

The Error Behind Admiration for Cruelty

When people who do not know the moral values of the Qur'an or who do not live by these moral values as they should are examined, a striking common characteristic becomes apparent:

Aspiration to and admiration for evil. Most of these people determine their attitudes according to the general tendencies of society, often without even considering what the things they aspire to mean or what kind of result they will bring about. They decide what is beautiful, good, right or wrong not according to their consciences, but according to the mindset of the great majority of society. This situation often causes them, without even being aware of it, to accept evil after a while and regard it as ordinary.

Of course, it can never be generalized that society as a whole always takes evil as its basis. There may be both good and evil within every society. However, what matters is what values and criteria a person adopts and according to what he sets a limit for himself. The criterion of a person who lives according to the Qur'an is always God's approval. In other words, a person acts by considering whether or not he can earn God's love through an attitude he displays, a statement he makes or a decision he takes.

Some people, however, take how their interests will be affected as their basic criterion when adopting an attitude and style. For example, if it will cause them to be promoted in the company where they work, they do not hesitate at all to defame a colleague. The position they will attain, the seat they will occupy, the means that will be allocated to them and even the size of their office are more important to that person than placing a friend in a difficult situation. Or, if there is a possibility that their salary will be increased, they begin to defend with great enthusiasm something they had never approved of until that day. Whether or not the idea they defend is right does not concern them at all. Since their basic motive is self-interest, their criteria become what those who possess power, from whom they hope to obtain benefits, think and say.

Since these people forget that God is the sole Possessor of power and might, they imagine that those who are wealthy, rich and powerful possess a power that knows no bounds. They forget that these people, too, are beings who eat, sleep, become ill and have many physical weaknesses just like themselves. They do not even consider the possibility that those who are good, honest, sincere and on the side of truth may possess power. In many societies, goodness is supposedly regarded as gullibility, honesty as stupidity and love as idealism. Since they regard those who are good, honest and on the side of love as weak, they believe that they will inevitably be crushed sooner or later, and for this reason they refrain from standing beside them or even appearing to know them.

In the Qur'an, God has also given examples, as a lesson, of those who displayed this moral corruption in the time of our Prophet (saas). These people regarded the believers as weak and powerless and, because they believed the idolaters possessed power and might, chose to take them as friends:

"Do those who take the disbelievers as protectors, rather than the believers, hope to find power and strength with them? Power and strength belong entirely to God." (Surat an-Nisa, 139)

As revealed in the verse, the reason these people took the idolaters as friends instead of our Prophet (saas) and the Companions was that they imagined power, might and superiority to be with them. In their own eyes, they regarded our Prophet (saas) as weak and imagined that the material means of the idolaters and disbelief were very extensive, and that their power was therefore very firm. They forgot God, the Creator of all things, Who gave the idolaters the means they appeared to possess, Whose power and might are limitless and infinite and Who is the one Almighty. Indeed, they collaborated not only with the idolaters, but also with Byzantium, the global deep state of that time, which they believed to be an irresistible power that would prevail. Almighty God showed all of them that honor, glory and power belong to Him by making our Prophet (saas) and the Companions victorious each and every time over every trap and scheme laid by those who committed this immorality.

While goodness and aspiration to goodness are founded on spiritual gain, the apparent material and spiritual gains of evil and aspiration to evil virtually hypnotize some people. That is because the material return received from evil is immediately seen in concrete form. A person is suddenly made famous, obtains material benefits and acquires a position. Worst of all, the deterrent and intimidating power of **"being known as evil"** over weak people has a satanic pleasure to it. The

artificial respect arising from fear of loveless and merciless people who disturb others with arrogant, harsh, abusive and mocking attitudes creates an ugly reputation. Through the alluring influence of this ugly reputation, evil is made ordinary.

Those Who Support Cruelty for Petty Interests

Aspiration to and admiration for evil are widespread in many countries of the world. At the root of aspiration to evil lies the alluring effect that the benefits provided by evil people have on those with weak characters. Seeing that benefits can be obtained through evil draws many people into a race for evil with great eagerness and excitement.

For example, slandering someone, defaming and accusing a person by lying and, as a result, causing that person and his family to suffer are moral and character defects that, under normal circumstances, no person of reason and conscience would ever consider becoming of himself. All people throughout the world agree on the ugliness of slander. However, when the press and social media are examined, it can be seen that some people who are plainly seen to slander and lie are not condemned at all by many circles; on the contrary, the lies they tell are enthusiastically carried into the headlines. Although they say that they do not believe what is said when asked for their sincere opinions, they spread this defamation. Slander is, surprisingly, in demand. These slanders are discussed for hours with a strange and astonishing excitement, and some even lose control of themselves and begin enthusiastically adding lie upon lie.

While it would be expected that people would say, **“This is plainly a lie; its irrationality is evident in every respect,”** and that the slanderer would be condemned and censured, this system is unanimously kept standing. Moreover, this alliance brings together even people who lead entirely different lives, hold very different beliefs and are even diametrically opposed to one another. That is because **“fame, means, position, connections and material gain”** are obtained by crushing people, acting cruelly and supporting cruelty, and no one wants this order from which they benefit to be disrupted. Seeing that this order somehow provides benefits encourages other people to become part of the machinery as well. Consequently, a structure emerges in which evil rapidly spreads and is supported.

God, however, has forbidden suspicion, seeking out people's faults and slander in the Qur'an:

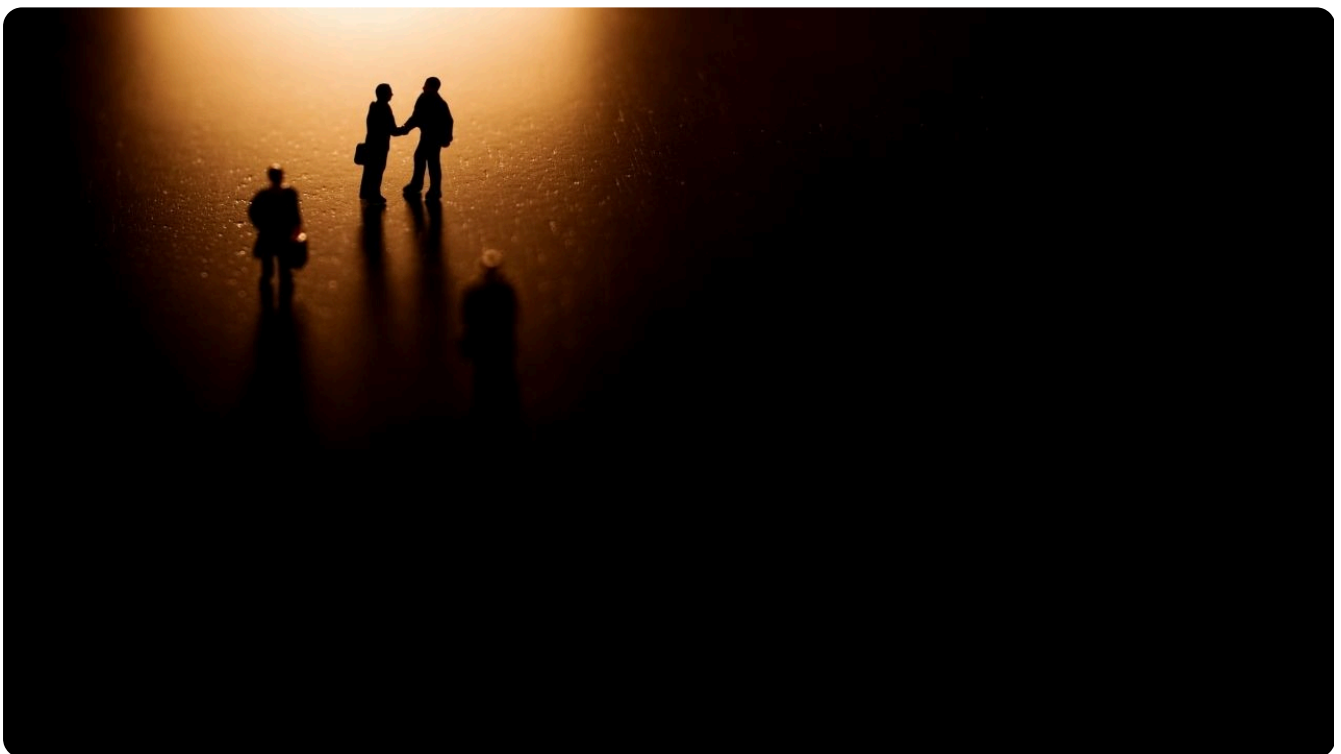
"Do not pursue what you have no knowledge of. Hearing, sight and hearts will all be questioned."
(Surat al-Isra, 36)

"You were bandying it about on your tongues, your mouths uttering something about which you had no knowledge. You considered it to be a trivial matter, but, in God's sight, it is immense." (Surat an-Nur, 15)

"Why, when you heard it, did you not say, 'We have no business speaking about this. Glory be to You! This is a terrible slander!'" (Surat an-Nur, 16)

"Indeed, those who [falsely] accuse chaste, unaware and believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter; and they will have a great punishment." (Surat an-Nur, 23)

"You who believe! Avoid most suspicion. Indeed some suspicion is a crime. And do not spy and do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat his brother's dead flesh? No, you would hate it. And have fear of God. God is Ever-Returning, Most Merciful." (Surat al-Hujurat, 12)



One of the fundamental elements that keeps the structure founded on evil standing is the cooperation and solidarity among evil people. Slanderers, liars, hypocrites and self-seeking people recognize and understand one another as soon as they see each other and somehow

invariably support one another. People who would not even come together under normal circumstances suddenly unite on the same side when evil is at issue—for example, when innocent people are intended to be defamed through slander, when it is intended to cause disorder by provoking society or when plans are made to obtain benefits through injustice and oppression. Yet God has forbidden people to cooperate with one another in evil, enmity, sedition and disorder, and has commanded them to be in solidarity and cooperation only in goodness and good moral values:

"... Help each other to goodness and piety.

Do not help each other to wrongdoing and enmity. Have fear of God. God is severe in retribution."

(Surat al-Ma'idah, 2)

The fact that those whom they regard as rich and powerful are ruthless, merciless and cruel often has, strangely enough, an even more mesmerizing effect on some people. That is because in societies far removed from religious moral values, cruelty is a kind of display of power. Cruelty and ruthlessness are perceived as the pinnacle of power. The way to benefit from this power is to become a supporter and a part of cruelty. Those with weak characters enter into a race **"to support cruelty"** in order to win the approval of those whom they regard as possessing power and might. Most astonishing of all is that, after a while, this situation can come to be regarded as perfectly ordinary by certain sections of society and can virtually turn into a social frenzy.

In fact, wars are situations in which the most striking examples of this distorted mentality are observed. Masses who had been leading friendly lives as neighbors only the day before turn, in a short time and amid social hysteria, into murderers who mercilessly slaughter one another.

The burning and destruction of Rome,

The plundering of Istanbul by the Crusaders,

The merciless destruction of Persian civilization,

Millions of people savagely slaughtering one another for years in the First and Second World Wars,

Jews, Catholics and the Roma being burned in ovens, and women and children being reduced to an inhuman state in concentration camps,

People who had lived together for centuries turning into machines of rape and massacre in the Bosnian War,

People in Soviet Russia and China under Mao being condemned to live in the most degrading ways possible, and executions being turned into virtual spectacles in public squares, and mass slaughter and torture becoming so widespread all over the world are some of the horrifying consequences caused by the mentality of aspiring to evil.

The fact that some people are so eager for evil also occurred among past peoples and is an important matter related in the Qur'an as a lesson for all people. It is revealed in the Qur'an that the Prophet Salih (pbuh) said the following to his people:

"He said, 'My people, why are you so anxious to hasten the bad before the good? If only you would ask for forgiveness from God, so that mercy might perhaps be shown to you.'" (Surat an-Naml, 46)

As revealed in the verse, for people who are far removed from religious moral values, evil is regarded as something **"hastened,"** in other words, done easily and eagerly, while goodness is presented as difficult or supposedly unnecessary and is sought to be forgotten. Some people are so eager for evils such as slander, lying, cruelty, ruthlessness, selfishness and disloyalty that, in their own foolish minds, they even seek to encourage the prophets toward evil. In the Qur'an, this imposition by the idolaters upon our Prophet (saas) is revealed as follows:

"They want you to hasten the bad rather than the good when examples of punishment are there before them in the past. Your Lord has forgiveness for people for their wrongdoing; but your Lord is also severe in retribution." (Surat ar-Ra'd, 6)

Admiration for Power

Some people take the life of this world, which has been created solely as a place of education, as their basis and determine all their criteria, moral values and lives according to this world, as though they were to remain here forever. These people attach importance and value to the power they regard as **"concrete."** They are unable to see God's intellect, artistry, knowledge, power and might, which inspire tremendous admiration in the fruit they eat, the breath they take, the atom surrounding them and every one of their cells. The only things they can see are the cars, villas, summer houses, clothes, luxury restaurants and lives they regard as ostentatious around them.

They cannot consider that the luxury, wealth and magnificence they admire are God's artistry. God is beyond that; instead of God, they magnify in their eyes those people to whom God has entrusted these blessings.



As a result of this state of heedlessness found in some people, an ignorant, blind and passionate admiration for wealth and power emerges. In the account of Qarun in the Qur'an, it can be seen that God describes in detail the state of mind of those people who were virtually spellbound by Qarun's wealth and fell into heedlessness, forgetting that God is the sole Possessor of goods, property, wealth, power and might:

“Qarun was one of the people of Musa but he lorded it over them. We gave him such treasures that their very keys would have been too heavy a weight for a band of strong men. When his people said to him, ‘Do not gloat. God does not love people who gloat. Seek the abode of the hereafter with what God has given you, without forgetting your share in this world. And do good as God has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the land. God does not love corrupters.’ He said: ‘I have only been given these riches because of the knowledge I have.’ Did he not know that before him God had destroyed generations with far greater strength than his and far more possessions? The evil-doers will not be questioned about their sins.” (Surat al-Qasas, 76-78)

As revealed in the verses, even carrying the keys to Qarun's goods and property required a body of strong men. While describing this wealth in the verses, God has provided very important information concerning the psychology and flawed chains of reasoning of people who are far removed from religious moral values:

God bestows goods and property upon people so that they may give thanks, do good and strive for the Hereafter. Yet some people forget that it is God Who gives and, even though they do not possess so much as a single cell of their own, become spoiled by imagining that they themselves are the owners of property and wealth. As a result of this arrogance, they fall into the error of thinking that wealth was given to them because they deserved it or that they obtained it through their own efforts.

Although they see only a small manifestation of God's infinite and majestic power and wealth, they imagine it to be an endless, inexhaustible, unshakable and indestructible power belonging to themselves.



In some people, this state of heedlessness and arrogance causes a ruthless, selfish and merciless state of mind to develop and leads them to cause corruption on earth. Corruption does not necessarily mean war, torture or bloodshed. Turning away from serving God's religion and, instead of striving to spread goodness, truth, patience and compassion, merely being content to complete the day in the daily course of life is also a form of cruelty and a contribution to cruelty. That is because even the person with the fewest means certainly has an opportunity to tell those around him about God's religion and call them to beauty and love.

When people saw this arrogant and heedless state of Qarun, although they should have taken a lesson from it, some admired Qarun with astonishing ignorance and wished to be in his place:

"He went out among his people in all his finery. Those who desired the life of the world said: 'Oh! If only we had the same as Qarun has been given! What immense good fortune he possesses.'" (Surat al-Qasas, 79)

The pure intellect, superior morality and faithful determination of believers have constituted a very fine example for all people throughout history:

"But those who had been given knowledge said: 'Woe to you! God's reward is better for those who have faith and act rightly. But only the steadfast will attain it.'" (Surat al-Qasas, 80)

When believers look at a person, they see that person's respect for God, love, morality and faith, and are influenced by these. The goods and property of a person who cannot comprehend God's magnificent artistry, greatness and might are of no value; therefore, they have no influence whatsoever over believers. God reveals as follows the exemplary end of those who commit evil by relying on their goods and property, and the situation into which those who admired such people fell:

"We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides God, nor was he able to defend himself. Those who had longed to take his place the day before began to say: 'God gives abundantly to whom He will, and sparingly to whom He pleases. If God had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the disbelievers are not successful.'" (Surat al-Qasas, 81-82)

The System of Dajjal (Antichrist) Seeks to Influence the Masses Through Power, Self-Interest and Coercion

In the End Times in which we are living, the most intense form of bringing the masses under control through self-interest and coercion is seen in the Dajjal system. In the hadiths, our Prophet (saas) revealed that the Dajjal would have **“mountains of bread”** with him, in other words, that he would bind people to himself by providing material means such as goods, property, rank and position. In the End Times, the great majority of people will covet the opportunities the system of Dajjal provides them and will eagerly carry out the evils it demands merely in order not to lose those opportunities.

In a hadith, Mughira ibn Shu'ba (ra) related as follows:

No one asked the Messenger of God (saas) as many questions about the Dajjal as I did. He said to me: 'What harm can he do to you?' I said: 'O Messenger of God! They say that he will have mountains of bread and rivers of water with him.' Thereupon, the Messenger of God (saas) said: 'He is more insignificant in God's Sight than that (God's permitting him to test the faith of believers with such means does not mean that He values the Dajjal).' (Sahih Muslim, Fitan 112, Hadith No: 2933)

Another important fact our Prophet (saas) provided concerning the Dajjal is that all the means the Dajjal presents to people as though they were Paradise are in fact a kind of Hell. Through the material means he offers, the Dajjal drags people toward the real Hell in the eternal life:

Shall I not tell you about the Dajjal a report such as no prophet has told his people? He is one-eyed, and he will come with what resembles Paradise and Hell. What he says is Paradise is actually Hell. I warn you about him just as Noah warned his people. (Sahih al-Bukhari 3338, Book 60, Hadith 13)

Bediuzzaman also explained that in the End Times the Dajjal would use technology, the media, pressure and imposition to provoke people's ambition and fear of the future, and would influence the masses by eliminating feelings of affection, compassion and love. The element that makes the system of Dajjal appear powerful is its creation of an environment of extreme pressure, oppression, violence and fear. People whose faith and moral values are weak will imagine the Dajjal to be a special power that cannot be resisted and will submit to him, acting with the logic, **“Since he is so powerful, he will be the one who prevails,”** or **“He cannot be resisted; I must take his side and save myself from being crushed.”**

Because both Dajjals employ the severest despotism, the greatest tyranny, and the maximum violence and terror, they appear to have vast power... (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, The Rays, The Fifth Ray, "The Second Aspect and Reason.")

Similarly, the "Sufyan," who is the Islamic Dajjal, will, through the deceptions of Satan and the evil-commanding soul, try to abolish some of the eternal injunctions of the Shari'a of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). By breaking the material and spiritual bonds of human life and leaving rebellious, drunken, and heedless souls unrestricted, he will loosen the luminous chains of respect and compassion. By giving people a freedom which is pure despotism so they fall on one another in a swamp of putrid lust, he will open up the way to a terrible anarchy. There will then be no way those people can be kept under control other than by the most repressive despotism. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, The Rays, The Fifth Ray, "Three Brief Matters," First Matter)

In the section titled Sixth Section of the Twenty-Ninth Letter, known in Turkish as *Hücumat-ı Sitte* (The Six Attacks), Bediuzzaman describes as follows how some people forget God's infinite power and become relentlessly afraid of the impositions of the cruel, and how this fear rapidly drives them toward evil:

Indeed, he enters a snake's mouth so that a fly will not bite him.

With these words, Bediuzzaman explains how the vein of fear in man can be misdirected. He says that malicious powers and propaganda provoke people's minor anxieties and drive them toward a great abyss. Cowardly people submit to the domination of the cruel or the mentality of the Dajjal merely so that **"no minor trouble befalls them, no one says anything about them and their comfort is not disturbed."** While fleeing out of fear of a small and insignificant harm, they find themselves right in the midst of a far greater disaster.

The Race to Win the Approval of the Powerful

In the verses of the Qur'an describing the struggle of the Prophet Moses (pbuh) against Pharaoh, it is revealed that Pharaoh offered people various material means while gathering them against the Prophet Moses. Pharaoh promised the magicians that if they defeated the Prophet Moses (pbuh), **"they would be among those brought near to him."**

"The magicians came to Pharaoh and they asked, 'Will we receive a reward if we are the winners?' He said, 'Yes, and you will be among those brought near.'" (Surat al-A`raf, 113-114)

Being able to be in the close circle of a person whom they regard as powerful and mighty is such a strong desire for some people that, in order to achieve this, they do not hesitate at all to support the persecution of the innocent and oppressed. Indeed, in order to **“be among those brought near,”** with the mentality popularly known as being **“more royalist than the king,”** they become more oppressive than the oppressor, more brutal than the brutal and more ruthless than the ruthless. In this way, they seek to gain the approval of the oppressor they admire and imitate his disregard for rules.



Indeed, this is one of the reasons why armament and the formation of mafia groups are rapidly spreading among young people in some Middle Eastern countries. A similar situation is involved in the spread of groups described as the **“new generation mafia”** in Turkey in recent years. Young people with insufficient financial means and low levels of education have come to be used in armed attacks with promises that they will rapidly attain things they regard as measures of wealth, such as luxury cars, a lively nightlife and designer clothes. The increase in the number of young people who readily commit murder simply to be under the protection of people they regard as powerful and who then seek to make a name for themselves on social media with the financial means provided to them in return for these murders has reached striking proportions.



A Believer Always Sides with the Truth Even If It Conflicts with His Interests

While people who are unaware of God's infinite might and power, His breathtaking artistry, Divine wisdom, boundless love and mercy imagine that everything consists solely of this world and compete in wickedness with an inconceivable greed, believers compete in good works and aim only to adorn themselves with piety.

“Each person faces a particular direction, so race each other to the good. Wherever you are, God will bring you all together. Truly, God has power over all things.” (Surat al-Baqara, 148)

“They believe in God and the Last Day, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous.” (Surah Ali `Imran, 114)

“... Whatever good you do, God knows it. Take provision; but the best provision is doing your duty (fear of God). So heed Me, people of intelligence!” (Surat al-Baqara, 197)

One of the most important manifestations of this superior morality of believers is that even when they encounter situations that conflict with their interests, they are certain of God's love, mercy, justice and wisdom.

Some people, however, immediately approach God with doubt when they experience even the slightest event that conflicts with their interests, even if no serious loss is involved. Even in ordinary matters such as failing to gain admission to a school they greatly desire or having an accident just when they are about to marry, they immediately become caught up in negative thoughts. In situations such as contracting a serious illness, the death of someone they love, damage to their possessions or property, suddenly losing all their wealth, becoming disabled or being unjustly imprisoned, they immediately abandon God.

However, God's existence is certain and beyond doubt. A person's falling ill, the destruction of his possessions and property, losing his child or his mother or father, or being imprisoned does not alter the fact that God exists, that He is the Ruler of all things, that He possesses infinite might, power and greatness, and that all His servants will return to Him. With an infinitely beautiful and loving wisdom, God is training the person, introducing his soul to himself and preparing him for the Hereafter. The finest, most beautiful and most beneficial part of this training is the times when the person encounters difficulties that conflict with his interests. A believer is someone who is fully conscious of this truth and experiences the joy of it.

A believer's trust in and submission to God are never shaken, not only when he risks losing his material means, but even when his life is in danger. Even if he contracts the most relentless diseases, suffers very severe physical losses, loses an arm or a leg, or even has nothing left on earth, he never abandons God.

"The angels descend on those who say, 'Our Lord is God,' and then go straight: 'Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised.'" (Surah Fussilat, 30)

God rewards this fine morality of believers both in this world and in the Hereafter. He protects them from all fear, sorrow and grief both in this world and in the Hereafter. Even if everything in their lives appears to be overturned, the earth moves from its place and the most unexpected things take place, for believers who trust in God's love and believe in His might and power, there is beauty, abundance, goodness, joy and mercy under all circumstances:

"Those to whom people said, 'The people have gathered against you, so fear them.' But that merely increased their faith and they said, 'God is enough for us and the Best of Guardians.' So they returned with blessings and bounty from God and no evil touched them. They pursued the pleasure of God. God's favor is indeed immense". (Surah Ali `Imran, 173-174)

“We will test you with a certain amount of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and life and fruits. But give good news to the steadfast: Those who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘We belong to God and to Him we will return.’ Those are the people who will have blessings and mercy from their Lord; they are the ones who are guided.” (Surat al-Baqara, 155-157)

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