
Rulings — *Concerning* — *Bismillah*

PART 2

By

al-Allaamah

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Shaah ar-Raashidee as-Sindhee

(d.1416H)

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Ahkaam al-Basmalah (pg.103-110)

[Translators note: This is a translation and hence an interpretation of the meanings of what the author originally said. The reader is strongly advised to refer to the original Sindhi, Urdu and Arabic texts for reference purposes.]

Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem (In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent) is the first verse of every soorah of the Quraan (inclusive of soorah al-Fatihah) except soorah at-Tawbah. The strongest evidence for this is that the Quraan we have today is in exactly the same order (of verses) that the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) taught the companions. Henceforth, the companions also wrote the Quraan and taught others in the same order. This is also the order in which it reached us and hence whatever is within its covers is the Speech of Allaah.

Manuscripts of the Quraan from the early times to the present day are present all over the world and in all of the copies every soorah present therein – long or short – starts with *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem*, except soorah at-Tawbah. This evidence is definitive and as such has nothing opposing it, there is no mutawatir report nor has anyone heard or observed anything to the contrary. By Allaah's arrangement of affairs the Quraan has remained preserved in the chests (of men) and books therefore the recitation of the Quraan in this way, generation after generation is itself an evidence for the assertion that the Quraan was revealed in this manner i.e. with *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* at the start of every soorah. No man of understanding and justice will have the audacity to deny this reality. This was the second evidence for our claim.

The third evidence for this is the narration of Zayd Bin Thabit present in Sunan Kubraa of Bayhaqi in which it is mentioned that he wrote a copy of the Quraan on the orders of the first caliph, Abu Bakr Siddique. The basis of all copies written afterwards was this manuscript and in all copies written subsequently every soorah (except At-Tawbah) starts with *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* which is evidence for the original manuscript being written in a similar manner. And this manuscript was written after hearing the Quraan from the students of the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) which means that the Prophet himself taught and instructed his students to write in this way and hence this is also how the Quraan was revealed.

Imam Bayhaqi in his Sunan Kubraa (2/40) has brought the aforementioned hadeeth of Zayd Bin Thabit under the following heading:

The chapter for the evidence that all of what was in the different mushafs (copies of the Quraan) of the companions was indeed the Quraan and Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem is at the beginning of every soorah except at-Tawbah.

The fourth evidence is a hadeeth narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbaas (Radhiallaahu Anhumaa) in Musannaf Ibn Abee Shaybah, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhee, Nasaa'ee, Kitaab ul-Masaahif of Ibn Abee Dawood, Ibn al-Mundhir, an-Naasikh wal Mansookh of Ibn Nahaas, Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan, Abush Shaykh, Mustadrak Haakim, Ibn Mardawiyah and Dalail an-Nabuwwah of Bayhaqee.

Sayyidna Abdullah Bin Abbaas states that I asked Sayyidna Uthmaan bin Affaan,

"Why did you not write Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem between Soorah al-Anfaal and Soorah at-Tawbah?" He replied, 'When the Quraan was being revealed the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) used to tell us to join such and such verse to such and such place, however, he gave no such instructions with respect to these two soorahs. Because both soorahs are very similar in regards to the topic they deal with, I wrote these together and did not write Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem between them."

Imaam Tirmidhee grades this hadeeth in Jami' Tirmidhee (2/135) to be hasan and Imam Haakim in his Mustadrak (2/221) grades it as saheeh according to the conditions of Bukhaaree and Muslim. Imam Dhahabee agreed with them in Talkhees.

This hadeeth proves the companions wrote *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* at the beginning of every soorah according to the instructions of the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam), however, the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) gave no such instructions in regards to Soorah at-Tawbah. After such a detailed explanation there is no room for any objection.

It is written in the famous tafseer of Baydaawee at beginning on (pg. 2):

"There is an ijmaa (consensus) that everything within the two covers is the Speech of Allaah the glorious. They are agreed to what is established in the mushafs (copies of the Quraan), and they emphasised on the effort that nothing should be added to the Quraan so much so that not even Ameen should be written."

and indeed, it is not written.

It is clear from this evidence that this verse is at the beginning of every soorah. When this evidence was presented by the famous jurist Imaam Ya'ala to Imaam Muhammad bin Hasan ash-Shaybaanee, the latter went quiet. (Tafseer Kabeer of Raazee 1/197)

Imam Nawawee says in Sharh Muslim (1/127):

"In the copies of the Quraan (Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem) is written in the same style as rest of the Quraan. All this is according to the ijmaa (consensus) and agreement of the companions; and they also had an ijmaa (consensus) on the issue that nothing is to be written within a copy of the Quraan in the style of the Quraan except for what is the Quraan. From the time of the companions to our times all agree that Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem is not at the beginning of Soorah At-Tawbah and is not to be written in a mushaf."

These words of Imam Nawawee give strength to our assertion that *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* is the first verse of every soorah except soorah at-Tawbah. This is also what Nawaab Siddeeque Hasan Khaan said in Fath-ul-Bayaan (1/31). Imam Bayhaquee mentions in Ma'arifus Sunan wal Athaar (1/202):

"Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem is a part of the Quraan and is the first verse of every soorah except at-Tawbah. The evidence for this is that the companions wrote the Quraan with immense meticulousness and took great care of ensuring that nothing other than the Quraan enters it. It has been narrated by several companions that they wrote the Quraan and without any exemption, other than that of soorah at-Tawbah, wrote Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem at the beginning of each soorah. And it cannot be imagined that the companions would add a hundred and thirteen verses to the Quraan which are actually not a part of it."

To elucidate the issue further, some more ahadeeth and athaar are presented here:

1. In Saheeh Muslim ma'a an-Nawawee (1/172) that Sayyidna Anas narrates that:

"One day the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) was amongst us when drowsiness overcame him and then smiling he raised his face towards the sky. We asked, 'Oh Messenger of Allah (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam), what made you smile?' He said a soorah has just been revealed to me and then recited: "Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem. Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam)) al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise){1}. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only){2}. For he who makes you angry (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)), - he will be cut off (from every good thing in this world and in the Hereafter){3}."

This narration makes it clear that every soorah starts with *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* and every soorah was revealed like this because the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) named this whole chapter as a soorah and it contains *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* at its start. Imam Nawawee writes under this hadeeth:

This hadeeth has benefits - from them is that Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem is at the beginning of every soorah of the Quraan. Imam Muslim's mention of this hadeeth here indicates that it was his intent to bring out this benefit.

2. In Saheeh Bukharee (2/754) Qataadah narrates:

Sayyidna Anas was asked how did the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) recite the Quraan? So he replied that the Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) used to elongate the words and then (Anas) demonstrated this by reciting Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem such that he recited the verses elongating Bismillah, elongating ar-Rahmaan and elongating ar-Raheem."

Through this hadeeth we can understand that every soorah of the Quraan starts with this verse.

3. There is a hadeeth In Abu Dawood (pg. 556):

"The mother of the believers Sayyida Umm Salamah said that the Prophet of Allaah (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) used to cut his recitation. Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem, Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil Aalimeen, ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem, Maaliki Yaumiddeen. meaning he used to recite each ayah separately (pausing in between)."

This narration is present in Abu Ubaid, Tabaaqat Ibn Sa'ad, Ibn Abee Shaybah, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Khuzaymah, Daarqutnee, Mustadrak Haakim and Bayhaquee and others. (ad-Durr al-Manthoor (1/7). Imaam Daarqutnee has classified this hadeeth as saheeh and graded all of its narrators to be trustworthy (Sunan Daarqutnee (1/313). This hadeeth also makes it clear that *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* is the first verse of every soorah.

4. Sayyidna Ibn Abbaas narrates in Abu Dawood (pg. 115):

"The Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) did not know the difference between two soorahs (such that a new one has started and the other finished) till Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem was revealed to him."

Imaam Haakim has mentioned this hadeeth in his Mustadrak (1/231) with the words:

"The Prophet (sal-Allahu-alayhi-wassalam) did not know a soorah finished until Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem was revealed."

Imam Haakim states in relation to this hadeeth that it is saheeh according to the conditions of Bukhaaree and Muslim. Further, Imam Dhahabee states in his Talkhees that this hadeeth is established (saheeh). Haafidh Ibn Katheer in his Tafseer (1/16) classifies the chain of this hadeeth to be saheeh.

We also find from the aforementioned hadeeth that *Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* at the start of the soorahs was revealed by Allaah. And while the Quraan was being revealed it was possible to tell the beginning of a new soorah through this verse.

5. Sayyidna Ibn Abbaas narrates in Mustadrak Haakim (1/232):

“Muslims did not know the revelation of a soorah had been completed until Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem was revealed. When Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem was revealed they used to understand that the soorah has indeed finished.”

Imam Haakim has graded this narration as Saheeh.