

Their pleasure or displeasure also has a prophetic element to it. When they are greatly pleased and happy with a person, it bodes well for the future success and prosperity of that individual. And when they are wroth with someone, it is an indication of his future affliction and ruin. This happens because, being completely lost in God, they dwell in the court of God. Their pleasure and wrath is God's pleasure and wrath, and it does not arise from the promptings of their inner selves, but such states are created in them by God.

Likewise, their prayer and attention is not like ordinary prayers or attention. Indeed it has a profound effect. There is no doubt that if a decree is not final and irrevocable, and their attention, with all its necessary conditions, is focused to avert a calamity, God averts it, regardless of whether it relates to a single person, a few individuals, a country, or a ruling monarch. The secret behind all this is that these people have annihilated their own selves and their will often coincides with the will of God. Therefore, when they focus intensely upon averting a calamity, and achieve the needed advancement towards God with an anguished heart, God's eternal way is that He hears them. Thus it happens that God does not reject their supplication. However, on certain occasions, to prove their servitude, their prayer is not granted so that the ignorant might not consider them to be partners with God. If it so happens that a calamity has descended and the associated signs of death have appeared, it is generally the way of God that the calamity is not postponed. On such occasions, it befits the elect of God to cease their prayers and resign themselves to His will. The best time for prayer is the time when signs of despair and hopelessness are not yet fully manifested, and such signs have not yet appeared as clearly show that the calamity is imminent and, in a manner of speaking, has already occurred. This is so because it is the divine practice, in general, that when God Almighty has manifested His will with regard to a chastisement, He does not revoke His will.

It is absolutely true that the vast majority of the prayers of God's elect are granted. Indeed, the very acceptance of prayer is their greatest

miracle. When their hearts suffer intense anguish during the time of some affliction, and in this state of intense anguish they turn their attention towards their God, He hears them and, at that moment, their hand is as if it were the hand of God. God is like a hidden treasure. He manifests His countenance through those whom He has bestowed His perfect acceptance. When His chosen ones are tormented, then indeed the Signs of God appear; and when they are tormented beyond limit, then be certain that God's Sign is near—nay, it is at the door—because they are the kind of people whom God loves more than anyone can love their dearest son. For those who love Him with all their heart and soul, He shows extraordinary Signs. He displays such of His might as a lion awoken from its slumber. God is Hidden and these are the people who manifest Him. He is cloaked in a thousand veils; His countenance is revealed through this group [of His elect].

It should also be remembered that the notion that every single prayer of the chosen ones gets accepted is absolutely false. Rather, the fact is that God maintains a friendly protocol with the chosen ones. At times He accepts their prayers and at other times He wants them to submit to His will—just as you see in friendship. Sometimes a person accepts what his friend says and does what he wants, but at other times he wants his friend to accept what he says. This is what God Almighty refers to in the Holy Quran. At one place in the Holy Quran He promises the acceptance of the prayers of the believers and says:

أُدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ¹

Meaning that, pray unto Me, and I will accept your prayer.

However, at another place, He instructs them to remain pleased and content with His decree and manifest destiny. As He says:

1. *Sūrah al-Mu'min*, 40:61 [Publisher]