Al-Jihad

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Introduction

Muslims believe that Islam is a complete way of life because the tenets of the religion and its governing laws encompass every aspect of a human being's existence be it individual, family, social, economical/financial, political, educational, environmental, or spiritual. Under the scope of divine directives are regulations on the establishment and maintenance of international relations and the co-existence with people of other faiths. These scriptural injunctions also control/oversee the sphere of defense, which is a natural response exhibited by plants, animals and humanity. Allah / God (swt) in His Infinite Wisdom has provided every creature with multiple innate response systems to external hazards which seek to cause injury or death. Demonstrating that self-preservation is an instinctive reaction to outside forces, which intend to harm.

According to Brian C. Freeman and Gwyn A. Beattie of Iowa State University, who wrote An Overview of Plant Defenses against Pathogens and Herbivores. *The Plant Health Instructor*, where they state the following:

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Plants represent a rich source of nutrients for many organisms including bacteria, fungi, protists, insects, and vertebrates. Although lacking an immune system comparable to animals, plants have developed a stunning array of structural, chemical, and protein-based defenses designed to detect invading organisms and stop them before they are able to cause extensive damage. Humans depend almost exclusively on plants for food, and plants provide many important non-food products including wood, dyes, textiles, medicines, cosmetics, soaps, rubber, plastics, inks, and industrial chemicals. Understanding how plants defend themselves from pathogens and herbivores is essential in order to protect our food supply and develop highly disease-resistant plant species.

Plant Disease and Resistance: Broadly defined, disease is any physiological abnormality or significant disruption in the "normal" health of a plant. Disease can be caused by living (biotic) agents, including fungi and bacteria, or by environmental (abiotic) factors such as nutrient deficiency, drought, lack of oxygen, excessive temperature, ultraviolet radiation, or pollution. In order to protect themselves from damage, plants have developed a wide variety of constitutive and inducible defenses. Constitutive (continuous) defenses include many preformed barriers such as cell walls, waxy epidermal cuticles, and bark. These substances not only protect the plant from invasion, they also give the plant strength and rigidity. In addition to preformed barriers, virtually all-living plant cells have the ability to detect invading pathogens and respond with inducible defenses including the production of toxic chemicals, pathogen-degrading enzymes, and deliberate cell suicide. Plants often wait until pathogens are detected before producing toxic chemicals or defense-related proteins because of the high-energy costs and nutrient requirements associated with their production and maintenance (Freeman and Beattie).

He created the heavens without pillars that you may see, and cast firm mountains in the earth lest it should shake with you, and He has scattered in it every kind of animal. And We sent down water from the sky and caused every splendid kind [of plant] to grow in it. (31:10)

In the animal kingdom the same system can be witnessed be they on land, in the sea or air. The defense mechanisms of some animals were documented by researchers for, which the following examples are noted:



In 2012, scientists recorded footage of a never-before-seen defense mechanism deployed by a small species of deep-sea squid: When threatened, the squid attacks its predator and then pulls away, breaking off the tip of its own arm and leaving it behind as a distraction. The arm continues to glow and twitch, creating a diversion and enabling the squid to escape. But this squid isn't the only creature with a bizarre way of defending itself. Here are several other ways animals try to save their own lives, or the lives of their comrades.

The Texas Horned Lizard is a scary-looking creature. Brown, plump and perfectly camouflaged in its native sandy environment, its first line of defense is its spiky demeanor. If the sharp spikes and horns don't ward off predators, the lizard steps it up a notch and squirts a well-aimed stream of blood out of its eyes. The stream of blood, which can go as far as 5 feet, is mixed with a foul-tasting chemical that wards off predators. But this odd weapon comes at a cost: The lizard may release a third of its total blood supply this way, amounting to two percent of its body mass.

When attacked, the Spanish ribbed newt shifts its ribs forward at an angle and pushes them through its stretched skin. The resulting effect is a row of spikes on either side of its body. Like the hairy frog, the newt has to force the bones through its skin every time it is attacked, but the mechanism seems to cause little or no harm to the creature. "Newts, and amphibians in general, are known to have an extraordinary ability to repair their skin," says zoologist Egon Heiss of the University of Vienna in Austria.

Under intense fear, opossums fall into a comatose-like state that can last for hours, long enough to convince any predator that the opossum is already dead. Also unappetizing: Fear causes these animals to emit a corpse-like smell that only adds to their act. (http://mentalfloss.com)

The Malaysian exploding ants have large glands full of venom inside of their bodies. When threatened, they contract their abs, which causes the glands to explode, spraying their predators with corrosive venom.

The bombardier beetle sprays its predators with a hot, noxious spray of toxic bodily fluids, right out of its anus. To do this the beetle stores hydroquinones, hydrogen peroxide, and a mix of enzymes that catalyze an explosive reaction shooting out at almost boiling point.

Armed with quills long enough to pierce through predators' internal organs, the African crested porcupine is one animal you'd be wise to avoid. If it sense danger, the porcupine will charge backwards or sideways to stab the quills into the predator. If it's being chased, it will stop suddenly, causing the predator to run headlong into its quills.

The Slow Loris, as its name suggests, is a painfully slow-moving creature, which makes it vulnerable to predators. In order to deal with its lack of speed, the Loris has developed poison glands near its armpits! It coats its body by rubbing its hands on these glands and then it applies the poison on its body and teeth. The resulting bite can put a predator into anaphylactic shock. (http://list25.com)

When it comes to human defense the topic becomes very complex due to the extensive variables associated with warfare, which include politics, power, ideologies, greed, capitalism, neocolonialism, expansionism, to name a few. Bearing in mind the continuum of responses that the human ego may express, Allah (swt) has placed specific limitations on how the concept of defense is to be manifested by individuals, societies and nations in Islam.

The Concept of al-Jihad in Islam

Islam is a religion that is built on illumination of the innate nature, reason, and good manners and the glorious Qur'an was the first document of its kind to make limitations and restrictions on open combat. Muslims have been forbidden to engage in any conflict for personal gain, revenge, or tribal disputes. Islam has called the believers to enjoin good and forbid evil, has made it one of the pillars of religion and has applied certain conditions and etiquettes with the art of defense, which are necessitated by wisdom and mandated by the nature of human beings.

It has been reported that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ^{PBUH} said, "When the Messenger of God ^{PBUH&HF} wanted to send a contingent of the army to battle, he would sit down with them and advise them to represent God justly and to follow the good example of the Messenger of God. He ^{PBUH&HF} [further] said, 'Do not indulge in acts of extremism, do not disrespect dead corpses, do not resort to deceit, do not kill the elderly, do not kill children,



do not kill women, and do no not cut down trees unless necessity dictates otherwise." The lives of those who do not fight are sacred, especially the weak among the elderly, the children, and the women. Souls are sacred! Islam says killing of an innocent soul has dangerous consequences, both in this world and in the hereafter. What a great travesty it is to kill innocent souls, and what a great honor it is to safeguard them, just as God, the Exalted mentioned in the glorious Qur'an:

"That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind. Our apostles certainly brought them manifest signs, yet even after that many of them commit excesses on the earth." (Surah Al Maidah:32)

Islam teaches Muslims not to: violate the sanctity of any sacred thing; infringe on enemies with the tongue or an action; nor target a person due to the mistakes of others for God, the Exalted says, "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another." (See 39:7 & 35:18 & 17:15 & 6:164). In addition, it is clearly stated in Islam that your hatred of someone does not justify that you violating his sanctity, for God the Almighty says, "And do not let the hatred of people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." (5:8)

It has also been reported that Imam Ali ^{PBUH} said, "I dislike for you to be of those who slander [others]. It is better for you to describe their deeds and state of action; surely, this is the more refined way of speaking [about others] and more justified in excuse rather than slandering them." (Nahju al-Balaghah, p.323)

Although, the Islamic model for conflict is bound by ethics and morals, these principles are not known / understood by the average person nor practiced by all Muslims from the various schools of thought. In addition, the stereotypes of Arabs which was promulgated during the 20th century as being backwards and camel riding villains was the impetus for portraying Muslims as conniving and unscrupulous beings. A continuous onslaught of negative images abounded in the western media stream of Muslims and any other race / nation, who was considered to be a potential threat or enemy, be it internal or external from North American soil. With the advent of the September 11th attacks on US territory, the joint collusion of government

agencies, capitalism and media moguls, the Arabs became the tools for the implementation of such laws as the Patriot Act; heightened global security; destabilization of governments and a generalized fear campaign to garner public support for the national invasion of other countries. As a result of 9/11 the word 'terrorist' became synonymous with 'Muslim' and the Taliban, Al-Qaida and the newly formed ISIS/ISIL were comprised of adherents fighting a holy war called, *jihad*, essentially these people are Islamic fundamentalists.

Ethan Cox of Ricochet Media interviewed Glenn Greenwald (lawyer, journalist and author) to provide a definition on the word terrorism. Glenn Greenwald provided the following response:

There really is no definition of the word terrorism, which is the problem. There's actually some great scholarship that has been done by Remi Berlin who is at NYU and was previously at the Sorbonne, about the history of that term and in modern usage the term was really created by the Israelis in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a means of trying to universalize the conflicts that they were having with their neighbors so that they could tell the world that what we are fighting is not land disputes or specific conflicts to Israelis but we're fighting this international menace called terrorism. And there were all these conferences back in that era to try and come up with a definition of the term and the problem that both the US and Israeli governments were having when they tried to create a definition of what terrorism meant, was that it was almost impossible for them to create a definition that included the violence they wanted to delegitimize without also including the violence that they regularly were engaging in or that they were supporting. And this has been the problem from the very beginning it's a term that almost has no meaning of any kind and so it's become nothing more than just a propagandistic weapon to end rational debate, to increase fear levels and the like. But whatever else terrorism means to the extent that there is a common understanding of what that term is, I think most people would say that it has to include the deliberate targeting of civilians with violence for political ends...I think the important point to think about is that if you want to be a person who uses the term, terrorism or who is affected when political leaders use it, it's first really important to have an understanding of what that means and to also ask yourself, if your own government's actions qualify by the meaning that you've ascribed to the term.





Fortunately, there are scholars who are offering an alternative view about what is transpiring in the Middle East and some of the factors, which have led to the creation of these fringe groups. In an interview on BlogTalkRadio, Shaykh Hanif Mohammed hosted Dr. Shaykh Odeh Muhawesh who offered the following insights about the formation of ISIS and the media's biased stance when it comes to crimes committed against humanity:

... The Saudis in Syria wanted to take over Syria, so they created what's called Jihad tul-Nusrah (sp) a brutal form of Al-Qaida that was focused on Syria and they are staunchly pro-Saudi. The Qataris didn't like this; the Turks didn't like this. So, the Qataris and the Turks founded their own version of Al-Qaida and they called it ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), they later changed the name to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and that ISIS wanted to show that it's more powerful so they became more brutal with anybody that disagrees with them including ironically with other Salafis who were pro-Saudi. People don't realize that ISIS killed 7,000 An-Nusrah Wahhabis in Syria, so what you are seeing today are fights between proxy armies. One is the Saudi proxy army of An-Nusrah and Al-Oaidi in Syria and in Lebanon versus the other proxy army that is ISIL that is Oatari / Turkish that is fighting to gain control over the oil wells of northern Iraq and eastern Syria. All of this is done in the name of Islam so that they can recruit people. But, we all know that Islam forbids the killing of innocent people; that Islam forbids the taking of hostages and killing POWs for instance; Islam forbids attacking innocent people in their villages and towns and homes. Everything that these guys are doing is outside the bounds of Islam. These are proxy armies that operate in the name of Islam.

But, Shaykh there is another important element. You hear these things about the Middle East; you hear the bloodshed that happens everyday in the Middle East that is done by people who proclaim to be Muslim. But, in a recent lecture, somebody asked me, what are Muslims are doing to each other? Why aren't other groups as bloody? And therein lies the problem. For instance, in Sudan, the Army of God, one of the most brutal armies, is killing, not only killing Muslims, it's killing pagans in south Sudan, it's killing other forms of Christians who disagree with them in the name of Christ. You would never hear that in the media outlets here. In the Central African Republic, people in the name of Christ, have killed, massacred, beheaded so many Muslims; children and women. They even went inside

of churches, where Muslims sought refuge in churches and these people went inside of churches, they went inside of mosques and killed so many Muslims. You would never hear about that in the media outlets here because it's done in the name of Christ. So, media outlets here don't have any interest in making us knowing about this...

Sh. Hanif – I believe that had it not been for the Christians themselves who said that they were seeking refuge in Najaf and Kerbala in Iraq, where they were being fed at the shrines of the Ahlul-Bayt (as) on a daily basis and given refuge. I don't think we would have heard about the good humanitarian efforts of the Muslims that were going on over there.

Sh. Odeh – That is absolutely right. Absolutely. Yesterday, a delegation of the Iraqi Christians met with Ayatollah Sistani, Grand Ayatollah Sistani, may Allah protect him. And they praised him and they thanked the Shi'as for protecting them. But, that's what the 12 Imams (as) taught us, Brother, they taught us to protect not only those who are weak and destitute but to protect even those who are our sworn enemies. But, the fourth Imam, Imam Zayn-ul Abideen (as) did is an example for all of humanity to follow where he witnessed the massacre of Imam Hussein and his holy family (as), he witnessed it with his own eyes. Yet, when the Umayyids, the same people, the same families who participated in the killing of his family sought refuge in him after they were overthrown. He's the one who told them that these are my guests and nobody shall harm them. That's the example that the Ahlul Bayt (as) gave us.

Interestingly, Graham E. Fuller, who is a former CIA Officer believes that US policies helped to create IS. Below is a glimpse of his interview with Radikal, the daily Turkish newspaper:

Radikal: How do you think ISIS [IS] was born?

Fuller: I think the United States is one of the key creators of this organization. The United States did not plan the formation of ISIS, but its destructive interventions in the Middle East and the war in Iraq were the basic causes of the birth of ISIS. You will remember that the starting point of this organization was to protest the US invasion of Iraq. In those days it was supported by many non-Islamist Sunnis as well because of their opposition to the Iraq's occupation.





The world renowned Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, philosopher and political commentator, Noam Chomsky has revealed how intricately woven some of the the western and eastern governments are, which is in opposition to common worldview. In the YouTube clip entitled, *Is Islam the Enemy*, Chomsky offers the following perspective:

The most fundamentalist Islamic state in the world is our big ally, Saudi Arabia, how does that fit. Saudi Arabia is a real, it's not fundamentalist enough for some of the people in it, but it's pretty extreme. Are we trying to undermine Saudi Arabia, of course not, they are sitting on all the oil, in fact they are our clients. That's a family dictatorship who we keep in power because they make sure the money from the oil doesn't go to the people in the region but goes to London and New York, so they're okay, there's no clash of civilizations there. That's state fundamentalism what about individual, like non-state well by far the worse ones are the guys who are tearing Afghanistan to pieces. If you find more crazy Islamic fundamentalists around than them I don't know about them, where'd they get their power from? Your pocket. They got six billion dollars or so it's claimed from the United States and Saudi Arabia through the 1980s, now they're tearing Afghanistan apart and it's nothing that we did, we're only wonderful people.

So, where is this clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, I don't see it. I mean, Indonesia is an Islamic state, do you see us trying to undermine Indonesia. There's a lot of rotten things in Indonesia, like for example wages are about half the level of China, which is not so munificent, do you see us trying to do anything about that. I think this is all farce, I don't mean to say total farce there must be a new paradigm, you know, something that people can build their careers on and write books about and so on and so forth, which can then be turned into a device for controlling people, that part is true.

The notion of controlling people's views is one of the obstacles in building human relationships. If this hurdle can be overcome then a correct understanding of not only Islam but other belief systems will be realized. When Reza Aslan was interviewed by Stefania Lakatos, one of the questions she asked him was, "Is it possible to change people's minds on this anti-Muslim feeling?"

To which Aslan responded:

Yes, it is possible to change people's mind but not through the way that a lot of people think. There is a tendency to think that education or information can change people's minds. That if people just learned more about Islam then they wouldn't be so afraid of Muslims, that's ridiculous. Education doesn't change perceptions. Bigotry is not something that resides in the mind; bigotry resides in the heart. Bigotry is about fear not about ignorance. And the only way that you can battle fear is through relationships. Polls show that if you know just one Muslim that it cuts in half your negativity rating of Islam. If you know a person, if you actually know an individual you can't just seem him as a symbol.

Although, many media outlets are continuing to espouse their prejudiced views against Islam, Muslims can counter the slander with correct information when dealing with others on an individual basis. In order to do so, one must have a sound understanding of the Islamic position on warfare, which is a defense mechanism to ward off attack.

The Arabic equivalent word for war is *harb* not *jihad*. *Jihad* is an Arabic noun and its literal meaning is 'struggling' or 'striving' for the sake of God, the Almighty and applies to any internal as well as external effort exerted by anyone such as: working for the comfort of the family, learning and teaching knowledge, serving other people, doing well in one's job, taking care of the family, respecting others especially parents, etc.

Once Prophet Muhammad ^{PBUH&HF} dispatched a contingent of the army to the battlefront, upon their return, he ^{PBUH&HF} said, "Blessed are those who have performed the Lesser Jihad and have yet to perform the Greater Jihad." When he ^{PBUH&HF} was asked, "What is the Greater Jihad?" He ^{PBUH&HF} replied, "the Jihad of the self."

The greater Jihad is known as the inner spiritual struggle, an exertion between the forces of light and darkness, which reside within. It is one's inner combat of the good characteristics such as generosity, love, compassion, kindness and sincerity against the evil insinuations such as arrogance, vanity, anger, pride, and lust, etc.

This struggle is considered as the greater conflict as it is much more difficult than a battle fought on a plain field, because this struggle occurs on a daily basis and is for a lifetime. Imam Hasan al-'Askari ^{PBUH} said,



"The strongest warrior for the faith among people is one who abandons the sins."

The lesser jihad is the outer physical struggle. Aggression is not permitted against anyone in Islam; however, defense is an absolute and natural right of every individual and nation, which no one can deny.

The lesser Jihad is categorized into several types:

- 1. Defending the existence of Islam and its sanctities against an enemy who intends to demolish the foundation of the religion
- 2. Resistance against an enemy who transgresses on the life and territory of Muslims
- 3. For a nation to defend its independence. (Mutahhari)
- 4. Defense of Muslims' wealth, property, freedom, honor, etc.
- 5. Something that mankind values and respects and which is necessary for humankind's prosperity and happiness it is to be defended. (Mutahhari)
- 6. Freedom in another corner of the world that pertains to the right of humanity, which is being infringed upon...defense is not limited to the actual individual whose freedom is in danger, but it is lawful, even obligatory, for other individuals and other nations to rush to the aid of freedom, and fight against the negator and repressor of freedom.

The abovementioned types of jihad can be performed in many forms such as by the tongue, knowledge, hand, heart or weapon; however, it does not automatically imply the unjustified use of violence.

People of the Book / of other faiths who live in Muslim lands are under protection. Muslims should never inflict harm on them, regardless of their religion and sect. Whosoever attacks a non-Muslim is a betrayer and traitor. Regarding people of other faiths, God mentions in the glorious Qur'an:

"God forbids you not, as regards those who have not fought you in religion's cause, nor expelled you from you habitations, that you should be kindly to them, and act justly towards them; surely God loves the just." (60:8)

It has been reported from the life of Imam Ali ^{PBUH} that he (a) offered those of other faith the same respect he (a) offered to Muslims so long as they did not wage war against him. Muslims should not violate the sanctity of those who are not Muslim and who live under the protection of Muslims. Rather, Muslims have to honor and guard them in the same manner that they would treat their own family.

During Prophet Muhammad's era prisoners of war, who were captured were not to be tortured or subjected to humiliation for the sake of entertainment, personal vindication or revenge. Captured prisoners were offered the same food and drink as that of Muslims, given the opportunity to learn about Islam and those who accepted Islam were accepted as Muslim citizens within the community of believers.

It has been reported that prisoners were offered their freedom by the holy Prophet ^{PBUH}, in exchange for teaching and educating ten Muslims. (Tarikh Piyambare Islam, p. 280-282)

All of this was fourteen centuries ago, before the Geneva Convention!

Muslims should strive to act in the same righteous manner as the Prophet (s) and his Household ^{PBUT} acted in both the times of war and peace; so, they could adorn Islam and set an example as it deserves.







ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Largest peaceful gatherings in the World:

Hajj (Mecca, Saudi Arabia – 2012) - 3.16 million

Hajj is the largest peaceful human gathering of Muslims in the world. *Hajj* is the fifth pillar of Islam and each and every Muslim needs to do Hajj in his/her lifetime should his physical and financial capability allow. The ritual is very powerful and reminds that one day each of us irrespective whether we are rich or poor, powerful or weak has to face God on the day of judgement. Every year millions of people visit Mecca for Hajj. Elaborate crowd management measures are deployed to ensure minimal loss of life and ensure safety for one and all. Saudi Arabia through a press release claimed that over 3.16 million people had visited Mecca for Hajj in 2012 making it the 7th largest peaceful human gathering.

Shrine of Husayn ibn Ali (as) during Arba'een – 2013, 20-25 million people

Husayn ibn Ali (as) is a very important figure in Islam, being the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. He lived from 626 to 680. Arba'een is a Shia Muslim religious observance that commemorates his martyrdom, with the date for Arba'een falling on the 20th day of the month of Safar. Husayn and 72 companions were martyred and killed in the Battle of Karbala in 680 (61AH). Arba'een, or Chehlum, is one of the largest pilgrimages on Earth. Every year, millions of gatherers travel to Husayn ibn Ali's (as) shrine in Karbala, Iraq during Arba'een. This number has only risen as time has passed. If we were to take each individual year into account, Husayn ibn Ali's (as) shrine would take six out of 10 spots on this list. 10 to 14 million people visited on Arba'een in 2009 and 2010; 15 to 18 million visited in 2012 and January 2013. The largest crowd yet, however, would be the December 2013 Arba'een, where an enormous 20 to 25 million people visited Husayn ibn Ali's shrine.

List of Deadliest World Events in Human History:

10) Atlantic Slave Trade Death Toll Estimate: 15 Million - The Atlantic (or Trans-Atlantic) slave trade began roughly in the 16th century, reaching its peak in the 17th century until finally being all but abolished in the 19th



Century. The main driving force behind this trade was the need for European empires to establish themselves in the New World. European and American settlers therefore began to use mainly West African slaves to fill the vast labor needs on plantations. Estimates vary on the amount of slaves who died, but it is said that for every ten slaves taken on a ship, four would perish from causes related to mistreatment.

Late Yuan Warfare & Transition to Ming Dynasty Death Toll Estimate: 30 Million

The dynasty turned out to be one of the shortest-lived in the history of China, covering just a century until it fell in 1368. Chaos reigned during the twilight years of the Yuan Dynasty, and the lands were marked by warring tribes, outlaws, political struggle, famine, and bitterness among the populace. After all this carnage, the Ming Dynasty took control. Their reign is described by some as "one of the greatest eras of orderly government and social stability in human history."

Soviet Crimes Death Toll Estimate: 49 Million - Here is another example of a disaster caused by a country with a vast population trying to change its economic and social landscape in a very short period. Under the Soviet Union, from 1917 to 1953, millions of Russians died at the hands of revolution, civil war, famine, forced resettlement and other crimes. One man can take most of the blame: Joseph Stalin.

World War 1 Death Toll Estimate: 65 Million

World War 2 Death Toll Estimate: 72 Million

European Colonization of the Americas Death Toll Estimate: 100 Million - When Christopher Columbus, John Cabot and other explorers in the 15th century found a new continent, it must've seemed like the dawn of a new age. Here was a new paradise that adventurous Europeans could call their new home. There was, however, one problem: this land already had an indigenous population. Over the following centuries, the seafaring Europeans brought vast death tolls to what is now referred to as North and South America. Although war and invasion can account for a hefty chunk of these casualties, it was the natives' lack of immunity to European



diseases that caused the most deaths. Some estimates state that 80% of the Native American population died as a result of contact with Europeans.

http://listverse.com/2013/01/03/10-deadliest-world-events-in-human-history/





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