

**THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE OF QS. AN-NAS IN THE BOOK
MAFĀTĪH AL-GHAYB BY FAKHRUDDIN AR-RAZI AND ITS
RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY LIFE**

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the theological messages of Surah An-Nas in *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* by Fakhruddin al-Razi and their relevance to contemporary life. The background of this research is based on the increasing psychological problems, social pressures, and complex flows of information in modern society, which are closely related to the concept of *al-waswās al-khannās* in Surah An-Nas. This research employs a qualitative library research method with theological and contextual approaches. The primary source of this study is *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*, while secondary sources consist of relevant books and scholarly articles. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically through examining the meanings of the verses and al-Razi's interpretations. The findings reveal that Surah An-Nas contains three main theological concepts: *Rabb*, *Mālik*, and *Ilāh*, which represent Allah's nurturing care, sovereignty, and the exclusive right to be worshipped. In addition, the concept of *al-waswās al-khannās* is understood as subtle disturbances affecting the human inner self, originating from both jinn and humans. In the contemporary context, the message of this surah remains relevant as a spiritual foundation for dealing with anxiety, social manipulation, hoaxes, and distractions in the digital era. Therefore, Surah An-Nas functions not only as a prayer for protection, but also as a theological and psychological framework for maintaining the inner resilience of modern human beings.

Keywords: Surah An-Nas; Fakhruddin al-Razi; contemporary theology

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary life is characterized not only by technological advances and the openness of information, but also by the increasing complexity of inner problems that are often invisible to the naked eye (Muvid, 2020). Phenomena such as excessive anxiety, overthinking, loss of meaning, and negative impulses arising from within have become increasingly common in contemporary society. This condition indicates that human problems are no longer merely physical and social, but also touch deeper psychological and spiritual dimensions (Gelgel, 2025).

Interestingly, this phenomenon, from a religious perspective, has long been recognized as a form of inner disturbance stemming from "whispers" or *waswas*. In this regard, Surah An-Nas presents a construct that not only addresses external threats but also reveals the internal dynamics of humans vulnerable to hidden negative influences. The term *al-waswās al-khannās* in this surah illustrates how evil can operate subtly, infiltrating human consciousness, and then influencing how we think, feel, and act (Muharram, 2023).

The structure of the verses of QS. An-Nas, which mention "*Rabb an-nās,*" "*Mālik an-nās,*" and "*Ilāh an-Nas,*" also indicates a layered theological affirmation regarding the relationship between humans and God. God is presented not only as the Creator, but also as the Sovereign Ruler and the only One worthy of worship. (Amin, 2017) This affirmation has an important implication that protection from all forms of evil, including those of an inner nature, can only be obtained through a complete attachment to God. Thus, QS. An-Nas not only functions as a prayer of protection, but also as a theological framework in understanding the position of humans amidst various complex threats (Khodariyah, 2018).

A more in-depth approach to this meaning can be found in Fakhruddin al-Razi's commentary on the *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*. This tafsir is well known for its rational and philosophical approach, as well as its ability to elaborate the meaning of verses not only at the textual level, but also in theological and psychological dimensions. Al-Razi often linked Qur'anic verses with profound reflections on the human condition, making his interpretation relevant to addressing issues across time, including the non-physical problems of modern life (Sastyaningrum, Qur'ani, & Khan, n.d.).

A number of previous studies have examined the Surah An-Nas from various perspectives, both as part of a letter of protection (*al-mu'awwidzat*), as a basis for ruqyah practice, and as a representation of the concept of Satan's interference in human life. (R. Setiawan, 2005) Several studies also highlight the concept of waswas from the perspectives of Sufism, psychology, and Islamic education (Suyuti, 2023). However, most of these studies focus primarily on the practical and normative aspects of QS. An-Nas and pay limited attention to the theological and philosophical dimensions of Fakhruddin Ar-Rāzi's interpretation. Moreover, studies that relate Ar-Rāzi's interpretation to contemporary issues, such as mental health, social manipulation, misinformation, and the challenges of the digital age, remain relatively scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the theological messages of QS. An-Nas in *Tafsīr Mafātīh al-Ghayb* and analyzing their relevance to contemporary social and psychological realities. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of classical theological-philosophical interpretation with contemporary psychological and social issues, thereby offering a more contextual understanding of the

relevance of QS. An-Nas in modern life.

Based on these considerations, this study examines the theological messages contained in QS. An-Nas through the interpretive perspective of Fakhrudin Ar-Rāzi in *Tafsīr Mafātīh al-Ghayb*. Particular attention is given to the concepts of divine sovereignty, human vulnerability to inner disturbances, and the spiritual mechanisms of protection presented in the surah. By connecting Ar-Rāzi's interpretation with contemporary psychological and social challenges, this study aims to demonstrate the continuing relevance of classical Qur'anic exegesis in addressing the realities of modern life.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative, library-based study *based* on the analysis of relevant written sources. The main focus is directed at examining Surah An-Nas in the book *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* by Fakhrudin al-Razi as a primary source. The approach used is a theological approach to examine the concept of divinity, the nature of evil, and spiritual protection, accompanied by a contextual approach to link the meaning of the verse to the realities of contemporary life.

The data sources consist of primary sources in the form of *Mafātīh al-Ghayb's* interpretation and secondary sources in the form of relevant books and journal articles. Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, while data analysis used a descriptive-analytical method, namely explaining Fakhrudin al-Razi's interpretation and then examining the theological messages contained and their relevance to modern life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Review QS. An-Nas and the Tafsir Style of *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*

Surah An-Nas is one of the closing chapters of the Qur'an, possessing both a dense meaning and significant theological depth. The main focus of this chapter is on asking God for protection from latent evil, specifically what is known as *al-waswās al-khannās*. This concept refers to a form of disturbance that is not physically visible, but rather operates through subtle whispers that enter human consciousness. This characteristic makes *waswas* difficult to recognize, yet it has a significant influence on human thought patterns, emotions, and actions. (Rohman, 2025)

The explanation of *al-waswās al-khannās* goes beyond its lexical meaning and also touches on the existential dimension of humans as beings with the potential for inner conflict. Several contemporary studies indicate that the concept of *waswas* can be linked to psychological phenomena such as anxiety, excessive doubt, and negative impulses that recur in the mind. This demonstrates that the message of Surah An-Nas has broad relevance, as it is able to explain human inner experiences across contexts of time. (Anugerah, 2025)

Another important aspect of Surah An-Nas lies in its affirmation of the multiplicity of sources of evil. The final verse, which mentions "*min al-jinnati wa an-Nas*," indicates that disturbances originate not only from supernatural entities but also from humans. This reality broadens the understanding that threats to individuals can arise through social relationships, environmental influences, and interactions that have negative psychological and spiritual

impacts. This perspective becomes crucial when linked to modern life conditions fraught with social pressures and a flow of information that is not always constructive. (Huda, 2023)

The structure of the expressions "*Rabb an-Nas*," "*Mālik an-Nas*," and "*Ilāh an-Nas*" also demonstrates a layered theological construction. Each term represents a different dimension of the relationship between humans and God, ranging from creation and power to worship. This arrangement is not repetitive, but rather contains a progressive affirmation of God's all-encompassing authority. This understanding leads to the realization that protection from all forms of evil can only be obtained through total attachment to God in all aspects of life. (Murdiono, 2013)

This deepening of meaning is more comprehensively evident in Fakhruddin al-Razi's commentary on *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*. Al-Razi's strong intellectual background in theology and philosophy influenced his perspective on interpreting verses. The resulting interpretation is not only oriented toward linguistic aspects but also leads to in-depth rational analysis and reflection on human reality. This style makes his interpretation argumentative and rich in conceptual elaboration. (Tarto, 2023)

The rational-philosophical tendencies in Ar-Razi's interpretations are often categorized as part of *the bi al-ra'yi interpretations*, which remain grounded in theological principles. He frequently links the meaning of verses to logical arguments and intellectual discourses that developed at the time. (Sastyaningrum et al., n.d.) In the context of QS. An-Nas, this approach is evident in his attempt to explain *waswas* as a phenomenon that originates not only from outside the human self but also relates to the structure of the soul and the internal tendencies of the human being itself.

Furthermore, Fakhruddin al-Razi emphasized that the human heart plays a central role as a platform for the entry of both good and bad influences. When a person's spiritual state weakens, negative impulses more easily influence consciousness and behavior. Conversely, the strength of faith acts as a defense mechanism capable of inhibiting the entry of such influences. This explanation demonstrates that Al-Razi's interpretation contains not only a theological dimension but also a close relationship with psychological approaches relevant to understanding the dynamics of the human mind. (Sa'ari & Akib, 2018)

This description demonstrates that Surah An-Nas does not merely address protection in a normative sense, but also presents a comprehensive conceptual framework regarding the relationship between God, humanity, and evil. This framework serves as an important foundation for further examining the theological messages contained within it, while also opening up opportunities for interpretation relevant to the challenges of contemporary life.

Analysis of the QS Theological Message. An-Nas in Tafsir Ar-Razi

1. Rabb: Awareness of Allah as the Sustainer

In *Tafsīr Mafātīh al-Ghayb*, Fakhruddin Ar-Rāzi interprets QS. An-Nas not merely as a prayer for protection from external disturbances, but as a theological guide that explains the relationship between human beings and God, the sources of evil, and the means of safeguarding one's inner condition. The structure of the surah itself reflects this purpose. The mention of *Rabb*, *Mālik*, and *Ilāh* does not stand independently; rather, these

three attributes form a gradual theological framework that leads human beings toward a deeper awareness of Allah. Ar-Rāzi argues that this sequence is not arbitrary, but represents stages through which human beings come to understand their relationship with God.

Human beings first come to know Allah as *Rabb*, the One who nurtures, sustains, and governs all aspects of life. The concept of *Rabb* serves as the starting point because it is the closest to everyday human experience. Everyone experiences divine blessings in various forms, including health, sustenance, protection, and the opportunity to continue living. Many of these blessings are received without being fully recognized, and people often regard them as ordinary aspects of daily life. Through these experiences, individuals gradually develop the awareness that their lives do not stand independently but are constantly dependent upon God's providence. (al Razi, 1981)

According to al-Rāzī, recognizing Allah as *Rabb* is not merely an intellectual acknowledgment but also an existential experience. Human beings do not simply know that God created them; they also realize that their entire existence remains under His care and authority. Such awareness fosters humility, as individuals come to understand that what they possess is not solely the result of their own efforts and abilities. Therefore, the concept of *Rabb* becomes the initial foundation of faith and monotheism, encouraging human beings to recognize their dependence on God before arriving at a deeper understanding of His sovereignty and their servitude to Him.

2. *Mālik*: Awareness of Allah as the Sovereign Ruler

Ar-Rāzi does not stop at recognizing Allah as *Rabb*. According to him, acknowledging Allah as the provider of sustenance and the sustainer of life is not sufficient to establish a complete understanding of monotheism. A person may recognize that God grants blessings and maintains human existence while still believing that they possess full control over their own lives. For this reason, the concept of *Mālik* serves as a deeper stage in developing the relationship between human beings and God. In the concept of *Mālik*, Allah is understood as the Sovereign Ruler who possesses absolute authority over all creation. This title signifies not only ownership but also complete power in governing every aspect of existence. Human beings do not merely originate from God; all aspects of their lives remain under His authority and decree. Success and failure, health and illness, as well as the various changes that occur throughout life, ultimately unfold within the scope of God's will and wisdom. Nothing in human existence is entirely independent of His governance predicted. (al Razi, 1981)

Awareness of Allah as *Mālik* challenges the illusion of self-sufficiency that often develops within human beings. Individuals may feel powerful because of their knowledge, social status, wealth, or the systems they have created, leading them to assume that life is fully under their control. In Ar-Rāzi's perspective, human beings must progress from the awareness of being sustained by God to the awareness of being governed by Him. This shift is essential because it enables individuals to recognize their limitations and dependence upon divine authority. Therefore, the concept of *Mālik* not only affirms

Allah's sovereignty but also places human beings in their proper position as creatures whose control over life is inherently limited.

3. *Ilāh* : The Culmination of Monotheism and Servitude

Within the structure of QS. An-Nas, the concept of *Ilāh* is not merely an additional attribute, but the culmination of the entire process of introducing human beings to God. Once individuals realize that they are sustained by Allah and remain under His authority, the logical consequence is the recognition that only Allah is worthy of worship and devotion. Thus, the concept of *Ilāh* elevates the human relationship with God beyond awareness and acknowledgment toward a deeper spiritual commitment.

At this stage, monotheism is no longer limited to the intellectual recognition that God exists and possesses supreme power. Rather, it develops into an existential commitment that shapes one's entire orientation in life. Recognizing Allah as *Ilāh* means placing Him at the center of one's values, as the ultimate source of truth, and as the primary guide for human actions. All forms of dependence, hope, fear, and life aspirations are directed toward Him. In this context, servitude is not confined to ritual worship alone, but encompasses a way of life characterized by obedience and submission to God's will. (Sangkot Sirait, 2020)

Furthermore, the concept of *Ilāh* demonstrates that monotheism is not only a matter of belief, but also a matter of life orientation. In contemporary society, people often place popularity, material success, social trends, or public recognition at the center of their lives (A. Setiawan, 2017). Through the concept of *Ilāh*, Ar-Rāzi emphasizes that only Allah deserves to be the ultimate object of devotion and worship. Therefore, monotheism functions as a guiding principle that protects human beings from various forms of attachment, dependence, and servitude to anything other than Allah.

The sequence of *Rabb*, *Mālik*, and *Ilāh* demonstrates that monotheism is a gradual process of spiritual awareness. Human beings are first invited to recognize Allah through His blessings and care, then to understand His sovereignty over all aspects of life, and finally to arrive at complete recognition expressed through sincere servitude. This process illustrates that monotheism is not merely an abstract theological doctrine, but an inner experience that shapes how individuals understand themselves, the world around them, and their relationship with God.

4. The Threat of Whispering: The Meaning of *al-Waswās al-Khannās*

Interestingly, after establishing the foundations of monotheism, QS. An-Nas shifts its focus to the concept of *al-waswās al-khannās*. This transition suggests that one of the greatest threats to human beings does not originate solely from external forces, but also emerges from within the human self. In Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī's interpretation, *al-waswās* refers to recurring whispers or suggestions that continuously influence human thoughts, while *al-khannās* describes a force that retreats, hides, and operates in a subtle manner. Together, these terms indicate that evil does not always appear openly or directly; rather, it works gradually by entering the mind and influencing human judgment and decision-

making. Ar-Rāzī further explains that the source of these disturbances is not limited to a single entity, but may originate from both jinn and human beings. This understanding broadens the meaning of *al-waswās al-khannās*, demonstrating that harmful influences do not always manifest in obviously evil forms. Instead, they may appear in ways that seem ordinary, attractive, or even convincing, making them more difficult to recognize and resist (Masdudi, 2016).

5. The Inner Dimension: The Primary Target of Whispering

At this point, it becomes evident that the primary target of whispering is not external behavior, but rather the inner dimension of human beings. Every action originates from the internal realm of thought and intention. When a whisper is accepted, it develops and influences behavior; when it is resisted, its influence weakens. This indicates that human beings are not entirely passive recipients of temptation. They possess the capacity to determine whether such whispers will be entertained or rejected. However, individuals are often unaware that they are being influenced by these subtle suggestions. For this reason, QS. An-Nas does not merely command people to resist evil, but directs them to seek refuge in Allah.

From a broader perspective, QS. An-Nas highlights the close relationship between faith and the psychological condition of human beings. Al-Rāzī explains that whispering occurs within the *ṣudūr* (hearts or inner selves). This term should not be understood merely in a physical sense, but rather as referring to the center of human consciousness, emotions, and intentions. Such an understanding demonstrates that faith is closely connected to one's inner state. When a person becomes negligent in remembering Allah, the inner space becomes more vulnerable to negative influences. Conversely, when an individual remains mindful of Allah, that space becomes protected. Al-Rāzī even explains that Satan retreats when a person engages in *dhikr*. This indicates that remembrance of Allah strengthens inner self-control, whereas negligence weakens it.

At this point, the relevance of QS. An-Nas becomes increasingly evident. When examined more deeply, this surah does not merely discuss protection from supernatural harm, but also provides guidance on how human beings should manage their inner lives. The greatest threats are often invisible, yet their effects are real and significant. Faith is therefore not limited to ritual practice, but is closely related to the ability to maintain inner stability and self-control. Dependence on Allah should not be understood as passivity; rather, it reflects an awareness of human limitations and the need for divine guidance. In this sense, the theological message of QS. An-Nas, as interpreted by al-Rāzī, moves from the affirmation of monotheism, to the identification of inner disturbances, and finally to the cultivation of spiritual resilience. Although brief, this surah contains a comprehensive framework for understanding the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human life.

Relevance in Life Contemporary

1. Mental Health and Anxiety

QS. An-Nas remains highly relevant to contemporary discussions on mental health. What Ar-Rāzi describes as *waswas* may be reflected today in experiences such as anxiety, overthinking, repetitive negative thoughts, feelings of insecurity, and various forms of psychological distress that are often difficult to explain. The pattern remains similar: it emerges internally, operates subtly, and repeatedly influences an individual's thoughts and behavior (DN, 2023). Many individuals may appear emotionally stable on the outside while internally struggling with persistent and unresolved mental conflicts. The phrase *min sharri al-waswās al-khannās* suggests that such disturbances are part of the reality of human existence because they operate within the deepest dimensions of consciousness and self-awareness.

From a modern psychological perspective, the characteristics of *waswas* described in QS. An-Nas are similar to the phenomenon of repetitive negative thinking, namely a person's tendency to continuously think about negative things repeatedly. This pattern is often found in individuals experiencing anxiety, prolonged stress, or psychological pressure. (Utami, 2024) Although the concept of *waswas* in the Qur'an cannot be directly equated with a specific psychological disorder, both indicate the existence of internal processes that influence human thinking, emotions, and behavior. Therefore, al-Razi's interpretation can be understood as an attempt to explain the spiritual dimension of human inner dynamics, which is still relevant to study today.

The subtle, repetitive, and often unrecognized nature of anxiety demonstrates that not all forms of inner disturbance can be overcome solely through rational thinking or personal willpower. At certain points, individuals may become aware of these struggles, yet still find it difficult to overcome them completely. This reflects the limitations of human beings when confronting their own inner conflicts (Khayyirah, tt). In this context, QS. An-Nas does not merely explain the existence of such disturbances, but also offers guidance on how they should be addressed. *Isti'ādhah* (seeking refuge in Allah) serves as a theological response to these conditions. Seeking protection from Allah is not simply a ritual act; it is also an acknowledgment that some aspects of human experience require assistance beyond one's personal capabilities. Likewise, *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) functions as a spiritual mechanism that helps prevent the mind from being dominated by anxiety and negative thoughts. When the heart remains connected to Allah, the inner self becomes calmer and more stable, allowing individuals to navigate psychological challenges with greater resilience (Maharani & Holifah, 2025)

2. Social Disturbances and Environmental Influences

The relevance of QS. An-Nas can also be observed in social life. The surah explicitly states that sources of disturbance may originate not only from jinn but also from human

beings. This broadens the understanding that threats do not always emerge from supernatural or invisible forces; rather, they frequently appear through everyday social interactions. In contemporary contexts, such influences may take the form of manipulation, misinformation, social pressure, and various forms of toxic influence. Deliberately constructed opinions, misleading information, and environments that subtly encourage harmful values can all function as forms of whispering that originate from human agents (Akbar, 2017).

Many cases demonstrate that social influence is not present directly or overtly, but rather shapes one's way of thinking gradually. A person may begin to doubt previously held values, or feel compelled to follow something because it is considered normal in their environment. This demonstrates that *waswas* (concern) is not always a direct impulse to do bad things, but can also manifest as a shift in perspective that slowly distances a person from the truth without them realizing it. (Anindya, 2025)

3. Information Flow and Challenges of the Digital Era

The rapid flow of information in the digital age continuously exposes individuals to a vast amount of content without interruption. Every day, people encounter hundreds or even thousands of pieces of information through social media, news platforms, and digital interactions. As a result, distraction has become a common feature of everyday life, while maintaining focus has become increasingly difficult. Thoughts constantly move from one issue to another, leaving little opportunity for reflection, evaluation, and inner calm. In such circumstances, the human inner self becomes more vulnerable to external influences (Ringo & Silitonga, 2025).

In the digital era, the concept of *al-waswās al-khannās* can be understood more broadly as various forms of influence that operate subtly through the flow of information. Hoaxes, misinformation, and manipulative content often do not appear in a form that is directly apparent, but are packaged in such a way that is easily accepted by the public. This condition bears similarities to the character of *al-khannās*, which works secretly and slowly influences people's ways of thinking. Therefore, the message of QS. An-Nas is not only relevant as a form of spiritual protection, but also as a foundation for building critical awareness of information circulating in the digital space.

4. Spirituality as a Mechanism Protection

In situations marked by psychological pressure, social influence, and the overwhelming flow of information, strengthening spirituality becomes increasingly important. *Dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *isti'ādhah* (seeking refuge in Allah) are not merely ritual acts of worship, but also serve as means of maintaining mental clarity and inner balance. When individuals regularly remember Allah, they cultivate greater awareness of their thoughts and emotions, enabling them to avoid becoming overwhelmed by uncontrolled impulses and negative thinking. Through this process, a person develops the capacity for reflection, self-awareness, and sound judgment. Conversely, when one's

relationship with Allah weakens, the mind becomes more susceptible to confusion, distraction, and harmful influences.

The awareness of monotheism reflected in the concepts of *Rabb*, *Mālik*, and *Ilāh* also has practical implications for everyday life. When individuals truly understand Allah as the Sustainer, the Sovereign Ruler, and the only One worthy of worship, they develop a clearer sense of purpose and direction. They no longer measure their worth solely according to the judgments of others, nor are they easily influenced by temporary trends and social pressures. Such awareness provides inner strength and stability because it is grounded in something permanent rather than in constantly changing external circumstances. In a social environment increasingly shaped by digital influence and public opinion, this perspective helps individuals remain resilient and emotionally balanced.

Overall, QS. An-Nas offers more than a prayer for protection in a narrow sense. It presents a comprehensive framework for understanding how human beings can respond to inner disturbances, social pressures, and the challenges of the contemporary information age. The surah teaches that the most significant threats are often subtle and difficult to recognize, that human beings must acknowledge their limitations, and that maintaining a strong relationship with Allah is essential for achieving inner peace and stability. Therefore, QS. An-Nas is not merely a normative supplication for protection, but also provides a relevant theological and spiritual framework for understanding and addressing the psychological and social realities of modern life.

CONCLUSION

QS. An-Nas demonstrates that the concept of protection in the Qur'an is not limited to external threats, but also addresses the deepest dimensions of human inner life. Through its structure and theological message, the surah presents an integrated understanding of the relationship between God, human beings, and the various forms of disturbance that affect human existence. Fakhruddin Ar-Rāzi's interpretation in *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* reinforces this understanding through a rational and reflective approach, allowing the meaning of the surah to extend beyond its textual dimension and function as a comprehensive framework for understanding human life.

Ar-Rāzi's interpretation shows that faith is not merely a matter of belief or intellectual acknowledgment, but a process of spiritual awareness that shapes how individuals understand themselves and their relationship with God. Disturbances are not viewed solely as external forces; rather, they are closely connected to the inner condition of human beings. In this regard, protection is understood not only as a defensive act, but also as an expression of human awareness of their limitations and their need for divine guidance. Consequently, the relationship between faith and psychological well-being becomes an important aspect of understanding the role of spirituality in maintaining inner balance and resilience.

The relevance of QS. An-Nas remains evident in contemporary life. Social pressures, the rapid flow of information, and various psychological challenges demonstrate that harmful influences often operate subtly and repeatedly rather than appearing in obvious forms. In this context, QS. An-Nas offers guidance that is not only normative but also practical through the strengthening of monotheistic awareness and spiritual closeness to Allah. Therefore, the surah

continues to provide a relevant theological and spiritual framework for understanding and addressing the psychological, social, and spiritual challenges of the contemporary era.

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