

“*iyyāka na’budu wa iyyāka nasta’in*” – Imam Ibn Uthaymeen

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ 1:5

Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'in

You alone we worship, and You
alone we ask for help.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Explanation of Verse 4 of Sooratul Faatiha

نَسْتَعِينُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ إِيَّاكَ

iyyāka na’budu wa iyyāka nasta’in

You alone we worship, and from you alone we seek help.

"You alone" (*iyyāka*): This is a case in grammar when the direct object comes before the verb, "we worship" (*na’budu*). In Arabic grammar, when the direct object precedes the verb, it gives a sense of restriction, so the meaning would be, "We do not worship anyone or anything except you alone."

"we worship" (*na’budu*): Meaning: We humble ourselves to you in complete humility.

In this way, you find the believers placing the most honorable part of their bodies (their faces) at the level of their feet in humility to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). They prostrate on the ground, covering their foreheads with dirt. This is from their humbleness before Allah. And if another person were to say, "I will give you the whole world and what it contains, just prostrate to me once," you will never find true believers accepting this because this type of humility is a form of worship specifically for Allah alone.

The word "**worship**" includes doing everything Allah commands and avoiding everything he forbids. Whoever is not in accordance with this, not carrying out what he is commanded to do and avoiding what he is forbidden to do then he is not a true worshipper and servant. A worshipper is someone who obeys the one he worships in whatever he legislates. So, worship requires that mankind carry out everything they are commanded to do and avoid everything they are forbidden from doing. However, it is not possible to fulfill all of these duties without the help and assistance of Allah. Because of this, Allah (سَدِّ بِحَانِهِ وَتَعَالَى) :syas neht

"and from you alone we seek help" (wa iyyāka nastaʿīn): Meaning, "We do not seek the help of anyone else in worship or in anything else." This "seeking of help" is to request the help and assistance, and Allah combines between worship and the seeking of assistance or reliance in many places the noble Qur'an. This is because worship could not be completely established except with the help of Allah by entrusting one's affairs to him, and relying on him.

Points of Benefit of al-Fātiḥah, Verse 4:

1. From the virtues of this verse is the sincerity in worship that is due to Allah alone as he says, "**You alone we worship**". It shows that this worship is due only to Allah by the direct object ("You") coming before the verb ("**we worship**") according to the rules of Arabic grammar.
2. Another point is that seeking help is also sincerely and solely for Allah based on the statement, "**and from you alone we seek help**". Likewise, the direct object precedes the verb indicating a sense of restriction just like in the first part of the verse.

Those points being said, what if someone asks:

How is it that seeking help is exclusively for Allah alone when there has come in another verse:

وَالْتَقَوَى الْبِرِّ عَلَى وَتَعَاوَنُوا

And help one another in righteousness and piety.[Sūrah al-Māidah, 5:2]

So, how do we understand the previous statements about seeking help only from Allah when, here in this verse, Allah confirms that seeking help from other than himself is permissible (rather it is a command here)? Also, the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

صَدَقَةٌ مَتَاعُهُ عَلَيْهَا لَهُ تَرْفَعُ أَوْ عَلَيْهَا، فَتَحْمِلُهُ دَابَّتِهِ، فِي الرَّجُلِ تَعِينُ

Helping someone onto his riding animal, carrying him on it, or lifting his belongings up to him while he is on it - all of these are (considered) acts of charity. [Recorded by Al-Bukhaaree (no. 2891) and Muslim (no. 1009)]

The answer to this question is that the act of seeking help and assistance is of two types. The first type is to request help while entrusting all affairs to the one you ask from. For example, you rely completely on Allah and you realize that any result you seek will not come from your own power or capability. This type of seeking help is specific for Allah (عِلَاعَتِ); he alone deserves this type.

The second type is to request help or cooperation in something you want to accomplish. This type is permissible as long as the one being requested is living and capable of doing what is asked of him. This is not considered a form of worship. This is the type that Allah refers to when saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْتَمِدُوا

And help one another in righteousness and piety. [Sūrah al-Māidah, 5:2]

If it is further asked, “**Is seeking help from the creation permissible at all times and in all situations?**”

The answer is no. Requesting help from the creation is only allowed when the one being asked is fully capable of what he is being asked for, otherwise seeking his help is not permissible. An example would be asking help from someone dead in his grave; this is prohibited, rather it is major Shirk (the associating of partners with Allah in worship)! This is because the person in his grave does not even have the ability to help himself, so how could he help someone else? Similarly, if someone seeks the help of another person who is not present with him such as a person believing that someone else in the far eastern part of the world could help him with something in his (the one seeking help) land – this is also major Shirk because the person whose help is sought is not capable of helping the seeker while they are in different lands.

If it is now asked, “**So, is it permissible to seek help from the creation if these conditions are met?**”

The answer is that it is better not to ask anyone for any help unless it is absolutely necessary or if it is known that the person would be happy to provide help. In this case, one could request his assistance in order to please him. The act that you seek another’s help in fulfilling must also not be something sinful and prohibited.

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