

Chapter One

EBADA (WORSHIPPING GOD)

What is Ebada?

Ebada or worshipping Allah means obeying His orders, and serving none but Him. It also involves voluntary submission to God out of love and gratitude for His blessings.

The difference between Ebada and obedience

Ebada is for God alone, while obedience may be to other human beings. Ebada also involves submission and the will and desire to follow the orders of God. In contrast, obedience to other human beings does not mean submitting our will or the desire to follow their orders.

The following concepts will be discussed

- 1- Ebada is for Allah alone, we cannot worship others besides Allah.**
- 2- If our motive is to please Allah and our deeds are good, then all our actions can be considered an act of Ebada to Allah.**
- 3- Ebada involves moderation and not following extremes.**
- 4- Ebada guides to patience and paradise.**
- 5- Allah rewards His righteous servants who serve Him.**

Ebada is for Allah alone

We are commanded in the Qur'an to worship Allah alone, and not worship anyone else besides Him.

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا﴾ [النساء: ٣٦]

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good to parents,
An-Nesa'a 4 : 36

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ ۖ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ﴾ [آل عمران: ٥١]

"It is Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a Way that is straight."

Al-Imran 3 : 51

Some claim that they worship other entities in order to bring them closer to God. Such a claim is not accepted in the Qur'an:

﴿أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ [الزمر: ٣]

Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors others than Allah (say): "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.

Az-Zumar 39 : 3

The obligation to worship Allah alone is an individual obligation binding on every human being:

﴿قُلْ يَتَّيْبُهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

وَلَكِنْ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّنَكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ [يونس: ١٠٤]

Say: "O ye men! If ye are in doubt as to my religion, (behold!) I worship not what ye worship, other than Allah! but I worship Allah, Who will take your souls (at death): I am commanded to be (in the ranks) of the Believers,

Yunus 10 : 104

It does not matter that others may be denouncing Allah or rejecting faith. We are still responsible and accountable for our own actions:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ [المائدة: ١٠٥]

O ye who believe! guard your own souls: if ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray. The goal of you all is to Allah: it is He that will show you the truth of all that ye do.

Al-Maeda 5 : 105

How can we worship anyone but Allah?

No one can help us except Allah our Lord, and no one can harm us if Allah wills to protect us:

﴿قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾ [المائدة: ٧٦]

Say: "Will ye worship, besides Allah, something which hath no power either to harm or benefit you? But Allah, He it is that heareth and knoweth all things."

Al-Maeda 5 : 76

﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَوةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٣]

Yet have they taken, besides Him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created: that have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor can they control Death nor Life nor Resurrection.

Al-Furqan 25 : 3

﴿وَإِن يَمَسُّنَكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِن يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾ [يونس: ١٠٧]

If Allah do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He: if He do design some benefit for thee, there is none can keep back His favour: He causeth it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleaseth. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Yunus 10 : 107

We learn from these verses:

- Other gods have no power to help us or harm us
- Other gods have no power or control. They need help themselves
- Allah is in full control: whatever He wills will occur. No one can harm us if we are protected by Allah, and no one can benefit us if Allah wills otherwise

Everything that we do in our daily life can be an act of worship if our motive and deeds are good

Ebada is not limited to rituals of worship like prayer or fasting. Any activity that a Muslim or a believer performs in his daily life can be an act of worship if two conditions are fulfilled:

- 1- Our intention and our motive is to please God and help others or help ourselves
- 2- Our deed is a good deed

The intent or motive must be good

If our motive is to get ahead and we do so by lying or cheating, then our deeds are not accepted. If we serve others besides Allah, our deeds are not accepted either. This false worship may involve money, power, fame or following our vain desires. The only deed accepted is worshipping and serving God alone, and not others besides Him:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ ۚ أَحَدًا﴾ [الكهف: ١١٠]

Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is one God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.

Al-Kahf 18 : 110

﴿ قُلْ أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ ﴾ [الفرقان: ٦٤]

Say: "Is it someone other than Allah that ye order me to worship, O ye ignorant ones?"

Al-Furqan 25 : 64

﴿ وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكَتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾ [الفرقان: ٦٥]

[الفرقان: ٦٥]

But it has already been revealed to thee, - as it was to those before thee - "If thou wert to join (gods with Allah), truly fruitless will be thy work (in life), and thou wilt surely be in the ranks of those who lose (all spiritual good)."

Al-Furqan 25 : 65

The deeds of those who worship false gods will not be accepted and will be null and void:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَىٰ رَبَّنَا لَقَدْ

أَسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٢١]

Such as fear not the meeting with Us (for Judgment) say: "Why are not the angels sent down to us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Indeed they have an arrogant conceit of themselves, and mighty is the insolence of their impiety!

Al-Furqan 25 : 21

﴿ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَىٰ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ وَيَقُولُونَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٢٢]

[الفرقان: ٢٢]

The Day they see the angels, no joy will there be to the sinners that Day: The (angels) will say: "There is a barrier forbidden (to you) altogether!"

Al-Furqan 25 : 22

﴿ وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِن عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنْثُورًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٢٣]

And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did (in this life), and We shall make such deeds as floating dust scattered about.

Al-Furqan 25 : 23

In contrast, if we have faith and we appreciate and acknowledge God's blessings and thank Him for His provision, then the act of eating food becomes Ebada or worship. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us:

(Allah is pleased with His servant eating a meal and thanking Him for His blessing; and drinking a drink and thanking Allah for His blessing)

Narrated by Muslim

Contrast this attitude with someone who eats food but has no appreciation of God's blessing and does not thank Allah. He is only eating, food, he is not worshipping his Lord.

Even when we have intimate contact with our spouses, we are rewarded for our actions if we are grateful to God for the blessing that He has provided spouses for us. We acknowledge the kindness, love, mercy and peace that we enjoy in our relationship as the Qur'an describes:

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً

وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ [الروم: ٢١]

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.

Ar-Rum 30 : 21

Some of the prophet's companions exclaimed "how can they get rewarded for the pleasure that they experience during sexual contact!". The Prophet's answer was (If you did this act through unlawful means you will be punished. Therefore, if you obey Allah's law and limit your contact to your lawful spouse, then you will be rewarded)

Ebada means helping others and serving their needs

Allah has no need for our worship or service. Ebada means being of help and service to others, especially those who are in need or are experiencing

difficulty. When we help them then we are indeed worshipping Allah and serving Him. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained this concept:

(Whoever relieves the distress of a believer, Allah will relieve his distress on the Day of Judgment. And whoever makes it easier on a debtor to pay his debt or forgives his debt, Allah will make it easier for him in this world and in the Hereafter. And whoever shields and does not expose the faults of a believer, Allah will shield him and cover up his faults in this life and in the Hereafter. And surely Allah will help His servant as long as that servant of Allah is helping his brother)

Narrated by Muslim

The help that we give others can take many forms. In this Hadeeth (saying of the prophet) four areas are mentioned:

- 1- Relieving the difficulty and distress of others. This may be financial difficulty or other types of difficulty and adversity.
- 2- Making it easier on others to pay their debt or forgiving the debt altogether
- 3- Covering the faults of others and not exposing them in public
- 4- Helping and continuing to help those who need our help.

When we do our work to the best of our ability, and we are honest and help those who need our help, then doing our work is an act of worship. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Allah loves for you to do the best possible job and to perfect your work)

Narrated by Baihaqi

Helping our parents and taking care of them when they grow old and become weak and dependant is a form of Ebada (worship) that is second only to worshipping God:

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبْتَغَِنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ٢٣﴾

[الإسراء: ٢٣]

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.

Al-Isra'a 17 : 23

﴿وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا﴾

[الإسراء: ٢٤]

And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."

Al-Isra'a 17 : 24

Loving our children and serving as good examples for them and teaching them their religion and how to behave as righteous God-fearing Muslims is an act of worship, no less than standing up in prayer.

Helping our fellow Muslims and working with other members of the community to help support important projects and safeguard our institutions is certainly an act of worship to God. Each member in the community benefits from the Islamic center, and helping other Muslims and spreading useful knowledge is the most notable form of worship.

Ebada means moderation and not following extremes

Islam is a practical religion, and does not ask us to be Angels or to do more than we are capable of. Islam asks us to be moderate in the way that we live, and to avoid extremes, even in rituals of worship like prayer and fasting. The story of the three men that came to the prophet's house asking about his worship and behavior is noteworthy. One of the three men vowed to pray all night and every night and not sleep. The second man vowed to fast every day of his life and never break his fast. The third man vowed to abstain and not marry. When Allah's messenger (PBUH) heard what they said, he replied:

(By Allah amongst you I fear Allah the most and I know Him and serve Him in the best way. I stand up in prayer at night, but I also sleep part of the night; I fast (optional fast) but not every day; and I marry women. Whoever does not wish to follow my way, cannot claim to be one of us)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

We learn the following:

- We should avoid extremes even in matters of prayer or fasting. It is not the Sunnah (tradition) of the prophet to pray all night or to fast

every day. Such rituals cannot be tolerated for long, and if done regularly it will be at the expense of other necessary activities of our daily life. Extremes in prayer or fasting will adversely affect our health and make us tired and unable to do our work to the best of our ability. It will also not allow us to take care of our family obligations or to be fair to our spouses and children

- Marriage is the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is against human nature to exercise celibacy for long. Marriage is the right way of satisfying our normal sexual desires and of establishing a family
- Excess prayer or fasting does not necessarily mean more piety. It is more pious for us to do our work properly and do our basic prayers, than to do excessive prayers but be lazy at work or cheat others
- The prophet (PBUH) understood how to worship Allah and serve Him in the best possible way. We should follow his example, for he was divinely guided. This is why the prophet told us that those who do not wish to follow his Sunnah cannot claim to be Muslims.

As Muslims we are not asked to do more than what we are capable of. But we are expected to do our worship consistently. When we do our prayers on a regular basis it becomes ingrained in our behavior and becomes our characteristic. The same is true of fasting Ramadan or giving charity. And the same should be true of doing our work to the best of our ability and of being good, kind and supportive of our families and of being helpful to those who need our help. Prophet Muhammad's advice to his fellow Muslims was to be consistent and moderate:

(O people do whatever you are capable of doing of good deeds, for Allah does not get bored till you get bored and cease your deeds. The deeds most beloved to Allah are those done on a regular basis and consistently, even if little)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

We learn :

- It is more natural to do a little at a time
- It is more important to be consistent in doing good, rather than doing a lot at one time, then stopping altogether.
- It is human nature to get bored and stop what we are doing

Ebada requires patience

Living our life as Muslims submitting our will to God and obeying His orders and doing good requires patience. We are going to be tested and tried and unless we have patience, faith and resolve we cannot withstand the test or continue to serve God. Some will give up and reject faith, but those who patiently persevere will be greatly rewarded.

﴿ قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ

ٱللَّهِ وَسِعَةٌ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّٰبِرُونَ أَجْرَهُم بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۖ ﴾ [الزمر: ١٠]

Say: "O ye My servants who believe! fear your Lord. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world. Spacious is Allah's earth! those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!"

Az-Zumar 39: 10

Those who worship and serve God will be rewarded in various ways:

- 1- Allah will provide for His servants
- 2- Allah will guide His servants
- 3- Allah will protect His servants
- 4- Allah is merciful and kind
- 5- Allah loves His devoted servants

Allah provides for His servants

﴿ ٱللَّهُ لَطِيفٌۢ بِعِبَادِهِۦ ۖ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْقَوِىُّ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ۖ ﴾ [الشورى: ١٩]

Gracious is Allah to His servants: He gives Sustenance to whom He pleases: and He has Power and can carry out His Will.

Ash-Shura 42 : 19

﴿ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِۦٓ أَزْوَٰجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ ٱلْحَيٰوةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِۦ ۚ

وَرَزَقُ رَبِّكَ حَيْرٌۭ وَأَبْقَىٰ ۖ ﴾ [طه: ١٣١]

Nor strain thine eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendour of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring.

Ta Ha 20 : 131

﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ

لِلتَّقْوَى﴾ [طه: ١٣٢]

Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: We provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness.

Ta Ha 20 : 132

We learn:

- Allah provides sustenance for everyone and He knows what is good for us
- We should not look with envy at what others have for it was willed by Allah. What Allah provides for us is better and will last. In contrast, those who abuse Allah's blessings their wealth will disappear
- We should seek help in patient perseverance and in prayers. They will make our hearts at peace and content. What is important eventually is not how much money we have, but our righteous attitude.

Allah guides His servants

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ

وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدَى إِلَى صِرَاطٍ

مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ [الشورى: ٥٢]

And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to thee: thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith: but We have made the (Qur-an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will; and verily thou dost guide (men) to the Straight Way;

Ash-Shura 42 : 52

We learn:

- The Qur'an is God's own words and it guides to a way that is straight
- The Qur'an is a light that illuminates our life and guide our way

Those guided by Allah can see their way clearly and understand their responsibility. They work to accomplish their goals. In contrast, those who deny themselves divine guidance are spiritually dead and in the depths of darkness unable to get out:

﴿أَوَمَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

[الأنعام: ١٢٢]

Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a Light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out? Thus to those without Faith their own deeds seem pleasing.

Al-An'am 6 : 122

Allah protects His servants

Satan does his best to seduce mankind in various ways, and tempts them to follow their vain desires, in order to mislead them from the path of Allah, but Allah promised to protect His righteous servants:

﴿قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾ [ص: ٨٢]

(Iblis) said: "Then by Thy Power, I will put them all in the wrong,
Sa D 38 : 82

﴿إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ﴾ [ص: ٨٣]

"Except Thy Servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy grace)."
Sa D 38 : 83

And:

﴿إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا﴾ [الإسراء: ٦٥]

"As for My servants, no authority shalt thou have over them: "Enough is thy Lord for a Disposer of affairs.

Al-Isra'a 17 : 65

We learn:

- We should seek God's protection against the temptation and influence of Satan. When we turn to God seeking His help and guidance, He promised to help us and guide us to His way
- Satan has no influence on God's righteous servants

Allah is kind and merciful to His righteous servants

﴿وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُم مَّوْعِدٌ لَّن يَجْدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلًا﴾ [الكهف: ٥٨]

But your Lord is Most Forgiving, Full of Mercy. If He were to call them (at once) to account for what they have earned, then surely He would have hastened their Punishment: but they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no refuge.

Al-Kahf 18 : 58

And:

﴿وَلَنُبْذِقَنَّهْم مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾ [الأنبياء: ٢١]

[الأنبياء: ٢١]

And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior to the supreme Penalty, in order that they may (repent and) return.

Al-Anbia'a 21: 21

We learn:

- God gives us chance after chance, and does not hasten in His punishment. We should avail ourselves of God's mercy and correct our wrong conduct

- Our tests and trials are a reminder from God to repent, believe and do good before it is too late

Allah loves His righteous servants

When we obey Allah and live our life as He has commanded, and we hasten in all good deeds, and do our best to come closer to Allah with optional service and prayers then we are considered devoted and righteous and we are loved by Allah. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained to us what earns us God's love and what it means to be loved by God:

(The best deed that brings My servant closer to Me and makes Me love him is for him to obey My orders and perform the obligatory acts of worship. My servant keeps on coming closer to Me with optional worship and service till I love him. When I love him then I become his hearing that he hears with; and his eye sight that he sees with; and his hand that he uses; and his leg that he walks with. If he asks me something, I will grant it, and if he seeks My protection, I will protect him. There is nothing that I hesitate in doing save My hesitation in taking the soul of the believer, for he hates death and I dislike causing him any harm)

Narrated by Bokhari

To be a servant of Allah is a great honor

The Qur'an praises Allah's righteous servants and describes their characteristics. The implication is that we should follow their example. Allah described His messenger and prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as His servant:

﴿وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ۖ﴾ [الجن: ١٩]

"Yet when the Devotee of Allah stands forth to invoke Him, they just make round him a dense crowd."

Al-Jinn 72 : 19

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ۖ﴾ [الجن: ٢٠]

Say: "I do no more than invoke my Lord, and I join not with Him any (false god)."

Al-Jinn 72 : 20

The Du'a (Prayer to Allah) of all the Pophets is: "Let me die as a Muslim submitting to You, and join me with the righteous of Your servants". For example Prophet Joseph said:

﴿ رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمَلِكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مَا تَأْوِيلُ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيَّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تُوفِّني مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقَنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴾

[يوسف: ١٠١]

"O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events, O Thou creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take Thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to Thy Will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous."

Yusuf 12 : 101

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