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Ölümün Yorumlanması, Ölümüne İyimserlikle Bakmak: Kamaruddin Hidayet'in Düşüncelerinin Analizi

Interpretation of Death, Facing Death with Optimism: Dissecting Komarudin Hidayat's Thought

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Ölümün Yorumlanması, Ölümle İyimserlikle Bakmak: Kamaruddin Hidayet'in Düşüncelerinin Analizi

Öz: Bu araştırma makalesi, saygın Endonezyalı İslam alimi Kamaruddin Hidayet'in ölüm konusunu nasıl ele aldığını incelemektedir. Makale, genellikle tabu olarak kabul edilen ve olumsuz bir şekilde algılanan ölümün, iyimser bir bakış açısıyla ele alınabileceğini savunmaktadır. Hidayet, ölümü olumlu bir zihniyetle kabul edilmesi gereken doğal bir geçiş olarak yeniden tanımlamamızı teşvik etmektedir. Yazar, bütüncül bir yaklaşımla, Kuran ve Hadis'ten alıntılar ve anlatılarla destekleyerek ölümün felsefi, manevi ve psikolojik yönlerini ele almaktadır. Çalışma, Hidayet'in Ölümle Barışmak: Ölümü İyimser Bir Şekilde Karşılama adlı eserini incelemek için kitap analizi metodolojisini kullanmaktadır. İçerik analizi, yazarın görüşlerinin daha derinlemesine incelenmesi için kullanılmaktadır. Hidayet'in görüşleri üç ana bölüme ayrılmıştır. İlk bölüm olan Yaşam Festivali, yaşamı amaçlı yaşanması gereken bir kutlama olarak tasvir etmektedir. Bu bölümde, yaşamın üç temeli ve renkli dünya gibi kavramlar ele alınmakta ve yaşam boyunca anlamlı faaliyetlerde bulunmanın önemi vurgulanmaktadır. İkinci bölüm olan Sonsuz Festival Yok ise ölümün kaçınılmazlığını ele almakta ve zihinsel ve manevi hazırlığın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Ana konular arasında Yaşlılığa Kadar Tanrı'yı Tanımayı Öğrenmek ve Nimetlerin Kaynağı Olarak Aile yer almakta ve bireylerin hayatlarını nasıl zenginleştirebilecekleri ve yolculuklarının sonuna nasıl hazırlanabilecekleri üzerine düşünülmektedir. Son bölüm olan Assalamu'alaikum ya Izrail ise ölüme yaklaşmayı ve onu kabul etmeyi ele almaktadır. Hidayet, örnekler vererek ölümün ürkütücü bir son değil, güzel bir eve dönüş olarak algılanabileceğini göstermektedir. Amacı, okuyucuları ölüm için zihinsel ve ruhsal olarak hazır olmaya teşvik etmek ve hayatın bu doğal parçasını zarif bir şekilde kabul etmelerini sağlamaktır. Hidayet'in anlaşılır yazım stili, bu karmaşık temayı günlük hayata uygun hale getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Psikolojisi, Ölüm, İyimserlik, Pozitif zihniyet, Maneviyat.

Interpretation of Death, Facing Death with Optimism: Dissecting Komarudin Hidayat's Thought

Abstract: The research paper examines the theme of death as addressed by Komaruddin Hidayat, an esteemed Islamic scholar from Indonesia. It argues that death, often regarded as a taboo subject and viewed negatively, can be approached with optimism. Hidayat encourages a reframing of death as a natural transition to be accepted with a positive mindset. The author employs a holistic framework, considering philosophical, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of death, supported by narratives and quotations from the Al-Qur'an and Hadiths. This study uses book analysis methodology to dissect Hidayat's work entitled "Berdamai dengan Kematian: Menyambut Kematian dengan Optimis" (Making Peace with Death: Welcoming Death Optimistically). Content analysis is used to dissect and analyze the author's views in a more insightful way. Hidayat's insights are organized into three main sections. The first section, Festival of Life, portrays life as a celebration that should be lived with purpose. It discusses concepts such as the Three Pillars of Life and The Colorful World, emphasizing the necessity of engaging in meaningful activities throughout one's life. The second section, No Endless Festival, addresses the inevitability of death, highlighting the significance of mental and spiritual preparation. Key topics include Learning to Know God Until Old Age and Family as a Source of Blessings, which reflect on how individuals can enrich their lives and prepare for the end of their journey. The final section, Assalamu 'alaikum ya Izrail, delves into the process of approaching death and accepting it with joy. Hidayat provides examples illustrating that death can be perceived as a beautiful return home, rather than a daunting conclusion. He aims to inspire readers to cultivate mental and spiritual readiness for death, fostering a graceful acceptance of this natural part of life. Hidayat's accessible writing style effectively renders this complex theme relevant to everyday experiences.

Keywords: Psychology of Religion, Death, Optimism, Positive mindset, Spirituality.

Introduction: Making Peace with Death

Death is a universal theme and an integral part of the human life cycle. In his book entitled “*Berdamai dengan Kematian: Menyambut Kematian dengan Optimis*” (Making Peace with Death: Welcoming Death Optimistically), Komarudin Hidayat, a renowned Indonesian Islamic scholar and thinker, invites readers to understand death from a more positive perspective. This old book is still worth reviewing because it is always relevant throughout the ages. In its time, this book had many readers, even a best seller and underwent several reprints. The author seeks to change society's view of death, which is often considered dark and frightening. Through a holistic and optimistic approach, he tries to provide an understanding that death is part of the human life cycle that must be accepted gracefully. How to fill the festival of life to prepare for death optimistically is the key point of Komarudin Hidayat's work.

Komaruddin Hidayat was born in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia, on October 18, 1953. His educational background began in Islamic boarding schools, and he completed his bachelor's degree in Islamic Education at IAIN Jakarta. He earned his doctorate at Ankara University in Turkey in 1990. He served as Rector of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta (UIN Jakarta) for two periods (2006-2010 and 2010-2015). Komarudin Hidayat currently serves as chairman of the Press Council, Indonesia.

The author at hand is known for his insightful interpretations of Islamic preaching, primarily through the Sufi perspective. His background in philosophy, Sufism and Islamic studies colors his various written works as a medium for preaching. Da'wah, through books with this unique approach, has received public appreciation as evidenced by many of his works being best sellers, reprinted many times. His various writings are able to bridge the gap between academia and spirituality and get a share of readers from students, scholars, and the general public. His influence in the intellectual discourse around religion and spirituality continues to leave a memorable impact on the academic community and the public. His books that imply Islamic preaching in the modern era are accepted by many. His written works in the genres of Sufism, philosophy, and psychology of religion that are well known by the public include: “*Memahami Bahasa Agama*” (Understanding the Language of Religion), “*Masa Depan Agama*” (The Future of Religion); “*Tragedi Raja Midas*” (The Tragedy of King Midas); “*Agama dan Guncangan Masyarakat Modern*” (Religion and the Shocks of Modern Society); “*Tuhan Begitu Dekat*” (God Is So Close); “*Wahyu di Surga, Wahyu di Bumi*” (Revelation in Heaven, Revelation on Earth); “*Hegemoni Budaya Benda*” (Hegemony of Material Culture); “*Menafsirkan Kehendak Tuhan*” (Interpreting God's Will); “*Psikologi Kematian*” (Psychology of Death); “*Psikologi Ibadah*” (Psychology of Worship); and “*Menerima Kematian dan Berdamai dengan Kematian: Menjemput Kematian dengan Optimis*” (Embracing Death and Making Peace with Death: Toward Death with Optimism).

The book titled *Making Peace with Death: Picking Up Death Optimistically* is written by Komaruddin Hidayat with a storytelling style as a form of reflection of his wealth of religious spirituality. One form of da'wah through this book is positioned to strengthen readers' literacy to solve the crisis of human spirituality and modern society that tends to be hedonistic and narcissistic. This book offers optimistic messages to pick up death. The upbeat style of da'wah in this book is complemented by quotations of topical Qur'anic verses and Hadith that specifically review death and its signs. The aim is to strengthen the relevant discussion, although not many quotes are presented. Psychologically, these reviews will provide information and various tips for picking up death more optimistically, in addition to offering multiple tricks of pious practice as a provision for life towards returning home to meet the Almighty Creator, visiting the ideal home, the closest, most certain, and most patient and loyal waiting for us to open the door.¹

¹ Komarudin Hidayat, “*Berdamai dengan Kematian: Menjemput Ajal dengan Optimis*” (Jakarta: Naora Book, 2015).

The book begins with a preface from the author and an introduction from Dr. Haidar Bagir and is divided into three main sections ending with an Epilogue. In his introduction, Haidar Bagir quotes the view of Ali bin Abi Talib, who stated, Indeed, in the life of this world, people are asleep. Only when they die do they wake up. This view describes the life of the world as an illusion or dream and death as the moment when humans truly realize the actual reality. This is a concept often discussed in Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and Islamic philosophy, which emphasize the importance of spiritual awareness and preparation for life after death.^{2 3} The introduction also reviews that there is nothing gruesome about the process of dying, as death is simply the process of moving from one home to another, from a house in this world to a home in the hereafter, back to the source, which is Allah.

Some people are indeed terrified of death because of the fiqh teachings we have received since childhood about the concept of heaven and hell. A sinner is afraid of death for fear of going to hell. So when the signs of death approach him, he hurriedly prays for an "extension of life" to improve himself and do as much good as possible. He repents and will not repeat his mistakes, as quoted from Surah Al-Mu'minūn [23]:99-100), which means: "*Such is the state of the disbelievers that when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord, bring me back to the world so that I may do the righteous deeds I have left behind. Never! Verily it is a pretext which he utters only. Before them is the beyond until the day they are resurrected.*

In fact, Allah is the Most Forgiving, as long as the sins we commit are human due to the human stamp of forgetfulness and haste. As long as we do not deliberately sin and do not repeat it, God willing, the door to forgiveness, as well as the road to heaven, remains wide open. Of course, after death and the process of purifying ourselves from all the dirt we go through.

This article explores Komarudin Hidayat's thoughts through a literature review related to the themes of Sufism and the psychology of death. Content analysis is the choice of approach according to the needs of the study. The holistic approach involving religion, Sufism, and psychology is a novelty in this paper, thereby enhancing readers' understanding of the cycle of life and death more optimistically.

1. The Festival of Life

The foremost part of the book in question has a major theme entitled Festival of Life. According to the author, life and living in this mortal realm are like a festival that should be celebrated and filled with joy and meaningful things. Our role and function in enlivening the festival depend entirely on us as the performers. It will feel short and very exciting if it is passed optimistically and joyfully. On the other hand, it will be long and tiring if it is filled with unhappy activities.

The very first part of this book discusses nine topics of study. In general, it describes the author's thought reflections from a variety of complex to effortless and everyday life experiences. In other words, it is as if we readers are invited to enter the author's thought patterns because the things revealed seem to be experienced by us, too. The inspirational discussions begin with the theme Three Milestones of Life; then successively titled Homo Festivus; Creatures Go and Return; Colorful World; When Husband and Wife Have Different Religions; Crisis Spurs Creativity; Different Elections and Markets; Chicken Sickness; and New Culture of Self-Promotion.

The first topic discusses the Three Milestones of human life starting with the process of birth, then marriage, and ending with death. Marriage is the axis and peak of the life cycle after a person is born, after which it will lead to the end of the cycle, namely death. In the Javanese philosophy used as Walosongo's proselytizing tool, the three life processes are represented by

² Adelia Januarto, "Kematian adalah Kehidupan: Metafora konseptual kematian dalam Islam di Indonesia," in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik dan Sastra (SEMANTIKS)*, 2019, 1: 28–42.

³ Umar Latif, "Konsep Mati dan Hidup Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Al-bayan* 22/34 (2016): 27–38.

the Mocopat songs, namely Mijil⁴ which tells about birth, Dandanggula⁵ which tells about the peak of a person's life with all the happiness of life including achievements, success and the sweetness of the world, and Megatruh⁶ which tells about the separation of the soul (spirit) from the body. As a bridge between the three milestones of life, the author states that we need to fill each of these cycles with all meaningful activities and all the virtues that will later be inherited when the spirit has separated from the body, towards the gates of death that certainly await us. A Hadith narrated by Bara' bin Azib RA states that the Prophet Muhammad said: "*Verily, the soul of a believer, when it leaves his body, will be carried by the angels, and they do not let go of it in their hands even for the blink of an eye until they take the soul to the sky and open for him the door of the sky ...*" (Tirmidzi No. 1071).

Furthermore, the author explores matters related to the festival of life, which includes topics on Homo Festivus, A Colorful World, and When Husband and Wife Have Different Religions. By the author, the series of human life is likened to a festival in which everyone will participate in enlivening with their respective roles. All life processes in the world are passed through a series of celebrations, both religious and non-religious. All of them are very diverse social activities. Births are celebrated, marriages are celebrated, and even deaths are celebrated. Once again, life is indeed a series of celebrations, elections, elections, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, birthdays, Hajj rituals, and many others. If we count how many forms of celebrations we do, it's like counting the stars in the sky; there are so many. To be grateful for favors and also to commemorate and preserve values in society is its function. In elections, each party uses its symbol to attach itself to supporters. Eid al-Adha also uses the symbol of slaughtering sacrificial animals to unite the feelings of the rich and the poor. Eid al-Fitr uses the symbol of shaking hands to strengthen the relationship. In connection with that, various festivals celebrating life it is always accompanied by symbols that are used as a means to express ideas, ideas, and emotions and have the function of attachment behaviour⁷ Which is a form of behaviour in a relationship to bond with one another.

In the discussion of Colorful World, the author alludes to his views on multiculturalism and religious pluralism. If what is meant is the fact of religious plurality or diversity in Indonesia, the author states that it will be more acceptable, such as the existence of interfaith dialogue to create harmony and tolerance. However, if it is referred to as religious equality, that all religions have the same truth and are authentic, it will undoubtedly cause a lot of rejection. Concerns that religious pluralism will threaten beliefs (aqidah) or denigrate the absolute truth of each religion cannot be denied. There is also concern about the rise of syncretism, where elements from different religions are mixed. A verse quoted in relation to the diversity that existed before Islam is surah Al-Baqarah [2]:62 which means: "*Verily, the believers, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabines, whosoever (of them) believe in Allah and the Last Day and does good (shall) have a reward from his Lord, no fear shall befall them nor shall they grieve*".

This verse is often interpreted in the context of religious pluralism, emphasizing that salvation and acceptance before God are not exclusive to one particular religious group but to all those who believe in God, the Day of Judgment, and do good deeds, regardless of their religious background. However, after Islam was revealed through the Prophet Muhammad as the perfect religion in Surah Āli 'Imrān [3]:85, Islam became the only religion accepted by God. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of faith in God, the Last Day, and good deeds. Surah

⁴ Fadhilla Ainuraziza Ramadhanti - Lutfiah Ayundasari, "Penggunaan Tembang Macapat dalam penyebaran Islam di Jawa," *Jurnal Integrasi dan Harmoni Inovatif Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial (JIHI3S)* 1/7 (2021): 866–872.

⁵ Anarbuka Kukuh Prabawa - Muh Mukti, "Interpretasi Makna Gramatis dan Psikologis Tembang Macapat dengan Analisis Hermeneutika Schleiermacher," *Indonesian Journal of Performing Arts Education* 2/2 (2022): 1–15.

⁶ Ramadhanti - Ayundasari, "Penggunaan Tembang Macapat Dalam Penyebaran Islam Di Jawa."

⁷ Kevin Durkin, "Developmental social psychology: From infancy to old age.," *Developmental social psychology: From infancy to old age.*, 1995, lvi, 776–lvi, 776.

al-Baqarah [2]:62 and Āli 'Imrān [3]:85 are often associated with the recognition and rejection of religious diversity. However, scholars underline that after the revelation of Prophet Muhammad, Islam is considered as the perfection of God's teachings, so the perspective of pluralism becomes unacceptable. Muhammad Abduh stated that the recognition of other religions does not change the position of Islam as the final and perfect religion. Among academics, there are pros and cons regarding pluralism in Islam. Some scholars, such as Fazlur Rahman, argue that Islam must adapt to diverse social contexts.

In contrast, others, such as Sayyid Qutub, emphasize the importance of maintaining the purity of Islamic teachings. Religious pluralism is understood to be incompatible with the basic tenets of Islam. This suggests a tension between the need to interact with a plural society and the desire to maintain an exclusive Islamic identity. The point is, in this life, there are many colours that we must choose and respond to use. Suppose we deal with this colourful festival of life with the principles of multiculturalism, mutual respect, and mutual learning, and all of them commit to upholding truth, justice, and love. In that case, a harmonious life can be realized without having to sacrifice the principles of their respective religious beliefs.

The author's attitude and view towards diversity (religion) is also evident in one of the book's discussions entitled *When Husband and Wife Have Different Religions*. The author is quite careful in addressing this matter and does not touch on theological issues (verses about marriage between religions). He prefers to give examples of several cases where the relationship between husband and wife of different religions will result in a relationship that is getting drier day by day, marked by a gulf that continues to gape. Religious differences in marriage can be a psychosocial stressor for various forms of psychological conflict, which in turn undermines the primary purpose of marriage, namely a healthy and happy family (sakinah).⁸ Finally, the mouth of happiness to be realized in the marriage mahligai becomes increasingly distant. For this reason, the author suggests that couples of different religions should rethink their steps towards marriage. Why is religion at issue in this case? Because religion is likened to clothing that will be worn for life. Religious spirit, beliefs, and traditions will always be attached to every religious individual, including when living a married life. Many religious rituals that all family members should carry out end up being neglected. Not to mention the psychological burden of children born to this non-religious couple, confusion and insecurity will colour the beginning of their religiosity development.⁹ Boys follow their father's religion, and girls follow their mother's religion. What does the world say? In relation to the theme of death in this book, it is mentioned that the prayers of pious children after our death are one of the vehicles that facilitate the cycle of going home to the future home. However, if the prayers are divided and scattered, the children who are born are not of the same faith; of course, the speed of the vehicle becomes rather slow. Casuistic indeed, but the author suggests that we consider it.

Indeed, our life is a going and returning package, thus the meaning implied in the topic entitled creatures go and return. Every time we take a step, do activities and perform our roles in the festival of life, we are performing the function of going. Going forward will not go backwards, nor will it recede. Towards where? Towards a place to go home. Towards a place that is the absolute limit to end travelling activities in the world, returning to another realm, to the afterlife village. This is the meaning that the author wants to reveal in the discussion entitled "*Mahuk Pergi dan Kembali*" (Want to Go and Come Back). Rationally, we don't even know where we are leaving from and where we are going. The process of leaving begins when the fetus comes out of the mother's womb. How we were born, what it felt like, what we experienced at birth, none of us former fetuses can remember. Whether it hurts, whether it's

⁸ Dadang Hawari, "*Al Qur'an: Ilmu Kedokteran Jiwa Dan Kesehatan Jiwa*," M. Sonhadj (Yogyakarta: Dana Bhakti Prima Yasa, 1997).

⁹ Retno Kartini Savitaningrum Imansah, "Pernikahan Beda Agama: "Sudut Pandang Agama, HAM, dan Hukum"," *Harmoni Jurnal Multikultural Dan Multireligius* VOL. X NO. (2011): 968-981.

sweet, whether it's tight, whether it's bitter, we can't recount it. A little grace of science is indeed able to channel the birth process from a zygote, DNA, and fetus to become a baby, but the taste and experience of birth for the baby itself is only the swaying grass, and Allah knows it.

The same applies to the return journey. Our reasoning will only reach the moment the body is buried in the ground. As for the final place of return and how our subsequent fate is still a divine secret that is only slightly divulged to humans. But don't be afraid, says the author. The journey home is beautiful. Moreover, many good friends are walking with us. Many relatives escort us with thousands of prayers. All we need to prepare is to bring souvenirs in the form of a basket of virtues and a pile of love for Him. And don't always forget to get our respective spiritual diskettes, which contain all the records of our deeds and goodness or, conversely, our forgetfulness and alpha to be *printed out* before Allah. The Owner of the House in the realm of eternity, who is like the Loving, Merciful Mother, who always longs and waits for the return of His children.

Some topics that are not related to the theme of death reappear in this book, namely the issues of Crisis Spurs Creativity; Different Elections Different Markets; Chicken Sickness; and New Culture of Self-Promotion. Indeed, the discussion does not directly intersect with the big theme of this book, namely the discussion of death. Still, when referring to the discussion of the colourful festival of life in our beloved country of Indonesia Raya, there may be a red thread.

The discussion on the frenetic pace of life begins with the author discussing the issue of crisis and creativity. Life is full of tests, as the wise man said. Many problems and crises must be overcome, even to the point of causing stress. When various interests fulfil the celebration of the festival of life, a crisis will inevitably arise. Because of these crises and problems, our brains will work harder to control them. People create dams to overcome the crisis of flooding in the rainy season and the drought of agricultural land in the dry season. That is just one example. The point is that various breakthroughs will be born to overcome the crisis. Humans will continue to squeeze their creativity to produce multiple solutions to face a life that is prone to problems.

If humans already feel in a comfort zone, that is, a safe zone, then there is a tendency that their creativity will also become comfortable, rest, and eventually die. So, this colourful life is indeed full of changes, movements, and alternations, coming and going. Very dynamic. If we as performers or borrowing the term from Komaruddin Hidayat's previous book, namely "*Khalifah Allah di Bumi*" (The Caliph of Allah on Earth). In another book, namely "*Psikologi Ibadah*" (Psychology of Worship), "*Mengungkapkan Makna Menjadi Hamba dan Mitra Allah di Bumi*" (Revealing the Meaning of Being God's Servant and Partner on Earth).¹⁰ The author reviews the stages for a Muslim to get closer to Allah through three paths, namely (1) *ta'alluq* (trying to remember and bind our heart and mind awareness to Allah); (2) *tahalluq* (consciously imitating the attributes of Allah), and (3) the ability to actualize oneself as a believer who radiates the attributes of Allah through a form of behaviour that is all holy and noble). Through these three stages, human beings with reliable psychological qualities will be created who are expected to be able to carry out their caliphate duties representing God's role on earth for the benefit of humans and other creatures of God's creation¹¹ So we must fill the festival by continuing to work to overcome the crisis. We must not lose to frogs, as the author says. Frogs will jump when splashed with hot water. Are we going to stand idly by and watch various crises hit this country? Finally, the author closes this discussion with a motivational statement: May this nation be able and even more passionate about facing various crises. Century crisis, financial crisis, gas cylinder crisis, moral crisis, crisis of trust, and many other crises.

¹⁰ Komarudin Hidayat, "*Psikologi Ibadah: Menyibak Arti Menjadi Hamba dan Mitra Allah di Bumi*" (Bandung: Serambi, 2008).

¹¹ Komarudin Hidayat, "*Psikologi Ibadah: Menyibak Arti Menjadi Hamba Dan Mitra Allah Di Bumi.*"

In another discussion, the author slightly touched on the tradition of elections in Indonesia. The author even analogizes this election to the hustle and bustle of the market. The program is likened to the merchandise that is held. The election mechanism referred to by this country, according to the author, is not sufficient. Many political parties are not healthy and only become a showcase for brokers, pickpockets, and drug sellers who like to brag, even blaspheme, each other in the same field, the field of Indonesia Raya. That's unfortunate. Another discussion that tends to criticize the political system in Indonesia also appears in the theme of the article entitled "*Rabun Ayam Penyakit dan Budaya Baru Promosi Diri*" (Myopia, Chicken, Disease, and New Culture of Self-Promotion). Both generally highlight the negative behaviour of politicians and bureaucrats in Indonesia.

2. No Endless Festival

The second part of the book takes up the central theme of No Endless Festival. This topic would open the veil of the last episode of human life in the mortal realm, namely death. Calculating profit and loss while living life and carrying out Allah's mandate on earth is something we must do if we look forward. That we will be accountable for a series of mandates is the starting point of the discussion, with optimistic thoughts, of course.

Part Two of this book explores ten themes: Learning to Know God Until Old; Be a Long Learner; Parents as a Door of Blessing; The Collapse of Family Palaces; Houses without Walls; The Meaning of Ownership; Pain that Brings Blessings; Religion Makes Sufferings Sufferable; Destiny and Human Freedom; and Even God is Shy.

When reviewing the topics of Learning to Know God Until Old Age, *Be a Long Learner*, and Parents are a Door of Blessing, suddenly, the mind immediately thought of Russel Jones, the *watermark* expert from England. In his old age, he continues to work and share his knowledge with others. Similarly, the author upholds his respect for his parents and seniors. He mentions a number of names that are figures he admires, such as Pak Iwan, a lecturer from ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology), Cak Nur, Prof. Dr. Mastuhu, and others. These are scientists and thinkers who are undying. They continue to learn and work despite age and illness, just like a coconut; the older it gets, the more coconutty it gets. These figures are described as filling their old age with a profile that is increasingly *wise*, more religious, and remains optimistic waiting for the last seconds of death to pick them up. They are the figures of parents who bring blessings because they continue to share what they have for others to benefit from. Leaving a great legacy after their death is a blessing beyond measure for the next generation.

The following discussions are still about humans and their roles in the family and society, or whatever status in the play they play to enliven the festival of life in the world. This is illustrated, for example, in the topic of The Collapse of the Family Palace and the Meaning of Ownership. In this discussion, we can see the author's concern about the trend of arrests of the nation's elders, former ministers, former officials, and others for alleged corruption cases. This is implied in the topic of discussion about the Collapse of the Family Palace. In their old age, when they are role models for their families and society, they are suddenly dragged by the police in corruption cases. So, the family atmosphere that was safe, calm, and peaceful suddenly became shaken, or the family palace that had been built collapsed. From this case, there is a lesson that we can learn, that tests and obstacles will be greater when we are in the top position. Once you fall, it is not only yourself that will be destroyed but also all the joints and pillars of the family. Many will be hurt and it won't be easy to get up again. For this reason, the author gives tips so that we use what we have as best as possible for the good and welfare of others because wealth, children, position, and others are only borrowed goods. Position it as a mandate and a gift to be grateful for and function. So, if the Owner takes away the trust, there will be no pity and regret because it has been used to do good deeds.

The author's thoughts and reflections on religious pluralism appear again in the discussion of Houses Without Walls. Theologically, religious plurality is seen as an undoubted

reality that each stands on an equal footing so that the spirit of missionary and Proselytizing is considered irrelevant because all religions are seen as having their truths. Many have rejected this concept. However, religious pluralism, in terms of diversity and multiculturalism without mixing the creeds of each, can be more acceptable to create tolerance and inter-religious harmony.

It is stated that rapid advances in technology and communication have made the boundaries between individuals thinner. Like houses that were once bounded by walls and fences, today these houses are almost without walls anymore. People can easily exchange information about cultures and religions through the internet and a wide variety of effective mass media products. As a result, people of different faiths and beliefs can dialogue with each other, fight, argue, blaspheme, and so on. It continues with the implementation of various interfaith activities. This is both positive and worrying, according to the author. However, in Indonesia, such a climate may not be so wavy because scholars always convince their people to maintain their respective beliefs. It is essential always to preserve belief, understanding, and faith. However, the wave of pluralism is getting higher. Where the boundaries of the house are no longer visible, of course, it must be faced with a wise attitude about how the author does not specifically discuss it.¹²

The wisdom behind calamity (blessing in disguise) is the next topic of this book. Being grateful for calamities and changing the perspective with a more optimistic attitude. The author gives a rather unusual example related to this topic. For example, the wisdom of the tsunami disaster was the cessation of GAM (Free Aceh Movement) activities. Because of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, Indonesia became independent on August 17, 1945. Compare this with the discussion on "Thankful for Disasters" and Changing the Point of View by Jalaluddin Rahmat, who states that luck and misfortune, grace and calamity, are like two sides of a coin that cannot be avoided from life. This is relevant to the quote from Surah Ash-Sharḥ [94]:5-6), which means: *"So, indeed, with hardship there is ease. Indeed, with difficulty, there is ease"*.

However, whether we will remain happy or suffer depends on our psychological attitude, perspective, and control in our hearts. So change our perspective so that every disaster does not cause suffering. How can we do this? That is by seeing the positive and good sides in the disaster by being grateful and having faith. Based on research, a positive perspective will encourage the birth of happiness and activate positive genes in the body. Happy people will be more resistant to disease, stay young, and live longer and more. On the other hand, a negative outlook by always complaining and lamenting calamities will trigger stress and negative genes. Negative genes will cause the brain to lose hair, rupture the stomach, and cause cancer and other diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, Diabetes Mellitus, haemorrhoids, and neurosis. So the point is that one's perspective and psychological attitude will affect the condition of the body.¹³

In essence, the author wants to state that behind the events of calamity, disaster, illness, or tragedy, there will be wisdom and grace waiting. Because of illness, we become closer to family and even closer to the Creator; the time for prayer, dhikr, or self-reflection becomes more spacious. The author quotes a saying, namely "religion makes suffering sufferable", that religion is able to make suffering bearable (self-healing function). Self-healing through dhikr can be a therapy for mental health. Dhikr is accompanied by an acknowledgement of the greatness of Allah, the Almighty Creator, and an acknowledgement of one's weakness, so there

¹² Attabik - Sumiati, "Pluralisme Agama: Studi Tentang Kearifan Lokal Di Desa Karangbenda Kecamatan Adipala Kabupaten Cilacap," *Islam Zeitschrift Für Geschichte Und Kultur Des Islamischen Orients* 9/2 (n.d.): 1–12.

¹³ Muhammad Arif, "Pendidikan Kejiwaan dan Kesehatan Mental (Perspektif Fakhruddin ar-Razi)," *Farabi* 16/2 (2019): 161–180.

is a process of self-compassion and positive self-talk.¹⁴ Dhikr can also be used as a balancing tool (equilibrium) for the human soul and spirit. Therefore, in Dhikr worship, there is a spiritual element, a mind that is centered on the Creator. This will then cause a feeling of surrender, which in turn creates hope and calmness. This then forms a homeostatic body condition, where the immune element becomes increased. These efforts and conditions are certainly inseparable from the work system that regulates the rhythm of human life, namely hormones.¹⁵ With the strength of faith and a sense of attachment to God, a person *who faces trials as severe as any will be able to survive, as the following verse means: "Allah does not burden anyone except according to his ability. To him is the reward for what he has done, and to him is the punishment for what he has done. (They pray,) "O our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or err. O our Lord, do not burden us with a heavy burden as You burdened those before us. O our Lord, do not impose on us what we are not able to bear. Forgive us, pardon us, and have mercy on us. You are our protector. So, help us in facing the disbelievers"* (Al-Baqarah [2]:286.

In this discussion of calamity, the author also touches on the involvement of destiny in organizing one's life. Receiving gifts and calamities is human destiny, and if everything is accepted sincerely, life will become calmer. However, in facing this destiny, humans are also given the freedom to appreciate it. Whether to take it with all faith or not is a choice of freedom given to humans, as quoted from the Hadith, which means, *"If Allah loves a people, then He will give them a trial. Whoever is pleased, for him is Allah's pleasure, and whoever is angry, for him is Allah's anger"* (Tirmidzi, No. 2396).

Humans who carry out Allah's role on earth are given reason and freedom as "managers of destiny".¹⁶ Through the gift of science, humans are given the ability to recognize and identify the symptoms of destiny that can be seen around them and use them to meet human needs. For example, earthquake disasters and calamities are destiny, but humans are also given a reason to understand the symptoms. For this reason, seismographs were invented, earthquake-resistant houses were built, or settlements were moved from earthquake-prone areas.

The second part of the book ends with the topic of God is Shy. God *is so shy* that He feels ashamed not to answer the prayers of His servants. If God is so shy, we should also maintain our shyness. Ashamed of committing despicable acts either in the eyes of God or others because vile deeds are filth, while shame is an adornment, as the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah radhiyallahu 'anhu: *"Every good thing is an adornment, and shyness is part of goodness"* (Al-Bukhari). Shame in Islam is a barrier to abominable deeds. People who have shame will protect themselves from actions that damage dignity and honour.

3. Assalamu 'alaikum Ya Izrail

The third part of the book, which is literally related to the title of the book, is the subject matter titled Assalamu 'alaikum ya Izrail. There are eleven topics reviewed, ranging from Making Peace with Death; Laksana Beringin Tua; Boarding Pass of Life; Forgiving is Noble and Healthy; Pay off Your Debts!; Children's Prayers for Parents; Camel Festival Fun, Forgetting the Hajj; Reading the Past; The Body Records; King Midas Syndrome; and Visiting Allah's House.

Most of the topics discussed are related to the final episode of the festival of human life on earth, namely travelling home to Sang Sangkan Paraning Dumadi. Before heading to the final journey, namely making peace with death, Allah sends messengers in the form of signs of death. Imam Qurtubi in his book *"At-Tadzkirah fi Ahwāl al-Mawtā wa Umūr al-Ākhirah"*

¹⁴ Fitri Agustina Sari - Agusman Damanik, "Konsep Self Healing dengan Zikir Dan Syukur dalam Al-Qur'an," *JRTI (Jurnal Riset Tindakan Indonesia)* 8/4 (2023): 353–361.

¹⁵ Umar Latif, "Dzikir Dan Upaya Pemenuhan Mental-Spiritual Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *At-Taujih : Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam* 5/1 (2022): 28.

¹⁶ Jaya Rukmana - Putri Rachmah Amalia, "Konsep Takdir Dalam Perspektif Hadis," *AL ISNAD: Journal of Indonesian Hadith Studies* 3/2 (December 14, 2022): 110–117.

(*Reminders of the Condition of the Dead and the Things of the Hereafter*) states that Allah through the angel of death gives a number of signs of death such as weakened energy, illness, gray hair that begins to grow, old age, and changes in hearing and vision.¹⁷ Even the individual himself is also given a premonition (death instinct).¹⁸ ¹⁹ Before death befalls him, which the family will usually realize after the person dies, in this topic, the author gives examples of some people who remain optimistic about death, such as Nurcholis Madjid (Cak Nur) and Prof. Mastuhu. This is because they have reached the peak of their quest for religiosity so that when they are physically weak and suffering from severe illness, they have the strength of faith, reason, critical thinking, and peace of mind. This significantly alleviates the suffering of those who are waiting for death. Family, friends and relatives who are left behind can finally take lessons on how to face death peacefully, sincerely, and husnul khatimah (write the meaning of this word here in Eng.).

The author describes the process of travelling to and from the house of death as an airport. Many humans who have finished their duties to enliven the world's hustle and bustle festival are patiently waiting in the waiting room to depart (take off) towards the mortality gate. To be able to enter the gate we must have a boarding pass whose patent is held by Angel Izrail. While in the waiting room, we are given full power to self-reflect. It will feel short if everything is pleasant, so we are optimistic and excited as if we are about to board a plane to travel or go home to the place where we came from. However, it can also feel long and tiring if you go through it feeling unhappy because you are reminded of the shadows left behind. Too much waste, too much affection for wealth and pleasure, unproductive and lack of friends and other good deeds. Three things will be our friends and provisions entering the realm of death, two things return, and one follows on, namely his family, his wealth, and his deeds. The two things that will return are his family and his wealth, while the one that stays is his deeds (HR Muslim).²⁰

Other discussions such as "*Laksana Beringin Tua*" (*Like the Old Banyan*), Forgiving is Noble and Healthy, Fun of Camel Festival, Forgetting to Perform Hajj, Reading the Past, The Body Records, and King Midas Syndrome generally explain the various steps that humans need to take to make peace with death. When death comes, it must be accepted with sincerity, enthusiasm, and *legowo* (*accepting destiny*). We all must be ready and enthusiastic, considering that the schedule of death is specific. Hopefully, the journey is joyful and able to enrich the mind like a spiritual tour. It is also necessary to complete some things that ease the journey, such as forgiving each other, conveying trust, fulfilling promises, or paying debts. Mention is also made of children's prayers for parents that will ease the journey to eternity. In addition, it also leaves behind everything that will make the trip home harder, such as excessive love for material possessions, which is examined in King Midas syndrome, hatred, and revenge. King Midas Syndrome, has been discussed by the author in his book entitled *The Tragedy of King Midas* (1998), which tells the story of King Midas who is thirsty for glory and wealth, even though they are only entrusted goods and are not eternal. In fact, if you are not good at dealing with them, you can harm yourself.²¹

Part Three of this book concludes with a topic entitled Visiting the House of God. The process of visiting in this context is the ritual of pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Mecca. It is

¹⁷ Imam al-Qurtubi, "*Tanda-Tanda Orang Akan Mati*" (Bandung: Jabal, 2012).

¹⁸ Nestiani Hutami, "Death Instinct Manifested through Passive Aggressiveness and Its Social Effects in Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener,'" *NOBEL: Journal of Literature and Language Teaching* 8/1 (2017): 1-8.

¹⁹ Monique Nyemecz - Stephen Appel, "The death instinct," *Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand* 13/1 (September 30, 2007): 7-23.

²⁰ Asep Saefullah - Darusmanwiati, "*Tamasya ke Alam Kubur, Mengerti Perjalanan Pulang Menuju Ruman Masa Depan*" (Jakarta: Zaman, 2009).

²¹ Komarudin Hidayat, "Tragedi Raja Midas, Moralitas Agama dan Krisis Modernisme," *Jakarta: Paramadina*, 1998.

also referred to as a spiritual homecoming that must be done with enthusiasm and passion. The ritual is characterized by relinquishing all dependence on social status and material possessions symbolized by the simple ihram garment. All the people gathered together look the same, and what distinguishes them in the eyes of Allah is only their level of faith and piety. In this case, the hajj can also be called a rite of ego death, where all Muslims melt and bury their self-identity and unite in the same desire to find ma'rifah (the breaking of the veil between the servant and Allah so that the servant is no longer filled with doubts) about the Substance of Allah Ta'ala. and His attributes and the wisdom of life, directly and closely from the source, Allah Ta'ala. In relation to the theme of death, the author reveals that we should also welcome our deaths as enthusiastically as we do our hajj.

Finally, the book reaches its conclusion by discussing the topic of Towards a Peaceful Death. No festival will not end. Similarly, life has an end and a purpose. If birth is the beginning of the journey away, then death is the end of the journey back. However, death itself is not something that must be feared, avoided, and ignored. It is definitely scheduled in the blueprint agenda of every human being. In fact, death and the things that will happen after it are the stages of the steps forward that humans go through to enter a higher quality of life.

The behavior of people when waiting for the Angel of Death, Izrail is different. Some are enthusiastic, sincere, and *legowo* (airy chest). But some are heavy, reluctant, afraid, doubtful, and various uncertain feelings. It is a painful choice if we see the gate of mortality as something dark and gloomy. God did not create death to frighten people. Death is not a dark gate full of terror and threats that our parents used to scare their naughty children. God is forgiving and merciful. In fact, Allah deliberately created the harmony of life and death in order to encourage humans to multiply the savings of good deeds as told in surah al-Mulk [67]: 2), which means: *"It is He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is better in deeds. He is the Mighty, the Forgiving"* (Al-Mulk [67]:2)

We are still given the opportunity and constantly reminded to make improvements before death picks us up. Therefore, change your perspective on death. Look at death with peace and optimism. Focus on increasing your provisions by continuing to work, strengthening friendships, and multiplying good deeds. Undoubtedly, our lives and, at the same time, our role in this festival will be lively, fun, and colourful.

4. Discussion

In the social and cultural context, people tend to be taboo about talking about death. This shows that there is still a strong stigma associated with death, which can lead to incomprehension and fear.²² Death is always seen as something scary and mysterious and often avoided in everyday conversations. This suggests that there is still a strong stigma associated with death, which can lead to profound incomprehension and fear.²³ Death is often viewed as a challenging and mysterious topic, leading to avoidance in conversations and contributing to a stigma that fosters misunderstanding and anxiety. This stigma often arises from a lack of knowledge about death and its processes. In response, Hidayat seeks to address these fears by providing valuable insights into death, aiming to initiate open dialogues that enhance understanding and encourage a more positive perspective. By adopting a holistic and empathetic approach, Hidayat explores various cultural traditions, rituals, and philosophical viewpoints associated with death. He emphasizes the importance of mental and emotional readiness when confronting mortality, urging individuals to see death not as an endpoint but as a natural part of life. His goal is to shift perceptions of death from fear to a meaningful aspect of the human experience that enriches our understanding of life. Through education, sharing

²² Januarto, "Kematian Adalah Kehidupan: Metafora Konseptual Kematian Dalam Islam Di Indonesia."

²³ Alaina J Brown et al., "Does death anxiety affect end-of-life care discussions?," *International Journal of Gynecological Cancer* 24/8 (2014): 1521–1526.

experiences, and fostering discussions, Hidayat hopes to create a more supportive environment for conversations about death, ultimately minimizing its stigma and encouraging individuals to live more mindfully and meaningfully.²⁴

The author also emphasizes the importance of spirituality in dealing with death. He invites readers to reflect on spiritual values that can provide peace and hope in the final moments. With an optimistic approach, *Interpretation of Death* is not just a book about death but also a guide to a more meaningful and conscious life.

The theme of death has been discussed for as long as and as old as the issue of divinity. Even the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* by Imam al-Ghazali explicitly discusses the issue of death. One of the books translated by al-Ghazali, *Behind the Veil of Death*, whose contents are quoted from the Book of "*Ihya Ulumuddin*". among other things, discusses Death, Grave Torture, the Chaos of the Apocalypse, the Mahsyar Field, Heaven and Hell, and the Extent of Allah's Mercy.²⁵ The discourse on death presents two contrasting perspectives: a religious viewpoint that embraces death and believes in an afterlife based on specific doctrines, and a secular perspective that often rejects or denies the concept. In "Rejecting Death," Agus Mustafa posits that we can combat death, highlighting the role of the "Telomere" gene, which influences lifespan. Some individuals are naturally endowed with longer telomeres, allowing potential lifespans of up to 100 years; however, unhealthy lifestyle choices can shorten these telomeres and drastically reduce lifespan. Additionally, factors such as stress and depression can accelerate genetic aging, potentially leading to suicidal thoughts, which may be seen as an expression of the death instinct. Islamic teachings emphasize that the timing of death is determined by Allah, prohibiting self-harm and highlighting instances of divine mercy that prevent suicide attempts, providing individuals with opportunities for reflection and personal growth.

In addition, some react pessimistically and consider death as a form of extinction, and some are optimistic and see death as the first step towards a better and eternal life.

Why do we fear death? It could be because it and what happens afterwards are so mysterious. Actually, this has been alleviated by the opening of the veil about death. No less than 300 verses talk about death and what a person experiences when facing it. Those who are obedient will get favours, while those who are cursed at the time of death will be visited by the angel of death who forcibly uproots his reluctant soul because he is shown the place to be visited (hell), as quoted in the verse which means: "*If he (the dead) was among those who were brought near (to Allah),.... he will have peace, sustenance, and paradise (full of) pleasure*" (Al-Wāqī'ah [56]:88-89). Or "*If he is among the liars and misguided, his banquet will be boiling water, and he will be burned by Jahim (Hell)*" (Al- Wāqī'ah [56]:92-94)

Since death is something that has not yet happened, in the sense that we have not yet experienced it, even though it is something specific, all discussions about death are more psychological and speculative. Death remains a mystery, and for some people, it is taboo to talk about it. In psychological studies, the term NDE (Near Death Experience) is known as.^{26 27} Which is the experience of people approaching death, or more precisely, the experience of suspended animation. Also called the term NDS (Near Death Survival), namely those who, according to doctors, have been declared dead but turned out to be alive and conscious again.²⁸ Based on stories, either written or oral, with those who have experienced NDE, what they tell

²⁴ Brown et al., "Does Death Anxiety Affect End-of-Life Care Discussions?"

²⁵ Al-Ghazali, "*Dibalik Tabir Kematian*" (Jakarta, Indonesia: Kathulistiwa Press, 2004).

²⁶ Abdul Hadi, "Near Death Experience Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Ad-DA'WAH* 20/2 (2022): 25–32.

²⁷ Bruce Greyson, "Near-death experience and quality of life: additional research," *Critical Care* 27/1 (2023): 185.

²⁸ Michael N Marsh, "The Neurophysiology & Phenomenology of the Out-of-Body Experience BT - Sensing the Divine: Influences of Near-Death, Out-of-Body & Cognate Neurology in Shaping Early Religious Behaviours," ed. Michael N Marsh (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 117–125.

reinforces the teachings of the Qur'an that death is the separation of the spirit from the body.²⁹ The spirit does not die but enters a new world. Related to the phenomenon of suspended animation, there are also OBE (Out Of Body Experience) events. The text examines the phenomenon of the spirit leaving the body and its subsequent return without a prior illness, referencing various accounts of Near-Death Experiences (NDE), Near-Death States (NDS), and Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE). It suggests that the process resembles a review of one's life, where spirits are presented with a report card of their virtuous and malevolent actions, with implications for their afterlife experiences. Positive actions lead to joy, while negative behaviors result in suffering. Some narratives feature reunions with deceased loved ones, while others depict a more ominous fate for those who have caused harm. The discussion also highlights Komaruddin Hidayat's recent publication, *Making Peace with Death: Embracing Death Optimistically*, which follows his bestselling *Psychology of Death: Turning Fear into Optimism*."

The new book reportedly offers little new content and is less comprehensive than its predecessor, aiming for a broader audience with its simplified approach. While both works feature a blend of Western philosophy and Islamic texts, the newer volume presents fewer references and lacks original Arabic citations. Overall, about 30% of *Making Peace with Death* addresses the theme of death, with the remaining 70% focused on life, reflecting a similar ratio to Hidayat's earlier work. This emphasis on life over death is intentional, as the author avoids in-depth discussions on jurisprudential and eschatological aspects of death. In contrast, Iman Ghazali's *Behind the Veil of Death* offers a more extensive exploration of the human experience related to death and the afterlife. In this case, the author prefers to discuss the issue of death in a more optimistic scope and how to deal with it more beautifully, enthusiastically, and longingly. As much as possible, the author tries to convince readers that death is not gloomy, dark, or even scary. Although in the journey of going and returning, there is still a counting cycle. Who plants who harvest when the gate of mortality begins to open. With many discussions of life, it is as if the author invites us to fill this life by doing as many practical activities as possible (religious *maslahat*).³⁰ Gathering as many provisions as possible may represent this intention.

Komaruddin Hidayat's second book on death is organized into three main sections. The initial sections, *Festival of Life and No Festival without End*, focus primarily on human life and mortality. The third section, *Assalamu'alaikum ya Izrail*, shifts the emphasis to death, while the epilogue, *Fetching Death in Peace*, offers a reflective conclusion. Hidayat effectively communicates complex themes of religion and Sufism in an accessible manner, allowing readers to engage with the concepts of *da'wah* through the perspective of death. The narrative style is conversational and anecdotal, reminiscent of Jack Canfield's *Chicken Soup* series, which enhances the readability of the text. Overall, Hidayat presents a mature view on life and death, advocating for a tranquil acceptance of death that arises from fulfilling one's responsibilities as Allah's *khalifah* on earth. He argues that achieving a harmonious balance between devotion to Allah and engagement with the world can alleviate the anxieties surrounding death.

Conclusion

This article with the genre of religious *da'wah* and *tasawwuf*, which carries more motivational themes, is quite interesting because it is expected to transmit positive inspiration to its readers. The inspirational stories in the background are filled with verses or narrations

²⁹ Michael N Marsh, "The Neurophysiology & Phenomenology of the Out-of-Body Experience BT - Sensing the Divine: Influences of Near-Death, Out-of-Body & Cognate Neurology in Shaping Early Religious Behaviours," ed. Michael N Marsh (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 117–125.

that reinforce the discussion of life and death from a more optimistic perspective. From the various stories presented, readers can take lessons to enrich their spiritual lives. As a result, there is no point in fearing, rejecting, denying, or even denying death because it is clearly coming. For this reason, it must be 33 embrasseds and waited for optimistically, like a person who is about to board an enjoyable spiritual tour planeand.

To enrich books with religious themes and a touch of Sufism, this book is worth reading for all circles. Readers do not have to frown as they read other Sufism-themed books that tend to use utopian and less down-to-earth language or read other books that carry the theme of death with a "*somewhat frightening*" explanation because they describe life after death with the concept of grave punishment, heaven-hell, and all its forms. As a light and inspiring contemporary religious da'wah book for those who want to add insight into the field of religious studies and Sufism with a bit of a touch of psychology, this book seems quite helpful.

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