105316 - Ruling on writing the Basmalah at the beginning of poems, stories and articles

the question

What is the ruling on writing Bismillaah il-Rahmaan il-Raheem at the beginning of articles, reports, stories and poems?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the subject matter of the articles, reports, stories and poems is good, such as calling people to adhere to Islam and good attitudes and the like, or the subject matter is permissible and is free of haram and evil things, there is nothing wrong with starting them with the Basmalah, rather that should be done, seeking blessing by mentioning the name of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and following the example of the Holy Quran, for Allah started it with the Basmalah.

But if the subject matter of these articles, reports, stories and poems is haram, then it is not permissible to write them or publish them, and it is not permissible to read them except for one who will denounce the falsehood contained in them; and it is not permissible to write Bismillaah il-Rahmaan il-Raheem at the beginning of them, because mentioning the name of Allah, may He be exalted, in the context of something sinful is contrary to the respect and veneration of Allah that is enjoined, and it may even lead to a kind of disrespect and mocking the name of Allah, may He be exalted.

Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd said:

Anything that is haram or makrooh, whether it is words or actions, it is not permissible to start it with any mention of Allah, may He be exalted, because that is disrespectful, and is starting sin with an act of obedience.

An example of that is writing the Basmalah at the top of a poem that is not good, or at the beginning of a haram game, or a haram bet, or starting a misguided program with recitation of the Quran or with praising Allah or sending blessings and peace upon the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and so on.

The people have gone so far in messing about and deceiving the simple-minded people by giving the impression that these haram things are permissible, and it has got so bad that they do a prostration for sin when one betting party wins over another, the winner prostrates for winning the haram bet! This prostration is something that incurs the wrath and anger of Allah. And Allah is the One Whose help we seek.

It was narrated that Mak-hool al-Azdi said: I said to Ibn ‘Umar: What do you think if the murderer, drinker, thief and adulterer remember Allah? Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you” [al-Baqarah 2:152]. He said: If such a person remembers Allah, Allah will remember him by cursing him until he falls silent.

Shaykh Ahmad Shaakir (may Allah have mercy on him) commented on this report in ‘Umdat al-Tafseer (1/273) where he said: What Ibn ‘Umar said is true, and applies fully to what the evildoers and promiscuous people do nowadays, when they remember Allah at times of committing evil and in evil and immoral songs and acting, which they claim are educational, and in their fabricated stories, which they regard as literature, and in their toying with religion which they call religious poetry and nasheed, and they sing these nasheeds at times when they should show dignity and devotion to worship, to the point that they have confused the masses with regard to the rituals of Islam. All of them mention Allah but Allah will mention them by cursing them until they fall silent. End quote from Tas-heeh al-Du`a p. 49.