

The Bilal ibn Rabah Scholarship Application

This scholarship promotes the University of Kentucky's Strategic Vision of Diversity and Inclusion. In order to obtain the educational benefits of a diverse student body, the University will aggressively admit and retain students from all segments of society including students of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, sexes, sexual orientation, gender identities, disability status, religious traditions, political beliefs, and geographic backgrounds. Factors that are considered in the holistic evaluation of applicants include contribution to diversity, test scores, grades, essay, leadership experience, extracurricular activities, awards and recognition, and community service. Awards will be based on the applicant's ranking within the competitive pool, with values varying based on meritorious criteria.

The name of this scholarship reflects the spirit of perseverance and determination to face and overcome any adversity in life. Bilal ibn Rabah embodied all of these characteristics and more. Therefore, this scholarship has been established to reward deserving students who have overcome a variety of adversities, or are inspired by the story of Bilal and see themselves standing for justice and equality in the same manner that he did. The awardees must have the desire to pursue their academic and life goals at the University of Kentucky.

- **All applicants are encouraged to complete the FAFSA. However, if you are not eligible to complete the FAFSA, you can still be eligible for the Bilal ibn Rabah Scholarship.**
- **Applicants applying for this scholarship are preferred* to have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale, however, all students may apply.**
- **The deadline for submitting the application is June 14, 2019.**
- **The Bilal ibn Rabah Scholarship is reflective of civic engagement and community service. All awardees will have the opportunity to learn about various civic engagement opportunities, including but not limited to:**
 - **University of Kentucky Center for Community Outreach**
 - **University of Kentucky Center for Student Philanthropy**
 - **University of Kentucky Student Government Association**
 - **Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Offices**

Bilal ibn Rabah: An Overview

Born in a mountainous place in Western Arabia, Bilal ibn Rabah is very lovingly remembered by all Muslims of the world as one of the earliest and most revered Muslims.

Although the son of an Abyssinian Princess and Arab father, Bilal's noble lineage afforded him no opportunities as both his parents were sold into slavery before he was born.

Well known for his abilities, strength, and intelligence, Bilal was forced to serve the royals of Mecca, specifically, Umayyah ibn Khalaf. The elite of Mecca, the Quraysh, were very strong and oppressed who dared to speak out against the injustices of their society. The Muslims, led by the Prophet (Muhammad) incurred the lion's share of their wrath.

This was due to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)'s conviction in the belief of One God in a pagan society. Extending from this central belief, he passionately spread egalitarian ideals that sought to dismantle the very power structures of the Quraysh. The message that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered flew in the face of the classism, sexism, elitism, and the very institutions that enabled the elites of Makkah to continue their oppression of the most vulnerable of society.

When Bilal heard this revolutionary message from the Prophet (PBUH) it resonated with him at a spiritual level. Having seen firsthand the inequality present in Meccan society, Bilal took this message of one God to heart and accepted Islam. Bilal knew full well that this would invariably result in more injustice and oppression towards him. However, Bilal refused to conform to his masters and remained an independent thinker and believer. Bilal worshipped God secretly away from the watchful eye of his master Ummaya bin Khalaf.

Bilal's conviction and commitment to justice of all kinds did not go unpunished. Ummaya Bin Khalaf eventually found out about his secret prayers and tortured him in the most gruesome of manners. Crushed by rocks, beaten with iron rods, and burned in the desert sun Bilal refused to acquiesce to this corrupt master in this corrupt system. Having heard of Bilal's bravery and dedication in the face of injustice, a man named Abu Bakr bought Bilal's freedom. Abu Bakr was a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This scene of freeing a slave from bondage was a scene to be played out many more times throughout the early history of Islam. Beyond this, the stark monotheistic religion of Islam freed believers from their mental and spiritual chains. Confronting the evils of society went hand in hand with confronting spiritual deficiencies of the individual.

All throughout his life Bilal remained a close companion of Prophet Muhammad, and was with him at every opportunity. Bilal's faith afforded him an elevated place among the great and holy women and men of Islam. Indeed, many human beings of distinction, prestige, or wealth have not obtained even one-tenth of the immortality which Bilal the Abyssinian slave turned powerful leader gained.

Today all around the world 1.8 billion Muslims know and love Bilal Al-Habashi, or Bilal the Ethiopian. Friday sermons from Pakistan to Ghana speak of his noble character and sacrifice. Ottoman Mosques in Istanbul display his name in huge, beautiful calligraphy over orante prayer halls. Inner city mosques throughout the United States bear his blessed name as their titles. His blazing conviction and refusal to bow to injustice has been engraved in the hearts' of the Muslim faithful for 1400 years and continues to inspire individuals, regardless of faith, worldwide.

(paraphrased from www.al-islam.org as well as input from the Lexington Muslim Community)

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name _____
Last First Middle

UK ID # _____ Telephone Number (_____) _____ - _____

Permanent Address _____
Street/Route City
State Zip County

Email Address _____

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (Please include school, community, and other organizations.)

Activity	Years Involved	Hours per Week	Leadership Positions Held

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Award or Recognition	Year Received	Level (Local, Regional, State, National)

WORK EXPERIENCE/CIVIC COMMUNITY SERVICE

Organization	Years Involved	Hours per Week	Positions Held

HOBBIES OR OTHER SPECIAL INTERESTS

MAIL TO:

University of Kentucky
203 King Alumni House
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0119

We cannot guarantee receipt of scholarship applications mailed to any other address.