

## The Effects of Sin from the Viewpoint of Quran and Narratives

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**Abstract:** Sin is an act with bad consequences. I.e. it would entangle the sinner and have its own effects, and repentance toward God is the only way to get rid of them. The present paper takes a quranic/narrative approach to investigate the sin and its effects. There are twenty explanations for sin in the Noble Quran, each of which refers to one of the contexts, effects or results of sin in this world and the life hereafter. Generally, sin is to enter territories which are forbidden by God and those who do so would suffer mind boredom, lack of understanding, forgetting their true personality, and receding from perfection. In this way, the one who gets used to committing sin (especially big ones), would gradually forget the God and lose his guidance and closeness and he would naturally get involved in spiritual metamorphosis and the consequences of straying from the path of human nature's health. Non-acceptance of prayers, revocation of worships, deprivation from portion, disappointment, outbreak of disasters, life shortening, and decadence and annihilation of nations (if the sin spreads among them) are all among the worldly consequences of sins. In the other world, the sinner would be blind to god and his kindness as they express spiritual metamorphosis, and they would experience different otherworldly torments depending on each of their improper moral paradigms and behaviors.

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### Introduction

By and large, sin refers to disobedience toward the governor. In religious context, this disobedience refers to act of violating god's wills by his servants. Sin is considered as the most significant factor causing destruction, adversity and entrance to hell. The words *bezeh* (crime) and *nafarmani* (disobedience) are the synonyms of *Gonah* (sin) in Persian. As to religious law, sin refers to any act that desecrates the servitude and violates the lordship of the Lord (Ebne Faras, no date, 53:2).

Sin has many divisions which are not to be discusses in this paper. But in a general view and from the view point of Quran and narratives, they are divided into two groups: cardinal and venial sins (*shori*, 37). Considering the verses of the Noble Quran, it can be understood that the God has promised to forgive venial sins, but he claims to retaliate cardinal sins with fire and torment and necessitates the repentance from them: "If you avoid the cardinal sins which you are forbidden, we will remove from you your lesser sins ..." (al-nisa, 31).

Although any sin is heavy and big as it is disobedience towards god's order, it doesn't disapprove that some sins are bigger the others depending on how hardly they are forbidden by God.

Sins are all common in one point even considering their different types; they all have a depravity deep inside. God has forbidden their servants from doing some actions and consider them

as sins because he wants to keep them away from these depravities". Disobedience is followed by worldly and otherworldly punishment and depravity is its forced result.

These depravities affect on soul, spirit, body and behavior of human being, even though some of them can be followed by decadence of societies as well. The lack of knowledge about the reality of sin and its effect is one of the factors which make its commitment easy for individuals.

Recognition of the effects of violation of God's order whether in formative or legislative forms that remain on one's soul and body, depends on the explanations presented by the religious law in its doctrines. In other words, recognition of depravities resulted by sin is possible through many methods on analyzing holy religious texts such as Quran and narratives.

### The terms of sin in Quran

Quran, our holly profit and imams has mentioned sin in different terms each of which reveal a part of its effects, requisites and preliminaries and express its variety as well.

The terms used in Quran about the concept of sin are:

**1. Osyen** (disobedience); "and Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray" (Taha, 121) *Masiat* means disobedience towards God's order (Moin, 395:3, 2007(1386)).

**2. Esm** (an impermissible act); “And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin” (Al-Nisa, 48), originally esm means to inaction and sluggishness which implies sin and refers to deprivation from rewards (Ragheb, 63, 1992 (1412)).

**3. Sayyea** (evil act); “All that -its evil- are hateful to your Lord” (Al-Isra, 38), Sayyea refers to a bad action which causes depression and misery (Ebne Manzoor, 1994 (1414), 1: 97).

**4. Jorm** (crime); “Humiliation and disgrace from Allah and a severe torment will overtake the criminals for what they used to plot” (Al-Anam, 124), originally, jorm refers to detaching fruits from trees and it means villainy which is an act that detaches the human from reality, felicity and goal (Ragheb, 192, 1992 (1412); Ebne Manzoor, 90:12 1994 (1414)).

**5. Haram** (religiously prohibited); “prohibited to you are dead animals and ...” (al-Maidah, 3), haram refers to prohibition. Thus the term haram indicates a territory that is not supposed to be approached (Ragheb, 229, 1992 (1412)).

**6. Khata** (lapse); “Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin” (Al-Isra, 31), Khata is to astray from the main direction, and sometimes it refers to a great sin, besides, the word khatie has been used as an intentional sin, “and whoever kills a believer by mistake, he should free a believing slave” (al-Nisa 92) (Ebne Manzoor 65:1, 1994 (1414)).

**7. Fesq** (debauchery); “also is (forbidden to you) the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows” (Al-Naidah, 3), Originally Fesq means to take out date stone which indicates the outgoing of the sinner from the path of obeying and serving God as he has broken the God’s sanctum and left it unprotected by committing a sin (Ragheb, 636 1992 (1412)).

**8. Fesad** (corruption); “whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely” (Al-Maidah, 32), Fesad refers to extravagation which results in corruption (the same).

**9. Fojur** (wickedness), “And indeed, the wicked will be in Hellfire” (al-Infitar, 14), Fojur is to infringe prudence and religion which ends in notoriety.

**10. Monkar** (wrong), “those enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful” (Ali- Imran, 104), originally, Monkar means unknown and in Quran it refers to sins as they are unknown by the clear nature, and healthy nature and wisdom consider it ugly and strange (Ragheb, 832, 1992 (1412); Ebne Manzoor, 233:5, 1994 (1414)).

**11. Fahishah** (indecenty), “And those who when they commit an indecenty or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for

their faults” (Ali- Imran, 135), Fahishah refers to an undoubtedly offensive action and in some cases it is used to indicate a very bad, shameful and horrid action as well (shori, 37). (Ebne Manzoor, 233:5, 1994 (1414)) sometimes, the term Fahishah is applied meaning a wrong path of life, “Nor come nigh to adultery, for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils)” (al-Isra, 32).

**12. Khabt** (aberration); “Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity” (Al-Baqarah), Khabt refers to imbalance while sitting and standing, as if the sinner moves in an imbalanced sleazy way and going to fall (Ragheb, 273, 1992 (1412)).

**13. Shar** (bad); “and let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away that which Allah has granted them out of His grace, that it is good for them; nay, it is worse for them” (Ali- Imran, 180), Shar Reffers to any obscenity hated by mankind, on the contrary, Khayr is loved by them. This term is usually applied for plights and disasters, but sometimes, it refers to sin as well, “And whoever does a bit of evil will see it” (Az-Zalzalah, 8) (Ragheb, 273, 1992 (1412)).

**14. Lamam** (venial sin); “The ones who avoid the cardinal sins and obscenities, except lesser offences” (al-Najm, 32), Lamam means to get near a sin and also small objects and it is applied to refer to venial sins (Mostafavi, 237: 10, 1981 (1360)).

**15. Vezr** (burden); “and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another” (Al-Anam, 164), vezr means weight and it is mostly used about carrying other’s sins. Sinner carries a heavy burden of his own sins (Ebne Manzoor, 86:11, 1994 (1414), Ragheb, 867, 1992 (1412)).

**16. Saql** (burden); “But they will surely carry their [own] burdens and [other] burdens along with their own” (Al-ankabut, 13), Saql means weight as well. It is sometimes used about sin and mostly about carrying other’s sins (Ebne Manzoor and Ragheb, the same).

**17. Hens** (Perjury); “Lo! Heretofore they were effete with luxury and used to persist in the awful sin” (Al-waqiah, 45 and 46), originally, Hens refers to a tendency to vein and it is mostly applied about sin and perjury and violation after commitment (Ragheb, 260, 1992 (112)). The use of this word in the concept of sin refers to the vow that human being had made to worship and obey God in Zar universe. Those who keep disobeying God in this world are in fact perjuring their vow.

**18. Zanb** (trail) “So each We seized for his sin; and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the blast [from the sky], and among

them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned. And Allah would not have wronged them, but it was they who were wronging themselves" (Al-Ankabut, 40), Zanb refers to villainy and trail, as any fault has its own consequence and trail in this and other world (Ebne Manzoor, 389, 1994 (1414), Farahidi, 190:8, 1994 (1414)). The torments mentioned in this verse are the samples of worldly consequences of sins.

**19. Hub** (Great sin); "And do not consume their properties into your own. Indeed, that is ever a great sin" (al-Nisa, 2), Hub refers to sin, huba means indigence and need. The word hub indicates vain needs and the motivation which make the person commit a sin (Ragheb, 134, 1992 (1412)).

**20. Maqt** (detestation); "And do not marry women that your fathers married, except what has already gone by; surely that is an obscenity and detestation, and an odious way" (Al-Nisa, 22), Maqt means a drastic detestation (Ragheb, 470, 1992 (1412)). This explanation of sin refers to the intensity of God's anger against a particular action.

Different explanations of sin have been frequently repeated in Quran. Each of these twenty terms refers to a part of ominous effects of sin and indicates the variety of sins. Through a special message and a particular warning, each term avoids human beings from committing sins.

### The effect of sins

If a person insists on committing sin and gets used to it without trying to give it up, a gross veil drops on his spirit and heart and disables him understanding realities and divine grace. In such situation, God's word wouldn't affect him even if it is told by a prophet and his eyes, ears and heart are not able to see, hear and understand the truth (al-Maidah, 61-63). Such a person can remain involved with the ominous effects of his intents and actions for ever.

Many individual and social effects of sins have been mentioned in the verses of Noble Quran and the narratives of Ahl-al Beyt, among which the most important ones are:

#### 1. Darkness of heart

"rayn" is one of the effects of sin which means rust and darkness of heart, as Quran says: "No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they have committed" (al-mutaffifin, 14).

Imam Baqir says: "there is a white spot in the heart of any servant. If he commits a sin a black spot would come out from the white one. If he repents the black spot vanishes but if he drowns in sin and continues so, the blackness would increase and cover

all the whiteness. Whenever the whiteness is covered, such heart would never be open to good." This is what god remarks: "no, what they have done has stained their hearts" (Kalini, 20:2, 1986 (1365)).

This phrase refers to those who deny God's verses and the resurrection day. A denial derived by violating God's limitations and committing sins.

What should be considered about "Rayn" is that by continuing a sin, human being would merge into spiritual darkness blow by blow and he would reach a point that sees his sins as good acts and sometimes, he even gets proud of them! In this stage, the ways to return would be closed to him and all the bridges behind would be broken down. This is the most dangerous state which may happen for a human being (Makarem Shirazi, 26:266, 1998 (1377)).

#### 2. Non-acceptance of prayers

Preying is the most significant communication method between the human and his worshiped God and the only way to attack God's attraction, as he says: "Say why would my Lord care for you if not for your supplication" (Al-Furqan, 77). There are some particular sins mentioned in narratives which prevent the prayers from being granted. Violating other's rights does so. Imam Ali said: "God told Jesus that he wouldn't grant the prayers of any Israelites and any creature who owes to others (Feyz Kashani, 301:2, 1961 (1340)).

It has also been mentioned that sin spoils the divine grace and the spiritual mood while praying. According to Imam Baqir, "indeed, the servant asks God a wish and he deserves to have it granted, but he has committed a sin and the Great God tells an angel not to grant his wish and deprives him, because he has disposed himself to torment by committing this sin and he deserves to be deprived." (Majlesi, 329:73, 1983, (1403))

#### 3. Revocation of (acts of) worship

Sin spoils the good effects of actions. Besides their bad effects, some sins prevent other worships from being accepted. Our Holy Prophet says: "God Has an angel who acclaims upon Jerusalem all nights that the one who eats forbidden things, God accepts none of his obligatory or virtuous acts of worship. (Ebne Fahd Hali, no date, 235).

The None-acceptance of actions is because the sinner insists on his sin or he doesn't think of rectifying his fault. In this case, according to God's word, as he goes beyond the boundaries of virtue, his actions wouldn't be accepted. The God remarks in Quran that "Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him]" (Al-Maidah, 27).

The significance of self-restraint and virtue in accepting of worships is also mentioned in narratives,

as our holly profit says: “even if you pray till you become like a nail pinned to earth and you fast till you weaken like a carved wood, god won’t accept unless through self-restraint which avoid sins” (Feyz Kashani, 301:2, 1961 (1340)).

#### 4. Bale and disaster

Sin brings about bales and disasters for the individual and society. God remarks: “And whatever strikes you of disaster – it is for what your hands have earned” (Ash-Shura, 30).

In the exegesis of the mentioned verse, Allame Tabatabayi states that “the word Mosibat (bale) refers to any kind of adversity that can happen for human being and the sentence, “what your hands have earned”, aims to indicate sins and obscenities. This Noble verse addresses the society; therefore, Mosibat refers to public and general bales such as famine, inflation, cholera, earthquake, etc. thus the meaning of this verse is: “any adversity and bales which involves your society is caused by the sins you have committed” (Tabatabayi, 287:2, 1987 (1366)).

Majmaolbayan Tafsir quotes From Imam Ali that our Profit said: “o, Ali! No Harm is done to our body by a piece of wood and nothing hurts our food, unless it is caused by sin” (Tabarsi, 123: 3, 1994 (1415)).

Imam Baqir said that “no pain and bale afflicts a servant unless it is caused by a sin and what God forgives transcends” (Kulayni, 134:2, 1986 (1365)).

From the mentioned narrative, it can be clearly understood that any sin can cause pain and bale for the sinner but God forgives them as he is kind and doesn’t afflict them.

Noble Quran mentions nations that who enjoyed God’s riches, but they lost them and perished because of committing sins: “Have they not seen how many generations we destroyed before them? And we sent [rain from] the sky upon them in showers and made rivers flow beneath them; then we destroyed them for their sins and brought forth after them a generation of others” (Al-Anam, 6). This is the fact the suites the divine tradition, unless it reforms when another tradition such as God’s try or emla and Estedraj occurs. In this case, the form of bale changes and instead of showing t the bad effects of sins, God pours his riches on them until they entirely get used to corruption and the world unifies against them and provides the needed parameters and equipment to extinguish them; as the Lord Says: “Then we exchanged in place of the bad [condition], good, until they increased [and prospered] and said, "Our fathers [also] were touched with hardship and ease." So we seized them suddenly while they did not perceive” (Tabatabayi, 86:18, 1987 (1366)).

Imam Ali states that “avoid the punishments imposed on former nations because of their improper and deprecated actions” (Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 92). The mentioned narrative indicates that sins and bad obscene actions bring about punishments for nations.

#### 5. Deprivation from aliment and portion

One of the effects of sin is deprivation from riches and lack of aliment. In the verse 11 from Surat ar- Rad, God remarks that “Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a nation until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah wants badly for a nation, there is no repelling”.

About this matter, Imam Baqir has said: “God has commanded certainly and surely that he wouldn’t take back riches that he has given to a servant mercifully, unless the servant commits a sin which is deserved to be punished (Koleyni, 20: 2, 1986).

The permanence of God’s riches is undoubtedly predicated to avoiding sins and obeying him, as he has mentioned it in Quran as well: “And if only the people of the towns had believed and feared Allah, we would have opened upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth; but they denied [the righteousness], so we seized them for what they were earning” (Al-Araf, 96).

About this matter, Imam Ali states that: “when calamities descend upon people and pleasures depart from them, they may turn towards Allah with true intention and the feeling in their hearts, and then he will return them everything that has fled from them and amends any corruption” (Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 178).

The relationship between sins and deprivation from riches can be clearly understood through thinking about the mentioned verses and narratives.

#### 6. Deprivation from forgiveness

God is the most merciful of merciful and he accepts the repentance of his servants, but the one who commits sins continues doing so and doesn’t repent, God will deprive him from divine mercy. He doesn’t think that God has given them a deadline for repenting; he imagines that God wouldn’t hurt him, thus he continues committing sins and doesn’t pay attention to God’s invitations for forgiveness, “He invites you to forgive you sins, and He delays your death for a specified term” (Ibrahim, 10).

This indifference results in deprivation from God’s forgiveness. Imam Sadeq said: “one, who intends to commit a sin, should avoid it, perhaps the servant commit the sin and god sees him and says: I swear to my dignity and glory, I won’t forgive you anymore” (Koleyni, 74:2, 1986 (1365)).

### 7. Self-oblivion and forgetting the knowledge

Sin causes forgetfulness. Forgetfulness can be affected by many parameters and disobeying god is one of them.

Guilt and sin is a result of forgetting God, thus it makes the human forget himself, as God remarks: "And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves" (Al-Hashr, 19).

Ebne Masoods quotes from our holly profit: "avoids sins, because they vanish good actions. A servant commits a sin; therewith he forgets his learned knowledge" (Bihar al-anvar, 773:70, 1963 (1403)).

### 8. Deprivation from communicating with God in this world

Because of the God-seeking nature in human beings, he feels an intense need to communicate with God to make his heart calm and confident. But only a few enjoy this gift and the God's friendship. Some are deprived from a real communication with God which makes their lives full of pressures, irritations and dead ends. One of the most important reasons of this deprivation is to commit sins, because disobedience against his commands and prohibitions would make him deprives us from his sanctum and company which is in fact a deprivation from everything. In preyer of Arafah, Imam Hussein indicates that "o, God! What can lose who has found you and what can find the one who have lost you?" (Noori, 327: 11, 1967 (1407)) Imam Ali says: "avoid following desires which makes you forget God" (the same, 347).

We also find sin as one of the reasons of deprivation from night prayer which is one of the important and prominent proofs of communicating with God. Imam Sadeq states that "indeed human being commits sin and as a result, he would be deprived from night prayers. Indeed, a bad action affects its committer faster than a knife can affect meat" (Koleyni, 272:2, 1986 (1365)).

### 9. Spiritual metamorphosis

The Sinner's inwardness would gradually change into animals with which they have similar characteristics. Intense greed changes it to a dog while intense passion changes it to a pig. Noble Quran says: "And if we willed, we could have deformed them, [paralyzing them] in their places so they would not be able to proceed, nor could they return" (Ya-sin, 67) and it remarks: "Say, "Shall I inform you of worse [owners of] penalty from Allah? [It is that of] those whom Allah has cursed and with whom He became angry and made them like apes and pigs" (Al-Maidah, 60) (Ragheb, 468, 1992(1412)).

### 10. Deprivation from God's guidance

Those who deny the right because of obstinacy and malice, are actually being cruel to themselves as they become deprived from God's Guidance and kindness and strayed from the path of growth and perfection.

According to the verse 54 of Surat al-Baqarah, when his people tend to worship calf, Moses told them: "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]". Besides, after mentioning the destiny and predestination of those who has deprived themselves from realities, God remarks that "and we did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves" (Hud, 101).

### 11. Disappointment

Disappointment is another effect of sin and the sinner sometimes loses his hope to be rescued which might make him commit bigger crimes. In such condition, the sinner should repent, turn to God and hope to have his kindness.

About this matter, Imam Sajjad says: "sins which cut off hope are: disappointment from God's relief and kindness, trusting anyone except God, and denying God's promises" (sadugh, 271, 1982 (1361)).

### 11. Shortness of life

Human's life is his greatest asset to obtain divine knowledge and just as some actions increase its duration, some other ones such as committing sin would make it short.

Imam Sadeq says: "those who die because of sins are more than those who pass away because of having a short life (Toosi, 377, 1981 (1401); Noori, 327:11).

### 12. Annihilation of society

In addition to its individual effects, sin has social influences as well which leads mankind to decadence and even annihilation.

Among the mentioned social effects of Sin in Quran is that he says: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done, perhaps they will return [to righteousness]" (Ar-Rum, 41).

Allame Tabatabayi indicates In Tafsir al-Mizan that "the the surface of the terms in this verse is general, thus it is not limited to a particular time, place or event. Therefore, "land and sea" includes the whole earth and and the corruption through the earth indicates public bale and disasters such as Earthquake, lack of rain and drought, famine, wars,

plunders, insecurity and generally, any disaster which disarranges the regular and competent system of world. "What earns with their hand" indicates that this corruption and destruction is caused by people's actions, i.e. it is because of their polytheism and sins they commit" (Tabatabayi, 292:16, 1987 (1366)).

The foresaid verse proves that human's sins have both individual and social effects.

Imam Baqir says: "know that no year is more pluvial than the others, but God pours it wherever it wants. Indeed, when a society commits sins, the rain which was supposed to pour upon their region, would be sent by god to vast deserts, seas and mountains (Sadoogh, no date, 252). In fact, the Noble Quran has set a clear linkage between materialistic and spiritual realities and considers retraction from sins and returning to God as a cause of prosperity, cheerfulness, vivacity, and increasing power: "And [Noah] said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers and give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers" (Nuh, 10-12).

What is interesting in Islamic narratives is what Rabi'ne Sabih says: "I was with Imam Hussein; a man came in and complains about the drought in his village. Imam Hussein said: ask forgiveness, another one came and complained about poverty, he was also told to ask forgiveness. The third came and asked Imam to pray for him to have a son. Again, Imam said: ask forgiveness. I was surprised, so I told: whoever has a problem or wishes something takes the same recommendation of asking forgiveness. His holliness answered: what I told wasn't mine, I've extracted it from God's words quoting from his profit, Nuh, and then he read the foresaid verses (Tabarsi, 361-10, 1995 (1415)).

### 13. Deprivation from seeing God in resurrection day

A heart contaminated by sins is not able to communicate the origin of life and this deprives him from meeting God in the other world, as we read in this noble verse: "No! Indeed, that Day, they will be forbidden [from meeting] their Lord" (al-Mutaffifin, 15).

Although some of the interpreters has tried to find praise (taqdir) in this verse to attribute this deprivation to God's kindness, beneficence, munificence and rewards (and not himself), the verse doesn't seem to need any praise. They are indeed deprived from their God, while good and pure ones find their way to get near him and enjoy seeing their Lord and such inward revelation which is the best pleasure ever. These unfaithful damns and sinners are

deprived from such great blessing and incomparable gift (Tafsir Nemooneh, 268: 26, 1998 (1377)). About the joy of spiritual union with God in other world, Quran indicates that "[Some] faces, that Day, will be delighted, looking at their Lord" (Al-Qiyamah, 22 & 23).

### Conclusion

Human's behaviors, words and intentions would have consequences which afflicts him whether in this world or the other. Sin has its own effects and it refers to something with consequences that afflict the sinner. Human's neglect and ignorance are the origins of sin and disobedience. If evil is able to make someone neglect his position, magnificence, knowledge, wisdom, God's kindness and his infinite riches, and the harms and consequences of sins, he would be easily led to sin and disobedience. Besides, ignorance of human's existential values, valuable effects of probity and chastity, the consequences of sins and finally, god's commands and prohibitions, would cause many sins as well. Therefore, the best way to be rescued from sins is to know his omnipotence, understand his magnificence and repent towards him. If we constantly pay attention to God's significance and the infinite riches that he has awarded to his servants, we would tend to thank him and his riches not to go after sins and violation. If we pay attention and trust God's knowledge and wisdom in ruling and interdicting or allowing actions, and know that the effects of sin are originally formative, we would understand that what is allowed is undoubtedly good, wise and profitable for us, and what is forbidden surely harms us, this is the point that we would never leave wisdom and profitability to go after evil and harms. If human being pays attention his high position and value among other creatures, and knows that sin would gradually turns him to the most insignificant creatures and the most distant place from God and his kindness, he wouldn't to lose this great values for a momentary and unworthy pleasure.

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