

Standing Firm by what is Right and Caution against Relapsing

Sheikh Saalih aal Taalib

April 4, 2014 ~ Jumada al Akhira 6, 1435

First Khutbah

Praise be to Allah! We praise Him, seek His assistance, and repent to Him. We seek refuge in Allah from our wrong doings and our sins. He whom Allah guides may never go astray and he who is deprived of Allah's guidance may never be guided. I bear witness that there is no deity worth worshipping except Allah alone with no associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah send his Mercy, Peace and Blessing upon him, his family and all his Companions.

Now then, I urge you and myself to observe taqwa (fear) of Allah in private and in public. It is the provision of the journey, the essence of virtues, the birthplace of traits, the source of power, the ascendance of sublimity, and the composure of the heart in times of trials. **"And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allāh. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."** [Surah al-Baqarah: 281]

O Muslims! Coming forth to Allah and feeling the happiness of obeying Him, accustoming oneself to worshipping and resenting sinful acts indeed constitute a treasure at hand. It is a triumph both present and future, a gain and success for mankind. Though the Muslim seeks pleasing the All Merciful, he must realize that his faith-laden heart is a targeted bastion, and that his senses, humbled by and for obedience, are misfortune prone. Therefore, they deserve to be protected, and revered.

Man's march towards his Lord is full of trials and plights. There are slippery and highly dangerous roads. This is Allah's decree **"Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving;"** [Surah al-Mulk: 2], "... and **We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good.**" [Surah al-Anbiyā': 35]

As long as the believer's body and soul are not severed by death, he is in a continual jihad (strife against evil).

It is said that when Imam Ahmad (Rahimahullah) was in his deathbed, an apparition of Satan biting his fingers came to him and said: *"You escaped me, Ahmad! You escaped me, Ahmad!"* **"Not yet, not yet,"** Ahmad answered, remembering the Prophet's hadith: **"Man spends a long time doing the work of the people of paradise, then he ends doing the work of the people of hell-fire."** [Narrated by Muslim]

Anas Ibn Mālik (Radiallahu Anhu) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ very often said, **"O Over-turner of the hearts, make my heart firm upon Your Religion."** **"O, Messenger of Allah!"** a man said, *"How come that you are afraid for us and we have believed in you and in what you have brought?"* **"Hearts are between two fingers of Arrahman's** (Allah, the Compassionate), **"the Prophet ﷺ answered, "He turns them the way He wishes."** [Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Mājah]

In Al-Tirmidhi's version, the prophet ﷺ often said, **"You Who make the hearts firm, make my heart firm upon Your religion!"**

O servants of Allah! These and similar *hadiths* warn against the danger of relapse that keeps threatening man. It is a potential flaw to which all mankind, except the infallible prophets, are susceptible. It is a situation feared by the pious and the righteous, and avoided by the truthful purists.

Many a righteous has gone astray; many a failure has been defeated, and many a regressing individual has fallen by the wayside. None but the feeble will fall. In times of trials, relapses abound. We seek refuge in Allah against scarcity after profusion.

A believer's supplication is mentioned in the Qur'ān: **"Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower."**[Surah Ale Imrān: 8]

O servants of Allah! A careful observant of the present situation of the Muslim society will not fail to see signs of debility on some of its members in a reality made so trivial by the media that it started to distract people away from Allah and deepen non-observance. These signs are manifested in shallowness of devoutness, negligence of religious duties, permissiveness and in condoning (sometimes accepting) imperfections.

These faults may be perpetrated by someone who has spent the better part of his life in righteousness and piety, but might double back and fall by the wayside. Despite the fact that this may often happen in times of long-persistent evil, it is not a valid excuse for man to neglect his duties towards his Lord. Each human being will individually be held to account. **"And everyone of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection (without any protector)."** [Surah Maryam: 95]

Certainly, every worker is entitled to a break, and every walker may stumble. However, this downside should not tempt the servant of Allah to neglect his duties or indulge in forbidden acts. It is only a condition that may affect the servant of Allah on his way towards Allah; a weakness dictated by the human disposition that may be overcome by remembering the hereafter. The servant of Allah may then rush to safety.

Putting one's hope in Satan and promising oneself firmness in Allah's religion are signs of vanity and pride. Firmness in Allah's religion is a gift that is only bequeathed by Allah on whomever He wishes. Allah says, **"Allāh will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world, and in the Hereafter. And Allāh will cause to go astray those who are Zālimūn, and Allāh does what He wills."** [Surah Ibraheem: 27]

Al-Nawās Ibn Sam'ān (Radiallahu Anhu) quoted the Prophet ﷺ as saying, **"Every heart is between two fingers of Ar Rahman's; if he wishes He may guide it to righteousness, or to misguidance."** [Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Mājah] Addressing His Prophet, Almighty Allah says: **"And had We not made you stand firm, you would nearly have inclined to them a little."** [Surah al Isrā': 74], Prophet Ibrahim ('Alayhi Salaam) said these prayers: **"... and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols."** [Surah Ibraheem: 35] Also, prophet Yūsuf ('Alayhi Salaam) supplicated Allah to save him from the women's cunning ways.

O servants of Allah! In our Lord's Book, the symptoms and the remedy are defined. There is also a description of the weak losers. These have only themselves to blame. Almighty Allah says: **When a single disaster smites you, although you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, you say: "From where does this come to us?" Say: "It is from yourselves (because of your evil deeds)." And Allāh has power over all things.** [Surah Ale Imrān: 165]

When man turns away from Allah, Allah will cause his heart to turn away: **"So when they turned away (from the Path of Allāh), Allāh turned their hearts away (from the Right Path)."** [Surah as Saff: 5] Turning away from good deeds causes the heart to turn away as well: **"Then they turn away. Allāh has turned their hearts (from the light) because they are a people that understand not."** [Surah at Tawbah: 127] Pride and rejection entail that **"I shall turn away from My Ayāt those who behave arrogantly on the earth, without a right, and (even) if they see all the proofs, they will not believe in them. And if they see the way of righteousness, they will not adopt it as the Way, but if they see the way of error, they will adopt that way."** [Surah al A'rāf: 146]

He whose heart grows callous is only because of his sinful deeds: **"Nay! But on their hearts is the Rân (covering of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn."** [Surah al Muṭaffifeen: 14] Following one's whims and clinging to the herein (*al-dunya*) are conducive to misguidance and deprivation of the bliss of knowledge: **"And recite to them the story of him to whom We gave Our proofs, but he threw them away, so Shaitân followed him up, and he became of those who went astray. And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his description is the description of a dog: if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out. Such is the description of the people who reject Our verses. So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect. Evil is the likeness of the people who reject Our verses and used to wrong their own selves. Whomsoever Allâh guides, he is the guided one, and whomsoever He sends astray, those! They are the losers."** [Surah al A'râf: 175-178]

Here is a man upon whom Allah has bestowed His signs, whom He granted from His favours, clad with His knowledge, allowed full opportunity for guidance and sublimation, yet he rejects all these favours. He dissociates himself from Allah's signs, discards the protective shield, and deviates from guidance to follow his whims and descends from the shining horizon to wallow in the murky mud.

With this he becomes an easy target for Shaitan, vulnerable and unprotected. He follows and accompanies him and becomes totally enslaved by him. In this he is just like a dog; it pants if it is chased and if it is left alone, it still keeps panting.

O servants of Allah! The pious and the upright were very keen on inspecting and mending their hearts. Righteousness, *taqwa*, tranquility and pleasure in invoking Allah Almighty, belief and certainty and all types of good may not exist but in pure and consecrated hearts. They may not dwell in hearts polluted by darkness and sin. Hence, the supplication of Ibrahim Al-Khaleel (Allah's intimate friend), 'Alayhi Salaam: **"And disgrace me not on the Day when (all the creatures) will be resurrected; The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, Except him who brings to Allâh a clean heart."** [Surah ash Shu'arâ': 87-89]

The fact that Allah does not misguide the one who comes to Him and follows His guidance is a feature of His absolute justice. If the servant of Allah relapses, it is only because of him and his negligence. **"And Allâh will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid. Verily, Allâh is the All-Knower of everything."** [Surah at Tawbah: 115]

Taking sins and disobedience lightly is one of the main reasons for relapsing and damnation: **"When you were propagating it with your tongues, and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a little thing, while with Allâh it was very great."** [Surah al Noor: 15]

It is narrated in the hadith, **"Beware of underestimated sins; they accumulate in the record of the individual until they destroy him."** [Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Al-Tabarâni]

Of the most dangerous perils conducive to delinquency and relapse are the sins of having a solitary meeting with the opposite sex, which may facilitate committing forbidden acts. At present the ways and means are readily available to the public, and nothing can preclude their temptation except *taqwa* and fear of Allah.

Opportunities for solitary meetings may be facilitated by way of testing one's faith: **"O you who believe! Allâh will certainly make a trial of you with something in (the matter of) the game that is well within reach of your hands and your lances, that Allâh may test who fears Him unseen."** [Surah al Mâidah: 94]

Kindled by a treacherous look or a delinquent thought, proscriptive desires may take roots in the heart, weakening the faith, tearing down the edifice of knowledge, sweeping away piety, precluding the mention of and the love of Allah and the solace one finds in Him, and generating dislike of the righteous and renunciation of worship.

How bitter a relapse is! **"(The hypocrites) will call the believers: "Were we not with you?" The believers will reply: "Yes! But you led yourselves into temptations, you looked forward for our destruction; you doubted (in Faith); and you were deceived by false desires, till the Command of Allāh came to pass. And the chief deceiver (Satan) deceived you in respect of Allāh."** [Surah al Hadeed: 14]

What could be most sorrowful and affliction laden for the servant of Allah is when he sees the path of salvation laid open for him and thinks that he is saved and starts to experience the situation of the joyous; then, all of a sudden, he gets separated from them and cast into damnation.

It is incumbent upon the Muslim to try to mend fences with himself, look after his heart and beware of the Shaitan-induced steps. Allah is watching and observing, and He will hold him to account and reward or punish him accordingly. Man has to watch his thoughts as corruption germinates in the thought. The thought holds the seeds of Satan in the heart and he takes care of his seeds by watering them time after time until they mutate into fruit of actions.

Undoubtedly, repelling thoughts is easier than repelling willed decisions. The servant of Allah will be unable to fend off these thoughts once they have developed into willed decisions. He has only himself to blame if he fails to nib them in the bud. He is then compared to someone who refused initially to put off the spark that fell on a heap of wood, and was therefore unable to extinguish the ensuing blaze afterwards.

O Muslims! It is also advisable to avoid suspicious and ill-reputed places, to keep away from bad company and to realize that illnesses of the heart are more contagious than those of the body. **"And when you see those who engage in a false conversation about Our Verses (of the Qur'ān) by mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic. And if Shaitān causes you to forget, then after the remembrance sit not you in the company of those people who are the Zālimūn."** [Surah al An'ām]

He who candidly seeks the purity of his heart will follow the right path; he will sterilize his heart with the right decontaminants and save it from all depressants. The best remedy of all is for one to heed the commandments of Allah [May He be extolled], observe taqwa, and fill one's heart with the love of Allah.

Quoting Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-'Ās (Radiallahu Anhum), Al-Tabarāni and Al-Hākim, in his Al-Mustadrak, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Faith deteriorates in your hearts in the same way your garment wears out. Ask Allah to revive faith in your hearts."***

In his Sahih, Muslim narrates that the Prophet ﷺ used to say (the following prayers): ***"O Allah! Bestow on my soul piety and purify it as You are the Best to do so. You are its Guardian and its Protector."***

May Allah bless you and me by the Qur'ān and Sunnah and benefit us with the wisdom and verses therein! I say this and seek Almighty Allah's forgiveness for me and for you.

Second Khutbah

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and King of Judgement Day! I bear witness that there is no deity worth worshipping except Allah alone with no associate, The King, the Supreme and Ultimate Truth. I also bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, the honest and the truthful. May Allah send His Mercy, Peace and Blessing upon him, his family and all of his Companions.

O Muslims! Our society, thanks be to Allah, enjoys abundant wealth, and it is our duty to take care of, develop and protect such wealth against misfortunes. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to teach ourselves and our children to fear Allah and observe taqwa, and to know about Him, His *hudoos*^[1] and shari'a. It is the kind of knowledge that induces action and intelligence and remains as sustenance and a protecting cover through thick and thin. He who possesses provisions in terms of taqwa and good deeds deserves salvation. It is Almighty Allah's decree never to disappoint any servant of His who comes forth to Him.

Avoiding pitfalls is effected by seeking refuge in the Almighty Allah [May He be extolled] Who says "So flee to Allāh..." [Surah al Dhāriyāt: 50] He [May he be extolled] also says, "Is not Allāh Sufficient for His slave?" [Surah az Zumar: 36]

Ibn Al-Qayyim (Rahimahullah) said, "*Sufficiency is proportionate to obedience. The more obedient you are to Almighty Allah, the more sufficiency you will receive from Him.*"

That is why the Prophet ﷺ directed Muslims towards worship in times of trials. He said, "**Worship in times of trouble is like emigrating to me.**" [Narrated by Muslim]

Blessed is the believer who resorts to prayers and worship when others are busy with trifling. Blessed is he who finds solace in Allah when other souls are worried and hearts are disturbed.

We must bring up our own selves and children to observe perseverance and determination and to avoid laziness, lethargy and whimsical desires. Honour is not obtained through vanity.

The Qur'ān says, "(It was said to his son): **O Yahya! Hold fast to the Scripture.**" [Surah Maryam: 12]

About Mūsā [Peace be upon him], the Qur'ān says, "**And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things (and said): Hold unto these with firmness.**" [Surah al A'rāf: 145]

It is through perseverance and hard work that the Prophet's Companions (Radiallahu Anhu,) obtained the best of the herein and the hereafter. They joined knowledge and worship, as well as calling to Islam and making jihad. They did not succumb to rest and comfort. The Prophet ﷺ said that paradise is surrounded by discomforts, which means that no one can reach paradise unless he surmounts these discomforts and overcomes these difficulties with reliance on Almighty Allah.

Protecting the self includes avoiding suppressants and bad company. "**O you who believe! Take care of your own selves, [do righteous deeds, fear Allāh much and love Allāh much. If you follow the right guidance and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong no hurt can come to you from those who are in error.]**" [Surah al Mā'idah: 105]

Those who observe prayers most are the ablest to control their desires. Desires take over when prayers are neglected. "**But there came after them successors [i.e. later generations] who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil.**" [Surah Maryam: 59]

Almighty Allah grants wisdom and firmness to whomever is wont to perform well with respect to worshiping Him, whomever is able to control himself and his behaviour, whomever is willing to watch his steps and follow the straight path, not defeated by evil whispers or undeterred by Satan's

beckoning. He who observes worship in solitude will be helped by the Almighty to stand firm in times of trials and misfortunes.

Our Prophet ﷺ says, **“He who is scared will embark on his journey at nightfall so that he may reach home quickly. Allah’s reward is costly; Allah’s reward is paradise.”** [Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi with an authentic chain of narrators]

In times of fluctuations and relapses, it is necessary that we resort to Almighty Allah in supplication to invoke His Mercy: **“... and know that Allâh comes in between a person and his heart (i.e. He prevents an evil person to decide anything) ...”** [Surah al Anfâl: 24] So pray Almighty Allah to help you stand firm.

During the time of the apostates, Caliph Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Anhu) used to show humbleness in his prayers and read: **“Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower.”** [Surah Āle Imrān: 8]

O Over-Turner of the hearts, make my heart take root in Your Religion! O Over-Turner of the hearts, make my heart take root in Your Religion!

Then send your salat and peace upon the best of mankind and the most honoured of humanity, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdillah, the Hashimite, the Qurashi.

O Allah, send Your Mercy, Peace and Blessing upon Your Servant and Messenger, Muhammad, and upon his virtuous and pure family, his righteous and brave Companions and upon those who follow in righteousness till the Day of Judgement!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims, and fail the tyrants, the atheists, and the corruptors!

O Allah! Foreordain for this Ummah a matter (an affair) of rationality (guidance) where the people of piety are honored and those of sins are guided, and where al-ma'roof (promotion of good deeds) is promoted and al-munkar (promulgation of evil deeds) is prevented! O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Make preoccupied with their own evil those who wish to harm Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Turn their plotting and their cunning against them and make them the cause of their own destruction! O Lord of the worlds!

O Allah! Grant victory to those who fight in Your cause in Palestine and everywhere, O Lord of the Worlds. O Allah! Lift the siege around them! Set right their conditions, and defeat their enemies!

O Allah! Free Al-Aqsa Mosque from the oppression of the oppressors and the aggression of the aggressors!

O Allah! Ease the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Syria, Burma, and Central Africa. O Allah! End their plight, and hasten the end of their suffering. O Allah! Have mercy on their weakness, help them overcome their helplessness, mend their breakage and take charge of their affairs, O You are the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate! O Allah! Spare their lives, attenuate their fear, protect their honour, provide for them, grant them courage, help them stand firm and make them prevail on their aggressor! O Allah! Set right their conditions, let them unite on guidance, save them from the evil among them and defeat their enemy!

O Allah! We implore you to rid us of the oppressive tyrants and their collaborators!

O Allah! Set right the conditions of our brothers and sisters in Egypt and everywhere! O Allah! Let them unite on righteousness and guidance! Grant leadership to the best amongst them, and save them from the evil people amongst them!

O Allah! Grant victory to Your religion, Your Book, the Sunnah of Your Prophet [May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him] and to Your faithful servants!

O Allah! Support our leader the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and guide him to do what pleases you, and to observe righteousness and taqwa! O Allah! Grant success to his Crown Prince and his Deputy Crown Prince, O Lord of the Worlds! O Allah! Bless their reign and make it good augur for Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Set right every Muslim ruler, and fill his heart with fear and heed of You in private and in public!

O Allah! Grant Muslim rulers success to implement Your Shar' (Islamic law), and to follow the Sunnah of Your Prophet Muhammad [May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him] and make them mercy-like for Your faithful servants!

O Allah! Make widespread security and prosperity throughout our country and all Muslim countries, and save us from the evils of the malicious and the machinations of the wicked.

"Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" [Surah al Baqarah: 201]

And they said nothing but: "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions, establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk." [Surah Āle Imrān: 147]

O Allah! Forgive us our sins, conceal our blemishes, facilitate our affairs, and help us fulfil our hopes in accordance with what pleases You! O Allah! Forgive our sins and those of our parents, their parents, our spouses and offspring; You are the All-Hearing!

O Lord! Accept our supplication; You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! Grant us forgiveness; You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing, and forgive us our sins; You are the All Forgiving, the Most Merciful!

Glorified be our Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from all that is wrongly attributed to You! And may peace be upon the Messengers, and praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!

[1] *Hudood* in Arabic (حدود) are the bounds or restrictions that Allah has placed on man's freedom of action.

Translated by Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
