolerance" may often be a front for heresy itself. It is essential to accept. I have confidence in God as well as in every other religion that has ever been, despite the fact that they may have different ways of expressing their devotion to the Supreme Being. I shall take refuge in the mosque of a Muslim, the church of a Christian, and the temple of a Buddhist in order to get a deeper understanding of the rules and practices that are associated with each of these religions. It is my intention to accompany the Hindu to the forest, where he will be meditating in search of the Light that glows inside the hearts of all people. In light of this, a universalist is required to possess an open mind and heart, as well as a willingness to seek understanding from the holy books of all religions.

Rather than being in opposition to one another, Vivekananda believed that faiths were complementary to one another. The distinction lies only in one's mental state. In light of this, no religion ought to be ignored. All of the objects that seem to be different could really have some fundamental characteristics. Despite the fact that men and women are distinct from one another, they share the same humanity. All living things, including plants, animals, and people, are members of the same community. This suggests that all faiths are referring to the same thing, despite the fact that they emphasize parts of the Truth that are slightly distinct from one another. It is necessary to acknowledge and respect all religions since they all share a common reality.

Life is shown by change, which is also an essential component of the natural order. If there is to be a single religion that encompasses all people, all time, and all places, Swamiji believes that it must be accessible to those who adhere to other religions or who do not believe in any religion at all. Furthermore, it should not be a religion that supports intolerance or persecution; rather, it should be a religion that embraces the innate divinity of every human and encourages them to express it to the fullest extent possible with their faith.

A guy who is really religious would recognize that there are credible routes to God that may be taken via each of the main religions. It is a moral need to show respect for those who adhere to various faiths. Always be steadfast in your beliefs, but steer clear of intolerance and hatred at all costs. Following the conclusion of the last session of the Parliament of Religions on September 27, 1893, Swami Vivekananda made a bold proclamation, which was as follows: "The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor is it possible for a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian." Everyone, however, is required to adopt the personas of the other people while still preserving his or her own identity and evolving according to the rules that govern his or her own growth.

The following observations made by Vivekananda in his lecture titled "The Way to the Realization of Universal Religion" are very important. "The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are, but there are so many pages and infinite pages that have not yet been unfolded," he asserts. Anyone would be able to participate in it. We have our feet firmly planted in the here and now, but we have our sights set on an infinite horizon. We take in the recollections of the past, bask in the light of the present, and throw open the doors of our hearts to the possibilities that the future has to offer. To the great prophets of the past, to the even greater prophets of today, and to the prophets who are yet to come, a toast is in order. That cleaning one's mind and emotions is the only way to get to the ultimate truth is a principle that is shared by all religions.

In today's world, everyone is yearning for a sense of serenity. Every single person, regardless of their age or socioeconomic standing, is looking for ways to alleviate stress and find purpose in their lives. Without a shadow of a doubt, the message that Vivekananda conveyed is both vital and pertinent in India and the rest of the globe, particularly in the context of the modern-day Indian world. This planet is destined to undergo a transformation if people adopt a mindset of mutual tolerance and respect for all faiths. All people will be roused from their doctrinaire sleep of superstitions and misunderstandings as a result of this discovery. A man will be transformed into a person who has the highest traits of fearlessness, compassion, love, tolerance,

and service to mankind as a result of this. It will also safeguard the next generation from moral degeneration and spiritual crises. The atmosphere of mutual tolerance and appreciation for the message that Swamiji is trying to convey will be a significant victory for mankind.

VI.   TEACHINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE

Despite the fact that Vivekananda's teachings on acceptance and tolerance were profoundly anchored in the ancient knowledge of India, they transcended cultural and geographical barriers, delivering timeless truths that continue to be relevant in the current world.

Oneness is the notion that lies at the core of Vivekananda's teachings on acceptance. This principle is the understanding that underneath the surface of the variety of religious beliefs and cultural customs, there exists a basic commonality that connects all of creation together. Vivekananda often said that every single person is a manifestation of the same divine nature, and he frequently talked about the global divinity that permeates every facet of life. The impassioned declaration that Vivekananda made in his renowned presentation at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 was as follows: "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance." Vivekananda, by use of these remarks, emphasized the all-encompassing character of Hinduism, which, according to him, recognizes all religious ways as legitimate manifestations of the human search for the divine.

The lessons that Vivekananda imparted on the subject of tolerance were similarly deep. He emphasized the need of cultivating an attitude of respect and understanding for others who have opinions that are different from our own. The fact that different religious views and practices are natural and unavoidable was something that he acknowledged. He also acknowledged that variety is an intrinsic component of human civilization. Vivekananda encouraged people to approach religious differences with an open heart and mind, looking for common ground and shared principles upon which to build bridges of understanding. He exhorted people to avoid indulging in language that divides

people and to avoid trying to force one's own ideas on other people. Vivekananda often referenced Sri Ramakrishna, his spiritual master, as an example in his writings and speeches. Sri Ramakrishna was a person who welcomed all religious ways and encouraged his followers to "see God in all beings" and "serve them as God Himself." Vivekananda had a deep respect for Sri Ramakrishna.

Vivekananda believed that tolerance was not only the passive acceptance of variety but rather an active engagement with the other. Tolerance manifested itself as a readiness to listen, learn, and develop as a result of interactions with others who had diverse points of view. He was of the opinion that genuine tolerance is the result of a profound understanding for the inherent dignity and value of every human being, irrespective of their religion affiliation or origin. Vivekananda's teachings on tolerance were founded on the idea of ahimsa, which translates to "nonviolence." He saw ahimsa as the ultimate virtue and the foundation of a society that is really harmonious. He exhorted people to create an attitude of loving-kindness and compassion for all things, acknowledging that violence and hate are generated out of ignorance and fear. He said this in order to combat the problem of violence and hatred.

According to Vivekananda's point of view, acceptance and tolerance are not only theoretical concepts; rather, they are practical qualities that should be developed in day-to-day living. Whether they were with members of their own family, neighbors, or complete strangers, he urged those who followed him to demonstrate these ideals in their dealings with other people. Vivekananda had the belief that the fundamental measure of a person's spirituality is not the execution of complex rituals or the reciting of holy texts, but rather the capacity to live in peace with others and to serve mankind without seeking personal gain. He made many references to the Bhagavad Gita, which states, "He who sees the Lord in every creature and all creatures in the Lord, him I hold the highest devotee of all." He often used this verse.

VII.   CONCLUSION

The relationship between acceptance and tolerance is intimately intertwined, with acceptance often leading to

tolerance and vice versa. Their interaction is closely interwoven. In order to prepare the path for more tolerance, understanding, and compassion, we must first cultivate a culture of acceptance. On the other hand, engaging in the practice of tolerance helps us to acknowledge the inherent dignity that is present in every individual and to enjoy the richness that variety brings. As we contemplate the teachings of Vivekananda, we are brought back to the realization that acceptance and tolerance in today's culture not only have theoretical implications but also actual implementations. It is necessary to make deliberate efforts at both the individual and the communal level in order to put these ideas into practice. These efforts should include developing tolerance within religious groups, facilitating communication across different faiths, and tackling institutional injustices that perpetuate differences. The concept of a global religion that is founded on acceptance and tolerance, as envisioned by Swami Vivekananda, provides a timeless blueprint for the construction of a world that is more accepting and peaceful. As part of our efforts to pay tribute to his legacy, let us take his call to action into consideration and work toward the establishment of a society in which acceptance and tolerance are not only concepts but, rather, living realities that improve the lives of all people.

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