

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MUSLIM LEADERS

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

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأُوصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our lives as human beings are not complete according to Islam unless we accept the two main duties on this earth as servants of Allah the Almighty and as His vicegerent to carry out all His commands according to the Quran and *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad's tradition and practices). Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 2 (*Surah Al-Baqarah*) verse (*ayat*) 30:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً ۗ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا
مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ
اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ

Which means: “...when your Lord told the angels, ‘I am putting a successor on earth,’ they said, ‘How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?’ but He said, ‘I know things you do not.’”

This verse explains that the main responsibility of man as a vicegerent is to manage the affairs of life in accordance with Islamic teachings - from the smallest affairs to the biggest affairs like managing a country.

Selecting national leaders is a religious duty and appointing pious leaders who will uphold the religion is our main responsibility as Muslims. If the appointed leader has the characteristics desired by Allah the Almighty, then it will please Him.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The responsibility of electing a leader to carry out the duties of the vicegerent on this earth is not just a responsibility whose performance will be evaluated through his Key Performance Indicators (KPI) or the audit process, but it will also be evaluated by Allah the Almighty in the afterlife. This is what leaders and those they lead need to remember. The Messenger of Allah may peace be upon him (PBUH) has reminded us of this great responsibility in a *Hadith* narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim:

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَسْتَرْعِيهِ اللَّهُ رَعِيَّةً يَمُوتُ يَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَهُوَ غَاشٌّ لِرَعِيَّتِهِ إِلَّا

حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ

Which means: “Any governor in charge of Muslim subjects who dies while acting dishonestly towards them will be excluded by Allah from Paradise.”

Reminders like this need to be heeded by leaders to ensure that their leadership excels with solid integrity and piety in the world and pleases Allah the Almighty in the hereafter. In fact, he must not just think about the voter’s evaluation of his performance as a representative of the people once every 5 years. These values are also what produced high quality leaders such as *Khulafa’ al-Rasyidin*, Umar Abdul Aziz, Solahuddin al-Ayyubi and others whose leadership is praised in the history of Islamic civilization. The role of the leader to complete the task of the vicegerent in the administration of the country is very important in Islam. In fact, it is obligatory to complete the task of managing worldly affairs with religious guidance as stated by Imam al-Mawardi about *siasah*, which is “managing the world with religious guidance” in order to gain Allah’s pleasure.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Leaders are responsible for spreading Islam to non-Muslims so that they believe in Allah the Almighty the way that the Prophet (PBUH) convinced the polytheists of Makkah (Mecca) to believe in Allah the Almighty.

Each appointed leader is responsible for defending Islam. Leaders must emulate the Messenger of Allah in his leadership, for example the Prophet

(PBUH) did not perform obligatory prayers alone but in congregation at the mosque. Leaders must never betray the trust that is given to them as Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 8 (*Surah Al-Anfal*) verse (*ayat*) 27:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

Which means: “Believers, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, or knowingly betray [other people’s] trust in you.”

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