# THE STORY OF BILAL AND THE CALL FOR PRAYER

Seven months after the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the Mosque, which still exists today and is called the Mosque of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, was completed. At that time, the Mosque was made of bricks with mud walls that had been smoothed down and whitened and the roof that was made up of rafters and palm branches.

Late one afternoon when the followers of Islam were gathered in the Mosque, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ asked the people, “How shall we call Muslims to Prayer?” The room fell silent. Finally, an old man in the corner cleared his voice, “If Prophet Mohammad ﷺ will permit”, he said, “I would like to tell of a dream”. Prophet Mohammad ﷺ nodded and leaned forward to hear.

“I had a dream one night of a man dressed in green. He held in his hand a bell. When I saw the bell, I thought to myself that I should buy this bell to call the Muslims to Prayer. So, I offered to purchase it from him. But he refused to sell it to me and said that I will show you a far better way—the human voice, a voice that can be heard from afar. A voice calling: “ALLAH (GOD) IS GREAT! THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH AND THAT MOHAMMAD ﷺ IS THE PROPHET OF ALLAH COME TO PRAYER! COME TO PRAYER!”

Prophet Mohammad ﷺ closed his eyes for a moment, and then nodded, “It is a sign from Allah. A human voice, then, shall call Muslims to prayer”.

Abu Bakr, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ’s friend and companion, had been sitting with his head bowed, listening, and remembering. He had heard a voice once – never in all his life would he forget that voice. He had been strolling on the outskirts of Makkah when it reached him from across the sands and the heat of the desert. “Ahad!” it cried, “Ahad!” (Meaning one Allah).

Such a cry of anguish and faith it was, that his heart melted upon hearing it. When he went to investigate, he saw Bilal the black slave with an enormous stone resting on his chest being whipped by his master because he had declared Shahada and had become a Muslim. The sun had baked his bleeding lips. With a great effort he summoned up his strength and cried out his faith in defiance to the pain, “Ahad!” Abu Bakr paid Bilal’s price to his master and freed him.

Seated beside the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, Abu Bakr looked over to the tall Black man whose life he had saved, and who had shown such proof of faith. As he did so the Prophet spoke. “Bilal shall be the one to call the prayer. Bilal shall be our Mua’dhin”.

“Yes! Bilal!” agreed everyone.

Bilal, slightly reluctant, and a bit embarrassed, let himself be hoisted to the top of a tall building. There, facing again the vast sky and the open desert, he forgot his shyness. His beautiful voice rang out, resonant and compelling:

“Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah

I bear witness that Mohammad ﷺ is Allah’s messenger

I bear witness that Mohammad ﷺ is Allah’s messenger

Come to prayer, come to prayer

Come to success, come to success

Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest.”

And the call for prayer was settled. This is called the Adhan and in Arabic it sounds beautiful.

It would be nice to play the Adhan at this point if the teacher could access a pre-recorded version and appreciate the beauty of the rhyme and rhythm with which it is said.