

## Introduction

Sayyidina Hazrat Bilal was an Abyssinian slave belonging to a Jew called Umayya Bin Khalf, who was a bitter enemy of Islam.

He embraced Islam in its early days, during times when the non-believers would continuously harass the Muslims and never allow them a moment of peace.

Hazrat Bilal's love for Allah and the Holy Prophet will always remain a perfect example of devotion and total submission.

Ahad, Ahad – there is only one Allah

In the sweltering heat under the Arabian skies, Hazrat Bilal's love for Allah shone brighter than the sun itself. So strong was it that he could not conceal it despite the punishment and torture afflicted on him by his cruel master.

There were times when a large boulder would be placed upon his chest as he lay on the scorching sand, his ribs being crushed under the weight. Yet the words 'Ahad! Ahad! (There is only one Allah!)' were constantly repeated by Hazrat Bilal, so strong was his faith and love.

His Jewish master would insult him and threaten him to denounce Islam, beat him, whip him and humiliate him on the streets of Makkah, but nothing was able to shake Hazrat Bilal's heart.

He put his life and soul into the Hands of Allah, and there it would forever remain.

One day, it so happened that Hazrat Abu Bakr was passing that way and saw Sayyidina Hazrat Bilal crying out, "Ahad! Ahad!", despite the immense torture he was being subjected to. As he watched, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique's heart became agitated upon seeing Hazrat Bilal under such persecution, and tears filled his eyes.

He then called Hazrat Bilal towards himself and advised him to utter Allah's name in solitude and not to utter it in the presence of his persecutor, or he would be subjected to further persecution and torture. Hazrat Bilal replied, "O Honoured One! You are the Siddique of Rasulallah, and therefore I accept your advice and will act accordingly."

The following day, Hazrat Abu Bakr happened to pass that way, and again he witnessed the same sight.

Hazrat Bilal was once more uttering the cry of "Ahad! Ahad!" while the Jew was torturing him to such an extent that again his body became soaked in blood. Seeing this, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique's heart was filled with pain and he advised Hazrat Bilal, "Brother, why do you utter 'Ahad' in the presence of this persecutor? Utter it silently and secretly within yourself".

Hazrat Bilal replied, "I make tawba (repentance) and in future will not act contrary to your advice."

Hazrat Mawlana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"When Abu Bakr advised him towards silence and secrecy,

Bilal repented again,

But when love overwhelmed, he swallowed the repentance.

It is the message of the troubled heart.

Without You there can be neither peace nor comfort."

Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, on numerous occasions, gave Hazrat Bilal the same advice but on every occasion when he passed that way, he saw the same scene - the Jew persecuting Bilal who was all the time crying, "Ahad! Ahad!"

Hazrat Abu Bakr finally went to Rasulallah and related the story to him. When Rasulallah heard the story, he was filled with sorrow and tears flowed from his blessed eyes. He asked, "O Siddique! What is the solution to this problem? How can we save Bilal from this calamity?"

Hazrat Abu Bakr replied: "Ya Rasulallah, I shall buy Bilal. Rasulallah agreed and said, "Let my share also be therein".

Subhanallah! How great the fortune of Sayidina Hazrat Bilal, that Rasulallah himself took part in purchasing him.

Hazrat Abu Bakr then approached the Jew while he was again torturing Hazrat Bilal. Hazrat Abu Bakr said to him, "Why are you beating this friend of Allah?" The Jew replied, "If you have so much sympathy for him, then bring the money and take him away as yours".

Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique then paid the ransom and freed Hazrat Bilal.

After this, Rasulallah, out of love and joy, embraced Hazrat Bilal and held him to his heart.

Hazrat Mawlana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Mustafa embraced Bilal and held him against his chest. The ecstasy Bilal felt! Who can ever imagine that?"

### Conquest of Makkah

When the Muslims finally conquered the city of Makkah, its people fled to their houses in fear and bolted the doors and windows. They feared that the Muslims would avenge themselves for the wrong done to them years ago.

The Muslims advanced towards the Holy Kabah and then Hazrat Bilal assured the people that they were safe. He announced out loud, "All those who lay down arms are safe. All those in the house of Abu Sufyan are safe. All those behind closed doors are safe."

### Heartbreak and immense grief

After the passing away of Rasulallah , Hazrat Bilal was overcome with immense grief. This death had completely shattered his heart and in this state, he decided that he could no longer stay in Madinah Sharif. He then gathered his belongings and left for Syria.

He had just left the border of Madinah Sharif, when sleep overcame him. He found a tree to sleep under and took some rest there. In his sleep, Rasulallah appeared in his dream and said, "Bilal, why did you leave me?" Hazrat Bilal immediately woke up and, without hesitation, made the journey back to Madinah Sharif.

When the people of Madinah saw Hazrat Bilal returning through the city gates, they were overwhelmed with joy. Word spread through the streets that Bilal, the Holy Prophet's Muazzin had returned.

As Hazrat Bilal made his way to the Holy Prophet's Masjid, requests for him to do the Azan were ringing in his ears. People followed him through the streets, pleading for him to deliver the call to prayer once more. The blessed city had been deprived of his beautiful Azan for too long, and the people craved to hear it one last time.

However, since the death of Rasulallah , Hazrat Bilal's grief had been so immense that he resolved that he would never do the Azan again, and so he refused the pleas of the people.

As he advanced towards the blessed Masjid, he saw the two beloved grandsons of Rasulallah , Hazrat Hassan and Hussain. They too requested for him to do the Azan, and when he looked upon their blessed young faces, his love for them overwhelmed his heart. He knew he could never refuse them anything, and they were, after all, the grandsons of the one whose love had penetrated his heart through and through.

Hazrat Bilal then stood up on the Mimbar, assumed his position as the Muazzin and started to read the Azan. His voice, beautiful as it was, rang through the streets of Madinah Sharif, his pain and heartbreak evident in the painful tune. He read to his heart's content, and in such a manner that there was not a person in the blessed city whose eyes were not wet with tears.

When Hazrat Bilal reached "Ash-hadu anna Muhammadur Rasulallah", he broke down and could not continue. His pain and the pain of Madinah's people was unbearable.

Memories of the beautiful days when Rasulallah sat amongst them penetrated their hearts with hurt and agony.

The emptiness of their lives and their souls without Rasulallah had devastated them and left them broken inside. Even the strongest amongst them who were usually able to suppress the pain could not hold back any longer.

Passing away of the Prophet's Muazzin

The great devotee and Muazzin of Rasulallah , the courageous and beloved Abyssinian by the name of Hazrat Bilal Habshi passed away in the middle of reading Azan in Damascus, Syria between the years 638 and 642 (AD).

This was the second time after the death of Rasulallah that Hazrat Bilal recited the Azan.