



بَيْتُ بِلَالِ بْنِ رَهَابٍ Bilal



Vol. no. 1

"BILAL" IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MOSLEM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, CARBONDALE

July 1963

BILAL

THE SPIRIT OF BILAL

This newsletter is named in memory of Bilal ibn Rahab, a black Ethiopian slave who became the comrade and closest friend of Mohammed, the Moslem prophet.

When, at the beginning of the seventh century, Mohammed began his divine mission and exhorted Arabs to discard idol-worship and to worship the one, invisible God, those who were converted to Islam were often subsequently persecuted for their beliefs. Many of Mohammed's early followers, in the face of danger, lost their original faith and turned once again to the idols of Mecca.

But Bilal, an Ethiopian slave who was bought by Abu Bakr and had accepted Islam was among the few who remained faithful to Allah and his prophet Mohammed. Although Bilal too was persecuted for his faith, he would not recant. Even when he was being cruelly tortured, his captors could force from him but one cry: "Ahad! Ahad! One, only one God!"

In time, Bilal became the First Muezzin (one who calls Moslems to prayer). His religious ardor and devotion were a great inspiration to Moslems and non-Moslems alike. Each morning before dawn, Bilal would call the faithful to worship with these words: "Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord! I bear witness that there is no God but the Lord! I bear witness that Mohammed is the prophet of God. Come unto prayer! Come unto salvation! God is Great! God is Great! There is no God but the Lord! Prayer is better than sleep! Prayer is better than sleep!" This is part of the Azaan, or call to prayer, and to this day it is the most impressive of Moslem rites.

Continued on page 2 ---

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P 6

TENETS OF ISLAM

The religion of Jesus bears the name of Christianity, derived from its author Christ; that of Moses and of Buddha are known by the respective names of their teachers. The religion of Mohammed alone has a distinctive appellation. It is Islam.

Salam (salama), in its primary sense, means to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, or to be at perfect peace. In its secondary sense, salam means to surrender oneself to Him with one's absolute submission to God's will, but means striving after righteousness.

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"The Spirit of Bilal" continued from page 1 ---

Mohammed and his followers had such high regard for Bilal that in addition to his being Muezzin, he was made First Treasurer of Islam, and had, as well, the office of receiving and entertaining diplomats and high officials such as emissaries from the Persian and Roman empires.

Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, continued close in Islamic brotherhood to Bilal, as did Omar, the next Caliph. So esteemed was Bilal by Moslems that after the capture of Jerusalem, he rode through the streets at the right hand of Omar. In this way and others, Bilal's power and popularity were recognized until his death.

Because of his black color, Bilal was insulted at least once, and that time was by Prince Constatine, Roman General and head of the Syrian army. When Bilal was sent to talk with the Prince about terms for Syria's surrender, Constatine looked at Bilal and said, "I will have nothing to do with this black slave." The Roman General paid dearly for this insult, for Bilal imposed strong terms, terms that met with the Moslem General's approval.

When Bilal died, he was buried in Damascus, where his mausoleum attracted visitors for centuries afterwards. Although Bilal died, he remains as a symbol of equality and brotherhood among men. With that same spirit, this newsletter is called "Bilal".

J.D. & L.C.

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"Tenets of Islam" continued from page 1 ---

The principal bases on which the Islamic system is founded are (1) a belief in the unity, immortality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator; (2) a belief in prophets that came before Mohammed, including Jesus and Moses, however, according to Moslems, Mohammed is the last of the prophets that God will send; (3) a belief in charity and brotherhood among men; (4) subjugation of the passions; and (5) accountability for human actions in another existence. (In following issues of "Bilal", these principles of Islam will be discussed more fully.)

A.L.

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The Moslems, with a total membership of more than 420,000,000 followers, are second in number only to Catholics, whose membership is about 500,000,000. Moslems are scattered around the world as follows:

North America	33,000	Africa	86,178,853
South America	342,615	Australia	102,000
Europe	12,425,300	Russia	30,000,000
Asia	321,524,930	Communist China	40,000,000

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MOSLEM STUDENT ASSOCIATION

On May 30 of this year, the Moslem Student Association of SIU was officially organized. The month before, several interested students, including Moslems from several countries and Christians
Continued on page 3 ---

"Moslem Student Association" continued from page 2 ---
from both Europe and the United States got together and drafted a constitution for the Moslem Student Association. The Constitution was approved on May 21, 1963, and officers were elected on May 30, 1963. Of the six offices of the Executive Committee, four were filled, one by an American Protestant. In accordance with the Moslem principles of tolerance and brotherhood, the Association is willing and would be glad to fill the two remaining offices with believers from non-Moslem faiths.

The purpose of the Moslem Student Association is to fulfill a need on the SIU campus. In the past, Islam has not been presented adequately, either by Moslem or non-Moslem speakers. One of the purposes of the Association will be to provide Moslem speakers who are able to present Islam more accurately and completely.

In addition to making Islam better understood, some other general purposes of the Association are: to strengthen fraternal bonds among Moslem students; to promote friendly relationships between Moslem and non-Moslem students; to arrange discussion meetings; and to participate in Islamic activities.

The members of the Executive Committee, who were elected on May 30, 1963, are:

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|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Yousef Danesh | President |
| Linda Clark | Secretary |
| Said Anabtawi | Treasurer |
| Saeed Nizami | Religious Relations Chairman |
| . . . | |
| Dr. H.A. Jacobini | Faculty Adviser |

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This is Issue I of "Bilal", a monthly publication. The editors invite its readers to express their views and to send any relevant articles for printing. The address of the Association is 713 Freeman, Carbondale, Illinois.

EDITORIAL STAFF

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| Clark, Linda | Lateef, Abdul |
| Danesh, Yousef | Nizami, Saeed |

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On August 4, 1963, at 7:00 p.m., The Moslem Student Association will meet in Morris Library Lounge to hold its General Assembly. All students and others interested are invited to attend.

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Also on August 4, 1963, at 8:00 p.m., in Morris Library Lounge, MSA will hold a celebration in honor of Mohammed's birthday. The program will include one brief address lasting no longer than fifteen minutes. Afterwards, guests are invited to remain for refreshments and conversation.