



Smoking Shisha or opening Shisha bars has become a widespread problem within the Muslim community. Smoking Shisha is not only detrimental to oneself but also to the society. Therefore, it is necessary to address this issue in order to raise awareness for the general public of its harmful effects physically and socially and its true Islamic position. A careful scrutiny of this issue in terms of its harmful effects and evil social impact and the evidences in light of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth, the Fatwa in our times should be ruled as Harām or at least Makrooh-e-Tahreemi. Both of these terms denote prohibition and unlawfulness and the one who smokes Shisha or provides Shisha will become sinful in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ.

It is the norm of every man and woman that whatever he/she perceives as pleasurable he/she tends to ignore its harmful effects as the Holy Prophet ﷺ rightly said, "Your love for (pleasurable) things blinds you and deafens you." (Abū Dāwood, Ahmad)

Mulla Ali Qāri ﷺ states regarding this Hadeeth that 'blinds you' refers to not being able to see its harmful effects. (Mirqāt)

The health risks that are associated with Shisha are far more serious than cigarettes. Many Muslims and especially the youngsters regard it as a safe alternative to cigarettes and something pleasurable. According to an expert opinion of Dr. Mike Knapton, associate medical director at the BHF in an article published in the T&A on 3rd March 2012, he said, "Contrary to popular belief, Shisha is not safer than smoking cigarettes."

Change of Rulings with the Change of Circumstances

Some can argue that the previous Indian-subcontinent scholars issued a verdict of Shisha generally being Makrooh-e-Tanzeehi (which merely means disliked

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but not unlawful). Many Fuqahā (Muslims Jurists) like Imām Ibn Ābideen As-Shāmi ﷺ have made it explicit that rulings and verdicts can vary due to the change of time and circumstances that are discussed by the classical scholars in the books related to issuing verdicts. There are many examples in the books of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) to be found where the later scholars have issued verdicts contrary to previous scholars due to the change of circumstances. Looking at the current climate and situation of the Muslims in relation to Shisha, it could be said with confidence that if those same Indian-subcontinent scholars were to be alive today and saw the current situation of Shisha bars and had become aware of the harmful effects of smoking Shisha, they would most definitely give the verdict of it being totally unlawful.

Background on Shisha (Water-Pipe Tobacco Smoking)

Shisha is a water-pipe used to smoke a flavoured tobacco known as molasses. There are many common names given to water pipe smoking such as Hukkah, Argileh, Marghile, Shisha and hubble-bubble. It first originated in ancient Persia and India. It was invented by an Indian physician during the reign of the Emperor Akbar called Hākim Abul Fath who suggested that tobacco should be first passed through a small receptacle of water so that it would be rendered harmless. However, this unsubstantiated belief subsequently became widespread, with the people of India and Persia thinking it to be less harmful. The water-pipe smoking eventually gained popularity and spread throughout the Middle East and Central Asia and became widely used in places such as Turkey, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Leb-

anon and the Indian-subcontinent. After the advent of the water-pipe tobacco smoking, in the late 20th century, supplementary products were introduced to add some flavourings to the tobacco, thus combining tobacco with a sweetener (typically fruits). Unlike cigarettes, Shisha is an exotic way of smoking tobacco in a fairly relaxed manner in a social environment. It is available in many pre-packed quantities sold in a variety of flavours such as apple, banana, peach, cherry, coconut, orange, grape etc.

How it works

- 1** Inhaling via the hose, air is pulled through coal and into bowl; hot air from charcoal burns tobacco, producing smoke
- 2** Smoke passes through body tube, extending into water jar; it bubbles up to the top of the water jar and into a channel connected to the hose
- 3** When a smoker inhales from the hose, pressure in the jar changes pulling more air through the charcoal and continuing the process

Health risks

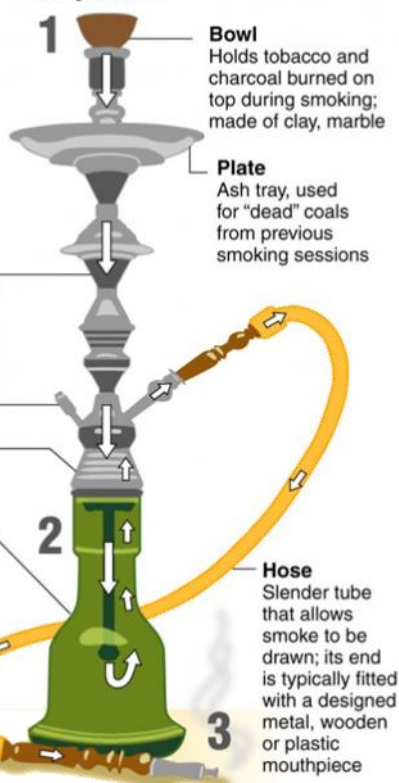
- **More smoke**
Person inhales more smoke over a longer time compared to cigarette smoking
- **Exposure**
Increased carbon dioxide and nicotine exposure; may contribute to heart disease and cancer

Description of the Usage of the Water-Pipe Smoking

A water-pipe mainly consists of four main parts:

- The head bowl where the tobacco is heated.
- Jar filled with water.
- A body/pipe which connects the head to the water bowl.
- A hose and a mouth piece through which the smoke is inhaled by the smoker.

Components



The tobacco that is placed on the head is moist and often sweetened with flavours. An aluminum foil is then placed over the head to completely seal the tobacco and with holes punctured in the foil. A charcoal is then lit (but does not burn in a self-sustained manner) and placed over the foil on top of the tobacco filled head bowl (covered by perforated aluminum foil). As it can be seen in the figure that once the head is loaded and the charcoal is lit, the smoker inhales the smoke through the hose and draws air through the body (connected to the head bowl and the water jar) and over the tobacco and charcoal. Having passed over the charcoal, the smoke (which now contains charcoal combustion products) passes through the tobacco and travels all the way down the water pipe body, bubbles through the water in the jar, creating a vacuum of smoke above the water and finally carried through the hose into the smoker's mouth with a mouthpiece. This process is repeated again and again on average for 45-60 minutes by the smoker.

Health Effects According to Health Experts

Contrary to what Shisha smokers commonly believe, Shisha is associated with serious health risks. Amongst many health organisations, one of the world's leading health experts are the WHO (World Health Organisation). WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

Much research has been carried out by the WHO (World Health Organisation) and other organisations like ALA (American Lung Associations) and many empirical tests have also been carried out in laboratories in establishing what health risks are involved in smoking Shisha. The smoke that emits from the water-pipe contains high levels of toxic compounds including tar, carbon monoxide and heavy metals that causes lung cancer, heart disease, asthma attacks, emphysema and other serious illnesses. According to the WHO research water-pipe tobacco smoking delivers the addictive nicotine drug and as in the case of cigarettes, more frequent use is associated with the smokers being more likely to report that they are addicted.

Furthermore, a water-pipe smoking session may expose the smoker to more smoke over a longer period of time than occurs when smoking cigarettes. Cigarette smokers typically take 8-10, 40-75 ml puffs over 5-7 minutes and inhale 0.5 –0.6 litres of smoke. In contrast, a water-pipe smoking session typically lasts 20-80 minutes during which the smoker may take 50–200 puffs which range from about 0.15–1 litres of smoke.

The water-pipe smoker may therefore inhale as much smoke during one session equivalent to a cigarette smoker inhaling from 100 - 200 cigarettes.

What becomes clear from this is that smoking Shisha is much more concentrated than smoking cigarettes. If cigarettes are known to cause severe health risks then imagine what Shisha is capable of. The exponents of Shisha often argue that the toxic effect is filtered when the tobacco smoke passes through water which therefore reduces the risk to health. However, according to the WHO the water does not filter out the toxic ingredients because nicotine and tobacco smoke are not water-soluble. The smoke produced still contains high levels of toxic compounds including carbon monoxide, heavy metals and cancer-causing chemicals during inhalation.

The WHO have gathered more facts about Shisha smoking as follows:

1. Commonly used heat sources that are applied to burn the tobacco, such as charcoal, are more likely to increase health risks because when such fuels are combusted they produce their own toxicants, including high levels of carbon monoxide.
2. Sharing a mouthpiece possesses a serious risk of transmission of disease, including tuberculosis and hepatitis. Water-pipe smoking is often sweetened and flavoured which makes it very appealing. The sweet smell and taste explains why some people, particularly young people, are addicted to it thus eventually increasing the chances of serious health problems.
3. Shisha smoke possesses dangers associated with second hand smoke.
4. Pregnant women and the foetus are particularly vulnerable when exposed either actively or involuntarily to the water-pipe smoke toxicant which can result in low birth weight babies.



Social Harms According to the ALA (American Lung Association) Report

Previously, the common trend was to smoke Shisha individually but today it is viewed as a social activity, often smoked by a group of people who share the same pipe and try different flavourings throughout the evening. Shisha is perceived as a way to get together with friends and to have fun.

According to a research conducted by the ALA the social aspect of water-pipe smoking may put many users at risk for other infectious disease such as tuberculosis and viruses such as hepatitis (inflammation of the liver causing fever, abdominal pain and weakness) and herpes (causing skin disease, painful blisters and inflammation). Shared mouthpieces and the heated moist smoke may enhance the opportunity for such diseases to spread.

Moreover, the second hand smoke from a water pipe is potentially dangerous because it contains smoke from tobacco itself as well as the smoke from the heat source used to burn the tobacco. Likewise, being in an environment of overwhelming smoke for a long period causes severe dizziness and at times unconsciousness.

The Islamic Perspective

So far we have looked at the harmful effects of Shisha from a medical perspective, now I shall discuss the Islamic perspective of Shisha.



1. The Body has Certain Rights Over Oneself

In Islām to safeguard one's body from harmful substances is obligatory. Everything in this world including our body is the property of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ states, **"To Him belongs all that which is in the heavens and all that is in the earth and all that is between them and all that is under the soil."** (20:6)

Allāh ﷻ has dignified the human body and has endowed it to mankind in order to test whether mankind will utilise it in the right manner or not, or nourish it with lawful or unlawful consumptions. Allāh ﷻ states, **"The One Who created the heavens and the earth to test you which one amongst you will do righteous deeds."** (67:2)

This sophisticated body is a wonderous miracle gifted by Allāh ﷻ. It is an example of one of the most complex 'machines' and a magnificent design by Allāh ﷻ as He states, **"Verily We have created mankind in the best form."** (95:4)

Each organ functions uniquely and performs its duty dissimilarly to the other. Nevertheless they all equally contribute in the preservation of the body. If one organ dysfunctions then it will effect the entire body. So we can imagine how delicate our body is and how important it is to nourish it in the proper manner. It is thus prohibited to nourish it with unlawful substances or that which is detrimental for the body because it violates its sanctity. It is a well-known fact that what-

ever a person nourishes his body with, will surely have an impact on his behaviour and conduct.

Imām Bukhāri رحمه الله relates in his Saheeh the statement of Sayyidunā Salmān Al-Fārsi رحمه الله when he once admonished Sayyidunā Abū Dardā رحمه الله regarding his lengthy worships at night and perpetual fast throughout the days, "Verily your Lord has a right over you, and your body has a right over you and your family has a right over you, so give each and everything the right it deserves." (Bukhāri)

In another narration once the Holy Prophet ﷺ advised Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Amr Ibnul-Ās رحمه الله when he heard about his exaggeration in worship, "Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

It is evident from the above Hadeeth that Islām emphasises the maintenance of the body and fulfilling its rights. Unlawful or harmful consumption violates its basic right and its human sanctity.

2. Prohibition of Causing Harm to One's Body

As was explained previously that in the Islamic perspective our body is the property of Allāh ﷻ endowed to us by Him as a test. The body must be utilised and cherished in the way Allāh ﷻ has instructed us to do so. It is prohibited to deliberately cause harm to the body as Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur'ān, **"And do not cast yourself into destruction with your own hands."** (2:195)

Although this command was revealed regarding a particular incident, nevertheless the general implication of this verse is to abstain from that which is intended to harm one's body unnecessarily that will eventually lead him towards destruction in this world and the Hereafter. Smoking Shisha causes physical harm to one's body in this world and makes him accountable in the Hereafter for violating its sanctity.

Imām Hākim رحمه الله and Imām Baihaqi رحمه الله relate a Hadeeth narrated by Sayyidunā Abū Sa'eed Al-Khudhri رحمه الله that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "There is no endurance of harm nor inflicting harm to anyone." In this Hadeeth the Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden inflicting harm upon one's self in any way and likewise inflicting harm to someone else.

The Fuqahā (Muslim Jurists) have deduced from this Hadeeth a ruling of:

الضرر يزال

“Harmful things should be averted.” (Al-Ashbāh wa Nadhā’ir)

This principle instructs to abandon and forsake those substances that directly cause harm to the body and without a doubt smoking Shisha is one of them.

3. More Harm to the Body than Benefit

Shisha may have some questionable benefits such as relaxation of tension, if this is the case then the same argument can be made to justify alcohol as some people drink to ease their tension yet no Muslim will ever accept it. Its harm out-weighs its benefit.

Although it can be argued regarding its benefits its harm outweighs them as Allāh ﷻ states regarding alcohol, **“They ask you (O Muhammad) regarding alcohol and gambling, say within them there is great sin and (also) benefits for mankind, however its sins are far greater than their benefits.” (2:219)**

Allāh ﷻ outlines in the above verse the nature of gambling and alcohol that although some benefits are attainable from them, their harmful effects are much more severe than their benefits. The Fuqahā of this Ummah have derived the following principle from this verse. Imām Ibn Nujaym رحمه الله writes:

درأ المفاصل أولى من جلب المصالح

“To avert the harmful effects is more important than to attain the benefits.” (Al-Ashbāh wa Nadhā’ir)

The fundamental principle to be understood here is that any substance in which its harmful effects outweigh its benefits, that substance must not be used at all. It becomes necessary to abstain from it at all cost. Shisha undoubtedly consists of more harms than benefit therefore it must be avoided.

4. Blocking the Means

Another juristic principle that relates to Shisha is— “blocking the means” to abstain from those acts that lead towards other evils e.g. to cast one’s gaze upon Ghair-Mahram (strange) women eventually can lead to

inclination towards fornication, therefore, to gaze at such women is prohibited. Islām takes preventive measures rather than suffering the consequences.

Shisha opens the doors to other evils such as excessive pleasure, waste of time, extravagance, addiction, harming oneself progressively and free intermingling with the opposite gender.

Some may argue that smoking Shisha once every so often cannot kill you nor put your health at risk. In that case then the same argument can be used with alcohol because the reason for its prohibition is it leads towards intoxication and many other evil acts, having one or two sips will surely not intoxicate anyone yet the Shari’ah has still prohibited it for this reason.

Similarly, Shisha contains the drug nicotine that causes addiction. Once a person becomes addicted to it, he is putting his health at serious risk. For this reason the principle of blocking the means to prevent further evils is applicable to smoking Shisha as well.

5. Slow form of Suicide

Taking into consideration all of the above facts, it can lead to eventual lung cancer, heart disease and many other serious illnesses which cause death. So the health risks associated with Shisha eventually lead to death whereby the smoker becomes guilty of committing suicide but in a slow and gradual way. Allāh ﷻ says, **“And do not kill yourselves, verily Allāh is very compassionate towards you.” (4:29)**

Apart from the above, there are other contributing factors that make the smoking of Shisha a serious issue:

1. Extravagance in Wealth

To spend money on that which by nature is not beneficial, excessive amount of unnecessary expenditure that is beyond one’s needs or that which is directly instrumental for causing harm to the body is part of squandering wealth.

Allāh ﷻ has prohibited squandering one’s wealth. Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur’ān, **“And do not squander (your wealth). Indeed the squanderers are the brothers of Shaytān.” (17:27)**



The Opening of Shisha Bars

There has been an increase in the number of Shisha bars in many parts of the UK. Unlike cigarettes, smoking Shisha is generally perceived as a social practice. This inevitably brings about more negative effects socially, morally and spiritually that many Muslims are unaware of. As discussed earlier, Islām takes preventive measures rather than suffering the consequences by imposing those rules that block the means. Some of the negative effects that Shisha bars bring about are as follows:

In another verse of the Holy Qur'ān Allāh ﷻ states, **"And do not waste, for Allāh does not love those who waste."** (6:141)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ forbade the squandering of wealth in the following Hadeeth, "Verily Allāh ﷻ has prohibited for you disobedience to parents, burying daughters alive, to deny what you owe and demand what you have no right to and has disliked for you hearsay (gossip), excessive questioning and the squandering of wealth." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

The smoking of Shisha is squandering one's wealth, so in this aspect it can also be ruled as prohibited.

2. Emitting Unpleasant Smell from the Mouth

The Holy Prophet ﷺ prevented people from entering the Masjid or coming in contact with anyone if they had eaten raw garlic and onions due to the bad odour the mouth emitted.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever eats (raw) garlic or onion should keep away from us, keep far away from our Masājid and should sit at home."

This was so that because so that the Musallis (those performing Salāh in the Masjid) and other people are not harmed because of the bad odour. This was the command about something that is generally permissible to consume, so imagine how much more severe it would be to smoke Shisha which in itself is very harmful. Although it may consist of flavouring, the purpose is to encourage someone to smoke excessively otherwise the tobacco effect still remains in the mouth and on the body which eventually emits an unpleasant smell.

1. Negative Social Impact - Free Mixing and Informal Interaction of Both Genders

In the UK as well as around the world there is an increase in immorality such as fornication, adultery, illegitimate babies, rape, cheating on one's spouse resulting in family breakdown and so on.

One of the main contributing factors of such acts is not controlling the gaze and free intermingling of both genders. Islām is not merely a religion that admonishes, but rather it is a pragmatic religion providing solutions to prevent immorality. Modern society views intermingling of both genders as progression of mankind whereas in reality this has drastically degenerated the dignity of mankind. The increase of rape, fornication, abortion, illegitimate relationships, cheating on one another bear testimony to this. This is why Islām is emphatic on implementing a system of segregation between both genders and the idea is not to degrade women but rather to enforce morality within the society, dispel immoral behaviour and preserve the chastity and dignity of women.

Once an Ottoman scholar Ahmad Wafeeq Pāsha, replied to a question posed to him at a congress in Europe as to why Eastern women remain in the confinements of their houses and don't freely mingle with men. His immediate reply was, "Because our women do not desire to become pregnant except with their husbands."

It is very unfortunate that in the current climate we are living in today, many of our Muslim brothers and sisters are ensnared in illegitimate relationships and other immoral behaviour. All this is due to free social interaction of both genders.

Almost every Shisha bar promotes the free mixing of both genders. They are a means of invitation towards sins and other immoral acts. Many Muslim brothers go to Shisha bars specifically to mingle with other women and cast unlawful gazes upon them whilst many Muslim sisters dress to impress men and immerse themselves in excessive fragrance and wear glamorous and attractive clothing. In this way they are directly or indirectly luring men. So both will receive a share of the sin.

In a Hadeeth of Saheeh Muslim, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ prohibited women to immerse themselves in fragrance when attending the congregational prayer in the Masjid. This is how much emphasis Islām gives in regards to setting limits in dressing when emerging from the home.

Allāh ﷻ through His Divine Wisdom knows what is harmful for us and what leads one to destruction so He has instructed men and women to lower their gazes and prohibited free mixing in order to attain purity.

Allāh ﷻ states, **“Say to the believing men to lower their gaze and safeguard their private parts, this is more pure for them, verily Allāh is All-Aware of what they do. And say to the believing women to lower their gaze and safeguard their private parts.”**

(24:30- 31)

“He knows the fraud of the eyes and what the hearts conceal.” (40:19)

Allāh ﷻ has instructed us to converse with women from behind the screen and not to directly come into contact with them for any casual reasons.

Allāh ﷻ states, **“And when you ask them (the women) for anything then ask them from behind the screen, this is more purer for your hearts and their hearts.”**

(33:53)

Sayyidunā Abū Usayd ؓ relates that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressing (the women) upon seeing men and women mixing after emerging from the Masjid, “Draw back, because you have no right to walk in the middle of the path (i.e. to walk with men) but keep to the side of the road. Thereafter, the women kept so close to the wall (and away from men) that their garments were rubbing against it.” (Abū Dāwood)

This Hadeeth forbids the free mixing of men and women even if it is outside the Masjid in spite of it being one of the greatest symbols of Islām. Therefore, any Shisha bar that provides free mixed facilities are not only sinful but in actual fact opening the doors towards immorality.

2. Music, Singing and Dancing

Apart from promoting informal interaction between both genders many Shisha bars consist of loud music and some even consist of singing and dancing. This poses a serious threat to Muslims spiritually, physically, psychologically and emotionally. Music causes arousal in a person and arouses him to commit sin because much music carries a general theme of love, emotion, fornication, crime and romance. This greatly influences emotion and psychological behaviour.

As mentioned previously Islām adopts preventive measures and blocks the means that lead to other sins. Many severe warnings have been mentioned with regards to music, singing and dancing:

1) Allāh ﷻ says, **“And there are among men, those that purchase idle tales, to mislead (men) from the path of Allāh and throw ridicule. For such there will be a humiliating punishment.” (31:6)**

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas’ood ؓ states in the explanation of the word “idle tales” that it refers to singing. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer)

Hasan Al-Basri ؓ says, “This verse was revealed in relation to singing and musical instruments.”

(Tafseer Ibn Katheer)

2) Sayyidunā Abū Mālik Al-Ash’ari ؓ reports that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ say, “There will appear some people in my Ummah, who will hold adultery, silk, alcohol and musical instruments to be lawful.”

(Bukhāri)

3) Sayyidunā Imrān Ibn Husain ؓ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “This Ummah will experience the swallowing up of some people by the earth, formation of some people into animals and stones being rained upon them.”

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A man from amongst the Muslims asked, "O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! When will this be?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "When female singers and musical instruments appear and alcohol will become (widely) consumed." (Tirmizi, Ibn Mājah)

4) Sayyidunā Ali ؑ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When my Ummah begin doing fifteen things, they will be inflicted with tribulations, and (from those 15 things he said), when female singers and musical instruments become widespread."

(Tirmizi)

What is the Islamic Ruling of those People's Income Who Provide Water-pipe Smoking (Shisha)

Another Islamic ruling that transpires from this is the income of those that sell or provide Shisha. Shaykh Khālid Saifullāh Rahmāni, one of the renowned scholars, states that the general principle of buying and selling in Islām is that any merchandise that itself is lawful would be permissible to sell, that which is unlawful (Harām) would be Harām to sell and that which is Makrooh would be Makrooh to sell. (Kitābul Fatāwa)

Since we have presented sufficient evidence and their reasons to prove that water-pipe smoking and opening Shisha bars to be unlawful and prohibited, the source of income derived from buying/selling water-pipes, smoking and opening Shisha bars will fall under the category of unlawful.

Conclusion

By now it has become apparent that smoking Shisha is associated with many serious harmful effects medically, physically and spiritually. Shisha cannot be classed as Makrooh-e-Tanzeehi (which merely implies to a disliked act and no sin). Smoking Shisha infringes many of the Islamic laws which renders it to be unlawful. Furthermore, the Shisha bars that currently operate today consist of many unlawful activities and pose a serious threat to the Muslim community. What goes on behind the scenes in many of these bars makes them no different to pubs with the exception that alcohol is not served. **Due to the severity of the crime, the Fatwa in our time in regards to Shisha is HARĀM or at least MAKROOH-E-TAHREEMI** as both terms imply it to be unlawful and a sinful act and the income received in providing it or opening Shisha bars cannot be classed as Halāl income.

If you have any questions regarding the beliefs & practices of Islām please email: fatawa@jkn.org.uk

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