Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Feb 04, 2011

Uprising in the Arab World

With profound changes taking place in the Arab world as a result of peaceful marches, protests and demonstrations to express indignation at the continued oppression of the masses by the ruling elite, this topic was both relevant and timely.

Ameer Mustapha began by reminding the gathering that the Qur’an is meant to be man’s book of guidance. It guides people to true happiness in this world and to a perpetual blissful life in the hereafter.

The current ongoing mass protests taking place simultaneously across the globe, and particularly in the Arab world in places such as Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen show the magnitude of the peoples’ rage and anger against their dictators who have been ruling them with an iron fist since inception. What is happening today, if seen in the context of the imminent change of leadership of these countries is yet another sign among the signs of Allah (SWT). Say: O God, Possessor of kingship; you grant kingship to whom You please, and revoke kingship from whom You please, and honor whom You please, and humiliate whom You please; in Your hand is kingship. You are capable of all things (Aal ‘Imran 3:26).

Allah (SWT) has given the rulers of these countries many chances to mend themselves. Rather than rule with justice, honesty, integrity, and God consciousness, they have chosen to do so otherwise. When sisters are banned to wear their mandated head scarves, people are prevented from assembling to study the Qur’an and from frequenting the masjid to pray, then Allah (SWT) pulls the rugs from underneath such rulers leaving them in utter humiliation and disgrace.

Tyrant rulers have always been around from the erstwhile Namrud and Firaun of the days of Prophets Ibrahim and Musa (may peace be upon them) to the present day Zain al-Abidin ibn Ali, the ousted head of Tunisia, and Hussni Mubarak, the extremely unpopular President of Egypt whom Egyptians are rightly bent upon removing from office. History repeats itself. Allah (SWT) sent messengers to Namrud and Firaun to warn them and guide them, but when these despotic rulers did not pay heed to the messengers’ admonitions, Allah (SWT) destroyed them. Not too long ago, Sheikh Shaarawi (may Allah have mercy on him) had met Hussni Mubarak in the presence of other ulama’ and priests and urged him to fulfill the amanah (trust) of leadership by ruling justly and acting benevolently towards his people. After all, it was Allah (SWT) who had granted him the honor and opportunity of being the head of a predominantly Muslim nation. Unfortunately these gems of wisdom coming out from a pious and erudite scholar fell on deaf ears. Mubarak, despite the fact that Firaun’s mummy lay in his backyard as a grim reminder that Allah (SWT)’s wrath falls upon tyrants, failed to take lessons and mend his ways.

It is a fact of history that tyrants are so arrogant and power drunk that they cannot conceive themselves of ever being without power. It is only when Allah takes away their authority from them and humiliates them that they realize how powerless they are. Unless they repent sincerely to Allah (SWT), they are doomed both in this world and in the hereafter.

Allah (SWT) advised Prophet Dawud in surah Saad as follows: ‘O Dawud, We have made you a khalifa (vicegerent) on earth. So judge between people with truth. Do not follow your desires, lest they divert you from God’s path: those who wander from His path will have a painful torment because they ignore the Day of Reckoning.’ (Saad 38:26). And in Surah al-Ma’idah, Allah (SWT) sternly admonishes those who don’t rule justly according to Allah’s laws. Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, such people are zalimun (wrongdoers) (al-Ma’idah 5:45). For verily, Allah does not love wrongdoers (al-Imran 3:57), and we have in Surah al-Qasas, Allah surely does not guide people given to wrongdoing and injustice (al-Qasas 28:50). About such wrongdoers, Allah (SWT) says, It was not Allah who wronged them; they wronged themselves (Aal ‘Imran 3:117).

The recent uprising in Tunisia, which led the Tunisian dictator Zain al-Abidin ibn Ali to flee the country with his family, has spread like wild fire across the Arab world. Were the Tunisian people so outraged at him and his regime? Among his many other nefarious deeds, he banned our sisters from wearing their veils and sisters who donned the veil were barred from employment in the government. He banned the Azan (call to prayers) to be announced through loudspeakers. He put restrictions on people assembling in the mosques to pray unless they carried with them special magnetic passes (ID) for this purpose. He put an end to the Islamic curriculum at schools and stopped children from memorizing the Qur’an. During one of the Hajj seasons, he stopped pilgrims from his country from performing Hajj for fear that they may get infected with swine flu. It was he who contracted the swine flu, sitting in his home. In doing all this, he was defying none other than Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT)’s wrath fell upon him. People were outraged at him. He
begged France, his former colonial master, to give him refuge, but received an outright refusal. The Shah of Iran had also met the same fate at the outset of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. He kneeled in front of America to give him shelter but was refused entry to the United States as he was no longer of any use to them. The same story is being repeated in Egypt. The current revolution that we are witnessing in Egypt is a very profound one. It is a revolution of youth who are fed up with the status quo — with what has been going on for decades. These young men and women born into tyranny can take it no longer. One of the young Egyptian sisters by the name of Asma Mahfoudh helped define the passion and intensity with which this revolution has been depicted. She made a video clip and posted it on the internet to be seen and heard by the multitude of her brothers and sisters all over Egypt. She invited them all to assemble at the ‘Liberty Square’ on January 25, 2011 to collectively give vent to their rage at Hussni Mubarak’s three decades of misrule, which had offered nothing but tyranny, injustice, corruption, rising inflation, insecurity, poverty, and curb on freedom of expression. Her clarion call had a magical effect—millions of Egyptians; young and old, men and women, Imams and priests, workers, doctors, and engineers, the lay people and the professionals, the believers and the non-believers, people from all walks of life gathered at the Liberty square simply to be liberated from decades of tyranny and authoritarianism.

It is terrifying and horrifying to learn that Hussni Mubarak killed thousands members of the Muslim Brotherhood in various prisons over the last thirty years. Muslim activists are routinely jailed and tortured. Six hundred thousand homeless Egyptians have made the graveyards their homes. Three million Egyptian children who should be getting proper schooling are on the streets. According to some sources, Mubarak’s two sons—A’la and Jamal have accumulated a staggering fifty five billion US Dollars of illicit wealth. Mubarak’s regime controls the Rafah Crossing since 2007 to prevent the Egyptians from sending aid to their brethren in Gaza who lack basic human needs like food and medicine. To top this all, Mubarak allied with the West and Israel and alienated himself from his own people. He had disregarded the Qur’anic teachings urging believers not to make the Jews and the Christians their intimate friends. O you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies: they are allies only to each other. Anyone who takes them as an ally becomes one of them— God does not guide such wrongdoers (al-Ma’idah 5:51). This does not, of course, imply that we should not have normal friendly ties of business relationship, communication, cooperation, and compassion with them. We should just be on guard not to take them as our intimate friends, allies or protecting guardians. We should turn for protection and friendship only to Allah (SWT), His messenger, and the believers. Those who turn for protection to God, His Messenger, and the believers [are God’s party]: God’s party is sure to triumph (al-Ma’idah 5:56).

The ripples of this wave of protests by the people of Egypt have reached the streets of Sana in Yemen where the people are chanting slogans to convey their solidarity to fight poverty, corruption, and injustice. The Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, has announced that neither he nor his son will contest in the next elections. This step is at variance with the trend that has become a tradition in the Arab world where kingship or leadership is inherited from the father to the son. The Algerian President, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika, has finally lifted the nineteen year old martial law. Such reaction by the leadership is not because of love of the people. It is because these authoritarian leaders are now looking at their regime being threatened by people’s power.

In sha Allah, the recent uprisings in the Arab world augur well for the people who have been oppressed and suppressed for so long. Injustice cannot go on forever. Oppressors shall find no helpers for themselves; neither in this world nor in the next. And those who do wrong will have no one to help them (al-Baqarah 2:270).

The courageous men and women who took to the streets to speak out against tyranny are indeed doing the most profound jihad because the supreme jihad is to speak a word of truth before a tyrant ruler.

Towards the end Ameer Mustapha asked the congregation to support our brothers and sisters in the Arab world and to remember them in our supplications. He also advised all those present to call their State Representatives, the Secretary of State, and the President to protect all those freedoms which have become the rhetoric and slogan of the US government. At the same time, they should be reminded not to meddle in the internal affairs of the Egyptian people or any people for that matter. They have also to be called to defend real democracy and to stop the military aid to Egypt immediately.

The khutbaa came to an end with supplications made to Allah (SWT) and salutations sent to the Prophet (SAW).

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