

Bilal ibn Abi Rabah (RadhiAllahu anhu)

- Bilal (RadhiAllahu anhu) is known amongst the galaxy of Sahaba as the Mu`azzin of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

Historians say that he was one of the first people to have embraced Islam along with; Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), Abu Bakr, Suhayb, Khabbab, Ammar, Sumayyah mother of Ammar, Miqdad and Khadija (radhiAllahu anhum).

He was an Abyssinian slave of Umayyah bin Khalaf, the disbeliever in Makkah. His conversion to Islam was naturally not liked by his master, and he was therefore persecuted mercilessly.

Ummayah bin Khalaf who was one of the worst enemies of Islam would make him lie down on burning sun at midday and would place heavy boulders on his chest, so that he could not even move a limb. He would then say to him,

“Say that your god is Lat and Uzza, or die!”

Under these afflictions Bilal (RadhiAllahu anhu) would exclaim, “Ahad! The one Allah! Ahad! The one Allah!”

He was whipped at night and with the cuts thus received, made to lie on the burning ground during the day to make him either abandon Islam or to die a lingering death from wounds. The torturers would get tired and take turns (Abu Jahl, Umayyah and others) and compete with one another in afflicting more and more painful punishment. But Bilal (RadhiAllahu anhu) would not leave Islam. At last Abu Bakr (RadhiAllahu anhu) bought his freedom, and he became a free Muslim. Islam taught the oneness of the Almighty Creator, while the idolaters of Makkah believed in many gods and goddesses, therefore Bilal (RadhiAllahu anhu) repeated:

"Ahad (The One). Ahad (The One)."

Lesson #1: This clearly shows his love and devotion to Allah. Allah was so dear to him that no amount of persecution could distract him from reciting Allah’s

blessed name. Our condition today is that we don't even perform our salah because we are afraid that people might stare at us if we do so. We should take lesson from these illustrious sahaba and gain courage from them to be steadfast on our prayers and Deen wherever we might be.

Lesson #2: We learn from Hazrat Bilal's story of how Allah rewards steadfastness and hardships! He was to have the honor of becoming the Prophet's Mu`azzin. He was always to remain with him at home and on journeys to call out the Azaan for his Salaat.

- One day the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) asked Bilal (radhiAllahu anhu), "O Bilal, how is it that I heard you're the sound of your footsteps in Jannah?" So Bilal (radhiAllahu anhu) answered, "O Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), it could be because every time my wudhu breaks, then I go renew my wudhu and then I pray two rakaats nafl." The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam answered, "Yes this is the reason why I heard your footsteps." (Narrated by Ahmad)

Lesson #1: We learn from this hadith of the importance of nafl prayers and that they are a way to get closer to Allah Ta`ala and enter Jannah.

Lesson #2: This prayer that was constantly performed by Bilal (radhiAllahu anhu) is called *tahiyyatul-wudhu*. It is 2 rakaats with the intention of nafl and to be done right after making wudhu.

- After the Prophet's death it became very-hard for him to continue his stay in Madina where he would miss him at every step and in every corner. He therefore left Madina, and decided to pass the rest of his life striving in the path of Allah. Once he beheld the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in his dream saying to him: "O Bilal! How is it that you never visit me?"

No sooner did he get up than he set out for Madinah. On reaching there, Hasan and Hazrat (RadhiAllahu anhuma) (The Prophet's (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) grandsons) requested him to call out the Azaan. He could not refuse them, for they were very dear to him. But as soon as the Azaan was called, the people of Madina cried openly out of the memory of the happy days of the Prophet's (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) time. Even the women came out of their houses weeping. Bilal (RadhiAllahu anhu) left Madina again after a few days and died in Damascus in 20 A.H.