



## Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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IONA  
REPENTANCE  
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH  
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

### Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on May 21, 2021

#### “Save Masjid al-Aqsa”

Surat al-Isra (The Night Journey) opens with the words, “*Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah) to al-Masjid al-Aqsa (the farthest mosque in Jerusalem) whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the all-Hearing, the all-Seeing.*” (al-Isra’, 17:1)

The first *ayah* of surat al-‘Isra mentions the night journey followed by a quick shift to the 2000-year old history of Bani Israel. Incidentally, the *surah* is also called Bani Israel (The Children of Israel).

The mention of Bani Israel is not a coincidence. It has a significant message. Jerusalem was the first scene of the night journey and the message is directed toward the Jews. The event suggests that the leadership will be reinstated by Allah’s messenger, Muhammad (SAW), and that the two sanctuaries of the Abrahamic faith (the *Ka’bah* and *Bait al-Maqdis*) will be under the jurisdiction of Muslims.

After a brief introduction to the blessings Allah (SWT) bestowed upon Musa (Moses) and his nation in the form of a Book that contains guidance with the admonition that they take no one in worship besides Him (17:2), Allah (SWT) mentions the rise and fall of Bani Israel. “*And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture, that you will cause corruption (and disorder) twice on Earth, and that you will rise to a great height.*” (al-‘Isra, 17:4)

The origin of the Israelites appear to be of nomadic Semitic tribes in the Mesopotamian region (Iraq) from 2300 through 1550 BCE.

Yaqub (Jacob or Israel), son of Ishaq (Isaac) and grandson of Ibrahim (Abraham), had 12 sons. Jacob was known to display favoritism among his children, particularly Yusuf (Joseph) and Benjamin. Out of jealousy, the brothers plotted against Yusuf; they failed in their plan to kill him, however, they succeeded in throwing him in a well. Yusuf was sold to al-Aziz and eventually he is given authority in Egypt. He invites his father and family to Egypt where they resided and eventually over time and after the passing of many generations the Israelites become enslaved by the Pharaohs.

After some time, Musa (Moses) is born. His life is spared when it was declared by Pharaoh to kill the male offspring of the Israelites. Instead, he was placed in a basket and set to sail in the Nile river. The wife of Pharaoh finds him, and he eventually grows up in the palace of Pharaoh.

Moses is chosen as a messenger of God and was assigned to deliver the Israelites from the enslavement and oppression of Pharaoh.

The Exodus, also known as the departure from Egypt is the story of freedom from the bondage of the Pharaohs and wanderings in the wilderness up to the border of Canaan. They were delivered from slavery by God, whereupon they made a covenant with God. The main covenant was that they worship none except God, “Be careful that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God that He made with you; do not make an idol for your-

selves in the form of anything He has forbidden you.” Deuteronomy 4:23

*“And so We took a covenant from the children of Israel, ‘Worship none but Allah; be kind to parents, relatives, orphans and the needy; speak kindly to people; establish prayer; and pay the poor-due.’ And yet, save for a few of you, you turned away and paid no heed.”* (al-Baqarah, 2:83)

A synopsis of the history of the Children of Israel is captured in surat al-Baqarah. Seventy-Six *ayat* are dedicated to the Israelites, their good and bad deeds.

The entire discourse begins and ends with, *“O children of Israel! Remember My blessings I bestowed upon you, and how I favored you above all other people.”* (al-Baqarah, 2:47 & 122)

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;” Exodus 19:5

“You have today declared the Lord to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. The Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken.” Deuteronomy 26:17-19

Allah (SWT) favored the children of Israel due to the subjugation and oppression they faced for centuries in Egypt. The children of Israel indeed were chosen by Allah as He is always on the side of the oppressed. However, when the oppressed breach covenants with Allah and act arrogantly and defiantly, Allah's wrath pours upon them.

Taking anything or anyone for worship besides Allah is a breach of the grand covenant, *“that you worship none besides God.”* The first and worst crime of the children of Israel is the worship of an idol; a calf, the golden calf.

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, ‘Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!’” Exodus 32:7-8

*“And indeed, there came unto you Moses with all evidence of the truth. And thereupon, in his absence, you worshipped the (golden) calf, and you did wrong.”* (al-Baqarah, 2:92)

Such a grand sin draws Allah’s anger. “Also in Horeb (Sinai) you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you.” (Deuteronomy, 9:8)

“Therefore, the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.” (2-Kings, 17:18)

Other crimes that drew the wrath of Allah, according to the last scripture, the Holy Qur’an, include rejecting parts of their scripture and the killing of God’s prophets.

*“And they were struck with humiliation and disgrace and have incurred the wrath from Allah. That was because they rejected Allah's revelations and wrongfully killing the prophets. That was because of their disobedience and transgression.”* (al-Baqarah, 2:61) A similar ayah in surat Aal ‘Imran (3:112) mentions Allah’s wrath upon the Israelites citing the same charges.

The above *ayat* are aligned with the Bible. Elijah (Elias in the Qur’an), one of the most notable prophets from scripture who defended the worship of the Hebrew God over that of the Canaanite deity Baal, and sought to restore God’s kingdom in a time of wicked rulers, is quoted in Kings of the Old Testament, “He (Elijah) said, ‘I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn

down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (1-Kings, 19:10)

Such behavior incurred the curse of their great prophets, David and Jesus. *“Those of the Children of Israel who defied God and denied the truth, were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, the son of Mary, because they rebelled and persistently overstepped the limits. They did not forbid one another from doing evil. Evil indeed was what they did!”* (al-Ma’idah, 5:78,79)

Of course, this does not apply to all Children of Israel as God reveals, *“They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book are upright people, who recite Allah’s scripture throughout the night and prostrate (in prayer). They believe in Allah and the Last Day, they command the good and forbid evil, and they hasten in doing good deeds, and indeed, they are among the righteous. And whatever good they do, will not be rejected of them for Allah knows well those who are conscious of Him.”* (Aal ‘Imran, 3:113-115)

Indeed, there are those who have conscience, who stand by and uphold justice for all, who speak out against occupation, oppression and evil. Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, Bernie Sanders are among many intellectuals, journalists and politicians and Jews of conscience who resist and speak out against the oppression of the Zionists against the Palestinians and the apartheid state of Israel.

### **The Rise and Fall of the Children of Israel,**

*“And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture, that you will cause corruption (and disorder) twice on Earth, and that you will rise to a great height.”* (al-‘Isra, 17:4)

#### **The First Rise**

Following the miraculous deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt and the 40 years they spent in the wilderness came God’s prophecy of the establishment of God’s kingdom in Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

Joshua identified as, *يُوشَعَ بْنِ نُونٍ, Yūshā‘ ibn (son of) Nūn*, although not mentioned by name in the Qur’an, is believed to be one of the two “God-fearing men” on whom Allah bestowed His grace (see surat al-Ma’idah, 5:20-23). After the death of Moses, Joshua led the Israelite tribes in the conquest of Canaan and distributed its lands to the 12 tribes. His story is mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Joshua.

#### **The First Fall**

God sent many Prophets to warn the Israelite kings of the destruction that would come their way if they didn't return to Him in worship and obedience. Due to continued idolatry and syncretism (mixing elements of true and false worship), failing to honor the covenant the Israelites made with God, and allegedly burning their sons and daughters as offerings and the practice of divination and sorcery, among other sins, divine wrath first appeared in the form of Babylonian forces marching into Judah in 604 B.C.

The armies of Nebuchadnezzar entered the Holy City on March 15, 597 B.C., and plundered the Temple of Solomon. The wall of Jerusalem was breached on July 9, 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar decided to make an example of the city, and his orders were carried out with cruel thoroughness. The city walls were demolished. The Temple and the palace were stripped of all valuables and burned to the ground. Thousands were killed, and a large part of the population was taken as captives to Babylonia, more than 500 miles away. The kingdom of Judah itself became a Babylonian province, which presented at that time a deeply scarred look. Everywhere, towns were ransacked and burned, crops destroyed, and villages deserted.

The following ayah elucidates this brief history, *“Hence when the prediction of the first of those two (periods of iniquity and decline) came true, We roused against you servants of Ours of great might who ravaged (your) country, and so the prediction was fulfilled.”* (al-Isra’, 17:5)

#### **The Second Rise**

The Israelites while in captivity repented and God's mercy came in the shape of Cyrus, king of Persia, who, brought the Babylonian Empire to her knees in 539 B.C. The very next year, Cyrus authorized the Jews in Mesopotamia to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple at the expense of the royal treasury. The second Temple was completed in 515 B.C.

*"But then (after your repentance) We allowed you to prevail against your enemy and increased you in wealth and offspring and made you greater in number."* (al-Isra', 17:6) The Israelites lived in prosperity and were informed, *"If you act rightly, it is for your own good, but if you do wrong, it is to your own loss..."* (al-Isra', 17:7)

## **The Second Fall**

The Israelites zeal and commitment to God began to fade with the passage of time. The love of God was gradually and eventually replaced by the love of the material comforts and possessions. The spirit of worship of the One God turned into empty forms of rituals, and moral and ethical values declined.

The Roman General and political leader, Pompey, who took on the Seleucids in Syria was called to settle internal conflicts by the Jewish people who were fighting over the control of Judah. Pompey decides to take the Holy City by force. Thousands of Jews were killed during the three-month long siege of Jerusalem. Pompey breaks into the walls of Jerusalem. After desecrating the temple, Pompey allows the priests to continue their religious practices in the temple. The Romans occupied Jerusalem and the Jewish people had to accept the terms of Rome. They became a province of the Roman Empire in 64 BC.

A century later, in 70 CE, the Romans under the Roman General Titus, and later Emperor, ransacked the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the second temple in retaliation for an ongoing Jewish revolt. Although Jews continued to inhabit the city, at the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, many of the Jewish people were massacred and Jews were banned from living inside Jerusalem.

Indeed, a scriptural prophecy fulfilled, *"...And when the prediction of the last (of those two periods of iniquity and decline) came true, (We permitted your enemies, the Romans) to disfigure your faces and to enter the masjid (temple of Solomon) just as they entered it the first time and utterly destroy whatever fell into their power."* (al-Isra', 17:7)

For centuries Jews lived in diaspora. It was during the reign of Omar (RA) in 638 CE, Jewish families were allowed to return to Jerusalem and live in the city.

*"And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture, that you will cause corruption (and disorder) twice on Earth, and that you will rise to a great height."* (al-Isra, 17:4)

The last statement of the ayah, *"and that you will rise to a great height,"* or to become elated with extreme arrogance, is what we see today, world domination through the control of media, social media, entertainment, political and economic policies. In terms of the plight of the Palestinians, the Zionist regime is oppressive. They have no regards for human rights and dozens of UN resolutions for breach of the peace and/or acts of aggression are ignored.

Sadly, Jerusalem, the city that was besieged by the Muslims in 636 A.D. and was offered to Omar (RA) by the Patriarch Sophronius, was captured by the Zionists in 1967.

Israel's annexation of occupied Palestinian East Jerusalem is declared illegal by the international community, including UN Security Council Resolutions 478 (Jerusalem). In 2017, former President Donald Trump, in a historic move officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

In case one wonders how Jerusalem vis-à-vis Palestine was lost to the Zionists, the colonial powers with the aid and influence of the Zionist agenda who saw the Ottomans crumble from within seized an opportunity to not only destroy the institution of the Ottoman Caliphate but pave the way to the creation of the State of Israel in Palestine in 1948. And in 1967 it gained East Jerusalem in the Six-Day war with Arab states.

The rise and fall of Bani Israel's discourse ends with, "*It is still possible that your Lord may show mercy to you but if you return (to sinning) We will return (to chastising). Indeed, We made Hell a prison for the disbelievers. Surely, this Qur'an guides to that which is most upright and gives the believers who do good deeds glad tidings that for them is a great reward.*" (al-Isra', 17:8,9)

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is not only political, but also religious. It is a conflict over land. The following verses from the Bible among other verses are usually cited to claim the land of Palestinians. Genesis 15:7 of the Old Testament explains, "He also said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.'" Also, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.'" (15:18)

Similarly, chapter 17 of Genesis asserts, "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." (Genesis 17:7-8)

The conflict is indeed over land and the Zionist regime's plan is to control not only Palestine but the entire region between the Euphrates in Iraq all the way to the Nile river in Egypt. They desire to destroy Masjid al-Aqsa and rebuild their temple that was destroyed two millenniums ago. The architectural plans for the reconstruction of Temple Solomon are ready to be executed.

The recent attacks on worshippers and the provocations at Masjid al-Aqsa is not the first time and will not be the last. The exercise of attacking the masjid is partly to see the response of the Palestinians, original inhabitants of Palestine and the ummah, Muslims at large.

Facts reveal that neither the natives of the land, the Palestinians, nor the ummah have forgotten about the al-Aqsa mosque and the Holy Land. The believers are ready to sacrifice themselves for the protection and preservation of the third holy and sacred mosque, masjid al-Aqsa. Facts also reveal that the oppression of the Zionist regime will not endure. There is a shift in public opinion partly due to independent media and social media. The world is witnessing the oppression of the regime and the plight of the oppressed Palestinians, and people of conscience around the world are rising in solidarity with these oppressed.

The provocations at Masjid al-Aqsa are a rehearsal for the final show. The Zionists who are bent upon executing their plan have an option; either turn to righteousness and seek peace with the Palestinians, return the stolen lands beyond the Green Line, pre 1967 border, to their rightful owners, and allow the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland or else face the final blow. "*It is still possible that your Lord may show mercy to you but if you return (to sinning) We will return (to chastising).*"

Surat al-Isra ends with a profound conclusion. "*Thereafter, We said unto the Children of Israel: Dwell in the land; but when the last (akhira) of the warnings comes to pass, We shall bring you as a crowd gathered out of various nations.*" (al-Isra', 17:104)

Most exegetes of the Quran understand the statement, "*the last (akhira) of the warnings,*" to mean the hereafter. There are, however, some scholars who have a different interpretation. "*The last (akhira) of the warnings,*" is understood to mean when Isa (Jesus) returns to earth.

The current situation in Palestine and the influx of Jews coming from all over the world to settle in Palestine could be an indication of the end of times and the great war between Truth and Falsehood that will soon take place. Soon is subjective. It could mean years, decades or centuries, God only knows. However, such a claim may be considered as a divine prophecy waiting to be fulfilled.

Oppression is a great sin. The Jews must take lessons from their own history. When they were oppressed under the Egyptian Pharaohs, God stood by the side of the oppressed and eventually liberated them as they enjoyed God's blessings in the form of security and prosperity. However, when the oppressed becomes the oppressor, God's manner doesn't change. He (SWT) remains on the side of the oppressed regardless of who it is. "*Never will you find a change to the way of Allah and you will never find any deviation of Allah's way (of dealing).*" (Fatir, 35:43)

Additionally, the Divine axiom regarding land is, *“And, certainly, We wrote down in the Psalms as We did in (earlier) Scripture: ‘My righteous servants will inherit the land.’”* (al-Anbiya’, 21:105)

We must do whatever we can within our means to ensure Masjid al-Aqsa remains standing until Judgment Day. Jerusalem is ours and we will defend it forever. The Masjid is our third holiest Masjid after Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and the Prophet’s Masjid in Madinah.

Muslims and people of conscience are speaking in one voice, “End the apartheid state.” Apartheid is legalized systemic oppression of a racial or cultural group.

Call it what it is. Israel is an apartheid state. Human rights watch and Betselem, a Jewish human rights organization, have called it apartheid. The Irish government has called it apartheid. Jimmy Carter called it an apartheid state. Politicians here and abroad are calling it an apartheid state. It is an apartheid state.

May Allah (SWT) save and protect the Palestinians and all people; the souls of the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and all people are precious and sacred. May there be an end to the oppression and bloodshed in Palestine and may our Masjid remain standing until the end of time, Ameen.

END