



The English translation is as follows: Allah is the greatest (x4), I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (x2), I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (x2), Come to prayer (x2), Come to success (x2), Allah is the greatest (x2), There is none worthy of worship except Allah.

A Brief History

The practice of adhan began when the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was living in the city of Madinah where the amount of Muslims was rapidly increasing. Previously, a simple loud announcement was made to congregate anyone who heard. Soon after, regular prayers were beginning and a more formal method was needed to gather everyone. The method of blowing a horn or ringing bells like the Judeo and Christian traditions was suggested, and so was beating drums. It is believed that a few of the Prophet's (pbuh) companions heard the adhan in a dream through the angel Gabriel (Progler). The Prophet (pbuh) chose the sahabah (one of his companions) named Bilal ibn Rabah as the first muezzin to recite the first adhan. Since then, it has been a tradition to make adhan for each of the five obligatory prayers.

The Traditions & Methods

The adhan has traditionally been a way to mark the time of day, and still serves that purpose in many rural areas. The loud call reaches homes and fields, informing families

and laborers of the time. People still plan their days around this trusty notifier. The adhan plays in several Muslim countries and in American mosques as well. Before modern technology, a muezzin would actually stand in the minaret of a mosque and loudly announce the adhan. In modern times, loudspeakers are placed on minarets and sometimes a recording is even played, but most adhans are recited live. There are also traditions of reading the adhan in a newborn's ear, and many Muslims believe that the call has medicinal attributes.¹

Significance

The role of adhan is extensive. This religious tradition is heard by millions everyday. Every part of our day, from the start to the end of it, is marked by the reminder of God. It helps form discipline in our lives to start the day early and on a positive note. For many, the adhan is a reminder of home, unity, and community. The familiar sound of the adhan unifies the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims living and working together in a single community. The adhan is a reminder of the old and the new, the memory of a complex past and the optimism for an even brighter future. The adhan is an omnipresent call for all nations and all people.

1. Progler, Joseph. "Muslim Call to Prayer | Smithsonian Folkways Magazine." Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, folkways.si.edu/magazine-fall-winter-2014-muslim-call-prayer/islamic-sacred/music/article/smithsonian.