



## Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Pakistan: From Political Conservatism to Modernity 2002-2018

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### Abstract

*This study evaluates JUI-F Pakistan's role concerning the significant changes in its political strategy and ideology from 2002 to 2018. Muslim societies as a whole, apart from few exceptions, were alien to the perfect and contemporary notion of democracy. The colonial governments and their political system, ruled over the Muslim majority nations during the colonial era, are one of the primary factors for the anti-democracy strategy. For different social, political and religious reasons, JUI-F Pakistan has undergone inevitable political changes and ideological transformations. Major events in the ancient and modern demonstrate its political shift. While some of Deoband's academics still favor radical groups and promote their cause like JUI-S but in this situation, JUI-F Pakistan is an exception. The party's general political function may not be fully and ideally democratic, but occurrences demonstrate their in-depth knowledge of continuing political changes and ground-based realities at regional and international level.*

**Key Words:** Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal), Radical Groups, Democracy, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan

### Introduction

The religious political parties in Pakistan, unlike their other mainstream counterparts, are less inclined towards personality orientation and are predominantly determined by ideology, although personality-factor plays an important role in setting ideological goals and determining direction. By monopolizing Islam, they act as centripetal forces. In Pakistan, there are conventionally three kinds of Islamic organizations. One; believing and participating in parliamentary politics, second; restricted to socio-spiritual issues, and third; is the Jihadi proviolence, mostly emerged during the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR (also known as Afghan Jihad). All these kinds, however, are in one manner or another interlinked. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal) is the first of these three kinds of Islamic Organization, led by Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman (Shamsi, 2012).

JUI-F is one of Pakistan's known religious political parties with a big amount of votes in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkwa, along with Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), including some level of public representation and well-wishers in other Pakistani provinces such as Sindh, Punjab and Gilgit Baltistan. Jamaat-e-Ulma-e-Islam has an intrinsic connection with Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, his Indian counterpart. Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind played a crucial and efficient role against the subcontinent's colonial powers and participated in the fight for liberty from colonial powers and the subcontinent's consequent independence. Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani created another party after the culmination of the independence movement in 1947, namely Markazi Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Mufti Mahmood was appointed its chairman in 1962 until his death (Amin, 2016). In 1980, JUI divided into two groups, namely JUI-F, led by Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman and JUI-S, led by Maulana Sami Ul Haq, when Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman refused to recognize General Zia Ul Haq's military rule and strategy of Islamization. A further short-term collaboration was noticed in the creation of Mutihada Majlis-e-Amal between Jamaat-e-Ulama- Islam (Fazal) and Jamaat-e-Ulama- Islam (Semi-ul-Haq), but later JUI-S left the alliance due to

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Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman's inclusive political strategy by wanting to ally with other moderate political parties that JUI-S hated because of its exclusive political strategy.

It confronted some other gap in 2008 when a Balochistan-based Jamaat Ulama-e-Islam-F leader and nationalist, Maulana Asmat Ullah, allegedly a hardcore supporter of pro-Taliban and Jihadist ideology, broke out and established another JUI-Nazariyati party on the assumption that Fazal Ur Rahman had set aside the ideology of armed resistance (Jihad). It's an hypocrisy whether the same leader set up a political party rather than initiating the Jihadist revolution as he stated while dividing JUI-F ways. Jamaat-e-Ulama-e-Islam (F) is progressively leading towards the democratic culture. It has yet to accomplish more inside the party by establishment the democratic customs like intra-party election is an crucial and intimate part of an model democratic system, but the former head of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and also the vibrant leader of JUI-F Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani was refused to withdraw his nomination paper for the party chairmanship against the Fazal-ur-Rehman who currently lead the party (Khan, 2014).

A feeling of opposition, though at a lower level, has prevailed toward Maulana brothers' dynastic leadership in the party since his father's downfall, Mufti Mahmood. Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman is a member of the National Assembly, his brothers Maulana Atta Ur Rahman is also a Senate member and former Minister of Tourism in federation, whereas Maulana Lutf Ur Rahman is MPA in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and opposition leader in Parliament, and Maulana Obaid Ur Rahman is also an opposition leader district government of the Dera Ismail Khan in 2017. According to the constitution of Pakistan every political party must conduct the party election every three years but Jamaat-e-Ulama-e-Islam (F) has not yet conducted internal-party elections, even though it was intended to do so, though JUI-F held intra-party elections in April 2014. In this regard, Pakistan's Election Commission recently issued warnings notification for intra-party elections to Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman.

## **Party Leadership**

At the time of Partition, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani led the Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam (JUI), as the successor to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind of the pre-Partition Indian. Party leadership sustains that while the Jamiat Ulma-e-Hind was anti-Partition and hence definitely anti-Pakistan, the Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam reinforced the independence of Pakistan. That was the only distinction between both parties. The post-partition JUI however, was less effective and stayed inactive for quite a while. Dr. Ahmad Hussain Kamal explained in his book 'Ehad-saz Qayadat (History of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam 1947-1973 Jamiat Journals April 2001) that the JUI was recharged in 1956 by a number of ulemas such as Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi, Maulana Mufti Mehmood (who was later to become the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Maulana Lahori and Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (Kamal, 2001). Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam -F is the fifth biggest party in Pakistan in 2013 general election, winning 15 of the National Assembly's 272 general seats and 3.2% of the popular vote. It is based completely in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan's northern areas.

## **Party Organization**

On the effort of Maulana Mufti Mehmood, the first party convention took place at Multan. Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori was chosen as its first-party president, while Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi and Maulana Mufti Mehmood became its Nazim-i-Alaa and vice president respectively. One room in a building was declared party headquarters Outside Delhi Darwaza, Lahore. However, the JUI came under a strict ban on political action enforced by the Martial Law that took over the state in October 1958 (Nasr, 2001).

In May 1959, the ulema incorporated at Madrassah Qasimui Uloom Multan, on the invites of Maulana Mufti Mehmood and Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi. After discussions, they formed a new party the Nizamul Ulema. At a subsequent conference of the party leadership in Lahore on 23rd June the same year, Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori was all chosen as its Amir. The party constitution experienced several modifications. On 12th and 13th June 2001, at the general council meeting of JUI in Qalat the final draft of the party constitution was accepted and implemented. According to which the central party headquarters would be situated in Lahore with provincial headquarter in all four provinces and its area of functions prolonged to the whole of Pakistan. Every mature Muslim Pakistani, who completely agree with the manifesto of the party and not affiliated with other parties,

could become the member of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. The criteria for membership were very simple. Pakistani Muslim national just filled a party membership form and only pays 10 rupees as a membership fee for three-year.

The secretariat consists of four organizational bodies representing each province, including district and tehsil-level organizations. There are one president (Amir), four vice-presidents (Naib Amir), 1 Nazim (major) and 7 other representatives at the central and provincial levels. The constitution of the party needs elections every 3 years to these offices. The JUI is headed by Amir with Naib Amir and General Secretary at the federal and provincial level (Report, 2011).

There are three separate bodies at each level: the Majlis-e-Umoomi (General Council), the Majlis-e-Shura (Consultative Council) and the Majlis-e-Aamila (Central Working Committee). Their responsibilities are the following:

**Majlis-i-Umoomi:** Party workers at the council, district tehsil, federal and provincial levels to form the general body or the Majlis-i-Umoomi. Internal constitutional and election choices. It elects 30 representatives at the level of Tehsil (city). For every five associates at the provincial stage, there is one participant associate at the central Majlis-e-Shura.

**Majlis-e-shura:** To consider joining the provincial or central general council, the requirement is that he should get accomplished for three years as a participant of the party. Its representatives shall be chosen by the provincial presidents and shall not exceed 45 in total (14 of whom are members of Majlis-e-Amla), with at least 25 percent of religious academics at the county level and 50% at the provincial and central level.

**Majlis-e-Amla:** Implementation of policies and party decision, with 14 party associates (Jamaat Rukan) (Rahman, 2017).

## **Party Manifesto**

According to its manifesto implemented on 27th September 1968 at its Shura conference, the JUI targeted to enforce an Islamic system in Pakistan wherein Islam would be country religion and head of State and head of the government would be from the primarily Ahle Sunnat sect. The state constitution would be Islamic, drawing its sanction from Quran and Sunnah sovereignty would belong to Allah alone.

## **Political Struggle**

Maulana Fazlur Rehman was verified as the JUI (F) Amir for the third time consecutive at the central Majlis-i-shura meeting at Lahore in March 2002. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, furthermore, was also recommended as the general secretary for the third successive term. The party under the leadership of Maulana Fazlur Rehman has progressed politically in the all provinces of state. Due to their progressive politics JUI-(F) has been holding an international Deoband conference at Peshawar in April 2001. The conference was joined by millions of party members from all over Pakistan and overseas. It was organized to honor the 150th birthday of the very religious madrasa (in the Native Indian city of Deoband) that has always been a resource of religious and political motivation for the JUI (Misra, 2003).

Significantly, the conference was organized when the Afghan students who had once graduated from the religious seminaries or Madrassahs in Pakistan, were governed Afghanistan. The supreme leader of Taliban Mullah Muhammad Omar had sent his mature help with a written message that was studied out from their Madrasa. This was crucial because for the first time, the JUI had a government ally and formed its strength from the Taliban government in Afghanistan. The JUI leadership had been keeping close interaction with the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Seeing the achievements of the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan the JUI (F) motivated can be expected identical fortune in Pakistan. This was one good purpose why at an Aieen-i-Shariat conference at Iqbal Park Lahore in October 1997, Maulana Fazlur Rehman declared dissociation from the electoral procedure and announcing the struggle for the Islamic revolution in Pakistan. The decision was recommended by the Majlis-i-Shura (Report, 2003)

The Taliban increase nearby had emboldened the JUI (F) workers to the level that they had openly started to ignore the law of land. The problem was more serious in areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribe places where its party workers started to frighten and destroy the facilities of the lawfully installation like satellite television systems. They went circular striking television places, confronted to shut down movie centers. They

released threatening claims and assaulted Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which were working for the betterment of women in tribal areas. The party was also the most significant edge in anti-government agitation when Pakistan declared its complete assistance to the US-led international coalition war on terrorism following the 9/11 strikes in New York and Washington. That involved the choice to give up the Taliban in Afghanistan and assisting the international group to make their pitfall which attracted its government and religious strength from the Taliban, the U-turn in Pakistan's plan vis-à-vis the young militia intended dropping a significant ally and promoter (Rana, 2002). It introduced a large number of its followers on the roads and demands for Jihad against the U.S forces or end the assistance of America against the Taliban government. The agitation, however, did not succeed due to the absence of community assistance. Maulana Fazlur Rehman was placed under detention and the whole activity fizzled out with the failure of the Taliban in November 2001. The JUI (F) has been enjoying a significant part in the strategy against national initiatives to control *deeni madaris* and control in the Jihadi outfits.

### **Enforcement of Shariah: Ballot or Bullet**

It is claimed that by having potential violent opposition, religious political parties posed a threat to democratic change and advancement (ICG, 2011), but JUI-F's actual political role seems quite divergent. Unlike Pakistan's insurgent groups such as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its subgroups, JUI-F has always acknowledged peaceful political transition and Sharia implementation by taking an active role in the democratic system and strengthening political culture and institutions rather than interfering in direct and aggressive clash with civil and military institutions. Such extremist groups have attempted to murder Fazal Ur Rahman and have murdered thousands of members along with members of parliament and philosophers associated with JUI-F, along with famous religious scholar and man of letters Maulana Merajuddin, Maulana Hassan Jan and recently a suicide bombing on party General Secretary Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri (The Dawn, 12 May 2017) for not owning the militant groups ' Jihadist ideology and strategy and participating in a democracy-like ' Un-Islamic Political System.'

While democracy was perceived alien to Islam and a personification of the Western agenda of subjugating Islam and Muslims, JUI-F has dramatically altered the views and understandings of traditional religious scholars on democracy. In essence, they are not against the democratic and popularly elected governance system because their democratic approach is manifested by the party constitution itself. It states that all important decisions will be made on the basis of majority opinion. There has been a new development in which exclusive social reformist movements such as Pir Zulfiqar Ahmed Naqashbandi, a Sufi scholar who leads a large number of Deobandi Muslims with a spiritual tendency, and Tablighi Jamaat, the reformist movement of the Deobandi school of thought, established exclusively and dedicated to the preaching of Islam at the grass-root level, is in close contact with Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman and shows its interest in Pakistan's democratic system by voting JUI-F. JUI-F appears keen to develop a democratic process by not participating movements such as the Difa-e-Pakistan Council (DPC), an ally of hard core-establishment and religious political and jihadist parties created in the wake of civil military conflict over certain security and defense problems. A certain approach was experienced in the latest tussle between democratic government and army establishment under the camouflage of the case of Panama Paper, in which Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Pakistan Supreme Court for the position of Premier despite being elected by popular majority votes. JUI-F preferred favoring and defending the democratic government rather than endorsing the establishment line as Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and other religious political parties did. Within the party, JUI-F undergoes democratic transitions. Even though it needs to promote the democratic culture in the party, it will take longer to adopt it over time and progressively. Various views are expressed about the weakness and strength of JUI-F's organizational structure and have only been labeled as a party of clergy and madrasa graduates, but it is true that they have appointed a person like Akram Khan Durrani as chief minister, who is not a religious person or a madrasa graduate in the real sense. Instead, he had previously had political affiliation with Awami National Party, a secular and nationalist political party (Amin, 2016).

In addition, the last general elections in 2013 and local government elections in 2015 saw another shift in the JUI-F leadership's political outlook. They designated such candidates who do popular symbols of religion such as beard, turban, certain dress, etc. The author noted that all three Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PK-74, 75 and 76

provincial assembly constituencies were allocated to members of local elite families. The same trend has also been observed throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in local elections.

### **Militancy versus Democracy**

The very first article of JUI-F's 2013 election manifesto begins with the statement that "Peace is going to be our main political priority." Distancing itself from the pro-establishment political movements and joining forces with those in favor of a smooth and continuous democratic process, JUI-F has adopted a policy of bringing about change through democratic processes rather than joining forces with militant and jihadist organization (Rehman, 2018).

Consequently, in the form of murder attempts on top leadership, parliament members, intellectuals and activists, the party faced the dire consequences. Although the party sacrificed many well-educated and knowledgeable religious scholars, seasoned parliamentarians and devoted activists, it never used the same coin to retaliate. Instead, it encourages its members to maintain confidence in the transition to democracy that leads to long-term strategy with self-discipline and sacrifice rather than accepting short-term violence and religious extremism by terrorizing the masses and engaging in an unnecessary armed struggle against the country's military and military forces.

### **Sectarianism and Pluralism**

History observed a divisions in JUI-F as a result of Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman's pluralist approach, and a new prone to violence and extremist, basically non-Shia group was formed, namely Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (Companion Soldier). Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan began to emerge as a defender of the Messenger's religious position and dignity (Allah be pleased with them) as a reaction to the organized movement to defame and disrespect the Companions (Allah be pleased with them) by few extremist Shia scholars. It hurts those hardliner's religious sentiments and they began to react with the same coin and ultimately resorted to violent fighting against the Shia community. Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman never favored their understanding of the issue and their strategy to address it. He was therefore criticized by the fanatics and even attacked, but he distanced himself from the anti-Shia approach. That's why in his native district, Dera Ismail Khan, a considerable number of Shia community cast their votes in favor of Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman in every election. He also gains the favors of Barelvi voters as well as the district's majority religious community because of his pluralist political approach. The leadership of the same anti-Shia militant groups was witnessed in recent years as Maulana Ahmed Ludhiyanwi was one of Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman's closest affiliates and recently Maulana Masroor Nawaz Jhangwi, The son of renowned non-Shia scholar Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangwi, a member of the banned SSP, now working as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, won by-election for the Punjab provincial assembly after being convinced by Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman of the need and importance of democracy in Pakistan and of the dangerous impacts of sectarianism, extremism and violence on almost all parts of the country with religious groups. He not only joined JUI-F after winning the by-elections, but also distanced himself publicly from the non-Shia propaganda (Rahman, 2017).

### **Minority Rights**

The leadership of JUI-F organized a three-day conference and invited leaders from nearly all political leaders, ambassadors from different countries, as well as the Bishop of Pakistan. It was the first political gathering organized by a religious political party to invite not only a non-Muslim representative, but also to share his views with the participants. It shows their pluralistic approach to politics.

They currently have a senator for a Christian minority, Asia Nasir in their party, and she admits that the party never encouraged her to pursue their Islamic path, but that she was free to support and experience her own religious doctrine (ICG, 2011). Jamaat Ulama-e-Islam (F) 2013 Election Manifesto includes few pledges on the status and rights of minorities in Pakistan as it claims that 'Minority groups will be equal under the law of Pakistan and would have all the fundamental rights assured in Islam and the Constitution including: Freedom of religion, anti-Muslim minority in the state will enjoy freedom of religion, human rights and unbiased access to justice (Rahman, 2017).

## Electoral Representation in the Parliament

The big crack for the Jamiat came following the general elections 1970. Mufti Mehmood wins the national assembly seat against the former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the in Dera Ismail Khan with the difference of ten thousand votes.

The defunct National Awami Party (NAP) of Khan Abdul Wali Khan and JUI entered into political partnership consequently and established a coalition provincial government in the Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Although the NAP was the largest party with thirteen Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA), the chief ministership of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was granted to Mufti Mehmood whose party had only four Member of Provincial Assembly in a house of 40 MPA (Rahman, 2017).

On 1st May 1972 Mufti Mehmood took oath of his office and take immediate step as:

Instantly prohibited alcohol

Declared attention as un-Islamic, Bhutto charged NAP of being a secessionist party following the restoration of hands from the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad.

This occurrence was said to be connected to the JUI in Balochistan. On 15th February 1973, the NAP-JUI government in Balochistan was eliminated. Mufti Mehmood's government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resigned in the demonstration. Maulana Mufti Mehmood died on 14th October 1980 to be quickly succeeded by his elder son Maulana Fazlur Rehman. The same year he was chosen party deputy secretary-general at the central Majlis-i-Shura conference in Lahore (Afzal, 1987).

**Table 1.** Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) position in the Parliament

| Years                                 | Votes     | %age  | Winning Seats | Total Seats in National Assembly | Year of senate election               | Senate winning Seats |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1970                                  | 1,315,071 | 4.0   | 7             | 300                              |                                       | -                    |
| 1988                                  | 360,526   | 1.8   | 7             | 207                              |                                       |                      |
| 1990                                  | 622,214   | 2.9   | 6             | 207                              |                                       |                      |
| 1993                                  | 645,278   | 3.2   | 4             | 207                              | 2006 Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan | 10                   |
| 1997                                  | 325,910   | 1.7   | 2             | 207                              | 2009                                  | 4                    |
| 2002 Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan | 3,335,643 | 11.41 | 63            | 342                              | 2012                                  | 3                    |
| 2008                                  | 772,798   | 2.2   | 7             | 340                              | 2015                                  | 2                    |
| 2013                                  | 1,461,371 | 3.22  | 15            | 342                              | 2018                                  | 2                    |
| 2018 Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan | 2,573,939 | 4.85  | 16            | 342                              |                                       |                      |

Source: (ECP, 2019)

In 1988, the party divided into two groups over policy matters. The faction led by Fazlur Rehman became JUI (F), the other was known as the JUI (Darkhwasti). Darkhwasti however, disbanded his team. However, the faction stayed outside the party, advancing by Maulana Sami-ul-Haq to become JUI (S). In the political scenario, the JUI (F) continued to be the main stream JUI, experiencing support both in political and electoral conditions. In 1993 elections the JUI (F) properly secured four seats of National Assembly, two each in Balochistan and Khyber PakhtunKhawa. In the 1997 elections, the party could handle only two seats, both in Balochistan. Fazlur Rehman himself lost the 1997 elections (Report, 2003).

**Table 2.** Party Position of JUI (F) in the Provincial assemblies

| <b>Years of General Election</b> | <b>Punjab</b> | <b>Sindh</b> | <b>Khyber PakhtunKhawa</b> | <b>Balochistan</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1993                             | -             | -            | 1                          | -                  |
| 1997                             |               |              | 1                          | 7                  |
| 2008 (MMA)                       | 2             | 0            | 14                         | 10                 |
| 2013                             | 0             | 0            | 14                         | 0                  |
| 2018 (MMA)                       | 0             | 1            | 17                         | 10                 |

Source :(*ECP, 2018*)

On the provincial field, JUI (F) could get only one seat in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 1993 election as also in 1997. In Balochistan however, it got complete of seven seats in the 1997 elections and finished up developing a coalition government. It enhanced on its count of three seats in the 1993 elections. In the 1997 elections, the JUI (F) worked out better in comparison with other political and religious parties by gambling 1.7% and 2.27% of the overall ballots polled in the national and provincial assembly elections respectively (Election Commission of Pakistan). It is obvious that the JUI (F) indicates better leads to Balochistan where it obtained ascendancy at the price of Pukhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party in the Pushtun dominated areas. In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa however, it had been able to win only one seat in the Provincial Assembly. The party head Maulana Fazlur Rehman had been successful and defeated his seats in his lative Dera Ismail Khan constituency (Rahman, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

The ability of Pakistan's extremist Islamic parties to face a limited but potentially violent opposition, had to face democracy, and through expansion, reducing religious extremism and improving the more peaceful and stable society. It is more difficult to do. It reflects the effective extremist basis of these parties or is ready to protect it through great inspiration and revelation in other words. While their electoral popularity in the masses remains low, the religious political parties have increased their influence in the parliament after introducing the Islamic structure in the politics of the state. Apart from the various aspects of the party agenda and organization analysis, and the various aspects of the impact in legal, political and general society, this estimate is how the Pakistani religious leaders pressurize the government, and the mainstream ability and capacity even to fight the pressure that parties are moderate on religious issues. The capability to demonstrate the support of these groups on their various agreements is clearly expressed internally, in policymaking procedures and relationships between management, leadership and rating and file. After that, those aspects of ruling parties are likely to understand their role in the country and understand their future relationships as prospects to influence the state politics.

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