

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICES THROUGH WASATHIYAH CONCEPT

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Abstract: Diversity is a natural event due to the meeting of various cultural differences in one place. Indonesia is a very plural and multicultural society. Diversity includes differences in culture, religion, race, language, ethnicity, ethnic traditions and so on. In such a multicultural society, tensions and conflicts between cultural groups often occur and have an impact on the harmony of life which can lead to imbalances and divisions. The purpose of this paper is to discuss religious moderation in the Indonesian context, religious moderation in Islamic religious practice through the concept of wasathiyah. The method used is a literature review. The conclusion in this study is that religious moderation is a religious attitude that is fair and balanced in viewing, responding and practicing between the practice of one's own religion (exclusive) and respect for the religious practices of other people with different beliefs (inclusive). In dealing with the diversity that occurs in Indonesia with its cultural diversity and its plural nature, it is necessary to strive for an increase in multicultural awareness in the Indonesian nation, and furthermore it will foster an attitude of religious moderation. The attitude of religious moderation is in the form of acknowledging the existence of other parties, having a tolerant attitude, respect for differences of opinion, and not imposing the will by means of violence. The concept of Islam wasathiyah, an inclusive way of Islam or an open religious attitude, which is called an attitude of religious moderation. In viewing and solving a problem, moderate Islam (wasathiyah) tries to take a compromise approach and is in the midst of its tribe, ethnicity, tradition, culture, and religion, is oriented towards islahiyah (good deeds) which is based on tradition, willing to listen to each other. and learn from each other to practice the ability to manage and overcome differences between them without compromising on the teachings of Islam that are believed.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Islamic Religious Practice, Wasathiyah Concept

INTRODUCTION

Diversity in life is a necessity that Allah wills. This includes differences and diversity of opinion in the scientific field, even the diversity of human responses regarding the truth of the holy books, the interpretation of their contents and the form of their practice.¹ In Indonesia, the highest regions committed violations of Freedom of Religion/Belief (KKB) in 2018. Data from the Wahid Foundation mentions that there were 32 incidents of KKB in DKI, in West Java 26 incidents and East Java 17 incidents.

Indonesia is a country with a majority Muslim population. Although the majority of Muslims, Indonesia does not follow an Islamic state. There is something interesting about Indonesian Muslims, namely their tolerance and moderation which is very dominant so that Indonesian Muslims are able to tolerate not forming an Islamic state. Apart from Islam, there is another style of religion, namely fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a movement in American Protestantism, where they put forward the truth of the Bible, not only in matters of belief and morals, but as evidence of historical records that are written about the truth of prophethood, for example the birth of a Christ from a virgin mother. Fundamentalism means the opposition of the orthodox church to modern science.²

Indonesian society which is very plural and multicultural consists of various tribes, ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultures. The diversity that is owned gives rise to differences, and each potential difference creates friction or conflict, which can lead to imbalances and divisions. In this regard, religious moderation is needed to create a balance in religious life. Religious moderation ensures that in practicing religious teachings, a religious person is not trapped in an extreme in one religious point of view only. Many efforts have been made by the government through the Ministry of Religion, from establishing a Religious Harmony Forum or FKUB to various religious dialogues at the national and regional levels. However, in these efforts, conflicts still occur, even religious-based conflicts continue to increase. Now the government's latest effort is to strengthen religious moderation which will be implemented starting in 2019 and will be accommodated in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM).

¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Secercah Cahaya Illahi: Hidup Bersama al-Qur'an*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2007), 52.

² Rifyan Ka'ban, *Islam dan Fundamentalisme*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), 1.

Minister of Religion in the era of the President of the Republic of Indonesia Ir. H. Joko Widodo (Jokowi) in the first period, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, explained the importance of religious moderation. In a book released by the Ministry of Religion in 2019, in the prologue he conveys three main points why it is necessary to know and participate in practicing religious moderation as an individual and collective system of religious life, namely; First, one of the essences of the presence of religion is to maintain human dignity as a noble creature created by God, including taking care not to lose his life. That's why every religion always carries a mission of peace and salvation. Second, thousands of years after religions were born, humans are increasing and diversified, having different ethnicities, nationalities, various skin colors, spread over various countries and regions. Along with the development and spread of mankind, religion also develops and spreads. Third, especially in the context of Indonesia, religious moderation is needed as a cultural strategy in maintaining Indonesianness. As a very heterogeneous nation, since the beginning the founding fathers of the nation have succeeded in inheriting a form of agreement in the nation and state, namely Pancasila in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which has actually succeeded in uniting all religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. It was agreed that Indonesia was not a religious state, but also did not separate religion from the daily lives of its citizens.³

Dr. H. Isroqunnajah, M.Ag also stated the importance of religious moderation due to three scopes, namely first living together in a plural society, secondly the responsibility to maintain social harmonization, and thirdly the development of extreme understanding in various social lines that threatens the foundations of the nation. Therefore, through this simple article, the author will talk about "Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Practices through *Wasathiyah* Concepts".

This study uses a qualitative approach, namely through the literature review method. The literature review is a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesizing research works and ideas that have been produced by researchers and practitioners. The functions of this method include deepening knowledge of the field under study, knowing the results of related research and those that have been carried out, knowing the development of science in our chosen field, clarifying research problems, and knowing the latest methods proposed by researchers to solve problems.

³ Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*, Cet. Pertama, (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), page 8-10.

After conducting a literature review, the researcher does not stop at just reading the literature, but also summarizes, analyzes and makes a critical and in-depth synthesis of the papers being reviewed or reviewed. The results of this summary, analysis and synthesis are then written in the form of a scientific paper. This research is sourced from journals and other findings that are related to one another. Of course, journals as primary sources are the main sources which cannot be separated from the fact that journals have high validity. Another finding that is used as a second source in this study focuses on the source of legislation which is a real attitude to maintain the existence of Indonesia as a rule of law.

FIND AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Religious Moderation

Moderate, comes from the word moderation from the Latin *moderatio*, which means moderate (no excess and no shortage). The word moderation also means the reduction of violence and the avoidance of extremes. In general, it means promoting balance in terms of beliefs, morals, and character, both when treating others as individuals, and when dealing with state institutions. In English, the word *moderation* is often used in the sense of average, core, standard, or non-aligned. In Arabic, moderation is known as *wasath* or *wasathiyah*. People who apply the principle of *wasathiyah* can be called *wasith*. *Wasith* has been as a referee, which means balanced, impartial and fair. The word *wasath* also means "everything that is good according to its object". For example, the word "generous", which means an attitude between stingy and extravagant, or the word "brave", which means an attitude between cowardice (*al-jubn*) and reckless (*tahawur*), and many other examples in Arabic.

Religious moderation is interpreted as a religious attitude that is balanced between the practice of one's own religion (exclusive) and respect for the religious practices of others with different beliefs (inclusive). So that this balance or middle way in practicing religion will avoid excessive extreme attitudes, fanaticism and revolutionary attitudes in religion.

Principles of Religious Moderation

The basic principle in religious moderation is to always maintain a balance between two things, for example the balance between reason and revelation, between physical and spiritual, between rights and obligations, between individual interests and communal benefit, between necessity and volunteerism,

between religious texts and the ijihad of religious figures, between ideals and reality, and a balance between the past and the future.

Justice, In the KBBI, the word "fair" is defined as: 1) impartial/impartial; 2) side with the truth; and 3) appropriate/not arbitrary. The word "referee" which refers to someone who leads a match, can be interpreted in this sense, namely someone who is not partial, but rather sided with the truth.

Balance, is a term to describe the perspective, attitude, and commitment to always side with justice, humanity, and equality. A balanced attitude means firm, but not harsh because it always sided with justice. Balance can be considered as a form of perspective to do something in moderation, neither too much nor too little, neither conservative nor liberal.

Thus, the essence of religious moderation is fair and balanced in viewing, responding to, and practicing all the concepts that are paired above. Every religion teaches complete surrender to God Almighty, the Creator. This servitude to God is manifested in the readiness to follow His instructions in life. Thus, religious moderation will encourage each religious community not to be extreme and excessive in responding to diversity, including religious diversity and religious interpretation, but always to be fair and balanced so that they can live in a mutual agreement.

Religious Moderation Capital

Organizing individual and collective programs, both on a micro and macro scale, at local and national and even international levels requires initial capital. As in the world of business and business, investment and investment is required. Religious moderation is a program that is held in the smallest scope in society to a national and sustainable scale. The initial capital for the implementation of religious moderation are as follows: The Process of Spreading Religion; Religious Organizations as Supporters; Fusion of Religion and Culture; Moderate and Tolerant Character of Society; Reconciling Religion and Nationality.

Moderate attitude in religion, always choosing the middle way (moderate), will be easier to realize if someone has an adequate breadth of religious knowledge so that he can be wise, resist temptation so that he can be sincere without being burdened, and not selfish with his own interpretation of the truth so that he dares to admit the interpretation. the truth of others, and dare to express their views based on knowledge.⁴ In summary the three main characters that make up someone's moderation of wisdom, purity, and courage.

⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

Key Indicators of Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is a choice in perspective, attitude and behavior that is in the middle between various choices, always acts fairly, not extreme and excessive in religion. Moderation is the key to creating tolerance and harmony in religion. There are many indicators that show the attitude of religious moderation, but they can be formulated as key indicators of religion, including:

- 1) State Commitment. Loyal to the state ideology. In Indonesia, Pancasila is a state ideology that does not exist in two. This means that every citizen is obliged to be loyal to Pancasila. Seeing the extent to which a person's perspective, attitude, and religious practice have an impact on loyalty to the basic national consensus. This is related to the acceptance of Pancasila as the state ideology, its attitude towards ideological challenges that are contrary to Pancasila, and nationalism.
- 2) Tolerance. There are 3 main aspects of religious moderation, namely social tolerance, political tolerance, and religious tolerance. These three main (primary) aspects are the main steps towards the sustainability of religious moderation and open opportunities for other aspects.⁵ Thus, tolerance refers to an open, airy, voluntary, and gentle attitude in accepting differences. And tolerance is not only related to religious beliefs, but can also be related to differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and culture.
- 3) Anti Violence. There is no support of any kind relating to acts of violence. Opposing an ideology or ideas that want to make changes to the social and political system by using extreme violent means in the name of religion, both verbal, physical and mental violence. Violence or acts of radicalism are essentially the attitudes and actions of a certain person or group that uses violent means to bring about the desired change. Therefore, it is necessary to create soft and pure approaches in justification.
- 4) Accommodating to Local Culture. Accommodating to local culture can be used to see the extent of willingness to accept religious practices that accommodate local culture and traditions. In their religious behavior, moderate people tend to be more friendly in accepting local traditions and culture, as long as they do not conflict with the main teachings of their religion.

Religious Moderation In Indonesian Context

The potential of the Indonesian nation in the form of ethnic diversity, race, culture, language, religion, and so on is the main capital in carrying out development. Although diverse, Indonesia remains one. Diversity in Indonesia is the wealth and beauty of the nation. The basis of this state unites this diversity,

⁵ *Ibid*, 42.

including diversity in embracing religion and in practicing the teachings of the religion they adhere to. Thus, the government must be able to encourage this diversity to become a force to be able to realize national unity and integrity towards a better Indonesia.

In a speech on the birth of Pancasila, June 1, 1945, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Bung Karno, stated; “Indonesia should be a country where everyone can worship their God in a freeway. All people should believe in God culturally, that is, without 'religious egoism'. And Indonesia should be a god country. Let us practice, practice religion, both Islam and Christianity, in a civilized way. What is the civilized way? It is respect for one another.”⁶

Religious moderation is part of this nation's strategy in caring for Indonesia. As a very diverse nation, since the beginning, the founding fathers of the nation have succeeded in inheriting one form of agreement in the nation and state, namely the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which has actually succeeded in uniting all of Indonesia, which is agreed not to be a religious state, but also not to separate religion from everyday life. What we need to understand here is that the state places religion in an ideal position. A country with religion is like a coin on each side. There is no one side, making the other side worthless or even worthless. This assumption does not make religion belittled or become a *second opinion*, the actualization of the state is based on religious values.

Religious moderation is the most appropriate content of values and practices to realize the benefit of the Indonesian earth. A moderate, fair and balanced mental attitude is the key to managing our diversity. In being solemn to build the nation and state, every Indonesian citizen has balanced rights and obligations to develop a peaceful and reassuring life together. If we can realize this, then every citizen can become a complete Indonesian human being, as well as a human being who practices religion completely.⁷

Quoting the opinion of Aristotle who said; “for although this good is the same for the individual and the state, yet the good of the state seems greater and more perfect to be attained and secured; and although one would be happy to do this service, to do it for a nation and for several nations is nobler and holier.”⁸

Rather than what was stated above, it shows that the concept adopted from the Greek philosopher shows that the collective good is prioritized and takes precedence over its interests, although individual interests are also felt to be inseparable. In this way, it is natural that religious moderation in Indonesia,

⁶ *Ibid*, 155-156.

⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

⁸ Aristoteles, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Terj. F.H. Peters: Buku I, (USA: Oxford, 1893), ii.

which is being pursued by the government, will later become an applicable legal system. It should be remembered again, that the 2020-2024 RPJM is not an instant plan, because it is related to fundamental aspects of the state, including related to religious beliefs and routine implementations that take place together. Therefore, in seeking to achieve and carry out religious moderation in a state order, there will be pros and cons to conflicts, so that there will be sacrifices for the purpose of the glory and holiness of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Wasathiyah Islamic Concept

In various parts of the world as well as in Indonesia, there are at least 3 groups of people, namely 1) Fundamentalists who strictly interpret religion from what is textually contained in the holy book, 2) Liberalists who provide logical space as a consideration in interpreting religious law, and 3) Moderates who interpret religion by looking at the content of the holy book, its syar'iyah rules, its masalah and being a mediator who considers tolerance in looking at social issues.⁹ Moderation does not only belong to one religion, more precisely, religious moderation is attached to every religion. In this discussion, the longstanding tradition of religious moderation in Islam is known as:

The Concept of Wasathiyah becomes Ummatan Wassathan

Extreme attitudes in religion are not a new phenomenon in Islamic history. Since the earliest period, a number of religious groups have exhibited this extreme attitude. The most prominent is the Khawarij group,¹⁰ when they disbelieved some of the Muslims who disagreed with them.

On the other hand, there are also groups that are no less extreme than the Khawarij in understanding their teachings, namely the Murji'ah. In contrast to the frigid Khawarij, the Murji'ah tend to be permissive (permissible) towards a number of Islamic teachings whose provisions are clear. In almost all respects, the Murji'ah group has become a kind of anti-thesis of the Khawarij group.

According to Khalif Muammar, there are three things that can stem the liberalization of religion, namely; first, strengthening the Islamic worldview and mastering the Islamic scientific tradition, second, avoiding dichotomy thinking, and third, the *wasathiyah* approach as its foundation based on the QS. al-Baqarah [2] verse 143, which means; "And similarly We have made you (Muslims)

⁹ M. Zainuddin & Muhammad In'am Esha. *Islam Moderat; Konsepsi, Interpretasi, dan Aksi*, (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2016), 60-61.

¹⁰ Muhammad Khalil Harras, *Syarh al-'Aqidah al-Wasathiyah, t.tp: ar-Ri'âsah al-'Ammah li Idârat al-Buhûts al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftâ' wa ad-Da'wah wa al-Irsyad, t.th, Cetakan 4: 267.*

a middle nation so that you may be witnesses of (deeds) of mankind and that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be witnesses of (deeds) you. We have not made the qibla that (formerly) you (oriented) to it, except that We may know who followed the Messenger and who turned back. Indeed, (the change of Qibla) is very heavy, except for those who have been guided by Allah. And Allah will not waste your faith. Verily, Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to mankind.” The basic concept of *wasathiyah* regarding away from deviations and deviations based on the QS. al-Fatihah [1]: 6, Show us the straight path.

Implementation of Wasathiyah Islam

In the context of religion in Indonesia, the word moderate is a word that is often misunderstood. Many people think that someone who is moderate in religion means that he is not firm in his stance, is not serious or does not really practice his religious teachings. Among the people, siding with the values of moderation and tolerance in religion is equated with being liberal and ignoring basic norms that are clearly written in religious texts. Those who are moderately religious are often seen as people who oppose conservatives who hold fast to their religious teachings.

Moderation is basically a dynamic condition, always moving, because moderation is basically a process of continuous struggle carried out in people's lives. So as a condition of religious moderation is to have extensive knowledge and have a good religious understanding.¹¹

Implicitly, the Qur'an and Hadith alluded to the importance of moderation, as well as the position of Muslims as moderate and best people. Moderation is a core value in Islamic teachings. In fact, these characteristics can be used as a formula to overcome various problems of the people, especially in the current era of globalization such as issues of religious radicalism, takfir, blind fanaticism (*at-ta'ashshub al-a'mâ*), which of course requires a proportional and fair attitude identified in a concept, namely *wasathiyyah*.

In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Quraish Shihab interprets Surah al-Baqarah verse 143 stating that Muslims are made middle (moderate) and exemplary people, so that the existence of Muslims is in a middle position.¹² The middle position makes humans impartial to the left and right and can be seen by anyone from different angles, this leads humans to act fairly and can be an example for all parties. Furthermore, it is stated that Muslims will be witnesses to human actions where the expression “*litakûnu*” uses *fi'il mudhâri'* (future verb), it implies a

¹¹ Luh Riniti R and Putu Surya W, “Potensi Peran Perempuan dalam Mewujudkan Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia”. *Jurnal Pustaka*. Vol. XX, No. 1, Februari 2020: 33.

¹² M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2000), 325.

struggle of views and the struggle of various 'isms'. However, in the end, it is the *wasathan community* that will be used as a reference and witness to the truth and error of these views and isms. There are aspects that make the *Ummatan Wasathan*. These four aspects can be carried out through four stages whose continuity is a cycle that continues to rotate (continuous) and interrelated. In summary, it can be presented as follows: 1) Thought (*Fikrah*) is tolerant, moderate, and dynamic in balancing the context. 2) Actions (*Amaliyah*) are respect for tradition and culture as pillars of religion. 3) Movement (*Harakah*) is oriented towards *islahiyah* (good deeds) which is based on tradition. Behave *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (peace) and non-violence. 4) Politics (*Siyasah*) is not contradicting religion and nationality. Acceptance of Pancasila as an ideology.

Wasathan Ummatan Character Values

Building an image as a man who *Kamil* and people who *khair* individually and collectively willing and able to carry out the mandate based on *commanding the good and forbidding the evil* to grow the character values, including:

1. *Al-Shidq.*

Based on QS. At-Taubah [9]: 119 which means honesty, truth, sincerity, and openness. As for honesty, it is the union of words with actions, and also the synchronization of speech with thoughts.¹³ What is spoken verbally, must be the same as what is expressed in the heart or in the heart. Honest in this case means not being fickle and not intentionally distorting facts or providing misleading information. In this case, being honest also means being honest with yourself.

In this sense, being honest also means being honest in every transaction you make, and being honest in exchanging ideas and discussions. Honest in transactions means avoiding all forms of fraud in pursuit of personal gain. While being honest in exchanging ideas means sincerely seeking benefit and truth from wherever or from whoever it comes from, and is willing to admit and accept better opinions.¹⁴

2. *Al-Amanah wa al-Wafa bi al-'Ahd.*

Principled on QS. An-Nisaa' [4]: 58 contains two interrelated terms, namely the term *al amānah* and the term *al wafa' bi al 'ahdi*. As for the first term, *al amanah* is more general in nature, which includes all the tasks that must be carried out, whether preceded by an agreement or not. While the

¹³ Mun'im, DZ, *Piagam Perjuangan Kebangsaan*, (Jakarta: Setjen PBNU, 2011), 57.

¹⁴ Turmudi, Endang, *Jejak Langkah NU dari Masa ke Masa*, (Jakarta: Luna Kreasindo, 2006), 115.

second term is more *al wafa 'bi al 'ahdi* is special, namely the burden of tasks that must be fulfilled when previously it was initiated by an agreement or agreement. The merging of the two terms is to obtain a unified meaning, namely 'trustworthy, faithful and true to promises'. That is, the character of *al amānah wa al wafa bi al 'ahdi* guarantees the integrity and dedication of a person or group of people in carrying out their duties and authorities.

3. *Al-'Adalah.*

Leaning on QS. An-Nahl [16]: 90, *al-'adalah* has an objective, proportional and principled understanding. This character holds to objective truth, puts everything in its place proportionally, and adheres to the applicable principles. With this principle the distortion of judgment that might occur can be avoided as far as possible. In addition, according to Endang Turmudi, the character of *al-'adalah* is the birth and *indwelling of* loyalty to the rules of the game, rationality in making decisions, including in matters of arrangement, placement, and utilization of existing resources.

4. *Al-Ta'awun.*

Contained in QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 2, *al-ta'awun* also contains a reciprocal understanding of each party to take and give each other. Therefore, the character of *al-ta'awun* encourages everyone to try and be creative in order to have something that can be donated to others and to the common interest. *Al-ta'awun* makes a person live dynamically with his environment, because each will appreciate, accept and perfect the shortcomings of other people and parties.

5. *Al-Istiqamah.*

Included in QS. Fussilat [41]: 30, contains the meaning of *steady*, continuous, and sustainable and upright in the truth. Steady means consistent, constant, and still does not shift from the path (*tharīqah*) in accordance with the provisions of Allah SWT and His messenger, the guidance given by *salāfu al-shālih* and the rules of the game and plans that are mutually agreed upon. Sustainability means the relationship between one activity and another and between one period and another so that all of them are an inseparable and mutually supportive unit like a building. While sustainable is the implementation of these activities is a process that takes place continuously without experiencing stagnation, which is an advanced process (progressing) instead of running in place (stagnation). And standing in the truth is staying until the end of your life as a Muslim.

Develop social attitudes and behaviors that include *tawasuth* and *i'tidal* (perpendicular), *tawazun* (balanced), *amar ma'ruf*

nahi munkar. These social attitudes and behaviors will form several commitments, including; upholding the values and norms of Islamic teachings, prioritizing common interests over personal interests, upholding brotherhood and unity and the value of compassion, upholding honesty in thinking, acting and acting, upholding loyalty to religion, nation and state, and upholding togetherness in life nation and state.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation is a religious attitude that is fair and balanced in viewing, responding and practicing between the practice of one's own religion (exclusive) and respect for the religious practices of others with different beliefs (inclusive). So that the balance or middle way in practicing religion will avoid excessive extreme attitudes (radicalism), fanaticism and revolutionary attitudes in religion. In dealing with the diversity that occurs in Indonesia with its cultural diversity and its plural nature, it is necessary to strive for an increase in multicultural awareness in the Indonesian nation, and furthermore it will foster an attitude of religious moderation. Religious moderation is a middle ground in the midst of diversity in Indonesia. Moderation is in the form of acknowledging the existence of other parties, having a tolerant attitude, respect for differences of opinion, and not forcing one's will by means of violence. The concept of Islam wasathiyah, an inclusive way of Islam or an open religious attitude, which is called an attitude of religious moderation. In viewing and solving a problem, moderate Islam (wasathiyah) tries to take a compromise approach and is in the midst of its tribe, ethnicity, tradition, culture, and religion, is oriented towards *islahiyah* (good deeds) which is based on tradition, willing to listen to each other. and learn from each other to practice the ability to manage and overcome differences between them without compromising on the teachings of Islam that are believed.

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