

## Moral Educational Values In The Book *Al-Azkar* By Imam An-Nawawi Ad-Dimasyqi

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the content of *al-Azkar* and to identify the moral educational values contained within it, as well as to examine its relevance to modern Islamic education. This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. The primary data source is the book *al-Azkar* by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, which is analyzed using the content analysis method to uncover the moral educational values embedded in the text. The findings indicate that *al-Azkar* contains hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad Saw related to daily practices of dhikr and supplication, which are rich in moral educational values. These values include: (1) morals toward Allah Saw such as tawhid (monotheism), piety, sincerity, gratitude, patience, trust in God (tawakkul), and repentance; (2) morals toward the Prophet Saw in the form of respect and love; (3) morals toward fellow human beings such as devotion to parents, respect for teachers, and maintaining good relationships within family and society; (4) inner morals such as humility (tawadu'), cooperation (ta'awun), tolerance (tasamuh), and positive thinking (husn al-zann); and (5) morals toward other creatures, including ethical treatment of animals.

**Keywords:** Moral Education Values; the Book *al-Azkar*; Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya penguatan pendidikan akhlak dalam konteks pendidikan Islam modern yang menghadapi berbagai tantangan moral. Kitab *al-Azkar* karya Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi merupakan salah satu rujukan klasik yang memuat ajaran zikir dan doa yang sarat dengan nilai-nilai akhlak. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kandungan kitab *al-Azkar* serta mengidentifikasi nilai-nilai

### Artikel Info

**Received:**

10 March 2026

**Revised:**

14 April 2026

**Accepted:**

19 Mei 2026

**Published:**

15 June 2026

pendidikan akhlak yang terkandung di dalamnya, sekaligus mengkaji relevansinya dengan pendidikan Islam modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*). Data utama diperoleh dari kitab *al-Azkar* karya Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan metode *content analysis* untuk mengungkap nilai-nilai pendidikan akhlak yang terkandung dalam teks. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kitab *al-Azkar* memuat hadis-hadis Nabi Muhammad Saw yang berkaitan dengan amalan zikir dan doa sehari-hari yang sarat dengan nilai pendidikan akhlak. Nilai-nilai tersebut meliputi: (1) akhlak kepada Allah Saw seperti tauhid, ketakwaan, keikhlasan, syukur, sabar, tawakkal, dan taubat; (2) akhlak kepada Rasulullah Saw berupa penghormatan dan kecintaan; (3) akhlak kepada sesama manusia seperti berbakti kepada orang tua, menghormati guru, serta berinteraksi baik dengan keluarga dan masyarakat; (4) akhlak batin seperti tawadu', ta'awun, tasamuh, dan husnuzan; serta (5) akhlak terhadap makhluk lain, termasuk etika terhadap hewan.

**Kata Kunci:** Nilai Pendidikan Akhlak; Kitab al-Azkar; Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi.

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## A. Introduction

Ethics is the cornerstone of Islamic teachings, serving to guide people to behave in accordance with virtuous values. The quality of a Muslim's religiosity is not measured solely by ritual practices and a vertical relationship with God, but also by social interactions that reflect noble character. Thus, ethics serves as a crucial indicator in assessing an individual's quality of religious life. The mission of moral refinement was even the primary purpose for the sending of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, who emphasized that moral cultivation is the core of Islamic teachings.

The term "education" linguistically derives from the root word "didik," with the verb "mendidik" meaning to nurture and provide proper training (instruction, guidance) regarding moral character and intellectual development (Language Development Center, 1994). In other literature, education is defined as all actions or methods used to educate (Language Development Center, 1994). Meanwhile, the term for education in English is "education" (Echols & Shadily, 2003).

Education is understood as a process of transforming the attitudes and behavior of an individual or group of people in an effort to foster human development through teaching and training (Syafaruddin et al., n.d.). Thus, in simple terms, the essence of education is the shaping of human beings toward an ideal state. Education is also understood as an effort to cultivate human potential, to guide the unstructured into the structured, and to nurture and provide training and instruction regarding a person's intelligence and behavior (Daulay, 2012).

In the context of Islamic education, akhlak is positioned as one of the primary dimensions that is inseparable from the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social aspects. Moral education is aimed at shaping individuals who are not only cognitively intelligent but also possess moral integrity in daily life. Imam al-Ghazali's thought emphasizes that moral education encompasses human relationships with God, fellow humans, and the metaphysical aspects that form the foundation of belief (Al-Ghazali, 2005). In line with this, Ibn Miskawayh emphasizes the importance of habit formation and self-control in shaping character (Miskawayh, 1968). These two perspectives demonstrate that moral education in Islam possesses a strong philosophical foundation and remains relevant for contextualization across various eras. Moral education, as articulated by 'Abdullah Nasih 'Ulwan, is defined as a set of moral principles and values that must be instilled so they can become habits ('Ulwan, 2020). The process of instilling these ethical and moral principles and values is the core of moral education. Thus, habits, attitudes, and character traits formed through systematic and planned practice can be understood as the result of moral education ('Ulwan, 2020).

Developments in research on moral education indicate a shift in focus from normative aspects toward an applied approach. In the early stages, studies on moral education largely emphasized the construction of values and moral concepts based on religious texts and the thought of classical scholars (Halstead, 2007). Subsequently, research evolved toward the implementation of character education within the formal education system, highlighting the role of the curriculum, teaching methods, and the exemplary conduct of educators as key factors in shaping students' moral character (Lickona, 2012). In recent years, academic attention has increasingly focused on the

challenges of character education in the digital age, characterized by the rising intensity of virtual interactions that are often not accompanied by proper communication ethics (Ribble, 2015; Jones & Mitchell, 2016).

On the other hand, several studies also indicate that the implementation of character education in various educational institutions has not yet fully achieved the expected outcomes. A study conducted by Berkowitz and Bier (2005) indicates that although character education programs have been widely implemented, their impact on behavioral change remains variable and is highly dependent on the consistency of implementation and the supporting environment. Similar findings are also emphasized in contemporary research, which states that the integration of moral values into learning is often merely a formality and has not yet addressed the interpersonal dimension

This indicates a gap between the ideal concept of moral education and the reality of its implementation in practice. Furthermore, advancements in information technology and social media have further compounded the challenges in moral education. Anonymous and unrestricted digital interactions often encourage negative behaviors such as hate speech, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). This phenomenon indicates that existing approaches to moral education have not yet been fully capable of responding to the rapid dynamics of social change in the digital age. Therefore, an alternative approach is needed—one that is not merely conceptual but also practical and sustainable in daily life.

In this context, a study of the works of classical scholars that contain practical dimensions in moral education becomes highly significant. However, research specifically examining the values of moral education within devotional texts remains relatively limited. One work with significant potential in this regard is the book *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam Nawawi. This book not only contains a collection of prayers and zikr but also incorporates character-building values integrated into daily spiritual practices (Nawawi, 1994). The habituation approach through dhikr and prayer in *al-Azkar* can be viewed as a form of moral education that is internal, reflective, and continuous.

Based on this literature synthesis, several research gaps can be identified, namely: (1) the predominance of studies on moral education that focus on conceptual aspects

rather than practice-based approaches, (2) the limited number of studies specifically examining moral education values in the book al-Azkar, and (3) the suboptimal efforts to integrate classical moral values with contemporary moral challenges, particularly in the digital context. Therefore, this study makes a scientific contribution to the development of classical text-based moral education studies using a contextual approach, thereby bridging the gap between conceptual ideals and practical realities.

## **B. Research Methods**

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand and interpret the meanings contained within the text, particularly regarding the values of moral education in the book al-Azkar. This approach emphasizes the natural examination of phenomena through the process of collecting, classifying, and interpreting descriptive data.

The object of this study is the book al-Azkar by Imam Nawawi. This study focuses on exploring the moral education values contained in the zikr and prayer texts compiled in the book. The data sources in this study consist of two types: (1) primary data sources, namely the book al-Azkar; and (2) secondary data sources, namely books, journal articles, and previous research relevant to the themes of moral education and Islamic thought. Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis. The researcher thoroughly read the contents of the book al-Azkar, then identified the sections containing moral values. The data found were subsequently recorded, classified, and organized based on specific themes, such as the relationship between humans and God (*ḥablun minallāh*) and the relationship between humans and their fellow humans (*ḥablun minannas*).

The data analysis technique employed content analysis using a descriptive-analytical approach. The analysis process is conducted through several stages, namely: (1) data reduction, by selecting data relevant to the research focus; (2) categorization, by grouping data into themes of moral values; (3) interpretation, by interpreting the meaning contained in the text; and (4) drawing conclusions, namely formulating

research findings systematically. This analysis also considers the contemporary context to assess the relevance of these values in modern life.

To ensure the reliability of the data (trustworthiness), this study employs source triangulation, which involves comparing data from the book *al-Azkar* with other relevant literature. Additionally, a cross-check of the sources used was conducted to ensure the consistency and validity of the data.

In writing this article, technical requirements follow scientific writing standards, namely: (1) the manuscript is paginated; (2) figure captions are presented as part of the figure title, not within the figure itself; and (3) if mathematical equations are included, they are formatted using Equation Editor or a similar tool. However, since this study is qualitative in nature, no mathematical equations were used in the analysis. Using this method, the study is expected to provide comprehensive answers to the research questions, particularly in uncovering the values of moral education in the book *al-Azkar* and their relevance to contemporary ethical issues.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

This study aims to identify and analyze the values of moral education in the book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi, as well as its relevance to contemporary Islamic education. The book *\*al-Azkar\**, written in the past by the scholar Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, is undoubtedly highly relevant to education in the era when it was written and disseminated. This is especially true when considering the historical context of educational fervor during Imam an-Nawawi's time, which did not face particularly complex issues. The complexity of contemporary educational issues has drawn attention to scholarly works of the past. Is the legacy of classical scholars still relevant to the world of education with its diverse and complex issues today? Imam an-Nawawi's *\*Kitab al-Azkar\** has been extensively re-examined, including in this paper. The strong values of tawhid and worship embedded within it remain highly relevant to the dynamics of Islamic education today. However, specifically regarding the theme addressed in this paper—which centers on moral education—after analyzing both the explicit and implicit meanings within the text, the relevance that can be established between the values of moral education in *\*Kitab al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-

Dimasyqi and contemporary Islamic education is as follows: Based on content analysis, the following scientific findings were obtained:

1. The Relevance of Moral Education to the Goals of Islamic Education

Islamic education is fundamentally aimed at making people aware of the purpose of human creation. There are at least two purposes of human creation, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, verse 30, where Allah says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِي الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً

Meaning: "And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a vicegerent on earth'" (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 30).

The purpose of humanity, or the wisdom behind human creation, is further explained in Surah al-Zariyat, verse 56, as follows:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنَ

Meaning: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Q.S. Al-Zariyat: 56).

The two verses above convey the essence that the creation of humankind inherently serves two functions or purposes. First, the purpose of human creation is to serve as Allah's vicegerent on earth. Based on the meaning of khalifah, which according to exegetes signifies a substitute or representative, it can be understood that humanity, besides being a substitute for the creatures that previously inhabited the earth, is in essence already designated by Allah as His representative on earth for the purpose of fostering its prosperity. The second function of human creation, based on the second verse of Surah al-A'raf (verse 56), is solely to submit oneself to Allah. To become a servant of Allah tasked with obeying all of Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions.

The purpose of Islamic education, based on the meaning of education in the Islamic approach, is understood as a process of shaping humanity toward the ideals envisioned by Islam. Thus, what Islam projects regarding the purpose of human creation is, in essence, the very purpose of Islamic education itself. This means that the entire system and apparatus of Islamic education—whenever and wherever it occurs—

must be directed and aligned with the ideals of Islam, specifically in the context of fostering prosperity on earth and serving God.

An analysis of the book *al-Azkar* reveals that the moral values contained within it align with the goals of Islamic education, namely guiding humanity to recognize their role as *khalifah fi al-ard* and servants of Allah (Q.S. *al-Baqarah*:30; Q.S. *Az-Zariyat*:56). This scientific finding indicates that this book not only teaches ritual practices, such as *dhikr* and prayer, but also instills spiritual and moral awareness, which form the core of Islamic education. Previous research by Halstead (2007) and Nucci & Narvaez (2014) emphasized the importance of integrating moral values and spirituality into modern Islamic education. The findings of this study align with this, demonstrating that classical texts such as *al-Azkar* can serve as a scientific reference for developing an Islamic education curriculum that emphasizes moral aspects and monotheism. Other contents teach humanity about divinity, monotheism, and creed. There are even moral educational values within it that govern the interactions between humans and God, as well as among fellow humans and other creatures. When all of these aspects are considered in relation to the objectives of Islamic education as outlined above, the book *al-Azkar* by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi is indeed highly relevant for study and as a reference in Islamic education. Beyond teaching good deeds, the book *al-Azkar* also educates people to become individuals who bring prosperity to the earth through their behavior the praiseworthy one.

## 2. Relevance to Formal Education (Schools and Madrasahs)

Contemporary education differs from classical education, which lacked a standardized system in practice. In addition to having a standardized system, contemporary education also faces a variety of complex issues. Among these complex issues today is the increasingly alarming moral decline. In reality, progress in the education system has barely kept pace with progress in the realm of morality. As the number of educational institutions increases, more and more educators remain unable to address these various moral issues.

The moral issues of concern to all stakeholders in today's educational world include the loss of respect and courtesy toward teachers, low moral standards—both in

speech and behavior—among students, and possibly among educators as well. Profanity, rudeness, dishonesty, insults, and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of unbecoming behavior, are prevalent among students and may very well occur among educators as well. The proliferation of unregulated social media activity further complicates these issues. Although the book *\*Kitab al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi is essentially an encyclopedia of the Prophet’s hadiths regarding daily practices—both obligatory and recommended—it also contains moral educational values within its pages. The relevance of the values of moral education in the book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi to contemporary formal education will be explained as follows:

a. Relevance to Educators

The values of moral education found in the book *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi are relevant to educators in today’s formal educational setting. In *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, there are educational values regarding sincerity. Every educator engaged in teaching today faces the issue of *ujrah*, or remuneration, for their work. This reality is not unique to Indonesia; educators everywhere today are no longer unsung heroes. Educators today each receive *ujrah* as compensation for teaching their students.

Specifically in Indonesia, since the government has established high education budgets, operational assistance for education, and teacher certification allowances from the lowest to the highest levels. In essence, what is in place today is already very good and indeed should be so; educators should no longer have to worry about living expenses and can focus on teaching and educating the next generation. Just as during the golden age of Islam, educators’ basic needs were met by the state, and every written work they produced was paid for by the government. This is also what led to the widespread dissemination of scholarly works in the past. This does not mean that educators of the past lacked sincerity in writing scholarly works; rather, their focus on knowledge—unburdened by other

concerns, particularly the struggle to meet basic needs—led to the widespread dissemination of knowledge throughout the Islamic world. The Kitab al-Azkar emphasizes the value of sincerity in teaching and educating, a principle relevant to the modern challenges in the world of education. Analysis of the text reveals that the book provides practical guidance on maintaining intention and focus in teaching without being distracted by material factors, in line with the principle of sincerity (ikhlas) in Islamic pedagogy. Furthermore, the book emphasizes courtesy and the ethics of communication (adab al-lisan), which is particularly important given that modern educational realities reveal issues regarding the lack of courtesy in the behavior of both teachers and students. These findings align with the research by Suryani & Widodo (2020), which found that teachers' character education significantly influences the formation of students' behavior.

b. Relevance to Students

Although there is not much that can be connected between the book \*al-Azkar\* by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi and the reality of today's students, there are still a few points that can be linked. One of these is respect toward parents and teachers. This reality is widespread in the world of education, where many students lack respect and courtesy toward parents and teachers. For this reason, Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi's \*Kitab al-Azkar\* offers a solution relevant to today's challenges through the values of how to behave respectfully toward parents and teachers—the technical details and virtues of which are outlined in the book. The dilemma in education today is that while education is being implemented on a massive scale, much of the output produced is far from good values—specifically regarding politeness and decorum in speech. The state of politeness in speech today is deeply concerning; nearly all segments of society are experiencing a decline in the ability to speak well and politely. This is especially true among students, where the level of politeness in speech is particularly concerning and requires an immediate solution. One approach to

addressing this issue is to foster awareness and deepen understanding. In the book *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, these two elements are present; the book fosters awareness of proper speech and provides understanding through proactive measures against the erosion of polite speech values, utilizing the Prophet's hadiths found in *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi.

The results of the analysis indicate that values of respect toward parents and teachers, as well as politeness in speech, can be applied to modern students. The book *al-Azkar* provides practical, preventive measures, such as through zikr and prayer as moral reminders. This aligns with the findings of Shamsuddin & Rahman (2019), who emphasize that systematic moral education significantly influences students' social behavior.

3. Relevance to Family Education (Informal)

The moral education values that can be linked to today's education are found within the family educational environment. The family unit is inherently part of the educational sphere. The role of the environment is central to producing the best generation as complete human beings. This principle is also conveyed in the Qur'an, Surah at-Taḥrim, verse 6, as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

Meaning: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from the Fire whose fuel is people and stones" (at-Tahrim: 6)

And the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad Saw further emphasizes the important role of education within the family as follows:

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

Meaning: "No child is born except in a state of fitrah; it is their parents who make them Jewish, Christian, or Zoroastrian" (Hadith narrated by Bukhari)

The verses of the Qur'an and the hadith cited above underscore the vital role of the family in Islamic education. Consequently, the book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi—which contains values of moral education—is highly relevant to family education. Among these connections are moral education for husbands and wives, as well as proper conduct toward children and extended family members. If education within the family sphere proceeds as it should, moral decline can be easily contained. However, the irony today is that family education is not proceeding as it should; parents are shirking their responsibilities by entirely delegating their children's education to schools, even though the fundamental education actually lies within the family environment, while schools merely assist parents in fulfilling their children's educational needs.

Analysis indicates that the book *al-Azkar* provides guidance on moral education within the family, including the ethics of spouses, children, and relatives. This aligns with the Qur'anic verse (at-Taḥrīm:6) and the Prophet's Sawhadith, which emphasize the role of parents in shaping a child's character. These scientific findings indicate that classical texts provide a moral and practical framework that can support modern family education, thereby helping to counteract moral decline resulting from reliance on formal education alone. This study reinforces previous findings by Al-Attas (2013), who emphasized that moral education must begin in the family as the primary social unit.

#### 4. Relevance to Education in the Social Context

The relevance of the book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi to the world of education lies within the social context. What is commonly observed in society today is a widespread neglect of *\*hifz al-lisan\** (guardianship of the tongue), resulting in frequent disharmony within society simply because people are unable to control their speech. Some of the common issues within society include backbiting, slander, lying, betrayal, cursing, and so on. Even when considered within the broader scope of education, all educational settings are connected to this issue of guarding one's tongue. Furthermore, the values contained in the book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi are highly relevant to the social conditions in that society, particularly regarding the ethics of *\*hifz al-lisan\**. The book *\*Al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad -

Dimashqi contains a chapter dedicated to discussing the issue of hifẓ al-lisān, starting from the prohibition of backbiting (ghībah) and slander (namīmah), the evils of the tongue, and the scope of backbiting and slander, all of which are comprehensively addressed in the book *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimashqi.

Ghibah, which is one of the main issues regarding the inability to uphold the values of hifẓ al-lisān in the book *\*al-Azkar\** by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, is discussed in such detail that Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi presents it in a highly comprehensive manner. From the definition of backbiting to technical discussions on the subject, he addresses these topics in that chapter, including how to repent from the sin of backbiting and related matters. For instance, backbiting is not limited to speech but also includes writing and gestures. The author assesses that, specifically regarding the section on hifẓ al-lisān found in the book *al-Azkar* by Imam an-Nawawi ad-Dimasyqi, it is highly relevant to the general issues occurring in society.

The analysis reveals that the book *\*al-Azkar\** specifically addresses *\*hifẓ al-lisan\**, which involves guarding one's tongue against backbiting, slander, lying, and other reprehensible verbal behaviors. Content analysis indicates that this book provides practical steps and explanations of moral consequences, making it highly relevant to the ethical issues of modern society, particularly in the digital age with the proliferation of social media. These findings are consistent with Al-Sheikh's (2018) research, which emphasizes the importance of moral education for maintaining social harmony, demonstrating that classical values retain contemporary relevance.

##### 5. Synthesis of Scientific Findings and Their Relationship to the Hypothesis

The research hypothesis states that the moral education values in the book *al-Azkar* remain relevant and applicable to contemporary Islamic education. Based on the findings:

- 1) This book teaches spiritual awareness, personal morality, and social ethics, supporting the goals of Islamic education.
- 2) The values of sincerity, politeness, and courtesy toward teachers and students are relevant for formal education.

- 3) Guidelines on family ethics support informal education, helping to prevent moral decline in children.
- 4) The value of *hifz al-lisan* supports community education and social behavior.

Thus, the research hypothesis is scientifically proven through content analysis and alignment with prior literature, demonstrating that the book *al-Azkar* remains a relevant source for contemporary Islamic education.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study indicates that the moral educational values contained in the book *Al-Azkar* are highly relevant to be implemented in modern Islamic education. Their implementation can be carried out through the methods of *mau'izah* (advice), *uswah hasanah* (good example), *ta'wid* (habituation), as well as *targhib* and *tarhib*. The implication of this study emphasizes that the integration of moral values based on remembrance (*dhikr*) and supplication (*du'a'*) can serve as a strategic alternative in shaping students' character to become morally upright individuals.

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