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The Theory of Nominal Equilibrium in Islamic Mysticism: A Novel Response to Contemporary Ethical Challenges

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ABSTRACT

SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: Contemporary societies confront multifaceted ethical challenges—including information warfare, genetic editing, and environmental crises—for which traditional ethical frameworks frequently prove inadequate. This study examines the "Theory of Nominal Equilibrium" (iʿtidāl al-asmāʾī), which draws upon the foundations of Islamic mysticism (ʿirfān) and Quranic ontology to offer an alternative framework for addressing and managing ethical conflicts.

METHOD & FINDING: Employing an analytical-interpretive method, this research investigates the system of Divine Names in Islamic mysticism through reference to the Quran, Hadith, and the works of prominent mystics such as Ibn ʿArabī. It then compares this system with materialist approaches grounded in sustainable development. The study further explores the theory's application to natural resource management as a practical case study.

According to the theory, the roots of ethical conflicts lie in the dynamic manifestations of seemingly opposing Divine Names (e.g., al-Bāsiṭ [the Expander] and al-Qābiḍ [the Constrictor]). These are harmonized and brought into equilibrium under the governance of the all-encompassing Name Allāh, mediated through the role of the Perfect Human (the Divine Vicegerent). The theory attributes intrinsic rights to all existents—not in an axiological or contractual sense, but as ontological manifestations of the Divine Names. In this respect, it diverges significantly from Western anthropocentric models that treat natural resources primarily as property.

CONCLUSION: By incorporating conceptually quantifiable tools inspired by the Divine Names al-Muḥṣī (the Reckoner) and al-Ḥasīb (the Accounter), operationalizable in policy analysis, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium integrates mystical principles into a coherent framework. This approach offers a distinctive and integrative response to contemporary ethical dilemmas.

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Introduction

In the contemporary world, human societies face increasingly complex ethical challenges arising at the intersection of cultural, technological, and social tensions. These challenges encompass issues related to artificial intelligence (such as algorithmic bias and privacy violations), bioethical concerns (such as human genetic modification), and environmental crises. Traditional ethical approaches, including Kantian ethics, have frequently proven inadequate in providing sustainable solutions. Their disconnection from deeper metaphysical foundations limits the conceptual resources necessary to address the existential roots of these conflicts.

By contrast, Islamic mysticism (*ʿirfān*), through its distinctive metaphysical framework, offers a system grounded in the "multiplicity of the Divine Names" (*kathrat al-asmāʾ*) and "Nominal Equilibrium" (*iʿtidāl al-asmāʾī*). This framework provides a theoretically innovative response to such challenges. According to this perspective, ethical conflicts are not confined to the material or social domains; rather, they originate in the inner ontological strata of existence—specifically, the realm of the Divine Names (*ʿālam al-asmāʾ*). Oppositions between Divine Names, such as *al-Bāsiṭ* (the Expander) and *al-Qābiḍ* (the Constrictor), manifest in the material world as conflicts such as industrial development versus climate crises. Under the governance of the all-encompassing Divine Name Allāh and through the mediating role of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*)—who serves as the concrete locus for realizing equilibrium in the material realm—these oppositions are reconciled into a harmonious balance.

The present research seeks to clarify and systematize the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium as an analytical framework for scholars and researchers in applied ethics. This framework enables a deeper understanding of the ontological roots of ethical conflicts and opens new pathways for ethical analysis and problem-solving. The central research question is: How can the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium contribute to the resolution of contemporary ethical conflicts, and in what ways does the Perfect Human operationalize and enact this equilibrium in the material world?

This article first explicates the conceptual foundations of the theory, with particular emphasis on the ontological basis of Nominal Equilibrium and its key concepts. It then reviews the relevant literature and outlines the research methodology. In the findings section, the mechanism of establishing equilibrium and its application to natural resource management are

analyzed as a case study. Finally, the article presents conclusions and suggests directions for future research in applied ethics.

Moving beyond a purely descriptive account of mystical doctrines, this study formalizes the dialectical relationship between the Divine Names and the role of the Perfect Human into a cohesive theoretical model—the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium. This model functions as an operational framework for analyzing modern ethical dilemmas. Its primary contributions are threefold: (a) the systematization of classical mystical concepts, (b) the extension of the "Intrinsic Rights of the Names" as an ontological foundation for applied ethics, and (c) the proposal of a clearly articulated four-stage operational process that bridges theoretical foundations with policymaking. In this way, the theory seeks to narrow the historical gap between speculative mysticism and the practical demands of the contemporary world.

Conceptual Framework

1. Nominal Equilibrium (*Iʿtidāl al-Asmāʾī*)

Ibn ʿArabī and, subsequently, Imam Khomeini have spoken of "nominal equilibrium" (*al-iʿtidāl al-asmāʾī*) as the dynamic balance between opposing Divine Names under the governance of the all-encompassing Name "Allāh." According to Imam Khomeini, the Supreme Name, through its attribute of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* (the Just Arbiter), establishes equilibrium among the Names (Khomeini, 1997, p. 41). This mechanism suggests that the manifestations of the Names, despite their multiplicity, attain coherence and balance in the shadow of the unifying authority of the Supreme Name. Accordingly, the ontological resonance of existence—from its innermost layers to its most manifest levels—tends toward resolving opposition and mitigating conflict on the basis of nominal equilibrium. The theory presented in this article maintains that such equilibrium is achievable not only in the higher worlds but also, through the mediation of the "Perfect Human" (*al-insān al-kāmil*), in the material world, thereby introducing nominal equilibrium as a foundational framework for the resolution of ethical conflicts.

2. The Divine Names and Their Polarity (*Jalālīyah/Jamālīyah*)

The Divine Names are the attributes and manifestations of the Essence of God (*al-Ḥaqq*) at different levels of existence, each representing an aspect of God's infinite perfections. In the creative order (*takwīn*), these Names are broadly divided into two opposing categories: the *Jamālī* Names, such as *al-Bāsiṭ* (the Expander of bounty), *al-Nāfiʿ* (the Benefactor), and *al-Hādī* (the

Guide); and the *Jalālī* Names, such as *al-Qābiḍ* (the Withholder), *al-Māniʿ* (the Preventer), and *al-Muḍill* (the One who leads astray) (Qayṣarī, 1996, pp. 823–824). Nominal polarity does not signify inherent conflict but rather indicates diversity in manifestations, paving the way for the emergence of multiplicity within the "Best System" (*al-niẓām al-aḥsan*). These polarities appear in the material world as ethical and natural conflicts. For the researcher in applied ethics, this view implies that every ethical conflict in the material world (e.g., the conflict between development and the environment) is not merely a material or legal issue but rather a reflection of a deeper opposition at the ontological level (e.g., the opposition between the Names *al-Bāsiṭ* and *al-Qābiḍ*). Therefore, any durable and effective solution must also be capable of addressing and regulating this fundamental opposition.

3. The Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*)

The Perfect Human is the complete manifestation of the Supreme Name "Allāh" and the Divine Vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth. By embodying the "Ethics of God" (*akhlāq Allāh*) and achieving the "Point of Essential Equilibrium" (*nuqṭat ḥaqq al-iʿtidāl*), they possess the ability to establish balance among opposing Names (cf. Khalfan et al., 2024). By assuming the divine attributes—such as justice (*ʿadl*), mercy (*raḥmah*), and wisdom (*ḥikmah*)—and through their "existential capacity" (*al-siʿat al-wujūdiyyah*), they play the role of mediator and moderator in nominal oppositions. The Perfect Human is not only a model for resolving ethical conflicts but also a conduit for God's all-encompassing mercy (*al-raḥmah al-wāsiʿah*) in the material world (cf. Baqlī, 2007, p. 161).

The "Perfect Human" is not an unattainable, idealized figure; rather, they function as a "regulative model" and a "normative reference point" for measuring equilibrium in any ethical action or policy process. This conceptualization allows the researcher of applied ethics to evaluate human agents—whether individuals or institutions—based on their relative proximity to this reference point and to design practical solutions aimed at progressively approaching it.

4. The Divine Vicegerent (al-Khalīfah al-Ilāhī)

The Divine Vicegerent is a station wherein the human being—especially the Perfect Human—undertakes the responsibility of stewardship over the manifestations of the Divine Names as God's representative on earth. This responsibility is based on the verse, "Indeed I will set a viceroy on the earth" (Quran, 2:30), and is defined with an emphasis on the teaching of the Names to Adam (AS). The Divine Vicegerent is obligated to regulate their

interactions with nature and society according to divine wisdom, by respecting the "Rights of the Names" (*ḥuqūq al-asmāʾ*) and by embodying the attribute of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* (Homāʾī, 2006, Vol. 2, p. 931).

5. The Right of Each Name (*Ḥaqq Kull Ism*)

It means recognizing the inherent station and essential demand (*iqtiḍāʾ*) of each Divine Name in the creative (*takwīnī*) and legislative (*tashrīʿī*) orders. Since every existent—be it in nature, humanity, or social phenomena—is a manifestation of one of the Divine Names, it possesses an "intrinsic right" to be preserved and to manifest within the framework of divine wisdom. For example, the right of the Name *al-Bāsiṭ* is access to bounty and well-being, while the right of the Name *al-Qābiḍ* is the prevention of waste and transgression against the sanctuary of other manifestations (Jundī, 2002, p. 143). The Perfect Human, by understanding these rights and granting each right its due measure, lays the groundwork for Nominal Equilibrium.

Literature Review

A study of mystical texts shows that the concept of "Nominal Equilibrium" and the role of the "Perfect Human" in establishing balance among the opposing Divine Names have long constituted an important and recurring concern within Islamic mystical discourse. Ibn ʿArabī, in *al-Futūḥāt*, considers the human being responsible for "giving every possessor of a right its due" (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 267) and, in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, emphasizes the manifestation of Divine Names in the Perfect Human (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 62). Qūnawī (1993, p. 105) also confirms this view by explaining the dispute (*ikhtiṣām*) among the angels. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (1997, p. 49) considers the main characteristic of the Supreme Name "Allāh" to be "giving every possessor of a right its due," and al-Kāshānī (2005, p. 56) defines justice as treating others with respect. These concepts form the foundation of the theory of the "Rights of the Names" in Islamic mysticism.

In the contemporary period, Imam Khomeini (1997, p. 41), in *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah*, sees the ultimate solution to conflicts in the attribute of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* within the Supreme Name "Allāh" and its manifestation in the Perfect Human, who, by being at the "Point of Essential Equilibrium," can fulfill the rights of opposing matters. This view forms the core of the "Theory of Nominal Equilibrium."

To explain the innovation of this theory, it is necessary to refer to contemporary research in Islamic environmental ethics, which can be divided into two categories:

a) Contemporary Islamic environmental ethics generally bifurcate into two

approaches. The first encompasses juridical-obligation approaches focused on religious rulings derived from principles like *lā ḍarar* (Mohammadzadeh Rahni, 2010; Fahimi & Arabzadeh, 2012). The second involves philosophical-axiological models emphasizing nature's sacredness or seeking an "overlapping consensus" on values (Naṣr, 2024; Bidehendi & Shiravand, 2010; Fanāʾī, 2022). While valuable for deriving practical rulings or identifying shared values, they largely remain at the level of prescriptive ethics and often lack a systematic ontological analysis of the conflicts themselves.

b) Distinction of the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium: This theory is distinguished from previous approaches by three features:

1. Transition from "Obligation" to "Existence": Unlike juridical approaches, which are centered on obligation, and philosophical approaches, which remain primarily ontological, the Nominal Theory locates the root of conflicts in the "opposition of Divine Names" in the higher worlds and identifies their resolution in the governance and harmonization of these oppositions under the comprehensive Name "Allāh."

2. Transition from "Value/Agreement" to "Intrinsic Right": The theory formulated in this article, utilizing nominal foundations, introduces the concept of the "Intrinsic Right of the Names." Accordingly, each Divine Name has its own specific existential exigencies, which manifest in the manifestations of that Name (including natural phenomena). Therefore, nature possesses an intrinsic right not because of philosophical intrinsic value or juridical accidental inviolability, but because it is a "manifestation of the Divine Name." This view, which is a new formulation of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings on "giving every possessor of a right its due," differs fundamentally from common approaches that ascribe "intrinsic value" (philosophy) or "accidental inviolability" (jurisprudence) to nature, or seek an "overlapping consensus" on values.

3. The Role of the "Perfect Human" as *Ḥakam-i ʿAdl*: Unlike juridical (obligated human), philosophical (thinking human), and pluralistic (human party to an agreement) approaches, in this theory, the "Perfect Human" as the "Divine Vicegerent" and manifestation of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* plays an active and executive role in establishing equilibrium among opposing manifestations, particularly at the level of ethical governance and policy implementation.

This article's focus on environmental ethics is due to the urgency of environmental crises and the richness of comparative research in this field, and it demonstrates the theory's capacity for application in other areas (such as artificial intelligence, bioethics, and

information warfare). The literature review indicates that existing research has largely remained either at the level of juridical rulings (centered on obligation) or at the level of philosophical values. What unites these studies is their effort to answer the question of "what should be done?" However, the more fundamental question—"why does an ethical conflict arise, and what is its existential root?"—has largely remained unanswered. The Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, which aims to address this epistemological gap, seeks to provide a framework for analyzing the "ontology of the ethical problem" prior to entering the stage of prescription. Accordingly, this theory can function as a meta-ethical framework for future research in applied ethics and offer a deeper foundation for interdiscursive dialogue. In line with this aim, the present study, in the next section, employs an analytical–interpretive method to explain this meta-normative framework and to derive its implications for research in applied ethics.

Research Method

This research, aiming to explain the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium and its application in managing contemporary ethical conflicts, was conducted using a qualitative, analytical–interpretive approach. Data were collected through library research and the study of mystical texts (especially the works of Ibn ʿArabī and Imam Khomeini) and Quranic verses. Data analysis was carried out using an inferential method, focusing on key concepts such as "Nominal Equilibrium," "the Perfect Human," and "the Rights of the Names." This methodological framework enabled a systematic explanation of the theory and the deduction of its practical implications for contemporary fields. By employing the method of mystical analogy, the practical implications of the theory in contemporary areas (such as natural resource management) were deduced. However, the research's reliance on mystical and exegetical texts limits the quantitative generalizability of the results. Also, the depth of mystical concepts and the need for epistemological presuppositions require caution in analysis.

1. Ontological Foundations of Nominal Equilibrium in the Divine Ethics Framework

In the intellectual system of Muslim mystics, the entire cosmos—from the unseen realms (*ʿālam al-ghayb*) to the sensible world (*ʿālam al-shahādah*)—functions as a mirror reflecting the Divine Names and Attributes (Monadi, 2024, p. 70). As emphasized in the *Supplication of Kumayl*: “And by Your Names which have filled the foundations of everything” (Kafʿamī, 1997, p. 188). This pervasive presence encompasses spiritual and ethical

dimensions, including human character. Thus, it is essential to distinguish between the Divine Name as an ontological reality at the level of Essence and Attributes, and the ethical character (*khuluq*) of that Name as a mode of manifested determination within specific ontological planes. In this regard, a precise understanding of the relationship between the “Divine Name” and the “ethical character (*khuluq*) of that Name” is necessary. According to Qūnawī’s analysis, nothing occurs in the expanse of existence—whether in the higher worlds or the material world—unless it is connected to the Divine Reality and based on aspects expressed by the Names and Attributes (Qūnawī, 1993, p. 101). This means that the outward forms of creatures point to unseen realities, and these realities manifest in various forms according to the conditions of each world.

Based on this foundation, it can be said that just as in material objects the "manifestation" (the outward appearance) is distinct from the "Manifest" (the Divine Name), this distinction also holds in the realm of ethics. For instance, the ethical trait of protective jealousy (*ghayrah*) as it manifests in the phenomenal world is not merely derived from, but is a specific ethical manifestation emanating from, the Divine Name *al-Ghayūr* (the Jealous Protectress) within the economy of the Names. Therefore, one can differentiate between the "Divine Name itself" (as a reality at the level of the Essence and Attributes) and the "ethical character (*khuluq*) of that Name" (as the manifested attribute and characteristic in the form of specific manifestations). The *khuluq* of each Name is its ethical manifestation that appears in each world according to the exigencies of that world. On this basis, the ethical manifestation of a Name in the lordly world (*ʿālam al-rubūbīyyah*) can differ from its manifestation in the creaturely world (*ʿālam al-khalq*). In a precise view, the concept of the "Name" cannot be equated with its "*khuluq*," although in a more general view, the manifestations themselves are sometimes referred to as "Names."

Another point is that, based on the law of the all-encompassing presence of the Divine Names, the appearance of the phenomena of ethical good and evil in the material world must be explained in a way that—as mentioned in ḥadīths under the title "the Soldiers of Intellect and Ignorance" (*Junūd al-ʿAql wa al-Jahl*) (Khomeini, 2003, Vol. 7, p. 58)—does not impair the pure goodness of the Divine Essence. This explanation interprets the journey from unity to multiplicity in the form of the apparent oppositions of the material world. From this perspective, these conflicts are not

signs of deficiency but tools for revealing the various levels of divine wisdom and perfection in the system of creation. Accordingly, ethical evils cannot be attributed to the Divine Names as such, but arise solely from the limitations, partiality, and conflicting capacities of particular manifestations in the material world. To complete the ontology of Divine Ethics, alongside describing the nominal system as the foundation for the formation of multiplicity, explaining ethical good and evil and the system of value priorities in the material world is essential. In his book *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Openings), Ibn ʿArabī depicts an example of this opposition in the face of human sin: the opposition of the Name *al-Muntaqim* (the Avenger, manifestation of justice and wrath) with the Names *al-Rāḥim* (the Compassionate) and *al-Ghaffār* (the All-Forgiving, manifestations of mercy and forgiveness). In this situation, the Name *al-Tawwāb* (the Accepter of Repentance) acts as a divine solution, and by giving predominance to the aspect of mercy, prepares the ground for the servant's return and repentance (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 232). By introducing the concept of the Name *al-Khādhil* (the One who Abandons), he adds to the complexity of these interactions, showing that the function of this Name in the struggle between the two opposing Names, *al-Muntaqim* and *al-Tawwāb*, is independent of them (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 232). This analysis demonstrates the dynamism and multifaceted nature of nominal interactions in the face of human actions and emphasizes that understanding the Divine Act requires attention to these subtleties.

The source of these oppositions must be sought in the difference between the "comprehensiveness" (*shumūl*) and "particularity" (*juzʾīyyah*) of the Divine Names. Particular Names, due to their inherent limitation, seek their individual manifestation, and this very fact creates the ground for their opposition (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 14). In contrast, comprehensive Names like "Allāh" and "*al-Tawwāb*" (the Accepter of Repentance), by virtue of their all-inclusiveness, are capable of uniting opposites. This opposition first begins at the level of Divine Unity (*ʿālam al-wāḥidīyyah*), where each Name strives to realize its manifestation in the "Fixed Archetypes" (*al-Aʿyān al-Thābitah*). The difference in the manifestation of the Supreme Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) arises from the difference in the capacities of the manifestations: some, due to their proximity to the comprehensive Name, achieve a more complete manifestation, while others, due to their particularity and weak capacity, have a more incomplete manifestation (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 28).

Ultimately, ethical good and evil are reflections of these nominal oppositions in the material world. For instance, the Names *al-Hādī* (the Guide) and *al-Muḍill* (the One who leads astray) are both divine, but in the material world, one becomes a source of guidance and the other a cause of misguidance. This difference stems from the varying degrees of proximity of the manifestations to the comprehensive Name "Allāh." Accordingly, the opposition of good and evil can also be interpreted in this context, for—as Imam ʿAlī stated—"the Divine Names have filled the foundations of everything" (Kafʿamī, 1997, p. 188).

The key point is that ethical evils arise not from the essence of the Names, but from the manner of their incomplete and contradictory manifestation in particular manifestations. As Rūmī expresses: "When colorlessness became captive to color, a Moses came into conflict with a Moses" (Rūmī, 1925/1976, Book II). This verse considers the opposition of Moses and Pharaoh not as an absolute conflict, but as the manifestation of two Divine Names (*al-Hādī* and *al-Muḍill*) in manifestations with different potentialities. Regarding the necessity of the existence of these oppositions in the material world, it must be said that although nominal oppositions in the material world lead to ethical evils, from the perspective of divine wisdom, the existence of these oppositions is necessary because the material world without conflicts would lose its capacity to realize the "Best System" (*al-Niẓām al-Aḥsan*). Qayṣarī emphasizes that the opposition of Names at the level of Divine Unity is not only not blameworthy but, due to the equilibrating presence of the Name "Allāh," maintains overall harmony (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 15). Over and above that, this opposition exists so that God's universal effusion (*al-Fayḍ al-ʿĀmm*) may encompass everything in the creaturely world that has the possibility of actualization; thus, every manifestation inevitably needs a governing Name to clothe it in the garment of existence (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, the material world, as the lowest level of existence, can only function as a locus for the diverse manifestations of the Divine in the shadow of these oppositions and pave the way for human perfection on the ascending journey. In his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Qayṣarī articulates the opposition of the Divine Names as follows: "Each of the Divine Names seeks manifestation according to its own mode, and this very aspiration for manifestation creates the ground for their opposition" (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 47). Accordingly, the ordinary human being is normally the manifestation of a particular Name and involved in nominal conflicts, and due to distance

from comprehensiveness and universality, remains far from nominal equilibrium, falling into blameworthy excess and deficiency. However, through mystical wayfaring (*sulūk*) and spiritual ascent (ascension of the intellect), one can gradually shed particular limitations and move towards more comprehensive Names. Union with the First Intellect (the first created manifestation of the Supreme Name) means attaining "simplicity" (*al-Basāṭah*) and harmony with the balanced nominal system. This transition is fundamentally the answer of Islamic mysticism to ethical challenges: resolving conflicts not by eliminating oppositions, but by ascending to a level where particular Names come under the dominion of the comprehensive Name "Allāh."

Based on the points made, it can be said: Nominal oppositions in Islamic mysticism are simultaneously the requirement for the emergence of multiplicity and evils, and also pave the way for the realization of divine wisdom in the Best System. These oppositions in the realm of Names are justified and necessary; but in the material world, due to the limitations of the manifestations, they turn into ethical conflicts. The Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, by relying on the ascending journey of man towards more comprehensive Names, offers a solution for overcoming conflicts and attaining true unity.

2. The Mechanism of Nominal Equilibrium and Its Application

In this section, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium is transferred from the theoretical domain to the operational sphere. First, the mechanism of harmonizing multiplicity in the shadow of unity is explained, and then its practical application in one contemporary issue is analyzed.

2.1. The Mechanism of Nominal Equilibrium: Harmonizing Multiplicity in the Shadow of Unity

In the ontological system of Islamic mysticism, evils in the material world are rooted in limitation, particularity, and, consequently, the opposition of particular Names and their manifestations. These oppositions and the resulting conflicts, which arise from the multiplicity of nominal determinations (*taʿayyunāt*), are not desirable from an axiological perspective. However, at a deeper level, in the realm of Names, these same oppositions are not only undesirable but are an inevitable necessity for the realization of the universal divine effusion (*al-fayḍ al-ʿāmm*). For only in the light of the diversity and contrast of Names can all existential possibilities—from mercy to wrath, from expansion to contraction, etc.—find the opportunity

to manifest, and the Divine Best System, which includes the material world and especially the element of human free will, achieve objective realization (Qayṣarī, 1996, pp. 14–15).

Nevertheless, the comprehensive Name "Allāh" acts as the axis of equilibrium; through the attribute of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl*, it prevents the excessive or deficient manifestation of opposing Names, transforming potential conflicts into harmony (*talāʾum*) (Qayṣarī, 1996, p. 905).

The term *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* is derived from the words of Ibn ʿArabī in *al-Futūḥāt* and Imam Khomeini in *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah*. Ibn ʿArabī, in explaining the position of this Name as the decisive arbiter (*faṣl al-khiṭāb*) between the two opposing Names *al-Rāḥim* (the Compassionate) and *al-Muntaqim* (the Avenger), elaborates on aspects of its station (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 633). In Imam Khomeini's words, *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* plays an unparalleled and pivotal role in creating and maintaining balance among the opposing Divine Names. This comprehensive attribute, which denotes God's absolute wisdom and justice, ensures that all Divine Names manifest in complete harmony and according to the wise and just divine system (Imam Khomeini, 1997, p. 41).

In this mechanism, divine ethics (*al-akhlāq al-ilāhiyyah*) finds meaning not in negating oppositions but in managing them, just as commendable human ethics also take shape in a context of conflicts and depend on conscious choice between good and evil. In the nominal realm as well, *Akhlāq Allāh*, with the attribute of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl,* turns oppositions into an opportunity for the realization of justice. It is worth mentioning that due to the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of the Name Allāh, other universal Names (which are universal relative to particular Names) also intervene, and synergy occurs between them. For example, in this process of proportionally allocating shares to each particular Name, the station of the Name *al-Muʿizz* (the Honourer) can be explained. In interpreting the verse "Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might (*al-ʿAzīz*) …," Ibn ʿArabī interprets *al-ʿAzīz* as *manīʿ al-ḥimā* (impregnable in sanctuary) and explains that when God bestows this attribute upon a servant, that servant serves as a shield against the manifestations of divine wrath (such as vengeance) (Ibn ʿArabī, 1946, p. 149). In this analytical framework, this immunity (*maṣūniyyat*) does not mean the negation of the *Jalālī* Names, but rather indicates their moderation in the light of divine wisdom.

Another point regarding the quality of the equilibrating mechanism of the Name Allāh is that the universality and comprehensiveness of the comprehensive Name is not such that

the coercive (*qahrī*) Names like *al-Muntaqim*, *al-Muḍill*, *al-Ḍārr*, and *al-Qābiḍ*, due to their opposition to the gracious (*luṭfī*) Names like *al-ʿAfuww*, *al-Hādī*, *al-Nāfiʿ*, and *al-Bāsiṭ*, have no opportunity to manifest and a negative approach is applied to their demand. Therefore, through the ethical character (*khuluq*) of *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* inherent in the comprehensive Name, the manifestations of the coercive and *Jalālī* Names will also find the opportunity to appear and manifest. However, this bestowal is not in a way that the outcome of the world ends up favoring evils and the dominance of coercive Names, because divine wisdom is attached to the predominance of good in the world. Evidence for this claim can be found in the phrase "O He whose mercy precedes His wrath" (Mufīd, 1992, p. 161) and the noble Quranic verse: "We send down in the Quran that which is a cure and mercy for the faithful; and it increases the wrongdoers only in loss" (17:82).

In the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, the balance of the material world is achieved through the manifestations of universal Names, especially the Supreme Name "Allāh." In the realm of Names, equilibrium is created by the Supreme Name itself; but in the external world, the Perfect Human, the manifestation of the Supreme Name, plays the role of establishing equilibrium among nominal oppositions. Mystical wayfaring (*sulūk*) and liberation from the constraints of particular Names perfect the human character (*khuluq*) in accordance with the character of the universal Names. And just as in the universal Names, the rule of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity, and its result, i.e., the harmony (*talāʾum*) of opposing particular Names under the comprehensive Name, prevails, their human manifestation also finds such a function towards the manifestations of particular Names and becomes the "Divine Vicegerent" (*al-khalīfah al-ilāhiyyah*), who, in the light of vicegerency, acts as an intermediary among the various manifestations and renders to every possessor of a right its due. Ibn ʿArabī defines the true Ṣūfī as one who embodies divine justice and wisdom, placing every manifestation in its rightful ontological position without distortion. Unlike the wrongdoers (*al-ẓālimūn*) who disrupt this balance by misapplying the Names, the Perfect Human operates with a divinely bestowed wisdom (*khayr kathīr*) that heals and harmonizes rather than exacerbates conflict (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 267).

This account reveals the main axes of the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium as follows: the Perfect Human, as the manifestation of the Supreme Name,

due to their existential proximity to this Name, is deputized to execute divine wisdom in the material world. This vicegerency (*khilāfah*) requires interacting with existents while respecting the "Rights of the Names" (*ḥuqūq al-asmāʾ*) and avoiding transgression against their sanctuaries. Adorning oneself with this attribute and benefiting from its effects and fruits—like healing and mercy—can only be realized in the shadow of assuming the divine attributes (such as justice, mercy, and wisdom). This assumption (*takhalluq*) protects man from "ignorance and injustice"—which arise from deviating from the positions of the Names—and, in mystical terminology, allows him to attain the station of "infallibility" (*ʿiṣmah*) (relatively or absolutely). According to Ibn ʿArabī, one who fulfills the trust (*amānah*) of creation—i.e., by relying on wisdom, properly places the manifestations of the Names in their true positions—is characterized as a "Ṣūfī." In contrast, one who, by violating this trust, removes the Names from their positions and fuels the intensification of conflicts is characterized as *ẓalūm* (a great wrongdoer) (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 267).

According to this account, divine wisdom is not limited to speech; rather, it flows through all existents. Accordingly, the Perfect Human, by understanding this system, can engage in the "management of the Names" (*taṣrīf al-asmāʾ*) in the external world. This management, formulated in the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, is not only applicable to resolving conflicts but also paves the way for the excellence of society.

In fact, by emphasizing that *al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* is a prominent ethical character (*khuluq*) of the Name "Allāh," Ibn ʿArabī shows that Nominal Equilibrium is not a static process but a dynamic one based on the mental and practical presence of the Perfect Human. This presence, on the one hand, helps resolve conflicts in the material world and, on the other hand, guides society towards the "Best System." Improving contemporary ethical issues (such as environmental crises or social inequalities) is also possible through this same path: when humans, inspired by the role of the "vicegerent," take the responsibility of the trust seriously and refrain from unprincipled intervention in nature or society as manifestations of particular Divine Names. With this explanation, this view is not only a response to the ethical challenges of the present age but also a way to emphasize the truth that the resolution of conflicts lies in their ontological roots.

Furthermore, in interpreting the verse "He who has been granted wisdom has certainly been granted abundant good" (Quran, 2:269), Ibn ʿArabī maintains

that "abundant good" (*khayr kathīr*) refers to the comprehensiveness of divine wisdom, not to quantitative material multiplicity. In his view, this "abundant good" results from the inclusiveness of the equilibrating attribute of the Supreme Name and its manifestation (the Perfect Human) among all Names and their manifestations (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 268). The Theory of Nominal Equilibrium infers from this perspective that each of the particular Names, existentially, is a dimension of the Supreme Name and, in relation to Him, is considered "abundant good." This view provides a basis for explaining the "Right of Every Name" in the system of existence, encompassing all existents and fulfilling the innate need of each. In truth, there is no Name or manifestation of a Name that is existentially independent of this attribute. Thus, each of the particular Names is an existential dimension of the Supreme Name, and existentially, they constitute abundant good for the Supreme Name.

The Holy Quran states that God placed man as "vicegerent" (*khalīfah*) on earth and entrusted him with the disposition (*taṣarruf*) in the world (20:50). In the mystical tradition, especially in the school of Ibn ʿArabī, this trust is interpreted as the "meeting point of the Names" (*nuqṭat talāqī al-asmāʾ*), meaning that man is the only existent that can be the manifestation of all Divine Names (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 266). Ibn ʿArabī further emphasizes that one who fulfills this trust properly, by relying on wisdom and assuming divine ethics, attains the station of "Ṣūfī." In contrast, one who fails to uphold this responsibility is called *ẓalūm* and *jahūl* (greatly wrongdoing and ignorant) because, by deviating from the divine norm, they intensify conflicts (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 267). This inquiry contends that this mystical view provides a basis for explaining the role of the Perfect Human in managing ethical conflicts. The Perfect Human, as the "meeting point of the Names," by understanding the right of every Name and granting it in due measure, transforms apparent conflicts into harmony and consonance (*talāʾum*). Accordingly, the "Ṣūfī" in this theoretical framework has gained the ability to "manage the Names" (*taṣrīf al-asmāʾ*) in the material world and, by assuming the ethics of God (*akhlāq Allāh*), prevents the excess and deficiency of nominal manifestations.

On this basis, imperfect humans can also take steps on the path of establishing equilibrium insofar as they approach the perfection of the Perfect Human. In other words, the levels of divine vicegerency form a dynamic spectrum, the peak of which is the absolute Perfect Human. This point not only clarifies the difference between perfect and imperfect humans

but also illustrates the inherent dynamism of man in the pursuit of spirituality and excellence.

Ibn ʿArabī emphasizes in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* that assuming divine ethics (such as justice, mercy, and wisdom) is only realized through the application of these ethics in relation to God's creation. In his words, man attains perfection when he embodies these attributes in himself and in relation to other existents (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, pp. 250–252). He also mentions a station in which man is endowed with a kind of infallibility (*ʿiṣmah*) such that no movement or stillness of his is in vain (Ibn ʿArabī, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 253). Ibn ʿArabī's view can be expanded within the framework of the "Theory of Nominal Equilibrium" as follows: a human being who, through self-awareness and being at the "Point of Equilibrium" (a concept this theory formulates based on Ibn ʿArabī's teachings), achieves balance among opposing Names, attains the station of "restraint" (*ʿiffah*) or "preventive power." This station means the ability to prevent the unilateral dominance of *Jalālī* or *Jamālī* Names. In this framework, the "infallible disposition" (*al-taṣarruf al-maʿṣūm*) of the Perfect Human pertains to the harmony he establishes among the manifestations of opposing Names (like *al-Qābiḍ* and *al-Bāsiṭ*, *al-Māniʿ* and *al-Nāfiʿ*) under the management of the comprehensive Name "Allāh." In other words, when the Perfect Human, by understanding the "Right of Every Name," prevents the unchecked dominance of one Name over others and grants every existent its due right, he realizes that same level of infallibility referred to in Ibn ʿArabī's words.

The result is that Nominal Equilibrium does not mean denying multiplicity but harmonizing it in the light of unity. This mechanism, relying on two fundamental principles/ethical characters—*al-Ḥakam al-ʿAdl* (placing every existent in its essential station, which is the very essence of equilibrating) and *ʿIzzah* (preserving the sanctuary of the Divine Names from transgression and deviation)—transforms ethical challenges from a field of conflict into an opportunity for realizing the "perfection of divine manifestation" (*kamāl al-istijlāʾ*).

The Perfect Human is the manifestation of a comprehensive Name that encompasses opposing Names and contraries; without any conflict and through union with the comprehensive Name, he is the embodiment of its equilibrating function. He is a perfect mirror of the Supreme Divine Name, encompassing opposites, yet entirely good, and in every realm (*nashʾah*), he has a special name and function. Due to this mirroring, he is the Vicegerent and successor of God. It is precisely

because of this fundamental absence of conflict in the Perfect Human that Imam Khomeini stated: "If all the great prophets were gathered in one city and one country, they would never disagree [due to selfish temptations]" (Khomeini, 2010, Vol. 14, p. 391).

He shows how one can, while accompanying multiplicity, remain unaffected by its flux and pave the way for fulfilling "the right of every single Name." Imperfect humans, to the extent that they approach the perfection of the Perfect Human, can also, by utilizing the existential capacity gained from removing limitations and becoming manifestations of the universal Names under the Name Allāh, take steps towards establishing equilibrium among more particular Names and play an effective role in treading the path of "rendering to every Name its due."

What is important for the applied ethics researcher in this mystical mechanism is the logic governing it: the logic of "managing oppositions by referring to a comprehensive reference." This logic provides a powerful analytical model, on the basis of which, in any ethical issue, one can: 1) identify the opposing poles (particular Names), 2) redefine the comprehensive and equilibrating reference (the Name "Allāh" or its vicegerent), and 3) analyze how the "right" of each of these poles is fulfilled within the framework of that comprehensive reference.

2.2. Applying the Equilibrium Mechanism to Contemporary Issues

For the sake of brevity, this section will only address one instance of the equilibrating mechanism in contemporary issues.

2.2.1. Case Study Analysis: Equilibrium between Jalālī and Jamālī Names in Sustainable Natural Resource Management

To provide a concrete demonstration of the application of this analytical framework, we will analyze the issue of sustainable natural resource management as a case study. This analysis will show how, through the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, a novel understanding of this ethical problem can be achieved, thereby paving the way for formulating solutions that possess both mystical depth and scientific precision. This analysis also offers a model for the researcher to utilize this framework in other areas of applied ethics.

2.2.1.1. Nominal Opposition in the Issue of Natural Resources

According to the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, the *Jalālī* Names (like *al-Qābiḍ* and *al-Māniʿ*) and the *Jamālī* Names (like *al-Bāsiṭ* and *al-Nāfiʿ*) act as two opposing poles in the world of creation. The *Jamālī* Name *al-Bāsiṭ*, with its ethical character of expanding

bounty, seeks human welfare through the utilization of natural resources. In contrast, the *Jalālī* Name *al-Qābiḍ*, with its restrictive nature, seeks to curb human intervention and prevent waste. The equilibrium between these two opposing Names, managed by the comprehensive Name "Allāh" and, consequently, by the Perfect Human, outlines a framework for the sustainable use of natural resources.

2.2.1.2. Consequences of the Extreme Dominance of Names

The unchecked dominance of either of these Names leads to excess and deficiency in the practical sphere. For instance, merely responding to the demand of the Name *al-Bāsiṭ* (without the moderating presence of the Name *al-Qābiḍ*) leads to the excessive extraction of fossil fuels with consequences such as global warming, air pollution, and loss of biodiversity (Eyring et al., 2021, pp. 423–552). Conversely, the absolute dominance of the Name *al-Qābiḍ* (without the equilibrating action of the Name *al-Bāsiṭ*) would lead to the unfair cessation of using vital resources and depriving humans of divine bounties.

2.2.1.3. The Role of the Perfect Human in Establishing Equilibrium

The Perfect Human, as the Divine Vicegerent and manifestation of the comprehensive Name "Allāh," endowed with "existential capacity" (*al-sīʿah al-wujūdiyyah* / *khayr kathīr*) and assuming the attribute of *Ḥakam-i ʿAdl*, establishes balance between these two opposing demands. Based on the Quranic teachings "And He taught Adam the Names, all of them" (2:31) and "Whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good" (2:269), he considers not one Name but all Names. This means that while each particular Name sees only its own benefit, the Perfect Human renders to all Names their due based on a wise measure.

For instance, in the context of energy management, one cannot solely address the existential demand of the Name *al-Bāsiṭ* (leading to the excessive consumption of fossil fuels) while ignoring the rights of the Names *al-Nāfiʿ* (Benefit), *al-Muṣawwir* (Biodiversity), *al-Qābiḍ* (Restraint), and *al-Muntij* (Ecosystem Balance). Consequently, adopting renewable energy is not merely a technical choice but a manifestation of the Perfect Human's comprehensive vision regarding the rights of the Names.

2.2.1.4. Practical Example: Water Resource Management

This approach facilitates the formulation of policies such as "tiered pricing for water," where the right to basic needs (*al-Bāsiṭ*) is balanced against the necessity of preventing waste (*al-Qābiḍ*) through measurable tools derived from the Names *al-Muḥṣī* and *al-Ḥasīb*.

2.2.1.5. Distinction from Common Approaches

This view has a fundamental difference with purely economic approaches that see water as a commodity for consumption optimization. Here, water, as a "manifestation of the Divine Name," possesses an "intrinsic right," not merely being a resource with external costs. Thus, any policy in the field of natural resources, before being an economic or technical solution, is a response to the opposing exigencies of the Divine Names and an attempt to find the point of equilibrium between them.

2.2.2. An Operational Decision-Making Framework Based on the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium

To operationalize this theory, we propose a four-step protocol:

1. Mapping: Identify the relevant opposing Names (e.g., in water management: *al-Bāsiṭ* for expansion vs. *al-Qābiḍ* for restriction).
2. Quantifying: Define measurable indicators for each Name (e.g., per capita access vs. consumption rates).
3. Prioritizing: Assign weights to these rights using participatory methods like AHP, involving experts and stakeholders.
4. Optimizing: Evaluate policy scenarios based on the weighted sum of fulfilled rights; the option maximizing these aggregates approaches the "Point of Essential Equilibrium."

2.2.3. Comparative Analysis of Approaches

From the perspective of an applied ethics researcher, these two approaches are not in opposition but are instead complementary. The scientific approach (sustainable development) provides precise measurement tools and operational models, while the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, by offering a deeper layer of meaning and existential analysis, helps the researcher better understand the "why" of conflicts and propose solutions rooted in nature (*fiṭrah*) and existence. The integration of the two can lead to the production of more comprehensive and more efficient knowledge in the field of applied ethics.

Note: The following tables are the authors' comparative analysis based on the foundations of the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium and existing studies in the field of sustainable development.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of the Scientific and Mystical Approaches in Natural Resource Management

Criterion	The Scientific Approach (Sustainable Development)	The Mystical Approach (Divine Names' Moderation)
Theoretical Foundations	Grounded in Islamic ontology: conflicts originate in the manifestations of Divine Names.	Based on environmental sciences and economics: balancing present and future needs.
Source of Legitimacy	Ethical legitimacy from the Quran and mysticism (Rights of the Names).	Legitimacy from scientific consensus and international standards (e.g., SDGs).
Operational Instruments	Reliance on ethical embodiment of divine attributes and the role of the Perfect Human.	Utilization of quantitative models, governmental policies, and green technologies.
Perspective on Resources	Resources are manifestations of Divine Names with an intrinsic right to preservation.	Resources are assets to be optimally consumed to reduce costs.
Role of Humanity	Humans are "vicegerents" (*khalīfah*) who ensure balance through wisdom (*ḥikmah*).	Humans are "managers" who regulate utilization via cost-benefit analysis...

Table 2: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Scientific and Mystical Approaches

Criterion	Mystical Approach (Nominal Equilibrium)	Scientific Approach (Sustainable Development)
Strengths	Creates deep ethical motivation for environmental preservation by relying on religious and spiritual responsibility.	Provides measurable models and specific policies for implementation.
Weaknesses	Pays less attention to providing practical and quantitative solutions.	Sometimes, due to focusing on material aspects, neglects spiritual and ethical dimensions beyond humans (like the rights of existents).

2.2.4. Explaining the Theory's Comprehensiveness and Responding to a Potential Critique

At first glance, it might be assumed that the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium merely complements the scientific approaches to sustainable development, in the sense that science provides practical tools and mysticism strengthens ethical motivations. But upon closer inspection, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium is not parallel to the scientific approach but instead encompasses it, serving as a more comprehensive framework.

The explanation is that in the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, everything that is realized in the world of existence is based on one of the Divine Names. Therefore, the scientific requirement for measurable models falls under the Names *al-*

Muḥṣī and al-Ḥasīb. In this light, true equilibrium requires balancing the "intrinsic rights" of manifestations (the exigency of *al-Bāsiṭ and al-Qābiḍ*) with precise technical planning.

For example, in water resource management, the Name *al-Muḥṣī* calls us to precisely calculate consumption rates and formulate quantitative indicators; the Name *al-Ḥasīb* emphasizes the necessity of accountability and exact reckoning; and the Names *al-Bāsiṭ and al-Qābiḍ* determine the framework of justice in distribution and consumption. The integration of these exigencies in the formulation of policies such as tiered water pricing (simultaneously securing the minimum public need) is an example of the comprehensiveness of this theory in practice. Thus, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium allows the applied ethics researcher, in their analysis, to pay attention both to the "existential rights" of stakeholders (human and non-human) and to utilize accurate measurement tools to evaluate the extent to which these rights are fulfilled.

2.2.5. Suggestions for Future Research

The Theory of Nominal Equilibrium offers a robust framework for emerging ethical dilemmas. Future research could apply this model to technology and AI (e.g., mitigating algorithmic bias via the Names *al-ʿĀdil* and *al-Ḥakīm*, or establishing ethical frameworks for cyberspace and autonomous weapons), bioethics (e.g., evaluating genetic editing or end-of-life decisions through the balance of *al-Khāliq*, *al-Muṣawwir*, and *al-Ḥayy*), and socioeconomic justice (e.g., resource distribution and mitigating inequality via *al-Ghafūr* and *al-Muntaqim*). Combining mystical textual analysis with empirical case studies in these domains will help solidify this theory's position within global applied ethics.

Conclusion

Aiming to provide an analytical framework for researchers in the field of applied ethics, this study examined the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium. The main achievement of this research for this audience is the transition from a surface-level analysis of ethical conflicts to their ontological analysis. This theory shows that contemporary ethical challenges are rooted in the opposition of Divine Names in the higher worlds, and therefore, sustainable solutions must also be able to take into account these existential dimensions. The application of this framework in the case study analysis of natural resource management demonstrated how this theory can be used for a deeper understanding of conflicts and for deriving practical

implications. By introducing the "Perfect Human" as a "benchmark reference point" for measuring equilibrium, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium provides a model through which ethical actions and proposed policies can be evaluated. By transforming mystical concepts into "analytical tools" (such as identifying opposing Names, the concept of the "Right of a Name," and the *Ḥakam-i ʿAdl* mechanism), this theory opens new horizons for research in diverse topics such as the ethics of new technologies, environmental ethics, and social justice. In this way, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium, by linking ethics to ontology, brings a depth and comprehensiveness to ethical discussions that purely anthropocentric or utilitarian approaches have largely neglected.

However, as an initial step in formulating this analytical framework, this research also faces limitations. The most important is the need to develop more precise methodological tools for operationalizing nominal concepts in empirical research. Therefore, future research can increase the richness and efficiency of this theory by focusing on:

1. Designing quantitative indicators for measuring the "Right of Every Name" in specific subject areas (such as water, energy, or privacy in cyberspace).
2. Testing this framework in specific case studies (e.g., in an environmental crisis or an ethical dilemma in the field of artificial intelligence).
3. Engaging in a critical dialogue between this theory and other contemporary ethical schools (such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics). Such efforts will pave the way for its broader application in various fields of applied ethics.

Ultimately, the Theory of Nominal Equilibrium moves beyond mere abstract contemplation, proposing a "Lived Mysticism" that addresses the ontological roots of modern crises. By redefining ethical agency as the manifestation of divine balance, this framework empowers contemporary subjects to navigate the complexities of technology and ecology through a sacred, yet practical, lens of cosmic justice.

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Authors' Contribution

The theoretical discussions and analysis of mystical concepts and the texts of thinkers (particularly Ibn ʿArabī and Imam Khomeini) were carried out by the corresponding author. The adaptation of these foundations to contemporary ethical challenges and the deduction of practical implications were performed by the second author. The final writing of the article was completed with the active participation and full agreement of both authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Negative AI Statement

The author(s) declare that no AI tools or services were not used or not highly applied during the preparation of this work.

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