



[12/10/1435 – A – Āl Ṭālib]

١٢-١٠-١٤٣٥-أ-آل طالب

## **The Story of (Prophet) Yūnus (Jonah) -Peace Be upon Him**

### **Khutbah Topic**

His Eminence Sheikh Saleh Ibn Muhammad Āl Ṭālib –may Allah protect him– delivered this Friday’s khutbah titled “**The Story of Yūnus (Jonah) –Peace Be upon Him.**” He dealt with the story of Allah’s Prophet Yūnus –peace be upon him– and the morals to be learnt from it. The Sheikh outlined the most important moral lessons to be drawn from his story, such as holding fast to, rather than renouncing, the path of *da’wa* (preaching Allah’s religion) despite the hardships and difficulties associated with it, and resorting to Allah Almighty through thick and thin to dispel grief and drive away sorrow.

### **Part One**

Praise be to Allah! Praise be to Allah, the Sovereign enjoying power and dominion. He has pervasive volition in dealing with His creatures. He is the Living, Eternal and Immortal. He (Glory Be to Him) has unrivalled supremacy over His creatures in terms of Rank, Potency, and Omnipotence. He salvaged His close companion (Ibrahim) from fire and saved Yūnus from the whale’s belly. I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah; No minute detail can escape His knowledge or surpass His will. I also bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s Servant and Messenger. His Lord has embellished his character with the best traits and the noblest qualities. May Allah send His bountiful *Salāt* (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) and Peace upon him, his family, and his Companions till the Day of Judgement!

Now then!

The best speech is Allah’s Book and the best guidance is that of Muhammad (May Allah’s *Salāt* and Peace be upon him). The most vicious of all things are novelties (*muḥdathāt*, in religion); every novelty (*muḥdathah*) is an innovation (*bid’ah*), and every innovation is misguidance.

Then the best advice is indeed observing *taqwa* (fear of disobeying Allah). So, do adhere to *taqwa* vis-à-vis Allah and perform good deeds:



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﴿... then whosoever becomes pious and righteous, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.﴾ [Al-A'rāf: 35]

Whoever observes fear of Allah will be under His guardianship, and whoever fears humans will find no shelter from divine chastisement.

O Muslims!

The conduct of prophets (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon them all) is full of lessons and moral points. It is a radiant light procession upon a radiant light procession:

﴿Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding. It (the Qur'an) is not a forged statement but a confirmation of the Allāh's existing Books [the Taurāt (Torah), the Injeel (Gospel) and other Scriptures of Allāh] and a detailed explanation of everything and a guide and a Mercy for the people who believe.﴾ [Yūsuf: 111]

The stories of the Holy Qur'ān were revealed to the Messenger of Allah (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him) while he was still in Makkah and while the few believers who followed him were under siege in the mountain paths of Makkah. Their way was hard and long, and they could hardly see any end to it. The Qur'ānic stories would reveal for them the end of the way ahead, show them its contours, guide their steps, and provide them with the needed help. The Qur'ānic stories were also meant to keep the Prophet (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him) steadfast:

﴿And all that We relate to you (O Muhammad SAW) of the news of the Messengers is in order that We may make strong and firm your heart thereby. And in this (chapter of the Qur'an) has come to you the truth, as well as an admonition and a reminder for the believers.﴾ [Hūd: 120]

and say to him “*You are not alone in this path.*”

﴿Therefore be patient (O Muhammad SAW) as did the Messengers of strong will ...﴾ [Al-Aḥqāf: 35]

O Muslims!

Today, we are going to deal with the story of one of Allah's prophets. It is a story that said to our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him): “Beware! Never renounce the mission of *da'wah* (calling to Islam) and the burdens of (conveying) the Message.” It said:



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﴿So wait with patience for the Decision of your Lord, and be not like the Companion of the Fish, when he cried out (to Us) while he was in deep sorrow.﴾ [Al-Qalam: 48]

That was the story of Yūnus (peace be upon him). Allah sent him to the people of Nineveh in the district of Mosul (in modern Iraq). He called them to *tawheed*, i.e. to profess belief in the unity of Allah (be He glorified) and to worship Him alone, but they disbelieved him and obstinately persisted in their atheism. With the passage of time, he grew impatient with their disbelief, became furious and quitted them. He threatened them that divine chastisement was due in three days.

He therefore quitted, showing his extreme anger thinking that Allah would not constrict the land in front of him. He thought that the earth was quite vast, the cities were numerous, and human communities were also countless. He also thought that since those people were too difficult to call to Allah, then Allah would certainly redirect him to other people. This is the meaning of the verse: ﴿... and imagined that We shall not punish him (i.e. the calamities which had befallen him)!... ﴾ [Al-Anbiyā': 87], that is to say, "He imagined we shall not constrict the land in front of him."

As to the people of Yūnus, when they noticed that he quitted them and that Allah's punishment would certainly befall them, Allah threw into their hearts repentance, so they regretted their negative response to their prophet. They, then, submitted themselves to Allah, showing their humility to Him. It was really a great moment! Allah lifted off, with His Might, Strength, Compassion, and Mercy, the punishment that was otherwise to befall them due to their deeds. That divine favour was granted only to the people of Yūnus.

Indeed, no nation in history, which disbelieved its messenger and was about to be punished, but then declared belief and was saved from the due divine punishment (except the people of Yūnus). Allah the Almighty says in the *surah* of Yūnus:

﴿Was there any town (community) that believed (after seeing the punishment), and its Faith (at that moment) saved it (from the punishment)? (The answer is none,) - except the people of Yūnus (Jonah); when they believed, We removed from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the (present) world, and permitted them to enjoy for a while.﴾ [Yūnus: 98]

O servants of Allah!

The fury of Yūnus (peace be upon him) led him to the sea shore where he boarded a ship laden with passengers and merchandise. In the middle of sea, the ship badly struggled against high winds and rising waves. In common creed, that symptom was ominous of wrath



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against one of the passengers who must have committed a sin and should accordingly be thrown into the sea so that the ship could be saved from sinking. They may have alternatively wanted to alleviate the cargo of the ship in order to avoid sinking. After they drew lots to decide on who should be thrown into the sea to save the ship, Yūnus' name emerged, but they pitied him and could not throw him into the sea. However, on drawing lots, Yūnus' name emerged repeatedly:

﴿And, verily, Yūnus (Jonah) was one of the Messengers. When he ran to the laden ship﴾ [Al-Şāffāt: 139-140]

To describe Yūnus' departure, Allah used the Arabic verb "*abaqa*", to run away in the same a slave does from his master, because he departed without Allah's permission: ﴿He (agreed to) cast lots, and he was among the losers.﴾ [Al-Şāffāt: 141]. He was then thrown into the sea. ﴿Then a (big) fish swallowed him and he had done an act worthy of blame.﴾ [Al-Şāffāt: 142]. He indeed deserved blaming because he disengaged himself from the mission Allah entrusted him with. Furious with his people, he left them before taking permission from Allah. Then, the big fish (whale) swallowed him without eating his flesh or smashing his bones. He remained inside the whale's belly for a while (preordained by Allah). It was a triple obscurity: the obscurity of the whale's belly, the obscurity of the sea, and the obscurity of the night. He (peace be upon him) called up his Lord in supplication:

﴿... *Lâ ilâha illa Anta* [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allâh)], Glorified (and Exalted) are You [above all that (evil) they associate with You]. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers."﴾ [Al-Anbiyā': 87]

It was reported that when the angels heard his voice, they said, "*O Lord! A feeble familiar voice coming from an alien country.*" So, Allah answered his supplication and salvaged him from grief:

﴿And thus We do deliver the believers (who believe in the Oneness of Allâh, abstain from evil and work righteousness).﴾ [Al-Anbiyā': 88]

﴿Had he not been of them who glorify Allâh﴾ ﴿He would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection.﴾ [Al-Şāffāt: 143-144]

Had he not shown obedience to Allah through performing prayers and evoking divine attributes in the time of well-being before being swallowed by the whale, he would have remained in the fish's belly till Resurrection Day. This point is implicit in the Prophet's *hadith*, "***Be mindful of Allah's commandments, He will protect you; Be mindful of Allah's commandments, you will find Him in front of you.***" Yūnus (peace be upon him) was one of



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those who glorify Allah and supplicate Him even inside the whale's belly because he was before accustomed to doing so.

Then, the big fish threw up Yūnus (peace be upon him) on the sea shore in a place where there was neither vegetation nor shade. His body was very weak:

﴿But We cast him forth on the naked shore while he was sick. And We caused a plant of gourd to grow over him.﴾ [Al-Şāffāt: 145-146]

The gourd plant cast its shade over Yūnus with its large leaves and protected him from flies which are said to be repelled by such a plant. In the Arab culture, every plant having no stem is categorised as gourd. It is reported that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him) was fond of *al-dubbā'* (a dish made of gourd) to the point that he would eat up every bit of it even in the edges of his bowl.

Then, Allah ordered him to return to his people, who believed him and embraced his faith. Their number reached no less than one hundred thousand people, which means that Allah honoured and favoured His prophet. That is why our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him) has the highest number of followers. He said, "***Every prophet, without exception, was given what humans were supposed to embrace as creed; and what I was given was divine revelation inspired to me by Allah; thus, I hope I will have the highest number of followers on Resurrection Day.***"

O servants of Allah!

That was (the story of) Yūnus (peace be upon him), a noble prophet. In the two *Sahih* Books by Imam Muslim and Imam Bukhari, it is confirmed that Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's *Salāt* and Peace be upon him) said, "***None should say: 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Mattā (Matthew) was'.***" He was one among many other noble prophets. Allah mentioned them in the *surahs* of Al-Nissā' and Al-An'ām when He said, ﴿They are those whom Allāh had guided. So follow their guidance.﴾ [Al-An'ām: 90]

The great guidance in this story is the right guidance that Allah commended His Prophet to follow when He said:

﴿So wait with patience for the Decision of your Lord, and be not like the Companion of the Fish, ....﴾ [Al-Qalam: 48]

So, all the people entrusted with a particular *da'wah* must, by all means, endure its painful burden and keep their patience in the face of disbelief and harm, for its sake. Disbelieving sincere and confident people is indeed very bitter for the soul to cope with, but these are the dear costs to be paid (for being entrusted with a *da'wah*).



Followers of the messengers must observe patience and endurance; they must stay the course and maintain perseverance. They must re-engage the *da'wah* and keep calling people time and again. They must not, however, give up faith in the goodness of souls and the responsiveness of hearts no matter how much denial, refutation, arrogance and ingratitude they may face.

It is easy for reformers to feel frustrated and give up on the people they are calling on because they do not find them responsive enough, but this does not help the truth to come out victorious. A believer must suppress his anger and carry on. It is better for him to be patient as all shall end well for the righteous:

﴿Indeed, We know that your breast is straitened at what they say. (98). So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him).﴾ [Al-Hijr: 97-99]

O servants of Allah!

O you, who are feeling distressed, burdened and afflicted! You shall find a set example in those supplications by the prophets. Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi narrated with an authentic chain of narration on the authority of *Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqāṣ* (May Allah be pleased with him) who reported the Messenger of Allah (May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him) to have said: "***The supplication of Dhi Al-Nūn (Prophet Yūnus) when he supplicated, while inside the whale's belly was: 'There is deity (worthy of worship) except You, Glory be to You! I have been of the transgressors.' No Muslim man has ever asked Allah for anything using this supplication without being answered.***"

Therefore, think about this great supplication, for it includes *tawheed* (monotheism) of Allah Almighty, His *tanzeeh* (elimination of anthropomorphic elements wrongly attributed to Him) as well as gratitude (towards Him):

﴿*La ilaha illa Anta* [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)], Glorified (and Exalted) are You [above all that (evil) they associate with You]. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers.﴾ [Al-Anbiyā': 87]

Imam Ahmad narrated that Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "***The Messenger of Allah (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) said: 'No servant (of Allah) suffering from distress and worry has ever said (supplicating Allah Almighty): Oh Allah, I am Your servant, the son of Your servant, and the son of your maid! My forelock is in Your hand; I am subject to Your supreme power and I confess to the wisdom in Your justice. I call on You with every attribute You possess, have sent down in Your book, taught anyone of Your creatures, or have solely reserved for Yourself, I call on You to make the Holy Koran the spring and light of my heart, the vanishing of my sorrow and***



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*sadness' - No servant (of Allah) has ever supplicated Allah Almighty in these words without having his concerns blown away, and replaced with joy', (or –as reported elsewhere with the word– relief.”*

They said: “O Messenger of Allah! Should we learn these words?” He said: “**Those who have heard them should learn them.**” Of course, ‘**learning them**’ includes memorizing them, understanding them, and supplicating Allah using them.

In the two *Sahihs* (the two hadith books by Imam Muslim and Imam Bukhari), the Prophet (May Allah’s *Salat* and Peace be upon him) used to supplicate Allah using the following words whenever he felt anguished: “**There is no deity but Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. There is no deity but Allah, the Lord of the Great Throne. There is no deity but Allah, the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of the earth, and the Lord of the Noble Throne.**”

These supplications are Prophetic remedies against all sorts of grief and sadness. He who uses them in good faith, Allah would ease up his grief and make go away his sadness.

Whenever you are graciously guided to voluntarily perform two *rak’ahs*<sup>1</sup>, do supplicate Allah Almighty in humility. (In this context, the Sheikh quotes a few lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*Ask your Lord to grant you success through them (rak’ahs).  
Ask Him in good faith whenever you implore Him;  
Whenever you prostrate yourself before Him in gratitude, supplicate Him  
In the same words uttered by ‘Thu Al-Nūn’  
Observe perseverance when knocking at His door,  
So that He may open it for you when you do so.  
Do remember Him continuously for as long as you are on Earth,  
So that you will be mentioned in the Heavens whenever you do so.*

May Allah bless you and me by the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* and benefit us with their verses and wisdom! Having said this, I ask Allah, be He exalted, to forgive me and you!

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<sup>1</sup> A *rak’ah* is an individual unit of *salat* (prayer). For instance, *Ṣubḥ* (or *Fajr*) prayer is made up of two *rak’ahs*.



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## Part Two

Praise be to Allah Alone, Who granted victory to His Servant<sup>2</sup> and might to His soldiers, and Who defeated the confederates alone. Praise be to Allah, the One and only One, the Single, the *Ṣamad*<sup>3</sup>, Who **begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him**.<sup>4</sup> I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah Alone with no associate and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah send His *Salat* and Peace upon him, his family, Companions, the *tābi'īn*, and those who followed them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment!

Now then, O Muslims!

“*Palestine: the Usurped Territory*”, “*Jerusalem: the Captive City*”, and “*The Palestinians: an Oppressed People while among their kin and brothers and sisters in faith.*” All the above are epitomes as to the current incapacitation within the Arab world, an arena for political auctioneering and state-sponsored terrorism which is perpetrated by the occupying entity (Israel) no matter how hard those governments that installed and sponsored it try to justify its crimes and cover up its massacres. One day, the cover will certainly be lifted and the media blackout will eventually come to an end.

While dismayed on account of the victims (of Israeli bombing), and aggrieved over the displacement of many families and the terrorizing of scores of citizens, and despite the differences among people over the circumstances involved, there is still shining hope through the gloomy night of aggression which is embodied in a number of aspects including the sympathizing from the part of many nations on earth as they realize the criminality of the occupier and usurper, the aggressor and bloody criminal, the appalling and insidious killer.

The blackout over those crimes committed against the Palestinians and Palestine is the quilt which has long covered up the enemy's hideous acts. This evil face, however, has been unveiled and along with it many other evil faces. Those who have always concealed and justified such crimes and occupation have now been exposed:

﴿And Allah drove back those who disbelieved in their rage, they gained no advantage (booty, etc.)﴾ [Al Aḥzāb: 25]

They have achieved nothing but the killing of children and civilians, the destruction of mosques and homes, collective massacres excluding no one, war crimes against humanity,

<sup>2</sup> Used in reference to Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him) during the Battle of the Trench.

<sup>3</sup> It is one of Allah's attributes mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, meaning the **Eternal**, the **Ever-Lasting**, the **Self-Sufficient**.

<sup>4</sup> The expression in bold borrowed from *sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ*, verses number 3-4.





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with no moral scruples or human consideration. All has been carried out under the gaze of the international community and its silent and languid institutions and organizations.

The recent confrontation on the land of Gaza, despite the similar assaults that were previously launched against its territory, features a new outcome where the balance of power has slightly shifted as never before in favour of the oppressed. This bears evidence of change towards a new type of rivalry; one that is carried out on the grounds of more equity in terms of the balance of power in the face of the unjust occupier, especially with the changes taking place in the region, despite their negative and blurry aspects. The sparks in the face-off are bound to strike a long-oppressing aggressor and an enemy who has continued killing and displacing people.

May Allah Almighty have mercy on the souls of the martyrs of Palestine, heal its wounded, make up for its losses in money and homes, and grant it success in setting up a righteous and truthful leadership.

We thank those nations who, despite the fact that they share neither language nor faith with the Palestinians, have taken commendable positions vis-à-vis the recent offensive. However, we have no consolation to offer for those who are still too weak in this regard!

﴿And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not.﴾ [Yūsuf: 21]

O Allah! Send your *Salat* and Peace upon Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, the best and most honest of all mankind.

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, honours, Mercy), Peace and Blessing on Your Servant and Messenger, Muhammad, his good and pure family, and his magnanimous and auspicious Companions! O Allah! We implore your satisfaction with the rightly-guided Imams and Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali, with all the Companions of Your Prophet and those who followed them in righteousness and taken up their *sunnah*, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims, and fail polytheism and polytheists (who associate partners with You). O Allah! Destroy the enemies of Your Religion. O Allah! Grant safety and security to this homeland and to the rest of Muslim homelands!

O Allah! Fail those who want to harm or divide our country, turn their plots against them, and make that the cause of their own destruction, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Grant us safety in our homelands! O Allah! Grant us safety in our homelands, set right our leaders and those responsible for our affairs, and support with the Truth our Imam and leader! O Allah! Help him follow Your guidance, make his deeds the source of Your Satisfaction, and provide him with a righteous and truthful retinue! O Allah!



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Grant him and his deputies success in their endeavours to achieve good and welfare for the people and the country! O Allah! Lead them to the path of guidance and righteousness!

O Allah! Shove away from us expensiveness, epidemics, usury, earthquakes, trials, and the worst ordeals whether implicit or explicit!

O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Unite them on the Truth and right guidance! O Allah! Stop their bloodshed, alleviate their fear, and protect their religion, honour, homelands and property!

O Allah! We implore You to be on the side of the oppressed and the afflicted, to grant victory to the defenceless Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Grant them victory in Palestine! O Allah! Unite them around Your Truth, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Grant victory to Your Religion, Your Holy Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your true servants! O Allah! We leave to you the enemies of religion, for they are no match to You! O Allah! We leave to you the enemies of religion, for they are no match to You! O Allah! We leave to you the enemies of religion, for they are no match to You!

﴿...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!﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 201]

O Allah! We ask You for pardon, well-being and long-lasting soundness in religion in the Herein and the Hereafter!

O Allah! Forgive our sins, cover our flaws, make easy our affairs and let our wishes come true in what pleases You! O Allah! Forgive our sins, those of our parents, our grandparents, their progeny, our wives and children, You are All-Hearing!

O Allah! Lead us to the path of righteousness and expiate our shortcomings! Do accept from us our *salat*, fasting, supplications, and good deeds as You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing! O Allah! Forgive us, for You are All-Forgiving, All-Merciful!

Glorified be Your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from what they attribute unto You! May peace be upon the Messengers! The last of our supplications is all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!