7945 - Was the adhan revealed by wahy or was it suggested by a sahaabi?

the question

I think i once read that the adhan (call to prayer)was suggested to our prophet Muhammed ( ) by another muslim after he said he didnt want to use the bells that the christians used or the rams-head(?) that the jews used to call people to prayer. How does the idea of everything the prophet ordered being an inspiration that is inspired fit in with this?
I am not trying to be picky here, but am asking purely to aid my understanding.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

“Adhan” in Arabic means conveying; in Islam it means announcing that the time (for prayer) has come. It was prescribed during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Madeenah. According to the hadeeth of ‘Abd-Allah ibn Zayd ibn Abd Rabbihi, when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) decided to use a bell even though he disliked it because it was like what the Christians used, ‘there appeared to me in a dream a man who was wearing two green garments, in whose hand was a bell. I said, “O slave of Allah, will you sell that bell?” he said, “What will you do with it?” I said, “We will call the people to prayer with it.” He said, “Shall I not show you something better than that?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Say, Allahu akbar Allah akbar … (to the end of the adhaan).” When morning came, I went to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him what I had seen. He said, “This is a true dream, in sha Allah. Get up with Bilaal and tell him what you have seen, so that he can give the call, because he has a more beautiful voice than you.” So I got up with Bilaal and started telling him what I had seen, and he gave the call to prayer. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab heard that whilst he was in his house, and he came out, dragging his cloak behind him, saying, “By

the One Who sent you with the truth, O Messenger of Allah, I saw the same as he saw.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “To Allah be praise.”’

(Narrated by Ahmad, 1588; al-Tirmidhi, 174; Abu Dawood, 421, 430; Ibn Maajah, 698).

It is clear from this hadeeth:

That the words of the adhan came in a dream which was seen by a great sahaabi and approved of by our great Prophet. They were not a suggestion as you mentioned, but a dream, and it is known that dreams are one of the seventy parts of Prophethood, because it was stated in a hadeeth narrated by Ibn ‘Umar that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Dreams are one of the seventy parts of Prophethood.”

(Narrated by Ahmad, 4449).

Al-Bukhaari narrated a different version: “True dreams are one of the forty-six parts of Prophethood.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari,, 6474; Muslim, 4203, 42005).

The dream here, which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described as a true dream, came from Allah and was not a suggestion from a person. So it was a part of Prophethood because it was approved of by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and was described by him as a true dream. If the Prophet had not approved of it, it would not have been considered a true dream and it would not have been a part of Prophethood. The one who judged it to be true was the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the one who commanded them to act upon it was the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who received revelation (wahy) from his Lord.

‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had seen a similar dream. Let us not forget that ‘Umar was one of the Rightly-guided khaleefahs (al-khulafaa’ al-raashidoon), of whom the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “I exhort you to adhere to my sunnah (way) and the sunnah of the rightly-guided khaleefahs. Hold on tight to it with your back teeth.”

(Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2600; Ibn Maajah, 43; Ahmad, 16519).

‘Umar’s view frequently coincided with the wahy and divine legislation. ‘Aa’ishah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say, “Among the nations who came before you there were people who were muhaddathoon (inspired). If there is anyone like this in my ummah, it is ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3282; Muslim, 2398). Ibn Wahb said muhaddathoon means inspired.

You may ask, why did the adhan start in this fashion, being seen in a dream by two sahaabis then being confirmed by the wahy? Why was it not revealed directly? The answer is that Allah decrees whatever He wills, however He wills, may He be glorified and exalted. Perhaps the way it happened was meant to demonstrate the virtue of these two sahaabis and to confirm the how good this ummah is, because among them are some whose opinions coincide with the wahy and some who had true dreams which confirmed their truthfulness, for the people who have the truest dreams are the truest in speech as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said.

Finally:

The definition of the Sunnah given in the books of the scholars is that it consists of everything that was narrated from the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), everything that he “said, did or approved of.”

What is meant by his words and actions is clear. What he approved of refers to when someone did something in front of him and he approved of it – this is also part of the sharee’ah, not because that person did it, but because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) approved of it. The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never kept quiet about falsehood and he never approved of anything false or misguided that was done by others. He would disapprove of it and speak out against it, as he did in the case of the sahaabi Abu Israa’eel, as was narrated by Ibn ‘Abbaas, who said: “Whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was giving a khutbah, he saw a man standing in the sun, and he asked about him. They said, ‘That is Abu Israa’eel. He vowed to stand and not sit down, not to seek shade, not to speak,

and to fast.’ He said, ‘Tell him to speak, seek shade and sit down, but let him complete his fast.’”

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6326).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) approved of Abu Israa’eel’s vow to fast, but he cancelled the rest of his vow and did not approve of it.

So it is clear that the adhan became part of the religion when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) confirmed what Allah had shown the two sahaabis in their dreams, and commanded ‘Abd-Allah ibn Zayd to teach it to Bilaal so that he could call the people to prayer. Hopefully the explanation given above will dispel your confusion and make matters clearer to you. We ask Allah to grant us and you understanding of Islam. And Allah knows best.