

האקנת' כי אדבר

TEFILLAH PROGRAM

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS





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האקנת' כי לדבר

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A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Introduction

What is one of the most serious challenges facing Torah learning and *halachahic* observant American Jewry? Many¹ have suggested that it is the lack of a sense of meaningful connection to G-d. This is not a side issue. Rather, it cuts to the central mission of a Jew's life on earth, as *Mesilas Yeshorim*² states, the purpose of each person's life, the core of it all, is to come close to G-d. Unless we meet this challenge, we risk raising an uninspired generation whose connection to G-d will continue to fray.

Solution: Program³ האמנתי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית

The **Program** האמנתי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית helps students develop the "eyes to see" Hashem's workings in everything that transpires in their daily lives. The goal is to give students a strong, clear and personally vibrant sense of Hashem's real השגחה, which will, over time, help them connect to the more pervasive and subtle hidden miracles which Hashem showers them every moment of their lives. This recognition is then connected through the concept of "mindfulness" to key words in *tefillah*, bringing together *tefillah* and a mindful awareness of G-d's Presence in every day events, השגחה פרטית.

At the age when students are beginning to formulate their personal view of the workings of their world, an awakening of their relationship with Hashem is most critical. It is our Rabbeim and Moros who are most ideally positioned to guide students toward a true recognition of Hashem's Presence as He interacts with them in "real time" in their world.

Instructions For Using Program האמנתי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית

Discuss the Format of the Program

1. **Format of the Program** – Each weekly lesson will include:

- **Words of Tefillah (p. 1)** – The actual words of a section of the *Shacharis tefillah*.
- **My Connection (p. 1)** – The connection between the words of the *tefillah* and the lesson of Hashem's involvement, השגחה פרטית, in some aspect of our lives.
- **My Eyes to See (True Story) (p. 1)** – True stories and parables that illustrate the lesson as it plays out in real life.
- **I Can See It Too [Write Your Story] (p. 2)** – Students are asked to write about a personal experience that most reminds them of the message in the lesson they just read.
- **Hint (p. 2)** – Ideas to guide them in writing their own true story.

1. Cited by Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, the executive vice-president of Agudath Israel of America in *Klal Perspectives*, page 8, Spring 2012.

2. Chapter 1

3. See *Program: An In Depth Look* which provides an in depth explanation of the need and importance of each part of the program's format.

- **My Mindful Tefillah Moment (p. 2)** – The message of Hashem's פרטית השגחה that they have internalized from the lesson is then connected using the concept of "mindfulness" to the key words in *tefillah* cited in the lesson. This will bring together tefillah and a mindful awareness with a full body-mind experience, of the פרטית השגחה in every day events. Your students will, BE"H, begin to mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah*, experiencing a personal, emotional connection to the words and their related פרטית השגחה message. By doing this, your students will have strengthened and grounded in all of their being the meaning of the words, enabling them to connect to this experience every time they read these words. This will, BE"H, help them have kavannah in the future.

Introduce the פרטית השגחה - השגחה פרטית - כי אדבר program to your students with a brief discussion of the **six important goals** it will help them achieve.

2. **Six important goals of the program-** Each weekly lesson will, בע"ה, accomplish the following:

- Students will begin to have a strong, clear and personally vibrant sense of Hashem's real פרטית השגחה in their daily lives. By building this sense, over time they will be able to sense the more pervasive and subtle hidden miracles with which Hashem showers them in every moment of their lives.
- Students will begin to internalize the fact that Hashem runs everything—the good as well as the things in life that upset them.
- Students will begin to realize that there is a unique purpose in their lives, because everything comes from G-d and is part of His plan for them.
- Students will begin to feel the real need to ask for Hashem's help in all aspects of their life.
- Students will begin to mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah*, with a focus on the meaning of the words and the connection they are making with G-d through their *tefillah*.
- Students will begin to appreciate that the purpose of his/her life—his/her עבודה—is to come close to G-d, the core of it all.⁴

4. Mesilas Yeshorim, Chapter 1.

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None Other Than G-d

AN IN DEPTH LOOK

Issue: 'Do You Know That There Is a Creator?'

This is the surprising question Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein, the *Mashgiach* of the Ponevezh Yeshiva, posed to Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, who had come to him for advice regarding one of his students. "What is the *Mashgiach* really asking?" Rav Wolbe wondered. After a moment's pause, he could think of no appropriate answer to the question other than the simple one: "Yes."

But Rav Chaskel wasn't satisfied. "Do you REALLY know that the world has a Creator?" he asked again. Once again, Rav Wolbe affirmed that indeed, he knew this to be true.

"Good," replied Rav Chaskel. "Then go back and tell your students that there is a Creator."

Rav Wolbe left the *Mashgiach* still pondering the meaning of this exchange. "After two weeks of thinking about it, I finally realized what he meant," he recalled. "There are people who go through their daily lives, studying Torah, performing mitzvos—living as all good Jews should—without feeling in the depth of their hearts that there is a Creator. Rav Chaskel was telling me that I should be sure to imbue my students with the knowledge and feeling of Hashem's essence."⁶

The Importance of 'Wow!—That's ה' ה'

Today, the challenge is no different. If anything, it has grown. Several years ago, a major Orthodox organization set out to identify the most serious challenges facing American Orthodox Jewry. One of the repeated responses it received was that many observant Jews feel they lack a sense of meaningful connection to G-d.⁷ Ironically, this was true even of many who ostensibly were living lives of admirable עבודת ה', evidenced by a commitment to Torah learning and a broad knowledge of *halachah*.

It is time for Yeshivas and Bais Yaakovs to take up this mission as the core of everything else they impart to the next generation of *Klal Yisrael*. Our Rabbeim and Moros are the ones most ideally positioned to guide students toward a true recognition of Hashem as He interacts with them in "real time" in their world. **Only when our children can say, "Wow! that was Hashem's doing!" about events in their own daily lives can they feel the connection that makes their tefillah, learning and scrupulous mitzvah observance real and complete.**

This goal is not a side-benefit, but rather, the fabric into which everything else is woven. As *Mesilas Yeshorim* states,⁸ the purpose of each person's life, the core of it all, is to come close to G-d. Unless we meet this challenge, we risk raising an uninspired generation whose connection to G-d will continue to fray.

Solution: Program האמנתי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית

The *Program האמנתי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית* helps students develop the "eyes to see" Hashem's workings in everything that transpires – not just in the heavens and in the abstract intricacies of nature, but in their daily lives. The goal is to give students a strong, clear and personally vibrant sense of Hashem's real השגחה, which will, over time, help them connect to the more pervasive and subtle "hidden miracles" which Hashem showers them every moment of their lives. By focusing, where possible, on moments of connection to Hashem, our program

seeks to break through the all-encompassing mindless “comfort zone” in which so many in our generation live. And even if one is not yet on the level where Hashem’s השגחה is clear to them, Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz assures us that by constantly speaking about emunah and השגחה פרטית — האמנתִי כי אדבר — one will come to internalize Hashem’s השגחה in his soul.⁹

At the age when students are beginning to formulate their personal view of the workings of their world, an awakening of their relationship with Hashem is most critical. At this point, although they may know the nuts and bolts of *tefillah*; it’s time that they become aware—mindful, what those “nuts and bolts” are actually building – a relationship with the One who is always there, Who occasionally reaches out from behind His veil to remind us, “I truly love you and I am always really here with you!”

Format of the Program: Weekly Lessons With A Lifetime Impact

The simple, clear format of the השגחה פרטית - האמנתִי כי אדבר program will help close the gap that prevents our student’s words of tefillah and knowledge of השגחה פרטית from truly entering their hearts. Here’s how and why.

- **Words of Tefillah - (p.1)** -- Each week’s lesson addresses one section of *tefillah*. The goal is to encourage students to connect to the words of the tefillah through the experiences of Hashem’s השגחה פרטית included in the true stories (**My Eyes To See**) and through the experiences of Hashem’s השגחה פרטית included in the stories they wrote (**I Can See It Too**), thus inspiring them to recite *tefillah* with *kavannah*. For example, when a student recites the word אָדוֹן in עוֹלָם אָדוֹן or עָלֵינוּ לְשִׁבְחָה לְאָדוֹן הַכֹּל, he can relate the meaning of the word אָדוֹן to a situation where he “saw” or “felt” or “experienced” G-d as the Master of **[Who continuously sustains all of creation]**, as the One Who solely directs the workings of the world. Now the student has a personal, emotional connection to the word “אָדוֹן” which, using mindfulness (see **Mindful Tefillah**, below), he can connect with when saying אָדוֹן עוֹלָם and עָלֵינוּ.

Tefillah: Building Our Connection With Hakadosh Boruch Hu

How can one build a connection to Hashem? Rav Wolbe¹⁰ teaches that tefillah (with *kavannah*) is the way. We daven because we believe Hashem is there listening to us¹¹ and able to answer all our requests. Every time we *daven* to Hashem, we deepen our recognition that everything comes from Him.¹² Rav Shach¹³ comments, that if one davens properly and with *kavannah*, he realizes that he is speaking directly to the Creator of the world—ensuring that our connection to Him becomes a reality.

This feeling of connection with Hashem is not just a by-product of tefillah, but its core purpose.¹⁴ According to Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus,¹⁵ “The central point of the world is...feeling connected to G-d...The whole essence of tefillah is this feeling.” Rav Aharon Kotler¹⁶ explains, “The foundation of the concept of tefillah is that we should be bound to the Creator and turn to Him and recognize that everything is from Him. And through tefillah it... takes root in us...” because we daven to Hashem, the Mabit¹⁷ explains, our *tefillas* become a daily lesson in

9. Sefer Tiv HaParsha, *Bereishis*, page 124.

10. Alei Shur, Volume 2, Page 588.

11. *Tefillah* is unquestionably a mitzvah. See *Magen Avraham, Siman 106, Se'if Katan 2; Mishnah Berurah Ibid, Se'if Katan 4*.

12. *Sifsei Chayim - Middos Va'avodas Hashem*, Vol. 1, p. 296.

13. See *Sefer Machshavos Mussar*, Volume 1, page 77, s.v. 'Vyaish I'hosif.

14. From the *Alter from Kelm*, cited in *Ohr Yechezkiel, Emunah*, page 187.

15. *Nefesh Shimshon, Siddur HaTefillah*, Pages 27-28.

16. *Mishnas Rebbe Aharon*, Vol. 1, p. 92.

17. *Beis Elokim, Sha'ar Hatefilla*, Chapter 2

comprehending Hashem's Omnipotence.¹⁸ We learn that there is no Power other than G-d, Who is Master of the universe. In reality, tefillah and connecting with Hakadosh Boruch Hu are two sides of the same precious coin.¹⁹

How To Internalize The Daily השגחה פרטית

Issue: When we *daven* to Hashem, we deepen our recognition that everything comes from Him and we should be able to truly feel connected to G-d's Presence.²⁰ Unfortunately, we often have difficulty davening with kavannah significantly reducing that recognition. Furthermore, because G-d's "Hand" is concealed in this world, we are usually not moved by what we do not see as the verse²¹ states, "אדם יראה לעיניו", man sees only with his eyes.²² On a practical level, that means that as much as we daven to Hashem, the reality is we tend to lose sight of Hashem's daily involvement because the abundant gifts we receive everyday are constant and hidden.²³ Adding to the challenge, mankind no longer merits the kind of open miracles that inspire undeniable belief in Hashem. Therefore, despite the fact that we daven, the "ordinary" person has difficulty relating the everyday goodness he receives to G-d's constant involvement.²⁴

Solution: The following lesson from the *Gemara*²⁵ provides a possible solution enabling students to more easily 'connect' to Hashem.

דוד המלך composed a psalm—"מזמור לדוד"²⁶—as he fled from his son Avshalom, who sought to kill him. The *Gemara* asks why this psalm is termed "מזמור" when its circumstances seem to be nothing about which to sing. It answers that דוד המלך indeed had reason to be happy. Hashem had already informed him that, "I will raise up evil against you from out of your own house."²⁷ דוד המלך assumed that this promise would be fulfilled through a slave or illegitimate child, who would have no natural pity on him. Once דוד המלך saw that it was his son Avshalom, he rejoiced.

Rav Yonasan Eibshitz²⁸ explains the reason for דוד המלך's happiness. It is natural for a slave or an illegitimate child to desire to kill his master (or father). Therefore, had such a person been דוד המלך's pursuer, דוד might not have recognized that Hashem was directing the action. However, since instead the evil arose from Avshalom, his beloved son, דוד המלך instantly recognized the השגחה פרטית. This unusual turn of events could only have come as an important message from Hashem. דוד המלך was happy because he realized that Hashem was not just throwing his destiny 'to fate', but rather, was guiding him along a Divinely chosen path. Therefore, דוד המלך could vividly perceive that the struggle had a purpose sent from Heaven—השגחה פרטית.

An unusual event provides an opportunity to more easily and clearly 'see' Hashem's 'Hand' because, although not an open miracle, it departs from the natural cause-and-effect expected pattern to which we are mindlessly accustomed. As we strengthen our recognition of Hashem's involvement in the unusual event, it helps us see

18. See Bais Kelm, *Emunah V'Midos*, page 5 that Rav Yechezkiel Levenstein, quoting the Alter teaches, "the main idea of tefillah is to strengthen in our heart emunah and hashgacha pratis."

19. See *Chochmah Umussar*, Volume 2, *Ma'amar* 1 where the Alter from Kelm explains that when a person davens to Hashem for his needs, he recognizes that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is the source of all blessing. This recognition is fundamental to our emunah in G-d as an active ruler of the universe. The more we daven, the more we incorporate this belief into our psyche. The more we feel connected to Him. See also *Sichos Mussar (Sha'arei Chayim)*, *Ma'amar* 101, p. 433, s.v. 'Sode ma'ales ha'tefillah'.

20. *Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah* 2:2 writes that every person can use the world as a means of connecting to Hashem.

21. *Yeshaya* 11:3

22. See *Rav Avigdor Miller on Emunah and Bitachon*, page 50.

23. *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Volume 5, page 18; *Alei Shur*, Volume 2, page 476.

24. *Meshech Chochmah, Bereishis* 5:1.

25. *Berachos* 6b.

26. *Tehillim* 3:1

27. *Samuel II*, 12:11.

28. *Drush* 11; *Haftaras Eikev*

that even the ordinary cause-and-effect ones -- are G-d orchestrated. When we see clearly the 'יד ה' in everyday life—when we can internalize that our loving Father in Heaven is guiding the event—we too will have reason to be happy. [Note: Please be aware that the stories of השגחה פרטית that will be included in the program will not involve the more difficult issues such as the one that דוד המלך faced. Rather, we will present personal “wow! that was a 'יד ה' moment students experience in life which can help them comprehend G-d’s involvement at their age appropriate level. These may include the “coincidences” that turned out just right; the surprising turn of events that solve a problem; the sudden recollection of an answer for a test question and so forth.]

- **I Can See It Too [Write Your Story] (p. 2)** – In a short paragraph, students will be asked to write one situation in which they themselves “saw” or “felt” or “experienced” Hashem’s “Hand” in the world in a way that is similar to the message portrayed by the lesson.

A Personal Connection

Why are we asking students to write their own stories involving השגחה פרטית? Although it is valuable to read stories about *Gedolim* who “saw ‘יד ה’”, **personal experiences** have much greater sticking power as the following story attests:

Once, during a cab ride, Rav Chaskel Levenstein’s cab driver driver felt impelled to tell the great Mashgiach about a miracle he had witnessed first-hand. As a young man, recently discharged from the army, the cab driver and some friends had travelled to a mountainous region in Africa. One night they awoke in their tent to hear one of their friends screaming in terror. The boy was enveloped by a huge boa constrictor, which was squeezing him to death.

They had no idea how to free their friend, and they were afraid to do anything to the snake, for fear they would antagonize it and make it squeeze even harder. Facing what seemed to be inevitable death, a member of the group told his friend, “I know that when Jews are about to die, they recite ישראל. You should recite it now.”

As soon as the ex-soldier screamed, “שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד,” the snake unwound itself and slithered away into the darkness.

“The miracle changed my friend’s life,” the cab driver concluded. “He went directly back to Israel, and is now a completely religious Jew.”

“And what about you?” Rav Chaskel asked.

“Me?” the driver responded quizzically. “The Rav doesn’t understand—the snake wasn’t wrapped around me, it was wrapped around my friend.”²⁹

Feeling Truly Connected To Hashem

Rav Cheskiel Levenstein once gave his young daughters notebooks and offered them incentives if they would write down any episode where they recognized Hashem’s השגחה פרטית.

By writing their own true stories of ‘seeing’ the 'יד ה' in their daily lives, *BE”H*, students will be able to internalize that they have an ongoing, constant and real relationship with Hashem. By using mindfulness (see below) and applying that sense of connection to the relevant words of specific sections of the Shacharis *tefillah*, students also will be able to *daven* with more *kavannah* further enhancing their connection to Hashem. Because *tefillah* is an expression

29. The 6 Constant Mitzvos, Page 45, ArtScroll.

of feeling connected to Hashem, truly powerful tefillah emanates from truly powerful feelings of connection. Cognizance of to Whom one is praying — which requires a vibrant belief in Hashem's Presence — is the "operating system" that energizes all tefillah, and enables us to truly feel connected to G-d's Presence³⁰ in our daily lives.³¹

- **My Mindful Tefillah Moment (p. 2)** – The message of Hashem's פרטית השגחה that students have internalized from the lesson is then connected through the concept of "mindfulness" to the key words in *tefillah* cited in the lesson, bringing together tefillah and a mindful awareness and a full body-mind experience of G-d's Presence in every day events (השגחה פרטית). Your students will, BE"H, begin to mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah* with a focus on the meaning of the words and its related פרטית השגחה message.

Mindful Tefillah: Connecting Personal Experiences\Events of פרטית השגחה With the Words of Tefillah

Have you ever driven your car somewhere and arrived at your destination only to realize you remember nothing or very little about your journey? Or started eating a packet of chips and then suddenly noticed all you had left in your hands was an empty packet? Or davened most of שמונה עשרה and can't remember where you are up to or if you said יעלה ויבוא on Rosh Chodesh or any other words you just said? Unfortunately, most of us have! The above are some common examples of 'mindlessness' – a state we also often refer to as being on 'autopilot.' When we slip into autopilot our attention is absorbed in our wandering minds and we are not really 'present' in our own lives as our attention is swept away by a never ending current of thought processes.

Being on autopilot, a state of 'mindlessness,' means we are in a dreamlike state since in that mode we are not fully 'present' in the moment. Our minds are conditioned to wander making it difficult to focus for even a short period of time.³² As a result, we often fail to notice the beauty or meaning of the words of tefillah and get stuck in robotic davening without focus on what we are saying.

Mindfulness in Tefillah

So what is the solution? The logical answer seems finding the opposite of *mindlessness* and applying it to tefillah. The good news is that there is a solution which directly addresses *mindlessness*--it is *mindfulness* in tefillah bringing about '**My Mindful Tefillah Moment**' included in each weekly lesson.

Mindfulness is the opposite of *mindlessness*. It is awareness—the act of consciously tuning into, paying attention and deliberately 'shifting gears' to the present moment enabling us to be 'more alive' in the present. *Mindfulness* as applied to tefillah means 'waking up' from autopilot, *consciously* 'taking the wheel' and placing attention on the words we recite and maintaining an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as we daven.

Mindfull Tefillah provides us with an opportunity to feel real connection with Hashem. Learning to be mindful can enhance our tefillah exponentially by enabling us to focus on the words being said and their meaning

30. See תפילות, Page 2b of ריף ב' s.v. 'איזהו בן' that states that if a person does not recognize G-d Presence and Power, he has no reason to pray. By approaching Hashem for everything through tefillah, we come to acknowledge that on our own, we have nothing.

31. For example, the morning ברכת השחר provides that Hashem gives us our everyday gifts, such as sight, the ability to function and life itself. Almost every one of the middle ברכות of Shemoneh Esrei begins with a request followed by a statement of our *emunah* in Hashem's absolute control over every aspect of life. For example, the prayer for healing opens with a request: "Heal us ..." It ends with "for You are G-d, the King, the faithful Healer ...," a statement of faith in G-d.

32. According to a study from Microsoft Corp., although the average attention span for the notoriously ill-focused goldfish is nine seconds, people now generally lose concentration after eight seconds.

that otherwise escape us and slip away. By doing this, your students will have strengthened and grounded the meaning of the words of tefillah. Furthermore, explains *Sifsei Chaim*,³³ one who is mindful during tefillah can gain a deep sense of Hashem's Presence and enjoy the exhilaration of a spiritual connection effectively transforming our connection with Hashem.

Our goal is to "plug in" our students to the words of *tefillah* at an impressionable and developmental stage in their lives and give them the opportunity to feel an enduring connection with Hashem. This is accomplished through connecting the words of tefillah they are reciting to the thoughts, feelings and sensations gained from reading our true stories (**My Eyes To See**) and writing their own true stories (**I Can See It Too**) in which they 'saw' or experienced Hashem's פרטית השגחה.³⁴

- **My Eyes To See (True Story) (p. 1)** – Each of the weekly lessons will include a story involving great people from our illustrious past and or a parable to illustrate the practical פרטית השגחה of each lesson.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz³⁵ explains that to effectively teach *bitachon*, "One must speak about it in public using *tangible and simple language* which is close to a person's emotions and not with deep wisdom." Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz explains that this is because emotion, rather than intellect, is the primary means for building trust in Hashem.³⁶ Rav Dessler³⁷ brilliantly explains the concept as follows:

We are an amalgam of the mental and the physical, and our physical aspect is affected more than by sensory impressions than by ideas.³⁸ [Understanding] of the heart, which is a combination of the body and soul, must be in a manner which allows the physical component to comprehend. That is [accomplished] with examples and with [breaking things down to their] separate components and [highlighting] slight differences. Because if one desires to explain to himself in a general way, it is comparable to inserting an elephant through the pin of a needle—it will not enter at all.

Conclusion:

We are confident that, BE"H, students will benefit from the האקנת' כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית program in the following ways:

- They will begin to "see" Hashem's "Hand" in their daily lives.
- The more they contemplate that Hashem runs everything, the more they will begin to come to taste Hashem's goodness in the world - טעמו וראו כי טוב ה'
- When things happen in life that upset them, they will begin to realize (at their level) that there is a purpose, as it all comes from G-d.
- By connecting their personal "wow! moments"— their experiences 'seeing' ה' with the same message rooted in the meaning of the key words of *tefillah*, they will begin to enhance their awareness of Who runs the world and Who they are davening to. These key elements will allow them to begin to experience tefillah to its fullest and bring them to connect with Hashem.

33. Sifsei Chaim, Midos V'Avodas Hashem, Volume 2, page 49.

34. See Ibid, page 50-51.

35. Cited in *Sefer Sichos Mussar, Ma'amar 70*, page 304. See also Daas Chochmah U'Mussar, Volume 2:85.

36. Ibid.

37. *Sefer Ha'Zikaron L'Baal Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Volume 2, page 95. See also *Sefer Matnas Chaim, Yomim Noraim*, page 83.

38. *Strive For Truth*, Volume II, Part 3, page 208.

- They will mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah* with a focus on the words and their meaning.
- They will begin to feel the real need to ask for Hashem's help in **all aspects** of life.
- They will begin to appreciate that the purpose of each person's life, his עבודה, is as Mesilas Yeshorim states,³⁹ to come close to G-d—the core of it all – the connection to Hashem.

We hope you will look at the 13 sample lessons included for you here, and see for yourself how simple, straightforward and potentially life-enhancing this program can be for your students. In mere weeks, they will acquire the tools for life, so that if ever they are asked Rav Chaskel's question, they can answer without hesitation: "Yes, I **myself saw and now I know** there is a Creator!"

האקנת' כי אדבר



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