

MAQALAH AL-FURQAN

SURAH 1 VERSE 4 (b)

وَأِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

¹These words are normally translated “We seek assistance only from You”. In the Arabic language there are many word for “help” and “assistance” then why these particular choice? The language we are talking about is very deep and complex and has many words just for one thing. The beauty of the Qur’an is that it chooses the right word to illustrate a message, although man might think otherwise. Therefore, it is the duty of the student of the Qur’an to enquire why certain words are used to describe certain issues in one place and another in another place. In this way one will not only understand the particular verse properly but the message of the whole Qur’an becomes apparent. Thus it becomes necessary to understand the Message of the Qur’an in the language it was revealed.

The root of **اِسْتَعَانَ** (ist’aan) or **نَسْتَعِينُ** is **ع و ن** “awana” and **عَوَانٌ** “Awaan” means that person or animal that has reached adulthood in all aspects of its physical development and all its faculties have been fully developed. This means that the object under discussion would have the full symmetry and proportion of stature of growth. Thus **اِسْتَعَانَ** will mean to seek sustenance and development potential from one who is in a position to grant it. Thus the reference to Allah in Surah 21 Verse 112 as **رَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ** means: “Our Sustainer, and Al Must’aan, whose help is sought”.

In the first part of this Verse **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** means that man must use all the facilities and power that has been given by Allah, to serve Allah, and for this accomplishment the sustenance and development potential must be such that it provides for the higher and steeper the goal of development when needed in the same ratio as the effort required and thus the need provided by **وَأِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** and this calls upon the attribute of Rahmaniya and Raheemiya of Allah to be in place.

The Mu’min servant has his ambitions and focus only for the fulfilment of the requirements that Allah has fashioned for him. Thus in Surah 76 Verse 30 it is illustrated that: **وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ** “Your desires and wishes must be within the wishes of Allah”, i.e. the will of man functions within the will of Allah. All of man’s abilities need to be built and focussed to fulfil the requirements of **وَأِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** through **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ**; and this is what is meant by seeking the assistance of Allah only.

دَعَا and Action

Du’a does not mean that whatever one desires and asks Allah for will be automatically granted. For the supplication to be fruitful one needs to function and fully affect action according to the Laws and injunctions required in the Qur’an. And **اِسْتَعَانَ** also does not mean that results are instantaneous. In Surah Baqara 2 Verse 153 it is stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

¹ As an explanation the pronoun **إِيَّاكَ**, iyyaka, means You and only You or You alone, but when it precedes a verb it gives emphasis. It is a nominal suffix to express accusative and is second person masculine singular personal pronoun

“But in the establishment of the Divine System great obstacles and hardships will have to be faced (since vested interests would not allow it to be established easily). In facing these difficulties keep two things in mind: firstly—do not lose your steadfastness or courage of conviction and secondly—no matter what way your opponents choose to follow, you should follow the path prescribed for you by *Allah*. This way you will be greatly strengthened.”

After stating that one should seek assistance through “Salaat and Sabr”. It is further stated in Surah 2 Verse 154 to 157 that for ultimate success it is required that: “During the struggle for the establishment of the Divine System one should be prepared even to face death. If someone dies in this struggle, that person should not be considered “dead” (3/168) for he has attained eternal life even though it cannot be perceived through ordinary human senses.”

This struggle will provide man with many opportunities to test his/her own mettle. Man may encounter wars and massacres and will also be confronted with scarcity of food and loss of life and property or with devastation of fields and orchards. Such ordeals would take place but ultimately those who remain steadfast and do not waver in their commitment to establish *Allah*'s System, will be successful. They will meet every challenge by saying: “We have dedicated ourselves to the establishment of the Divine System and come what may we will continue advancing towards that goal.”

They are the people who are considered to be eminently deserving of blessings of the Creator and Sustainer. They will certainly attain their goal.”

Only those who follow the instruction of Allah will inherit the earth. Surah 21 Verse 105:

105 And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that My righteous servants will inherit the land.

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
الرِّسَالَةِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ
الطَّالِقُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Then in Surah 21 Verse 112: This explains what is meant to seek Allah's assistance.

قُلْ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبُّنَا
الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

“(The *Rasool* conveyed everything to the people in accordance with the Divine Guidance and thereafter) He said, "O my *Rabb*! Time has now come for You to announce the verdict." Then he told his people, "Our Sustainer; Our *Rabb* is *Ar-Rahman* We implore His succour that He may grant us the complete development of our abilities; so that we are able to stand up to all that He requires of us."

One should notice that **نَسْتَعِينُ** and **نَعْبُدُ** are both in the plural form; not only this but all supplications in the Quran are in the plural meaning that seeking assistance of Allah is not individual but for the community. Thus it the duty of the M'umin to work with each other in a positive way, by cooperating with each other towards the formation of a Divine System for all of mankind.; and thus we are commanded in Surah 5 Verse 6 to:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ
وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٦﴾

“Co-operate with one another in matters dealing with the welfare of humanity. Adhere to the Laws of *Allah*. Let the action of your enemies be judged by the Law of *Mukaf'at* (Illat & M'aloom-cause and effect).” Cooperate with one another in “Taqwa” but do not in matters of evil. It must be noted that the **اِسْتَعَانَ** “Ist'aanut” of Allah cannot be obtained in caves, in monasteries, in lonely meditation; it can only be reached in the implementation of a communal programme.

When one utters the words of **وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** and makes supplication to reach the goals as illustrated in the Qur'an, then the first thing the object of the supplication would be what the effort would be to reach such goals how will this be done. Thus the desires of the heart reach out for

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ