

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Rulings concerning Basmallah Of Allamah Badi'udin Shah Ar- Rashidi As-Sindhi

Translated from the book “Ahkaam al-Basmalah” (pg.103-150) by Muhammad Hasan, and revised by Ali Hassan Khan.

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem (In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent) is the first verse of every Surah of the Quran (inclusive of Surah al-Fatihah) except Surah at-Tawbah. The strongest evidence for this is that the Quran we have today is in exactly the same order (of verses) that the Prophet (saw) taught the companions. Henceforth, the companions also wrote the Quran 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 Allah.

Manuscripts of the Quran from the early times to the present day are present all over the world and in all of the copies every Surah present therein – long or short – starts with “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*”, except Surah 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 Allah’s arrangement of affairs the Quran has remained preserved in the chests (of men) and books therefore the recitation of the Quran in this way, generation after generation is itself an evidence for the assertion that the Quran was revealed in this manner i.e. with “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” at the start of every Surah. 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 Kubra” of Al-Bayhaqi in which it is mentioned that he wrote a copy of the Quran on the orders of the first caliph, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq. The basis of

all copies written afterwards was this manuscript and in all copies written subsequently every Surah (except At-Tawbah) starts with “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” which is evidence for the original manuscript being written in a similar manner. And this manuscript was written after hearing the Quran from the students of the Prophet (saw) which means that the Prophet himself taught and instructed his students to write in this way and hence this is also how the Quran was revealed.

Imam Al-Bayhaqi in his “Sunan Kubra” (2/40) has brought the aforementioned Hadith of Zayd Bin Thabit under the following heading:

“Chapter: The evidence that all of what was gathered in the Mushafs (copies of the Quran) of the companions was indeed the Quran and “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is at the beginning of every Surah except Baraa (Surah At-Tawbah)”

The fourth evidence is a Hadith narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas (Rad) in “Musannaf” Ibn Abee Shaybah, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa’i, “Kitaab ul-Masahif” of Ibn Abee Dawud, Ibn al-Mundhir, “An-Nasikh wal Mansukh” of Ibn Nahaas, Sahih Ibn Hibban, Abu Ash-Shaykh, Mustadrak Hakim, Ibn Mardawiyah and “Dalail an-Nabuwwah” of Al-Bayhaqi.

‘Abdullah Bin ‘Abbas states: (as translated in “Sunnan At-Tirmidhi by Darussalam v 5 p 293-394, Sh Zubayr Ali Zai graded it as having Hasan Isnad):

“I said to ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan: ‘What was your reasoning with Al-Anfal while it is from the Muthani (Surah with less than 100 Ayat) and Bara’ah while it is from Mi’in (Surah with about 100 Ayat), then you put them together, without writing the line Bismillah Ar-Rahmanir-Rahim between them, and you placed them with the seven long (Surah)- why did you do that?’ So ‘Uthman said: “A long time might pass upon the Messenger of Allah (saw) without anything being revealed to him, and then sometimes a Surah with numerous (Ayat) might be revealed. So when something was revealed, he would call for someone who could write, and say: “Put these Ayat in the Surah which

mentions this and that in it.” When an Ayah was revealed, he would say: “Put this Ayah in the Surah which mentions this and that in it.” Now Al-Anfal was among the first of those revealed in Al-Madinah, and Bara’ah among the last of those revealed of the Quran, and its narrations (those of Bara’ah) resembled its narrations (those of Al-Anfal), so we thought that it was part of it. Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) died, and it was not made clear to us whether it was part of it. So it is for this reason that we put them together without writing the line Bismillah Ar-Rahmanir-Rahim between them, and we put that with the seven long (Surahs)”

Imam At-Tirmidhi grades this Hadith in “Jami’ At-Tirmidhi” (2/135) to be Hasan and Imam Hakim in his “Al-Mustadrak” (2/221) grades it as Sahih according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Imam Adh-Dhahabi agreed with them in “Talkhis”.

This Hadith proves that the companions wrote “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” at the beginning of every Surah according to the instructions of the Prophet (saw), however, the Prophet (saw) gave no such instructions in regards to Surah at-Tawbah. After such a detailed explanation there is no room for any objection.

It is written in the famous Tafsir of Al-Baydawi at beginning on (pg. 2):

“There is an ‘Ijma (consensus) that everything within the two covers is the Speech of Allah the glorious. They are agreed to establish it (Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem) in the Masaheef (copies of the Quran) wifth their extreme emphasis on not adding anything to the Quran so much so that not even Ameen should be written.”

It is clear from this evidence that this verse is at the beginning of every Surah. When this evidence was presented by the famous jurist Imam Ya’la to Imam Muhammad bin Hasan Ash-Shaybani, the latter went quiet. (“Tafsir Al-Kabeer” of Razi 1/197)

Imam An-Nawawi says in Sharh Muslim (1/127):

“It (Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem) was written in the copies of the Quran in the same style as rest of the Quran. All of this was with the agreement and ‘Ijma (consensus) of the companions that nothing is to be written within a copy of the Quran in the style of the Quran except for what is the Quran. And the Muslims after them of all times to our times all agree by consensus on this and they agree by consensus that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is not at the beginning of Surah At-Tawbah and is not to be written in it (in the Mushaf) and this strengthens what we said.”

These words of Imam An-Nawawi give strength to our assertion that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is the first verse of every Surah except Surah at-Tawbah. This is also what Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan said in “Fath-ul-Bayan” (1/31). Imam Al-Bayhaqi mentions in “Ma’arif As-Sunan wal Athaar” (1/202):

“The best evidence by which our companions (Shawafi’) took evidence is that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is from the Quran (meaning part of it) and it is at the beginning of every Surah except Surah Baraa (At-Tawbah) and by what was narrated to us about the gathering of the Book of Allah (‘Azza wa Jalla) by the Sahabah in the Masaheef and that they wrote in it “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at the beginning of every Surah except Surah Baraah, and without any (other) exception and restriction and without inserting something other than it, and they intended by this to deny difference about Qiraah, so how can one conceive that they would write one hundred and thirteen verses which are actually not a part of it.”

To elucidate the issue further, some more Ahadith and Athaar are presented here:

1. In Sahih Muslim ma’a An-Nawawi (1/172) that Anas narrates that:

“One day the Prophet (saw) was amongst us when drowsiness overcame him and then smiling he raised his face towards the sky. We asked, ‘Oh Messenger of Allah (saw), what made you smile?’ He said a Surah has just been revealed to me and then recited:

“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem. Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad (saw)) al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise). Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only). 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)”

This narration makes it clear that every Surah starts with “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” and every Surah was revealed like this because the Prophet (saw) named this whole chapter as a Surah and it contains “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at its start. Imam An-Nawawi writes under this Hadith:

“This Hadith has benefits – from them is that Basmalah is at the beginning of the Surah of the Quran (except for At-Tawbah) and it was the intent of (Imam) Muslim by inserting the Hadith here”.

2. In Sahih Al-Bukhari (2/754) Qatadah narrates:

Anas was asked: How was the Qira’ah (Quranic recitation) of the Prophet (saw)? So he replied that it was Maddan (its words were elongated) then he (Anas) recited (to demonstrate) “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” elongating “Bismillah”, elongating “ar-Rahman” and elongating “ar-Raheem.””

It is known through this Hadith that every Surah of the Quran starts with this verse.

3. There is a Hadith In Abu Dawud (pg. 556):

“From (the mother of the believers) Umm Salamah, she mentioned the Qira’ah of the Messenger of Allah (saw): “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem, Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil Aalimeen, ar-Rahman ar-Raheem, Maaliki Yaumiddeen” meaning he used to recite each ayah separately (pausing at the end of each).”

This narration is present in Abu ‘Ubaid, Tabaqaat Ibn Sa’d, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Khuzaymah, Ad-Daraqutni, Mustadrak Hakim and Al-Bayhaqi and others (Ad-Durr al-Manthur (1/7). Imam Ad-Daraqutni has classified this Hadith as Sahih and graded all of its

narrators to be trustworthy (“Sunan Daraqutni (1/313). This Hadith also makes it clear that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is the first verse of every Surah.

4. Ibn ‘Abbas narrates in Abu Dawud (pg. 115):

“The Prophet (saw) did not know the Fasl (seperarating point) between two Surahs till “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” was revealed to him.”

Imam Hakim has mentioned this Hadith in his “Al-Mustadrak” (1/231) with the words:

“The Prophet (saw) did not know the Khatam (ending point) of a Surah until “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” was revealed to him”

Imam Hakim states in relation to this Hadith that it is Sahih according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Further, Imam Adh-Dhahabi states in his “Talkhis” that this Hadith is established (meaning Sahih). Hafiz Ibn Katheer in his Tafsir (1/16) classifies the chain of this Hadith to be Sahih.

We also find from the aforementioned Hadith that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at the start of the Surahs was revealed by Allah. And while the Quran was being revealed it was possible to tell the beginning of a new Surah through this verse.

5. Ibn ‘Abbas narrates in Mustadrak Hakim (1/232):

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

Imam Hakim has graded this narration as Sahih.

6. Abu Hurayrah narrates in “Sunan Kubra” of Al-Bayhaqi (2/45):

“The Prophet of Allah (saw) used to say that (the Surah) “Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil Aalimeen” has seven verses, one of which is “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-

Raheem”, and it is (this Surah) which is “Saba’ Mathani” (seven verses which are read repeatedly) and “Quran Al-‘Azeem” and it is (this Surah) which is “Umm Al-Quran” and “Fatihatul Kitab””

With the same chain of narration as the above narration another report in “Sunan Kubra” Al-Bayhaqi has been reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah with the following words:

“The Prophet of Allah (saw) said: “When you recite “Al-Hamdullilah” then recite “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*”. Verily it is (this surah) which is “Umm Al-Quran” and “Umm Al-Kitab” and “Saba’ Mathani” and “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is one of them (the seven verses).””

After mentioning this Hadith Imam Al-Bayhaqi states that a narrator of this Hadith Nooh Bin Abi Bilal sometimes reports in Mawquf form i.e. narrates the saying of Abu Hurayrah. He sometimes does not narrate in Marfu’ form such that the saying would reach the Messenger of Allah (saw). However, this is not a major defect because Nooh Bin Abi Bilal is a trustworthy narrator as Hafiz Ibn Hajar as mentioned in “Taqreeb At-Tahzeeb”. Hence, a trustworthy narrator may narrate in a Hadith in both Marfu’ and Mawquf form.

Secondly, even if this Hadith is accepted only as Mawquf, still it comes under the ruling of Marfu’ because such decisions especially those involving classifying a verse as a part of the Quran cannot be giving merely on the basis of Ijtihad and opinion – rather they are to be understood as being heard from the Prophet (saw), as this not unknown to the people who are experts in these principles.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar mentions in “Talkhis ul Habeer” (1/233):

“Even though Nooh narrated this Hadith in Mawquf form, it still comes under the ruling of Marfu’ because there is no room for Ijtihad in the matter of the counting of Quranic verses”

Other than the aforementioned, more narrations regarding this issue can be seen in Sunan Ad-Daraqutni, Al-Bayhaqi, “Al-Mustadrak” and “Ad-Durr ul Manthur” etc. Other than

that, Imam Al-Bayhaqi has mentioned reports from Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Abu Hurayrah.

Hafiz Ibn Katheer mentions in his Tafsir (1/16):

“Among those from whom it is narrated that it (Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem) is a verse from every Surah except Bara'ah are: Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubayr, Abu Hurayrah and 'Ali. And among the Tabi'is: Ata', Tawoos, Sa'eed Bin Jubayr, Makhoul, Az-Zuhri, and this is the position of 'Abdullah Bin Mubarak, Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad Bin Hanbal in one of his narrations, Ishaq Bin Rahawayah, Abu 'Ubaid Qasim Bin Salam, may Allah have mercy upon them”

Allaamah Abul Khair Al-Jazari writes in “Kitab An-Nashr Fil Qira'atil 'Ashr” (1/262)

“All the Fasilin with Basmalah (those who would stop when ending a Surah and recite Basmalah before starting the next) or the Wasilin and Saqitin (Those who recite continuously two Surah without pausing), when they begin a Surah among Surahs, they all recite “Basmallah” without any exception from any of them except when beginning Bara'ah (At-Tawbah).”

There is no difference of opinion regarding this. Those scholars who oppose this and do not consider “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” as the first verse of every Surah (except At-Tawbah) have no evidence which can oppose these evidences.

The famous Egyptian scholar Allaamah Ahmad Shakir writes in his footnote to “Al-Muhallah” (of ibn Hazm) (2/252):

“As for those who allow the recitation of Al-Fatihah in the prayer without the “Basmalah”, they have no evidence at all and the Ahadith on which they base themselves, some of them are weak and others do not clearly support this and they cannot contradict (the narrations that affirm recitation of Basmalah). Furthermore, the agreement of the reciters without any difference on (reciting) the Basmalah at the beginning of Al-Fatihah followed by it being written in the

Mushaf is the decisive evidence which is enough to finish off any disagreement.”

Now we will analyse some of the famous evidences used by those who do not regard the recitation of “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” as necessary.

1. The Hadith on Taqseem us Salah (divide of the prayer) in Sahih Muslim in which is no mention of *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.

Answer:

Firstly: This narration has no connection with whether “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” should be read or not but rather it mentions the virtues of these verses. Hence, the fact that *Bismillah* is not mentioned has little bearing on the issue at hand.

Secondly: As “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is the first verse of every Surah except At-Tawbah, it was not mentioned here. Only those verses which are particular to Al-Fatithah are mentioned. Resultantly, it is not proper to take this as evidence.

Thirdly: Lexically, all that can be proven through this narration is that *Bismillah*'s reply is not mentioned whereas those for other verses are. But how does that imply that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is not a verse of the Surah?!

Fourthly: The words of the Hadith are ‘When a person says ‘*Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil Aalimeen*.’ Nowhere does it say that one should not recite *Bismillah*. What could mean here is that when a person recites up until here i.e. “*Alhamdulillahi Rabbil Aalimeen*”; as Imam An-Nawawi has mentioned in Sharh Sahih Muslim (1/170) and is the general rule that where there is chance or possibility the deduction is futile.

Fifthly: Even if this narration is accepted as evidence even then it is not clear in meaning and implication, whereas those that we have brought forth are absolutely clear. And hence it is those which will take precedence as has been mentioned by Imam Ar-Razi in “Tafsir Al-Kabeer” (1/201).

Sixthly: Since the third verse of Al-Fatihah (*Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem*) has been mentioned in the virtue and answer (contained in the Hadith), and because *Bismillah* is the same in meaning as this verse, its virtue and answer (of *Bismillah*) is included in the virtue and answer of the third verse. This is what has been mentioned by Imam Ibn Sa'eed An-Naas in "Sharh At-Tirmidhi" (1/195).

Some people also take evidence in this narration by saying that the words of the narration are: "The servant says: "Guide us to the Straight path, The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray", He (Allah) says: "These (Haoulai) are for My servant, and My servant will receive what he asks for.""

Their argument is that since the last phrase is referred to using the term "These (Haoulai)" and that "These (Haoulai)" is in plural which is used for at least a quantity of three, some people deduce that from "Guide us to the Straight path" to the end of the Surah constitute three verses and hence there are four verses before that - which in turn implies that "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is not a verse of Al-Fatihah.

Such a deduction is weaker than a spider's web as evidence. This is because there is no reason to believe that "These (Haoulai)" refers to three verses, rather it could refer to these words (of the servant, and these words are more than three). This is especially likely because in Sahih Muslim ma'a An-Nawawi (1/170) "This (Haza) is for my servant" is used instead of "These (Haoulai)" and "This (Haza)" is used to refer to a masculine subject whereas verses are referred to in the feminine gender and hence it could not possibly refer to verses. If the implication here would have been verses then "this (Hazihi, which is feminine form)" would have been used instead of "this (Haza, masculine form)". This is also what Imam An-Nawawi mentioned in Sharh Muslim (1/171).

Furthermore, Abu Hurayrah who is a narrator of this Hadith himself considered "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" as a verse of Al-Fatihah (as has been mentioned earlier). Hence this narration cannot be used to negate "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" as a verse of Al-Fatihah because a narrator knows what he narrates.

2. The second evidence which is usually presented is that it is stated in a Hadith that Surah Al-Mulk as 30 verses, if you include “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” then this amounts to 31. As a consequence, “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” cannot be considered a part of Surah Al-Mulk.

Reply to this is that in opposition to the clear and overwhelming proofs already presented, to use this as evidence is unacceptable. This is because it is not clearly mentioned in the Hadith that *Bismillah* is not a verse. Moreover, it is said in this Hadith that Surah Al-Mulk has 30 verses because it is already ingrained in everyone’s mind that *Bismillah* is at the beginning of every Surah and hence the Prophet of Allah (saw) only mentioned the remaining thirty verses.

There are more evidences which will be covered when we discuss the issue of whether “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” is to be recited loudly in prayers.

Allamaah Ibn Khalawayah writes in “I’rab Thalatheen Surat Min al-Quran al-Kareem”, pg.15:

“Amongst the seven famous reciters, all established “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” at the beginning of each Surah except Surah Baraa (At-Tawbah) except Abu Umar and Hamzah who would not pause between two Surahs by ““*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*””

Allamaah Ahmad Shakir wrote in his footnotes to “Al-Muhallah” (2/251):

“For anyone about whom it is narrated that he left it (Basmalah), it is reported from him that he established it and omitting it is not narrating from any of them”

He also wrote (3/252):

“The truth is that the recitation of those who recited with omission of it (Basmalah) in continuing recitation (between two Surah) is Shaaz not authentic, even if they are from the seven or ten (reciters), because among the condition of authenticity of the recitation is

its concordance with the writing of the Mushaf as it has been agreed by all reciters without any difference, rather it is the agreement of all scholars, and the companions would never add the *Basmallah* one hundred and thirteen times in the Masaheef without it being revealed in the places in which they wrote it. If we were to doubt about this, we would open a large door to heretics who play with fire, and the Companions were among most desirous people not to leave any doubt or suspicion on the Book of Allah, this is why they left from the Masaheef the names of the Surahs and did not write "Ameen", and 'Umar and some others from great Companions withheld from writing his testimony of Rajam (punishment of stoning for adultery) fearing that it would be an addition to the Book, and he declared it publicly on the Minbar (that stoning to death is legislated in Islam and that s verse regarding this was revealed in the Quran, however, its recitation has been abrogated but the ruling still applies)"

'Abdul Hayy Al-Lukhnawi mentions in "Ahkam Al-Qantarah" ("Al- Majmu'ah" pg. 220):

"From Muhammad (bin Hasan Ash-Shaybani, one of the great pillar of the Hanafi Madhab), when asked about *Basmallah* said: "Whatever is in between the two covers (of the Quran) is the Speech of Allah."

Second Topic

Now that it is established that "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is the first verse of every Surah except At-Tawbah, as a consequence, whoever does not recite the first verse of Al-Fatihah then his prayer is not correct because it has been mentioned in detail earlier that there is no prayer without Al-Fatihah. There is no mention of reciting half of it or a part of it. In these circumstances it would be understood that Al-Fatihah has not been recited. If a person does not recite Al-Fatihah wholly, then his Rak'a is not valid.

Third Topic

Since "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is the first verse of every surah except At-Tawbah, it should be recited

loudly (with *Jahr*) when reciting loudly (*Jahri Qira'a*) in prayers. This is because when a recitation is to be done loudly it should be done so for all verses and to exclude a verse from this ruling is not correct. The narrations that have preceded in the earlier discussion support this and therefore since this is the verse of every Surah (except for At-Tawbah) it will be recited with Jarh in every *Jahri* recitation.

Especially in the narration of the mother of the believers mentioned earlier, the method of recitation and elongation of "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" by the Prophet of Allah (saw) is very clear. The mother of the believers knew this because the Prophet recited *Bismillah* loudly – otherwise she would not have known.

Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr mentions in "Al-Insaf":

"What shows that "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is a verse at the beginning of Fatihatul Kitab and that the Messenger of Allah (saw) would recite it as such and would recite it aloud is what was described by Umm Salamah about the recitation of the Messenger of Allah (saw)"

Other than this, there are countless other Ahadith which clearly show that in *Jahri* prayers, "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is to be recited loudly. Due to the large number Ahadith associated with this ruling, Jalaludin As-Suyuti has termed them as *Mutawatir*. As a matter of fact, he has a famous book by the name of "*Al-Azhaar Al-Mutanatharah fil Ahadith Al-Mutawatirah*" which is dedicated to this topic. On pg. 16 of this book, in his comments under Hadith #31 he wrote:

"The Hadith of reciting the Basmalah aloud has been narrated by Al-Hakim from Anas, ibn 'Abbas, Abu Hurayrah and Umm Salamah, and narrated by Ad-Daraqutni from 'Uthman, 'Ali, Jabir ibn Abdillah, Al-Hakam ibn 'Umayr, ibn 'Umar, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, An-Nu'man ibn Basheer and 'Aishah, and reported by Al-Bayhaqi from Ubay ibn Ka'b, Samurah ibn Jundub and reported by Al-Khateeb in his book "Al-Basmalah" from Buraydah, Basheer or Yaseer ibn Mu'awiyah, Husayb ibn Arutah, Mujalid ibn Thawr, and reported by Ash-Shafi'i from a group of Muhajirin and Ansar"

We will mention some of these narrations:

1) (**Abu Hurayrah**) Na'eem al Mujmar narrates in Sunan An-Nasa'i (pgs. 91-92):

'When I prayed behind Abu Hurayrah, he recited "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" and then recited "Umm Al-Quran (Al-Fatihah)" until he reached *Ghairil Maghdhoob e Alayhim Waladhaaleen* and then said *Ameen*. And the people also said *Ameen*. Whenever he performed *sajdah* he said *Allahu Akbar* and when he stood from the sitting after the two (Rak'ah), he said *Allahu Akbar*. After he finished his prayer he said, 'By Him in whose Hand is my soul, I pray a prayer which is more in resemblance to that of the Prophet of Allah (saw) (than yours).'

It is mentioned by Az-Zeyla'i in "Nasb Ar-Raya" (335/2):

"This Hadith has been narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah in his Sahih (1/251), Ibn Hibban in his Sahih (3/215) and by Al-Hakim in his "Mustadrak" (1/232) and he said that this narration is sahih according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim but they did not narrate it. Similarly, it has been narrated by Imam Ad-Daraqutni in his Sunan and he said that this Hadith is Sahih and all its narrators are *thiqa* (trustworthy) and by Imam Al-Bayhaqi in his "Sunnan" and he said that the chain of narration of this Hadith is Sahih and there are other evidences to support it. Moreover, he writes in "Al-Khilaafiyat" that the narrators of this Hadith are *thiqah*, there is an *Ijma'* (consensus) on their integrity ('Adalah) and they are based upon in the Sahih (meaning Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated from them and based on them, not only brought their narrations as supporting narrations)"

Hafiz Ibn Sayyid an-Naas in "Sharh At-Tirmidhi" (187/1), while authenticating this Hadith, quotes Abu Bakr Khateeb Al-Baghdadi as saying, 'This narration is authentic and proven without any defects.' Likewise, Ibn Abdil Barr proves this Hadith to be sahih in "Al-Insaf" and refutes those who take evidence from the *Taqseem us Salah* Hadith (in Sahih Muslim). Rather, he asserts that this is in conflict with the *Taqseem us Salah* Hadith.

Allaamah Qasim Ibn Qutlubagha al-Hanafi grades this Hadith as sahih on pg. 177 of his checking of "Usul Al-Bazdawi".

This Hadith is extremely clear in its meaning. Abu Hurayrah when leading the prayer recited *Bismillah* (loudly), this is why the narrator Na'eem al-Mujmar heard it and narrated it. Furthermore, Abu Hurayrah made it clear that his prayer is in conformity with the Prophet's prayer and hence this is the way of the Prophet (saw).

Imam Ibn Hibban narrated the above Hadith in a chapter which he entitled: '**Mention of what is recommended for the Imam to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly at the beginning of Fatihah Al-Kitab**'

Imam Ibn Khuzaymah has also deduced that the recitation of "*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*" is to be done with Jarh using this Hadith as evidence (1/125).

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani writes after mentioning this Hadith in "Fath Al-Bari" (1/267):

"Imam An-Nasa'i has entitled the chapter in which he mentioned this Hadith as "Al Jahr bi Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" (meaning Basmalah should be read loudly). This Hadith is the most authentic amongst all the Ahadith which are mentioned in this topic. The deduction of evidence that is done through this Hadith has been criticised (by some people) by the possibility that Abu Hurayrah intended by his saying "which is more in resemblance" that it is in relation to most aspects of the prayer and not to every aspect. Secondly, numerous people other than Na'eem al-Mujmar have narrated this Hadith but have now without the mention of *Basmillah* in it, as it will be mentioned soon, and the answer is that that Na'eem is trustworthy, so his addition is accepted. And the apparent meaning of the narration is that all aspects of prayer are included. So it is taken upon the general meaning unless there is some specific evidence to restrict it"

Imam An-Nawawi says in "Sharh Al-Muhazzab" (244/3):

‘Imam Ibn Khuzaymah states in his book: “As for reciting loudly *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”* in the prayer, it is authentic and established from the Prophet of Allah (saw) with an established and connected chain. And there is no doubt or suspicion amongst the people of knowledge of narrations regarding the authenticity of its chain and its continuity”. After he quoted the Hadith (of Na’eem al Mujmar) and then said: “It is proven and established that the Prophet (saw) would recite loudly *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”* in the prayer’

It is enough for this narration to be strong that Abu Hurayrah himself used to recite *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”* loudly.

Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr mentioned in “Al-Insaf”:

“What gives witness to the authenticity of the Hadith of Abu Hilal from Na’eem Al-Mujmar from Abu Hurayrah is what is narrated by Sa’eed Al-Maqbari and Salih Mawla Tawamah from Abu Hurayrah that he would start his prayer with *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”*, this is the wording of the narration of Salih from Abu Hurayrah. And Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah said Hushaym narrated to us, that Abu Ma’shar informed us from Sa’eed ibn Abi Sa’eed from Abu Hurayrah that he would recite *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”* loudly” (Majmu’ah Ar-Rasail Al-Muneeriyah 2/284)

Ibn Abdil Barr also narrated in “Al-Insaf”: “From Al-‘Ala ibn AbdirRahman from his father from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (saw), he used to recite when starting the prayer *“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”* loudly”

Hafiz (ibn AbdilBarr) mentions that this is a Marfu’ Hadith supports what has been narrated on the authority of Na’eem al-Mujmar. The narrator of this Hadith Isma’eel Ibn Abi Awais is not alone in narrating this but there are other narrators who followed him.

This Hadith is reported in Sunan Ad-Daraqutni (1/306) with the following words:

‘When the Prophet (saw) used to lead the people in prayer he started the prayer with *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.’

Hafiz Ibn Sayyid An-Naas states in “Sharh At-Timidhi” (3/188):

‘Imam Ad-Daraqutni says that all the narrators of its chain are *Thiqah*.’

In Sahih Muslim ma’a an-An-Nawawi (170/1) the following Hadith has been reported with three chains of narration:

‘Abu Hurayrah said that recitation is done in every Rak’ah, what the Prophet (saw) would make us hear (meaning recited aloud), we will make you hear it, and what he would conceal to us (meaning recite in a low voice) we also would conceal it to you.’

This narration shows that the recitation of Abu Hurayrah in that when it was done with Jarh or in a low voice is according to the action of the Prophet. We have already stated earlier that the method of Abu Hurayrah was to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” with Jarh in *jahri* prayers, and hence one can deduce that this was the action of the Prophet as well.

Similarly there is another Sahih Hadith reported by Abu Hurayrah which proves exactly this. It is reported in Sahih Al-Bukhari (103/1):

‘When the Prophet (saw) made the opening Takbir, he would be quiet for a little while before his recitation. I asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, why are you quiet between the (opening) takbir and your recitation? What do you say (at that time)?’ He said, ‘I say, “Allahumma baa’id bayni wa bayna khataayaaya kamaa baa’adta bayn al-mashriqi wa’l-maghrib. Allahumma naqqani min khataayaaya kamaa yunaqqaa al-thawb al-abyad min al-danas. Allahumma’ghsilni min khataayaaya bi’l-maa’ wa’l-thalj wa’l-barad” [O Allah, make the distance between me and my sins as far as you have made the distance between the East and the West. O Allah, cleanse me of my sins as a white garment is cleansed of dirt. O

Allah, purify me from my sins by snow, rain and hail.]’

This Hadith has also been narrated in Sahih Muslim ma’a An-Nawawi (219/1) and hence this is an agreed upon Hadith by Al-Al-Bukhari and Muslim and as such is at a high level of authenticity. This makes it totally evident that Abu Hurayrah used to hear the recitation and the Takbeer of the Prophet but did not hear his dua which he recited in a low voice. And this is why Abu Hurayrah asked him this question. This proves that the Prophet (saw) used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” with Jarh and not with a low voice. Rather, the content of what he used to recite in a low voice is this Du’a which he mentioned, had he recited “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” he would have mentioned that as well. Hence we find that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” was included in the (loud) recitation and was heard by Abu Hurayrah.

This above-mentioned Hadith is an incontestible proof for a definitive judgement between us and those who are in opposition to reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly. We ask them whether “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is a part of the recitation (in prayer). If it is, then the Sunnah is to recite it loudly as was heard by Abu Hurayrah. If it is the case that it is not a part of the recitation and Abu Hurayrah did not hear it from the Prophet and neither did the Prophet recite it in a loud voice, then it will be said that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is not to be recited at all; neither loudly nor in a low voice. This is because what was recited in a low voice by the Prophet did not include *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.

Now our friends should either consider it a part of the recitation and recite it out loudly, or they should not recite it at all whether that is with a loud or low voice. Rather, they should declare its recitation in opposition to the Sunnah. This is because there are only two sides to (understand) the above Hadith: either “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is not to be recited at all, or if it is recited then it should be done so loudly. And to say that it is to be recited but in a low voice, according to this narration such an act has got nothing to do with the Sunnah.

I say: The Marfu' Hadith of Abu Hurayrah and his own action is in front of the reader as clear as the sun and the Hadith of Na'eem al-Mujmar has been strengthened (by these evidences). All the excuses and tricks that are concocted regarding this have become weaker than a spiders web. One of the narrators of this Hadith Imam Layth Ibn Sa'd himself used to recite *Bismillah* loudly.

Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr writes in "Al-Insaf":

"This Hadith is preserved (Mahfuz) from the Hadith of Al-Layth from Khalid ibn Yazeed Al-Iskandrani from Sa'eed ibn Abi Hilal, and they are both trustworthy Egyptians , as for Al-Layth, he is the Imam of his country, and others than Al-Layth narrated it as you see in this chapter. 'Amr Ibn Hisham al-Bayruni says the he prayed behind Imam Layth Ibn Sa'd who used to recite Ameen and "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly. Imam Abu Yahya Zakariyah as-Saaji mentioned from Ja'far ibn Muhammad Al-Fariyabi from Maymun ibn Abi Al-Asbagh from 'Abdullah ibn Salih from Al-Layth ibn Sa'd, he said that Khalid Ibn Yazeed narrated to us from Sa'eed Ibn Abi Hilal from Na'eem al-Mujmar, he said: I prayed behind Abu Hurayrah and he recited "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" in "Umm Al-Kitab" and said: I pray a prayer which is more in resemblance to that of the Prophet of Allah (saw) (than yours)"

In this Sanad only one act of prayer i.e. to recite *Bismillah* with Jarh is mentioned and it is said that the prayer is like that of the Prophet's prayer. So it is understood that Imam Laith Ibn Sa'd considered this Hadith Sahih and what he understood from this is to recite *Bismillah* loudly. Resultantly, all excuses and tricks that are raised regarding this are now laid to rest.

Another Hadith regarding this issue is reported in "Sunan Ad-Daraqutni" (1/307):

'From Muhammad ibn Qays from Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (saw) used to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly.'

Even though one of the narrators of this Hadith Muhammad Ibn Qais is *Dha'eef* (weak) ("Taqreeb"), it can

still be presented as supporting evidence in the presence of other narrations.

Imam Hakim has used this as supporting evidence in his Mustadrak (1/232).

In summary, several Ahadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah and his own action, in addition to that of the great Imam Laith Ibn Sa'd, regarding whom it is said that he was more of a Faqeeh and followed the Sunnah more closely than Imam Ash-Shafi'i and Imam Malik {"Tahzeeb" 463/8}) adds strength to and makes the matter definitive.

2) (**Ibn 'Abbas**) The following Hadith can be found in Sunan At-Tirmidhi (1/33):

'Ibn "Abbas narrates that the Prophet (saw) used to start his prayer with *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.'

Imam At-Tirmidhi states regarding this Hadith that its chain of narration is not such, meaning not strong. He says this because there is some criticism on two of its narrators namely Isma'eel Ibn Hamaad Ibn Abi Suleyman and his teacher Abu Khaalid Al-Walbi. However, Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani refers to Isma'eel as "*Saduuq*" i.e. truthful and this is used to approve someone. Moreover, he refers to Abu Khaalid Al-Walbi as "*maqbool*" i.e. if there is some supporting evidence to the Hadith he narrates then it is acceptable and otherwise it is weak, as is mentioned in the preface of the book.

This rule by Hafiz Ibn Hajar is based on justice, as he himself says in the preface, 'I will give a ruling on every individual such that is fair and just in the eyes of all critical reviewers.'

There are also other supporting narrations for this report. Hence, Imam Al-Al-Bayhaqi after mentioning this Hadith writes in "Sunan al-Kubra" (42/7):

'There are supporting narrations (Shawahid) from ibn 'Abbas which we have mentioned in "Kitab al-Khilafiyat".'

In such a scenario, the Hadith of Abu Khaalid Al-Walbi is not considered weak but rather it is acceptable and Imam

At-Tirmidhi's assertion would mean that this narration does not have the strength of the highest level but is not such that it is rejected altogether.

The authentic narrations mentioned earlier give strength to this report. Imam Ad-Daraqutni has mentioned supporting narrations for this Hadith in Sunan Ad-Daraqutni (303-304/1), one of which is presented below:

'Muhammad Ibn Yahya Ibn Hamzah reports: I prayed behind Ameer-ul-Mumineen Al-Mahdi and he recited "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly. When I asked him about this he said: my father narrated to us, from his father, from his grandfather from Ibn "Abbas that the Prophet used to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly. Then I asked him whether we could narrate (this Hadith) from him and he said yes!'

Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaani has mentioned this Hadith in "Talkhis al-Habeer" (1/235) and was quiet in that he did not level any criticism. According to Hanafi Usool this Hadith is considered as Hasan or Sahih by Hafiz Ibn Hajar, as written by Allaamah Zafar Ahmad Thanvi in "Inhaa as-Sukan" (pg. 25):

'Likewise the silence of Hafiz ibn Hajar on a Hadith in "At-Talkhis Al-Habeer" is an evidence for the narration being Hasan or Sahih (for him). An analysis of "Nayl Al-Awtar" of Ash-Shawkani (rah) reveals that sometimes he took evidence from his (Hafiz Ibn Hajar's) silence in "At-Talkhis" in the same manner as he took evidence from his silence in "Al-Fath".'

Hence, this narration gives strength to the narration of Ibn "Abbas. This Hadith is also mentioned in Musnad al-Bazzar with the following words:

'From ibn 'Abbas that The Prophet (saw) used to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" with Jarh in the prayer.'

Hafiz Nurudin al-Haythami after mentioning this Hadith in "Majma' az-Zawaid" (2/108-109), states that all the narrators of this Hadith have been declared trustworthy (Mawthuqun)

Ibn ‘Abbas’ own action was to recite *Bismillah* loudly. It is mentioned in Musannaf Abur-Razzaaq (2/90):

(It is narrated) from ‘Amr ibn Deenar that Ibn ‘Abbas was starting the prayer with *Bismillahi Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem*.

In addition, Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr mentions in “Al-Insaf” (Rasail Muneerya 189-190/2):

‘Sa;eed ibn Jubayr from Ibn ‘Abbas that he used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly, and from ‘Ikrimah from ibn ‘Abbas that he used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly and said that this is one of the first things that Shaitaan has taken away from the common people.’

This action by Ibn ‘Abbas once again gives strength to the narration mentioned earlier. In fact, his famous students: Sa’eed Ibn Jubair, ‘Ataa’ Ibn Abi Rabaah, Tawoos, Mujahid, ‘Amr Ibn Deenar and ‘Ikrimah all used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly. It is mentioned in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (412/1):

“From Wafa, I heard Sa’eed ibn Jubayr reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly, and from ‘Ata, Tawoos and Mujahid that they used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly”

It is narrated in Musannaf Abur-Razzaaq (91/2)

“From Sa’eed ibn Jubayr that he used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly in every Rak’ah”

And the words of ‘Amr Ibn Deenaar and ‘Ikrimah are present in “Al-Insaf”.

I say: Ibn ‘Abbas is considered a great Mufassir amongst all the Sahabah. Ibn Mas’ood has said:

Ibn ‘Abbas is an excellent interpreter of the Quran.’
(Tahzeeb 228/5)

The Prophet made the following Du’a for him:

‘O Allah give him *hikmah*, O Allah teach him the Quran.’ (Al-Bukhari 531/1)

For such a great Mufasssir to espouse this methodology gives strength to this ruling. The Hadith narrated by him is also authentic and proven. Furthermore, for his students to adopt this methodology is enough evidence for this ruling to be famous and widespread. Imam At-Tirmidhi in his Sunan (33/1) has also included Ibn ‘Abbas amongst those who hold this opinion.

3) (**‘Ali ibn abi Talib**) It is mentioned in Ad-Daraqutni (1/302):

“From ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (rad), he said: The Prophet used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” in prayer.”

It should be remembered that this cannot be reported without actually hearing it. Imam Ad-Daraqutni writes regarding this Hadith that there is nothing wrong with its Sanad. (“Nasb Ar-Raya” by Az-Zaylai’ (1/225)

Imam az-Zayla’i quotes from Hafiz al-Mizzi:

‘This Sanad cannot be used for proof as I do not know this Suleymaan (narrator Suleyman Ibn Abdul ‘Aziz Ibn Abi Thabit).’

However, this objection is not accepted since Hafiz al-Mizzi has said this according to what knowledge he had, whereas Imam Ad-Daraqutni has said that ‘there is nothing wrong in it’ which means that this sanad is famous and reliable. There is an usool that the one who knows something is a *hujjah* (proof) on the one who does not know it.

In fact, Ameer-ul-Mumineen ‘Ali’s own action was to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly, as has been narrated through Imam Sha’bi in Al-Bayhaqi (2/48):

‘I saw ‘Ali Ibn Abi Taalib and prayed behind him and I heard him reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly.’

4) (**Anas ibn Malik**) It is mentioned in Mustadrak Hakim (1/233):

“From Anas Ibn Malik, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly”

Imam Hakim states that all the narrators of this Hadith from beginning to end are all *Thiqah*. Hafiz adh-Adh-Dhahabi agreed with him in “Talkhis” and Imam An-Nawawi has authenticated it in “Sharh al-Muhazzab” pgs. 350-351.

It is also narrated in Mustadrak Hakim (233-34/1):

‘Abu Muhammad ‘AbdurRahman ibn Hamdan Al-Jalab narrated to us in Hamdan: ‘Uthman ibn Kharzar Al-Antaki narrated to us: Muhammad Ibn Abi As-Sari al-‘Asqalani said: I prayed Maghrib and Fajr behind Al-Mu’tamar Ibn Suleyman several times that I cannot count and he used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly at the beginning of Al-Fatihah and after it. I heard Al-Mu’tamar saying that I do not differ even by a bit in praying like my father Sulayman at-Taymi and my father said that I do not differ even by a bit in praying like Anas Ibn Malik and Anas Ibn Maalik used to say that I do not differ even by a bit in praying like the Prophet (saw).’

Imam Hakim says that all the narrators of this Hadith, from the beginning till end, are *thiqah*. Imam ad-Adh-Dhahabi agrees with him and Imam An-Nawawi says in Sharh al-Muhazzab (350/3):

‘Imam Ad-Daraqutni said that all the narrators of this chain are *thiqah*.’

This Hadith is extremely clear in how it should be understood in that the Prophet (saw) used to recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly. The companion of the Prophet (saw) Anas Ibn Maalik also acted in accordance to this and his student Sulayman at-Taymi and his son Mu’tamar Ibn Sulayman both acted in accordance with this Hadith. Such continuance of this act further highlights the importance of this issue.

Imam Ash-Shafi'i brings the following Hadith in his "Kitab al-Umm" (1/93):

"AbdulMajeed ibn AbdilAziz informed us from ibn Jurayj, he said: 'Abdullah ibn 'uthman ibn Khatheem informed me that Abu Bakr ibn Hafs informed him that Anas ibn Malik informed him, he said: Mu'awiyah lead the prayer in Madinah and in it he did his recitation loudly and read "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" in Al-Fatihah but did not do so for the second surah (i.e. it was not heard) until he completed this recitation, he did not do takbeer when going down until he completed his prayer. When he gave final salutaions, the Muhajirun who heard this started asking him from all sides: "O Mu'awiyah, did you steal from the prayer or forget?" When he prayed after this he recited *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*, for the Surah that is after Al-Fatihah, and Takbeer loudly when going to Sajdah."

This Hadith is present in Sunan Ad-Daraqutni (1/311), Mustadrak Hakim (1/233), Al-Bayhaqi (2/49) and in "Al-Insaf" of Ibn Abdil Barr and others through Ash-Shafi'i, and its words are: "The Muhajirun and the Ansar who heard this started asking him." Similarly it is also present in Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq (3/96) and "Ma'rifatus Sunnan wal Athaar" of Al-Bayhaqi (1/205).

Imam Hakim graded this Hadith as Sahih according to the conditions of Muslim. Imam adh-Adh-Dhahabi has agreed with him in "Talkhis" and Imam Ad-Daraqutni has said that all its narrators are *thiqah*. Moreover, Imam An-Nawawi in Sharh al-Muhazzab (3/349) and Hafiz Ibn Sayyid An-Naas in Sharh At-At-Tirmidhi (1/192) have graded it as Sahih.

This Hadith is clear in its meaning and proves the following:

1. The legislated way is to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly in *jahri* prayers. Imam Ya'qub Ibn Sufyaan Al-Fasawi used this Hadith in order to deduce that "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is to be recited loudly. (Sharh al-Muhazzab (3/349))
2. This was also the action of the companions.
3. In fact, when in *jahri* prayers if they did not hear *Bismillah* then they used to object to that.

4. Rather, they objected to the extent that they likened it to the abhorrent act of stealing.
5. *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem* should be recited loudly at the beginning of ever Surah, be it surah Al-Fatihah or some other Surah.
6. This was also the way of the people of Madinah. In the mentioned incident, the congregation included both Muhajirun and Ansar. Therefore, the claim that the people of Madinah did not recite loudly or recited silently is proven incorrect.

Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr mentions in Al-Insaf (Majmoo' Rasail Muneerya (1/192)):

'Amongst the evidences used to prove that the action of the people of Madinah was to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly is the Hadith which has been mentioned by Imam Ash-Shafi'i.'

i.e. the above mentioned incident involving Ameer-ul-Mumineen Mu'awiyah.

Before stating this, Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr has mentioned Ahadith narrated from 'Abdullah Ibn Zubair and from amongst the Tabi'een Ibn Shihaab az-Zuhri, Abu Qilaabah and the Khalifah of the Muslims, Umar Ibn 'Abdul 'Azeez. All of them were of the opinion that "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" is to be recited loudly – and they were all from Madinah. In fact, the act of reciting "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" in a low voice only started after the time of the companions.

Imam Al-Al-Bayhaqi brings a narration of Imam Az-Zuhri in as-Sunan al-Kubraa (2/50):

'From the Sunnah of the prayer is to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" then "Fatihah Al-Kitab" and then "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" then a Surah. Ibn Shihab (Az-Zuhri) used to recite sometimes a Surah with "Fatihah Al-Kitab" and he would begin each Surah with "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem". And he used to say that the first person to recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" with a low voice was 'Amr Ibn Sa'eed al-Aas because he was a shy person.'

The status of Imam Az-Zuhri amongst the scholars of Madinah is not hidden from anybody. Imam Az-Zuhri is the teacher of Imam Daar ul Hijrah Malik Ibn Anas. Abuz-Zinaad refers to him as *A'lam an-Naas* (*most knowledgeable of people*). Araak Ibn Maalik said that out of the Fuqaha of Madinah, Imam Zuhri was the most knowledgeable. Imam Laith Ibn Sa'd said, 'I have not seen anyone bigger than him and with such comprehensive knowledge as him.' ("Tahzeeb" 9/448-49)

Hence, his testimony that that the action of the people of Madinah was to recite loudly is enough and the person who started to recite in a low voice, 'Amr Ibn Sa'eed al-Aas, was a Tabi'i and not a companion ("Tahzeeb"). All people before him recited loudly. Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr said:

"And reciting it (Basmallah) loudly has been narrated from 'Umar, 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with them both, with difference from them (meaning silent also has been narrated), this has been narrated by 'Amar, Abu Hurayrah, ibn "Abbas, and ibn Zubayr. And there is no difference about reciting "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" loudly from Ibn 'Umar, and it is also authentic from ibn "Abbas, and upon this is the group of his companions Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, 'Ataa, Mujahid, Tawoos, and it is the Madhab of Ibn Shihab Az-Zuhri, 'Amr ibn Deenar, Ibn Jurayj and Muslim ibn Khalid and all the people of Makkah."

All the above-mentioned companions and Tabi'een used to recite loudly and this is also the way of the people of Makkah.

Hafiz Ibn Sayyid An-Naas mentions in Sharh At-Tirmidhi (1/192):

'Al-Khateeb related reciting it loudly from Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, "Uthman, Ubayy' Ibn Ka'b, Abu Qatadah, Abu Sa'eed, Anas, "Abdullah Ibn Abi Awfa', Shadad Ibn Aws, "Abdullah Ibn Ja'far, Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali and Mua'wiyah.'

He then goes on to write:

‘Al-Khateeb said that the leading Tabi’oon and those after them who say (to recite) loudly are too many to be mentioned and too large to be gathered. Among them are: Sa’eed ibn Al-Musayyab, Tawoos, Mujahid, Abu Wail, Sa’eed ibn Jubayr, ibn Sireen, ‘Ikrimah, ‘Ali ibn Al-Husayn and his son Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, Salim ibn Abdillah ibn ‘Amr, Muhammad ibn Al-Munkadir, Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Hazm, Muhammad ibn Ka’b, Nafi’ Mawla ibn ‘Umar, Abu Sha’tha, ‘Umar ibn Abdil ‘Azeez, Makhool, Habeeb ibn Abi Thabit, Az-Zuhri, Abu Qilabah, ‘Ali ibn Abdillah ibn ‘Abbas and his son, al-‘Azraq ibn Qays, ‘Abdullah ibn Ma’qal ibn Muqrin and after the Tabi’een ‘Ubaydullah Al-‘Umari, al-Hassan ibn Zayd, Zayd ibn ‘Ali ibn Al-Husayn, Muhammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Ali, Ibn Abi Zib, Al-Layth ibn Sa’d, Ishaq ibn Rahawayah and Al-Bayhaqi added among the Tabi’een ‘Abdullah ibn Safwan, Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyah, Sulayman At-Taymi and among their followers Al-Mu’tamar ibn Sulayman.”

Other than this, the action of Khaleefah ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azeez is also a strong evidence and during his reign people used to act upon this because at that time a lot of the senior Tabi’een were still present.

Readers! Imam Ishaq Ibn Rahawayah is a famous Muhaddith and Faqih. Imam Ibn Abdil Barr mentions in Al-Istidhkaar (2/176) on the authority of Ishaq Ibn Mansoor:

‘I asked Ishaq Ibn Rahawayah about a person who prayed and did not recite in it “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” with “Al-Hamdulillah Rabbi ‘Alamin”. He replied: He will have to repeat all his prayer!’

This was also the way of the people of Makkah and the Fuqaha of the Haramayn agreed upon this. Amongst the persons mentioned, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas, his son Muhammad, ‘Abdullah Ibn Safwan and Ishaq Ibn Rahawayah were all from Makkah.

Other than this, Sa’eed Ibn Al-Musayyib, ‘Ali Ibn Husayn (Zain ul ‘Abideen), his son (Al-Baqir), Saalim Ibn ‘Abdillah, Muhammad Ibn al-Munkadir, Abu Bakr Ibn Muhammad Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Hazm, Nafi’ Maula Ibn Umar,

Khaleefah ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdil ‘Azeez, Imam Az-Zuhri, ‘Ubaidullah Ibn ‘Umar al-Umari, Hasan Ibn Zaid Ibn ‘Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, Zaid Ibn ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, Muhammad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn ‘Ali and the Faqih Ibn Abi Dhib were all from Madinah.

Abu Wail (Shaqeeq Ibn Salamah), Sa’eed Ibn Jubair, Habib Ibn Abi Thabit and “Abdullah Ibn Ma’qal Ibn Muqrin were from Kufah.

Muhammad Ibn Sireen, Abu ash-Sha’tha (Jaabir Ibn Zayd), Abu Qilaabah (‘Abdullah Ibn Zaid), ‘Azraq Ibn Qais, Sulayman at-Taymi and his son Mu’tamar were all from Basrah. Similarly, Makhool is Syrian and Tawoos is Yemeni. Imam Al-Layth Ibn Sa’ad is Egyptian and ‘Amr Ibn Deenaar who was mentioned earlier is Makki. All of these people are mentioned in “At-Tehzeeb” and “At-Taqreeb”. Hence we can conclude that major scholars from far and wide were of this opinion.

Furthermore, from the companions that were mentioned, Shadaad Ibn Aws and Mu’awiyah are from Syria, “Abdullah Ibn Abi Aufaa was from Kufah and Anas Ibn Malik, even though he went to Basrah in his final years, was from Madinah. Ahadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah and ‘Ali were also mentioned, and on the authority of Ibn Abdil Barr, Ibn Zubayr and Ibn ‘Umar were mentioned – all of them were from Madinah. Mawquf as well as Marfu’ narrations were mentioned from Ibn ‘Abbas who was Makki.

At the end of “Al-Insaf”, Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr brings a quote from the son of Imam Ahmad, “Abdullah:

‘I heard my father saying: “I like that in the Qiyam of Ramadan (Taraweeh prayer) the person recites “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at the beginning of every Surah and finishes the Quran as it is written in the Mushaf.’

This narration can be found in Imam “Abdullah’s book “Masai’l Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal”, pg. 76.

We have mentioned eight Ahadith regarding praying “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly, and mentioned some more in passing. There are many other Ahadith regarding this and can be found in Sunan Ad-Daraqutni

and Al-Al-Bayhaqi etc. The Imams of Hadith such as Imam Al-Marwazi, Imam Ad-Daraqutni, Imam Hakim, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah, Imam Ibn Hibban and Imam Khateeb al-Baghdadi have written books dedicated to this topic.

There are also proofs regarding this from the four madhabs e.g. we mentioned Imam “Abdullah Ibn al-Mubarak who was of the opinion that it should be recited loudly. The Hanafis consider him one of their Imams and mention him in their *Tabaqaat*. The interested reader can refer to: Al-“Jawahir al-Madhiya” by Abdul Qadir Al-Qurshi (1/288) and “Al-Fawaid al-Bahiyyah fi Tarajim Al-Hanafiyya” by Abdul Hayy Lukhnawi pg. 103 etc. In this vein, Abdul Hayy Lukhnawi in “Ahkaam al-Qantarrah fi Ahkaam al-Basmallah” (“Majmu’ah Ar-Rasail” Ath-Thamanyah of Al-Lukhnawi) accepts that to recite *Bismillah* loudly is Sunnah and writes that to try to deny the attribution of reciting aloud from the Prophet (saw) is not only difficult, but impossible. The Imam of the Maliki Madhab Ibn Abdil Barr is also of the opinion that it should be recited loudly as can be seen from his proof of it in “Al-Insaf”.

It is well-known that the opinion of the Shawafi’ is to recite it loudly, their books are full of explanations regarding this issue.

The famous Imam of the Hanbali madhab, Abul Qasim ‘Abdur Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ishaq Ibn Mandah (d. 470) was of the opinion that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” should be recited loudly, as was quoted by Hafiz Ibn Rajab from Ibn Taymiyah in “Tabqaat Hanaabilah” (1/130).

Now we will mention some of the evidences that the people who are of the opinion that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” should be recited in a low voice use and then we will make clear their reality.

Their most famous evidence regarding this is the narration of Anas Ibn Malik which can be found in Muslim ma’a An-Nawawi (172/1) with the following words:

‘I observed prayer behind the Apostle of Allah (saw) and Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. They started with: “Al-Hamdu lillahi Rabb al-‘Alameen” [All Praise

is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds] and did not recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at the beginning of the recitation or at the end of it.’

Answer:

1. The chain of narration (in part) of this Hadith is: Muhammad ibn Mahran Ar-Razi narrated to us, Waleed ibn Muslim narrated to us, al-Awzai’ narrated to us from Qatadah that he wrote to him informing him from Anas Ibn Malik.... It should be remembered that Qatadah was congenitally blind (“Tahzeeb” (351/9), “Taqreeb”, “Tadreeb Ar-Rawi” by as-Suyuti pg. 90). Hence this narration could not have been written by him and he would have had to have someone transcribe it for him and that scribe is Majhul (unknown). This is also what Hafiz Ibn Hajar mentioned in an-Nukat (pg. 294 (manuscript)).

There is also some doubt in that the narration would have been corrupted as the person who delivered the narration to al-Awzai’ after it was transcribed is also Majhul. Hence between Qatadah and al-Awzai’ there are two people who are unknown. Hence this narration is not correct with these words. Moreover, Qatadah himself was a Mudallis, as is written in “Tabaqat Al-Mudalliseen” of Ibn Hajar pg. 16, ‘famous for doing tadlees, as mentioned by Imam An-Nasa’i and others.

It is quoted from Ibn Hibban in “Tahzeeb” (355/8) that he was a Mudallis and because he was mentioned as one of the third level by Hafiz Ibn Hajar, his Ahadith will not be accepted unless he makes it clear that he heard i.e. uses words such as hadathana and sami’tu, as it is mentioned in the preface to “Tabqaat Al-Mudalliseen”. Here he does not do this and hence this is the second reason why this narration is *dha’eef*.

2. Since the words of this Hadith are in contradiction to what is related by Anas in other sahih Ahadith in which is a mention of reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly, it is defective and hence is not reliable in front of Sahih narrations.

3. Even if this narration is accepted to be Sahih then its implication would be that “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” is not to be recited at all, neither with a loud nor with low voice. Therefore, there is no evidence in this for those who recite with a low voice.

In Sahih Muslim, before this another narration is present with the following words:

‘Shu’bah narrated to us, I heard Qatadah narrating from Anas, he said: I observed prayer along with the Messenger of Allah (saw) and with Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with all of them), but I never heard any one of them reciting *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem.*’

Answer:

Even though this narration does not have the aforementioned defects, if it is accepted to be Sahih, then there are two ways of understanding it.

One is that Anas Ibn Maalik did not hear it, this does not necessarily negate reciting loudly because it is quite possible that (it was recited and) he did not hear it. Furthermore, the narrations which mention reciting loudly, especially those that have already preceded, clearly tell us that the Prophet used to recite *Bismillah* loudly. The speech of the one who hears will take precedence over that of one who does not hear.

A second meaning of this Hadith could be that he did not recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at all. In that case, there is no evidence in this for those who recite with a low voice; they should look for some other evidence. Whereas with us we have Ahadith which mention loudly recitation, some of which have already been brought forth for the reader. How will the deniers of loudly recitation prove their stance with a Hadith that mentions the Prophet recited *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*?! This is because such a Hadith would mean that some companion heard the Prophet say it, otherwise without hearing it no companion would attribute the recitation to him.

There are also some other defects in this Hadith:

1. Four Ahadith narrated from Anas have been mentioned in which he himself attributes loudly recitation to the Prophet (saw). Those Ahadith refute this.
2. One of these four Ahadith, one is in Sahih Al-Bukhari and is more authentic than this one. It is clearly mentioned in it that the Prophet used to elongate reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” and this Hadith includes his action within the prayer and outside of it. Anas would never have narrated any action like this from the Prophet (saw) unless he had actually heard it. Hence this sahih Hadith also refutes this.
3. This Hadith mentions the action of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and “Uthman when it has stated earlier that their way was to recite loudly recitation. Hence this reason also makes this narration defective.
4. The action of Anas himself was to recite it aloud; how could he possibly narrate the negation of loudly recitation and then himself oppose it?! According to the Madhab of the Hanafis this Hadith is abrogated because according to their usul when a companion’s action opposed his narration then that is evidence for its abrogation, and it will be understood that the companion was aware of the abrogation. As is written in the famous book on Usul Al-Fiqh of the Hanafis, “Nur Al-Anwar” pg. 755 etc.

Obviously this Hadith is also defective (Ma’lool) for the Muhaditheen. Even if it is taken to be Sahih then one will have to say that since Anas is the narrator of Hadith mentioning loudly recitation as well as that which is opposing it, and since his own action was to act on the narration mention loudly recitation, this is enough to give preference to this narration (i.e. the one mentioning aloud recitation).

5. For companions, whether they are from the Muhajireen or Ansar, to object to the action of Mu’awiyah also renders this narration defective.
6. We also quoted from Imam As-Suyuti earlier that the narration reporting aloud recitation is at a level of

Tawaatur. This is also a strong evidence for this narration to be defective.

7. There are a lot of discrepancies with regards to the actual wording of this Hadith:
 - i. Some narrators quote Anas as saying, ‘they would not mention *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.’
 - ii. Others quote him as saying, ‘they did not recite “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” loudly.’
 - iii. And some others quote, ‘they did not recite *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.’
 - iv. Yet others quote him as saying, ‘they recited “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” aloud.’
 - v. And yet others quote him with these words, ‘I have not heard anyone of them recite *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*.’

And some say when Anas was asked about this he said that I am old and do not remember. What is worth paying attention to is that there is so much difference of opinion amongst the people who quote the same narration from the same companion. Some narrations are proving loudly recitation, others are negating it, and yet some others reject reciting “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” at all. Where a difference exists such that there is no possible way of reconciling (the narrations), then the narration falls from a level of authenticity.

Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr says in “Al-Insaf fima bayna Al-‘Ulama fi “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” minal Ikhtilaf” (“Majmoo’ah ar-Rasail al-Muneerya” (178/6)):

‘There is no evidence for me in anything of it.’

Imam as-Suyuti agreed with him in “Tadreeb Ar-Rawi” (pg. 60) and termed this Hadith defective (Ma’lool).

Hafiz Ibn as-Salaah also terms it as defective (ma’lool) in his “Muqqadimah” pg. 43 and writes that the correct words for the narration are, ‘He used to start with “*Alhamdulillah Rabbil ‘Alameen*”.’ The words of the narration al-Al-Bukhari and Muslim that

are agreed upon are limited to this. What is said in addition to it that he did not recite loudly or he did not recite at all etc. are not a part of the Hadith but rather is the understanding of the narrator in which he has erred. The meaning of starting with "*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen*" is certainly not that he did not recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" at all or did not recite it aloud. What is meant here is that he used to recite Surah Fatihah before he recited any other surah of the Quran. This is the topic explained in this Hadith, but it does not contain the mention of "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" because Anas himself denies this and says that he does not remember (these words).

Hafiz Abul Fadl Al-'Iraaqi in "Taqqid wal Eedhah" (pg. 119), Allaamah as-Sakhawi in "Fath Al-Mugheeth" (p.96) and Hafiz as-Suyooti in "Tadreeb Ar-Rawi" (pgs. 90-91) have mentioned something similar.

From the above we come to know that:

1. The accepted narration is that which is present in the Sahihain (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) i.e. he used to start with "*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen*". The additional wording has been inserted due to the misunderstanding of the narrator.
2. The additional words are not based on reality but are due to the narrators own comprehension of the Hadith.
3. The narrator has erred in properly understanding the Hadith.
4. The correct Hadith regarding this does not have a mention of not reciting "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" because there are several sahih Ahadith which prove to the contrary. In actuality this Hadith has got nothing to do with whether one should recite or not recite "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" but rather emphasizes that during the time of the Prophet and the righteous caliphs, the method of recitation was to recite Al-Fatihah first and then a second Surah. In and of itself, this issue of what one is supposed to start recitation with is important and

through this Hadith we find that one is required to recite Al-Fatihah first and then whatever he remembers of the Quran. The scholars of Hadith before us have drawn attention towards this fact. Imam an-Nasa'i has mentioned this Hadith under the following heading, **'Chapter of starting with "Fatimah Al-Kitab" before the Surah.'**

5. We have explained in detail earlier that one of the names of Al-Fatihah is "*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen*" and we used this Hadith to prove that. So what is meant here is that in prayer they recited Surah "*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen*" and then some other surah. This meaning is what is mentioned by Imam Ash-Shafi'i in "Kitab al-Umm" (93/1) and Imam At-Tirmidhi has quoted Imam Ash-Shafi'i in Jami' At-Tirmidhi without any objection. Furthermore, Imam Al-Al-Bayhaqi in "Sunnan al-Kubra" (51/2), Imam Al-Hazimi in "Kitab al-I'tibar" pg. 81, Imam al-Baghawi in "Sharh As-Sunnah" (55/3), Imam An-Nawawi in "Sharh Al-Muhazzab" (351/1), Hafiz Ibn as-Salaah in "Muqqadimah" pg. 43, Hafiz Abul Fadl 'Iraqi in "Taqqid wal Eedhah" (1/119), Allaamah as-Sakhawi in "Fath Al-Mugheeth" p 96, Al-Karmani in "Sharh Al-Bukhari" (5/111), Haafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaani in "Fath Al-Bari (2/227) and Allaamah Qastalane in Irshaad as-Saaree (2/72) have mentioned this meaning. This is also the meaning that is present in the famous lexicon "Majma' Bihaar al-Anwaar" (3/53). Hence it is totally incorrect to take this Hadith as evidence for reciting "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" in a low voice.

Second evidence that they use is the following Hadith present in Sunan At-Tirmidhi (33/1) with the following words:

'From Ibn "Abdullah Ibn Mughafal, he said that I was reading "Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem" in prayer such that my father heard it and said, "O my son this is an innovation and hence save yourself from (this) innovation. I have noticed that the companions detested nothing more than innovations. I have prayed behind the Prophet (saw), Abu Bakr, 'Umar and "Uthman and did not hear any of them saying it. You as well when you pray, you should not recite it

("Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem") but should recite
Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen."

Answer:

Firstly, this narration is *Dha'eef* (weak) because its narrator Ibn "Abdullah Ibn Mughafal is *Majhul* (unknown) as is mentioned by Hafiz Ibn Abdil Barr in "Al-Insaf" (Majmoo'ah ar-Rasail al-Muneerya (1/159)), "This narrator is *Majhul* for them and the evidence is not established with the *Majhul.*" Imam An-Nawawi in "Sharh al-Muhazzhab" (355/3) has quoted from the Imams of Hadith, Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Abdil Barr and al-Khateeb that they have termed this narrator as *Majhul*. Hafiz Ibn Hajar has called him *Mastur* in an-Nukat pg. 302. Hence this narration is not reliable especially in light of the Sahih Ahadith that have been mentioned in explanation of this issue.

Secondly, even if this Hadith is accepted to be Sahih then to recite *Bismillah* would be totally forbidden, to recite it would be an innovation whether done in a low or loud voice. This is because he is asking his son not to recite *Bismillah* (neither with a low voice nor with a loud one), He is stopping him in absolute terms. Those who use this as evidence are themselves of the opinion that one should recite in a low voice and hence they themselves are opposing this narration.

Thirdly, even if this Hadith is accepted as Sahih then the most one can say is that "Abdullah Ibn Mughafal himself did not hear it because he said I did not hear anyone recite *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*. When he did not hear then he is considered impaired and the saying of those who did hear will take precedence rather it is *Hujjah* on them as it is established by people of Usul. Furthermore, how can we accept is saying in opposition sahih Ahadith?!

Imam Abu Bakr Khateeb al-Baghdadi says (as quoted in "Sharh al-Muhazzhab" (3/355)):

'(The narrator of this narration) Ibn "Abdullah Ibn Mughafal is *Majhul* and even if this Hadith is proven to be Sahih then it will have no effect on the narration of Abu Hurayrah regarding aloud recitation of it. This is

because “Abdullah Ibn Mughafal is one of the young companions and Abu Hurayrah is one of their Shaykh. The Prophet (saw) used to order that in the prayer, men of understanding and intelligence should stand near him and the rest can continue to stand in that order. Then certainly Abu Hurayrah used to be nearer to the Prophet (saw) than “Abdullah Ibn Mughafal because of his young age, and it is known that the recitor raises his voice and recites loudly more in his recitation in the middle than in the beginning and “Abdullah Ibn Mughafal did not hear the loud recitation of Bismillah as he was far and it is the beginning of the recitation and Abu Hurayrah memorized it because of him being near, elder and strongest memory and intense care (about the actions of the Prophet (saw)).’

Hence even if this narration is accepted to be Sahih then this cannot be used as evidence for those who recite in a low voice.

The third evidence (that they use) is the *Taqseem As-Salah* Hadith and it has been discussed in detail that it is not in opposition to reciting *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*. This is because the narrator of this Hadith Abu Hurayrah himself used to recite it aloud, and if there was evidence in this Hadith for the negation of reciting it aloud then Abu Hurayrah would never act in opposition to it.

“*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” is not just the first verse of Al-Fatihah but also the first verse of every Surah and this Hadith only mentions those which are particular to Al-Fatihah. Other than this, there is nothing in this Hadith with regards to reciting *Bismillah* loudly or in a low voice. The Sahih and clear Ahadith that have been mentioned should suffice, and to take this as evidence in the presence of Sahih Ahadith is just plain obstinance.

Conclusion: The Sunnah is that in loud prayers one should recite “*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem*” with a loud voice because it is the first verse of every Surah of the Quran except At-Tawbah and hence in loud prayers it should be recited loudly and in silent prayers it should be recited in a low voice. It is hoped that this analysis will be sufficient for the *Ahlul haq*. To sum up I would like to present an extract from the book of Imam Muhammad Ibn Maqdisi on

this topic. Hafiz Ibn Mulqin quoted him in “Al-Badr al-Muneer fee Takhreej Ahadith Ar-Rafi’i al-Kabeer” (pg. 363):

‘One should know that the Ahadith that have been mentioned in relation to reciting *Bismillah* aloud are plenty from a group of companions whose number reaches 21 in number. They narrated this from the Messenger of Allah (saw) and some of them clearly affirmed this and for others, it is understood from their quotes. And there is no clear mention of reciting it silently from the Prophet (saw) except two narrations, one of them from ibn Al-Mughafal and it is weak, and the second from Anas and it is Mu’alal (defective) which necessitates dropping basing upon it. And some of them based themselves on the Taqseem us Salah Hadith stating “*I divided the prayer between Me and My servant in two parts*” but there is no evidence in it for reciting it (“Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem”) with a low voice. As for the Ahadith of reciting it aloud, then the Hujjah is established with what witnesses to its authenticity, and among them what is narrated by six Companions: Abu Hurayrah, Umm Salamah, Ibn ‘Abbas, Anas, ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Samurah Ibn Jundub, may Allah be pleased with them all!”

Note: There is a famous incident that is often mentioned by admonishers that the king of Rome, Caeser (Heraclius) wrote to the chief of the believers Umar (Rad) requesting him to send a remedy for a complaint of having a constant headache. So the chief of the believers Umar (rad) sent him a hat. Upon the king wearing the hat his pain would stop and return when he took it off. He was amazed at this and hence carefully examined the hat upon which he found “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” written on it.

This incident is totally baseless, without evidence and is not mentioned any where with any chain. Imam Ar-Razi in his “Tafsir Al-Kabeer” (1/171) and Shaikh Isma’eel Al-Hanafi in his “Ruh al-Bayan” (1/9) have mentioned this incident however there is no reference to any book of Hadith or history nor has a chain been mentioned for it, you also find it being mentioned in some Urdu books. For example “ad-Da’a wad-Du’a” (pg.16) of Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, “Fawaa’id As-Sattaariyyah” (pg.67-68), “Ghaza al-Arwaah” of Allaamah Dawud Raaghib Ar-

Rehmani (pg.36), "Islaami Wazaa'if" (pg.36) of Allaamah Abdus-Salaam Al-Bustawi, "Shar'i Ta'weezat" (pg.34-35) of Allaamah Abdul Qadir Al-Hisari amongst others. In these books the incident has an addition of the King becoming a Muslim. This addition alone is sufficient in proving this incident to be a lie because he did not become a Muslim in the end as Hafiz Ibn Hajar has mentioned in detail in "Fath Al-Bari" (1/37-44 Salafiyyah print)

In fact we have a Hadith narrated by Anas (rad), which has been transmitted by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, that the Messenger of Allah (Saw) wrote a letter to this king (Caesar) calling him to Islam. The king in his letter replied saying, I have become a Muslim. After reading his letter the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "The enemy of Allah has lied, he is not Muslim, he is still a Christian." ("Mawarid az-Zaman" (pg.393).

Imam Muhammad bin Abdullaah al-Azdi (Rah) a Taba Tabi'een mentioned the battles of the armies of Caesar the king and the Muslims in his book "Futuh ash-Shaam" which occurred during the reigns of Abu Bakr and Umar (Rad). This proves he did not become a Muslim and remained upon disbelief, hence on this basis the incident is false and rejected."

May Allah send Salah and Salam on the Prophet (saw), his famili and companions!