

Eid-ul-Fitr

SPECIAL

Significance of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain

MUSLIMS all over the world celebrate the great festival, Eid-ul-Fitr, at the end of Siyam (fasting), which lasts for a period of one month Ramadan. All Muslims, old, young and children alike except sick and elderly persons turn up at the congregation field (Idgah) in the morning hours on Eid-ul-Fitr to express gratitude to almighty Allah and seek his blessings. This is the day of rejoicing. Before going to offer prayer at congregation site devotees take bath and wear new clothes. Prior to offer prayer it is customary to pay fitra (alms) by earning head of the family. The rate of fitra, however, varies from year to year on the basis of market price of wheat or flour. This fitra is meant for the poor and the destitute to make them happy to perform Eid-ul-Fitr. Another significance of the day is that of exchange of greetings, Eid Mubarak with the rich and the poor in the same manner and exchange of visits between relatives and neighbours, apart from distribution of sweets. Alms are also offered to the needy.

It is interesting to note that Eid-ul-Fitr prayer is conducted in an open space outside of mosque to establish contact with nature. There are many verses in the Quran, which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during the month of Ramadan, that encourage Muslims to gather knowledge of natural science, physics, chemistry and geophysics.

Wide contact with the people is possible in the congregation. The devotees do not use the same route while returning from the congregation. Both ways one could meet a good number of people. Eid-ul-Fitr festival is an added attraction in Islam. This is a part of the religion.

After having observed full one month siyam (fasting) Eid-ul-Fitr brings joyous moments for the Muslim community. Siyam has been mandated by Allah. It is written in the Quran in the following manner: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint." (2:183). As soon as the crescent moon is sighted the people go to the mosque to offer Tarabi prayer and siyam begins on the following day. Ramadan in Islamic calendar is a very significant month for the Muslims, who believes in one Allah and his prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last and the great prophet.

Belief in and submission to one Allah is an innate quality. In Islam death leads to other part of

unearthly life. Either reward or punishment waits in hereafter on the basis of one's deed in this materialistic world. If one's belief does not correspond with reality, he/she will not get the benefit he/she has sought. It is doomed to failure. The purpose of life has been stated in Quran as: "I created the jinn and mankind only that they might worship me." (51:56) It said further: "Allah has created death and life, that He might test you, which of you is best in conduct." (67:2).

For true believer in Islam Ramadan not only means fasting alone but also brings about purification of the soul. The month of Ramadan teaches us to refrain from criticising some one including one's enemy in his/her absence. Criticism without his/her presence tantamount to committing a crime of severe nature. One cannot make false statement or speak lie on any matter during the entire month, but that does not mean to speak lie after Ramadan. Ramadan also provides us a lesson of restraining oneself from committing sexual abuses. Allah, however, permits to have sexual relations with wife in the night.

All Muslims, who reached the age of puberty and having sound mind and in good health, are commanded by Allah to observe fasting during Ramadan. Fasting

in the month of Ramadan is the blessing from Allah for Muslims. Jews and Christians also observe fasting but fasting in Islam is distinctly different from other religions. Islam imposes ban on eating, drinking and sexual relations from sunrise to sunset.

Salat (prayer) is must for all Muslims five times a day, but most of us religiously follow this system during the month of Ramadan in particular. During the month of Ramadan salat is required to be performed, apart from Tarabi in a congregation in the Mosque. The entire Quran is read out by Imam of the Mosque and the Hafiz, who can memorise the Quran in toto. This is only revealed religious book, which is so widely read, more of prayers. In conclusion it can be recited, committed to memory in whole or in part.

Salat is very important element in Islam as has been aptly described by Professor Dr Annemarie Schimmel, 82 (whom the writer knew personally during his diplomatic assignment in Bonn, Germany.) Professor Schimmel is known as scholar on Islam in Europe. She is a German. She said, "belief in the purifying power of ritual prayer is intense. The prophet compared it to a stream of water that washes off sins five times a day. The performance of prayer at the prescribed time constitutes ide-

ally a means of educating Muslims to punctuality, cleanliness and since there is no ranking in the mosque, equal participation in the life of the community. Prayer can also lead to ecstasy experiences and when one observes a praying Muslim, who is oblivious of anything and as it were, out of this world to stand humbly before the Lord, one realises best whence Islam derives its vital strength." (This quotation was taken from the book: Islam and the Modern Muslim World by Professor G W Choudhury.) In Quran Muslims are reminded 82 times to offer prayer. At the same time Muslims are commanded to pay Zakat. Zakat is mandatory for those who have enough wealth, to help the have-not to bring about a balance in the society.

We find every verse, which commands to offer prayers, contains the provision for Zakah. The word Zakah (Zakat) appears 32 times in the Quran together with Salah (Salat). Allah says, "And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, with sincerity and under discipline. He has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the religion of your father Abraham. It is he who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (revelation); that the messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind. So establish regular prayer, give Zakah and hold fast to Allah! He is your protector the best to protect and the best to help". (22:78). Zakah is mandatory on five items: gold and silver ii) commercial goods iii) agricultural products iv) livestock v) mining and minerals.

Most of our religious leaders only speak of gold and silver but this is not correct form of approach. About Zakah it would perhaps be relevant to quote from the book, Islam and the Modern Muslim World by political scientist Professor G W Choudhury, who said that "one of the most important principles of Islam is that all things belong to God (Allah); and that wealth is, therefore, held by human beings in trust. The word Zakat means both 'Purification' and 'growth'".

It is, therefore, very clear that Siyam, Salat and Zakat constitute important elements during Ramadan in particular. Ramadan teaches Muslims to exercise self-discipline, restraint, equality and fairness. Temporal differences between the rich and the poor become insignificant as reflected in Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr congregation said that Islam is the blending of materialistic and spiritual aspects of life.

Eid and the Indigent

by Kazi Aulad Hossain

THIS is the end of the holy month of Ramadan and before dwelling on the occasion and festivity of Eid we may recall here once again why Almighty Allah has prescribed "Siam" or fasting for the Muslims from dawn to dusk every day for full 30 days during the said month of Ramadan. The reason is, as declared by Allah Gafur-ar-Rahim in Ayat 183 of Sura Baqara (the cow) of the Holy Quran, Siam or fasting will enable us to "learn self-restraint" and it will help abstain from doing evil deeds. As Siam purifies a human soul during the month of Ramadan this month is also known as the month of self-purification. And following this month comes Eid-ul-Fitr, the occasion of celebration.

In this context, however, when we find rich and wealthy persons as well as leaders in the society throw iftar party and entertain their guests with sumptuous dishes consisting of dozens of items long before the advent of Eid-ul-Fitr then we tend to easily imagine that they would be more elaborate to have gastronomic delight on the ensuing Eid-day with their family members and friends and also put on gorgeous and costly clothes and go for

other expensive enjoyments. But when Siam or fasting during the holy month of Ramadan teaches us self-restraint to be virtuous (Muttaqil) in that case such lavish spending is not certainly commensurate with the Quranic injunction (Ayat 183 of Sura Baqara of the holy Quran). Again, such reckless expenditure is also not in conformity with the relevant Ayat of Sura Baqara in which Almighty Allah in clear and unambiguous terms admonishes the persons who misuse money and wealth.

Now the pertinent question is: do the aforesaid rich and wealthy persons ever think for a moment that there are such indigent persons in their respective localities/areas who do not have the ability of having two square meals a day? On Eid-day they stand with their outstretched hands at the entrance of the mosque or around the maidan where Eid-ul-Fitr congregational prayers are being offered for fitra/alms. We may now turn to a tycoon having a fat bank balance of, say, two hundred crore taka. One day during the holy month of Ramadan when his spouse specially asked him to replace the existing car (though the car was in good condition) and buy a

brand new car of the latest model so that they could use it on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr festival, the powerful capitalist readily agreed in deference to his wife's desire and instructed his manager for placement an order for a brand new car costing about 20 lakh taka. But does this powerful moneyed man ever think for a while, when driving his costly brand new car with an air of 'superiority' (!) complex that there are many half-naked, ill-fed and ill-nourished persons in his very locality who are deprived of the basic requirements of life? Has he ever seen the melancholy faces of these unfortunate destitute who are also human beings like him and they are supreme creation (ashrafal makhluqat) of the Lord Creator Allah Rabbul Alameen?

In this context we may also refer to Ayat 7 of Sura Al-Hadid (Iron) of the Holy Quran and see what Merciful Allah says in that Ayat. He says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees; and such of you as believe and spend (arigh) theirs will be a great reward."

When Benign Allah says "spending" as indicated in the aforesaid Ayat, He obviously means spending in charity and

spending in charity means one's disposition to do good to people who are needy and indigent. The Ayat under reference clearly indicates that a moneyed man's money and wealth actually belong to Almighty Allah and he (the moneyed and wealthy person) is merely a trustee of that money and wealth on behalf of Almighty Allah. According to this Ayat he is required to spend a portion of his money or wealth for the benefit of the indigent persons. It may be stated here that there is no occasion like Eid-ul-Fitr when joys of eating and feasting should be shared so widely. But we hardly do so. If the aforesaid tycoon can gladly and unhesitatingly buy a costly brand new car of the latest model at the cost of about 20 lakh taka replacing the existing car to please his wife over and above the existing good one, then he can easily afford to spend at least a sum of fifty thousand taka to bring smile on the melancholy faces of many indigent persons living in his area on the Eid-day. 'Eid' means happiness and there is no other occasion which can match the bonanza and excitement that Eid has to offer. Let us not, therefore, forget the indigent people around us. Let us share our happiness with them.



Eid congregation outside mosque.

Bounty of Ramadan and Beneficence of Eid-ul-Fitr

by Prof Abul Kalam Elias

WHAT is Islam? Islam implies surrender to Allah. According to Poet Allama Iqbal, "Complete trust in Almighty Allah and defence of death that is Islam." Islam emphasized on the unity and solidarity of the Muslim Umma. Allah says in Kamale Pak (holy Quran), "Catch hold of the rope of Allah steadfastly and do not be separated."

Our holy Prophet (PBUH) imagined a Muslim Umma, referred to in the holy Koran in many places, where reciprocal love, affection, sympathy and fellow-felling among Muslims will be like one human body, as it were, when one limb is wounded then the whole body is affected.

Glorious tradition Muslims have glorious tradition and distinctive culture. To tell the truth, our name and nomenclature, arts and architecture, history and tradition literature and music outlook of life and on life are quite different from other nation.

But what do we see today? Cultural aggression cultural conquest alien culture their encroachment upon our culture has added to our miseries and our religion and culture is in danger these days.

Many of our people have strayed away from the path of rectitude. They perform prayer, keep fast, go to pilgrimage but they are not Muslims in letter and spirit.

As the Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam puts it.

It seems that dolls of machine are moving.

They have no Iman, Yet they are called Muslims

We though Muslims could not repose our trust in Allah

Satanic influence has destroyed our Iman

We have indulged in fratricidal quarrels and killing.

We did not sacrifice anything.

We had no regard for what is great and good.

RamadanRamadan has made

its august presence amongst us this year when the whole nation is beset with trials and tribulation storm and stress.

Ramadan is the name of 9th month in Muslims calendar. It is derived from 'ramaja' that means burning stone. It is said that the Arabian people people used to keep fast during extreme hot season. According to another opinion 'ramj' means burning. Fasting of ramadan burns the sins and evil-propensity. Thus the name is justified.

Different Prophets and early Muslims would observe fasting in the dim past. But it was made obligatory and compulsory in the second Hemira (arabic year).

Fasting has been called by the holy Prophet of Islam as the shield that guards against all dangers and evils.

Ramadan is the month prescribed for attainment of Taqwa (God fearingness referred to in Koranul Karim in innumerable places. It is the month of self control, self rectification, self

purification.

But how many of us have been able to derive any benefit out of Ramadan. It is lack of faith that stands as the stumbling block to our courage of conviction.

We have miserably failed to inculcate in us the qualities of the Muslims as faster of Ramadan.

The instances of offences and crimes committed in our day to day life in our Metropolis and remote countryside speak volumes for the fact that our whole country is going to rack and ruin as the disastrous consequences of our misdeed, intolerance, hatred, jealousy, self-aggrandisement and violence emanating from unhealthy politics.

There is fasting of every limb not only of mouth but also eyes, ears, hands, legs etc. abstaining from evil things.

Those who could not avoid lying, backbiting, smoking, drug addition, smuggling, bribery, profiteering and corruption, are not in the good grace of Al-mighty.

Their fasting has been called frauds in the holy scripture.

Ramadan month of Jihad (Crusade and conquest)

In Islam Mujahid (religious fighter) is held in high esteem. In the history of Islam there had never been so much victory in any other month than in Ramadan. Thus the valiant Muslim fighter came out triumphant in the battle of Badar, Kadesia, Jerusalem, constantinople, Sind (by Mohd bin Kasem) etc at different times of history.

Ramadan month of revelation.

The holy Quran was revealed in this holy month. This divine scripture is the sources of inhausable power and energy; and once brought about a revolutionary change in the life history of the Muslims. It is this sacred book that was deliverer of mankind from darkness in days of ignorance.

Koran is fresh and life-like and is the model for all times and climes. This is why one French Scholar and humanist said

Korean is the deep sea, where the rivers of knowledge and wisdom have met with each other.

Iranian people pay proper respect and reverence to holy Koran by religious discourse and research during Ramadan. This is why Ramadan in Iran is called spring time of Koran. Ramadan month of Esteqlar (remorse and repentance for forgiveness).

Devoted Muslims find a golden opportunity to ask forgiveness for remission of their sins defects and short comings from Almighty Allah by offering 'doa and Darud' (benediction) and by being worthy of 'Laallakum Tattaqoon'.

Eid-ul-Fitr

The bearings of holy Eid-ul-Fitr on our life is rejoicing. I have seen how the poorer section of our people and the street baggars and have-nots look forward to the rising of Ramadan moon on the western horizon proclaiming the coming of Ramadan thus declaring the happy new of getting ifter, left over food, Fitra, Zakat, Gift in

cash and kind.

This is why Ramadan is called month of Rahamat (mercy) Barkat (benefits). Milk of human kindness is visible during this sacred month.

On the auspicious day of Eid-ul-Fitre every true Muslim thinks it his bounden duty to contribute his might towards the next door neighbour relatives, guests, Passers by and penniless destitutes.

By distributing 'Fitra' among the less fortunate and under-fed, feeding the poor, clothing the naked and catering to the needs of the displaceed and deprived, every Muslim can seek the pleasure of Almighty on the happy Eid-day thus becoming co-sharer of their laughter and tears. This day of delight and rejoicing is the embodiment of universal brotherhood, unity, freedom and love.

A poor man cannot take anything from you by force. If you are a gentleman and true Muslim you must have a sense of consideration for others. Shelter, ess,

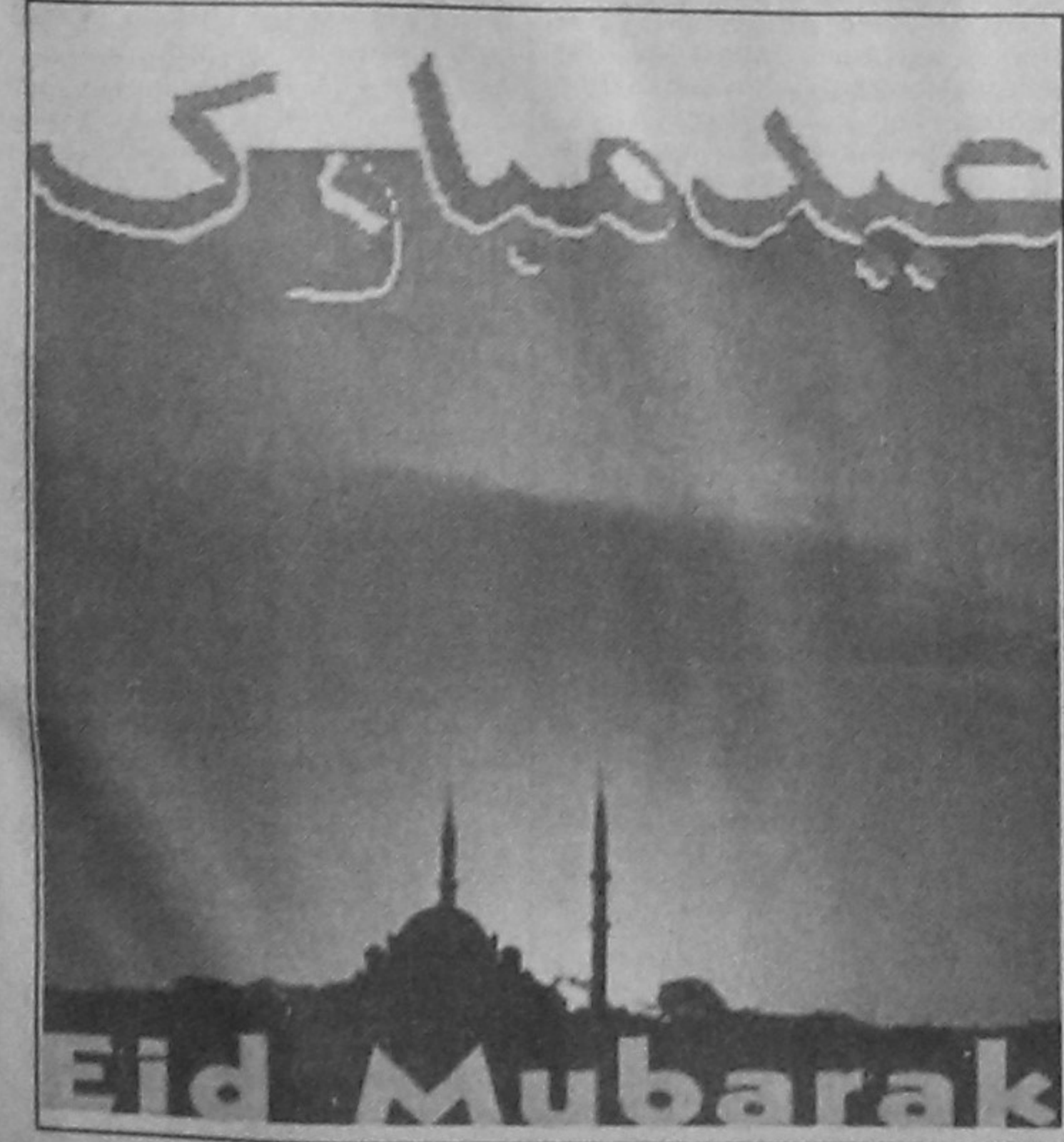
rootless, pavement dwellers, and have nots are the Guests of God, as said by Abdul Kader Zilani (R). If you extend hands of mercy an benevolence to them, than you will be highly rewarded here and hereafter. The prayer of penniless Musafirs (indigent traveller) is accepted by Al-mighty Allah, said the holy Prophet of Islam.)

It is futile to indulge in fancy-fairs, fan-fare, Meena Bazar Eid Mela, and other festivities on the Occasion of Eid-ul-Fitre without imbibing and inculcating the virtues and qualities of the true Muslim. Non-fasters cannot actually enjoy Eid-ul-Fitre marrying-making and merrimer jollity and joviality, delicacy and delight. Because they suffer from prick of conscience and guilty mind prevents them deriving innocent amusement out of any pastime.

In a nut shell, Ramadan has many bearings upon us like Barkat (benefit), Rahamat (mercy) magferat (forgiveness) Nazat (Salvation), Fazilat (rewards) and what not. We must prove ourselves worthy of it.

Wealth is purified by Sadaqa (Zakat) and body is purified by prayer and fasting.

Attainment of TaqawGod rearingness is the main purpose of Ramadan. On this day of of reckoning, we must realise the truth how far we have ment our ways and rectified ourselves and purified our mind body and soul.



ঈদ মোবারক

পথে পথে আজ হাঁকিব, বন্ধু,
ঈদ মোবারক! আসসালাম!
ঠাটে ঠাটে আজ বিলাব শিরিন ফুল-কালাম।
বিলিয়ে দেওয়ার আজিকে ঈদ।
আমার দানের অনুরাগে-রাঙা 'ঈদগা' রে।
সকলের হাতে দিয়ে দিয়ে আজ আপনারে—
দেহ নয়, দিল হবে শহীদ ॥

ঈদ মোবারক



Buying new clothes for Eid celebration.

Great is the Congregation
This day on the Eidgah
In the world will prevail again
The Islami Dispensation
indeed

Those who unconscious lay
buried in tears and sighs
Seek Firdaus this day on rising
from sleep
with the newer fervour of life.
You too come and join
The great congregation
For getting wordly worries.

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