

Sexual Ethics in Pesantren Literature (Sexual Regimentation in Qurrah al- Uyun)

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Abstract

The widespread pornography has yielding enormous negative effects for especially women and their born children ranging from diseases, abortion, death, unhealthy sexual life, and so on. These excesses generate from the crisis of sexual ethics that degrade sexual acts as merely for temporary and biological objectives. Using both hermeneutics and mainly discourse analysis, this paper seeks to find out the representation of sexual ethics in Qurrah al-'Uyun. This study finds out that sexual regimentation in Qurrah al-'Uyun is constituted based on the benefit of sexual act and its danger. This research is methodologically follows qualitative approach that aims to comprehend the data in depth taking. The religious and medical precautions are established in order that subjects will

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1 follow the recommendations and avoid the cautions to hinder harmful effects, the sexual acts may generate for them and their progeny. They have to apply self restriction and stylizing their sexual behavior according to the determined regimen either alimentary or sexual to gain benefit for the future.

[Pornografi yang meluas telah menghasilkan dampak negatif yang sangat besar terutama bagi perempuan dan anak-anak mulai dari penyakit, aborsi, kematian, kehidupan seksual yang tidak sehat, dan sebagainya. Dampak tersebut dihasilkan dari krisis etika seksual yang menurunkan perilaku seksual semata-mata untuk tujuan sementara dan biologis. Hermeneutika dan analisis wacana yang digunakan dalam kajian ini berupaya untuk mengetahui representasi etika seksual dalam Qurrah al-'Uyun. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa representasi seksual di Qurrah al-'Uyun dibentuk berdasarkan manfaat tindakan seksual dan bahayanya. Metodologi dalam penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui data secara mendalam. Tindakan pencegahan agama dan medis ditetapkan agar subjek akan mengikuti rekomendasi dan menghindari peringatan guna menghambat dampak berbahaya yang dapat dihasilkan tindakan seksual terhadapnya dan keturunannya. Mereka harus menerapkan pembatasan diri dan menata perilaku seksualnya sesuai dengan cara hidup yang ditentukan baik tujuan pencernaan atau seksual untuk mendapatkan keuntungan di masa depan.]

Keywords: sexual ethics; pesantren literatur;
sexual regimentation

Introduction

The excessive pornography in media exerts significant influence on young sexual practices. Survey conducted by KPAI (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia or Indonesian Children

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Protection Commission) dan Kemenkes (Health Ministry Republic of Indonesia) in October 2013, shows that 62,7% Indonesian youths have experienced pre-marital sexual relation. 20% of 94.270 young women was having pregnancy out of marriage, and 21% of them have ever underwent abortion. It leads to other case that during 3 month there was 10.203 cases and 30% of the sufferers are youth.¹

The State depicts lists some problems of women stemming from their subordinate position in sexual relation to their sexuality. First, it causes an unexpected pregnancy causing social and health problems such as social sanction, abortion, risk of death for both mother and the born child, and premature birth. Second, it will cause the occurring IMS (Infeksi Menular Seksual/Sexual Contaminate Infection). Premarital sexual relation will risk the occurrence of IMS that continually increases in a year with age 15-48 years. In some developed countries the infected women reach at 11-25%. Women are more susceptible to that infection than men for lacking antibody protection compared with mature women and lacking cervix ripeness that make it vulnerable to that infection. Uncured infection will incur cervix cancer, damaged fertility, chronic hipbone sickness and affecting the born child. Third, it creates an unhealthy sexual life for the prevailing voluntarily lack and sexual pressure will generate anxiety and susceptible of diseases. Forced sexual relation over women will also cause frigidity (unwilling of having intercourse), dispareunia or vaginismus (agonies and stiff of sexual organ as making intercourse, or even sexual aversion sexual rejection). Forth, sexual violence or harassment renders women mostly as victim.

¹ http://www.kompasiana.com/rumahbelajar_persada/63-persen-remaja-di-indonesia-melakukan-seks-pra-nikah_54f91d77a33311fc078b45f4

Fifth, it generates human trafficking that mainly befalls women than men for their subordinate position.²

All these problems are revolved around sexual relation that actually can generate both benefit and danger depending on how one embody it properly in line with natural and religious norms. On this reason, this paper seeks to elaborate discourse of sexual ethics in pesantren literature to provide an account of sexual regimentation to regulate sexual acts in order to attain benefit for health, progeny and sexual satisfaction and otherwise avoid of any negative excesses that may occur from disregarding the established precautions.

Methods

This research is generally classified as a library research in which the data both primary and secondary are collected from literally sources. It methodologically follows qualitative approach that aims to comprehend the data in depth taking into account all the “roundness” that circumstance the subject of research in question. It aims to search the meaning of the subject and proceeds it inductively in order to generate a particular theory originated from the specific phenomenon.

This research is placed in the intersection of sociology, hermeneutics and cultural studies. It definitely demands multidisciplinary approaches and accommodates variety of theoretical frameworks to unravel the sexual ethics and its in Islam particularly represented within *Pengantin al-Qur'an* and *Qurrah al-Uyun*. For this goal, two approaches are of significance to employ. The first is Gadamer's hermeneutics oriented for casting the ways the authors of the works as readers interact with and interpret the quoted texts particularly related with theme of sexual ethics under discussion. Analysis on text, its context and reader are valuable to depict the

² Made Oka Negara, “Mengurai Persoalan Kehidupan Seksual dan Reproduksi Perempuan,” *Jurnal Perempuan*, no. 41 (n.d.): 10-14.



interaction of reader and text situated in particular context. This approach is considerable for supporting the second approach.

The second approach is discourse analysis aimed to reveal discursive production of the discourse of sexual ethics in Qurrah al-'Uyun, the subjectivity it seeks to create and power relations embedded within. It evolves three levels, that is representation, discursive practice and social practice.

Regimen of Pleasure, Procreation and Recreation

Foucault investigates historically discursive accounts of sexuality generated a profound elaboration on the sexual ethics of the ancient Greek and Rome. Turning to both epochs, the constructed sexual ethics are mainly explored in respect with "the specificity and peculiarity of a government of the sexual subject either by external legal and scientific techniques or by internal relation of the self to the self vis a vis the question of proper sexual comportment".³

In ancient Greece, for instance, there were hardly prevalent official authorities (legal, moral, juridical) that controls and disciplines sexual conduct. Though, in certain extent, there existed laws such as absolute prohibition on extramarital relationship for women, the ways sexual acts regulated and disciplined were particularly different with official treatments. Sexual attitudes are more ethical in nature and the sphere was especially domestic in everyday life. As such, sexual rules were mostly oriented to train oneself through abstention and austerity embodied in internal and external disciplines.⁴

Garton argues that Roman sexual ethics was engendered by the decline of birth rate among the elite and the mobility of public activities that generated immoral comportments and effeminate man highly regarded as a social thread. Hence, it needs to recover such "violation" through affirmation and

³ Ibid., 92

⁴ Ibid., 93

insistence of conjugal valorization guaranteed by law enforcement that encourages men to maintain conjugal relation and appreciates women to have birth more than three children.⁵

In Greek medicine, there are accounts on relation between sexual activities and body, whether beneficial or harmful for men, women and their progeny that further yield careful sexual regimen. He finds out that in ancient medical thought there are positive and negative insights attached to sexual acts. The former refers to “the valorization of the semen” naturally deemed as the substance in which all the powerful in life gather within, by which the continuity of life maintains, and through which death can be negotiated. It is the sperm that men reach their highest virtue and perfection for its contribution to “health, strength, courage, and generation”⁶ and making them occupying superiority over others. There is also a valorization of sexual act for since sexual union is considerable as natural, it is unlikely harmful in itself. While the latter views that sexual act is intrinsically dangerous for its excretion of that worth substance and for its potential of ill-effects.

Sexual relation in Islam is sanctioned as religiously legitimate for procreative end as well in other religions. Religious texts (Qur’an and *hadith*) bear on affirmation on the significance of marriage for human being, that is, generating progeny. In the Qur’an 2:223, it is stated that: “Your wives are as a tilth unto you so approach your tilth when and how your will.”⁷ Wife is assumed as a tilth on which husband sows the seed in order to grow plant of worth fruits. In a sense, marriage serves as a natural mechanism by which preservation of generation and offspring is likely to manifest. It gains more

⁵ Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Sexual Revolution* (London: Equinox, 2004), 58.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Care of Self* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 112.

⁷ ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translations and Commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989), 90.

significance as religion prescribes five fundamental objectives of Islamic tenets on which overall religious teachings and practices rely on and to which they have to be made in reference to, called as *maqasid syari'ah*, consisting of: preservation of religion, reason, progeny, property, and soul.⁸

Several traditions as well confirm the procreative aim of marriage. The Prophet suggested his followers to get marriage and yield offspring for he could be proud of his huge followers in hereafter in compared with the previous prophet's followers.⁹ Otherwise, practice of religious celibacy is precisely objected by the prophet regarded it as violating his tradition and thus claiming marriage as his *sunnah* or authoritative practice.¹⁰ On this ground, he ever criticized his follower's attitude that practiced worldly alienation including celibacy arguing that he exemplified worldly involvement and not that of worldly avoidance including getting marriage and having sex with his wives.¹¹

Sexual pleasure in Islam is not considerable as an evil; even it is as much regarded as natural need, good for human being and a part of religious devotion. 'Ali, in his commentary on verse 2:223 above, holds that "sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, or to be treated lightly, or to be indulged to excess. It is as solemn a fact as any in life."¹² Sex and thus its manifestation are a part of natural order not necessarily to avoid and since it is natural its existence precisely must be preserved

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⁸ Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A System Approach* (London and Washington: The International Institute of Islamic thought, 2008), 21-24.

⁹ Abu Muhammad Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun* (Surabaya: Dar al-'Ilm, n.d.), 11.

¹⁰ Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 6.

¹¹ Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, ed. Dar Al-Fikr, 1994. Vol. 6, 142.

¹² 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translations and Commentary*, 90.

for maintaining the natural order itself. In contrast, rejection of sex and its embodiment results on the occurrence of natural disorder.

In the Qur'an, it is emphasized that "emotional and sexual relief couples provide for each other".¹³ "And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may take rest with them, and He established between you love and compassion." (30:21). There is also a tradition mentioning that the man who marries takes possession of half of religion. Commenting this tradition, Abdelwahab Boudilba views that the fulfillment of one's personality lies in the intimacy of the sexes.¹⁴ Ibnu Arabi even maintains that all the cosmos and things within is a locus of God' self revealing. However, the greatest locus of such revelation is sexual experience.¹⁵

It strikingly differs from Christianity that prohibits any sexual relation for pleasure as such. The only religiously legitimate aim is only for procreation to generate offspring. Weber contends that sexual pleasure can threaten any attempt to respond religiously to sinfulness. Even it is perceivable as irrational that is potential to break rational organization such as self control and life planning.¹⁶

However, in terms of sexual pleasure, Islam sets up that it must be oriented and embodied in accordance with religious and moral values. Religion prescribes that such satisfaction has to be fulfilled within legitimate and sacred bond of marriage and love. Therefore, the satisfaction is certainly not oriented for a temporary enjoyment rather more everlasting joy. The drive to

¹³ Leonard Lewisohn, "Romantic Love in Islam," in *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions* (Oxford: Abc-Clio, 2008). Vol. 1., 513.

¹⁴ Abdelwahab Boudilba, *Sexuality in Islam: Peradaban Kamasutra Abad Pertengahan* (Yogyakarta: Alenia, 2004), 184.

¹⁵ Shichiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 250.

¹⁶ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body & Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 19.

pursue it is primarily soul not physic within which the latter considerably partakes little portion compared with the former. On this ground, the ways to fulfill the pleasure must be as well attached with religious and moral values so that its realization is not morally excessive and uncontrolled. "One relying on physic within sexual relation does not understand the sacred marital relationship; therefore good religious men and women when having such relation will cover most part of their bodies instead of opening them up".¹⁷

Religious affirmation on sexual pleasure is also sanctioned by tradition that indeed in particular case prioritizes fulfillment of pleasure than religious devotion. As in case of women's fasting, it is not justified to continue her fasting and therefore must be cancelled as her husband wants her to have intercourse.¹⁸ Satisfaction in question is significant in maintaining both women and men identity that for the former it is that makes them truly women for their sincere submission to men. While for the latter, it also makes them feel like real men for their bearing of responsibility for taking care of their women.¹⁹

Sexual regimentation in Islam is constructed for both procreative and pleasure objectives. Both ends are equally deemed as natural and hence religion accommodates both of them yielding sexual regimen built on health and moral perspective. Precautions and restrictions are made based on to ensure that sexual acts will conform their objectives while not violating natural and moral rules. Moral regulations are drawn from religious tenets and from the prevailing dominant social and cultural ideology. Here the constitution of moral norms is by no means shaped in a vacuum space rather as a result of

¹⁷ Quraish Shihab, *Pengantin Al-Qur'an: Kalung Permata Buat Anak-Anakku* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 34-35.

¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹ Ibid.

encountering between religious precepts and the complex cultural presuppositions. Social, economical and political settings so much exert a great influence on formulating what cultural determinations to be appropriated with religious norms.

Scrutinizing on the sexual regimen prevalent in Greek, it was not constructed on the basis of a solely objective or natural perspective on health as well. What count to be healthy is so much connected with social and cultural precepts. In field of health, for instance, sexual pleasure in Greeks is not conceivable as an evil, as it does in Christianity, rather there is an emphasis on the relation between sexual conduct and health from which they develop theories on the dangers of sexual practices. Two kinds of effect are conceivable to generate from the conduct of sexual desire. Firstly, sexual acts will affect on the individual's body that there are certain times beneficial or harmful for body in conducting sexual act. There is also a contention that having sexual relation is necessary for women's organism. Otherwise, for men, it is abstinence that indeed keeps their strength and preserves their force. Secondly, the use of pleasure is as much as arranged in respect with the future of progeny. During a period of procreation, sexual desire must be expressed in a right time and regular schedule. Instead, there are three important things to take into account to acquire the best offspring, that is, the ideal age of parents (man's age is from thirty to thirty-five, while for woman is between sixteen to twenty), the diet of the parents to not drink wine and follow the regularly set up regimen.²⁰

Through stylizing sexual behavior, the dangers can be avoided for the benefits of the health of individuals and their lineage as well as of their power. Through mechanism of abstinence, men are encouraged to repress and master their own desire and expected to form self-respect or "be stronger than

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 1990, 117-124.

himself” that further constitutes ethical attentiveness towards the self. Only through this mode of ethical behavior considerable as moderation of sexual pleasure that men will acquire mighty power not only in domestic sphere (his children, slaves and wives) but also social one.

Foucault maintains that the Ancient Greeks did not have judgments on pathological effects of sexual behaviors as in bio-power era and make distinction between abnormal and normal behavior. They have valuations on good and bad erotic conduct, but the focus is more concerned on the stylization of erotic conduct centered on an ethics of abstention. They especially stress on “the use of pleasure – which conditions were favorable, which practice was recommended, which rarefaction was necessary- in terms of a certain way of caring one’s body”.²¹

Valuation and ethical judgment are hence not natural and objective in nature rather embedded within social, political and cultural expectation and power. It explains what Foucault has asserted in his statement that Greeks’ sexual ethics was strikingly different with that of Western sexuality and Christianity since the complex and diverse intersection among the existing discourses and power relations persist. Even the so called natural knowledge or in context of Greek entitled with medicine or science on health, it do embody appropriation of social precepts and structure into the body of knowledge. Medical explanation or justification was incorporated to the maintenance of ethically male power either in private or public sphere.

Sexual regimen is also prevalent in Islam. Based on both objectives of procreation and sexual pleasure, sexual behaviors are governed through strict regimentation in order not to be harmful for individual and social body and the future offspring. Instead of taking religious texts as the sources, it also has adopted the existent dominant medical discourse combined

²¹ Ibid., 97.

with the former one. In respect with medieval sexual regimentation, Galen medicine, widely elaborated by Foucault in both *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, has exerted such a significant influence on the constitution of sexual regimen in Islam. As Ze'evi finds out, Galen medicine has been predominantly widely accepted in Abbasid Middle East and inspired medical books and treatments. Initiated with hard efforts of prominent physicians such as Ibnu Sina, al-Razi, and Ibnu Nafis that translated and adopted an ancient Greek and Roman medical knowledge, both medicine come to dominate or even hegemonize the prevailing medical theories and practices. Even, "Galenic medicine had become a set of basic assumptions, ideologies and cosmologies, tools and methods, as well as a set of queries and a specific terminology, all of which created an enclosed medical world."²²

In the Ottoman world, there were also eclectic and competing curative knowledge challenging Galenic medicine. Curative theories and practices from Indian and Far Eastern were widely disseminated and persisting. Medical ideas based on the Qur'an and hadith prominently called as *al-tib al-nabawi* and popular medical practices of mystics and sufis were mostly given preference and acceptance by popular people. Though religious medical practices are very popular and gain cultural acceptance but they can hardly intellectually compete with Galenic one and only dwell marginal space in Ottoman era. Otherwise, Galenic medicine prevailed exclusively in court circle, general hospitals in major cities and exerted a significant affect on medical works.²³ This attachment lasts for centuries until the nineteenth century when modern medicine comes out, the domination of Galen medicine decreases. In sum, discourse of sexuality in medieval Ottoman "still adhered to the same

²² Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourses in The Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 17-18.

²³ *Ibid.*, 18.

values espoused by the Hippocratic writers”²⁴ which Galen includes within.

1 **Favorable Times for Progeny and Pleasure**

Sexual regimen much more gains decisive concern compared with alimentary regimentation. Matters on times (time of the day, day, month, and season), frequency and positions of having intercourse, physical and psychical conditions of the spouse are indispensable things to take into account in performing sexual conduct. Based on such things, prescriptions and precautions are made suitable with the preoccupied matters involving excesses they may occur if breaking the regulations.

Several prescriptions was made in respect with time along with its possibilities in incurring benefit or excess for either body and soul of both the spouse and its progeny. In Islam, time for holding marriage is necessary to notice for its influence on family is as equally important as sexual act. Based on tradition, though all months are good for performing marriage ceremony, but month of *Syawwal* is conceivable as the best one. While the prevailing perception that month of *Syawwal* and *Muharram* must be avoidable was as much regarded as a foolish precept. This rejection is based on Aisyah’s account saying that she was married by the Prophet in *Syawwal* and had intercourse with in the same month. Aisyah further asserts that no wives of the Prophet were more satisfying than she did.²⁵

Honey moon as an initial moment of sexual act among husband and wife is necessary to prepare its time. Al-Tahami holds that early month is better to have honey moon than in the end of the month for it is related with expectation of bearing child with virtue. It is assumed that seed is better planted in early month for its result is much in amount rather than in the

²⁴ Ibid., 19

²⁵ Al-Tahami, *Qurrah Al-Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 26.

rest of month. The most appropriate day of the early month is Sunday for, as the prophet said, it is the day for making plants grow and cheering up. God as well has created the world and made it alive in this same day. However the last statement has been criticized as a weak account for the prophet never says that unless Ibnu Jarir did.

The second recommendation is avoiding improper days to make love, that is, on Thursday of the third week, the third day of the month, the fifth, the fifteenth, the sixteenth, the twenty first, the twenty fourth, and the twenty fifth. It is also banned to have intercourse in four nights of *Idul Adha*, first night, middle night, and the end night of the month. It is based on tradition banning to have intercourse in the first and middle night of the month. Whereas, al-Ghazali says that it is *makruh* for three nights of the month, that is, first, middle and end of the month. The prohibition is caused for its negative impact on progeny such as infected leprosy, being born as a killer, and so on.²⁶ Medical writings in medieval Islam emphasize the conviction on “the contagious and heredity nature of leprosy.”²⁷

Matter on the right time to have sexual intercourse gains a significant concern that yielding debates among the scholars. Intercourse may be committed anytime either at night or noon except in forbidden times as implied from the Qur’an: “Your wives are as a tilth unto you so approach your tilth when or how you will.”²⁸ However, making it in early night is more virtuous though there is no interdiction to have it in times. Early night is deemed as better considering the range between intercourse and obligation of taking purified bath is quite long. While in the late night, the gap is short and it will disturb an on time *subuh* prayer. (connected with time of purification) Besides,

²⁶ Ibid., 51-52.

²⁷ Sara Scalenge, “Disability,” in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopaedia* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). Vol. 1, 209.

²⁸ Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translations and Commentary*, 90.

sleeping first and having intercourse later in late night cause a disgusted feeling of bad smell of mouth and further weakens sexual desire. Meanwhile, the precise objective of intercourse is to foster a sense of tranquility (*ulfah*), love (*mahabbah*) and affection of one another.²⁹

Al-Tahami seemingly does not give much emphasis on the problem of being in unpurified state. His preference on early night as the best time is based on his consideration of the many benefits it yields either from religious, healthy and psychical aspects.³⁰ The quite long range of having sex with enables one to prepare both purity ritual and attend prayer on time. Being unpurified for some time is not perceivable as an urgent problem for having sex is a part of natural event. The second reason is for attaining sexual pleasure. Having in love with bad smell of mouth and body, both are as well natural, is counter productive for creating romantic love that indeed becomes the main objective of sexual act. Given its emphasis on love and affection as the ultimate end of sexual relation, reveals the influence of prevailing discourses that put love as the highest objective to which matrimonial relationship must reach to. Sexual activities are not designated for the sake of physical pleasure as such rather transcending it for being affectionate one another and performing self sacrifice for both pleasure.

In compared with the Greek ethics, night is in particular given more preference for having intercourse based on the reason that dark has a potential to restraining sexual desire as such that not repeat it and hence do it suit with the need. Bright situation, otherwise, will incite and strengthen desire and soul that drive one to have sexual act beyond one's need. Connected with the danger of image, night will cover image of body and thus lessen desire, while bright condition will make image of body clearer and in result stimulate and urge desire to move

²⁹ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 48-49.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

beyond its necessity. It is a natural tendency and conceivable also as human weakness that needs to anticipate through a mechanism of choosing the right time to have sexual act which on one side fulfill naturally bodily need but on the other side does not go beyond its natural need as well. Being exceeding natural limitation will cause the occurring diseases and psychical problems.

Meanwhile, al-Ghazali opposes al-Tahami's view arguing that intercourse in early night is *makruh* (supposed to leave) for the condition one after having sexual act is unpurified so he will sleep long in that condition until time for *subuh* prayer. Here al-Ghazali is more concerned with the purified body and seemingly being unpurified caused by intercourse is highly conceivable as an urgent condition to keep away. While in Islam, according to Maghen, what counted to be *ahdas* (things that obliges one to take purification both *wudhu* or *junub*) is actually a part of natural order that is not evil. The emphasis of purity acts is not to hinder one to undertake those natural order rather purifying profane or worldly activities before conducting divine ones. Quoting Kevin Reinhard, he says that "the Islamic notion of "impurity"-as it concerns with the *ahdas*-is best thought of not as an actual defilement of the person, but rather as a temporary preclusion from prayer."³¹

The choice of day is determinate to yield a good progeny that Sunday is preferable on the ground of God's creation of world is on that day. Sunday is deemed by the Prophet as the day of planting and cheering it up related to the above precept. There is also a contention that it is Saturday as the best day to have honey moon not Sunday since the former information is more valid than the latter. Friday is recommended too after the best day since it is in that day that marriages between Adam and Hawa, the prophet Yusuf and Zulaikha, Musa and syu'aib's

³¹ Ze'ev Maghen, *Virtues of the Flesh-Passion and Purity in Early Islamic Jurisprudence* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), 35.

daughter, and between Sulaiman and Bilqis, have taken place at that day.³² Making the marriage of those figures as an ideal reference symbolizes that Friday is the best day among other days wishing that marriage performed in that day will be like those marriage filled with happiness, love and long lasting.

Dry season and rainy season are forbidden to have it and it is by no means allowed in term of the prevailing excessive air pollution or epidemics for the ubiquitous diseases spreading everywhere.³³ In Greek medical context, season is given a decisive determinant to affect sexual acts. The preferable season for generating strong child is during winter and spring, while autumn is debatable. In summer, it is supposedly a time for abstention of sexual activities.³⁴

Matters on the right time are evolving time of eating, physical and psychical condition. From the prophet followers' account, it was reported that in succeeding sexual intercourse, husband ought to feed his wife sweets, while he is simultaneously discouraged to eat food harmful for weakening sexual desire, such as cucumber, soybean, grain, sour meal, onion, and so on.³⁵ It is supposed to groom to eat sour fruits and meal, and avoid the bitter one for it could cause weakening her desire and being incapable of pregnancy while the main objective of marriage is precisely to generate offspring. While the suggested meal for wife is chicken meat and sweet fruits.³⁶ Breaking up this prescription will affect on children's physical appearance. It is concluded from tradition that the Prophet enjoining on eating *safarjal* fruit (a kind of guava) to beautify the born child's appearance.³⁷

³² Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 26.

³³ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁴ Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 130.

³⁵ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 36.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

This dietary regimentation was also prevalent in Greek medicine. As the procreation is mainly oriented to produce good progeny and strong citizen, some precautions is necessary to follow including managing diet. The diet contains of food and meal good to consume that are in moderate temperature, not too hot and moist, no drunk, and no indigestion acting as “a general purification of the body.” Everything dealing with alimentary that is not productive for creating well condition of body to produce good seed and soil is recommended to avoid. Using a metaphor, the Greek treat this diet with “the farmer sows only after having first cleansed the soil and removed any foreign material.”³⁸

Certain conditions are of necessary to avoid for in making intercourse such as in hungry, being saturated and after consuming dry jerked meat. Making intercourse in saturated condition will cause stomach, suffer bone disease, so on. Committing this sexual practice in fit and health condition will keep body healthy.³⁹ Condition of being thirsty, hungry, saturated, less sleep, sad, angry, even exalted must be eluded to have intercourse for diminishing its power.⁴⁰ It is as well avoided to have intercourse preceded by sickly situation such as vomiting, tired, ejecting blood, over urinating, over sweat, and so on for it is, as al-Razi says, dangerous for the body.⁴¹

The precautions on conditions to concern above are considered in respect with their impact on the decreasing sexual desire that will affect on not achieving sexual satisfaction and on its negative potential for body. In Greeks, the precautions are highly emphasized in regard with negative effect for yielding progeny of having good quality. The physical and psychical conditions of their parents may presumably be reflected in the

³⁸ Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 125-126.

³⁹ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 49-50.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 52.

⁴¹ Ibid.



fetus, "Since the latter would be a kind of mirror and witness of these excesses. ...because the offspring bears some resemblance to mother as well, not only the body but the soul. Therefore it is good for good that the offspring be made to resemble the soul when it is stable and not deranged by drunkenness."⁴²

The frequency of intercourse needs to maintain. Minimally twice intercourse in Friday is deemed as women right or once for husband in healthy condition. Umar established once in the women's purified period or once a month in order that husband can make his wife pregnant and take care of her. Lessening or adding frequency is allowable based on need and protection of wife's health physically and psychically.⁴³ Sexual gratification is also available for wife that husband must fulfill it as his duty. Kecia Ali argues that female satisfaction is framed under the emphasis of male responsibility. It is a husband duty to satisfy wife's sexual desire to avoid personal and social disorder. Since it is not established as woman right, in consequence wife has no right to demand for sexual access from the husband and no consent required for sexual relation.⁴⁴

Otherwise, wife is highly prohibited to refuse husband's will to have intercourse without any legitimate reason (*uzur*). As mentioned in tradition, husband's right is wife's acceptance of husband allurements to have sex even in camel back. Another tradition states: "as husband allures his wife to have in bed, then she refuses it, angels will curse her until *subuh* time coming."⁴⁵ These traditions create a discursive paradigm that posits women as sexual objects available for men anytime. Women responsibility is so much emphasized on their capability of fulfilling men's desire. It suggests that men have

⁴² Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 127.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 53

⁴⁴ Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*, 7.

⁴⁵ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 53-54.

an almost unrestricted right to demand women sexual service and it simultaneously endows them a great authority to determine sexual relation.

Based on analysis of 'Abbasid literature on women, Myrne finds out that though women's desire is in a certain extent taken into account, the prevailing dominant paradigm has prescribed that "their sexuality is directed to the husband and sexual experience is condemned. For men, sexual experience is equated with nobility."⁴⁶ It is a logical consequence of matrimonial system that hierarchically render husband as *ba'l* (master, owner) to which authority of preservation and protection of family takes hold of, while wife serves as *mab'ul* (owned, slave) that gives over her submission to husband. It is the *ba'l* that husband lays his manly authority and giving more free space will in turn threaten his authority.⁴⁷

Sexual activity is considerable as a means to release from the body feeling of burden and worry.⁴⁸ The natural reason for this is that intercourse is naturally sought after for discharging the accumulated semen. Having been discharged, it will decrease natural burden. Abandoning natural mechanism means blocking semen discharge that cause diverse pains such as weak body, sight-lost eyes, and tumors and so on. While over semen discharge will lead to overworking semen-producing mechanism triggering health problem such as "strength decreases, the light of the eyes become weaker, the nerves become powerless, the heart weakens, and phenomenon such as trembling, shivering, spasms, paralysis, forgetfulness, bad

⁴⁶ Pernilla Myrne, *Narrative, Gender and Authority in 'Abbasid Literature on Women* (Sweden: Orientalia et Africana Gothoburgensia, 2010), 115.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁸ Al-Tihami, Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun, 49.

habits, heaviness of the mind, or cowardice occur, each one of them is a serious problem.”⁴⁹

The Greek scholars as well recognize the benefit of sexual act for both body and soul. Due the former benefit, some theorists mention its effect on dismissing diseases in regard with phlegm, restoring physical conditions resulted from illness, such as being emaciated, obtaining an easy respiration, and recovering an appetite of food. Whereas the latter advantage, intercourse is good for pacifying the violent state of anger, restoring a low-spirited and angry man to be more sensible, bringing man into peacefulness, and dampening a passionate man to be in a moderate desire.⁵⁰

Having intercourse while the wife is in menstruation is prohibited for the Qur’an sanctions to not do that at that situation. “They ask thee concerning women’s courses. Say: They are a hurt and in pollution; so keep away from women in their courses.” (2:222).⁵¹ Referring to Hafsah’s view and Mujahid, keeping away in that verse is interpreted as keeping away from wife’s vagina. There is also an opinion that that word means keeping away from wife’s bed. But this view is in contradictory to the prophet tradition that exemplifies of keeping with his menstruation wife in bed and no covering as barrier but until his *lutut*.⁵² This implies that it is allowable to have intimacy with menstruated wife as long as not having intercourse. Breaking this rule, as al-Ghazali says, will be harmful for the progeny causing being infected by leprosy.⁵³

As apart of alimentary dietary, the proper time too have intercourse necessary to caution. Having sex during menstruation, according to Galen, is prohibited for this term is

⁴⁹ Ze’evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourses in The Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, 31-32.

⁵⁰ Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 118.

⁵¹ ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translations and Commentary*, 89-90.

⁵² Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 50

⁵³ Ibid., 51.

signified as an evacuation of blood. The blood will flow in and the semen that supposedly must get into uterus will come out with the flowing blood. As well as before menstruation, the stomach is overburdened that naturally tends to dispose the material included the entering semen. The best time is after menstruation when "the flow is ceasing and so that the uterus is still moist with blood and permeated with warmth."⁵⁴

There are some positions of intercourse, according al-Tahami, that must be avoided. Firstly, standing position will cause weakening kidney, stomachache and arthritis. Second, sitting position will as well cause weakening kidney, stomach, nerve and suppurated wound. Third, oblique position will cause disease on bottom and gastritis. Forth, as wife is in active position while husband in passive one can generate disease on husband's urethra. Position in having intercourse is of importance to notice for the effect is not only on health and pleasure of both parties but also on their progeny. Positions of intercourse must posit men in an active actor for being passive is bad for men's health.⁵⁵ As the supposed best position always posit women in passive one. Sexual intercourse is undertaken as only when one's desire was aroused. It will make body feel light and lost of worry.⁵⁶ Fifth, having intercourse through wife's anus being cursed and labeled as *kafir* (infidel).⁵⁷

The dangers for health arisen from positions of intercourse are also held by some physicians in medieval Islam. The discourse was partly adopted from Indian medical discourse and Galen teachings. To discharge semen completely, positions are determinate and necessarily to aware of. The position where woman in top and man below is mostly regarded as causing incomplete evacuation. Even, there is a worry that woman

⁵⁴ Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 126-127.

⁵⁵ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 44.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.



liquid will enter to man's penis and cause the coming diseases. The best position is woman below for the existence of woman is merely as a vessel of semen poured down.⁵⁸ This medical discourse was even connected with the supposed power relation between man and woman in which man is social-culturally in the top of power and woman is superior. However, Ze'evi argues that this power discourse is quite minor in concern, but he points out that the worry in positions shows an early consciousness of the people on the possible danger during intercourse long before the finding syphilis disease.⁵⁹

On image, it is categorized as *makruh* to see intimate parts of both husband and wife for it will result on disease of eyes and dismissing shy. While for other, such as Qasim, it is allowable.⁶⁰ In Greek ethics, this account is discussed under the theme of image that the prevailing erotic images can stimulate sexual desire to overreach beyond one's natural need. Image will influence the soul to drive it fulfill sexual pleasure excessively. It is as well represented in the statement above that seeing intimate parts will eliminate shyness and urge one to move beyond natural and moral values and regulations. Added with health excess, the occurrence of image is not only harmful for body but also soul. The similar case is attributed to matter on having intercourse while imagining other women is banned and *haram*.⁶¹ This prohibition is related with the negative potential of image and imagination for the motion of body and soul to exceed beyond their natural limitation.

Further recommendations are offered and advised to incite pleasure for both parties. First, wearing no clothes but only a covering or blanket based on two benefits to gain. Firstly,

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⁵⁸ Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourses in The Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, 34.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 60.

⁶¹ Ibid., 61

sleeping in stark naked frees body from hot temperature in the noon, flexible in motion, yielding joy and love as exemplified by the prophet.⁶² Secondly, it is suggested by some scholars to fold dress in night to bring it as it was and reciting *basmallah* while folding it up. Second, it is suggested to have foreplay at first such as saying romantic words, kissing, caressing and so on to attain pleasure for both. Conducting otherwise, is condemned for it could cause a quarrel among them and yielding a foolish progeny.⁶³ Third, it is necessary for husband and wife to perfume to incite desire and thus gain pleasure.⁶⁴ Forth, it is prohibited to give wife money or valuable goods before having intercourse for it is commonly equaled as promiscuity.⁶⁵

These prescriptions imply that sexual acts are not merely for procreative end as such, but also for the sake of pleasure. Sexual satisfaction is justified naturally and religiously indispensable not only for shaping matrimonial relationship based on love and affection but also based on this kind of relationship that good quality of offspring is likely to manifest. Since parents are mirror of the progeny, sexual acts experienced in affectionate, joyful and enjoyable conditions will affect on good and strong offspring. Given its importance, various ways are recommended to make sure that intercourse will direct to the achievement of both objectives.

Pleasure and Aging

Religion maintains that sexual relation is encouraged for the preservation of the offspring. It further sets out its tenets, regulations and recommendations to implement such maintenance and provide legitimacy and ways to achieve this end. The Qur'an and traditions have ubiquitously insisted on

⁶² Ibid., 37.

⁶³ Ibid., 37-38.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.



the functional aim of marriage to generate progeny, even the prophet had claimed it as a part of his legitimate exemplary. Otherwise, rejection is addressed to practice celibacy either being motivated by religious piety or individual choice insisting that it do neither include in religious teachings nor prophet tradition.

Given its aim laid on procreation, tradition recommends man to choose female partner who is able to meet that function. The prophet recommends men to marry jaunty women and (the supposed) bearing many children for its huge amount of his followers will become a credit to him before other prophets in the hereafter. Besides, he warned men to not marry five types of women: *syahbarah* or woman with grey eyes and bad-spoken, *labharah* or tall and thin woman, *nahbarah* or old woman being apt to keep away from his husband in bed, *handarah* or dwarf and contemptible woman, and *lafut* or woman bearing child not from her husband.⁶⁶ These traditions are not given further explanations on their meanings, but they are just quoted sequentially under the theme of ideal women in Islam. However, there is a close connection between both traditions in question in its stress on taking young woman to marry so that fulfills reproductive roles.

Based on the prophet command to marry virgin and young girls provides religious legitimacy for establishing and creating sexual relationship with mature girls. Given its procreative orientation, it makes sense that the tradition and as well as its medical practices suggest young or mature girls as sexual partner. While practicing the opposite that is, having sexual relation with old woman will cause senility.⁶⁷ Here the requirement on age is only attached to women for the very emphasis on procreative objective. The similar imperatives do not attach to men likely undervalued by his possibility to

⁶⁶ Ibid., 13

⁶⁷ Ibid., 63.

disturb the procreation end and its influence to the quality of progeny. According to Ibnu Sina, both of men and women equally produce semen but in different quality. Men's semen is thought of soul-full and therefore superior in determining the quality of the embryo. While women' semen is "soulless and therefore inferior to male semen, serving mainly as "matter" to be shaped and formed by male semen."⁶⁸ Ze'evi continues to explain that partial evacuation is dangerous for the body similar with total abstinence and overindulgence in. One of causes of that partial discharge is the less capability of uterus to attract semen for its weak condition. In this line, having intercourse with old woman is dangerous for its diminished capability to attract semen perfectly.⁶⁹

Different opinions are given in Galenic curative theories that prerequisite the proper age for the spouse to generate the best quality of the children. The age of both man and woman is not too young and too old that is more and less fourteen years. Being too young will be dangerous for their bodies causing, Galen detected, "incurable diseases" for their violation on the prescribed time set by nature.⁷⁰ Otherwise, being too old is as well as dangerous for body for "it exhausts a body no longer capable of reconstituting the elements that were withdrawn from it."⁷¹

The last statement points out that the effect is more attached on the old one not the young partner. While in *Qurrah al-Uyun*, the negative effect that is senility, is indeed attached to the young man who has intercourse with old woman. If in the Galen medicine, the danger comes out from the age of each partner and affects each of the bodies, while in *Qurrah al-Uyun*

⁶⁸ Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourses in The Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁰ Foucault, *The Care of Self*, 129.

⁷¹ Ibid., 28.

the harm comes out from the partner of old age in particular women partner that decreases the memory faculty of men one. The old age woman in turn receives double blame for her incapability of reproduction and her potential to cause senility for her younger partner. In contrast, the old man by no means experiences this double blame that his old age does not affect his share of reproduction and the quality of his children, and as well not cause harmful effects for his young female partner.

Pleasure and Religious Ritual

Etiquette of having intercourse is of importance in sexual ethics of Islam stressing that sexual practice is not regarded as merely worldly or profane activity but religion stamps it as a transcendental submission. Therefore, procedures to undertake such activity are not material but also spiritual. Being explained in *Qurrah al-'Uyun*, sexual practice must be preceded by ritual of physical and psychical purification through *wudhu* and repent (*taubah*). The religiously supposed attitudes are highly recommended such as preceding right foot, calling the name of God and peace on the prophet and all human beings, praying (*shalat*) two *raka'at*, then reading sura al-Fatihah and sura al-Ikhlâs three times respectively, saying invocation for the prophet three times, and the last praying to God asking for blessing and fortune for him and his family and fostering love among them.⁷²

Besides, al-Tihami adds another virtuous deed before having sexual relation that is huddling up the neck's wife while reading *ya raqib* seven times wishing that God will always protect them and lacking worry of wife's bad characters, as well as for the born child in order that God always keep him/her.⁷³ There is also a suggestion to wash wife's hand and foot in a container and then pour its water to each corner in house in

⁷² Al-Tihami, *Qurrah Al-'Uyun Bi Syarh Nazm Ibn Yamun*, 32-33.

⁷³ Ibid., 35.

order to dismissing misfortune and devil's effect. It is imported from prophet tradition saying that "if groom enter to your house, pull her sandals off and wash her foot with water. Then pour its used water to all house's corner, so it will enter seventy blessing and God's mercy."⁷⁴

Purification, as Maghen holds, serves as an intermediary between profane activities and divine one. After one conducts worldly works and then he/she wants to perform prayer which is a spiritual deed it must be previously preceded by taking purity ritual that is *wudhu* or *junub*. In respect with intercourse, Maghen continues to maintain that "erotic excitement is problematic to prayer is due not the dirtiness, shamefulness or any any other negative quality of arousal..., but instead, perhaps, due to its very power and beauty."⁷⁵ Both represent two different powerful passions of which prayer is a form of passion and love to God while intercourse is passion and love to human being. Both are equally natural and legitimate but they cannot co-exist at the same time. "Experiencing these urges simultaneously diminishes the energy of both, whereas exclusive focus on each in turn facilitates optimal levels of achievement and relationship."⁷⁶

Shihab contends that the prophet suggestion to perform purity ritual before sexual act indicates that intercourse is a purified thing and therefore must be initiated in a purified condition and not in dirty one. Invoking prayer before such act is intended to present a state of spiritual atmosphere within profane sexual activity in order to give positive influence for the child. Quoting August Forel, condition of the parents in having intercourse will significantly affect the child. The research conducted by Luce discovers that many children with

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Maghen, *Virtues of the Flesh-Passion and Purity in Early Islamic Jurisprudence*, 32.

⁷⁶ Ibid.



monomania stem from the prevalent inconvenience and anxiety felt by mother during intercourse.⁷⁷

Religious ritual, as Crossley views, represents an embodied experience consisting of two main elements: conceptual or reflective understanding pointing to knowledge on the ways to perform, time to perform, how to position the roles in it, and so on; and practical reason that subject to do it not just in theoretical level but in practical one. Ritual does not only pertain individual sphere but also social one, for it can be conceived as knowledge and understanding of the wider society in which ritual is circumstanced. It symbolizes a particular type of social relationship and in turn aims to perpetuate that social structure.⁷⁸ In line with this theory, Geertz asserts that ritual serves as model of and for reality.⁷⁹ Catherine Bell signifies this notion as Geertz's effort to describe how the symbols and activities on ritual seek to project images that relate to actual social condition and simultaneously serve as a template to reorient and reconstruct the social situation.⁸⁰

Following the theoritization above, ritual before intercourse prerequisites subject to know all about the ritual either reflective and practical knowledge such as what steps have to be done in sequence, when it has to be initiated, how to posit each role within, what type of social relationship must be performed and maintained, and so forth. Physical and psychical purification must be done first then followed with appealing to God and the prophet to gain mercy and kindness for the individual and family and to foster love among them. This

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⁷⁷ Shihab, *Pengantin Al-Qur'an: Kalung Permata Buat Anak-Anakku*, 72-75.

⁷⁸ Nick Crossley, "Ritual, Body, and (Inter) Subjectivity," in *Thinking Through Ritual: Philosophical Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 39.

⁷⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 92.

⁸⁰ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66.

reveals that human must always keep a continual relation with God professing an absolute authority to determine human's destiny. Instead, it also represents the roles and type of social relation that must be kept in which husband is posited in superior having authority to lead the prayer and to purify wife physically and psychically for her potential of generating excesses. Through committing the ritual, the subjects affirm and preserve the underlying social structure of the ritual.

Conclusion

In field of sexual ethics, Qurrah al-'Uyun provides quite elaborate depiction on the relation between sexual acts and health. Though the representation is seemingly religious basis in which religious texts are drawn as primary sources, there are sexual prescriptions that warn subjects to take into account some precautions on the benefit and danger of sexual acts in some conditions. As sexual behaviors are naturally and religiously set to attain procreation and pleasure, sexual regimentation is constructed to make sure that subjects will gain both goals without any excesses for the health and soul, and the progeny. Both sexual and alimentary regimens are set out in precise form to hinder any harmful effect for the subjects and their progeny.

Favorable times are precisely established with some cautions on the benefit and danger. Some favorable times are withdrawn from religious texts with religious consideration, such as the preferable day to generate the best progeny is on Friday which at that day there are marriages of prominent religious figures (Adam and Hawa, Yusuf and Zulaikha). In case of the best time of the day for having intercourse, al-Tihami quotes the Qur'an that allows having sex anytime. However, he prefers to contend that early night is the best for there is quite long time for taking rest after intercourse though being in unpurified condition in long time too, considering that in late



night body is not in good condition for gaining sexual satisfaction and for preparing *subuh* prayer on time. Al-Tihami's argument is not solely religious reason that for having enough preparation for prayer, but also natural and health ones regarding on his affirmation on the goal for sexual satisfaction and relaxing body after intercourse.

In another case, al-Tihami by no means refers to religious texts and scholars opinions, but his view has a connection with the Galenic medical theory and the prevailing Muslim medical discourse in medieval Middle East. In regard with position in intercourse, there is a condemnation for wife being in top while husband in underneath for its harmful effect to health. Galenic medicine developing widely in medieval Ottoman, consider that position as also being dangerous for men for it causes incomplete semen discharge and the possibility of the coming diseases. These regimentations call the subjects to follow mostly not because following religious rules rather to stylizing their sexual behaviors to get benefit and to hinder harmful excesses.

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