

Roses in the Path

Talks and Thoughts About the Mystical Teachings
and Kantian Concept on Ethics and Morality



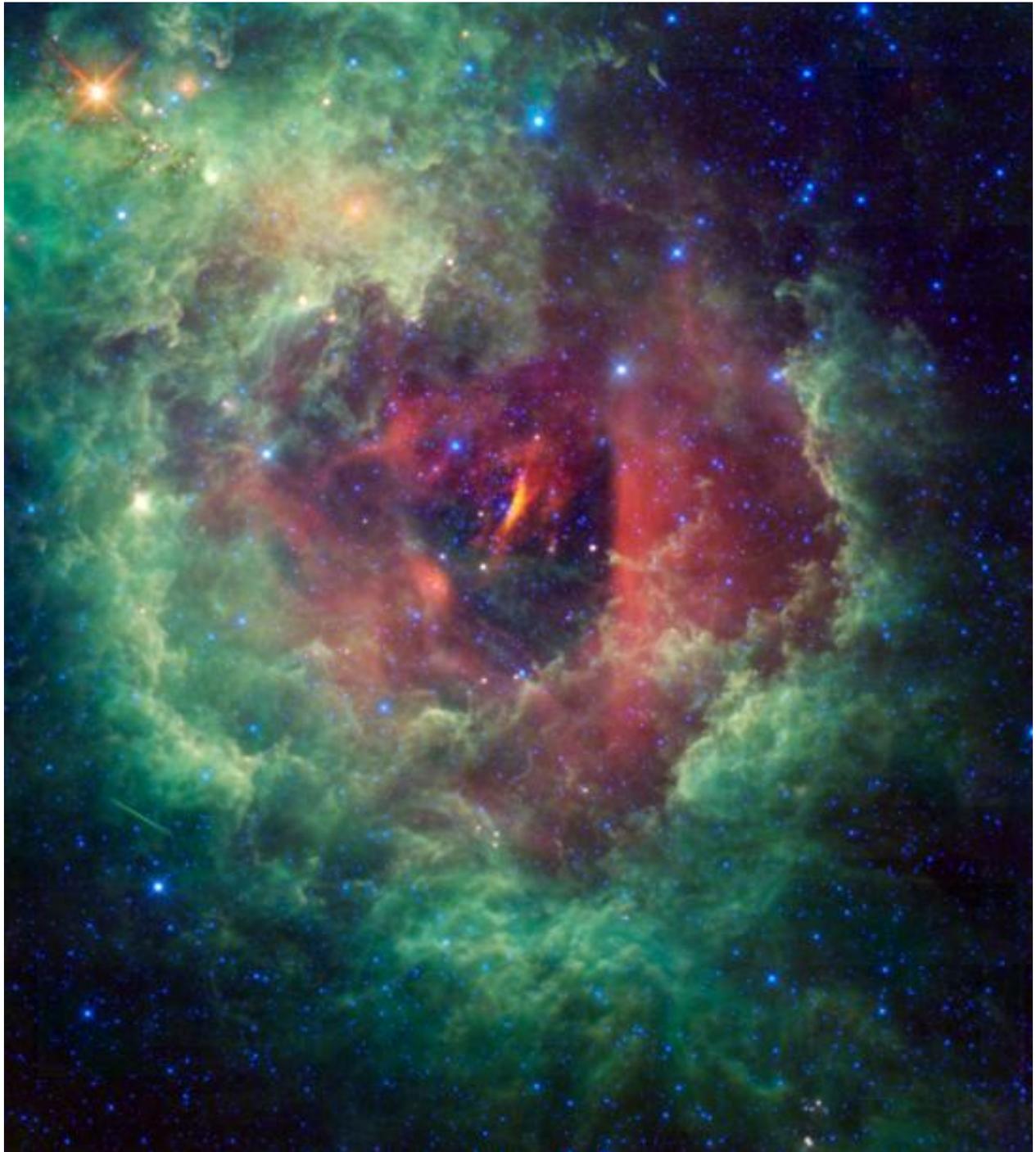
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“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.”

— Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason



The **Rosette Nebula** (also known as **Caldwell 49**) is a large, spherical (circular in appearance), H II region located near one end of a giant molecular cloud in the **Monoceros** region of the **Milky Way Galaxy**. The **open cluster NGC 2244** (Caldwell 50) is closely associated with the nebulosity, the **stars** of the cluster having been formed from the nebula's matter.

Foreword

The present work relates the moral deontological theory of Kant with the Rosicrucian Philosophy. It is considered that Kantian ethics is deontological because it argues that the moral value of an action is in its intention and not in its consequences.

For Kant, moral law is a law of our rational consciousness that requires absolute respect for duty, for the fulfillment of certain norms, such as not to kill, not to steal and not to lie. What determines whether an action is performed by duty is its intention which has moral value when the agent's purpose is to perform duty to duty. According to Kant, the moral law has a formal character because it indicates how right it is to do the duty. For him there is a supreme principle of morality, the Categorical Imperative, a command which defines what moral duties are. He proposes two equivalent questions that we must ask ourselves whenever we decide to act:

(1) Can I rationally *will* that everyone act as I propose to act? If the answer is no, then we must not perform the action.

(2) Does my action respect the goals of human beings rather than merely using them for my own purposes? Again, if the answer is no, then we must not perform the action.

For the Rosicrucian Philosophy, actions contrary to duty, generate debts that must be repaid in this life or in another one. To the extent that the human being responds to the command of duty, the categorical imperative, will be free from karma or law of cause and effect.

Roses in the Path

Talks and Thoughts About the Mystical Teachings and Kantian Concept on Ethics and Morality.

I met a Probationer along the way, and we talked about the Teachings and several other things, coming to a brand new thought, in spite of talking about the old and perfect Teachings. When I think about it now, I feel that some of those ideas should be written down, in order to share those same thoughts with others students in the path. I believe that knowledge can be written down and transferred without losing much of its richness.

One of the most interesting point of view in his talks, is about *categorical imperative* (German: *kategorischer Imperativ*), the central philosophical concept in the deontological moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the connection between it and some students' practical actions and exercises.

Max Heindel's Teachings sustained that one shall be good, and that altruistic love and service is the most important thing in the path. This is not something to think about, it is, indeed, our duty. And this is all about acting according to *categorical imperative*, but, before we move on, we must think about the *categorical imperative* concept itself, introduced in Kant's 1785 *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, defined as a way of evaluating motivations for action.

Immanuel Kant, (born April 22, 1724, Königsberg, died February 12, 1804, Königsberg), was a Prussian philosopher whose comprehensive and systematic work in epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics greatly influenced all subsequent philosophy.

Kant was one of the foremost thinkers of the Enlightenment, a European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. In Kant were subsumed new trends that had begun with the empiricism of Francis Bacon and the rationalism of Descartes. He inaugurated a new era in the development of philosophical thought.

His original conception of his own critical philosophy anticipated a new era of a critique of moral philosophy. The *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) is the standard sourcebook for his ethical doctrines. The earlier *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) is a shorter and more readily comprehensible treatment of the same topic. Both differ from *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), in that they deal with pure ethics and try to elucidate basic principles. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, on the other hand, is concerned with applying these principles in the concrete, a process that involved the consideration of virtues and vices and the foundations of law and politics.

In the Dialectic, Kant took up again the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality. Having dismissed them in the first *Critique* as objects that can never be known because they transcend human sense experience, he now argued that they are essential postulates for the moral life. Though not reachable in metaphysics, they are absolutely essential for moral philosophy.

Practical, like theoretical, reason was for Kant, formal, rather than material - a framework of formative principles, rather than a content of actual rules. This is why he put such stress on his first formulation of the Categorical imperative: ***“Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”*** In spite of that, his formulation is a purely formal or logical statement and expresses the condition of the rationality of conduct, rather than that of its morality, which is expressed in another Kantian formula: ***“So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, always as an end, and never as only a mean.”***

Kant sustained there was only one such **categorical imperative**, which he formulated in various ways. He contrasted the **categorical imperative**, which holds absolutely or unconditionally, with **hypothetical imperatives**, which are valid only in the presence of some ulterior desire or goal - for example: “If you want to be well-liked, do not lie.” Lacking any insight into the moral realm, humans can only ask themselves whether what they are proposing to do has the formal character of law - the character, namely, of being the same for all persons similarly circumstanced (universal law).

Categorical imperative in the ethics of the 18th century Prussian philosopher Kant, is about a moral law that is unconditional or absolute for all agents, the validity or claim of which does not depend on any ulterior motive or end. “Thou shalt not steal,” for example, is categorical as distinct from the hypothetical imperatives associated with desire, such as “Do not steal if you don't want to go to jail.”, or, “Do not steal if you want people to trust you.”.

We all should be aware of this, and we should rule ourselves and our actions in life according to Categorical imperative - inner morality. As students we should pay attention to the real reasons why we do some exercises and take an action.

Are we acting like the one who doesn't steal because it is wrong? (categorical imperative) or is it the other way around? Are we acting like the one who doesn't steal in order to be trustworthy? (hypothetical imperative) If that is so, then we're taking some correct actions but only in order to accomplish something which is a personal gain, even if it is spiritual gain, and that is wrong. We should put only altruism and service in every action that we take (categorical imperative).

Rosicrucian exercises are precious gifts, but the reason to do those exercises

must be above “hypothetical imperatives”, they must be taken as a moral duty, not in order to accomplish spiritual gain (hypothetical imperative), even being true that we do accomplish spiritual gain, but because we must do those exercises, for what they mean by themselves, because they are part of our path, so that they become our moral duty, according with inner morality, internal morals (categorical imperative).

One of the most important rosicrucian exercise is **retrospection**. **Retrospection**, for example, the evening exercise, is of greater efficiency than any other method in advancing the aspirant upon the path of attainment. But this should not be the reason why we do this exercise. The aspirant reviews his moral attitude in relation to each scene. At meals, for example: Did he, or she, eat to live? Or did he live to eat? Let him, or her, judge himself, or herself, and blame where blame is due, praise where merited. The value of retrospection is enormous:

- We perform the work of restoration of harmony consciously and in a shorter time than the desire body can do during sleep, leaving a larger portion of the night available for outside work;
- We live our Purgatory and First heaven each and every night, and we build the right feeling into the spirit, the essence of day's experience; we do extract the essence of those experiences, the ones which make for soul growth.

Our sins are blotted out, our auras begin to shine, and we attract the attention of the Teacher. But this only happens when the aspirant is ready, and this means that he is selfless, that he acts according to Pure act, *Actus Purus*, and this is what categorical imperative is all about, inner morality. Never in order to achieve a spiritual gain. Selflessness... That is the key word in the Path. The only one that really counts. As Max Heindel said:

"(...) Is it strange that people find it difficult to realize this high ideal of continued well-doing, made doubly hard by the fact that self-interest is entirely ignored? Sacrifice is demanded with no positive assurance of any reward.(...)" (Max Heindel, in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, Chapter XV, Christ and His Mission, The Evolution of Religion).

As a matter of fact, only the pure shall see God.

Another example that we can take a look at, is about **probationership**. After a two-year term of being a Regular Student of the Fellowship, a person who abstains from all flesh food, tobacco, mind-altering drugs and alcohol may apply for **probationership**.

Once again the point is: Are we changing habits only because of our goal – being a probationer? Are we changing habits only because of our health condition? If that is so, once again we are talking about hypothetical imperatives... We only do

something to achieve our goal. It is correct, according to morality. But it is not morality itself.

The inner morality, categorical imperative

In *Occult Principles of Health and Healing*, by Max Heindel, for example, he explains the reasons for a vegetarian diet:

“(...) We hinder their evolution instead of helping them, and the day will come when we shall feel a deep disgust at the thought of making our stomachs the burying ground for the carcasses of murdered animals. All true Christians will be abstainers from flesh foods out of pure compassion; they will realize that all life is God's life, and to cause suffering to any sentient being is wrong.”

As we can read, all of this is about categorical imperative. This is the main reason, the only which matters, for being a vegetarian. Heindel didn't say that the reason was about health, for itself, nor about becoming a Probationer. What he said is clearly written above: *“(...) and to cause suffering to any sentient being is wrong.”* Thus it is very clear that the aspirant should act only according to **categorical imperative**: the action for itself, moral duty, inner morality.

The aspirant shouldn't act because of personal reasons, even if it is a part of esoteric training, an exercise, or a requirement for being a **probationer**. That is the wrong way, the mean to accomplish an end – hypothetical imperative.

Aspirants must act according to inner morality, moral duty, the mean and the end – categorical imperative. If one takes the Path, then he, or she, must be aware of this, all along the way.

We also can read, in *Occult Principles of Health and Healing*, something else, very important too:

“(...) There is an esoteric meaning to the feeding of the multitude where fish was used as food, but looking to the purely material aspect we may sum up the points in our answer by reiterating that we shall some time outgrow flesh and fish Eating as we have rise above cannibalism. Whatever license may have been given in the barbaric past will disappear in the altruistic future, when more refined sensibilities shall have awakened us to a fuller sense of the horrors involved in the gratification of a carnivorous taste.”

Once again, we can read that the altruistic future, when more refined sensibilities shall have awakened us, will not tolerate animal cruelty and animal abuse.

This is the main reason for a vegetarian diet, according to Max Heindel himself. If we forget about this, and if we only think of our own progress and personal goals, along the way, we are wrong. Maybe the Teacher will never come if we make that kind of mistakes... Nevertheless, and once again, this is not the point, or else we would be talking about hypothetical imperative, which, as mentioned above, isn't right. Therefore we should keep in mind, that we must always act according to categorical imperative, inner morality; in life, as in the Path.

If we have a look at *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, Chapter XV, Christ and His Mission, The Evolution of Religion, by Max Heindel, we may understand that, in a way, **our own evolution is somehow like the evolution of religion, itself, in what concerns the gradual replacement of hypothetical imperatives by categorical imperatives.** In fact in the evolution of religions, man was impelled first to fear God and was given religions of a nature to further his spiritual well-being under the lash of fear. Then he was induce to achieve a certain kind of unselfishness, to give up parts of his worldly goods to sacrifice. This was achieved by giving him the Tribal or Race-God, a jealous one. All of this is, in fact, about hypothetical imperatives: man achieved God and Sacrifice from external rules, external morality. This is just like the one who doesn't steal because he is afraid of going to jail if he does it, or because he wants to be trustworthy. Also, somehow, it is just like the one who does an exercise like **retrospection** with that same feeling... The feeling that he must do that because "it is written", but he doesn't feel it as a moral duty, inner morality, and this way he can't really feel the pain that he caused, he can't achieve the error itself. One should do this exercise as an inner need, a moral duty. One should do this exercise according to an inner morality, categorical imperative, and not only because one must do the exercise to achieve something personal. This is just like the one who doesn't eat flesh foods because he must do so to become a Probationer. In spite of being true, the fact is that if one does it only as a mean to an end, where the mean is "not eating flesh foods" and the end is "becoming a Probationer", we are talking about kantian hypothetical imperatives and that is wrong, once again. Not eating flesh foods, because of animal cruelty should be the reason why, the mean and the end, inner morality... That's what categorical imperatives are all about, and that is, in fact, what Max Heindel said to be the reasons for a vegetarian diet. Nevertheless, like in the evolution of Religion, some of us may start from there: not eating flesh foods to become a Probationer.

Then, the next step would be to achieve an inner morality, categorical imperative, and becoming conscientious of the main reason for a vegetarian diet: being against animal cruelty and abuse, just because it is our moral duty, inner morality; being a vegetarian because it can't be otherwise...It is a categorical imperative, a moral duty, inner morality.

Just like in the evolution of religion, it may start in a different way, from the

“outside”, external morality (hypothetical imperatives), even if it demands sacrifice and unselfishness as mentioned above: but the final step is to obtain an inner morality, therefore categorical imperatives, and then realize that the Path is about a high ideal of continued well-doing, sacrifice without a reward, altruistic love, service, in every little action that we take, and this is our moral duty, internal moral, inner morality.

If morals have internal enforcement, the individual feels compelled to moral behavior (categorical imperatives). If morals have external enforcement, then it is only the threat of mistreatment for immoral behavior, or rewards for moral behavior, that keep members of a group in line (hypothetical imperatives).

As Max Heindel wrote in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, Chapter XV, Christ and His Mission, The Evolution of Religion:

“(...) the great sacrifice on Calvary- while it also served other purposes, as will be shown-becomes rightfully the Beacon of Hope for every earnest soul who is striving to achieve the impossible; to attain, in one short life, to the perfection demanded by the Christian religion.”

This perfection, as a matter of fact, is all about being altruistic in every step we take; acting according to the one and only reason that matters, moral duty, the mean and the end, inner morality, categorical imperatives, no rewards, no personal gains, only Altruism and Service as moral duties...

In fact, acting according to inner morality, internal morals, is the way to find the inner Christ, the inner God, and to become one.

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Portrait of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
by the german painter Adolf von Heydebeck (1787-1856), made by observation of Doebler's work (1791).

“Why should we argue about the existence of God? Two factors are sufficient to prove it and to force us down onto our knees in adoration: namely, the starry skies above and the moral law within.”

- *Immanuel Kant*



Star explosion leaves behind a rose. Seen as a red dusty cloud in this image from NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer, or WISE, Puppis A is the remnant of a supernova explosion. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCLA. More information is online at https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/WISE/main/index.html and <http://wise.ssl.berkeley.edu/> and <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/wise/>

Cosmic Consciousness

*One universal body contains all matter.
One universal nerve feels all pains.
One universal mind contains all wisdom.
One universal spirit fills all planes*

*In the universal body
All parts working together are needed.
Those in touch with Cosmic Consciousness
Know all viewpoints must be heeded.*

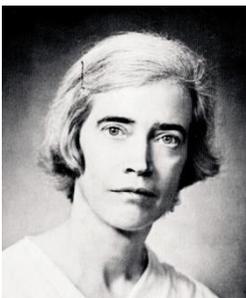
*In the universal feeling
The pain of one is for all a fact.
Those in touch with Cosmic Consciousness
By compassion are led to act.*

*In the universal mind
Is the Cosmic Plan.
Those in touch with Cosmic Consciousness
Know what's good for beast and man.*

*In the universal spirit
Is all in earth or heaven.
Those in touch with Cosmic Consciousness
Know from It no one is riven.*

*When all gain Cosmic Consciousness
When all parts know the Whole
Then all will be united
Into one harmonious whole*

- Elsa M. Glover



Elsa M. Glover graduated from the University of Rochester with a bachelor's degree in Physics. Later she studied at the University of Purdue where she became a Master and PhD in Physics. She dedicated her life to research and university teaching on this subject at Stillman University for more than thirty years. She was also a dedicated violinist and a member of the Rosicrucian Fellowship, for which she wrote many articles and two books and taught classes in their summer school at Oceanside, California. Dr. Glover , died Thursday, June 26, 2003 , age 63, at home in Tuscaloosa.

The Mission of the Rosicrucian Fellowship

God is Light—if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have Fellowship with one another.—1st John 1:5-7.

The Rosicrucian Fellowship is not a sect or religious organization. It is a School of Thought. It does not aim at proselyting, but rather to make the Christian Teachings a living factor in the land by encouraging people to remain with their churches while giving them explanations which time has obscured. To such as have already severed their connections with the church it offers a temporary anchorage until they become aroused anew to a deeper understanding of the uplifting power and the beauty of the Christian teaching.

In the Rosicrucian Fellowship the Elder Brothers distinguish between three classes: First, *Students*, those who are merely studying the Philosophy.

Second, *Probationers*, who are students, but who wish to fit themselves for service and aspire to first-hand knowledge. To the latter, the General or Local Secretary will furnish a pledge wherein the aspirant promises *himself* to faithfully perform two specific exercises; to keep a daily record of his performance, and send that record monthly to headquarters. The term of probation is at least a year and has for its purpose to test the earnestness and persistence of the aspirant and to give him the opportunity to purify himself, before taking up the more direct methods of training incident to discipleship. The report is also designed to be a help to the aspirant in the performance of the exercises. It is human nature to want to make as good a showing as possible and the aspirant will thus try to do better, knowing that his work is being inspected.

Third: *Disciples*, who have completed the term of probation, been accepted by the Elder Brothers and given individual instruction. Tuition is free.

The Rosicrucian Fellowship has no officers except a General Secretary, who is merely a channel for the dissemination of the teaching.

Any one may enroll as a *student* of Rosicrucian Christianity by writing to the General Secretary, who will furnish the necessary facilities for study, or, wherever possible, students may band together and form a local Fellowship center, a local school, selecting one of their number as local secretary to correspond with the General Secretary.

There are no charters, initiation fees, dues or other financial aspects incident to organizations. The expenses incidental to the promulgation of Rosicrucian Christianity are borne by voluntary subscriptions, which may be sent to General Secretary Rosicrucian Fellowship, P. O. Box 1802, Seattle, Wash.

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- First edition of Max Heindel' series "Rosicrucian Christianity", Rosicrucian Fellowship, Seattle, 1909.

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Max Heindel
(1865-1919)

Max Heindel, the public founder of Rosicrucian Fellowship, born Carl Louis von Grasshoff in Aarhus, Denmark on July 23, 1865. He was a Danish-American Christian occultist, esoteric astrologer, and mystic. He died on January 6, 1919 at Oceanside, California, United States.

Cover:

Path Under The Rose Trellises, Claude Monet, 1924





Information on courses and affiliations, addresses for contacts can be found on the official website of the world headquarters: The Rosicrucian Fellowship.

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