

Only saying Bismillaah when beginning food

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

No. 344- From Umar bin Aboo Salmah (رضي الله عنه)¹ who said: I was a young boy in the house of the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)² and my hands used to take food from all over the dish, the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to me:

‘O boy! If you eat, then say ‘Bismillaah’ and eat with your right hand and eat what is close to you.’

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)³ said: ‘In this hadeeth, there is evidence that the Sunnah regarding mentioning the name of Allaah when beginning food is to say, only

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
‘Bismillaah’
(In The Name of Allaah)

Likewise, there is the hadeeth of [Umm-al-Mumineen] ‘Aishah, [the Mother of The Believers] (رضى الله عنها)⁴, - where the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

‘If one of you eats food, then he should say ‘Bismillaah’. If you forget to say it when beginning then you should say:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي أَوَّلِهِ وَآخِرِهِ
‘Bismillaah fee awwalihi wa aakhirih.’
(In the name of Allaah, start of It and the end of It.)⁵

The hadeeth of Aishah, [the Mother of The Believers] (رضى الله عنها), was authenticated by Ibn al-Qayyim in ‘Az-Za’ad’ and was strengthened by al-Haafidh in ‘al-Fath’⁶ where he said ‘It is the most clear hadeeth that has been mentioned regarding the manner of saying Bismillaah’.

He also said, ‘As for the statement of an-Nawawee in ‘Al-Athkaar’ regarding the manners of eating where he said,

‘The description for saying Bismillaah is the most important thing from those things which are necessary to know. It is best to say:

¹ (رضى الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

³ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

⁴ (رضى الله عنها) (rad iyallaahu `anhaa) May Allaah be pleased with her

⁵ Collected by Tirmidhee, who authenticated it. It also has a supporting narration in the hadeeth of Ibn Mas’ood (رضى الله عنه).

⁶ Haafidh Ibn Hajr al-Asqalanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) wrote the famous explanation of Saheeh al Bukhaaree called Fath ul-Baree.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ 'Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem' - In The Name of Allaah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy).

However, if he says 'Bismillaah', then this would be sufficient and he would have fulfilled the Sunnah.'

Ibn Hajr continues: I do not see a specific evidence to support his claim of its being better.'

I (al-Albaanee) say, there is nothing better than the Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) 'And the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).' Therefore, if nothing has been affirmed regarding saying 'Bismillaah' when commencing food except the saying of 'Bismillaah' only, then it is not permissible to add extra wording to that saying of 'Bismillaah', nor to imply that there is an extra wording that is better than saying 'Bismillaah' only!

This is because using this extra wording opposes that which was indicated in the hadeeth, 'And the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).'⁷

⁷ Taken from Silsilah Ahadeeth as-Saheehah by Shaykh al-Albaanee (No. 344)