

# Religionimic Units in English And Uzbek: Linguistic Features and Contrastive Analyses

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**Abstract:** Religious terminology constitutes a specialized lexico-semantic field deeply embedded in the cultural, historical, and spiritual identity of societies. These units are not merely lexical signs but complex semiotic constructs, reflecting theological doctrines, ritual practices, and moral-philosophical concepts. This paper investigates the structural, semantic, and pragmatic features of religion-related units in English and Uzbek, exploring their etymology, morpho-syntactic patterns, and sociolinguistic functions. Special attention is given to translation strategies and cross-cultural equivalence, considering challenges posed by culturally bound connotations and doctrinal specificity. The study employs comparative, etymological, and discourse-analytic methods to reveal linguistic asymmetries and highlight strategies for achieving functional and communicative adequacy in interlingual transfer.

**Keywords:** Religion-related terminology, linguistic analysis, cross-cultural communication, theological semantics, pragmatic features, sacred lexicon, translation challenges, morpho-syntactic patterns, connotative meaning, doctrinal specificity, comparative linguistics, cultural untranslatability, lexicographic description, discourse analysis, Arabic loanwords, Latin borrowings, etymological tracing, religious discourses, reverence markers, Islamic lexicon, Christian terminology, metaphorical extension, communicative equivalence, , spiritual heritage.

**Introduction:** In the past decade much research have focused on religious units. Religion has historically functioned as a central semiotic system shaping the linguistic, cultural, and ideological identity of societies. Religious discourse not only serves as a vehicle for transmitting theological doctrines but also functions as a repository of culturally embedded lexical, semantic, and stylistic markers that encapsulate the spiritual worldview of its adherents. Within the framework of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, religion-related units – lexemes, idiomatic expressions, collocations, formulaic phrases, and scriptural quotations – constitute a specialized terminological subsystem characterized by sacred semantics, doctrinal fixity, and high metaphorical density.

The precise provenance of such units remains elusive, as they frequently emanate from authoritative

canonical sources – including the Bible (comprising both the Old and New Testaments), the Qur'an, the Torah, the Vedas, and the Hadith compilations, as well as from codified liturgical formulas, ritualistic hymns and chants, and scholastic theological treatises, all of which collectively shape and perpetuate the sacred lexicon across religious traditions. Their semantic load extends beyond referential meaning, encompassing symbolic, intertextual, and eschatological dimensions. For instance, the English term Messiah and the Uzbek equivalent Mahdi share the denotative feature of a divinely appointed savior but diverge in eschatological connotations due to differing theological frameworks – Christian soteriology versus Islamic eschatology.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive linguistic and comparative analysis of religion-related lexical units across selected languages,

with a particular focus on their etymological origins, semantic structures, and pragmatic functions in cross-cultural communication. By tracing the genesis of these units from canonical texts, liturgical formulas, and theological discourse, the research seeks to identify both universal and culture-specific features of sacred terminology. Furthermore, the study aims to elucidate the challenges inherent in translating such lexicon while preserving doctrinal accuracy, connotative nuance, and communicative efficacy. Ultimately, the research aspires to contribute to the broader field of linguistic anthropology and translation studies by offering a systematic framework for the classification, interpretation, and interlingual transfer of religious terminology.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

A considerable number of both international and Uzbek scholars have made substantial contributions to the advancement and scholarly conceptualization of the religious domain. Among them A.K Gadomskiy, E. Kucharskaya, Drays, T.F., Sapronov, Y.T., Listrova P., Golovanevskiy A.L., Toshpulatov B., Sultonova Sh., Xoshimov M., Soliyeva Sh., Galieva M.R., Maxmaraimova Sh.T., Omonturdiyeva Sh., Mavlonov O.A. and other scholars have studied various elements of the religious sphere. They have analyzed the semantics and functioning of religious units, individual lexemes within them, and entire linguistic-thematic groups.

The empirical foundation of this research is built upon a systematically compiled bilingual corpus of religion-related lexical units, encompassing primary sources, secondary scholarly works and contemporary discourse samples in both English and Uzbek. The data used for this study were collected by:

- **Sacred texts and canonical scriptures:** English: Authorized King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, Revised standard version (RSV), New International Version (NIV).; Uzbek: Qur'oni Karim/Holly Koran (with authoritative tafsir exegeses such as Tafsiri Hilol and Tafsiri Muyassar) [5], Hadith collections (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim) [6] in Uzbek translation. These sources provide doctrinally accurate examples of religious terminology, metaphoric imagery and theological formulae.

- **Lexicographic and terminological Sources:** English

monolingual dictionaries (Oxford English Dictionary, Collins English Dictionary) and specialized theological glossaries (Westminster Theological Wordbook, Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology). Uzbek monolingual and bilingual dictionaries (Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbek, Uzbek-English religious glossaries), along with Islamic terminological dictionaries (Encyclopedia of Islam).

- **Lexical-semantic analysis** was applied to identify core semantic fields such as divinity, ritual practice, eschatology, moral injunctions and sacred space. For example, the English salvation and Uzbek najot share conceptual equivalence but differ in doctrinal scope.

- **Etymological analysis** traced the origins of terms, identifying loan translations, calques and direct borrowings. For instance, amen (English, Hebrew origin) has a functional equivalent omin in Uzbek, derived through Arabic influence.

- **Pragmatic and stylistic analysis** examined usage in liturgical versus colloquial contexts, revealing register variation and formulaic patterning.

- **Cross-cultural translation assessment** applied the Nidaian theory of dynamic equivalence and Venuti's domestication-foreignization model to evaluate translation strategies for doctrinal fidelity and cultural acceptability.

Data were subjected to triangulation by cross-referencing scriptural occurrences, theological commentaries, and native speaker intuitions to ensure semantic accuracy and doctrinal consistency. A panel of subject-matter experts –including theologians, linguists, and professional translators – reviewed the compiled units to eliminate semantic drift and avoid theological misrepresentation.

#### RESULTS

The present study, situated at the crossroads of contrastive lexicology, theological semantics and translation theory, pursues three primary objectives. Primarily, it examines the linguistic architecture of religion-related units in English and Uzbek, analysing their etymology, morphology and semantic typology. For example, comparing salvation (Lat. salvatio) with Uzbek najot (Pers. origin), which diverge in doctrinal scope. [4-32] As a secondary consideration, it identifies translation challenges arising from doctrinal,

metaphorical and pragmatic asymmetries between Christian and Islamic discourse traditions, as illustrated by the metaphor “the Lamb of God” in the Bible, which lacks a direct counterpart in Islamic theology and thus demands interpretative adaptation. On the third point, it conducts a contrastive lexical analysis using authentic data from sacred scriptures (Bible, Qur’an), liturgical registers and idiomatic usage – such as, the English “prodigal son” and Uzbek “yo‘ldan ozgan farzand”, which share thematic parallels but differ in metaphorical imagery. By combining corpus-based methods with interpretative theological analysis, the research contributes to the field of religious linguistics, particularly in intercultural contexts where sacred language serves as both a cultural heritage marker and a medium of interlingual negotiation. [1-155]

The translation of religion-related units constitutes a high-stakes domain of applied linguistics and translation studies because these units are frequently culture-bound expressions imbued with sacrality, intertextual allusions, and historical depth. The complexity is amplified by several factors: doctrinal specificity – exact semantic fidelity is mandatory to avoid theological distortion (Trinity in Christian theology has no direct conceptual equivalent in Islamic theology); metaphorical universes – metaphors rooted in agrarian, nomadic, or urban sacred imagery vary significantly across cultures (The Good Shepherd in English Christianity versus Rahmat yomg‘iri [rain of mercy] in Uzbek Islamic discourse); lexical borrowing and calquing – religious terms often enter a language through scriptural translation movements or interfaith contact (e.g., English Amen and Uzbek Omin).

From a contrastive linguistics perspective, the religious lexicon of English largely reflects Judeo-Christian theological traditions, marked by biblical idioms (by the sweat of one’s brow, salt of the earth), ecclesiastical terminology (epistle, psalm), and doctrinal nomenclature (atonement, salvation, baptism). In contrast, the Uzbek religious lexicon is predominantly shaped by Islamic Arabic–Persian influences, with Quranic borrowings (taqvo, sabr, baraka, halol), hadith-based idioms (ilm olish farzdir – seeking knowledge is obligatory), and ritual terminology (namoz, ro‘za, hijrat).

However, the lexicons also reveal zones of semantic convergence due to the Abrahamic heritage, such as

concepts of divine unity (monotheism – tawhid), prophetic authority (prophet – payg‘ambar), and afterlife (paradise – jannat). These overlaps provide fertile ground for comparative semantic mapping, while divergences pose significant cross-cultural translation challenges.

Religion-related lexical units such as, sacrament, hadith, pilgrimage (English) and ro‘za, haj, zakat (Uzbek) function as culturally marked linguistic signs that preserve and transmit the spiritual heritage of communities. They encapsulate a wide range of conceptual domains, from divine entities and sacred spaces to ceremonial acts and theological doctrines. Their lexical stability over centuries reflects the durability of religious institutions, while semantic shifts and borrowings indicate dynamic intercultural contact. [20]

In contemporary linguistics, the analysis of religious terminology holds significance for three key reasons:

1. It illuminates how sacred concepts are codified in language.
2. It reveals the interplay between religious discourse and socio-political contexts.
3. It facilitates accurate intercultural communication in translation, diplomacy, and academia.

The linguistic characteristics of religion-related units encompass their etymological origins, sacred semantic load, culturally embedded metaphors, and pragmatic functions, which collectively reflect the theological, historical, and socio-cultural contexts of the faith traditions they represent. From a morphological perspective, religious terms in English often derive from Latin (credence, benediction) or Greek (ecclesia, liturgy), reflecting the historical influence of Christian theological scholarship. Uzbek religious lexicon, in contrast, is largely influenced by Arabic (iman, duo, taqvo) and Persian (namozgoh, masjid) a legacy of Islamic cultural expansion. [14]

From a semantic viewpoint, these units frequently demonstrate high degrees of polysemy and metaphorical extension. For example, the English cross denotes both the Christian symbol and metaphorically, a burden or trial. Similarly, nur in Uzbek denotes both “light” in the physical sense and “divine enlightenment”. [3-162]

From a pragmatic standpoint, religious units carry strong presuppositions and connotative meaning. The utterance peace be upon him in English Islamic discourse, or alayhissalom in Uzbek, serves not only as a lexical expression but as a speech act of reverence. When we talk about religious units one should consider cross-cultural translation challenges of religion-related units should be arise from doctrinal nuances, culture-specific metaphors, and historically rooted semantic layers, requiring translators to balance theological accuracy with cultural intelligibility. Translation of religion-related units presents unique obstacles due to:

- Untranslatability of culturally specific theological terms (taqwa, grace, karma).
- Doctrinal specificity, where lexical equivalence does not guarantee conceptual equivalence.
- Sociolinguistic sensitivity, as misinterpretation can result in offense or doctrinal distortion. For instance, the English atonement has no fully equivalent single word in Uzbek; translators must employ explanatory paraphrasing (gunohlarning kechirilishi uchun qurbonlik). Similarly, ummah in Islamic contexts resists reduction to “community,” as it encompasses theological and eschatological dimensions.

The linguistic analyses of religion-related terminology in English and Uzbek reveals a multi-layered structure encompassing etymological origins, morpho-syntactic formations, semantic fields and pragmatic functions. The analysis proceeded by categorizing lexical units into doctrinal terminology (e.g., salvation and Uzbek najot), liturgical expressions (e.g., peace be upon him – Uzbek alayhissalom), and metaphorical or idiomatic religious references (e.g., forbidden fruit – Uzbek harom or ta’qiqqlangan meva).

Etymological tracing demonstrates that English religious lexicon is heavily influenced by Latin

(sacramentum, gloria), Greek (ekklesia, angelos) and Old English Christian heritage, whereas Uzbek religious vocabulary is predominantly shaped by Arabic loanwords (iman, ibodat, taqvo) and to a lesser degree, Persian (ruh, jannat). This divergence reflects the distinct theological histories. Christianity’s European linguistic lineage versus Islam’s Semitic-Arabic theological base.

Morpho-syntactic patterns indicate that English tends toward nominal compounding (God-fearing, Holy Spirit), while Uzbek relies on genitive constructions (“Allohning Rahmati”/“the mercy of Allah”) and affixation to mark reverence (-jon, -xon in proper names with religious connotations). Semantic contrast reveals differences in connotation intensity. For example, the English grace combines notions of divine favor and elegance, whereas Uzbek fazl retains a purely theological sense linked to divine generosity. Similarly, sin in English covers a broad moral spectrum, while Uzbek gunoh carries a stronger religious obligation for repentance tavba.

It has been established through our analysis that, pragmatic features show that English religious discourse often integrates metaphorical extensions into secular contexts (e.g., turn the other cheek, doubting Thomas), whereas Uzbek maintains a stronger liturgical anchoring, with religious expressions retaining a sacred communicative frame (bismillahir rohmanir rohim uttered before starting any task). [9-68]

According to corpus-based frequency analysis such lexicon indicates that certain English units (blessing, heaven, miracle) have developed significant secular metaphorical usage, whereas in Uzbek, frequency of use for parallel terms (baraka, jannat, mo’jiza) remains higher in explicitly religious or culturally ceremonial contexts.

**Table 1. Contrastive examples of religion-related units in English and Uzbek**

Category	English term	Etymology	Uzbek equivalent	Etymology	Notes on semantic/pragmatic usage
Doctrinal Term	<i>Grace</i>	Latin <i>gratia</i>	<i>Fazl</i>	Arabic <i>faḍl</i>	English term also secularized; Uzbek retains strict

					theological meaning
Liturgical Expression	<i>Peace be upon him</i>	Biblical formula	<i>Alayhissalom</i>	Arabic formula	Both retain high reverence; Uzbek used exclusively for prophets
Metaphorical Reference	<i>Forbidden fruit</i>	Biblical metaphor	<i>Harom meva</i>	Arabic + Uzbek	Conceptually equivalent; metaphor less common in Uzbek
Politeness / Reverence	<i>Holy Father</i>	Ecclesiastical Latin	<i>Hazratotaxon</i>	Arabic honorific + Uzbek	English refers to Pope; Uzbek more general religious elder
Islamic-Specific Lexicon	–	–	<i>Iman</i>	Arabic <i>īmān</i>	No direct Christian doctrinal equivalent
Christian-Specific Lexicon	<i>Trinity</i>	Latin <i>trinitas</i>	<i>Uch birlik</i>	Uzbek calque	Uzbek used in Christian contexts only

The contrastive lexical analysis demonstrates that while both languages employ religion-related units to express sacred concepts, their morphological composition, semantic evolution, and pragmatic deployment differ substantially due to theological specificity and cultural embeddedness. This confirms the hypothesis that cultural untranslatability often stems from asymmetric religious experience and linguistic heritage, requiring translators to employ strategies such as explicitation, cultural substitution, or annotative amplification to preserve doctrinal integrity and communicative function.

Religious terms such as Holy scripture, Old testament and New testament are consistently capitalised, following the convention of treating them as proper nouns. In Uzbek academic translations, these terms are rendered as Muqaddas kitob, Eski ahd (Tavrot), and Yangi ahd without obligatory capitalization except at the sentence beginning. The English version preserves interfaith neutrality, while the Uzbek version often adopts terminology rooted in local religious traditions. [9-47]

### Central concept expression

The English sentence “The notion of God seems to be central to the Bible” employs the modal phrase seems to be, introducing a nuanced, cautious statement typical in academic writing. The Uzbek equivalent tends to omit such modal hedging, presenting the statement more categorically as “Xudo tushunchasi Injilda markaziy o‘rin tutadi” (“The concept of God occupies a central position in the Bible”).

### Metaphor and metonymy explanation

The English formulation “not merely ornamental devices... but hold a fundamental function in our cognition and understanding of reality” balances rhetorical and cognitive perspectives, framing metaphor and metonymy as essential conceptual tools. The Uzbek equivalent retains the meaning but often places greater emphasis on their role as primary cognitive functions, slightly reducing the rhetorical contrast present in English. [12-29]

### Religious nomenclature

The Trinitarian formula “God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit” is a direct theological term in English. In Uzbek, the equivalent “Xudo Ota, Xudo O‘g‘il, Xudo Muqaddas Ruh” exists but appears

primarily in Christian theological discourse and is less familiar to the general readership, potentially requiring explanatory notes.

### **Stylistic register**

The English text maintains an academic, explanatory, and religiously inclusive tone suitable for interfaith and interdisciplinary readerships. The Uzbek version, while academic, often adapts expressions to align with local religious and cultural frames of reference. English employs hedging (seems to be, among others), which functions as a politeness and objectivity marker in academic style, while Uzbek tends toward more assertive declarative statements. [5:674-675]

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study clearly show that, the comparative investigation of religion-related terminology in English and Uzbek reveals a highly stratified interplay among theological semantics, cultural semiotics and morpho-syntactic structuring. Religious lexicons, whether inherited through Arabic-Islamic theological discourse or Latin-Greek Christian ecclesiastical tradition, function not merely as referential linguistic signs but as semiotic carriers of sacral authority and repositories of collective memory. Each term represents an intertextual node within a broader religiolect – a specialized sublanguage characterized by heightened reverence, doctrinal precision, and socio-pragmatic constraints.

From a linguocultural perspective, Arabic-origin Islamic terms in Uzbek such as, *taqvo/piety*, *iman/faith*, and *zakat/obligatory almsgiving* are embedded in Qur'anic hermeneutics and Sharia-based socio-religious institutions. Their semantic scope is multidimensional, encompassing moral imperatives, ritual prescriptions, and eschatological connotations. Conversely, English Christian terminology, exemplified by *atonement*, *redemption*, and *sacrament*, is historically rooted in Latin and Koine Greek ecclesiastical lexicons, with semantic fields shaped by canonical scripture, liturgical praxis, and dogmatic theology.

The morpho-syntactic realization of these terms in religious discourse reflects distinct rhetorical typologies: Uzbek Islamic sermons frequently employ formulaic epithets, parallelism, and metaphorical imagery derived from Qur'anic cosmology, reinforcing the vertical hierarchy between Creator and creation.

English Christian homiletic discourse, on the other hand, often integrates juridical metaphors (e.g., *covenant*, *judgment*) and familial metaphors (e.g., *children of God*, *Heavenly Father*), demonstrating a more anthropocentric theological anthropology. These metaphorical divergences are not purely stylistic – they represent ontological frameworks that shape doctrinal interpretation and believer identity. [1-102]

The contrastive corpus analysis reveals that the metaphorical conceptualization of divine-human relations in Uzbek religious discourse favors servitude metaphors (*banda* – “servant of God”, *taslim bo'lish* – “to submit to God”), aligning with Islamic theological constructs of total submission (Islam itself meaning “submission”). In English Christian discourse, however, the familial metaphor schema frames the believer as an adopted child within God's household, producing a different cognitive metaphor mapping. The translational challenge emerges when such metaphors are non-isomorphic – requiring either conceptual adaptation or cultural glossing to avoid theological distortion. [2:368-369]

The lexicographic documentation of such terms further demonstrates etymological asymmetry and semantic incongruence. While some religious terms allow for calquing or transliteration, others necessitate functional equivalence or exegetical translation. For example, *jihad* in Uzbek maintains its Qur'anic interpretive plurality (inner spiritual struggle, societal defense), whereas its English usage—particularly in mass media – often exhibits semantic narrowing or pejorative drift due to discursive reframing in non-religious contexts. Likewise, *sacrament* lacks an exact Islamic analogue, thus requiring paraphrastic explicitation in Uzbek to convey its sacramental theology and ritual centrality.

From a translation studies standpoint, these findings underscore that sacred discourse translation is inherently hermeneutic and intercultural in nature. The translator operates not only as a linguistic mediator but also as a cultural theologian, navigating semantic preservation, doctrinal fidelity, and pragmatic adequacy. This necessitates a multidisciplinary competence encompassing comparative theology, semiotic analysis, and pragmatic stylistics to ensure that the translated text retains both the denotative accuracy and the connotative sanctity of the original.

The comparative analysis of the English and Uzbek renderings of religious terminology reveals several linguistically and culturally significant divergences that hold implications for both translation studies and intercultural religious discourse. Firstly, the capitalization norms in English for religious proper nouns (e.g., Holy Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament) function not merely as orthographic conventions but as semiotic markers of reverence and theological specificity. In Uzbek, the absence of obligatory capitalization—except at sentence-initial position—may attenuate the symbolic salience of such terms, reflecting differing conventions in textual sanctification practices. This orthographic disparity underscores the influence of socio-religious norms on lexical representation in academic translation.

Secondly, modality emerges as a salient stylistic differentiator. The English phrasing “The notion of God seems to be central to the Bible” demonstrates epistemic hedging, aligning with Anglophone academic discourse traditions that prioritize nuance, tentativeness, and avoidance of dogmatism in theological claims. By contrast, the Uzbek equivalent tends toward categorical assertion, thereby foregrounding ideological conviction over rhetorical mitigation. This shift in modality may influence reader perception, with English versions facilitating interpretive openness while Uzbek renderings signal authoritative stance.

Furthermore, the conceptual framing of metaphor and metonymy exhibits subtle yet meaningful cross-linguistic variation. English discourse explicitly positions these devices within the framework of cognitive linguistics, particularly in line with Lakoff and Johnson’s theory, emphasizing their dual function as both rhetorical and epistemological tools. The Uzbek renderings, while retaining cognitive emphasis, reduce the rhetorical contrast, thereby prioritizing their ontological role in human cognition over stylistic artistry. This may reflect broader tendencies in Uzbek academic writing to privilege conceptual clarity over discursive ornamentation.

In the domain of theological nomenclature, particularly the Trinitarian formulation (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), English maintains direct referential clarity for an interfaith readership. Conversely, the Uzbek equivalent, while lexically

accurate, is embedded primarily within Christian theological registers and lacks widespread cultural familiarity. This necessitates paratextual interventions—such as explanatory footnotes—when engaging with broader Uzbek-speaking audiences, especially in interfaith or secular academic contexts.

Finally, the stylistic register across both languages reflects underlying epistemological and communicative norms. English maintains religious inclusivity, hedging strategies, and an explanatory tone suitable for interdisciplinary readerships. Uzbek, while academically structured, often integrates culturally embedded religious references, implicitly aligning the text with prevailing socio-religious frameworks. These stylistic tendencies have broader implications for translation practice, particularly in the sensitive domain of sacred text interpretation, where linguistic precision, cultural appropriateness, and theological neutrality must be carefully balanced.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study was limited by the present comparative investigation into the linguistic, cultural and cognitive dimensions of religious terminology in English and Uzbek has elucidated several salient divergences in lexical capitalization, modal hedging, rhetorical structuring, and theological nomenclature. The findings demonstrate that while English religious discourse exhibits a marked tendency toward interfaith neutrality, cautious epistemic modality, and stylistic inclusivity, the Uzbek counterpart often prioritizes categorical assertion, culturally embedded terminology, and audience-oriented adaptation. Such distinctions are not merely formalistic, but profoundly reflect underlying epistemological frameworks, socio-religious traditions, and pragmatic conventions shaping each linguistic system. By situating metaphor and metonymy within a cognitive-linguistic paradigm, this study has highlighted their dual role as both theological explicators and conceptual scaffolds, underscoring their indispensability to religious discourse analysis.

The research overcomes the limitations of prior studies that treated religious translation primarily as a lexical equivalence problem by integrating cognitive semantics, cross-cultural pragmatics, and stylistic register analysis. This multidimensional approach enables more nuanced translation strategies that

safeguard both semantic fidelity and cultural intelligibility. Moreover, the study offers a replicable methodological template for examining other domains where sacred lexicon interacts with divergent cultural-linguistic realities, thereby contributing to the broader field of religious linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

This study undertakes a comparative typological examination of religious terminology in English and Uzbek, focusing specifically on biblical conceptualizations within interfaith discourse. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics, cultural semantics and religious discourse analysis, the research identifies both convergences and divergences in lexical representation, metaphorical mapping, and doctrinal framing. The corpus for analysis comprises selected excerpts referencing the Holy Scripture, Old Testament, and the notion of the chosen nation in English, juxtaposed with their functional equivalents in Uzbek religious discourse.

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