

The story of Bilal, the first Muezzin.

Bilal was a black skinned man from Africa and worked as a slave in Arabia. A man called Umayya owned Bilal, and he treated him badly. When the merchant heard Muhammad teaching about one god, Allah, he was angry. He might lose money.

When the slave owner heard Muhammad say that all people were equal, like the teeth in a comb, he was furious. No slave was equal to him. The merchant decided to test Muhammad's teachings. He ordered Bilal to strike one of the Prophet's companions, firmly believing that a slave would not disobey his master. Bilal, however, had listened to Muhammad too, and he thought the Prophet was right. He believed that it was more important to obey Allah than his master, even if it cost him his life. He dropped the whip Umayya had given him, and refused to do as he was told. Immediately the merchant had Bilal thrown in prison and hurt him badly. As he was hurt, Bilal cried out "One God, One God."

Prophet Muhammed heard what had happened and told his great friend Abu Bakr, to buy this slave to free him with. As a free man, Bilal became a close and dear friend to both Abu Bakr and Muhammad. He helped to build the first mosque in Medina. The time came when the Muslim's were searching for a way to call the faithful to prayer, Bilal came into his own. The believers decided they did not want a flag, or a bell, or a rattle, or a drum, or a trumpet, but a beautiful human voice. Abu Bakr declared, "Then there is only one voice we could use for our first call to prayer," he said, and explained how he had found Bilal and set him free. Muhammad agreed, and so it was that Bilal became the first muezzin, the first to call people to prayer.