

RELIGION AND THE CALIPHATE
(LESSONS FROM THE FALL OF BAGHDAD 10th FEB 1258)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيَكُمْ وَأَيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has commanded and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

One of the reasons that humans were created is to be the vicegerents, those who are responsible for administering this world based on the Islamic law (*Sharia*) as mentioned by Allah the Almighty in the Quran in Chapter 6 (Surah Al-An'am), verse (*ayat*) 165:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلْقَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ

فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

Which means: *It is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.*

Based on this trust, one of the struggles (*jihad*) demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the need to protect the religion of Islam through the power of government within a country. If acts of worship such as prayer and fasting were sufficient to complete Islam, then the Prophet (Pbuh) would not have emigrated to build the state of Medina as his companions and he could have worshipped in Mecca. However, history teaches us that many of the religious teachings can be properly practiced when Islam reigns. In his book titled *Ihya'ulumuddin*, Imam al-Ghazali stated that: *Government and religion are like twins. Religion is the foundation, the government is the defender. Whoever has no foundation, then he shall perish. Whoever has no defender, then he shall be at a loss.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The pinnacle of Islamic rule was during the Abbasid era which was based in the city of Baghdad. The world was amazed by the achievement of Muslims in the fields of science and technology. The world also respected the power of Islamic rule which defended the oppressed. Baghdad was the world reference for those who were seeking knowledge especially in science and technology.

Unfortunately, after nearly 500 years of ruling, the Abbasid empire finally fell into the hands of the Tartar army under the reign of Hulagu Khan, on 10 February 1258 AD. The

fall of Baghdad is indeed a very sad event. Thousands of lives were lost, houses were demolished, and *Baitul Hikmah*, a well known building of knowledge, was burned. Books were thrown into the Dajlah River to be made into a bridge until the water turned black with ink.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Those were the consequences of Islam losing the power of governance. From that time onward, the mastery of Muslims in science and technology began to fade. The oppressed were no longer defended and given rights. The Islamic symbols were abolished little by little, and Islamic law was marginalized.

One of the reasons for the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad was disunity among Muslims which eventually led to a series of rebellions. Among the weaknesses of the Islamic leadership were the lack of trust and transparency. The leaders were busy chasing after wealth and neglecting their responsibility to govern the nation. Hoarding personal wealth and attending to other trivial matters were given priority over strengthening the religion and uniting its followers.

Let the fall of Baghdad be a lesson and let us strive to defend Islamic rule. We must never conspire with those who want to undermine Islamic law. Let us together form a society that loves Allah the Almighty and His messenger by frequenting the mosque for congregational prayer. Consequently, the Muslim community will be united and will unite againsts all the problems that are faced by society. We will be able to spread the religion as mentioned by Allah the Almighty in the Quran in Chapter 24 (Surah An-Nur), verse (*ayat*) 55:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۗ
يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ۗ وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Which means: Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me. If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked.

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ
الْعَظِيمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ
الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.