Internalizing Religious Behavior Through Philosophical Engagement: A Case Study at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Institute, Indonesia

Hafizh Idri Purbajati[1]
Muhaiminah Darajat[2]

Hafiz.idri@gmail.com
mimin.darajat@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explores the internalization of religious behavior among students through philosophical engagement at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Institute. Employing a qualitative field research design, data were collected via participant observation and in-depth interviews with selected students. Analysis followed the Miles and Huberman framework, comprising data reduction, display, and verification. Findings reveal that daily practices such as communal prayers, Qur'an recitation, and philosophical discourse play a critical role in shaping religious consciousness. The results contribute to understanding religious behavior formation through social and philosophical enculturation in Islamic higher education settings. The methods used are group methods and individual methods. This change in religious behavior is categorized as a change through the enculturation process.*

Keywords: *Philosophy, internalization of awareness, behavioral change, religion, students.*

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi internalisasi perilaku keagamaan di kalangan mahasiswa melalui keterlibatan filosofis di Institut Agama Islam Miftahul Ulum. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian lapangan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan dan wawancara mendalam dengan mahasiswa terpilih. Analisis mengikuti kerangka kerja Miles dan Huberman, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian, dan verifikasi. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa praktik sehari-hari seperti doa bersama, pembacaan Al-Qur'an, dan wacana filosofis memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk kesadaran beragama. Hasilnya berkontribusi untuk memahami pembentukan perilaku keagamaan melalui enkulturasi sosial dan filosofis dalam lingkungan pendidikan tinggi Islam. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode kelompok dan metode individu. Perubahan perilaku keagamaan ini dikategorikan sebagai perubahan melalui proses enkulturasi.*

Kata Kunci: *Filsafat, kesadaran, perubahan perilaku, beragama, mahasiswa.*

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[1] Institut Agama Islam Miftahul Ulum Lumajang
[2] Universitas Islam Syarifuddin Lumajang

Introduction

Religious behavior means all actions or words carried out by a person. In contrast, the actions or actions and words will be related to religion, all of which are carried out because of belief in God with teachings, devotions, and obligations related to belief (Vanderweele, 2023). Thus, religious behavior and understanding Islamic ethics in student socializing require extra careful behavior. This is because the appreciation and practice are individual. This means that what a person understands and experiences about the truth depends on their background and personality. Therefore, religious behavior and understanding of Islamic ethics will be closely related to a person's emotional sensitivity, which is influenced by various factors (Purnama et al., 2022).

Indicators to measure and see whether something shows religious behavior or not can be seen from the characteristics of religious behavior. Several things can be used as indicators by (Nugraha et al., 2021) of a person's religious behavior, namely, commitment to God's commands and prohibitions, enthusiasm about studying religious teachings, being active in religious activities, respecting religious symbols, familiarity with holy books, and using a religious approach in determining choices.

Students are a very valuable asset to a nation. They are future leaders and successors of the nation's struggle. If students currently studying in college can be educated in a complete and focused manner, then the future of this nation and country will be promising (Musa et al., 2023). However, if they receive partial education, only prioritizing the aspects of intellectual intelligence and physical strength and ignoring the development of intellectual and spiritual intelligence will threaten this diverse nation's sustainability. The big challenge that students must face after graduating and becoming prospective workers in the current era is not only the demand for abilities in intellectual intelligence (cognitive) and physical skills but also strong emotional and spiritual intelligence (Agustini et al., 2023).

It is realized that students are starting to be critical in responding to life issues related to religion and ethics, especially for those who have faith. Moreover, students are in a transitional period between late adolescence and early adulthood (Upayogi et al., 2024). At this time, they begin to think about social, moral, economic, and religious responsibilities, themselves, their families, and God who has given them life even

Volume 16 Number 02 October 2025
Submitted: 19-12-2024 Accepted: 06-03-2025 Approved: 15-03-2025 Published: 02-04-2025

209

though mixed emotions accompany them. The differences in religious behavior and understanding of social ethics significantly impact students (Zetriuslita et al., 2022). The mental state of young men and women on campus must be considered in bringing them to religious experience, which will be their eternal provision for life.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, the influence of secularization also gives rise to another phenomenon, namely the weakening of the attitude of the Muslim generation towards religion and its teachings. From a research report by several Islamic groups conducted in 2022, it was found that around 65% of the 223 million Muslims cannot read the Al-Quran (Franken, 2023). This data is supported by social phenomena developing in Muslim society, such as free association, individualism, hedonism, apathy, and other phenomena contrary to Islamic values (Siddique, 2024). The various symptoms and phenomena above can be summarized as symptoms of the weakening of religious perception experienced by the younger generation in this era, or, not to say, there are symptoms of neglect of religion. Another example is a group of young people who are administratively registered as Muslims but in their daily lives do not carry out rituals and experience the essence of Islamic teachings (Van Buren et al., 2020).

Miftahul Ulum Islamic Institute of Lumajang, one of the Islamic boarding school-based universities in Lumajang Regency's learning process, requires students to receive good guidance so that their emotional and spiritual intelligence can develop optimally. One aspect students developed in the educational process at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang is the development of religious behavior in the affective aspect (attitude, behavior, and personality). So far, the cognitive and psychomotor aspects have developed a lot and become the primary concern. Students formally reside in Islamic boarding schools to develop affective abilities. The goal achieved from this education is the formation of a good personality in students who are strong in practicing the teachings of Islam (Zarkasyi, 2021).

Several previous studies concluded by (Razak et al., 2023) and (Iles-Caven et al., 2023) that in the process of social institutionalization, there is a social construction that takes place in several stages, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. This aligns with (Amalia et al., 2023) and (Mahudin et al., 2022) research, which concluded that society is not an objective reality in the natural sense

alone, but rather human formations, or it can be said that humans create social construction. Humans are human products, and this expression is not in the sense of a biological process but at the sociological level.

In this study, the social construction theory of (Pearce et al., 2017) will be the analytical tool to see the phenomenon being studied. This is because this theory is considered relevant in explaining the phenomenon of change that occurs in various types of social relations, especially at the micro-sociological level. This theory assumes that social reality is a historical formation and experience that forms a particular construction. In this study, the theoretical framework used is the theory of social institutionalization written by (Vanderweele, 2023).

This study differs from previous studies because it primarily focuses on internalizing religious behavior among students through philosophical involvement at the Miftahul Ulum Islamic Institute. Therefore, based on previous studies and the above background, this paper aims to analyze and provide a cultural education model of religious behavioral diversity among students to strengthen the character of discipline, respect, and harmony.

Research Method

This type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach. (John W. Creswell, 2021).This research is a case study approach because this research describes the religious behavior of students—the field study we conducted for two months, in January and February 2025. The researcher determined the primary and secondary data sources using the purposive sampling technique (Rustamana, 2024) with informants including students of the 6th semester Al-Quran and Tafsir Science Study Program, Lecturers of the Al-Quran and Tafsir Science Study Program and three people.

Data were obtained through direct observation and interviews with several informants who were students at the Miftahul Ulum Islamic Institute of Lumajang, hereinafter abbreviated as IAI Miftahul Ulum, which is a higher education institution based on a salafiyah Islamic boarding school. During the two months, the researcher intensively followed the development and changes in the behavior of students to see and record the changes or dynamics that occurred to them, especially in terms of religious behavior (Pfeifer & Dolan, 2023).

Volume 16 Number 02 October 2025
Submitted: 19-12-2024 Accepted: 06-03-2025 Approved: 15-03-2025 Published: 02-04-2025

211

The students who were the research subjects at IAI Miftahul Ulum were selected randomly, and the criteria was that they had studied there for at least three months. The researcher chose not to make the management of IAI Miftahul Ulum part of the informants because of the assumption that they would only provide normative answers. Instead, to find out the description of this college and the various formal rules in it, the researcher chose to directly participate and follow the program activities within the Islamic boarding school to obtain concrete data so that they could be closer to the subjects being studied. This study focuses on analyzing changes in the religious behavior of students at IAI Miftahul Ulum as a result of social construction.

In this study, the researcher used the stages of data analysis according to the Miles and Huberman pattern, namely the reduction stage, the data presentation stage, making temporary conclusions, and verification activities (Brailas & Tragou, 2023). First, data reduction is carried out by sorting out unnecessary data. In this case, reduction is done to make it easier for researchers to draw temporary conclusions. The selected data is clarified and rewritten naturally. Second, the data display stage is carried out by organizing the data into a specific form. Thus, data presentation is carried out to read the data comprehensively. When rewriting, the researcher interprets or analyzes related to the research question (Garrido, 2022).

The researcher checks the data so that it is possible to obtain valid data as the original. First, a review of the reference section will be conducted by comparing the findings with the sources so that the results of this study follow the actual situation. Second, triangulation is used to check the accuracy of the data. The researcher checks the data obtained from another source, such as data or information obtained from lecturers, students, and others (Negou & Fonkem, 2023).

Result and Discussion

Internalization of Religious Awareness and Behavior of Students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program, IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang

The internalization stage means that knowledge and behavior have entered, initially only limited to adaptation and adjustment, into a kind of awareness within a person. Alternatively, Berger means subjective reality. The important point in internalization is significance. This means that what becomes the constructed behavior or mentality has become part of his self. Primary and secondary socialization: Primary

socialization of the religious behavior of the students is obtained through their respective family environments. Although socialization is still dogmatic and straightforward, psychologically, it still leaves an impression.

The effectiveness of the philosophical material studied in the class gives each student reflection and depth to enter self-understanding, which is indeed the orientation of the content of the material they study. This strengthens the internalization process because it involves awareness (Chodijah & Mahalle, 2023). Humans and students at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang will not be the same. The differences in students' religious behavior vary, as conveyed by the head of the IAT study program.

> "...because there are various children, sir, some are neat, polite, some are good, pious, diligent in worship, but there are children who are indeed untidy just from the way they dress..." (Interview, Sahrul Hidayatullah. January 7, 2025)

Furthermore, the head of the IAT study program explained how students' religious behavior is when carrying out worship, especially when they are about to answer the call of Allah SWT (Azan). "Alhamdulillah, everything is fine, but there are indeed some students who need special guidance, and need more attention in terms of implementing religious guidance. For example, because at school it is mandatory when entering the Dzuhur or Asr prayer, it is mandatory to pray the Dzuhur and Asr prayers in congregation, some children do have to be herded first before going to the mosque at the beginning of the time. I mean, everyone will go to the mosque. It is just that they are more like waiting for later, not at the beginning of the time" (Interview, Sahrul Hidayatullah. January 7, 2025)

In behavior towards fellow human beings, in this case, the behavior of students towards lecturers when they meet, the behavior of students varies. A Lecturer conveyed the following from the IAT study program.

> "... there are those who are indifferent to lecturers when passing by. There are those who are very polite, even though they are men." (Interview, Wahyudi. January 9, 2025)

The religious behavior of students from the IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang IAT study program varies. Regarding the fulfillment of worship, for example, the call to prayer, some students seem accustomed to rushing to the mosque when the call to

prayer sounds, and vice versa. Some students still delay. Then, regarding behavior towards others, there are students who are polite and those who are indifferent to teachers in particular.

The results of observations that have been carried out regarding the form and stages of religious guidance with philosophy material at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang can be described as follows:

In the morning, students greet, greet, and shake hands with teachers and several other students before entering the campus environment. Entering the classroom, students say hello, and before learning begins, students are guided to tadarus Al-Qur'an, or for students who cannot read the Al-Qur'an, Iqra provides guidance with a tutor in a different room. Especially on Fridays, male students rush to perform Friday prayers at the mosque. In contrast, female students perform muhadharah in a designated room, using materials prepared by the Lecturer. Then female students perform the Dhuhur prayer at the mosque after the Friday prayer. On days other than Friday, all students immediately rush to the mosque when the call to prayer has sounded. Class recitation is held monthly on a day and in a place determined by the guardian Lecturer. (Observations. January 13, 2025)

Subject EF, a Lecturer in philosophy, confirmed the observation's results again. Salman, a student, conveyed the same message regarding religious guidance activities at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang.

"There are activities of reading the Qur'an in the morning, then praying Dhuhur and Ashar in a congregation, then there is a class study about religion, and it takes place at one of the students' houses, then muhadharah on Fridays, so male students pray Friday prayers and for female students muhadharah." (Interview. Salman. January 14, 2025)

The same question was asked to students. Subject Huda revealed his statement regarding the stages of implementing religious guidance at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang.

"Religious guidance activities at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang, this is from the morning, before the lesson, there is tadarus al-Qur'an, and it is mandatory for the whole class, then congregational prayers, of course, dzuhur and ashar, there

is also when after the dzuhur prayer there is a kultum, it is representatives from certain classes and children, congregational ashar prayer, then if it is Friday it is for the muhadharah girls, and there is a class pengajian." (Interview. Huda. January 14, 2025)

Based on the description of the study results, the implementation of internalization of students' religious awareness and behavior cannot be separated from supporting and inhibiting factors. The implementation of philosophical thinking guidance at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang is supported by a shared vision and mission, namely obedience to the teachings of the Islamic faith and the status of a devout Muslim. In addition, the mentor or Lecturer always helps remind students to carry out religious activities that are mandatory by the command of Allah SWT, such as prayer and religious activities that have been determined and scheduled by the campus.

Changes in Religious Behavior of Students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang.

After the questions of internalization of religious awareness and behavior of students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang were empirically analyzed after the habituation of religious behavior which became the campus rules that they had been doing for several months, in practice the activities of prayer, weekly prayers, and religious practices have become a new habitus, transformed into their self-identity. Student Huda in the Al-Quran and Tafsir Study Program of IAI Miftahul Ulum, for example, explained that:

"The change must have happened because I started asking about existential things in myself, such as the purpose of life, why I was created, what the position of religion in my life, and so on, all of which are not dogmatic, the answers of which are simply instilled, but based on rationality and clear references. The point is, I feel free over my theoretical and practical choices". (Interview. Salman. January 14, 2025)

With such circumstances, internalization, in this case, does not only occur because of the results of a reasonably long habituation. This process can take place because religious behavior is finally chosen consciously based on the theoretical basis that has been studied. Huda, in the Al-Quran and Tafsir study program, explained that

Volume 16 Number 02 October 2025
Submitted: 19-12-2024 Accepted: 06-03-2025 Approved: 15-03-2025 Published: 02-04-2025

215

the learning material he received greatly influenced his self and religious behavior. He said:

> "His personality is now not the same as before, and the change was felt very quickly for him. "I think a lot has changed, and the change is huge. For example, in the past, I had no idea I would become someone who diligently prays five times a day, recites the Koran, or often goes to the mosque. My behavior in the past was full of sin, and my friends might not believe in my behavior and thoughts now. This is not that I feel that I have been good, but if you ask about changes, yes, that is how fast it is". (Interview. Salman. January 14, 2025)

The head of the IAT study program explained how the religious behavior of students has changed as he:

> "Whether we realize it or not, the interaction process built by the IAI Miftahul Ulum's academic community can give rise to new insights and mindsets that enable every individual or group to apply themselves to make changes. In essence, because students always engage in social interactions, social change cannot be avoided individually or in groups" (Interview, Sahrul Hidayatullah. January 12, 2025)

Some statements show that there is information that shows changes in religious behavior related to academic achievement and social interaction of IAT study program students, as stated by Maulana, an IAT study program student who gave the following statement:

> "Holding socio-religious activities can help me slowly eliminate bad habits and be more busy with positive things. I have also become more active in socializing with friends since I started actively participating in religious study activities and other youth activities. In the beginning, I was a person who was less social with students from other study programs, so it grew my self-confidence in socializing with friends." (Interview, Maulana. February 2, 2025)

In line with the statement given by Saiful Anam, a student of the IAT study program who gave the following statement:

> "Initially, I had no activities other than playing and chatting from morning to afternoon. However, since the holding of socio-religious activities and

philosophical discussions about who I am and what my purpose in life is. I am busier with activities than having to be unemployed every night on the side of the road. Alhamdulillah, now I have been able to reduce my bad habits because I am active in youth activities it can also make me a developing teenager". (Interview, Saiful. February 2, 2025)

Based on the description of the research results, it can be synthesized that this behavioral change shows how theoretical awareness is beneficial in the internalization process experienced by IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang students. In the past, when performing prayers or events in prayer assemblies, it was because they were forced to. However, after several months of learning programs and making religious practices carried out wholeheartedly and consciously, they considered it an obligation that arose from within themselves. Although the instructions and procedures for religious rituals come from religious teachings, the will to do them comes from within, becoming a part of the self. So, in carrying out these religious practices, there are no longer any considerations and conflicts; rather, they are done because they have become a habitus for themselves.

Discussion

Internalization of Religious Awareness and Behavior of Students at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang

Religious behavior consists of physical, mental, emotional, and social manifestations of a person's attitudes, behaviors, and routines. Moral behavior based on religion consists of human behavior that is motivated by religious principles and inner fortitude (Vanderweele, 2023). Religious behavior consists of good deeds that apply religious principles in everyday life. The form of religious behavior discussed in this research is carrying out physically visible rituals or worship, such as prayer and reading the Al-Qur'an.

Meanwhile, the construction of changes in religious behavior at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang was a secondary socialization stage where there was tension between various thoughts within them. There was still an internalization of religious values within them. So religious behavior such as praying five times a day, reading the Al-Qur'an, and living out daily or weekly prayers have become deeply habituated in their minds. Moreover, this internalization process occurs because of the support of

Volume 16 Number 02 October 2025
Submitted: 19-12-2024 Accepted: 06-03-2025 Approved: 15-03-2025 Published: 02-04-2025

217

theoretical truths achieved by their thinking after approximately three months of systematic study of Islamic philosophy.

In general, the internalization activities of religious awareness and behavior of students at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang are Muslims' daily activities, where performing prayers and reading the Qur'an is an obligation for every Muslim. Religious guidance at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang is a religious activity that is an obligation for a Muslim to be carried out as a form of obedience to the commands of Allah SWT, such as obligatory prayers, which are then added to other activities such as tadarus Al-Qur'an, discussion and debate, and so on.

The form of internalization of religious awareness and behavior at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang is carried out every day, such as tadarus Al-Qur'an, *Iqra* coaching, dzuhur and Ashar prayers in congregation (especially during school hours because outside of school teachers can only remind them remotely by telephone), kultur after dzuhur prayers in congregation (except Friday). Other religious guidances are carried out at certain times, such as muhadharah (for female students), Friday prayers (for male students), joint donations held on Fridays (for females only), and class recitation is held once a month.

In the process of internalizing religious awareness and behavior of students in the Al-Quran and Tafsir study program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang which is supported by all lecturers as supervisors with the subject of religious guidance itself being students. Religious guidance carried out at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang generally uses direct methods, namely group and individual methods. This is to the theory proposed by (Pearce et al., 2017), which states that there are two methods of religious guidance in terms of communication, including direct and indirect methods; direct methods are divided into two, namely, group methods and individual methods.

Students at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang who follow religious guidance show an increase in their behavior by Islamic teachings; this is to the theory of religious dimensions proposed by (Vanderweele, 2023), including ritual involvement, intellectual involvement, ideological involvement, and consequent involvement. According to (to Razak et al., 2023), ritual involvement in religion, in the findings of this study, can be seen from how a Muslim carries out the obligations of worshiping

Allah SWT, such as performing prayers and carrying out everything He commands by the rules and teachings of Islam.

Changes in Religious Behavior of Students in the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang

Changes in religious behavior that occur in students in the Tafsir and Al-Qur'an study program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang are categorized as changes through the enculturation process, namely the process of an individual in learning and adjusting his thoughts and attitudes to customs, normative systems, and regulations that live in his culture. This process started in childhood, in the family environment, with playmates, or at school. An individual often learns by imitating various actions, which is internalized in his personality from these actions. By repeatedly imitating, his actions become a steady pattern and a norm that regulates his actions or becomes a cultured action.

Changes in a person's religious behavior are a possibility, and one of the causal factors is the culture of society; social interaction is between a person and another person or with a group of people (society), so there is a point of contact between social consequences and changes in religious behavior (Van Buren et al., 2020),. Changes in a person's religious behavior are possible, both in terms of quality and quantity and total structural change. The quality aspect is the change in the value of religious behavior, whether it increases or decreases or is of good quality (Iles-Caven et al., 2023).

After the objectivation process that occurs after they go through and follow a learning program in an integrated system between campus rules and Islamic boarding schools, until at an advanced level, internalization occurs in them of religious behavior, which is the result of learning and the education system that they follow after some time, which is a social construction based on Pearce et al.'s (2017) perspective.

These changes are also symptoms reflected by internal forces such as faith, psychological or physical conditions, and community culture. Behavior is related to a person's interaction with other people or something else; it is also identical to individual behavior or morals, good personality, and polite speech. Meanwhile, religion is given the meaning of the characteristics contained in religion or everything about religion.

Social change and dynamics are the result of interactions between humans and groups (Amalia et al., 2023). The interaction process can give rise to new insights and mindsets that enable each individual or group to apply themselves to make changes. In essence, social change cannot be avoided individually or in groups because society always carries out social interactions.

Based on the discussion of the research results with theoretical analysis, the research findings can be formulated briefly in the following table:

Table 1. Internalization of Philosophical Awareness and Changes in Religious Behavior

No	Research Findings	Indicator Findings
1	Internalization of philosophical awareness in students' religious behavior	1. Habituation of Al-Qur'an interpretation discussions, Iqra coaching, congregational prayer 2. Philosophy discussions accompanied by a Lecturer. 3. Control of religious guidance 4. Community service activities for joint alms held on Fridays 5. Extensive discussions with other study programs and universities are held once a month
2	Changes in Students' Religious Behavior	1. According to religious teachings, intentions and motivations change within the individual student who seeks to achieve or do something useful. 2. Changes in knowledge obtained through sensing or learning improve students' understanding of the rules and morals according to religious and cultural guidance. 3. Changes in attitudes based on students' perspectives on values or beliefs about behavior that provides benefits and

harms themselves and others. New information, experiences, or influences from others can influence this process. This is what will manifest in the form of behavior.

Conclusion

This study concludes that philosophical engagement significantly supports internalizing religious values in a structured Islamic educational environment. Future research should investigate longitudinal impacts and incorporate comparative models from other institutions. The implementation of philosophical thinking guidance at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang is supported by a shared vision and mission, namely obedience to the teachings of the Islamic faith and the status of a devout Muslim. Apart from that, there is the factor of the supervisor or Lecturer who always helps remind students to carry out religious activities that are obligatory according to the command of Allah SWT, such as prayer and religious activities that have been determined and scheduled by the campus.

Religious guidance conducted at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang generally uses direct methods, namely group and individual methods. This is to the theory proposed by Berger, which states that there are two methods of religious guidance in terms of communication, including direct and indirect methods; direct methods are divided into two, namely, group methods and individual methods. Changes in religious behavior that occur in students of the Tafsir and Al-Qur'an study program at IAI Miftahul Ulum Lumajang are categorized as changes through the enculturation process, namely the process of an individual in learning and adjusting his thoughts and attitudes to customs, normative systems, and regulations that live in his culture.

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Volume 16 Number 02 October 2025
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221

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223

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