

## Adhaan (part 1 of 2): The call to Prayer

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

### Introduction

Linguistically, the term Adhaan means “a proclamation”, and this is what is meant in the verse of the Qur’aan:

**[“And a proclamation (Adhaan) from Allaah and His messenger to all people on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage that Allaah is free from (all) obligations to the polytheists, and so is His messenger.”]<sup>1</sup>**

In religious context, the Adhaan is that proclamation made, consisting of specific “words of remembrance”, the time for an obligatory Salaah has begun. Throughout the Muslim world and in some places in the West, the caller to prayer announces five times a day from every mosque that it is time for prayer, to remember Allaah, and to put aside all the cares of life to prepare for the worship of the Giver of Life. The prayer “God is the Greatest” resonates through all semblances of civilization, through small towns to metropolises.

The Adhaan covers all the essentials of the Islaamic faith in a few words:

- It begins by proclaiming the greatness of Allaah.
- It testifies to Allaah’s Tawheed and His exclusive right to worship.
- It denies shirk – the worship of everything besides Allaah.
- The Adhaan testifies that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah.
- It mentions belief in one of the greatest pillars of Islaam: the Salaah prayer.
- Invites to the prayer and equates it with prosperity, salvation and success (in the hereafter)
- It affirms the reward for Salaah: prosperity for one who singles out Allaah in Tawheed, follows His Messenger, establishes the Salaah and other pillars of Islaam.
- It implies the loss of one who does not respond to the Adhaan and does not pray.

<sup>1</sup> Qur’aan [9:3]

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### History of Adhaan

The Adhaan was prescribed during the first year after the Prophet migration to Madeenah. It was taught in true visions to two companions and made part of Muslim life by the Prophet, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), himself. Abdullah ibn Zayd, a companion of the Prophet, reported:

**“When the Prophet was to order the use of a bell to call the people to prayer, he disliked it because it resembled the Christian practice. While I was sleeping, a man came to me carrying a bell. I said to him, ‘O slave of Allaah, will you sell me that bell?’**

**He said, ‘What would you do with it?’**

**I replied, ‘I would call the people to prayer with it.’**

**He responded, ‘Shall I not guide you to something better than that?’**

**I said, ‘Certainly.’**

**He said, ‘You should say:**

**Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar**

**Ashhadu alla ilaaha illaallaah, ashhadu alla ilaaha illaallaah**

**Ashhadu anna Muhammadar-Rasool-lal-lah,**

**ashhadu anna Muhammadar-Rasool-lal-lah**

**Hayya ‘alas-salah, hayyah ‘alas-salah**

**Hayya ‘alal-falah, hayya ‘alal-falah**

**Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar. La ilaaha illaallaah.’**

**Then he went a short distance away and said, ‘When you stand for the prayer, say:**

**Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar**

**Ashhadu alla ilaaha illaallaah**

**Ashhadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasool-lal-lah**

**Hayya ‘alas-salah, hayya ‘alal-falah**

**Qad qaamatis-salah, qad qaamatis-salah**

**Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar. La ilaaha illaallaah.’**

**When the morning came, I went to the Messenger of Allaah to tell him what I had seen. He said, ‘Your dream is true, Allaah willing. Go to Bilaal, tell him what you have seen, and**

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tell him to make the call to prayer, for he has the best voice among you.’ I went to Bilaal and told him what to do, and he made the call to prayer. ‘Umar was in his house when he heard it. He came out with his cloak, saying ‘By the One who has raised you with the truth, I saw similar to what he saw.’ The Prophet said, ‘All praise is to Allaah.’”<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) appointed two companions to call the Adhaan in Madeenah in his mosque: Bilaal, a former African slave whose freedom was bought by Aboo Bakr, and Ibn Umm Maktoom for the Adhaan of Fajr. He also appointed Aboo Mah-zura in Makkah and Sa’ad al-Qaraz in Quba’.

### The virtues of Adhaan

Many ahadeeth of our Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) describe the virtues of the Adhaan and the one who calls it:

**“If the people knew what was in the Adhaan and the first row (of the prayer in virtue), and that they could not get it save by drawing lots, they would draw lots.”<sup>3</sup>**

The meaning of this Hadeeth is that if the people knew the abundant reward in calling the Adhaan, and could not find any way to call the Adhaan except by drawing lots, then they would do that to attain its virtue.

**“The callers to prayer will have the longest necks of all people on the Day of Resurrection.”<sup>4</sup>**

This meaning of this Hadeeth is explained to be that they will be masters and leaders, as the Arabs describe leaders as having long necks, or it means they will have the most good deeds to their credit.

**“Allaah and His angels send blessings upon the front row, and the caller to prayer is forgiven as far as his voice reaches, and whatever hears him, animate or inanimate, confirms what he says, and he will have a reward like that of those who pray with him.”<sup>5</sup>**

**“Your Lord, the Exalted, is amazed (and pleased) by one who is watching sheep in his pasture, then goes to the mountain to make the call to prayer and pray. Allaah, the Exalted, says, ‘Look at my slave there who makes the call to prayer and establishes the prayer out of fear of Me. I have forgiven my slave and have allowed him to enter Paradise.”<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, Ibn Maajah, Al-Tirmidhee

<sup>3</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and others

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad, Saheeh Muslim, Ibn Maajah

<sup>5</sup> Nasaa’ee

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, Nasaa’ee

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“The Imaam is a guarantor, and the caller to prayer is one who is given the trust. O Allaah, guide the Imaam and forgive the caller to prayer.”<sup>7</sup>

“Whoever gives the call to prayer for twelve years will be guaranteed Paradise, and for each day sixty good deeds will be recorded for him by virtue of his Adhaan, and thirty good deeds by virtue of his iqamah.”<sup>8</sup>

### How is the Adhaan called?

Here are the wordings of the Adhaan.

*Allaahu akbar*

Allaah is the Greatest

*Allaahu akbar*

Allaah is the Greatest

*Allaahu akbar*

Allaah is the Greatest

*Allaahu akbar*

Allaah is the Greatest

*Ashhadu alla ilaha illaallaah*

I testify there is no true god worthy of worship but Allaah

*Ashhadu alla ilaha illaallaah*

I testify there is no true god worthy of worship but Allaah

*Ashhadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasool-lal-lah*

I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah

*Ashhadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasool-lal-lah*

I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah

*Hayya ‘alas-salah*

Come to prayer

*Hayya ‘alas-salah*

Come to prayer

*Hayya ‘alal-falah*

Come to success

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Tirmidhee

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Maajah

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*Hayya 'alal-falah*

Come to success

*Allaahu akbar*

God is the Greatest

*Allaahu akbar*

God is the Greatest

*La ilaaha illaallah*<sup>9</sup>

There is none worthy of worship but Allaah alone

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<sup>9</sup> Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, Ibn Maajah, Al-Tirmidhee