

The Kitāb Rūḷa Bizānī

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A special category of the unpublished texts which allows us to estimate the knowledge which Kurds had of Islamic issues is the literature dealing with the Islamic 'aqīdas. It is fair to say that none of these unpublished texts were written exclusively for the sake of knowledge of Islam. The authors mostly draw conclusions from their investigation in order to distinguish good from bad. In view of this they also may describe Islamic *sharī'a* as being fundamentally the primary way to a better understanding of Prophet and Islam. This issue will only play a marginal role in the following brief note. Rather, we will embark upon an attempt to describe an unknown manuscript of *Rūḷa Bizānī*.

Rūḷa Bizānī

The *Kitāb Rūḷa Bizānī*, which has become known to the local Kurdish researcher especially through Sanandaj edition, the Kurdish editions by Farūxī and Elwendī, and the recent Kurdish translation by Afshārpūr¹, consists of two parts. The first aimed principally at the first group of readers, gives concise introductions to the basic codes of Islam and *sharī'a*, the interrelationships between the different Islamic codes, and the importance of Islamic codes.

The second part, aimed at all readers, provides accounts in the honor of Prophet. In the Kurdish areas, however, the *Rūḷa Bizānī* is identified as 'Manual of Sharī'a for Children' and is explicitly attributed to Malā Khidir (<Pr. Khidr), the disciple of Sheikh Wasīm (I) Takhtī Mardūkhi.

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¹ See Rūdbārī Awrāmī 2006, 2010.

About the personality and life of Malā Khidir Rūdbārī Kurdistānī (1138/1725-26-1205/1790-91) little is known. He was a son of Malā A'mad and came from Rūar (<Pr. Rūdbār) village, in Awrāmān-i Takht. He is known as the author of several Arabic and Gūrānī works of which the *Dawlatnāma* deserve to be mentioned here².

The *Ṛūla Bizānī* is not large, it has a somewhat abrupt style and it lacks a balanced structure. Certainly it was written for didactic purposes and meant for elementary and ordinary readers. In its short description of the major Islamic codes it only offers the main lines.

MS Gulpāygānī 27/218

The full Gūrānī text of the *Ṛūla Bizānī* is preserved in some early mss., which were written probably in Awrāmān, while extracts exist in a few other mss³. These mss. are very general in character and more interesting is that all mss. attribute the *Ṛūla Bizānī* to Malā Khidir. According to MS Gulpāygānī 27/218, *Ṛūla Bizānī* is interestingly by Sheikh Muh'ammad Wasīm (1118/1706-1171/1757-58)⁴, rather than Malā Khidir; although the oral tradition also knows Malā Khidir primarily as the originator of *Ṛūla Bizānī*, it remains unclear which attribution is correct.

The Qum manuscript of *Ṛūla Bizānī* (accession No. 27/218) is kept at Islamic collection of Gulpāygānī Library. It is entitled Kitāb Ṛūla Bizānī min Kalām-i Shaikh Muh'ammad Wasīm "The Book of Ṛūla Bizānī by Sheikh Muh'ammad Wasīm". The text is mostly written in the Arabic language and sometimes in Persian. The Gūrānī text is written in *nasta'liq* while the main part of the Arabic section is in *naskh*. The manuscript has been catalogued by Dirāyatī as "*Ṛūla Bizānī*", while the Gulpāygānī Library, in Qum, mistakenly mentioned it as a book of 'interpretation of dreams' by Muh'ammad Qāsim⁵. This may be explained as a perfunctory consideration of the second part of the manuscript which includes a long discussion of prayer problems (fol.5v. ff.). The primary folios of the manuscript (fols.2v.-5v.) includes an interesting version of *Ṛūla Bizānī*. Besides the Gūrānī folios that contains the text of *Ṛūla Bizānī*, we have also a concluding note written in the same hand and in the Persian language which is helpful for establishing the date of the manuscript. 'Abd al-Qāsim is mentioned as the scribe and the book is dedicated to the son of 'Abd al-Qāsim, named 'ūfi 'Abbās, in 1296/1879.

2 See Rūdbārī Awrāmī 2007, 5.

3 See Ibid, 24.

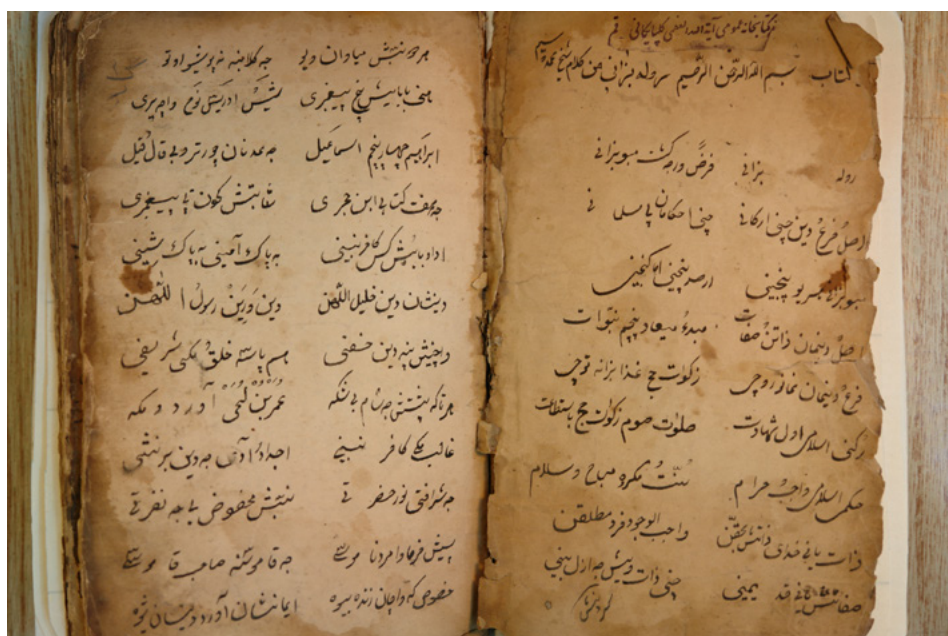
4 This is Sheikh Mu'ammad Wasīm I Takhti Mardūkhī. For the life and the works of Mu'ammad Wasīm, son of Sheikh A'mad, see Ru'ānī 1985, 237-38.

5 See Dirāyatī 2010, viii, 491.

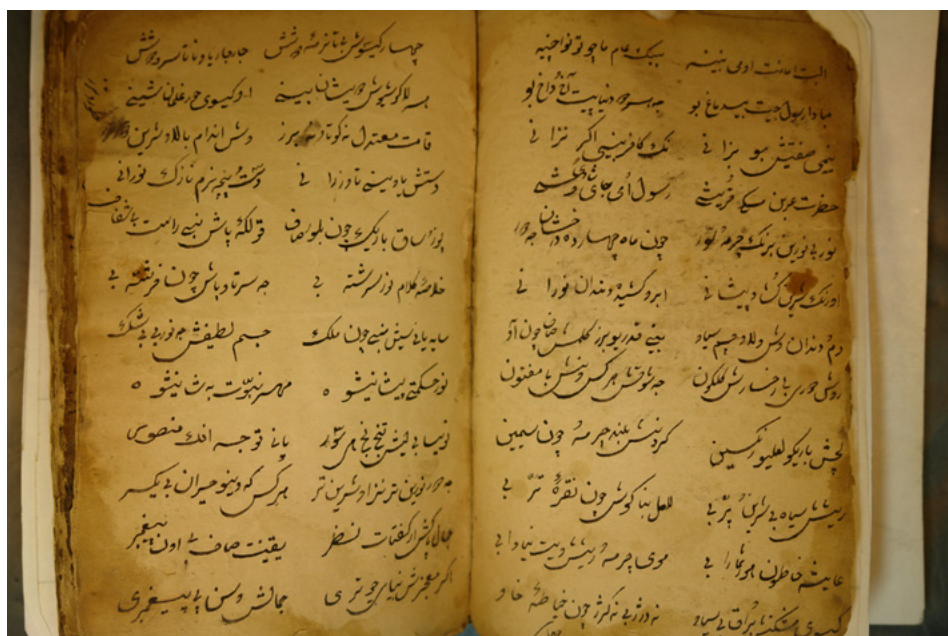
This haywire manuscript in its entire form is of 70 folios. It is interesting that there is a second version of *Ṛūḷa Bizānī*, entitled as *Ṛūḷa Bizānī Kalām-i Shaikh Muh'ammad Wasīm* "The *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* by Sheikh Mu'ammad Wasīm", in the folios 30r.-33v. It is written by the scribe Mu'ammad Amīn on 6 Jumādā II, but there is no clear mention of the year. It should probably be dated in or around 1308/1891. Similarities with the previous version it acknowledges the authorship of Muh'ammad Wasīm and not Malā Khidir. With regard to the present versions, however, one should refrain from accepting Malā Khidir's original authorship of the *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* for lack of evidence. It is possible to say that due to the confusion and controversy over Malā Khidir's identity as the disciple of Mu'ammad Wasīm, *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* was transmitted under his name. But there is a more important possibility.

The versions of *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* given in the Qum manuscript include 69 and 65 *beyts*, respectively, while the *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* by Malā Khidir is a long poetry including 145 *beyts*. While most agree that the work of Malā Khidir was composed within some decades after the *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* by Mu'ammad Wasīm, the more difficult question is the extent to which it reflects what was actually said by Mu'ammad Wasīm. The content, or arguments, and the form, the literary qualities, are inseparable. According to the present manuscripts, it is possible to say that Malā Khidir as the disciple of Mu'ammad Wasīm has expanded his own master's *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* from the same perspective. The works of Mu'ammad Wasīm, especially *Zindagānī-yi 'a'rat-i Rasūl*, *Shamāyil-i 'a'rat-i Rasūl*, and *Asmā'-i A'āb-i Badr* (all in Kurdish) served as an important source for Prophet values during the age of Malā Khidir. He could not escape the influence of the *mathnawīs* of Mu'ammad Wasīm regarding the Prophet.

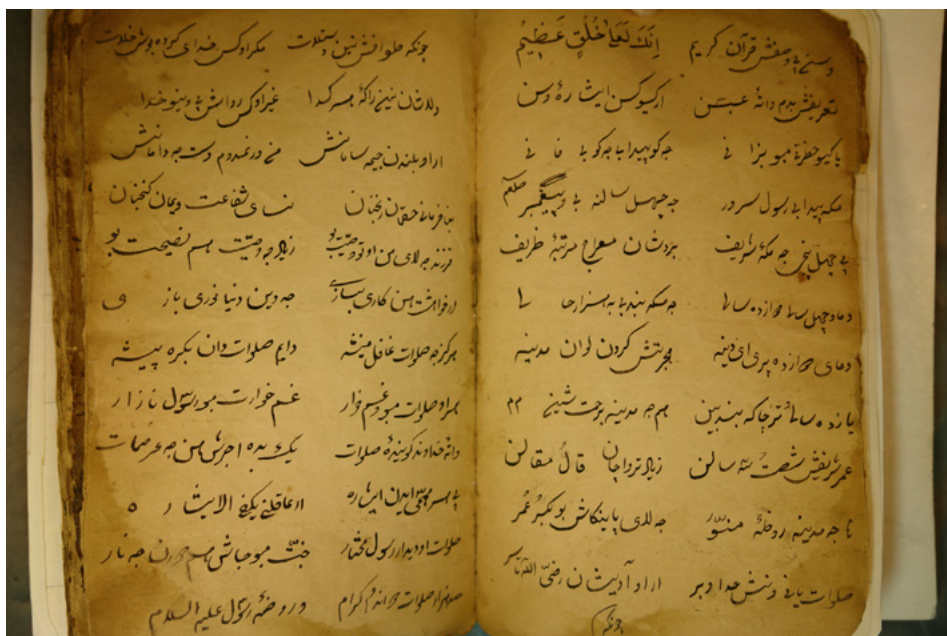
At the same time, Malā Khidir, in his own view, may have amplified certain aspects of the *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* he heard in a way consistent with the principles that guided Mu'ammad Wasīm throughout his life. True or not, one cannot deny that the *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* is, in part, Malā Khidir's eulogy for his revered teacher. Just as speakers revised their speeches after oral delivery prior to publication, Malā Khidir expanded, paraphrased, and embellished Mu'ammad Wasīm's words, rather than producing a verbatim transcript. In this manner, Malā Khidir carefully adhered to the ideas Mu'ammad Wasīm expressed in his work; some important *beyts* are the same mentioned in the work of Mu'ammad Wasīm but it is a more extensive version of *Ṛūḷa Bizānī* though bearing the stamp of Mu'ammad Wasīm's art.



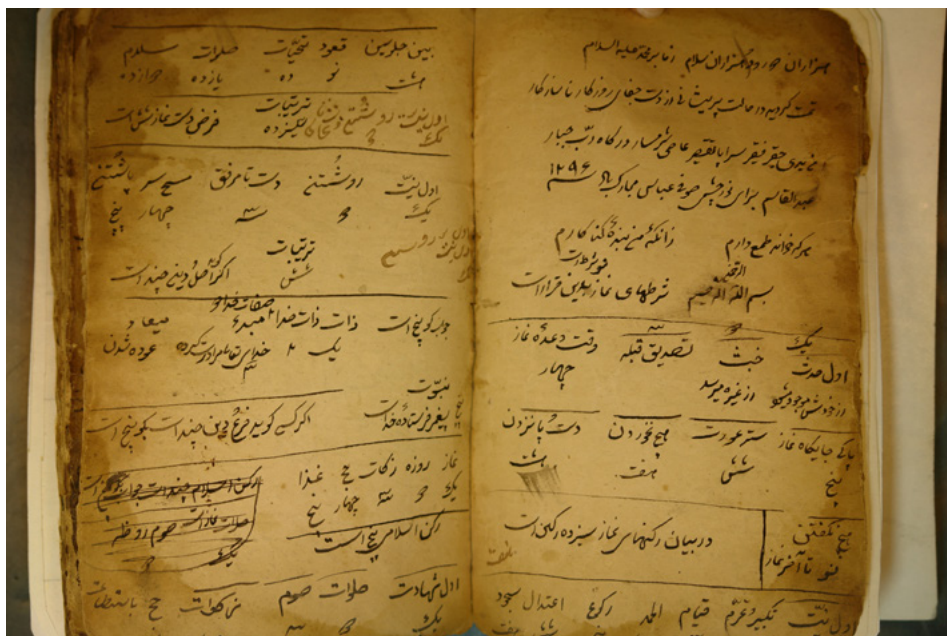
fol.2v-3r.



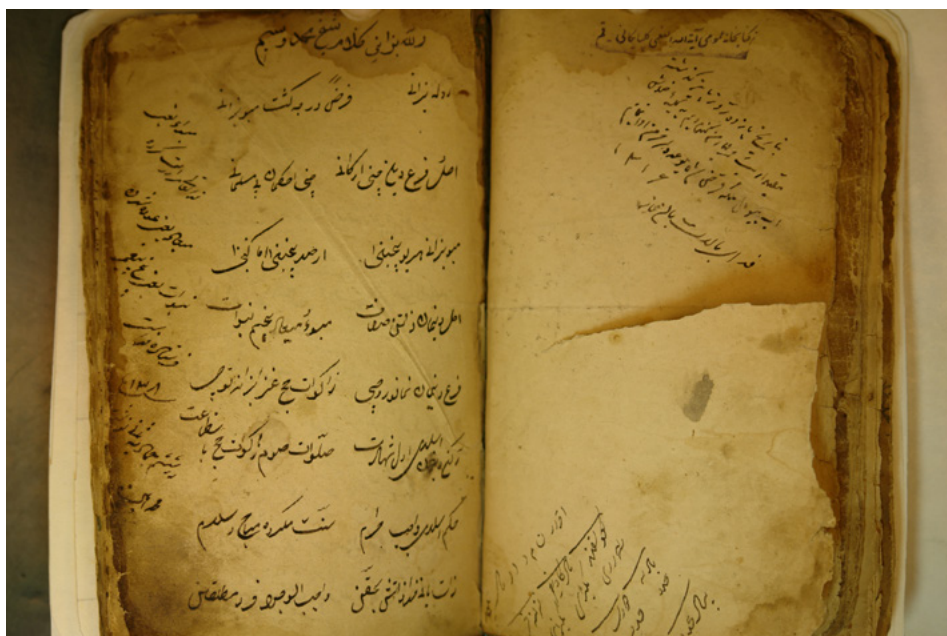
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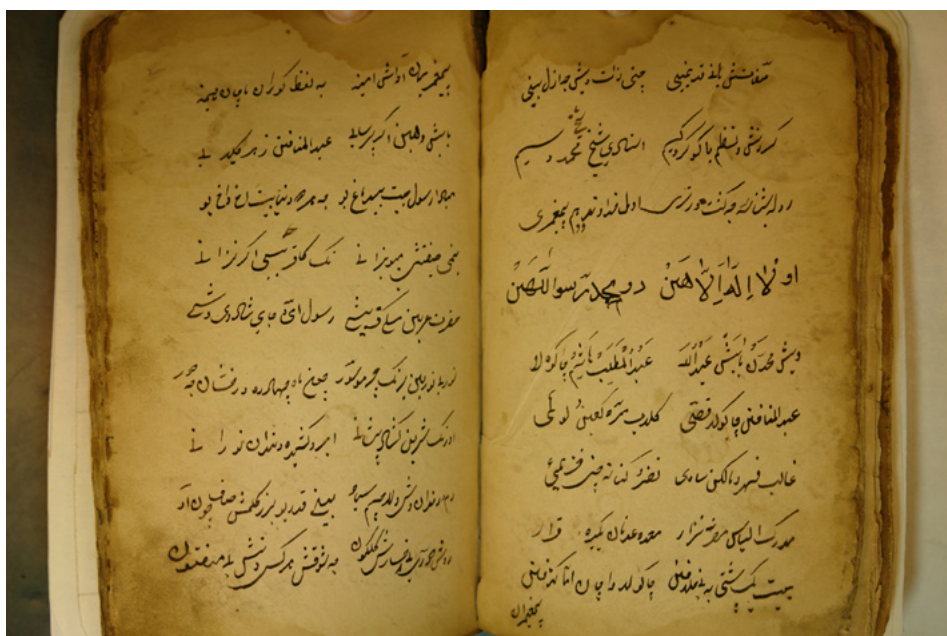
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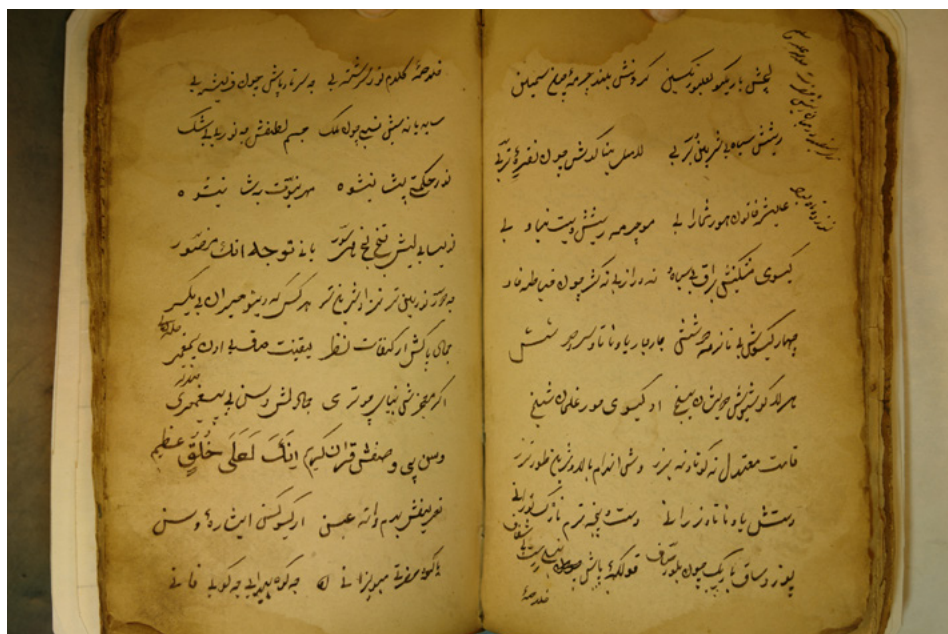
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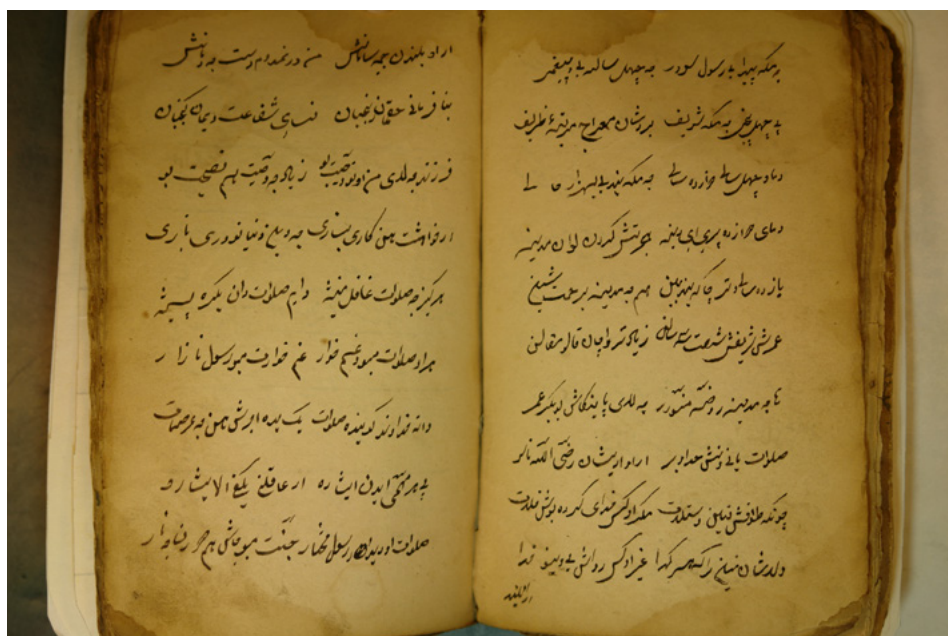
fol.29v.-30r.



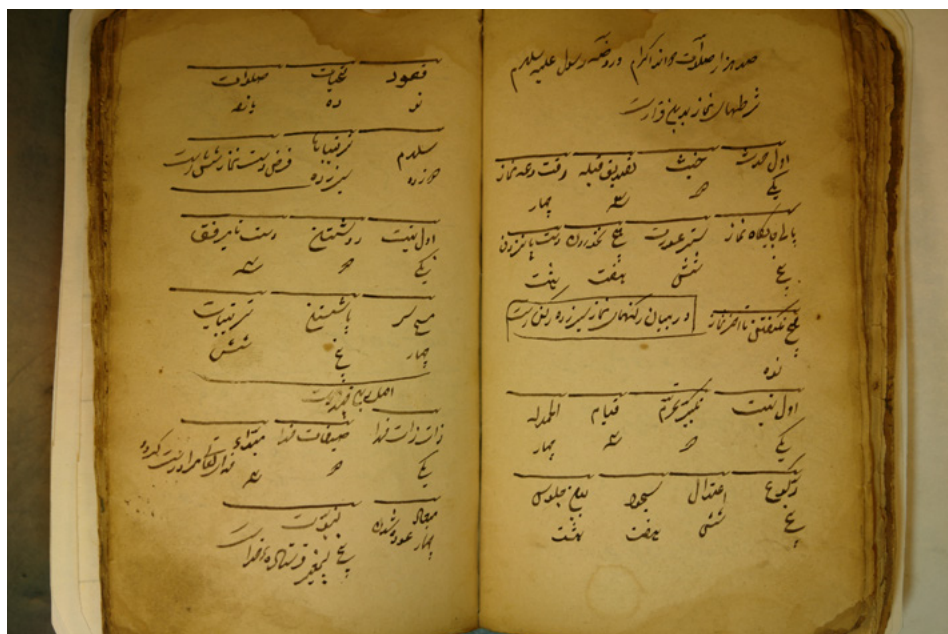
fol.30v.-31r.



fols.31v.-32r.



fols.32v.-33r.



fol.33v-34r.

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