

Women Issues Discussed by Feminist Muffasirs in Indonesia

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Abstrak:

Ide feminisme di Indonesia berawal pada masa penjajahan Belanda pada akhir abad ke-19. Kami melihat banyak wanita muda dalam perjuangan melawan penjajah. Selain Ide Feminisme, pada masa Orde Lama muncul gerakan feminisme Indonesia yang bernama Gerwani (Gerakan Perempuan Indonesia) yang didirikan pada tahun 1950-an. Gerakan Feminisme di Indonesia beroperasi dalam beberapa cara. Seperti organisasi, lembaga, tulisan, seminar, dan berbagai gerakan. Awal penafsiran feminis di Indonesia muncul setelah kemerdekaan Indonesia dan pendidikan dan sastra Islam di Indonesia. Pada masa Orde Lama, sarana pendidikan dan sastra Islam mulai dilembagakan, seperti munculnya PTAIN dan UII. Di Indonesia, perkembangan tafsir perempuan yang muncul sekitar tahun 1960-an ketika Buya Hamka menulis Tafsir Al-Azhar dan mulai berkembang pesat pada tahun 90-an dengan munculnya beberapa tulisan Quraishy-Shihab, yang kemudian oleh beberapa tesis dan disertasi di kalangan intelektual muslim Indonesia, yang membahas tentang konsep Alquran. Beberapa feminis mufters di Indonesia, antara lain: Buya Hamka, Quraish Shihab, Husein Muhammad, Mansour Faqih, dan tokoh Mufassir feminis lainnya.

Kata Kunci: Feminisme; Muslim Indonesia; Tafsir Al-Qur'an

Abstract:

The idea of feminism in Indonesia originated in the Dutch colonial period at the end of the 19th century. We saw lots of young women in the struggle against the colonialists. Besides the Idea of Feminism, a movement of Indonesian feminism emerged during the Old Order era named Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement), which was founded in the 1950s. The Feminism Movement in Indonesia operates in several ways. Such as organizations, institutions, writings, seminars, and various movements. The beginning of feminist interpretation in Indonesia emerged after Indonesian independence and Islamic education and literature in Indonesia. During the Old Order era, educational facilities and Islamic literature began to be institutionalized, such as the emergence of the State's Islamic Higher Education (PTAIN) and Islamic University of Indonesia (UII). In Indonesia, the development stage of women's interpretation which emerged around the 1960s when Buya Hamka wrote Tafsir Al-Azhar and began to develop rapidly in the 1990s with the emergence of several writings by Quraish-Shihab, which were then by several theses and dissertations among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, which discussed the concepts of the Qur'an. Several feminist mufters in Indonesia, including: Buya Hamka, Quraish Shihab, Husein Muhammad, Mansour Faqih, and other feminist Mufassir figures.

Keywords: Feminism; Indonesian Muslim; Qur'anic Exegesis

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is an ideology or an understanding that states equal rights between men and women. The language of feminism comes from Latin, namely from the word "femina," which means having a womanly nature (Rahman, 2019). Feminism is often interpreted as a movement for women's emancipation that speaks of improving women's position and rejects the difference in degrees between women and men (Baidowi, 2005). According to Michael A. Riff, the Feminism Movement first appeared in America in two periods. The first period appeared around the late 19th and early 20th centuries (1870-1920). In the first period, this movement was focused on obtaining the right to vote (the right of vote), but after this right was obtained after 1920, this movement had sunk. Although the feminism movement only appeared in the 19th century. The idea of feminism emerged in 1792 when Mary Wollstonecraft published her book entitled 'Vindication of the Rights of Women'. She was the driving force for the emergence of the idea of individualist feminism. The second period emerged in the mid to late 20th century (the 1960s - 1970s) after Betty Friedan published her book 'The Feminine Mystique' in 1963; this movement shocked the public. It encourages new awareness, especially for women, that their traditional roles have placed them in an unfavorable position, namely the subordination and marginalization of women (Baidowi, 2005).

The thought of feminism in Indonesia originated during the Dutch colonial period. In the late 19th century, we saw young women in armed struggle against the colonialists. At first, it was only limited to helping her husband or father and gradually becoming a leader for the troops and people. Cut Meutia and Cut Nyak Dien, for example, Christina Martha Tiahahu with Kapitan Patimura, Emmy Saelan with Monginsidi, Seland Wolanda Maramis, and Nyi Ageng Serang.

The Indonesian feminist movement emerged during the New Order era, namely the Gerwani movement (Indonesian Women's Movement), which was founded in the 1950s with more than 650,000 members in 1957. This group has strong links with the Indonesian Communist Party. Still, it is an independent organization that pays attention to socialism and feminism issues, including reform of the marriage law, labor rights, and Indonesian nationalism. In the 1980s, a women's activist, Raden Ajeng Kartini Djojo Adhiningrat, or RA Kartini, often referred to as a symbol of the liberal-feminist flow in Indonesia. Kartini was always glorified as a woman warrior who dared to fight gender inequality. The rights of men in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial era gave priority to women's rights at that time. Kartini's figure is depicted as a tough woman who is fearless in expressing injustice (Jewell, 2017). Kartini's name is widely known thanks to the circulation of the contents of Kartini's heart through letters she wrote to her friends in public. The letter indicates Kartini's deep grief because women's rights have never been fulfilled. Women always experience bullying both physically and emotionally as witnessed by Ratna Megawangi, Herawati, Wardah Hafidz, Yulia Surya Kusuma, Marwah Daud Ibrahim, and others (Zulaiha, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ahmad Baidowi in his book 'Feminist Tafsir (Study of Women in the Koran and Contemporary Mufassirs) (Baidowi, 2005), The Islamic Feminism movement (*harakah tahrir Al-Mar'ah*) in Indonesia took place in several ways. *Firstly*, through the empowerment of women through the establishment of a women's study center in higher education. Gender training and training, through seminars and consultations conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as P3M (Association for the development of Islamic boarding schools and communities) WCC (Women Crisis Center) Yasanti (Annisa Swasti Foundation), and others. Also, this institution criticizes state policies that are considered detrimental to the existence of women. *Secondly*, through books written on various themes, such as Fiqh of Empowerment, Masdar Farid Mas'udi in his book 'Women's reproductive rights'. *Thirdly*, conducting historical studies on the equality of men and women in the history of Islamic society has succeeded in placing women truly equal to men and achieving extraordinary achievement levels in various fields, including politics, education, religion, and others. For example, Fatimah Mernisi entitled 'The forgotten queens of Islam', Hibbah Rauf Izzat's work entitled 'women and politics in Islamic perspective,' where they are examples of this type of feminism movement. *Fourthly*, conducting critical studies of religious texts, both Al-Quran and hadith, reveal the inequality between men and women. In this case, a reinterpretation of the hermeneutics approach is carried out and involves the analysis knife in the social sciences to show that the position of men and women is equal. It is an alternative to the classical interpretation, which tends to maintain these seemingly patriarchal texts' literal meaning (Barlas, 2019). Examples of this type of feminist movement such as that of Husein Muhammad's.

In addition to Ahmad Baidowi's opinion above, according to the author, several forms of feminist movements in Indonesia, namely the Feminism Movement carried out by academics through Eni Zulaiha's research with Irma Riyani and Musdah Mulia. And there are many other examples of academic feminists. Apart from feminist movements and figures, there is also a feminist movement through social media platforms in this modern era. An example is the @thisisgender account on Instagram and Facebook and the @mubadalah.id account.

The beginning of feminist interpretation in Indonesia emerged after Indonesian independence and Islamic education and literature in Indonesia. During the Old Order era, educational facilities and Islamic literature began to be institutionalized, such as the emergence of PTAIN and UII. Besides, during the old order, the ICMI (Indonesian Muslim Cendikia Association) was formed. At this time, a lot of Islamic literature from East and West was adopted in Indonesia and was widely read by academics and santri at Pondok Modern.

In the late 1960s, Hamka (1962), when imprisoned by the Soekarno government, began to write a monumental Tafsir, the Tafsir Al-Azhar. Besides, Hasbi As-Shidiqy also compiled a Tafsir entitled Tafsir Al-Quran Al Majied in several volumes and then collected it into Tafsir An-Nur. And he refined it into Al-Bayan's interpretation. On both Tafsirs, the women's verses have been interpreted with a few comments and footnotes. As for Hamka, he is a little more advanced because he has tried to provide a broad explanation in interpreting the women's verses. Meanwhile, other commentators are still cautious in giving interpretations. The tafsir books they write are only limited to providing meaning or translating verses of the Koran (Abidin, 2011).

In Indonesia, this stage of the development of women's interpretation emerged around the 1990s, with the emergence of several writings by Quraish-Syihab, which were then followed by several theses, theses and dissertations among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, which discussed the concepts of the Qur'an. Among the women's tafsir books that have been published at this stage are *Tafsir Bi al-Ra'yi: Efforts to explore the concept of Women in the Al-Quran* by Nashruddin Baidan (Baidan, 1999), *Argument Gender Equality Perspective of the Qur'an* by Nasaruddin Umar (Umar, 1999), *Hate Tafsir: Gender Bias Study in Qur'anic Interpretation* by Zaitunah Subhan (Subhan, 1999) and several other writings of Indonesian Muslim feminists. At this stage, the interpreter is usually carried out using a thematic approach, where the discussion focuses on specific themes that I analyze using various methodologies. However, the writings at this stage, particularly those of feminists and rationalists, are still effective; that is, the analysis used is a modern-critical analysis such as feminism, but not accompanied by a comprehensive analysis of the verses in question. Thus, even though the spirit brought is liberation, it does not show its relationship with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, namely the Al-Qur'an. However, this is not accompanied by a comprehensive analysis of the verses concerned. Thus, even though the spirit brought is liberation, it does not show its relationship with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, namely the Al-Qur'an. but not accompanied by a comprehensive analysis of the verses in question. Thus, even though the spirit brought is liberation, it does not show its relationship with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, namely the Al-Qur'an (Abidin, 2011).

In the late 1990s, the development of women's interpretations in Indonesia had progressed rapidly. Muslim intellectuals who come from campus, especially IAIN and other universities, both public and private, have tried hard to reveal the concepts of the Koran with a multidisciplinary methodology (Nasir et al., 2020). In the study of women's interpretations, this kind of situation would provide extraordinary added value in the development of the Tafsir Al-Quran in Indonesia in the future.

Here we present several feminist exegete figures in Indonesia, including: Quraish Shihab, Hussein Muhammad, and Mansour Faqih. Prof. Dr. AG. H. Muhammad Quraish Shihab, Lc., MA was born in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi, February 16, 1944; 76 years old). He is a Muslim scholar in the sciences of the Qur'an and former Minister of Religion in the VII Development Cabinet of Soeharto (1998). Quraish Shihab is categorized as a Feminist Mufassir because he has a gender-fair discourse in his interpretation of his work, namely the Al-Misbah interpretation (Shihab, 2002).

Husein Muhammad is a male feminist who has the awareness to defend women. He has brought feminist ideas into action and discourses. In his story, he has written several works to support women in their discourse level. Besides that, he also dared to counter gender-biased religious discourse based on classical scholarship, commonly used by the general public and circles in Islamic boarding schools (Muhammad, 2001).

Mansour Fakih was born in Ngawi village, Bojonegoro, East Java, October 10, 1953. Mansour Fakih graduated as a bachelor from the Faculty of Ushuluddin IAIN (now UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, in the early 1970s. In 1990 he received a master of education from the University of Massachusetts in education and social change. He mentioned five phenomena of gender inequality, namely: (1) the marginalization of women reproduces in the household, work, and social-society, which indirectly results in women's economic poverty. (2) Subordination to women because of the assumption that women are irrational and emotional, so they cannot lead and occupy important positions. (3) The assumption that women dress up to attract the attention of the opposite sex. So, every case of sexual violence against women is always linked to this and makes women victims and the cause of sexual violence. (4) The stereotype that women are more suitable for doing domestic work than for public work (Fakih, 1996; Ilyas, 2002).

And there are still many other figures who try to dismantle various normative knowledge that is biased towards men's interests in religious life orientation, especially related to gender relations. Not to forget, Muslim feminist figures from Indonesia have also started to study this issue a lot and have produced several books that Indonesian Muslims can read. Among them are Nasaruddin Umar, Siti Ruhaini Zuhayatin, Budhy Munawwar Rahman, Cici Farkha, and many others (Ag & Wardani, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative method. According to Bodgan and Taylor (Taylor et al., n.d.), qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. The research form adopts an approach content analysis. This research tries to study the interpretation the work of feminist commentators. Primary data sources are exegetical texts which are studied by focusing on the interpretation of verses relating to femininity. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are books, research proposals, scientific papers, articles, journals and documents related to research.

Data collection depends on the type and source of data required. The data collection technique used in this study as a whole is a library research or book survey. In operation, the data collection techniques in this study emphasize the study and

collection of various interpretations of feminist commentators in Indonesia. Data analysis used techniques content analysis, which were obtained in the form of textual data with steps consisting of three components of data analysis, namely: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 2013). Data reduction is a process of selecting, focusing on simplification, abstracting and transforming that arises from written records. At the time of collecting the data, the researcher tried to trace the interpretations of feminist commentators and their relation to Indonesian political conditions, especially those concerning the women's movement in Indonesia. Furthermore, a reduction is carried out by selecting from the interpretations of the feminist commentators. After that, the construction of the data presentation is carried out in the form of a systematic description, the presentation of the data is presented by involving aspects of the wealth of data and tools of feminist theory analysis. After presenting the data, the next researcher draws a conclusion by verifying it based on the synthesis contained in the reduction and presentation of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation of Quraish Shihab about the creation of women in Surat An-Nisa verse 1 which reads:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Meaning: "O all human beings, fear your Lord who created you from oneself, and created from him his partner"

The expressions *min nafs wahidah* (from one self) and *wakholaqo minha zaujaha* (and create from them their partners) describe the origin of women's occurrence. The majority of mufassir understands it in the sense of "Adam As". Jalaluddin agrees with this opinion As Shuyuti, Ibn Katsir, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Biqoi and Abu Al-Suud. This opinion affects the next word, "zaujaha" which means Eve, which means Adam's spouse or wife.

According to the Quraish Shihab, the word *nafs* denotes a general human meaning, not one type of adam. The reason Quraish Shihab interprets the word *nafs* as adam because it is based on QS Al-Hujurat verse 13. "O people, we created you from a man and a woman, and made you nations and tribes ...". Quraish Shihab uses *munasabah* part between verses or *munasabah fil father*, namely the expression "*wa batssa minhuma rijaalan katsiir wan nisa*" explains the spread of humans from offspring correlates with logic. If the word *nafs wahidah* is not adam, it certainly comes from human descendants consisting of men and women because of its wide distribution (Ag & Wardani, 2017).

The meaning of the word "*zaujaha*" according to Quraish Shihab, he quoted from the opinion of Rashid Rida regarding the influence of the classical interpretation which states that women were created from Adam's ribs with the contents of the old covenant (book of events II: 21-22) which states that when Adam fell asleep, Allah took a rib and covered it with meat. From the rib that was removed, God created woman. This argument thus states that these interpretations are influenced by *israiliyat*. Quraish Shihab defines *lafadz "khalafa minha zaujaha"* not as the creation of women from Adam. However, he interpreted it as a message from the Koran so that husband and wife should unite to become oneself. That is to combine feelings and thoughts in mind and hope, in movements and steps, even in the breath. Both husband and wife are referred to as *zauj* or partners. And marriage is called *zawaj* or pairing (Ag & Wardani, 2017).

According to Buya Hamka, who quoted from the Hadil Arwah book, the Prophet himself said that the woman was nobler than an angel in heaven. Umm Salamah once asked the Prophet in a hadith: "which one is nobler, O Messenger of Allah, the woman in this world or an angel in heaven? Rasulullah replied: "Women in the world are nobler than nymphs as more exalted than underwear" (Juono, 2015).

Another thing that can be seen from the Islamic view of women is polygamy. The Qur'an Surat An-Nisa verse 3 says:

إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسُطُوا فِي الْبَيْتَامِ فَانكحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرِبَاعًا فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا

Meaning: "And if you are afraid that you will not be able to do justice to (the rights) of an orphaned woman (if you marry her), then marry the (other) women that you like: two, three, or four. If you are afraid that you will not be able to do justice, then (marry) only one person or the slaves you have—that which is closer to not doing the persecution."

According to the Quraish Shihab, the best way to understand the above verse is:

1. By placing the verse in context to whom the verse is referring. In the history of Bukhari, Aishah says that this verse relates to orphans who are in the care of a saint, whose assets are joined to the assets of the guardian, and the guardian likes the beauty and wealth of the orphan. The Saint wanted to marry her without giving her an appropriate dowry.

2. Based on that, the claim is fair to the orphan, which is the accent of this verse, then the mention of "marry the woman you like 2, 3, or 4 is in the context of emphasizing the order to be fair. The editorial of this verse is like the words of someone who forbids others from eating certain foods, and to reinforce the prohibition; he says, "if you are worried that you will get sick because of this food, then eat other foods that are in front of you." The command to finish the food merely emphasizes the need to heed the prohibition against eating certain foods. On this basis, the order (*amr*) in this verse contains absolutely no recommendation, let alone the obligation of polygamy.

3. The socio-historical context of Arab society. According to the Quraish Shihab, this verse does not make rules or regulations regarding polygamy because polygamy has been known and implemented by adherents of various religious laws and community traditions before the revelation of this verse. Here, Quraish Shihab moves from the perspective of *asbab nuzul* to the socio-historical condition which Fazlur Rahman calls "the general socio-historical background of the Koran." (Shihab, 2002).

Another thing that can be seen from the Islamic view of women is in the field of inheritance. QS An-Nisa verse 11 says:

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمُ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ فَإِن كُن نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُن تُلْثًا مَّا تَرَكَ وَإِن كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِن كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِن لَمْ يَكُن لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ آبَاؤُهُ فَلِلَّذَّكَرِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِن كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِلْمَرْءِ السُّدُسُ مِمَّا بَعْدَ وَصِيَّةِ يُوَصِّي بِهَا أَوْ دِينِ آبَاؤِكُمُ وَالْأَبْنَاؤُكُمُ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمُ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

Meaning: "Allah stipulates for you about (the distribution of inheritance for) your children. Namely: the share of a boy is the same as that of two of his daughters; and if the children are more than two women, then two-thirds of the property that is left behind is to them; if the girl is alone, then she gets half the wealth. And for two mothers and fathers, for each one sixth of the property left behind, if the deceased had children; if a person who dies is childless and he is inherited by his / her parents (only), then the mother gets one third; if the deceased has several siblings, the mother gets one sixth. (The distribution mentioned above) after fulfilling the will that he made or (and) after being paid the debt. (About) your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is closer (much) to your benefit. These are decrees from Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise."

The expression "part of a boy is equal to that of two daughters (*li al-dzakari mistlu hadz al-untsayain*) has become a point of debate and political target for various parties, both Muslim and non-Muslim. M Quraish Shihab notes the mistakes that occur in understanding the text as methodological mistakes, such as understanding problems (questions of legal, applied, or specific details in the sense of non-legal principles) regardless of the general tenets and understanding the text irrespective of context. Quraish Shihab said, "it is certain that wrong starting points, among others, cause these criticisms.

Quraish Shihab is a follower of the adage '*shalahiyah al nash li kulli zaman wa makaan*' (the relevance of text in every space and time) so that criticism of some feminists and Islamic figures, such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, against the inheritance of men and women as a statute only relevant in the time of the prophet as a decree which was not final. And can be revised. Quraish Shihab responded with the argument of "the perfection of Islam" in al-maidah verse 3 and the statement of inheritance law as Allah's boundaries or Allah's hudud (Story of Surah al-Nisa: 13-14) (Shihab, 2002).

Another thing that can be seen from the Islamic view of women is in the field of women's leadership. QS An-Nisa verse 34, which means: "*Men are the leaders of women, because Allah has exaggerated some of them (men) over others (women), and because they (men) have spent part of their wealth. Therefore, a godly woman who is obedient to God will take care of herself when her husband is not there because God has taken care of her (them). The women you are worried about nusyuznya, so advise them and separate them in their beds, and beat them. Then if they obey you, do not look for ways to trouble them. Allah is Most High, Most Great.*"

According to the Quraish Shihab, this verse talks about leadership and discussions about the context of a husband-wife relationship, where men and women involve each other. The word *al-rijal* is the plural form of *al-rajul*. As evidenced by Nasaruddin Umar in his dissertation, *al-rajul* does have many relational meanings according to the sentence's context, such as: in the sense of male gender, community leaders, and slaves (Umar, 1999). Besides that, many scholars who understand this word in the sense of "husbands" in the context of the above verse is what causes Quraish Shihab to accept this opinion in his book, the insight of the Koran. The consideration of the verse's commandment as emphasized in the continuation of the verse is because they or their husbands spend part of the property for their wives. If what is meant by the word 'men' are men in general, we would not consider this. Moreover, the continuation of the verse talks about wives and domestic life (Shihab, 1996).

CONCLUSION

The thought of feminism in Indonesia originated during the Dutch colonial period. In the late 19th century, we saw young women in armed struggle against the colonialists. After that, the Indonesian feminism movement emerged during the New Order era, namely the Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement) movement, which was founded in the 1950s. The Feminism Movement in Indonesia takes place in several ways. Such as organizations, institutions, writings, seminars, and various movements. The beginning of feminist interpretation in Indonesia emerged after Indonesian independence and Islamic education and literature in Indonesia. During the Old Order era, educational facilities and Islamic literature began to be institutionalized, such as the emergence of PTAIN and UII. In the late 1960's, Hamka (1962) when imprisoned by the Soekarno government, began to write a monumental Tafsir, the Tafsir Al-Azhar. Besides, during the old order, the ICMI (Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association) was formed. In Indonesia, this stage of the development of women's interpretation emerged

around the 1990s, with the emergence of several writings by Quraish Shihab, followed by several theses and dissertations among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals discussed the concepts of the Qur'an.

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