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THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF TAHSIN AND TAHFIDZ IN THE CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SCHOLARLY TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

Epistemology, Tahsin, Tahfidz, Knowledge Transmission, Qur'anic Education

Tahsin and tahfidz of the Qur'an are intellectual traditions that play a crucial role in the transmission system of Islamic knowledge because they maintain the authenticity of the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an and serve as a means of transmitting religious knowledge. This study aims to analyze the epistemological construction of tahsin and tahfidz in the classical Islamic scientific tradition and examine its transformation in the contemporary era. The study uses a library method with a qualitative-descriptive approach through a review of various literature related to Qur'anic science, Islamic epistemology, and the development of tahsin-tahfidz education. The results show that the classical tradition places sanad, talaqqi, and musyafahah as the main instruments for validating knowledge so that scientific authority is built through direct relationships between teachers and students. In the contemporary era, these principles are maintained but have undergone adaptations through the use of digital technology, curriculum development, and the application of more systematic learning methods. These findings indicate that the epistemology of tahsin and tahfidz has a dynamic character that is able to adapt to current developments without losing its normative foundation. In addition to supporting mastery of reading and memorizing the Qur'an, tahsin and tahfidz also contribute to character formation, strengthening spirituality, and developing a culture of Qur'an literac

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INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the primary source of Islamic teachings, its existence and authenticity are consistently maintained through the tradition of recitation, memorization, and continuous teaching from generation to generation. In the context of Islamic education, tahsin and tahfidz of the Quran are two crucial and inseparable aspects. Tahsin serves to ensure accurate recitation in accordance with the rules of tajweed and makharijul huruf, while tahfidz plays a role in maintaining a complete and systematic memorization of the Quran. Both contribute significantly to shaping a generation of Muslims who are not only capable of reading and memorizing the Quran but also understand the importance of preserving the purity of revelation as a guide for life. As public awareness of Quranic education increases, various educational institutions, tahfidz houses, and religious study groups continue to develop learning programs oriented towards improving the quality of students' recitation and memorization.

However, various problems remain in the implementation of tahsin and tahfidz learning in the community. Some students' Quranic recitation skills do not adhere to the rules of tajwid, which impacts the quality of their memorization. Furthermore, the limited number of competent teachers, the lack of use of engaging learning media, and the low consistency of students in murojaah (recitation) are challenges frequently faced by Quranic educational institutions. These conditions result in slow achievement of memorization targets and suboptimal quality of student recitation. Furthermore, the rapid development of information technology has not been fully utilized as a means to support effective and sustainable Quranic learning.

Based on these conditions, efforts are needed to improve the quality of tahsin and tahfidz learning through a more systematic and adaptive approach. The program offered focuses on strengthening Quranic recitation competency through tahsin-based guidance on talaqqi and musyafahah, training in effective memorization methods, and the use of digital media as a learning support tool. This program is implemented through several stages: identifying participant needs, implementing training and mentoring, direct learning practice, monitoring participant development, and evaluating the results of the activities. This approach is expected to integrate classical Quranic learning methods that emphasize accurate recitation with modern, more flexible and accessible learning innovations.

Partner participation in this activity is demonstrated through active involvement in all stages of the program's implementation. Partners play a role in providing participants, supporting the implementation of activities, facilitating learning resources, and participating in the evaluation process to ensure the program's sustainability after completion. This involvement is crucial in creating a conducive learning environment and supporting the ongoing development of participants' skills.

The targeted outcomes of this activity are improved participant recitation of the Quran in accordance with the rules of tajwid, increased quality and quantity of Quranic memorization, and increased motivation for participants to participate in the tahsin and tahfidz programs. Furthermore, this activity is expected to produce a model of Quranic learning assistance that can be implemented sustainably by partners, strengthen the culture of Quranic literacy in the community, and support the creation of a generation with sound religious competence, noble

morals, and capable of preserving the traditions of Islamic scholarship amidst ongoing technological developments and social change.

METHOD RESEARCH

This community service activity was conducted at a partner Quranic educational institution, primarily targeting students and students participating in Quranic tahsin and tahfidz (memorization) lessons. The program was conducted over a predetermined period, based on the needs and mutual agreement between the implementation team and the partner. Participants included students with varying levels of Quranic reading and memorization ability, necessitating a learning approach tailored to the needs of each participant. In addition to students, teachers and institution administrators were also involved in the program to support the sustainability of the program after the community service program concluded.

The method used in this activity was a combination of training, continuing education, increased understanding, and intensive mentoring. The activity began with observation and identification of participants' needs to determine their initial abilities in reading and memorizing the Quran. The results of this identification were used as the basis for developing materials and strategies for implementing the program. The materials provided included improving Quranic recitation according to the rules of tajwid and makharijul huruf (letter pronunciation), effective Quranic memorization techniques, review strategies to maintain memorization, and the use of digital media as a learning tool. The program is implemented through lectures, demonstrations, hands-on practice, and ongoing mentoring. During the tahsin training phase, participants are guided to improve their recitation quality through the talaqqi and musyafahah methods, allowing for immediate correction of reading errors. During the tahfidz phase, participants are provided with guidance on systematic memorization techniques, memorization time management, and methods for strengthening memorization through structured repetition. Furthermore, participants are introduced to various digital learning media that can be utilized to support independent learning outside of face-to-face learning sessions.

Partner participation is demonstrated through the provision of activity venues, participant organization, mentoring during program implementation, and active involvement in the evaluation process. Partners also play a role in ensuring that the methods and materials provided can be applied sustainably after the program concludes. Evaluation is conducted through direct observation of participant development, assessment of the quality of Quran recitation, and monitoring of memorization achievements achieved during the program. These methods are expected to improve Quran reading and memorization skills, strengthen participants' learning motivation, and foster a more effective and sustainable Quran learning culture within the partner community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Epistemology

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature, sources, limits, and validity of knowledge. Etymologically, epistemology comes from two Greek words: episteme, meaning knowledge, and logos, meaning study or science. Thus, epistemology can be understood as a branch of science that examines the nature, sources, and process of acquiring knowledge. Broadly speaking, epistemology addresses two main questions: (a) What can be

known? (What can be known?) and (b) How can it be known? (How can it be known?). The first question concerns the source and scope of knowledge, while the second concerns methodology, or the method of acquiring knowledge. Therefore, epistemology can be understood as a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of knowledge, its sources, and the methods used to obtain and verify the truth of knowledge.

Over the years, two major groups of philosophers have emerged, each with similarities and differences in paradigms related to epistemology. The first group is known as Western philosophers, and the second is Muslim philosophers. In Western philosophy, there are two major schools of thought that have significantly influenced the development of epistemology: rationalism and empiricism. These two schools are even considered the main principles and pillars of the scientific method. Everything is measured and assessed based on these two principles: whether it is rational or empirically verifiable. If it does not meet these two criteria, it cannot be categorized as science or is not scientific. Based on this, the essence of science in Western philosophy, based on rationalism, is derived from the power of reason and can be accepted and understood by reason. Meanwhile, according to empiricism, the essence of science is something that can be proven by scientific methods and is real, with reason merely serving as a tool for implementing these scientific methods.

Although rationalism and empiricism have contributed significantly to the development of modern science, their exclusive application in Islamic studies raises several epistemological issues. First, the dominance of the rationalistic approach tends to place reason as the primary source of knowledge, thus often underestimating the position of revelation as the source of truth, as it assumes the source of knowledge originates from the human mind. This clearly contradicts Islamic scholarship and civilization, which claim revelation (holy scripture) as central and the source of knowledge. Second, scientific methods that prioritize the principle of empiricism seem to reject the transcendent realm, such as the realm of angels or the unseen, because these cannot be proven and cannot be observed empirically (Sardar, 1989). This is clearly at odds with Islamic understanding, which believes in the existence of the transcendent realm and even considers it the true life, as life on earth is only temporary. This is in accordance with Allah's words in the Quran, Surah Gafir, verse 39:

"O my people, indeed, the life of this world is but a (temporary) enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter is the eternal abode."

Based on this reality, an epistemology based on rational and empirical aspects is intrinsically inadequate to analyze Islamic studies, which are always inspired by and related to revelation, nor can it be relied upon as the epistemology needed by a spiritual society. This means that another, more relevant epistemology is needed here.

b. Tahsin and Tahfidz in Islamic Tradition

a. Tahsin Al-qur'an

Etymologically, tahsin comes from the words hassana-yuhassinu-tahsinan, which mean to improve or beautify (Asep Muhidin 2015). In the context of learning the Qur'an, tahsin is defined as an effort to improve recitation by paying attention to the makhraj of letters, the nature of letters, and the rules of tajweed. According to the Arabic dictionary, tahsin means to improve, enhance, beautify, decorate, or make better than the original. Tahsin linguistically

means to improve, while in terms of terminology, it means reading the Qur'an correctly as read by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions (ra). This is done by extracting letters from their makhraj, fulfilling their nature, and paying attention to the rules of

recitation. Thus, tahsin of the Qur'an is a learning process aimed at improving the quality of Qur'an recitation so that it is in accordance with the rules of tajweed and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as read by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. Overcoming Qur'an illiteracy is the responsibility of all parents and teachers to teach children from an early age.

Therefore, memorizing the Quran is a very noble and commendable act. Those who memorize and recite the Quran are considered servants or members of Allah's family on earth. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct Quran recitation learning so that children can read the Quran and develop a love for it, thus enabling them to practice it in their daily lives (Najamudin Muhammad 2011).

b. Memorizing the Qur'an

Tahfidz Al-Qur'an is an activity of memorizing the verses of the Qur'an systematically so that they are stored in memory and can be read again without looking at the mushaf, is a derivative of the meaning of the Arabic word, namely hafizha-yahfadzhu-hifzhan, which means always remember and not forget (Mahmud Yunus 1990). Another definition of memorization activity is repeating something that is done by reading or hearing (Abdul Aziz Abdul Rauf 2004). Hifzhu has various meanings depending on the sentence structure, including: Always, guarding and performing prayers on time, Guarding, Maintaining, and being lifted (Abdu Rabb Nawbuddin 1992). Tahfizh Al-Quran is a sentence in which there are 2 words, namely tahfidz and Al-Quran. The word tahfidz comes from Arabic, namely from the word hafizho-yahfazhu-hifzhon which means memorizing. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), memorizing comes from the root word "hafal" which means having entered into memory or being able to say something by heart without looking at a book or other notes.

The etymological understanding of the Koran means reading or being read. According to the terms of the ulama, the Al-Quran is the word of Allah that was revealed by Allah SWT to the Prophet Muhammad, delivered mutawatir, has the value of worship for Muslims who read it, and is written in a mushaf. Some understandings regarding the Al-Quran include: The Al-Quran is the word of Allah which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, through the angel Gabriel with its lafadz and meaning. The Koran occupies a position as the first and main source of all Islamic teachings and functions as a guide or guide for mankind in achieving happiness in life in this world and in the afterlife (Muhammad Shabuni Ali-Ash 1991). The Al-Quran is the word of Allah that weakens the enemy's challenges (miracles) which was revealed to the last Prophet or Apostle through the Angel Gabriel, written in several mushafs, transferred (dinukil) to us mutawatir, it is a worship by reading it, starting with the Al-Fatihah letter and ending with the An-Nas letter. As is known, in principle the Al-Quran is not written (rasm), but reading (qiraah) in the sense of speech and pronunciation. Both the process of revelation (revelation) and its delivery, teaching and narration were carried out verbally and by rote memorization, not writing. Meanwhile, writing only functions as a support. Because the source of the writing itself is memorization or what has previously been recorded in the reciter's memory (Abdurrahman Nawabudin 2005).

Based on this definition, memorizing the Quran can be understood as the process of memorizing the verses of the Quran through continuous repetition until the memorization is

firmly embedded in the memory, so that without looking at the Quran (from memory), a person can read it standing, sitting, or lying down. This memorization process is carried out repeatedly so that the memory becomes stronger and a person can read it at any time without looking at the Mushaf.

c. Ilmu

1. The Concept of Knowledge in Islam

In the Al-Munawwir dictionary (Ahmad Warson Munawwir, 1984) the word science comes from the Arabic 'ilm ('alima-ya'lamu-'ilm), which means knowledge (al-ma'rifah), then develops into knowledge about the nature of something that is understood in depth (Al-Yassu'i, 1986). From the origin of the word 'ilm, it was then absorbed into Indonesian to become science or knowledge. In the Islamic perspective, science is in-depth knowledge resulting from serious efforts (ijtihād) from Muslim scientists ('ulamā'/mujtahīd) regarding worldly and spiritual problems based on Allah's revelation (Azizy, 2003). In the Islamic perspective, science is understood as knowledge obtained through a systematic search process and does not conflict with the values of revelation as a source of truth;L.

In other words, in the Islamic view, something is considered knowledge if the knowledge is based on or does not conflict with Allah's revelation or the Koran. The Al-Qur'ān is God's revelation which functions as guidance (hudan) for mankind, including in this case guidance regarding knowledge and scientific activities. The Qur'an pays special attention to scientific activity. Evidently, the verse that was first revealed reads:

Ministry of Religion 2002 translation "Read with (mentioning) the name of your Lord who created" (Al-'Alaq/96:1)

Reading, in its broadest sense, is a key activity in scientific pursuits. In addition to the word "read," the Quran also contains numerous verses that indirectly refer to scientific activities and the development of knowledge, such as commands to think, reflect, reason, and the like. For example, the word "aql" (reason) is used in the Quran in Surah Al-Anfal, verse 22, and the word "fikr" (thought) in Surah Ali Imran, verse 191.

Meaning: "Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb (who do not hear or understand the truth), those who do not understand."

Meaning: (Namely) those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying), "Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain; Glory be to You; protect us from the punishment of the Fire."

The verses of the Qur'an above demonstrate the theocentric paradigm of knowledge in Islam. Therefore, the relationship between knowledge and religion demonstrates a harmonious relationship, with knowledge growing and developing hand in hand with religion. Therefore, in the history of Islamic civilization, scholars lived harmoniously alongside scientists. In fact, many scientists in Islam were also scholars. For example, Ibn Rushd, in addition to being an Islamic jurist and author of the book Bidayah al-Mujtahid, was also a physician who compiled the book al-Kulliyat fi al-Thibb.

Based on the discussion above, which answers the question of what is meant by knowledge in Islam, the author can conclude that knowledge in Islam is knowledge of both the

perceptible physical world and the intangible metaphysical world. Sensual entities such as God, angels, the grave, and the afterlife are comprehensively derived from God's revelation, both qualitative and quantitative. The physical and non-physical realms are equally valuable as sources of knowledge in Islam. This contrasts sharply with Western epistemology, which recognizes only the physical realm as a source of knowledge. Therefore, anything non-sensory, non-physical, or metaphysical is excluded from scientifically knowable objects.

2. Methods of Science in Islam

In Islamic epistemology, knowledge can be attained through three elements: the senses, the intellect, and the heart. In practice, these three elements are applied using different methods: the senses for the observational method (*bayānī*), the intellect for the logical or demonstrative method (*burhānī*), and the heart for the intuitive method (*‘irfānī*).

a) Bayani Method

The word "bayani" comes from the Arabic word "albayani," which literally means something distant or open. However, terminologically, scholars differ in their definition of "al-bayani." For example, scholars of *balaghah* (*balaghah*) define "al-bayani" as a science that can determine a meaning through various methods, such as *tasbih* (similarity), *majaz* (figurative speech), and *kinayah* (prophetic prayer). Scholars of *kalam* (theology) say that "al-bayani" is a proposition that can explain a law. Others say that "albayani" is a new science that can explain something, or a science that can remove something from a state of obscurity to a state of clarity. However, in Islamic epistemology, bayani is a uniquely Arabic method of thought that emphasizes the authority of texts (*nash*), directly or indirectly, and is justified by linguistic reasoning derived through inference (*istidlal*). Therefore, in a simple sense, bayani is understanding a text as knowledge and directly applying it without the need for thought. In a broader sense, bayani means understanding a text as raw knowledge that requires interpretation and reasoning. However, this does not mean that reason or rationality can freely determine its meaning and intent; it must still rely on the text. Therefore, in bayani, rationality is considered incapable of providing knowledge unless it is based on the text.

b) Burhani Method

Burhani comes from Arabic and literally means to purify or clarify. According to scholars of *ushul*, "al-Burhan" is something that separates truth from falsehood and distinguishes right from wrong through explanation. Burhani epistemology is an epistemology that holds that one of the means to acquire knowledge is reason. If we refer to the verses of the Quran, we will find numerous verses that instruct humans to use their reasoning to weigh the ideas that enter their minds. Many verses address this with various wordings, such as *ta'qilun*, *tatafakkarun*, *tadabbarun*, and others. Based on the explanation above, we can conclude that burhani epistemology emphasizes its vision on the innate human potential of instinct, sensory perception, experimentation, and conceptualization.

c) The Irfani Method

Irfani comes from Arabic and has two original meanings: something sequential and connected to one another and meaning silence and calm. However, literally, *al-irfani* is more specific than *al-'ilm*. Terminologically, *irfani* is the revelation of knowledge obtained

through God's revelation of reality to His servants (al-kashf) after undergoing riyadhah. Another concrete example of the 'irfani approach is philosophy (isyraqy), which views discursive knowledge (al-hikmah al-bathiniyah) as having to be creatively and harmoniously combined with intuitive knowledge (al-hikmah al-zauqiy). With this integration, the knowledge gained becomes enlightening and even achieves al-hikmah al-haqiqiyah. To this day, the study of the 'irfani method remains a topic of discussion, leading to many differing views among scholars. Essentially, the 'irfani method is one way in Islam to acquire knowledge through certain processes such as kasf and riyadhah.

d. Development of Classical and Contemporary Islamic Epistemology

The classical Islamic period lasted from the Prophet's death until around the 13th century CE. This period is not always defined by a fixed date, but thinkers often refer to it. Islamic periodization often refers to the periodization compiled by Harun Nasution. According to him, the classical period is calculated from the Prophet's death to the end of 1250 CE, i.e., between 650 and 1250 CE. The subsequent period is called the Middle Period, from 1250 to 1800 CE. Meanwhile, the modern Islamic period is calculated from 1800 CE onward to the present. In Saleh Putuhena's view, the classical era of Islam lasted from the 7th to 13th centuries CE. This period is called "the golden age of Islam."

This classical period is indeed a glorious period, noted by many scholars. Because of its brilliance, a prominent scholar and Muslim who taught at Imperial College London once said: "between 750 and 1200 CE, knowledge or science belonged primarily to Muslims." Azhar Arsyad provides examples of prominent classical figures of Islamic thought who contributed to the world of Muslim thought. These are prominent figures who have distinguished themselves in Western literature, often with Latinized names. They were given Latin names to make them more familiar to their tongues. However, history has still identified them as Muslim philosophers.

The development of classical Islamic epistemology is marked by the emergence of a number of Muslim scientists who made significant contributions to various scientific fields. Figures such as Jabir ibn Hayyan in chemistry, Al-Kindi in philosophy, and Al-Khwarizmi in mathematics demonstrate that the Islamic scientific tradition developed in a multidisciplinary manner and influenced the development of global science.

After briefly discussing the development of classical Islamic epistemology, the discussion of contemporary Islamic thought continues, a very diverse and interesting one. Several contemporary Islamic thinkers have attempted to formulate the basis, model, and orientation of their epistemology as a worldview for understanding and practicing Islam according to the needs and developments of the times, while adhering to the basic principles and substance of Islamic teachings. In principle, the discourse on contemporary Islamic epistemology is an effort to discover or formulate an Islamic epistemological concept that aligns with contemporary developments in thought while remaining true to the basic principles of Islamic teachings.

After science underwent a transformation from Islamic science to secular Western science, several Muslim scientists and intellectuals sought to re-Islamize it. It was during this period that the Islamization project, commonly referred to as the Islamization of contemporary

science, re-emerged. The concept and process of Islamization are considered crucial by some Muslim scholars. Among these scholars are two figures who are synonymous with the term "Islamization of science." The idea of "Islamization of science" was developed extensively by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. Both emphasized the importance of integrating modern science with Islamic values in building contemporary Muslim civilization.

Masudul Alam Choudhury offers an epistemological project or concept, namely tawhidi epistemology. He believes that tawhidi epistemology is universal and holistic and can become an alternative global epistemology in the future. In other words, this epistemology is the right answer for Muslims in facing the era of postmodernism and globalization. Methodologically, epistemology is free from imitation and liberalism. tawhidi Other thinkers who can be considered to agree with this tauhidi epistemology are thinkers who directly proposed the concept of Islamization of knowledge, namely Naquib al-Attas, Osman Bakar and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. Tawhidi epistemology that advocates the Islamization of science, according to Kuntowijoyo, seems reactive. Therefore, he disagrees with the project of Islamization of science. He prefers to use the term Islamic science. The Islamic scientific movement must move from text to context, namely from the sacred text of the Qur'an to the social and ecological context of humanity. Then the next movement builds the paradigm of Islam as a paradigm of integral science as a union between science and religion (revelation). Thinkers who, according to the author, tend to align with the above thinkers are Mulyadhi Kartanegara with the integration of science and Imam Suprayogo with his tree of knowledge.

Mohammed Arkoun's new critical epistemology critiques the concept of the Islamization of knowledge. According to Arkoun, the concept of the Islamization of knowledge must begin with a radical epistemological critique of knowledge. This is necessary by distinguishing ideological discourse from the discourse of ideas so that a new critical epistemology can be elaborated. The author views this new critical epistemology as essentially an attempt by Islamic thinkers to address and confront various ideas that developed during the era of modernism and the emergence of postmodernism. Therefore, its figures are highly versed in postmodernist thought such as Derrida's deconstruction, hermeneutics, critical philosophy, and so on. In his thinking on interfaith dialogue, Arkoun uses an inclusive, dialogical, and humanist approach as someone who is well versed in epistemological and scientific theories as well as contemporary philosophy. Arkoun always connects text and context in his thinking. According to the author, Indonesian figures or thinkers who may be closer to this new critical epistemology include Nurcholis Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid.

CONCLUSION

Quranic recitation and memorization are essential components of the Islamic scholarly tradition. They not only serve as a means of preserving the authenticity of Quranic recitation and memorization, but also serve as a medium for transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next (Al-Qattan, 2000). From an Islamic epistemological perspective, the learning process of tahsin and tahfidz demonstrates that knowledge is acquired through a combination of revelation, reason, practical experience, and the guidance of a teacher with scholarly authority (Al-Attas, 1995).

In classical Islamic tradition, the validity of tahsin and tahfidz is established through a system of sanad (chain of transmission), talaqqi (religious consultation), and musyafaha (religious consultation), which emphasizes direct interaction between teacher and student (Azami, 2003). This mechanism serves as a primary instrument for maintaining the authenticity of Quranic recitation while ensuring the continued and reliable transmission of knowledge (Al-Suyuthi, 2006). This tradition demonstrates that accurate recitation and memorization depend not only on individual ability but also on the continuity of the chain of knowledge passed down from previous generations (Azami, 2003).

In the contemporary era, technological developments and educational innovations have introduced various new methods for learning tahsin and tahfidz. The use of digital media, learning applications, and a more systematic curriculum have made it easier for the public to learn the Quran (Arifin, 2016). Nevertheless, the basic principles that underpin its epistemology remain intact, particularly regarding the importance of teacher guidance, reading validation, and maintaining the quality of memorization (Nata, 2012).

Thus, the epistemology of tahsin and tahfidz demonstrates an adaptive character without losing its fundamental identity. This tradition bridges the intellectual heritage of classical Islam with the needs of modern education, thus remaining relevant in developing a generation capable of reading, memorizing, understanding, and applying the Quran sustainably in their daily lives (Nata, 2012).

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