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**LEADERSHIP WHOISM: AN INSIGHT INTO THE LOGIC OF GOOD LEADERSHIP**

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<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>KEYWORDS</b>
<p>This research with the title, Leadership Whoism, is aimed at unraveling the essential fundamental criterion that ought to define the person or the whoism of a leader. This work makes reference to the thoughts of the Golden Triad on leadership in situating its philosophical framework through which it justifies its thesis which asserts that an absolutely necessary nexus exists between the possession of virtues and functioning as a leader. The pivotal problem which inspires this discourse is the enigma of moral turpitude which poses a daunting challenge to actors in the leadership arena. This problem is best captured in the inquisitives or questions of this research: who ought to be a leader? Is leadership an all-comers affair? Through an intrepid assessment of the ideas of the Golden Triad on leadership, the research addresses the first question by positing the categorical fundamental criterion for becoming a leader and answers the second inquisitive in the negative by asserting that leadership should be accorded only those who possess virtues. In its conclusion, the work unveils the conjunctive logical formular for good leadership and submits that the operationalization of the virtue-cum- leadership correspondence tenet adumbrated by the triad thinkers will flatten the steeping curve of leadership morass which has become an intractable pandemic to humanity. This research is thus very significant in that it reflects the urgency of articulating a ramified knowledge structure and cognitive parameters for leadership conversation on who ought to be a leader.</p>	<p>Leadership, whoism, golden triad, moral turpitude, virtue, logic, conjunction.</p>

**INTRODUCTION**

Etymologically, the term virtue is derived from the Latin term, “vir”, which means ‘manliness’ or ‘excellence in battle.’ Virtue could be conceived as a habitual disposition which prompts one into excellence in action. Hence, Austin Fagothey explains the relationship between habits and virtue thus: Some habits perfect us only physically. or mentally or socially, but if they perfect our nature taken completely, they are good habits of living or conduct and are called virtues. (Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice 170).

Today, virtue is no longer contiguous with manly display of excellence in warfare but it is understood as an ethical habit of excellence. Prominent contemporary leadership

scholars, like Craig Johnson, conceive virtues as “positive leadership traits or qualities” (Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership 70). These positive habits constitute the building blocks of good character and leaders who fail to cultivate virtues, ipso facto, are in deficit of good character. This is the reason that advocates of virtue norms principles of ethics concede that there is a direct correspondence between possession of virtues and display of good leadership

Virtue ethics is that school of ethics that concerns itself with the predispositions of a person’s character which have developed overtime and resulted in exemplary actions. Virtue ethics contrasts with the universalism found in Kantian categorical imperative (deontology) and that of utilitarianism in that it deals with the specific moral fiber of the individual and unlike the universalism of Kantianism and Utilitarianism, virtue ethics is context based though the exercise of virtue is not situational. This is so because what may function as an appropriate virtue, say humility, may not be appropriate in another context. ‘Courage’ in the context of war may be viewed as a more appropriate virtue comparatively. The appropriateness of one virtue in a particular context does not vitiate the inherent legitimacy and validity of all virtues in all situations.

Philosophy is mostly an activity which responds in all epochs to the most seething challenges and problems humans face within each cultural milieu. This occasions the aphoristic notion that every philosopher is a child of his time or age who responds to the prevailing circumstances of the age in his philosophic activity. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are apt figures to demonstrate this position. They had experienced the golden age of Athens under the rule of Pericles. Under the leadership of Pericles, Athens who was weak in terms of military might, poor; in terms of material wealth and men of fame minds, became an imperial power who defeated many other city states and colonized them. Also during the reign of Pericles, Athens excelled in Art and literature and produced prodigies like Herodotus, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle whose works have stood the test of time. Among the lasting legacies which Athens bequeathed to posterity is the democratic system of government. Despite the peculiarity of aristocracy or elitism that characterized this democracy, it must be underscored that under Pericles, acquisition of power was predominantly via a democratic process in which members of the city state exercised their franchise in electing their leaders and directly contributed to the machinery of decision making.

Tragically, the balance of forces which culminated in the Golden age was plummeted by external aggression and internal insurrection — from without by Sparta and from within by the treacheries of the traitors of the Athenian democracy. An instance of such act of treachery from within which eventually aggravated Socrates’ sentence was the traitorous actions of Alcibiades; a pupil of Socrates, who committed the treason of availing Sparta of valuable information in the course of their war with Athens (Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Satire: A History of Philosophy* 42).

Recalling the tragic denouement of the rising glory of Athens under Pericles, Russell records thus:

But towards the end of his life the leaders of the Athenian democracy began to demand a larger share of political power. At the same time, his imperialist policy, with which the economic prosperity of Athens was bound up, caused increasing friction with Sparta, leading at last to the Peloponnesian war (431 - 404) in which Athens was completely defeated (61).

It was in this time and circumstance of cultural declension, social déclassé and leadership debacle that the thoughts of these golden triad- Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were provoked to propound philosophies that will serve as antidotes to the Athenian leadership deficit.

## **The Confluence between Virtue and Leadership in Socrates**

Socrates' brand of leadership philosophy can best be described as "Ethical Intellectualism". This philosophy is traceable to his conviction, contra sophists, that the soul or psyche of man has the capacity to know. To portray this inherent knowledge capacity of the soul, he proclaims that "man by nature desires to know." He establishes a one-to-one correspondence between knowledge and virtue. Socrates avers that acquired knowledge should invariably lead to, and produce virtuous acts. Apart from equating knowledge with virtue, he asserts that there is a synonymy between virtue and the good and that virtue is coterminous with wisdom — or knowledge of the right.

In his teleological conception of reality, he holds that everything tends towards some purpose and every action of man is aimed at some good or happiness. Thus the end of knowledge is virtue, good and right action. For Socrates, true knowledge entails deep convictions of what is right and of utility and as such does not lead to vice. This implies that vice is the outcome of ignorance as virtue is the outcome of knowledge.

This correspondence between knowledge, virtue and right action (wisdom) implies that the fulfillment of goals is a function of the degree of knowledge one has of such ends. In this wise, roles and responsibilities should be imposed in accordance with the level of knowledge one possesses which in turn determines the fulfillment and performance of such roles and responsibilities. He argues that if one is looking for a mender of a shoe, he will not procure a carpenter to perform the task of a cobbler. Similarly, since the soul of Athens has been badly battered due to vicious leadership, to mend the soul of the city state, Athenians must appoint one who has corresponding knowledge of leading the state to the ultimate good — Happiness. Thus, in Socrates' leadership philosophy, leadership should be accorded those who are most knowledgeable in the art of governance. It must also be emphasized that such knowledge must necessarily be virtuous and productive of the good, i.e. moral in content.

## **The Congruence between Virtue and Leadership in Plato**

Plato's most savvy insights on leadership are recorded in the Republic and the Statesman. Plato concurs with his master, Socrates, on the idea of the necessity of virtue for a good life. In book IV of the Republic, Plato identifies four kinds of virtue, namely;

wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. Since Plato conceived the state to be man writ large, the same sets of virtues are tenable in both the individual and the state. Virtue for Plato is synonymous with the fulfillment of functions. The soul of man is tripartite in nature and the good life of harmony is achieved when the three parts of the soul; reason, spirit and appetite, fulfill their functions effectively. Since virtue is the fulfillment of functions therefore there will be peculiar and specific virtues corresponding to the three parts of the soul to enable them fulfill their functions.

Wisdom is the virtue that corresponds with the rational part of the soul and it is achieved when reason, consistently pursues the ideals in the midst of the ever changing particulars, and is able to keep the desires of the appetite and the rashness of the spirit in check. Courage is the virtue that pertains to the spirited part of the soul and is achieved when the powers of the soul is kept within limit from engaging in unwarranted, unjustifiable and impulsive defense actions. When the appetitive part of the soul is subjected to limits and its desires and pleasures are moderated from excesses by reason, the virtue that arises is called moderation or temperance. The fourth virtue, justice, is a general virtue that is attained when each part of the soul is performing its due function without interference and usurpation of the roles of other parts. Plato alludes to the allegory of the chariot and the charioteer to exemplify the strategic and prime function of the rational part of the soul or reason among the other parts. In the Phaedrus he depicts the charioteer as reason. One horse, the spirit is good and does not need whips but only words and admonitions for cautioning while the other horse, appetite, is bad and needs whips to keep it in order. The charioteer has the duty to hold the reins and keep the horses; which occasionally may want to go astray, in order. This is similar to the function that reason must perform in the soul by keeping the spirited and the appetitive components under its rule. Since the society is a macro- amplified man, by extension, the function that reason plays in the soul is replicated in the social system where the class of rulers, the equivalent of the rational component of the soul, must perform the function of leading the society.

It was Plato's belief that the decadence that besets any society emanates from the privation of the virtue of wisdom in the governing class, in the event of which there will be meddling, relegation of duty, interference and usurpation of the powers of one class by the other. Hence, Plato places accentuated primacy on the value of wisdom for the governing class. Consequently, he advocates that the ideal society must necessarily be governed by the class of the wise or by Philosopher Kings (men or women of wisdom). This belief that the most sagacious and competent should govern elicited the most celebrated maxim from Plato, thus:

Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize that is until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils ("Republic" Book V, pg 100).

The essential and sensitive task of leadership made Plato to recommend a very rigorous scheme of education for the philosopher kings. Like his master, Socrates, Plato also believed that knowledge is virtue. Leadership excellence or virtue can only be gained through proper education from which the needed knowledge of leadership is acquired. The education of the would be ruler, unlike that of others, was to last longer and culminated in the trainee philosopher king taking courses in dialectics and moral philosophy at age thirty- five, after which s/he spends the next fifteen years on field experience of public service. At age fifty, the trainee leader should then be saddled with the responsibilities of state leadership. Plato's submission that only those who have received training as philosophers should be rulers was premised on the assumption that it was only philosophers who have the capacity by reason of their education, to transcend the confusing ephemerality and vicissitudes of the sensible and make decisions that conform to the nature of the unflinching ideals which will in turn have an unmodulated positive impact on the society.

Though Plato's stratification of the society into classes can be criticized as implying ontological bifurcation between the different classes, the imperativeness of his demand for a punctilious and assiduous scheme of education for the would be leader cannot be impugned. The abysmal leadership deficit global menace we experience is largely due to our making of leadership an all corners affair where people who have little or no formal training in leadership are imposed as leaders. It amounts to a gross misplacement of priority for different societies to develop and maintain different pedagogical frameworks for the training of the various expert functionaries in the society, yet a less than cavalier attention is paid to leadership training upon which the vitality and viability of the entire social system depends. To offer the task of performing any function that requires specialist knowledge to a non-expert is unpardonable but to saddle an unqualified person who has not been educated in the arts and science of leadership with the burden of leadership is a gross and dastardly concussion of due process and there should be no other graver first order crime against humanity but this.

## **The Nexus between Virtue and Leadership in Aristotle**

The two most profound works among the plethora of books that Aristotle authored which are of immediate relevance to leadership are the Nichomachean Ethics and Politics. Besides these seminal works, he also offered guardianship, tutelage and education in the art of leadership to eminent historical leaders. At the demise of Plato in 348/347, the ruler of Atarneus, Hermias beckoned on Aristotle to come and settle in Atarneus and offer him tutorship. Under Aristotle, Hermias acquired the knowledge of Geometry, Ethics and Dialectics and to the credit of Aristotle's positive influence, Hermias tempered his tyrannical brutality and commenced reforms in his government in accordance with the blueprints of Aristotle. Not only was Aristotle given funds to open a new school, in compensation for the invaluable services Aristotle rendered to him, Hermias also gave his niece and adopted daughter, Pythias to him in marriage and also funded him to

establish a school at Assos. Again in 343/342BCE, the king of Macedonia, Philip II, who had political treaties with Hermias, invited Aristotle to tutor his thirteen-year-old son; Alexander, who rose to become a one-time world emperor.

A reflection on the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics will reveal to us Aristotle's thoughts on leadership. In the Nicomachean Ethics, named after Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, he discusses the ends that people pursue, virtues and human behaviour. He asserts that people as well as everything in nature have a distinctive end to fulfill. He argues in this respect that "Every art and enquiry, and similarly every action as well as choice, is held to aim at some good. Hence people have nobly declared that the good is that at which all things aim" (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics. Bk 1.1). Aristotle holds the position that among the multiple ends which people seek as good, there is a non-instrumental, intrinsic good, which is pursued for its own sake, rather than as a means to other ends. This summum bonum or highest good for Aristotle, is happiness. People seek pleasure, money, fame, honour etc. with the hope that through their instrumentality they will achieve happiness ultimately. Aristotle's ethics is described as Eudaimonian because of its emphasis on happiness which he calls eudemonia. It is also described as teleological because it holds that all human action is end-oriented or has an end (telos) in sight. His portrayal of happiness as the complete and ultimate end is captured in his verses that "happiness appears to be something complete and self-sufficient, it being an end of our actions" (Bk 1. CH.7).

Happiness is as well the end of the state. So if the leaders of a state must achieve happiness, then they must know about the excellence they must possess so as to arrive at happiness for the state. The vehicle to achieving happiness is virtue. Virtue in this respect is an excellence one must possess in order to fulfill an end or a purpose. Virtues are those qualities one must possess which constitute the means to gaining the telos (end). Aristotle defines human virtue as "that characteristics as a result of which a human being becomes good and as a result of which he causes his own work to be done well". (Nicomachean Ethics Bk2.ch.6). In this sense, a person must possess virtue so as to be reckoned as good. The opposite of virtue is vice. Thus whereas a good person possesses virtues, a bad person has vices. Concomitantly, a leader must possess virtues or vices to be adjudged as good or bad consecutively.

Aristotle also conceived of virtue as a mean between two extremes. In his doctrine of the golden mean, he implies by 'mean' a sort of intermediate or middle value between excesses or extremes. In relation to vices, he defines virtue as "a mean with respect to two vices, the one vice related to excess, the other to deficiency and further, it is a mean because some vices fall short of and others exceed what should be the case in both passions and actions whereas virtue discovers and chooses the middle term" (Nicomachean Ethics Bk2.ch.6). However, if it has to do with the determination of virtue between two best acts, virtue in this case lies in the extreme. Aristotle is here saying that virtue should not be practiced moderately but to its extreme. Construed in another way, Aristotle is saying that virtue is the mean between an excess and a deficiency but that

there is neither an excess or deficiency of the mean which is virtue nor is there a mean of an excess and of deficiency. This is so because there are some morally debased acts that no mean can be deduced from them. Such acts as spitefulness, shamelessness, envy, adultery, theft, murder are morally wrong acts which lack any mean, excess or deficiency. Aristotle classified virtue into two categories namely, intellectual virtue and moral virtue, analogously and in comparison to the division of the human soul into the rational and the non-rational parts. The non-rational part of man is in turn segmented into the vegetative; the part that pertains to nutrition and growth, and the sensual or appetitive part; the part that has to do with desire and cravings generally. Aristotle observes that the sensual part of man obeys the commands of reason therefore it shares a commonality with reason. The intellectual virtues peculiar to reason include wisdom, comprehension and prudence.

He holds that the intellectual virtues are to control and serve as guides to the moral virtues which arise out of the non-rational part of the soul. It is only the moral virtues and not the intellectual virtues that we subject to the principle of the golden mean since they are concerned with passions and actions and it is only passions and actions that can be in excess or deficiency and thus capable of yielding a middle term or a mean which does not share in the viciousness of the extremes. The general rule of morality is to act in accordance with right reason. An individual is said to be acting in accord with right reason when that individual allows the rational part of the soul to superintend over the irrational part. Moral virtue is a mean relative to or dependent on the individual since it has to do with passions and actions which are subjective in nature. But an individual acts morally when s/he allows right reason to arbitrate in issues and strike a golden mean between extreme possibilities. Moral virtues are inculcated through acting habitually while intellectual virtues are inculcated through teaching and learning.

Aristotle discussed the means of some virtues elaborately in Book four of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Liberality is the mean in matters of the giving and taking of money while prodigality and stinginess are the excess and deficiency pertaining to money. Aristotle sees liberality as being relative to a person's resources. In both generating and spending of money, a liberal person makes money from a noble source and spends the money for a noble purpose. He does not accumulate wealth for the sake of self-aggrandizement but views wealth as a currency that must be used in helping others judiciously. Hence it is said regarding a liberal person that "those who must deserve wealth are the less wealthy in fact" (*Nicomachean Ethics* Bk.4 ch.1). In leadership, a liberal leader spends judiciously and nobly whereas a prodigal one spends recklessly, frivolously and earns ignobly while a stingy leader accumulates wealth avariciously and gives frugally. Magnificence is another mean with respect to spending great amount of money with parsimony as its deficiency and crassness or vulgarity as its excess. A magnificent person spends great amounts of money for great and suitable objects. The vulgar spends lavishly and ostentatiously just to cause a spectacle while the

parsimonious would always want to spend the least amount for both great and little things.

Good temper as a virtue is a mean between unirrascibility and irrascibility. A good tempered person displays anger proportionately in that he/she is angry at the right time, place and with the right people. Thus the issue of transference of aggression does not arise. The irascible expresses anger excessively and disproportionately while unirrascibility is a deficiency. Truthfulness is the mean between the excess, boastfulness whereby reality is exaggerated and the deficiency, mock-modesty, whereby inferiority psyche makes one to trivialize or diminish one's possessions.

The various virtues and vices in matters related to honour are also discussed in Book four. Greatness of soul has to do with perceiving oneself as worthy of great things and aspiring for greatness because it is one's worth. This virtue has much to do with the worth an individual accords himself and the value the society places on the person and it arises as a result of the possession and performance of all the virtues. Thus the great souled man is synonymous with the best all round in terms of possession of virtues and the truly great must therefore be the good person who practices what is best in each virtue and therefore is worthily accorded honour as a prize for his/her possession of virtues. In connection to leadership, no person who has defaulted or is defective in virtues or does not possess virtues sublimely should be accorded the honour of being a leader in any form.

The relevance of situating leadership virtues on concrete philosophical foundations is to avail one of a more comprehensive vista and outlook on the nexus between virtues and leadership. Most works that discuss the issue of leadership and virtues do so from a very peripheral and superficial ambience. In this respect Craig Johnson (72-75) discusses only the minimal catalogue of virtues without a mention of some other virtues like prudence and temperance. Aside courage and justice, prudence and temperance are cardinal virtues. Prudence is a virtue that is concerned with choosing the right means towards worthy ends. Prudence is pivotal in a wide range of issues extending from how to choose the right people for the right duties to how to make the right decision in a perplexing situation.

Prudence and wisdom are coterminous and without prudence most of the leadership virtues may slide into extremities. Justice without prudence becomes caustic and courage changes to conceit and overzealousness. Temperance is the virtue that regulates our indulgence thereby curbing excessiveness in appetite and sensual pleasures. Over indulgement in materialism and sensual pleasures have causal correlation with misappropriation, embezzlement, sex mania and other sundry scandals that often beset leadership. Courage is that virtue that enables one not to vegetate before danger, it is a spur to action in the most enervating situations. Courage encourages one to bear pains and other excruciating impediments on the path of achieving goals. Courage is not synonymous with rash boldness. Every courageous act must be based on good reasoning, embracing danger out of ignorance is a departure from courage. When leaders and



followers face dangers out of good judgment and rationality, it is courage. Courage may be physical or moral. Physical courage entails one's fortitude against any evil that involves bodily harm and requires physical attack or endurance. Moral courage entails unflinchingness in abhorring immorality and resoluteness in abiding to moral principles. Craig Johnson (71) avers that courage is needed to fulfill the two components of ethical leadership namely, acting morally and exerting moral influence. The first requires taking risks and bearing perils in the course of action and the second requires sustaining and being consistent on one's values in the midst of value-crisis and conflict. Lack of courage is viewed as cowardice, indecision, impatience, timidity etc while overshooting or excess of courage manifests as ruthless behaviours, presumptuousness, adamantness etc. Justice is another cardinal virtue that is harped by the Socratics. Justice entails fair, unbiased, unprejudiced and equal treatment of people and distribution of resources. Aristotle discusses the nuances of the concept of justice in Book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. From Aristotle's perspective, justice could be understood from the general moral point of view which connotes doing the right thing as required by principles of moral law. Aside the general understanding of justice above, justice is also particularly understood as meaning fairness. Fairness as a concept has a connection with equality and there are two types of equality as discussed by Aristotle in his *Politics*, namely, the principle of proportional or geometrical equality and arithmetical equality. The principle of proportional equality or fairness requires that those who are equal ought to be treated equally if their circumstances are similar and unequals ought to be treated differently provided the difference in treatment is proportional to the inequality that exists between them. Justice, going by the proportional principle requires treating equals equally and unequals unequally. The principle of arithmetic equality requires equal treatment where equals are involved in similar situations. This principle reduces to the principle of reciprocity in distribution of resources and requires strict equal treatment without variation. Aristotle discountenances the arithmetic principle of equality since it glosses over peculiarities of the people involved. Aristotle equates equity or fairness which is the substance of justice with the geometrical principle of equality whereby benefits or responsibilities are shared on the basis of worth, ability, merit, need etc. Justice, going by the geometrical principle requires being impartial in treating equals equally and unequals unequally. Impartiality in this sense allows discrimination based on differences and condemns discrimination where there are no such differences. D. D. Raphael says that "It is fair to discriminate in favour of the needy, or the meritorious, or equally able (*The Problem of Political Philosophy* 173).

### **Critical Remarks and Conclusion**

The synonymy established between leadership and the possession of virtues in this discourse does not vividly expose the practical cum technical aspect of virtue, namely, effectiveness, which is a necessary conjunct in the definition of good leadership. The golden triad appear to excessively emphasize the mental and rational aspects of virtue

as if they are logically sufficient for achieving good leadership. Against this backdrop, Joanne B. Ciulla notes that:

The ultimate point of studying leadership is, “What is good leadership?” The use of word good here has two senses, morally good and technically good or effective. These two senses form a logical conjunction. In other words, for the statement “She is a good leader” to be true, it must be true that she is effective and true that she is ethical. The question of what constitutes a good leader lies at the heart of the public debate on leadership. We want our leaders to be good in both ways. It’s easy to judge if they are effective and that is the focus of most leadership literature from the social sciences, but more difficult to judge if they are ethical because there is some confusion over what factors are relevant to making this kind of assessment. (*Ethics, The Heart of Leadership*. “Leadership Ethics: Expanding the Territory”, 16)

Ciulla is here arguing that good leadership cannot be meaningfully conceived devoid of the two necessary and essential components of ethics and effectiveness. A technically effective leader who is ethically deficient cannot be said to be a good leader just like an ethically excellent leader who is technically ineffective cannot analogically be called a good leader. Logically, one can submit that good leadership is a conjunction of ethics and effectiveness. Ethics and effectiveness have a symbiotic relationship because they emanate from the same ancient Greek and Latin terms *arête* and *vir* or virtue which connotes both moral and practical/technical excellence. Consequently, the idea of a morally excellent person who is technically incompetent is as anomalous as the idea of a morally bankrupt person who is technically competent. Possession of virtue is supposed to enable holistic perfection. Symbolically, if G is used to symbolize *good leadership* and M is used for moral excellence, E for effectiveness while • is used as a sign for conjunction. Then the logical formular for good leadership can be stated as:

$$G = M \cdot E$$

A Conjunction is said to be True when the two conjuncts are True. From this rule, it means that good leadership can only take place when both the moral and practical components of the act of leadership are True.

Since being ethical in this context is associated with the possession of virtues

Though the list of virtues is nearly infinite, it must be noted that the possession of virtues serves to accord moral warrant or legitimacy on the act of leadership and could also serve as the litmus test for good and bad leadership. A leader that does not cultivate virtues loses legitimacy and the act of leadership becomes sinister, toxic, lackluster and immoral. The exercise and practice of virtues must be viewed as a kind of holistic spectrum whereby the various virtues are mutually reinforcing and therefore the practice and adoption of one set of virtues in default or devoid of other known virtues is morally abhorrent. A leader from the point of view of virtues is a moral entity and an embodiment of virtues.

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