

# HSACRE



## AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 21 February 2017</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.15 pm (or at the conclusion of the Hillingdon SACRE meeting)</b>	Carole Jones (Chairman) Alison Rollin Anil Bhatt Father Desmond Banister
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW</b>	Angela Flux Councillor Keith Burrows Councillor Carol Melvin BSc (Hons) Councillor John Morse Councillor June Nelson Councillor Susan O'Brien
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Members of the Public and Press are welcome to attend this meeting</b>  <b>This agenda and associated reports can be made available in other languages, in Braille, large print or on audio tape on request. Please contact us for further information.</b>	Lil Osborn Gail Butler Robert Harwood Connie Dusek Heather Steady Umesh Sharma Angela Lount Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed) Naseem Bint Amir Richard Cawley Jamal Pasha Nicole Schnackenberg Stephen Horsman Jasvir Singh Rayat Mary Coulthurst Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE Debby Mitchell

Published: Monday, 13 February 2017



# Agenda

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## **Agreed Syllabus Conference**

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# Agenda Item 1

## **The meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference commenced at 9:00 pm.**

Following discussion at the previous meeting held in March 2016, guidance had been circulated to Members. This suggested that the Agreed Syllabus Conference would need to consider updating the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus in order to include coverage of Humanism and non-religious world views.

There was a discussion about the challenges faced by schools with regards to the teaching of RE. This included that there was not enough time available for schools to teach pupils about all faiths. Schools would need to determine how they covered both religious faiths and non religious world views and SACRE could play a role in advising on this.

Concerns were raised that schools often taught RE to ensure that their pupils were successful in their GCSEs, rather than lessons providing a wider education. It was acknowledged that this was likely to be the case for all school subjects. It was agreed that the provision of RE guidance to teachers was important, especially as some of those required to teach the subject did not have a specific background in it

Members agreed that a review of the syllabus should be undertaken and it was agreed that Robert Harwood, the Humanist representative on the Agreed Syllabus Conference would draft proposals. This would be based upon a nationally agreed template that could be adapted for use locally. A sub group of HSACRE Members would then meet to discuss the proposals. It was anticipated that this meeting would take place in September. The sub-group would then look to present its proposed alterations to the syllabus to the next Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting in November 2016.

### **Resolved:**

#### **– That:**

- 1. A review of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus would be undertaken to ensure the sufficient coverage of Humanism and other non-religious world views;**
- 2. Robert Harwood, the Humanist representative on the Agreed Syllabus Conference would draft proposed revisions to the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus;**
- 3. A sub-group would be convened to discuss the proposed revisions to the syllabus. Membership of the sub-group would include Amir Ahmed, Naseem Bint Amir, Robert Harwood, Duncan Struthers and an officer from the Council's School Improvement team; and,**
- 4. Hillingdon SACRE to review GCSE RE papers at its next meeting.**

**The meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference concluded at 9:20 pm.**

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## Minutes

### HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

10 November 2016



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Carole Jones (Chairman), Alison Rollin, Gail Butler, Robert Harwood, Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed), Naseem Bint Amir, Richard Cawley, Jasvir Singh Rayat, Mary Coulthurst and Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Duncan Struthers (Advisor to SACRE)</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer) and Venetia Rogers (Education Policy Manager)</p>
	<p><b>PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE AND THEREFORE NO FORMAL DECISIONS WERE MADE</b></p>
	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>It was confirmed to that the meeting did not have the attendance to make quorum, and therefore no formal decision could be made. It was agreed that the meeting continue and the comments on each item be reported to the next HSACRE meeting.</p>
39.	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>It was suggested the minutes be agreed at the next meeting.</p>
40.	<p><b>AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Prior to the HSACRE meeting, a sub-committee was set up to look into the possibility of adding Humanism to the HSACRE syllabus. The Humanist Society was asked to come up with a suggestion that would fit with the HSACRE syllabus' key ideas, and the results were included in the agenda. HSACRE thanked the Humanist Society for their work on this.</p> <p>The proposed addition was sent to schools, and responses were gathered on whether schools were in favour or opposed to the addition of Humanism.</p> <p>The Humanist representative also confirmed that a link listed on the syllabus would help schools to plan lessons on Humanism, if required.</p> <p>HSACRE Members confirmed that they have always been inclusive, but questioned whether the addition of Humanism to the syllabus could put an unnecessary burden on</p>

	<p>teachers to learn more information. It was stated that by Key Stage 4, all pupils must have been taught one non-religious world view at school, and that adding Humanism to the syllabus would help achieve this, although Members commented that this may be seen as unfair on other non-religious world views.</p> <p>HSACRE Members stated that it was not their role to tell teachers what they should teach, and that they could only comment on the content that could be taught in school; it was the choice of governing bodies to decided what should be taught in each individual school.</p> <p>The advisor to HSACRE commented that as many schools had responded to the consultation with their views, it would be helpful to write to those schools to inform them of the responses that were received, once they had been made anonymous, with an update confirming that the potential change to the syllabus would be discussed again at the next meeting.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 8.14 pm, closed at 9.06 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Luke Taylor on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.



## HUMANISM KEY STAGE 1

### Key areas of understanding

- Ideas of god
- Teachings
- Responses from a believer
- Festivals and celebrations
- Place of worship

### Key ideas

#### Ideas of god

- Humanists don't believe there is a god.
- Some believe that we can never know whether there is a god, or not.

#### Teachings

- Human beings are special. Some of the things that are special about humans we share with some other animals, but some things only humans have
- Special attributes include our ability to question, our ability to reason, our empathy for other humans and animals, our ideas of right and wrong and our creativity.
- Human life is valuable and rewarding, as is love and support from others.

#### Responses from a believer

- Human beings should be good to each other, promote happiness and avoid doing harm. One way to be happy is to make others so.
- Humans can all find different ways to be happy.
- The happy human as a symbol is often used by humanist groups to represent the celebration of life and the importance of making ourselves and others happy.

#### Festivals and celebrations

- Humanists do not have unique festivals, but often participate in special cultural occasions as a means to celebrate the importance of family, friendship, kindness and sharing.
- Humanists like to mark key moments in people's lives, such as births, weddings and death.
- Humanist naming ceremonies celebrate the arrival of a new baby, where family and friends make promises of love and support.

#### Places of worship

- No particular places of worship, Humanists are happy to gather and celebrate anywhere.
- Humanists value the beauty of the natural world, and appreciate feats of human achievement and creativity.

Humanist views are found in every culture and country in the world.

On <http://understandinghumanism.org.uk> teachers can find a wide range of resources relevant to the above themes and discussions, including lesson plans, classroom activities, presentations, films, and humanist perspectives.

## HUMANISM KEY STAGE 2

### Key areas of understanding

- Ideas of god
- Teachings
- Responses from a believer
- Festivals and celebrations
- Place of worship

### Key ideas

#### Ideas of god

- Humanists don't believe in a god or gods because they find no supporting evidence.
- Humanists would either consider themselves atheists or agnostics.
- Humanism is more than just atheism/agnosticism - a humanist has many other positive beliefs about how best to live life.
- Humanists believe we can lead good and happy lives without divine support.

#### Teachings

- Humanists base their beliefs about the world on scientific evidence; they believe science is the best method for understanding the world.
- The universe is billions of years old and began from a natural event.
- All life on Earth including human beings evolved from a common ancestor
- This is the one and only life we have, we should make the most of it - the time to be happy is now.
- Humanists have no sacred text or divine authority to guide them
- Rewards and punishments should not be our only motivation to do good.
- Empathy (the Golden Rule) and reason (considering the consequences and what might happen if everyone acted the same way) can help us decide how we should act.
- The importance of practical action – 'actions speak louder than words'

#### Responses from a believer

- It is important for individuals to ask critical questions, and to consider alternatives to widely-held beliefs.
- Respect different people's choices and different ways of life.
- Be willing to change their beliefs when faced with new evidence.
- Celebrate humanity, companionship, curiosity and both intellectual and artistic creativity.
- Appreciation of the senses.
- Appreciating and taking pleasure in the way we experience the world around us, especially the people we meet and our environment.
- Working to create a better society and a better world.

#### Festivals and celebrations

- Humanists value and celebrate human life, marking key moments such as births, weddings and death.
- Humanist weddings celebrate when two people, of any gender, agree to spend the rest of their lives together.
- Love and support needs to come from other people in our lives.
- Humanists do not have unique festivals, but often participate in special cultural occasions as a means to celebrate the importance of family, friendship, community and kindness.

#### Places of worship

- No particular places of worship, Humanists are happy to gather and celebrate anywhere.
- Humanists show appreciation and spread awareness of aspects of the world they consider worthy, to ensure nothing is taken for granted.

On <http://understandinghumanism.org.uk> teachers can find a wide range of resources relevant to the above themes and discussions, including lesson plans, classroom activities, presentations, films, and humanist perspectives.

# HUMANISM KEY STAGE 3

## Key areas of understanding

- Ideas of god
- Teachings
- Responses from a believer
- Festivals and celebrations
- Place of worship

## Key ideas

### Ideas of god

- Humanism is a positive philosophy of life. It is more than just being an agnostic or an atheist.
- Humanists would disregard claims of revelations or miracles
- Humanists don't believe in the supernatural power of prayer but will reflect and contemplate on situations and use that to help guide their behaviour or motivate themselves

### Teachings

- Humanists base their beliefs about the world on scientific evidence; they believe science is the best method for understanding the world.
- The universe is billions of years old and began from a natural event.
- All life on Earth including human beings evolved from a common ancestor
- Naturalism, rationalism and scepticism are held as important ideas by Humanists
- Given the absence of any discernible purpose to the universe, humans have the right and responsibility to make their own lives meaningful
- Death is part of the natural cycle of life, we have one life and we should make the most of it.
- Something of us can survive our death (atoms, genes, ideas, memories, achievements, etc).
- Human morality is a natural capacity, which has evolved to help us live together in a society.
- All life has value and should be respected.
- We have the freedom to live how we wish as long as we try to avoid harm and avoid restricting others freedoms to live as they wish.
- The Importance of human rights.
- Humans have individual freedom of thought, speech, and choice.
- We should live our lives with social and environmental responsibility.

### Responses from a believer

- Live useful and practical lives, being considerate of others' needs.
- Respect different people's choices and different ways of life.
- Charitable work, humanists can and do offer pastoral care in the community, e.g. in hospitals and prisons.
- Be willing to change one's belief when presented with the appropriate evidence.

### Festivals and celebrations

- A Humanist Celebrant can be asked to conduct special occasions marking rites of passage.
- The end of human life and the memory and achievements of the deceased during their life are honoured at humanist funerals.

### Places of worship

- No particular places of worship, Humanists are happy to gather and celebrate anywhere.
- Humanists show appreciation and spread awareness of aspects of the world they consider worthy, to ensure nothing is taken for granted.

On <http://understandinghumanism.org.uk> teachers can find a wide range of resources relevant to the above themes and discussions, including lesson plans, classroom activities, presentations, films, and humanist perspectives.

### **Suggested addition to the Glossary**

AGNOSTIC - someone who does not know, or believes that it is impossible to know, if a God or gods exist.

ATHEIST - someone who believes that a God or gods do not exist.

CELEBRANT - someone who is involved with creating, writing, and conducting a ceremony.

ETHICAL DECISION - a course of action stemming from a moral choice, that may have no clear right or wrong answer. It will try to take into account all the available evidence and considers all the foreseeable consequences, in order to do the least harm.

EMPATHY - the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

EMPIRICAL - based on, concerned with or verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory, or pure logic.

EVOLUTION - the process by which different kinds of living organism have developed from earlier forms over the history of the planet.

THE GOLDEN RULE - the concept, often appearing throughout the history of ideas, that people should treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves, with the implication being that it is best to treat everyone with tolerance, consideration and compassion in order to have a better society overall.

HUMANISM - an ethical worldview based on scientific understanding and human morality.

HUMANIST - someone who personally identifies with Humanism.

IGNOSTIC - someone who believes that the question of the existence of a God or gods is meaningless because the term "god" has no unambiguous definition.

JUDGEMENT - the formation of an opinion about some fact or idea after critical reflection, on the basis of reasoning and/or experience as appropriate.

NATURAL SELECTION - the process whereby organisms better adapted to their environment tend to survive and produce more offspring. The theory of its action was first fully and popularly expounded by Charles Darwin and it is now regarded as the principal mechanism by which evolution occurs.

NATURALISM: The idea that everything arises from natural properties and causes and discounts all supernatural or spiritual explanations

PASTORAL CARE - an ancient, universal model of emotional and spiritual support, performed by trained individuals supporting people in their pain, grief and anxiety or in their triumphs, joys and victories.

RATIONALISM - the practice or principle of basing opinions and actions on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief or emotional response.

REASON - the power of the mind to think, understand and analyse given information and form judgements logically.

RELATIVISM: The idea that all points of view are subjective and there is no absolute truth

SECULARISM - a principle that proposes a strict separation between the state and religion and also that everyone, regardless of religious background, is equal before the law.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD - a set of principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge and discovery, based upon the recognition and formulation of a problem, the formulation of testable hypotheses about the solution of the problem, and the collection of experimental data to enable the testing and refinement of those hypotheses.

SCEPTICISM - the idea that not all ideas should be taken at face value, but instead should be subjected to logical and empirical challenges.

## Comments regarding Addition of Humanism to RE Syllabus

Name	Position / Role & Responsibility in RE	School / Interest in RE	Yes/No	Comments
Phil Seaman	Head of subject	Queensmead School	Yes	Strongly in favour of inclusion
Dominic Beer	Assistant Headteacher / RE teacher	Northwood School	Yes	
Gurpreet Sidhu	Subject leader for RE / Punjabi	Sikh Faith Academy	Yes	Would be useful addition to K3 syllabus. We already use many of the key terminology mentioned within lessons for year 7/8
Alice Guthrie	Ruislip Gardens		Yes	We agree as a school that it would be beneficial to teach a specific strand relating to humanism and we are strongly in favour of the proposed change
Uma Thaker	RE Coordinator	Hayes Park School	Yes	I am in favour of this addition as I feel it is important for children to understand that there are various ways for people to live their lives. I think it will encourage a wonderful, broad and open mind to life.
Sabrina Edwards	Headteacher	Bourne Primary	Yes	I think that in order to fully embrace British Values, it is vital that children have an understanding that some people do not have a faith but still lead lives based on moral values.
Becki Wakefield & Jodie Simmons	RE Coordinators	Deansfield Primary	Yes	We feel that it is important to teach all major religions and, in a changing community, we feel this is more relevant in today society.
Elaine D'Souza	Headteacher	Hermitage Primary	Yes	
Trusha Dabba	Chairperson	Heathrow Primary	Yes	
Rachel Quinn	RE Coordinator	Breakspear School	No	The curriculum states that we should be learning about the 6 main religions and Humanism is not one of them. However, I feel the concepts from Humanism are great and something that we should be informing our children. I feel this might be better in PSHE session.
Olivia Wall	Deputy Head, RE teacher	Swakeleys School for Girls	Yes	
Robert Goldsmith	Parent Governor	St Bernadette's Primary School	Yes	I think that as the number of people who identify with this choice increases in the country it is important that our children are taught about all aspects of religious faiths including those with no faith.
Karen Jenkins	Year 4 teacher / RE co-coordinator	Hillside Junior School	No	Due to what appears to be the confusing nature of the religion, for example KS1: Humanists would either consider themselves atheists or agnostics, then Humanism is more than just atheism or agnosticism. The information provided seems quite wide ranging, contradictory and not specific enough to create understandable lessons/
Karen Collier	RE Coordinator	Whiteheath Junior	No	Humanism is a "non-religious philosophy based on liberal human values" (Oxford

		School		<p>English Dictionary definition). As humanism is a philosophy rather than a religion it does not qualify to be included in the syllabus.</p> <p>Religious belief does not engage with matters of science and there is no crossover with the science syllabus. Humanism with its emphasis on understanding through scientific development is presenting a position that is not relevant to religious education.</p> <p>Within the religious syllabus the emphasis is always that some people hold beliefs consistent with the religion that is being studied and some do not, being followers of other religions or those that have no religious beliefs at all.</p> <p>It is not clear from the document how ethical or societal values are derived by humanists. Without a defining text, "liberal human values" are open to individual interpretation and so cannot be readily evaluated in a learning context.</p> <p>The "responses" outlined within the humanism document are typical of the vast majority of religious beliefs and therefore developed as part of the existing curriculum and further covered in the PSHE syllabus.</p>
Alan Mills	Headteacher	Oak Farm Junior School	Yes	
Ravinder Singh	Head of RE	Uxbridge High School	Yes	
Sydney Quartey	Subject Leader RE	Harlington School	Yes	
Sharifah Lee	RE Subject Leader	Charville Academy	Yes	<p>Our teaching plans include acceptance of all faiths/beliefs and aspects of humanism. We aim to be fully inclusive and encourage tolerance and critical thinking. It is important that pupils are encouraged to look at a range of resources and evidence (including scientific) to support and develop their own ideas and understanding</p>
Ann Bowen-Breslin	Headteacher	Hillingdon Primary School	Yes	
Jasvinder Osan	Chair of Governors	Minet Nursey & Infant School	No	<p>Children at the Stage 1 / Stage 2 are impressionable. Exposing these age groups to differing ideas as in Humanism may lead to mental setup which makes them consider traditional religions negatively. The concept of Humanism, which is effect not a religion is an acquired view that is gained through the child's own realisation of nature around him / her, as they seek to accept that in their own life, and we should not try to influence them with these concepts at an early age. We should therefore allow them to mould into that as they gain more life experiences, and</p>

				allow them to acquire these concepts outside of school curriculum & RE.
Steven Courtnade	Chair of Governors	Ruislip Gardens Primary School	No	Agree wholeheartedly with the inclusion of Humanism in the RE syllabus but not in this format. Non-religious views should be taught <i>alongside</i> the main religions as a method of enriching discussion of religion rather than an either-or. Humanism should be taught in its own terms, not forced into the same structure as the main Religions as appears to be suggested here.
Rev Daniel Norris	Executive Headteacher	Holy Trinity C of E Primary, Northwood	No	In my opinion humanism is a world view/ philosophy/ ideology and is not a faith. There is already provision within the syllabus for the discussion of a range of world views.
Diana Jelavic-Wade	Assistant Headteacher	Whiteheath Infant School	Yes	My opinion is that it is really important to acknowledge Humanism and teach children about it. In my experience, there are less and less people who are religious in a traditional sense more and more people that take on this approach to life. I went to a Humanist funeral recently and it made me think about some of the ideas that are part of this approach. Any belief/ attitude that promotes goodness, helping and respecting others, looking after the natural world surely is something we want to teach our children about at all stages of their education. I am hoping that Humanism becomes part of our agreed RE syllable and I have already ordered a copy of the book by Michael Rosen for my school.
Niela Bamber	Headteacher / oversees RE	Rosedale Primary	Yes	
Rachel Langford	Co-Headteacher	Whiteheath Infant School	No	The teaching of religious education is vital to the development of well-rounded and informed individuals. It is our duty as practitioners to teach our children about religion, sharing with them what people believe and letting them form their own thoughts and opinions for themselves. In an Infant/primary school our children are very young, their religious beliefs are often formed from their parents/carers views which is totally appropriate. We teach Christianity and Hinduism which form the two biggest religion groups in our school. We encourage parents of other religious groups to come and talk to the children, and have a range of denominations come to talk to the children in assembly of religions that are represented in our school. All of our religions believe in a God, and the biggest question for most of our children is death, knowing that there is a God brings comfort to children. As children mature

				<p>they will begin to question more and at this point (Secondary in my opinion) it is appropriate to talk about what other religious groups believe. Our job is to teach, inform and care for the children in our care, not cause more confusion, some children are aware that atheism is a belief 'that there is no God', Humanist don't associate themselves with this group which again is confusing for children of primary school age. Humanism is not significantly represented at all in our school and I would argue not Nationally either with a poll in 2011 showing the 3 biggest groups as Christianity at 59.3%, Islam at 4.8%, Hindu at 1.5%. Humanism teachings are not dis-similar to other religions that are represented, the main difference is Humanists don't believe there is a god or that we can ever know whether there is a god, or not. We are a thinking school we believe in questioning, teaching this key idea of Humanism would take up a considerable amount of our timetable and is not a reflection of what our children or parents believe. The parents in my school especially Christian and Muslim would have real reservations on these key principles being taught. We are a broadly Christian school and celebrate Christian festivals Humanim ideas of god are in total disagreement to this.</p>
Kristin Sutherland	Headteacher	St Andrew's C of E Primary School	No	We understand why it might be included
John Goddard	Headteacher	Hedgewood	Yes	<p>In respect of the documentation received and the ideas and principles contained therein, I think it would be accurate to say that as a school community, we are committed to striving for equality,empathic consideration (translated as practical expressions of value and respect for others) which is describing a sort of goodness grounded in love and respect for our fellow human beings and the wonderful natural bio diversity of the planet. Thus in principle we would be happy to include and incorporate much of the KS1 and KS2 areas.</p> <p>However, there is a caveat and that is as a special school where most of our pupils are autistic and communication disordered, this does mean that we have to adapt and present the curriculum in a way that has relevance for our young people. This makes the RE curriculum challenge interesting to say the least. However our young people are amazing and never cease to enlighten and invigorate us with their capacity to care beyond themselves, accept others and</p>



				deal positively with the significant challenges they face on a daily basis.
Mrs Roseline Wilkinson	DHT & RE Teacher	Botwell House Catholic Primary	Yes	
Gemma Denham	Head of RE	Harefield Academy	No	We include a variety of beliefs within our SOW, including atheism and agnosticism also but cannot include all ideas as we have to meet the demands of the preparation also needed for GCSE- the foundation knowledge which must be built in KS3. We will add in Humanism to our environment, charity, human rights and community cohesion lessons as this is important that students understand a variety of viewpoints.
Ann-Marie Sissons	DHT with responsibility for RE	Pinkwell Primary	Yes	
Russell Middleton	Chair of Governors	Barnhill Community High	Yes	
Rob Hayden	Head of Department	Haydon School	No	<p>In principle I do not have any problems with Humanism being added to the syllabus but I do have some concerns in having an equal place alongside the other 6 religious faiths. Firstly - why Humanism? Could the argument also be made for other belief systems such as paganism, scientology etc. What is the criteria that has now meant that Humanism is considered alongside the 6 major world faiths? Secondly looking at the proposed areas of study, there really is not a great deal of depth compared with the other 6 religions. If we are being encouraged to teach Humanism as a religious belief system I think there needs to be more in the way of beliefs and practices.</p> <p>I do believe it is important to cover a range of religious and non religious view points within the classroom. My understanding though would be that non religious beliefs would be used as a counter or point of comparison with religious beliefs. I am not convinced that Humanism can stand alone as an area of study in this context.</p>

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