Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on July 18, 2014

“The Qur’an is Our Only Hope”

The Qur’an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) at a time when people needed it the most. It mainly addressed the pagan Arabs who were drowning in a sea of polytheism (shirk), corruption, oppression, exploitation and tribal wars, while they claimed to be the descendants of Ibrahim (AS), the father of monotheism. They strayed away from the authentic tradition of Ibrahim and Isma’il (AS) by introducing idols as objects of worship besides Allah (SWT) and mixed the religion with superstitions. The pagan Arabs stripped the spirit out of the pure teachings of Ibrahim (AS) and confined Allah (SWT), the Creator of everything, to the heavens only. This era of darkness is often referred to as the period of ignorance or Jahiliyyah.

The Qur’an was introduced to rescue the pagan Arabs specifically while introducing a way of life suited for humanity at large for all time to come. Not so surprisingly, the beginning of surat Ibrahim declares, “Alif Lam Ra. This is a Book We have sent down to you [O Prophet] so that, with their Lord’s permission, you may bring people from the depths of darkness into light, to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy One” (Ibrahim, 14:1).

The Qur’an came down on the night of power or lailatul-Qadr, as the final gift to humanity, “It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur’an was sent as guidance for mankind, clear messages giving guidance and distinguishing between right and wrong” (al-Baqarah, 2:185). “We sent it down on the night of al-Qadr (Power/Decree)” (Al/Qadr, 97:1).

Eventually, the Arabian Peninsula was completely cleansed from idol worship. The Prophet (SAW) was supremely successful in restoring the pure teachings of Ibrahim (AS). Centuries later, however, the Muslim Arabs, or the ummiyyeen (unlettered) according to the Qur’anic terminology, who happened to be the nucleus of the ummah since Muhammad (SAW) was himself an Arab, and the non-Arabs who embraced the universal faith of Islam found themselves going back to the old pagan Arab practices. Present day idol worship manifests through the worship of materialism while superstitions continue to invade almost every Muslim home.

Many of present day Muslims who claim to believe in Allah (SWT) seek deceased individuals for help and guidance, while many others go after fortune tellers in order to predict their future and status of wealth. Just as the descendants of Isma’il (AS) took away the spirit from the teachings of Ibrahim (AS), many Muslims today have stripped the spirit out of the pure and simple teachings of Muhammad (SAW) limiting the religion to a set of dogma and rituals mixed with superstitions.

The Prophet (SAW) indeed spoke the truth when he prophesized the disastrous awful condition of Muslims to come. He predicted, “Soon, there will come a time upon the people when nothing will remain of Islam except its name and nothing will remain of the Qur’an except its script. Their mosques will be splendidly fur-
nished but devoid of guidance. Their scholars will be the worst people under the sky. Strife will emanate from them and return back to them.”

None of the anxiety and fear as well as the strife that is plauging the ummah today would have subsisted had Islam been practiced as was established for us by the Prophet (SAW) and his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them. No calamities or misfortune would befall upon us had we embraced the Qur'an and implemented its divine wisdom.

In fact, clear instructions were given to Adam and Eve (AS) as they were being dispatched from the garden to assume their responsibilities on earth, “When guidance comes to you from Me, as it certainly will, there shall be no fear for those who follow My guidance nor shall they grieve” (al-Baqarah, 2:38). In other words, Allah (SWT) assured happiness to those who adhere to Allah's guidance.

It appears that Muslims are under the grip of divine punishment for failing to uphold the Book of Allah (SWT). Moreover, it seems that Muslims are treading the footsteps of the Children of Israel. “Some of those who had received the Scripture before threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they had no knowledge of it” (al-Baqarah, 2:101).

In spite of the present condition of Muslims in the world, there is still a glimpse of hope. First of all, we must realize that no matter how bad our conditions are or may become, we must never despair from the great and infinite mercy of Allah (SWT). “Say (O Prophet), ‘O My servants who have transgressed against yourselves (by sinning), do not despair of Allah’s mercy. For Allah surely forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the most Forgiving, the most Merciful’” (al-Zummar, 39:53).

We have a great opportunity in the remaining days and nights of Ramadan to return back to Allah (SWT) in repentance while asking Him for forgiveness. “O Allah! You are the One who pardons and love to pardon, so pardon me,” is the supplication taught to ‘Aisha (RA) by the Prophet (SAW). It should not be mere lip service. We must show Allah (SWT) that we are sincere in returning back to Him. One way to prove one’s sincerity and loyalty is by returning back to His Book with the pure intention of seeking His guidance.

Secondly, the only sure way out of our predicaments, calamities, trials and tribulations is the Qur'an, the Book of Allah. That was the remedy given to Ali (RA) when he (SAW) informed him, “Very soon there is going to be a trial (fitanh).” Ali (RA) not concerned about what kind of trial nor its timing inquired, “What will be the way out O’ messenger of Allah?” The Prophet (SAW) replied, “The Book of Allah.”

The Prophet (SAW) further elaborated on the Book of Allah when he (SAW) said,

“It contains instructive narratives of preceding nations.” The Qur’an contains the stories and fate of previous nations such as the nations of ‘Ad, Thamud, Nuh, Lut etc. Nations that rejected Allah’s messengers who invited their people to the universal message of, “La ilaha illa Allah, there is no god except Allah,” were annihilated. They were wiped off the face of the earth. The Qur’an talks about historical events and patterns of history. More sections of the Qur’an are dedicated to the Children of Israel. One thing we learn about them is that, “Some from among the people of the Book (Jews) threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as though they knew nothing about it” (al-Baqarah, 2:101). Unfortunately, this is the affair of the great majority of Muslims today.

“It also contains news of what comes after you.” The Qur’an mentions the future consequences and outcome of deeds. Great detail regarding the grand day of accountability or the Day of Judgment, are mentioned in the Qur’an. Those who behave in accordance to the teachings and instructions of the Qur’an are informed of the good news of Paradise. On the other hand, those who follow their whims and desires and turn their backs on the
divine guidance shall have to pay dreadful price on the Day of Judgment.

“As for him who receives his book (of deeds) in his right hand, he will have an easy reckoning and return to his people full of joy. But as for him whose book (of deeds) shall be given to him behind his back, he will cry out for destruction. He will burn in the blazing Fire. Behold, (in his earthly life) he lived joyfully among his people. He thought he would never return (to his Lord). Yes indeed, his Lord was watching him” (al-Inshiqaq, 84:7-15).

“It is the adjudicator among you.” The Qur’an contains verdicts of disputes that may arise among people. It is the final divine law. Sadly, people judge and legislate according to their own personal wishes and desires. The Qur’an reminds, “Judgment rests with none but Allah” (Yusuf, 12:67). Surat al-Ma’idah, ayat 44, 45 and 47 declares those who do not rule and judge according to what Allah (SWT) has sent (the Qur’an) are deniers of truth (kaﬁrūn), wrongdoers (zalīmun), and rebels (fāsiqūn).

“It is a decisive word. It is not a joke.” The Qur’an is a decisive book. It makes a distinction between good and evil and sets apart right from wrong. It also distinguishes between truth and falsehood. It is a serious book. It is not to be taken lightly.

“If any tyrant relinquishes it, Allah will break him.” Rulers and dictators who forsake the Book of Allah (SWT) will be crushed and destroyed by Allah (SWT).

“And whoever seeks guidance ahead of it Allah will lead him astray.” One must never look for guidance outside the Qur’an. We have the absolute final Book of guidance. Sadly, Muslim governments in an attempt to please the Jews and Christians are importing western culture into their countries leaving behind the true and authentic guidance.

Allah (SWT) informed, “Neither the Jews nor the Christians will be pleased with you (O Prophet) until you follow their way. Say, ‘Verily the Guidance of Allah is the Guidance.’ And if you (O prophet) were to follow their desires after what came to you of knowledge, you will have neither support from Allah nor any help” (al-Baqarah, 2:120). He (SWT) also stressed, “Verily, this Qur’an guides to that which is most upright, and gives the believers who do good deeds the glad tiding that they shall have a magnificent reward” (al-Isra’, 17:9).

“It is Allah’s strong cord.” Allah (SWT) commands the believers to cling tight unto the Qur’an, “And hold fast unto the rope of Allah altogether and be not divided among yourselves” (Aal Imran, 3:103).

“It is the wise reminder.” Allah (SWT) swore, “By the Qur’an hearing the Reminder! (Sâd, 38:1). The Qur’an is a reminder with guidance to the truth. It is full of remembrance embracing all that is worth taking to one’s hearts. “Those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah - truly it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find peace” (al-Ra’ad, 13:28).

“It is the straight path.” Worshippers cry out to Allah (SWT) everyday in their prayers, “Guide us to the straight path.” We, however, are heedless of the Qur’an. The Book of Allah is the straight path. “And this (Qur’an) is the Path of your Lord, a Straight Path” (al-An’am, 6:126). We must read and ponder on the ayat of the Qur’an and put it into practice. Only then may one say I am on the straight path.

“It is that by which the desires do not swerve nor can the tongues twist it.” One can never be misled by the Qur’an. It is a manifest truth that protects one’s thoughts and desires from immoral and sinful inclinations. One’s soul can never deviate to wrong actions when following the Qur’an.

“Scholars are never satiated with it.” The scholars and intellectuals are never satisfied with its knowledge. They don’t get enough of it. Their appetite for learning increases as they read the Qur’an. The deeper they dive into the ocean of the Qur’an the more gems of wisdom they extract.
“It never becomes tiresome or worn out with repetition.” No matter how much it is repeated it cannot be worn out or become boring. It is not difficult on the tongue, rather very easy to recite and understand. “We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran; will anyone take heed?” (al-Qamar, 54:17).

“Its wonders never cease.” The Qur’an is the last and final living miracle of Allah (SWT). It is unique in its style and eloquence. One may be granted deeper insight and the favor of seeing a new light pondering on the same ayah despite it being read countless times. Aside from its literary beauty and eloquence the Qur’an contains many scientific miracles that only recently were discovered. “Say (O Prophet), ‘If all mankind and all invisible beings (Jinn) would come together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce anything like it, however much they help each other’” (al-‘Isra’, 17:88).

“It is that concerning which the Jinn did not hesitate to declare, when they heard it, ‘We have heard a wonderful recital which guides to what is right, and we believe in it.’” The information of such unseen reality was revealed to the Prophet (SAW) in surat al-Jinn (72:1,2). This proves that the Qur’an is the final guidance for the invisible and visible beings, Jinn and humans.

“He who utters it speaks the truth, he who acts according to it is rewarded, he who pronounces judgment according to it has done justice and he who invites people to it guides (in another narration, is guided) to a straight path.’”

In conclusion, the Book of Allah is the only way out of our predicament. The current calamities, trials and tribulations can be best understood when pondering on the following ayah, “We shall certainly make them taste a lesser punishment (in this life) before the greater torment, so that perhaps they may return (to the right path)” (al-Sajdah, 32:21). To return to the mercy and grace of Allah (SWT) is to return to the Book of Allah.

The Book of Allah is our only hope.