A METAPHYSICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF UTUISM.
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Abstract

This article seeks to understand the metaphysical nature of human person that helps in understanding the human behavior. This behavior is dictated by the existence of Utu in the human person. The paper relates human behavior with utuism and explains the reasons why human person behave in a particular way.

Keywords: Utuism, Human person, and utu

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since metaphysics deals with fundamental constituents of reality, this chapter intends to narrow down to those that are specific to man. Though man has a mode of existence same as that of other physical existential beings, that is, same as in materiality, it seems he enjoys a different mode of being characterized as active. It would seem, too, that Sartre’s famous epitome of existentialism, ‘Existence precedes essence’, although it is an allusion to a classical theory about existence, is not itself a statement about existence but rather about the nature of human freedom. This freedom is an ontological one. This chapter will affirm the metaphysical understanding of the human person so as to position the active humanism (Utuism) in the inner world of the human person and the expression it brings about in relation to other human beings. The chapter borrows the arguments of Omkaranga-ashram who has analysed the metaphysical reality of man. This makes this metaphysical reality of man be engaged in Section One, and in Section Two, we see the effects of science on man. In Section Three we engage the metaphysical significance of man. The nature and destiny of man and how his consciousness demonstrates infinite dimensions are treated in sections four and five respectively. Section Six treats the relation between man and God. In Section Seven, we shall see how man’s eternal essence propels him, as Section Eight engages the faculties bestowed to man intrinsically. Then, in the last section we shall engage man’s greatness and destiny.

The Metaphysical Reality of the Human Person

The metaphysical reality of the human person is founded in his reality as part of “Being qua Being”. A “Being”, according to Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding, is “that which is”. By this they mean “that which exists”. It is this existence that befits the reality of the human being as “that which is”. In the hierarchy of “Being” we have God as the highest reality and existent Being followed by the Spiritual or Incorporeal Being. These two can be said to be in the immaterial World as opposed to the material World. Man as a Rational Being or Animal, to use Aristotle’s term, is the highest in the material or corporeal world. This level is higher than that of
the Animate Being to which man is but with a specific distinctive difference or quality that elevates him from other animals. Below the Animate Being we have both Sentient and inanimate Beings in that order. To know something we must define it to be in a position to embrace the distinctive character or specific difference from other things. In the same line, the human being is that ‘Being’ that is endowed with the active faculty of intellection and consciousness. It is this rationality that distinguishes man from other animals according to Aristotle. But man is endowed with other distinctive qualities different from other beings: active humanness, conscious emotions, moral and spiritual consciousness, love and hate.

**Science and Dimensions of the Human Person**

As a matter of fact, since the times of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler, science has been growing more and more conscious of its own limitations, and of the need for the rational acceptance of some ultimate cause, the creator, behind the universe it studies. At the conclusion of the 17th century, Sir Isaac Newton wrote in his greatest work, *Principia Mathematica*, thus: This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being ... As a blind man has no idea of colours, so have we no idea of the manner by which the all-wise God perceives and understands all things.³ And, for the inspiration and edification of humanity, the famous German astronomer, Johannes Kepler, has bequeathed this hymn: Great is our Lord, great is His Power, and there is no end to His Wisdom! Praise Him, sun, moon and planets, in whatever language your hymn of thanksgiving to the Creator may ring out! Glorify Him, you the celestial harmonies, and also you the testimonies and corroborators of His unveiled Truths! And thou, my soul, sing the glory of the Lord as long as thou livest! From Him, through Him, and to Him are all things, the visible and the invisible ones. To Him alone be praise and glory, from eternity to eternity! Amen.⁴

These are sure indications that man, despite his great advancement in scientific discovery, still swims in the mystery of the vast reality of “Being *qua* Being” or Being as such. To the self, man finds the entire reality in the human person as connected to the ultimate reality. In the modern world, all countries (developed, developing and underdeveloped) are doing everything at their powers to make their citizens holistically happy and developed. But a new world of peace and happiness rests upon the right view of man. We may use all our resources in research with the aim of maintaining or uplifting the dignity where it is down. A scientific self-analysis of the observing consciousness in the subjective and objective activities of the human individual, discloses the truth that man is the imperishable essence of the all-creative Infinity, which is infinitely more than all that man can be as an artist, as an aesthetician, as a scientist, or philosopher, or administrator, or as a prophet.⁵

The mystery of Man is engaged by the realization that the human person is not merely a biological phenomenon or an empirical reality only. There is in him a psychical apparatus packed with latent potentialities, powers and possibilities. He, without deliberative consciousness, encounters himself pursuing the reality of what he already knows. Greatest men and individuals of spiritual experience are a living proof of this fact. A deeper insight into the psychical being of man compels us to accept the reality of the Cosmic Consciousness, or the divine Life-Force, as the basis of the psychical entities. This is the reason we need to understand man not only at his biological, physiological, social and mental, but also at his psychical and spiritual levels. These levels make the human person engage the other human person in view of appreciating what he has in the same level and realm to what is higher in level or lower than him.
Therefore, not until we abandon all the erroneous, partial, misleading notions of man, and his possibilities, his aspirations, his tendencies, his motives, and embrace a new scale of values, a new system of ideals, a new vision of life, can we allay human agony, ensure real human progress, bring in general human welfare, and resolve the riddles modern mind has burdened all men with. Maithulism as an activity relies upon this foundation alone to restore to man the light that is his, and raise a race of decent men, men capable of creative morals, sane views, constructive labour, and a dignified poise of life.

Metaphysical Significance of Man

In the entire material creation, there seems to be no other creature endowed with so many faculties than man. This makes him the most superior to anything created in this material world. Due to this fact, in a daily subduing of the world, man is ever active. He makes a community with his kind to be able to achieve this task. Does man rest in his present life in this physical world? The answer would no doubt be no. Man seems to be active and those moments that dictate him to rest, are only “a pause” in life and then continue. All these man engages to uphold his well-being and that of the other human persons. The saying that man is the measure of all things is perfectly true. Man is a many-levelled being, and has various sheaths which conceal his real personality. Nyasani in his argument on “Person, Personality and individuality” says: The fact that the human person is capable of questioning himself on what he can achieve and how he goes about achieving it projects and portrays him as a self-transcending agent, mainly because of his intellective and volitional powers which betray him to be more than he is. He may identify himself with the gross physical body and look to its needs as an animal does, or he may identify himself with the self-conscious reason, or he may feel his oneness with his real self which is the eternal witness of both. The vital aims, however valuable they may be in their own place, cannot take control of the spiritual being for a long time without complete disorder to one’s personality. No personality or idea of personality would exist in the absence of some concrete person or some positive object of attribution as Nyasani puts it.

In the modern man, self-conscious intellect, with all its natural limitations, takes the highest place, and suicidal scepticism is the result. Intellect can move only in a vicious circle of possibilities. It hovers round an object. Deeper, it can never go. It cannot enter into, and be one with it. And be it noted, without complete identity, knowledge is impossible. Intellect accepts the evidence of the senses and the result of inference, but it rejects as spurious the deepest subjective intuitions. In line with Omkaranga-ashram’s argument that there is indeed something more in man than is apparent in his ordinary consciousness, something which originates all thoughts and emotions, a finer spiritual presence which keeps him ever dissatisfied with mere earthly pursuits, there is also the doctrine that the ordinary condition of man is not his final state. That is, he has a deeper self, an immortal spirit, a light that can never be extinguished, has engaged the highest intellectual attention of the best of mankind, through the ages.

All the greatest thinkers of the world, including Socrates, unite in asking us to know this self. Socrates himself puts it as a dictum, “man, know thyself”. While our bodily organization undergoes change every moment, while our thoughts gather like clouds in the sky and disperse again, the real self is never lost. It is all-pervading, though distinct from all. It is the source of the sense of identity through numerous transformations. It remains itself, though it sees all things. It is the one constant thing which remains unchanged in the multiple activities in the universe. Our limited personality is conscious only by fits and starts; there are large gaps in it. Even if death
overtakes a man, the Seer in him cannot die. Maybe this can somehow be supported in the argument against the annihilation of the Universe. We can argue that nothing on the objective side can touch the inner subjective Being. This ever-persisting ‘Self’ which is the eternal Subject, is not capable of proof, nor does it need any. It is self-proved. It is the basic substratum of every act of knowledge, and vivifies every organ and faculty. But for man it may be put this way: It is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity. In making this choice he also chooses all men, not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image as we think he ought to be to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose, nothing can be good for us without being good for all. ‘Yet at every moment I’m obliged to perform exemplary acts. Am I really the kind of man who has the right to act in such a way that humanity might guide itself by my actions?’

This universal Self becomes confused with the empirical self, owing to mental impurities. When we break through the ring of the smoke round the Self, unwrap the sheaths which cover it, we achieve here and now, in the physical body, the destiny of our being. We find in man an inner divine Self, the “I”, which encompasses a transcendent Reality, Awareness, and Freedom. To understand the human person is to embrace this inner divine “I”. Dupre argues that to penetrate man essentially is to understand his transcendence. According to him, the center of human piety has moved inward where the very self-encounters its own transcendence. Hence, the modern man sacrileges from within a world that no longer possesses a sacred voice of its own. His initial contact with transcendences occurs in an inner self that is neither sacred nor profane. That is why we argued in Chapter Two that the self transcends its striving as well as its achievements. Through Utuism man directs this reality to fellow human beings.

The Nature of Man and His Destiny

As was demonstrated when we were defining the term “being”, the nature of man is a holistic whole where body, mind and soul unite to make an integral unit. The nature of the human person is deemed to be rational as the distinctive quality predictable to him. This creates the “Self”. The real self within man is infinite. It is the absolute Existence, Knowledge and Delight. The Self is the infinite creative ether of Consciousness which has within itself all orders of time, space and activity. Everything in the universe is a part of the infinite Self in man. Modern thought is increasingly approaching these views and conclusions derived from inner spiritual experience. A modern scientist and writer, Haldane, says, “There is no special limit to the life of the organism, just as there is no special limit to what can be perceived.”

Myres, in his Human Personality says: The conscious self does not comprise the whole of consciousness, or of the faculty within us. There exists a more comprehensive consciousness, a profounder faculty which for the most part remains potential only. Man appears as a being of groundless depth reaching with its roots into the metaphysical region. That is, his existential reality transcends to experience both the origin and destiny of his being.

Science is rapidly succeeding in demonstrating the unbroken oneness and perfect internal unity of the entire, all-inclusive being of the world. Randall further states: The universe is an integrity perfect whole and an indivisible organism of being, there are no such things as private, separate, exclusive, individual beings, or selves, save in the false, or illusory thinking. All individual selves are One Self. Edward Carpenter (29 August 1844–28 June 1929) says that it seems to him more and clearer that the word “I” has a practically infinite range of meaning. Kingsland writes, “Every so-called atom is nothing less in substance than the One Substance which cannot be divided or cut.” We read in Genesis 1:27, “So, God created man in His own Image, in the Image of God
“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,” says the Greek mystic-philosopher Plato, “Man is” potentially a participator in the eternal mode of being, which he can make his own by living in detachment from the fleeting shadows of the world.

These are the statements of Jesus Christ: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). “All that the Father hath are mine” (John 16:15). The fundamental thesis of the great traditions of perennial philosophy and timeless wisdom subsistent both in the East and in the West is the unity of God and man. The destiny of man is unity with God, for man is essentially inseparable from God. Man is a part of the world and the world is rooted in God; it cannot exist if God is not. The reality of the world is the Reality of God. Whatever has any value in the world belongs to the nature of God.

Some individuals take the world to be different from God, and also from himself who also seems to be different from God. The moment the veil of spiritual blindness is rent asunder, it will be seen that what really is, is an ocean of pure divine Consciousness, the infinite Reality wherein the world and the individual are no more distinct and separate entities, but one with the splendour of the Absolute. But man is in a continuous movement towards a destiny. This is the grand destination of life, the purpose of everyone’s existence, the goal of all aspirations and endeavours.

**Man’s Consciousness Demonstrates Infinite Dimensions**

Young coined his phrases on the nature of man such as, “the insect infinite”, the “dim miniature of greatness absolute”. John Davidson sermonized that man is the universe become conscious, and that even the simplest among men should consider himself too great to be called after any name. This can be considered in the following: The conscience as the Person’s inner normative reality: is primarily made to only one dimension and one significance of the person’s transcendence in the action, namely, the transcendence of freedom that also finds its realization in the ethical modality of action and person. Thomas Carlyle taught that there are in man heights that reach to the highest heaven. He asserted that man’s far-reaching spirit stretches outward to the infinite, and there alone finds rest. Far from living by the conception of man presented by that embodiment of wisdom and knowledge, the modern Western mind continues to live by the idea of man it has derived from Adam Smith, as a bargaining animal, from Aristotle, as a rational animal, from Herbert Spencer, as a social animal, from Karl Marx, as a sheer economic unit.

**Man and God**

Every man is a conscious power of the infinite Being, a dynamic manifestation of the absolute Reality, is the voice of our inner spiritual experience. God is the Creator, and man is the creature. But the matter is not as simple as that. Man is a strange creature. For, the whole of the Creator is in His creature called man! Therefore, the relation between God and man is the same as the relation between God and Himself. This is in harmony with the divinely revealed truth presented in the Bible, concerning man. The Bible sees man in relation to God, the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is a fundamental connection between God and man. When a sculptor creates an object of beauty, what is the relation between it and himself? The relation is that of the creator and the object created. It is a distant, external, non-essential, non-vital, destructible relation. The relation between God the Creator and man the creature is internal, subjective, vital, dynamic, essential, indestructible, eternal and immediate. Otherwise how could the Kingdom of Heaven be in man, how could God be closer to man than his own veins and breath, how could we say that man cannot survive the moment God withdraws Himself from man? It is the view of man as the
Image of God that could form the one solution to the many problems of modern life. Having created man in His own Image, God has taken His residence in man, with all His Being, with all His Power, Beauty, Peace, Joy, Perfection. Therefore, it is a unique relation. It is God looking at Himself in a mirror.

**Man’s Eternal Essence as Source of His Power**

The nature of man’s knowing is transcendental. The human person does not only know the Universals and their reality, but also the dignity of his essence. What does it matter if things that are not essential, that are not human, change, alter, and are subject to mortality? This is a question reality would render human life meaningless. The conscious Being behind the flux and operations of man’s surface physical consciousness and mental experiences, is imperishable. To Omkaranga-ashram, that inner Essence which man’s intellect does not know and without which man’s intellect cannot function, is immortal. That is what men as such are and they are aware of this real treasure. That is the biggest bank, the highest pleasure-garden, the source of all creative powers, unlimited peace, undying joy, is to see life beyond death. This means that death cannot annihilate the Essence of the Being of man. Live in, and from, the vivid consciousness of this real face of yourself, this real Being of yourself, this real imperishable You! This Essence, this real inner imperishable man, is from the Heaven, the bearer of the Heaven.  

**Man’s struggle to push on his Human Existence**

The reality of man’s adventure in areas of his development, inclination, education, socio-cultural and political, research and even his spiritual adventure, all demonstrate a holistic intellectual consciousness. The inner urge in man to build himself beyond all that he is in the present, the inner compulsion man experiences for surpassing himself, the hunger he has for the right that resolves the many contradictions involved in all forms of empirical life, these are essentially activities occasioned and determined by the genius of empirical evolution inherently operative in the formula of human existence. Due to this inherent quality in the human person, the desire and dynamism in man to transcend his own normal manhood, and put on the poise, the peace, the power of a mighty Divinity, can neither be suppressed nor given wrong turns without disastrous effects. It does not matter whether one outgrows one’s normal manhood by growing divine love, or by expanding divine knowledge, or by increasing activity of the creative intelligence, or by a total and complete surrender to the infinite Godhead. This is a human reality that is so unique to himself alone.

It is in this human endless adventure that we have expressed, that we experienced man’s misuse of his God-given powers. Incapable of responding rightly to the working of these spiritual urges, factors and dynamisms, man has given them many wrong turns. Nyasani, in his treatment on consciousness, indicates that man’s discovery of his consciousness has its own consequences and implications: One cannot doubt the fact that the major spur that led Descartes to pose his famous dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, must have been the indubitable discovery that he possessed consciousness and that this had its own consequences and implications. It is quite obvious that once a person discovers, as Descartes did, that he is conscious of some object, the matter just cannot end there, because it has to raise the question of the resolve, the underpinning stuff of the resolve, and the authority of the underscoring resolve, all pointing directly or indirectly to the existence of the indubitable ‘me’ who is consciously aware of some enigma, and who must ask those fundamental questions to propose answers. The dictum of Descartes should also help man to realize that he is not an individual endowed with
everything, every power or every first and final cause of his very being or destiny. Man needs God, the other human being and the World as such.

**Man can direct his worth in modus operandi**

Man knows intrinsically his inner worth and has the capacity to express this inner world to the others. As a matter-of-fact, a man grows into the greatness he seeks to represent others. We encounter man commanding deepest insights into the realities of life giving to humanity broad perspectives, penetrating perceptions, ideas that live in the lives of men and sublimate them. At the same time man presents innovative views that spread light and make for human development and happiness, thoughts that keep the being of mankind above all pettiness, trifles and turmoil, and turned towards objects that evoke creative activity and nourish the soul. This is the reason why we understand man as an active conscious being. It is through this active consciousness that makes man either bring down to his reach the entire reality of Being qua Being, or, to transcend all limitations to embrace it. To assess his progress on the same, man reaches out to the other man to create a community of adventure to the Absolute Reality. This may justify man to be a mysterious being despite living in the physical World.

**The Faculties Bestowed on Man**

Man has been endowed with various faculties by nature. These faculties encroach the reality that surrounds man in his adventurous modus operandi. First, the Heart that is full of the conquering power of all-inclusive Love or Hate; second is the Mind from which emanates the wisdom above the farthest height of human knowledge, understanding, interpretation, deliberative act, appreciation and reflection, memory and projection to take just a few. Thirdly is the will. Will, which is the faculty of moral choice, exercises itself with amazing sweet prowess in an unstinting giving of its energies, in self-sacrifice, in spontaneous and constant endeavour for securing peace, happiness, light and strength for all around it. The fourth faculty is the soul that wraps itself in an austere vision and a deep awareness of the transcendent Reality immanent in the essence of its own being; and lastly, is the greatness of aureate eyes tranquillised by an intimate experience of the universal Consciousness, of the spiritual Being in man. These faculties that are uniquely possessed by the human person only make him be enshrined in the realm of the Transcendental Being, God. It may be for this reason that the Christianity, Islamic and other World Religions that relate God (through whichever name they accord Him) with man, put man as the Greatest of all creation. This is the way to honour the Image of God in ourselves, and acknowledge the Breath of God in all.

**Man’s Greatness and Destiny**

Man’s greatness is experiential and, in way, existential. At the same time this greatness is transcendental inasmuch as man never rests as he seeks his creator or his ultimate origin and, due to this, the adventure becomes a continuous search. This continuous search makes man a being in pursuit of satisfaction which is referred to as happiness. That is, happiness to man is to reach his final destiny. Humanity assesses its greatness and that of his other human beings in terms of the measure of good, happiness, peace, comfort, light he brings to it; and time judges the duration of that greatness by the amount of energy, will, force, divine grace with which such beneficent works were wrought. This is an inspiration that renders the human person an all-dynamic, a force of will that accomplishes with incredible realization everything that he intends, thus becoming his settled and normal nature. As said in Chapter Two, the most important area in our concern on
Karol Wojtyla is the transcendence of the action in relation to the human person. This is quite evident in that the person’s transcendence is to be understood in its relation to truth, good, and beauty. According to Wojtyla, the notion of the ‘transcendence of the person’ may be examined and widened in relation to all the traditionally distinguished absolute exponents of values: ‘Truth’, ‘Unity’, ‘Good’ and ‘Beauty’. These are the transcendental attributes of God as previously given.

However, the vision of the transcendence of the man-person that is formed through his relation to these absolute points of reference does not lose anything of its significance, when reference is made to experience in particular, to the experience of morality. For the transcendence of the person understood metaphysically is no abstract notion; the evidence of experience tells us that the spiritual life of man essentially refers to, and in its striving vibrates with, the reverberations with the experientially innermost attempts to reach truth, unity, goodness, and beauty. We may thus safely speak of the role of these absolute modes of values that accompany the experience of the personal transcendence. The conscience as the Person’s inner normative reality is primarily made to only one dimension and one significance of the person’s transcendence in the action, namely, the transcendence of freedom that also finds its realization in the ethical modality of action and person.  

We also contended in Chapter Two that man hurls himself toward a future, and one who is conscious of imagining himself as being in the future. We further said that the goal of Existentialism’s first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest in him and also responsible for all men. They suggestively put it this way:

It is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity. In making this choice, he also chooses all men, not a single one of our acts, which does not at the same time create an image as we think he ought to be, to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose, nothing can be good for us without being good for all. ‘Yet at every moment I’m obliged to perform exemplary acts. Am I really the kind of man who has the right to act in such a way that humanity might guide itself by my actions?’  To him, this knowledge, through which we ‘anticipate’ in the direction of being as a whole, is not a grasping possessive knowledge which possesses that which is known, but a knowledge which projects that which can be known. This is a presumption that we already know about being or about the meaning of being. The origin of this knowledge lies in the art of questioning itself. Whenever we question, we know that we question, that we are the inquirer, that we perform the act of inquiring. In every act of inquiring or knowing, some being is given which coincides immediately with knowing, which knows itself as being. The act knows itself as being. Being knows itself as act. We have an immediate unity of being and knowing in the very act of knowing.

2.0 CONCLUSION

As we have seen in this short exposition, the human person is a transcendent reality conscious of his very being. He possesses an ontological dimension and orientation. His nature of moving from within himself to realization of the reality surrounding him, demonstrates his modus actus. That is, the human person acts according to the mode of his very being. That is why we claim that the human person is a transcendent being and his reaching to the other person is inbuilt in his very nature. One would seek to know whether Utu is the only aspect or reason of human beings. The answer would be difficult to answer just like that. This is out of the realization that
this very human being is an entity composed of body, mind and soul. The union of these entities make up a man. The active humanness in this man is the Utu. It is an ontological concept of man’s horizontal realization, that is, in the very nature of the other “Being” whose both intrinsic and extrinsic composite properties, there is the “sameness”. It is through this “sameness” that an “individual” human person moves towards “others”.

It seems that the reality or even realization of Utu or Utuism is higher than reason. On one hand, one can reason to act against the other human person or go forth to the extent of destroying the world in which he lives and realizes his potentialities. This is negative and detrimental to humanity as such. On the other hand, man embraces positively his “beingness” when his Utu is active. If he does not demonstrate this, he is referred to as a person without Utu. This is tantamount to saying that although some people claim reason or consciousness is the distinctive character of a “human person”, you may be using reason but if your Utu is dead or corrupted by the very reason, that reason is useless. This somehow shows the difference between humanism and reason. That is, the former embraces the latter, or in other words, reason is a single aspect of humanism. There are other aspects like feelings, emotions, reactions to certain stimuli that at their onset, reason is not there, and progressively its application only comes later, for example in the case of reaction from pain. One may reason to kill someone since he is his enemy but in killing there is no Utuism or humanism. The core reason of this exposition was to allow us contextualize this human reality in his interpersonal orientation. This sounds as existential and it probably is. Thus, this chapter was bringing to our paradigm that to be able to embrace the unseen, we need to embrace the seen, especially the other human being.

The nine sections we have used were designed to help in grasping this metaphysical reality of man in relation not only to the Creator, but to fellow human beings. Thus, any scientific enquiry or inquiries, the nature and destiny of the human person and his active consciousness should be actualized in the dignity of every human person. This reality was interrogated from Section One to Five.

In Section Seven we encountered the fundamental relation between man and the Supreme Being, God. Due to the fact that man is by nature endowed with superior faculties over other creatures in this material world, he possesses an intrinsic power and worth that propel him to other people through daily undertakings, elevating his own and neighbour’s greatness and dignity, and lastly, wanting to exist eternally. This we have engaged in sections seven to nine. The relationship between this section and the main theme of Utuism was to give the subsequent chapters their meaning. Chapter Four will relate Utuism and other related philosophical concepts.

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