

Story 2016

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The Importance of Saying "Bismillah"¹

One day the Muslim Prophet was having dinner with some of his friends. They all ate heartily for some time, but the amount of food on the table did not seem to diminish at all. One of the Prophet's friends arrived belatedly, but he joined the other diners at once. Those sitting near the newcomer observed, however, that the amount of food on the table was decreasing rapidly. One of them said, "O Messenger of Allah,² the food was plentiful at the beginning of this meal, and no matter how much we ate, it was not diminished. Then suddenly there began to be less and less food. Why did this change occur?"

¹Bismillah is a short form of Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, which means "in the name of the most merciful Allah." It is used audibly or silently by many devout Muslims before starting any undertaking, great or small, and it signifies, "I begin this act by mentioning the name of Allah as a token of reverence." It is widely believed that saying this contributes to the likelihood of success and that failure to say it may doom a project. The good effect of saying Bismillah before a meal is very graphically illustrated in ATON No. 1517. In tale 2016 Besmele is used.

²The epithet here applied to Mohammed is Resulullah. Resul can mean ambassador, spokesman, or messenger. The expression -ullah is a form of Allah.

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Our Prophet answered this question. "All of us who were here at the beginning of the meal said, 'I begin with the name of Allah.' That was the reason why the food supply remained the same even as we were eating from it. But our guest who arrived here late started eating at once without having said, 'I begin with the name of Allah.' The food that was eaten after that was not replaced, and so the supply of food shrank."

This gives us a piece of wisdom about saying "Bismillah." It causes food to be replaced.