

Chapter Eight

Reciting Bismillah silently in Salaah

The hadith I have used is by no means to go against the great Imams i.e. Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. Their method of Salaah is also correct as it is according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

The hadith quoted are to show that the Fatwas of Imam Abu Hanifa are according to the Sunnah as the Ghair Muqalids object to this.

It is Sunnah to recite Bismillah silently before Surah Fatiha and commence recitation with Surah Fatiha. Reason being the Hanafis do not consider Bismillah part of the Fatiha and therefore do not recite it. The Ghair Muqalid insists on reciting Bismillah aloud. Let us take a look at some ahadith in support of the Hanafi Madh-hab.

Note: The hadith numbers before the hadith indicate the different chains of narrations; hence, each chain will count as a separate hadith.

Hadith 1- 6

Anas reported: I observed prayer along with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and 'Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them), but I never heard anyone of them reciting '*Bismillah Hirahma Nirhaem*'.¹

Hadith 5

'Abda reported: Qatada informed in writing that Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) had narrated to him: I observed prayer behind with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and 'Abu Bakr and 'Umar and 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them). They started (loud recitation) with '*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen*' and

¹ Muslim, Book of prayer, Hadith # 786. Bukhari. Ahmad. Nasa'i. Ibn Hibban. Tahawi.

did not recite ‘*Bismillah Hirahma Nirhaem*’ (aloud) at the beginning or at the end.²

Hadith 6

The companion ‘Abd Allah ibn Mughaffal al-Muzani saw his son pronounce the tasmiya in his prayer and he forbade him to do so and said: “O my son, keep away from innovation in Islam. I prayed behind Allah’s Messenger, behind ‘Abu Bakr and behind ‘Umar, and they did not pronounce the tasmiya (Bismillah...). Therefore, do not say it. When you pray, say (directly): ‘*Alhamdulillah Rabbi ‘Aalameen*’

Tirmidhi narrates it and says: it is hasan, and that is the practice of the majority of the People of Knowledge among the Companions of the Prophet, among them: ‘Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali, and other than them as well as those after them from the Tabiin. That is also the position of Sufyan al-Thawri, Ibn al-Mubarak, Ahmad, and Ishaq: they do not consider that one should say “*Bismillah Hirahma Niraheem*” out loud, but they said he should say it to himself.³

Hadith 7 - 11

‘Aisha said, “Allah’s Messenger used to open the prayer with takbir, and he used to open the recitation with ‘*Alhamdu Lillahi Rabbi ‘Aalameen*’.⁴

Hadith 12

Al-Sarakhi said, “Its interpretation is that he used to pronounce the tasmiyya silently and this is the position of our school and the saying of ‘Ali and ibn Mas’ud.”⁵

Hadith 13 -14

Ibn Mas’ud’s saying, “Let the Imam not pronounce four things: ta‘awwudh, (‘*Audhu Billah*) tasmiya, (*Bismillah*) tameen (*Aameen*) and tahmid (*Rabbana Lakal Hamd*).”⁶

2 Muslim, Book of prayer, Hadith # 788.

3 Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Salat.

4 Muslim narrates it in the book of prayer, hadith # 1005. Abu Dawud, Nasai. Ibn Majah and Ahmad.

5 Al-Sarakhsi. Al-Mabsut, 1:15.

6 Ibn Abi Shayba narrated it in his Musannaf from Ibrahim al-Nakhi. Ibn al-Humam cited it in Fath al-Qadir, 1:204.

Hadith 15

Anas reported: “Without doubt I have prayed behind the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and ‘Abu Bakr and ‘Umar they would commence the recitation with ‘*Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen*’.”⁷

Hadith 16 - 19

Anas reported: Without doubt the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and ‘Abu Bakr and ‘Umar would recite ‘*Bismillah*’ silently.⁸

Hadith 20 - 22

Anas reported: “Without doubt the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and ‘Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and ‘Uthman would commence the recitation with ‘*Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen*’.”⁹

Hadith 23

Ibrahim Nakh'i reports: “Let the Imam pronounce four things silently: tasmiyya, (*Bismillah*) Thana, (*Subhanakallah Humma*) ta‘awwudh (*Audhubuillah*) tasmiyya, (*Bismillah*) tameen (*Aameen*).”¹⁰

Hadith 24

Abu Quhafa narrates that ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) would not recite ‘*Bismillah*’ aloud but would recite ‘*Alhamdulillahi*’ aloud.¹¹

Hadith 25-28

Samurah ibn Jundub reported: I remembered from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) two periods of silence. Saeed said: “We asked Qatadah: what are those two periods of silence? He said (one) when he began his prayer and (one) when he finished his recitation. Then he added: when he finished reciting (the closing verse of Fatiha):

7 Muslim.

8 Tabarani in Mu'jam Kabir. Abu Na'eem in Hilya. Ibn Khuzayma. Tahawi.

9 Abu Dawud. Darami. Tahawi.

10 Imam Muhammad in book of Aathar.

11 'Abdur Razzaq.

“Not of those who have earned Your anger and nor of those who have gone astray.”¹²

Imam Aazam Abu Hanifa took all ahadith into consideration and also the practises of the companions to decide that raising reciting *Bismillah*... silently is Sunnah.

Common Sense

The Bismillah that is written before each Surah in the Qur’aan are not part of the Surah but are written to separate them. In the Hadith it states that work which is not commenced with Bismillah is incomplete. In the same way a person offering Salaah before the recitation recites ‘*Audhu* for blessings, but why silently it is not part of the Qur’an? In the same way recite *Bismillah* silently for blessings. In *Surah Naml* (not before) to recite *Bismillah* aloud as it is part of the verse of the Qur’an. So to recite *Bismillah* before the Surah silently is because it is not part of the Surah.

Objection of Ghair Muqalid

Question: Bismillah is part of the Qur’an it should be recited, as if it was not part of the Qur’an it would not have been included in the Qur’an.

Answer: Bismillah is not part of every chapter as it was not revealed with the Qur’an or as part of it.

The following is mentioned in Bukhari and all Seerah books. At the time of the first revelation when Jibrail (upon whom be peace) asked the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to read he said, I am not a reciter, and this happened twice. On the third time Jibrail recited ‘*Iqra’ Bismi Rabbikal Ladhi Khalaqa*’ and the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) recited. We find that this was the first revelation and there is no mention of *Bismillah*, hence, *Bismillah* is not part of the Qur’an.

¹² Muslim in his Sahih, Abu Dawud, book of prayer, Hadith # 779. Tirmidhi who said it is hasan, also by Ahmad.

If it was part of the Qur'an it would not have been written separately from the Surahs in different fonts i.e. long writing, in different styles, but would be written as the rest of the verses and not separated. Take a look at Surah Naml, because Bismillah is part of the verse it has been written the same as the other verses and not separately or in a different style or font. We find that the reason it is written in a different style or font is to separate it from the Surah.

Question: In Tahawi it is narrated by Umme Salma (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah blessings be upon him) would pray Salaah in my house he would recite Bismillah and then Sura al-fathia from this we find that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah blessings be upon him) would recite Bismillah aloud, otherwise how would Umme Salma hear it and know what the messenger was reciting?

Answer: In this Hadith there is no mention of the Prophet of Allah (May Allah blessings be upon him) recited aloud but it only mentions that he recited Bismillah. Also This Salaah was voluntary as the Prophet of Allah (May Allah blessings be upon him) prayed the obligatory prayers at the Masjid with the congregation and in voluntary prayers the recitation is done silently hence the Bismillah was recited silently as well as Surah Fathiah so here we learn that even if Umme Salama was close by to the Messenger of Allah she would still not hear the recitation as the rule of the silent recitation in Salaah is that it should be recited in such a manner that the voice of the person should be only heard by him or herself.

Question: In Tirmidhi it is narrated by ‘Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would begin his Salaah with Bismillah-Hirahmanir Raheem?

Answer: Firstly, Read the note to this Hadith, it states: “This Hadith does not have any chain of narration”. It is a shame that even the authentic Hadiths with good strong chains of narrations quoted by Imam Abu Hanifa are classed as weak and are refuted by some, but in return they base their own arguments on weak Hadiths. Secondly coming back to the question

let's assume that even if this Hadith was authentic even then there is no mention whether the Messenger of Allah (May Allah blessing be upon him) recited Bismillah aloud or silently all that the Hadith states is that the noble Messenger would recite Bismillah while commencing his Salaah and there is no argument regarding this point of view, and finally the statement in the hadith which states that he would begin his Salaah with Bismillah then this could even mean before the Takbeer-e-Tahrira.

My question is split into two parts:

“Did the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) recite Bismillah... aloud all the time?”

“Did the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) do this until he passed away?”

Hope you can prove these two questions and when doing so I do not want to hear the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) recite Bismillah... aloud etc. but I want Sahih hadith that clearly (no meanings or interpretations) states the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) recited Bismillah... aloud all the time and that he did this action until he passed away. Good luck!