

aghora at the left hand of god

****Aghora at the Left Hand of God: Exploring the Mystical Path****

aghora at the left hand of god is a phrase that evokes intrigue, mysticism, and deep spiritual symbolism. Rooted in ancient Indian spiritual traditions, the concept of Aghora has fascinated seekers and scholars alike for centuries. When combined with the idea of being “at the left hand of God,” it opens up a profound dialogue about divine energy, the nature of spiritual practices, and the balance between creation and destruction. In this article, we will delve into the essence of Aghora, its significance in spiritual traditions, and what it means to stand metaphorically at the left hand of the divine.

Understanding Aghora: Beyond the Surface

Aghora is one of the five faces or aspects of Lord Shiva, a central deity in Hinduism. The term "Aghora" literally means "not terrible" or "beyond fear," yet it is often misunderstood because of its association with unconventional practices and a fierce form of spirituality. Aghora represents the transformative power of destruction that leads to renewal and liberation. It's a path that embraces the darker, often rejected sides of life and consciousness to transcend fear and ignorance.

In spiritual contexts, Aghora is a symbol of breaking taboos and confronting the raw realities of existence. This includes embracing death, decay, and impurity as necessary parts of the cosmic cycle. The Aghori sadhus, ascetic practitioners who follow this path, are known for their radical rituals that challenge societal norms, but their goal is ultimate enlightenment and unity with the divine.

The Left Hand Path and Its Spiritual Significance

The phrase "left hand of God" can be interpreted through the lens of the Left Hand Path (Vamachara) in Indian spirituality. Unlike the Right Hand Path (Dakshinachara), which focuses on orthodox rituals and social conformity, the Left Hand Path embraces heterodox practices. This includes the use of taboo-breaking rituals, meditation on death, and confronting fears head-on.

Being “at the left hand of God” metaphorically represents a spiritual stance that is unconventional, fearless, and transformative. It symbolizes walking the road less traveled, a path where one confronts the shadows within to find divine light. The Left Hand Path is not about evil or negativity; instead, it's about transcending dualities and societal restrictions to reach spiritual freedom.

The Symbolism of Aghora at the Left Hand of God

When we combine the concept of Aghora with the idea of the left hand of God, a rich symbolism emerges. This union suggests a divine presence that is fierce, transformative, and intimately connected with the cycles of destruction and creation. It is a reminder that divinity is not just about light and purity but includes darkness and impermanence.

Destruction as a Path to Creation

One of the core teachings behind Aghora is that destruction is not something to fear but to embrace as part of spiritual evolution. The left hand symbolizes power and change, and when it is associated with God, it reveals the divine's role in breaking down illusions and attachments.

This concept helps devotees understand that letting go of the ego, old beliefs, and attachments is necessary to experience spiritual rebirth. The destructive energy of Aghora clears the way for new growth, much like a forest fire clears old underbrush to make way for new life.

Facing Fear and Transcending Duality

Being at the left hand of God also suggests a spiritual courage to face what most avoid—fear, death, and the unknown. Aghora teaches that confronting these realities head-on is essential for true liberation. This involves moving beyond the dualistic mindset of good and evil, pure and impure.

In this sense, Aghora's place at the left hand of the divine is a powerful metaphor for embracing wholeness. It encourages seekers to accept all aspects of existence, including those that are uncomfortable or taboo, as integral to the spiritual journey.

The Practices and Philosophy of Aghora

Aghora is not just a concept; it is a lived spiritual path. The Aghori sadhus pursue intense practices designed to transcend conventional morality and social norms. These practices are often misunderstood but are deeply rooted in the philosophy of non-duality and liberation.

Rituals and Meditation

Aghori practitioners engage in rituals that may involve cremation grounds,

meditation on death, and consumption of substances taboo in mainstream society. These practices are symbolic acts to break attachments to societal norms and the ego.

Meditation on impermanence and death helps practitioners dissolve fear and experience the unity of life and death, form and formlessness. This intense focus on the transient helps cultivate detachment and spiritual insight.

Philosophical Foundations

The philosophy behind Aghora emphasizes that the divine is beyond all concepts of purity and impurity. It rejects dualistic thinking and invites practitioners to see the sacred in all things, even those considered profane.

This non-dual approach aligns with broader Hindu teachings like Advaita Vedanta but is expressed through radically different methods. It challenges spiritual aspirants to confront their deepest fears and prejudices to attain liberation.

Modern Interpretations and Cultural Impact

In contemporary times, the concept of Aghora at the left hand of God has inspired artists, writers, and spiritual seekers worldwide. It challenges modern spirituality's often sanitized approach by reintroducing the importance of shadow work and the acceptance of life's darker aspects.

Influence on Spirituality and Popular Culture

The mysterious image of the Aghori and the symbolism of the left hand of God have found their way into literature, cinema, and art. These representations often focus on themes of transformation, taboo, and the quest for ultimate truth.

Spiritual seekers drawn to non-conventional paths find inspiration in Aghora's fearless embrace of life's totality. The teachings encourage a holistic understanding of spirituality that includes darkness as much as light.

Applying the Teachings in Daily Life

While the intense rituals of Aghora might not be practical for everyone, the underlying principles offer valuable lessons:

- ****Embrace Impermanence:**** Accept change and loss as natural parts of life.
- ****Confront Your Fears:**** Face uncomfortable truths to grow spiritually.
- ****Challenge Social Conditioning:**** Question norms that limit your spiritual growth.
- ****See Unity in Diversity:**** Recognize the sacredness in all aspects of existence.

By integrating these insights, anyone can embark on a path that balances reverence for the divine with acceptance of life's complexities.

Exploring the concept of *aghora at the left hand of god* opens a fascinating window into a spiritual tradition that defies easy categorization. It invites us to consider how destruction and creation, darkness and light, fear and courage all dance together in the divine play. Whether through ancient rituals or modern interpretations, the essence remains: true spirituality honors the fullness of existence, embracing even those parts that challenge our comfort and understanding.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God'?

'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' explores the mystical and esoteric practices of the Aghori sect in India, delving into themes of spirituality, death, and the transcendence of social norms.

Who is the author of 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God'?

The book 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' is authored by Robert E. Svoboda, a well-known expert on Ayurveda and Indian mysticism.

How does 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' portray the Aghori sect?

The book portrays the Aghori sect as ascetics who embrace taboo practices to transcend conventional spirituality and reach enlightenment, challenging societal norms in pursuit of divine truth.

Is 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' based on true events or folklore?

'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' is based on Robert E. Svoboda's real-life

experiences and studies with Aghori practitioners, providing an authentic and firsthand account rather than folklore.

What makes 'Aghora: At the Left Hand of God' significant in spiritual literature?

The book is significant for its rare insight into a little-understood and often misrepresented sect, offering readers a profound look at unconventional spirituality and the quest for enlightenment beyond mainstream religious practices.

Additional Resources

****Aghora at the Left Hand of God: Exploring the Mystical Dimensions of a Controversial Tradition****

aghora at the left hand of god is a phrase that evokes intense curiosity and profound spiritual inquiry within the realms of Hindu mysticism and esoteric practices. Rooted deeply in the ancient and often misunderstood tradition of Aghora, this concept challenges conventional understandings of divinity, morality, and spiritual transformation. As an investigative exploration, this article delves into the symbolism, historical context, and theological implications of Aghora's association with the "left hand" of God, unpacking its relevance in contemporary spiritual discourse and its impact on seekers and scholars alike.

Understanding Aghora: Origins and Philosophical Foundations

Aghora (or Aghori) is a sect of ascetic Shaiva sadhus known for their unconventional and often taboo practices aimed at transcending societal norms and dualities. Originating from the broader tantric tradition, Aghora literally means "non-terrifying," which contrasts with its common perception as dark or fearsome. The Aghori practitioners seek liberation (moksha) through embracing aspects of existence that most consider impure or forbidden, such as death, decay, and cremation grounds.

This spiritual path is intricately linked to Shiva, one of the Hindu trinity gods, who embodies destruction and regeneration. Shiva's role as a god who destroys illusions and ego aligns with the Aghori pursuit of ultimate truth beyond superficial dichotomies of good and evil. The phrase "at the left hand of God" metaphorically references the left-hand path (Vamamarga) in tantric traditions, which embraces unconventional methods to attain spiritual enlightenment.

The Left-Hand Path: Symbolism and Spiritual Significance

In tantric Hinduism, the left-hand path (Vamamarga) is distinguished from the right-hand path (Dakshinmarga) by its use of transgressive rituals and symbols. While the right-hand path tends to emphasize purity, adherence to social norms, and orthodox worship, the left-hand path involves ritualistic breaking of taboos to transcend dualities and societal conditioning.

Aghora's placement "at the left hand of God" symbolically situates it within this left-hand tantric tradition. This positioning underscores its role as a spiritual practice that confronts and integrates what is conventionally rejected or feared. The left hand is often associated with the feminine, the mysterious, and the unknown, aligning with the Aghori's engagement with death, impurity, and transformation.

The Practices and Rituals of Aghora: A Closer Look

Aghora's practices are both ritualistically intense and philosophically profound. Understanding these enables a clearer grasp of why the tradition is so often misunderstood and why it is described as being "at the left hand of God."

Engagement with Death and the Cremation Grounds

One of the most distinctive features of Aghori sadhus is their habitation near cremation grounds, a place considered impure and inauspicious by mainstream society. Here, they meditate on the impermanence of life, confronting death as a pathway to spiritual liberation. This practice defies social taboos and redefines death not as an end but as a transformational passage, embodying the left-hand path's core philosophy.

Use of Charred Remains and Ritual Objects

Aghoris often use human skulls, bones, and ashes in their rituals. These symbols represent the transient nature of the physical body and material existence, reminding practitioners of life's ephemeral qualities. The use of such objects is controversial and often sensationalized, but within Aghora, it represents deep metaphysical truths about detachment and the dissolution of ego.

Mantras and Meditation Techniques

The spiritual discipline of Aghora also involves the chanting of powerful mantras and meditation on Shiva and his consort Kali, who embodies fierce compassion and destruction of ignorance. These practices are designed to awaken the kundalini energy and facilitate direct experience of the divine beyond conventional moral frameworks.

Comparative Perspectives: Aghora and Other Esoteric Traditions

While Aghora is uniquely rooted in Shaiva and tantric Hinduism, parallels can be drawn with other esoteric and mystical traditions worldwide that engage with taboo or shadow aspects of spirituality.

- **Western Occultism:** Similar to the left-hand path in Western esotericism, Aghora embraces transgression as a means of spiritual empowerment, challenging dualistic morality.
- **Tibetan Buddhism:** Certain Vajrayana practices involve meditating on death and impermanence with the aim of transcendence, echoing Aghora's cremation ground rituals.
- **Shamanism:** Many shamanic traditions confront death and the spirit world directly, paralleling Aghora's focus on transformation through engagement with what is typically feared.

These comparisons highlight the universal human quest to reconcile with mortality, impurity, and the unknown, emphasizing that Aghora's "left hand of God" is part of a broader spiritual archetype.

Contemporary Relevance and Misconceptions

In modern times, Aghora remains both enigmatic and controversial. Media portrayals often sensationalize Aghori practices, focusing on their shocking rituals rather than their profound spiritual aims. This has led to widespread misconceptions, painting Aghora as malevolent or dangerous rather than as seekers of transcendence.

Challenges in Interpretation

The phrase "aghora at the left hand of god" itself can be misinterpreted without understanding the symbolic language of tantra and the cultural context of Hindu spirituality. The left hand is not inherently evil or negative; rather, it signifies an alternative, non-dualistic approach to divinity that includes darkness as well as light.

Spiritual and Cultural Impact

Despite misunderstandings, Aghora continues to attract spiritual aspirants interested in radical paths to enlightenment. Its emphasis on facing fear, embracing impermanence, and transcending social conditioning offers a powerful counter-narrative to sanitized spirituality.

Moreover, Aghora's teachings invite broader discussions about the nature of divinity itself—whether God is confined to benevolence and purity or whether divinity encompasses destruction, chaos, and transformation. The "left hand of God" metaphor thus serves as a potent reminder that spiritual realization may require embracing complexity and contradiction.

Exploring Aghora Today: Resources and Further Study

For those seeking to understand Aghora beyond myths and sensationalism, scholarly works, firsthand accounts, and respectful ethnographic studies provide valuable insights.

1. **Academic Research:** Journals on religious studies and anthropology often feature critical analyses of Aghora traditions, exploring their historical evolution and ritual significance.
2. **Documentaries and Interviews:** Visual media featuring interviews with Aghori practitioners offer a nuanced perspective on their beliefs and lifestyles.
3. **Primary Texts and Commentaries:** Tantric scriptures and commentaries shed light on the theological foundations of the left-hand path and Aghora's place within it.

Engaging with these resources enables a deeper appreciation of how Aghora at the left hand of God challenges and enriches spiritual narratives.

By examining the phrase "aghora at the left hand of god" through historical, philosophical, and cultural lenses, it becomes clear that this tradition embodies a radical spirituality that confronts death, impurity, and societal norms to reveal a more expansive understanding of divinity. Far from mere shock value, Aghora represents a profound journey into the heart of existence, where the left hand of God guides seekers through darkness toward liberation.

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aghora at the left hand of god: Yoga Journal , 1998-09 For more than 30 years, Yoga Journal has been helping readers achieve the balance and well-being they seek in their everyday lives. With every issue, Yoga Journal strives to inform and empower readers to make lifestyle choices that are healthy for their bodies and minds. We are dedicated to providing in-depth, thoughtful editorial on topics such as yoga, food, nutrition, fitness, wellness, travel, and fashion and beauty.

aghora at the left hand of god: Cremation, Corpses and Cannibalism Anders Kaliff, Terje Oestigaard, 2017-05-11 Death matters and the matters of death are initially, and to a large extent, the decaying flesh of the corpse. Cremation as a ritual practice is the fastest and most optimal way of dissolving the corpse's flesh, either by annihilation or purification, or a combination. Still, cremation was not the final rite, and the archaeological record testifies that the dead represented a means to other ends - the flesh, and not the least the bones - have been incorporated in a wide range of other ritual contexts. While human sacrifices and cannibalism as ritual phenomena are much discussed in anthropology, archaeology has an advantage, since the actual bone material leaves traces of ritual practices that are unseen and unheard of in the contemporary world. As such, this book fleshes out a broader and more coherent understanding of prehistoric religions and funeral practices in Scandinavia by focusing on cremation, corpses and cannibalism.

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aghora at the left hand of god: Lords of the Left-Hand Path Stephen E. Flowers, 2012-06-15 Examines the left-hand path and reveals the masters of the tradition • Explores the practices and beliefs of many left-hand path groups, including the Cult of Set, the Hell-Fire Club, and heretical Sufi, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Muslim sects • Investigates many infamous occult personalities, including Helena Blavatsky, Aleister Crowley, the Marquis de Sade, and Anton LaVey • Explains the true difference between the right-hand path and the left-hand path--union with and dependence on God versus individual freedom and self-empowerment From black magic and Satanism to Gnostic sects and Gurdjieff's Fourth Way, the left-hand path has been linked to many practices, cults, and individuals across the ages. Stephen Flowers, Ph.D., examines the methods, teachings, and historical role of the left-hand path, from its origins in Indian tantric philosophy to its underlying influence in current world affairs, and reveals which philosophers, magicians, and occult figures throughout history can truly be called "Lords of the Left-Hand Path." Flowers explains that

while the right-hand path seeks union with and thus dependence on God, the left-hand path seeks a "higher law" based on knowledge and power. It is the way of self-empowerment and true freedom. Beginning with ancient Hindu and Buddhist sects and moving Westward, he examines many alleged left-hand path groups, including the Cult of Set, the Yezidi Devil Worshipers, the Assassins, the Neoplatonists, the Hell-Fire Club, the Bolsheviks, the occult Nazis, and several heretical Sufi, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Muslim sects. Following a carefully crafted definition of a true adherent of the left-hand path based on two main principles--self-deification and challenge to the conventions of "good" and "evil"--the author analyzes many famous and infamous personalities, including H. P. Blavatsky, Faust, the Marquis de Sade, Austin Osman Spare, Aleister Crowley, Gerald Gardner, Anton LaVey, and Michael Aquino, and reveals which occult masters were Lords of the Left-Hand Path. Flowers shows that the left-hand path is not inherently evil but part of our heritage and our deep-seated desire to be free, independent, and in control of our destinies.

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aghora at the left hand of god: *Aghor Medicine* Ronald L. Barrett, 2008-03-04 For centuries, the Aghori have been known as the most radical ascetics in India: living naked on the cremation grounds, meditating on corpses, engaging in cannibalism and coprophagy, and consuming intoxicants out of human skulls. In recent years, however, they have shifted their practices from the embrace of ritually polluted substances to the healing of stigmatized diseases. In the process, they have become a large, socially mainstream, and politically powerful organization. Based on extensive fieldwork, this lucidly written book explores the dynamics of pollution, death, and healing in Aghor medicine. Ron Barrett examines a range of Aghor therapies from ritual bathing to modified Ayurveda and biomedicines and clarifies many misconceptions about this little-studied group and its highly unorthodox, powerful ideas about illness and healing.

aghora at the left hand of god: *Bhakti Religion in North India* David N. Lorenzen, 1994-11-09 In India, religion continues to be an absolutely vital source for social as well as personal identity. All manner of groups--political, occupational, and social--remain grounded in specific religious communities. This book analyzes the development of the modern Hindu and Sikh communities in North India starting from about the fifteenth century, when the dominant bhakti tradition of Hinduism became divided into two currents: the sagun and the nirgun. The sagun current, led mostly by Brahmins, has remained dominant in most of North India and has served as the ideological base of the development of modern Hindu nationalism. Several chapters explore the rise of this religious and political movement, paying particular attention to the role played by devotion to Ram. Alternative trends do exist in sagun tradition, however, and are represented here

by chapters on the low-caste saint Chokhamel and the tantric sect founded by Kina Ram. The nirgun current, led mostly by persons of Ksand artisan castes, formed the base of both the Sikh community, founded by Guru Nanak, and of various non-Brahmin sectarian movements derived from such saints as Kabir, Raidas, Dadu, and Shiv Dayal Singh. Two chapters discuss the formation of a distinctive Sikh theology and a Sikh community identity separate from that of the Hindus. Other chapters discuss the validity of the sagun-nirgun distinction within Hindu tradition and the interplay of social and religious ideas in nirgun hagiographic texts and in sectarian movements such as the Adi Dharma Mission and the Radhasoami Satsang.

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aghora at the left hand of god: Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine David Kinsley, 2023-07-28 The Hindu pantheon is rich in images of the divine feminine—deities representing a wide range of symbolic, social, and meditative meanings. David Kinsley's new book documents a highly unusual group of ten Hindu tantric goddesses, the Mahavidyas, many of whom are strongly associated with sexuality and violence. What is one to make of a goddess who cuts her own head off, or one who prefers sex with a corpse? The Mahavidyas embody habits, attributes, or identities usually considered repulsive or socially subversive and can be viewed as antimodels for women. Yet it is within the context of tantric worship that devotees seek to identify themselves with these forbidding goddesses. The Mahavidyas seem to function as awakeners—symbols which help to project one's consciousness beyond the socially acceptable or predictable. Drawing on a broad range of Sanskrit and vernacular texts as well as extensive research in India, including written and oral interpretations of contemporary Hindu practitioners, Kinsley describes the unusual qualities of each of the Mahavidyas and traces the parallels between their underlying themes. Especially valuable are the many rare and fascinating images he presents—each important to grasping the significance of the goddesses. Written in an accessible, engaging style, Kinsley's book provides a comprehensive understanding of the Mahavidyas and is also an overview of Hindu tantric practice. The Hindu pantheon is rich in images of the divine feminine—deities representing a wide range of symbolic, social, and meditative meanings. David Kinsley's new book documents a highly unusual group of ten Hindu tantric goddesses, the Mahavidyas, many of w

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spiritual tradition. The Tantric teachings are geared toward the attainment of enlightenment as well as spiritual power and are present not only in Hinduism but also Jainism and Vajrayana Buddhism. In this book, Georg Feuerstein offers readers a clear understanding of authentic Tantra, as well as appropriate guidance for spiritual practice and the attainment of higher consciousness.

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examination of one of the twentieth century's most distinctive occult iconoclasts, Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), one of the most influential thinkers in contemporary western esotericism.

aghora at the left hand of god: Chants of a Lifetime Krishna Das, 2018-01-23 Chants of a Lifetime offers an intimate collection of stories, teachings, and insights from Krishna Das, who has been called the chant master of American yoga by the New York Times. Since 1994, the sound of his voice singing traditional Indian chants with a Western flavor has brought the spiritual experience of chanting to audiences all over the world. He has previously shared some of his spiritual journey through talks and workshops, but now he offers a unique book-with-audio download combination that explores his fascinating path and creates an opportunity for just about anyone to experience chanting in a unique and special way. Chants of a Lifetime includes photos from Krishna Das's years in India and also from his life as a kirtan leader—and the audio that is offered exclusively in the book consists of a number of private chanting sessions with the author. Instead of just being performances of chants for listening, the recordings make it seem as if Krishna Das himself is present for a one-on-one chanting session. The idea is for the listener to explore his or her own practice of chanting and develop a deepening connection with the entire chanting experience.

aghora at the left hand of god: 105 Esoteric Traditions of the World — Book II: Forbidden Paths and Dangerous Teachings of the Hidden Orders: Cathars, Yezidis, Sethian Gnostics, Aghori, Left-Hand Tantra, Taoist Thunder Magic, Umbanda, Vodou, Qalandari Sufis, Mazatec Mushroom Path Laing Z. Matthews, 2025-09-20 Not all sacred knowledge is safe. Some teachings have been silenced, outlawed, or forced into disguise—not because they are false, but because they overturn the structures of control. Dangerous Teachings gathers fifteen lineages whose survival has depended on secrecy, exile, and the courage of those willing to carry wisdom that could not be spoken aloud. Across continents and centuries, these traditions have been branded as heresy, magic, or madness. Yet within them lie precise spiritual technologies—ways of seeing, healing, and awakening that confront the deepest fears of empire, orthodoxy, and conformity. This is not sensationalism. It is the reality of what happens when the sacred refuses to bow to power. In these pages, you will meet visionaries, ascetics, and mystics who kept the thread alive under threat of prison, exile, or death: Native American Church peyote roadmen keeping the night fire through prohibition. Romani dream-readers decoding fate under centuries of persecution. Siberian dreamwalkers retrieving lost souls when the state outlawed shamanism. Dagara diviners in West Africa speaking with elements and ancestors against the tide of colonial erasure. Kalachakra adepts preserving the “Wheel of Time” tantra through the destruction of Tibet. Forest Theravāda monks disappearing into wilderness to escape religious bureaucracy. Essene breath mystics whose desert rites survived in fragments. Golden Dawn adepts using ritual as a science of transformation, not spectacle. Assyrian Christian mystics guarding the Aramaic breath of Christ through genocide. Each chapter follows the same initiatory pattern: the core teaching of the tradition, the spiritual condition it addresses, its inner technology of practice, its symbol or image, and the key danger it faces—whether distortion, commodification, or outright destruction. Every section closes with a living practice the reader can try, and an image or parable to seal the teaching in memory. Dangerous Teachings is not a handbook for dabblers. It is a map for those who understand that real wisdom demands responsibility—and sometimes, risk. This is not the marketplace version of spirituality, stripped of its teeth. It is the unsoftened, unlicensed transmission of currents that have survived precisely because they refused to be made safe. Volume II continues the work begun in Guardians of the First Flame, shifting from primordial traditions to those forced underground by direct suppression. Together, the seven volumes of Esoteric Traditions of the World form an ark of memory—rescuing not just facts, but the living essence of ways of knowing that might otherwise vanish. If you read this book, you step into that ark. You take on a share of the responsibility to remember. And perhaps, if the time comes, to pass the fire on.

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