

## MODULE 2

**Class Title:** *Dajal* of this World, part 2 – Reality behind glamour of this life  
(2<sup>nd</sup> part of a 3 lesson series)

**Aims of the Lesson:**

To analyse the glamour promoted by popular culture

To see that all that glitters is NOT gold

**Categories:** Scripture, popular culture

**Lesson format:** Power point presentation with narration. Discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli*

(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

This is a continuation of last week's class. Let us quickly recap what we discussed.

We were talking about the deception of this world and the story of the sleepers of the cave from Surah Al Kahf.

Slide 2:

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ  
قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا

“And we made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and they said, ‘Our Lord is the Lord of the Heavens and Earth. Never shall we call upon any other God than Him. If we did we would indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief.’”(verse 14)

Allah (swt) says: And We made their hearts firm and strong...

Teacher: Whose hearts?

Students: sleepers, the young men's hearts

Teacher: What did Allah (swt) make their hearts strong against?

Student: Idol worshipping.

Teacher: Yes and He also made their hearts firm against the glamorous lifestyle that was all around them.

We discussed that the life of the young chaps in Ephesus was as exciting as your life in Karachi, perhaps even more because that was a very happening place. The greatest lesson we learn from the story of the sleepers of the cave is that *imaan* (faith) makes

us smart – it gives us the insight to see the shallowness behind this glamour around us and then gives us the strength to act accordingly.

Slides 3- 8:

We have glitz and glamour, high rise buildings, malls and all sorts of entertainment all around us. This a global village, isn't it? You guys have access to just about everything. You go on holidays, you are on the internet all the time, you watch TV and movies. Don't you?

Slides 9-10:

Are you exposed to glamorous things? Do you get fascinated when you see the Oscars for example?

People walking down the red carpet? All those beautiful women and dashing guys. It is absolutely alluring. Some of you might say '*astaghfirullah*' it doesn't attract me but of course it does.

The lesson that we learn from the story is, "all that glitters is not gold."

Slides 11- 12:

These are maggots. You know what maggots are? Maggots are those *keeras* (insects) that come when something is dead and rotting! All that glitters is most certainly not gold. The depression, the loneliness, the heartbreak, the mental illnesses, the big issues that are behind all this glitz and glamour is something that is hidden behind those flashy perfect smiles.

Today, we are going to look at some deceptions or *dajal* around us.

Slide 13:

Before we go on I want to make one thing clear. We are going to talk about real people - celebrities. The reason we are going to talk about them is to understand that certain lifestyles that may seem all "cool" and glitzy don't necessarily benefit those living them. In fact, behind the scenes of seemingly glamorous lives, a lot of not-so-pretty stuff goes on.

We are not going to make fun of any celebrity or look down upon them in anyway. Do keep that in mind. (**NOTE:** very important to stress this point)

One deception or *dajal* we hear is 'music is food for the soul.'

Teacher: have you heard this one?

Students: yes

Slide 14:

Teacher: Who is this?

Students: Britney Spears.

Slide 15:

Britney Spears started out as a girl next door and then she became a glamorous super star but do we ever see the heart break, depression, the drug and alcohol abuse and the broken marriages behind all that fame and fortune? The first time she got married, it lasted for 55 hours and the second one ended in two years with her giving up custody of her two kids. And look at this picture, my goodness. Do we see that on MTV?

If music is food for the soul, why is the poor girl starved for affection? You know she even paid for her own engagement ring??

Slide 16:

Teacher: Now tell me who is this?

Students: Michael Jackson.

Teacher: the legend of pop music.

Slides 17- 18:

He was born a cute African American kid but then what happened to him? This is a photograph of Michael Jackson's face during a court trial and it is not touched up or anything. This is a real picture! We are all aware of all the different plastic surgeries that the poor man went through. Did he die a soulful person? Music is food for the soul. He was the king of pop! He was the greatest pop singer that ever lived. Do you guys think that he lived a serene life?

Slide 19:

Teacher: Who is this?

Students: He is Slash of Guns n Roses.

Teacher: And what kind of life did Slash have? Very secure in himself and all together?

No! But if music is food for the soul then what is the problem here?

Slide 20:

Teacher: Who is this?

Students: Madonna

Teacher: Does she really look like this, you think?

Students: No.

Teacher: Do you think there is any problem with her life? Are there any insecurities? Any heartbreaks? Is there a lot of loneliness?

But if music is food for the soul then what is the problem?

Slide 21:

Teacher: Anybody heard of Avril Lavigne?

She started as a 17 year old innocent kid but then what happened to her?

This is a picture from 2007; she was 22 years old at that time and then she got into a drug habit and had to be in rehabilitation. All sorts of nasty things happened to her. I don't even want to repeat the kind of nasty things that happened to this innocent kid.

This is an interview that she gave when she was 17 years old in 2002.

She was asked by an interviewer in 'BBC', 'Were you surprised or overwhelmed by your success?'

She said; 'Yes. It does get overwhelming. I was fine a little while ago. But now that things are going off, that's when the stress is coming. This crazy lifestyle is not a normal thing for a 17 year old to be going through'.

But you see we are told by a lot of people, including Sufis that 'music is food for the soul'. If music is food for the soul then all these people are making music, their life should be all sorted out and secure. They should all be very happy but they are not.

Slide 22:

Teacher: Snoopdog, have you heard of him?

Students: "Yes."

He was involved in the shooting of a rival gang member. He and his entourage were arrested for creating a mini riot at Heathrow airport.

This person is a former drug dealer who has served time. He has been both shot and stabbed. His album sales total up to \$25 million but this is what his life is.

Slide 23:

Teacher: All of you know Eminem don't you? Just listen to the lyrics of one of his songs. "Hey slim! That's my girlfriend screaming in the trunk but I didn't slit her throat. I just tied her up."

This is food for the soul?

He pleaded guilty to possessing fire arms after threatening his ex wife's new boyfriend and apparently now he has a daughter also. I want to repeat these lyrics and I want you to listen to this. These are the lyrics that you listen to when you have this music 'food for the soul' plugged in your ears. This is just one example. Some examples are so terrible that I don't even want to repeat them.

Teacher repeats: "Hey slim! That's my girlfriend screaming in the trunk but I didn't slit her throat. I just tied her up."

If this is food for the soul, I would rather just go hungry.

Slide 24:

Do they show all of this on 'MTV Awards'? Do they show the drug habits, their problems or their messed up personal lives. If the music that they are making is so full of soul, so full of meaning and is elevating them to another level then why do they have to get involved in all this? Do you think there is a problem behind this statement that 'music is food for the soul' or not? If music is food for the soul and if you believe this statement, then what is the matter with these people? Like I said these are just few people that I am talking about. The list is endless.

The evidence that we see right now doesn't support the fact that music is food for the soul. It is also said that '*qawwali*' which is another form of music, is food for the soul. All I am saying is that if we go by the statement that 'music is food for the soul' and we don't see the *dajal* and deception behind it, then where is it going to take us? That is the question that we need to think about.

Slides 25- 26:

'There is no business like show business.' Has everybody heard that?  
What happened to Drew Barrymore? This is her biography called 'Little girl lost.'

Slide 27:

Another person Lindsay Lohan with whom you are familiar with said;  
'I used booze and drugs to mask all my troubles. If I hadn't stopped I would be dead.'  
In and out of drug rehab, in and out of jail so what happened to 'there is no business like show business?'

Slide 28:

This is Miley Cyrus who plays Hannah Montana among other roles. I found some garish pictures of this poor innocent girl. Such terrible pictures that I didn't really want to put them in because it defeats the purpose. She is 18 years old and her life is all messed up but then, 'there's no business like show business!'

Slide 29:

Paris Hilton.

Slide 30:

Oscar winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow revealed that Brad Pitt broke her heart when he walked out on her. Look at how amazingly gorgeous she is. If there is no business like show business, what was the problem with her? Brad Pitt left her, then he left Jennifer Aniston now it is Angelina Jolie. But it could be somebody else tomorrow. There is no business like show business but what about the stability of a relationship? What about the stability of a marriage? Where is that?

It could happen in a “regular” life also, no doubt – but when we see “stars” and think they have it all, their lives must be oh so cool – we don’t see the reality behind the red carpet smiles.

Slide 31:

Heath Ledger. Born in 1979 and died in 2008 of a drug overdose. He died at the age of 29 by an overdose of prescription drugs.

Slide 32:

Britney Murphy was 32 years old when she died last year from drug overdose. ‘There is no business like show business’!

When we look at the lifestyle of the rich and famous, their fancy cars, big mansions and holiday homes we think they have got it all but you should realize that these poor people get sucked into this deceit, this *dajal* and its glamour. They get exploited and abused everyday but when we look at them on our television screens or computers, some of us might be thinking, ‘Oh! I wish I had that. I wish I looked like that.’ See the *dajal* behind it, the deceit behind it...

Slide 33:

Kate Moss is a super model. I was reading somewhere that in Hollywood, a size 4 is considered fat so often young girls of 12 and 13 years of age, smoke and take drugs to kill appetites and suffer from eating disorders such as anorexia.

(Teacher asks a reasonably normal sized girl to stand up): What dress size do you wear?

Student: size 6

Teacher: This girl here would be considered fat in Hollywood or in the modelling industry!

Teacher: You know these girls?

Slide 34:

Students: Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen.

They were perfectly fine and healthy kids and were stars since they were little babies but they became anorexic. Bulimia is a serious eating disorder in which a person eats and then deliberately throws up (binging & purging). Incidentally, Lady Diana had bulimia

Where is all this pressure coming from? If there is no business like show business, then why all these problems? Where is it all coming from?

Slide 35:

Never land is just that guys – never. It ain't gonna happen. It is not real. That is the deceit that Allah (swt) is telling us through the story of *Ashab e Kahf*. Those young men recognized the *dajal* of this world and chose to tread upon a seemingly boring, glamour-less path – a path that would keep their faith intact.

We need to see behind all of this glitz and glamour, these fancy cars and parties, the Oscar awards etc. We don't know what is going on behind the lives of all those people whose only security is to look pretty.

How long are those looks going to last? It is hunting for Never land which does not exist but if we get taken in by it and we end up compromising our faith, then where are we? We are absolutely nowhere!

Slides 36- 37:

It's just like driving a car with no brakes and having no idea about one's destination. That surely is the perfect recipe for disaster.

Slides 38- 39:

Surely human beings are more dignified than this! Allah (swt) has said that we are the best of creations, is this the best of creation? What have we done to ourselves?

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ  
ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

(Surah At Teen 95: verses 4 & 5)

Allah (swt) says: Indeed We created man in the best of mould. Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.

You might be thinking that she is talking about Hollywood. Who cares about Britney Spears anyway? So let me ask you how many of you have been to Park towers (an upmarket mall in Karachi)?

Teacher: “What happens when you walk in?”

Student: “lots of festivities”, shops”.

Teacher: “What kind of shops are they? Are they attractive or boring?”

Student reply: “Attractive.”

The reason I’m talking about Park towers is that although it is not show business but the glamour and glitz is there. When I go there, I stand in front of a shop and spend half an hour extra which perhaps I didn’t need to. Glitz and glamour is all around us. You open the television, you turn the internet on, you look at a billboard, you see glamour all around you, and whether you like it or not it profoundly affects you.

Our weddings and the elaborate “festivities” and “functions” that are part of that deal now are another Big Showtime. Yes, everyone is singing and dancing and making merry – how can you be the one, perhaps the only one in the family NOT to join in for the sake of Allah?

Do not think for a moment that *dajal* is only to do with the lifestyle of those celebrities out there somewhere in Hollywood and Bollywood. Nan hah – its right here at our doorstep, in our families, in our homes.

Just some years ago it was totally not acceptable for decent *shareef* family girls and boys to dance like filmi style at their family or friends weddings. Now – girls, boys, their *ammās* (mothers) and *abbās* (fathers) spend weeks to prepare “item numbers” for the *mehndi* or *dholkis* and entire families – grandparents, aunts, uncles - sit around and not just watch but applaud and join in! If one family member or friend objects – **they** are looked upon as if **they** are the ones gone off the rocker, are extremist, *mulla* and what-have-you.

What should they do then? Join in or choose the path of those brave young men, the *Ashab e Kahf*, reject the glamour and sit quietly in a cave?

Show business has seeped into our lives big time. We need to constantly check ourselves so that we don’t fall into that trap. Surah Kahf has been sent to us for a reason.

Slide 40:

We can recognize and stay away from *dajal* only if our faith is strong. Everybody gets sucked into it one way or the other. You don’t have to be a superstar to fall prey to this worldly deceit, every normal person gets affected by it and we can counter it by being steadfast in our faith. Until and unless Allah (swt) makes our hearts steadfast, we will fall prey to the *dajal*, to the deceit.

Slide 41:

And that can only happen when our faith is super solid. Now the question arises that how can we make our faith super solid? Is there a formula for that? Yes there is. Allah (swt) has given us lessons from each and every story that He has told us in the Qur’an. Faith is powerful, it gives us the insight to recognize *dajal* and the courage to reject it. It gives us the wisdom to make the correct choice and the patience to be steadfast.



Slide 42:

Allah (swt)'s mercy is boundless. In Surah Al Kahf, He has not only told us about the dangers of *dajal*, He has also given us an action plan. Allah (swt) never leaves us in a limbo that *ab khud se soch lo bhai, mei ney bata dia yeh problem hai, now save yourself!* (now think for yourself I have told you this is the problem)

No! He has given us an action plan.

Slide 43:

وَأْتِلْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

O Prophet! Recite what has been revealed to you from the Book of your Rabb: **no one** is authorized to change His words (and if you dare to make any change), you will find no refuge to protect you from Him (Surah Al Kahf 18: Verse 27)

Slide 44:

To understand and recognize *dajal*, we need to take guidance from Qur'an and from the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'I am leaving amongst you two things, if you hold on to them you will not go astray, they are Allah's Book and His Prophet's *Sunnah*.' [Muwatta Imam Malik]

Simple as that! This is the only formula that helps us recognize *dajal* and teaches us ways to protect ourselves from it and keeps our faith strong – to hold on for dear life to the book of Allah and to the way of His Prophet (pbuh).

And then Allah (swt) is giving us a warning in the middle of the verse;

Slide 45:

... لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ...

“... No one is authorised to change His words....” (Surah Al Kahf 18: Verse 27)

This is a very profound piece of the verse and is not for pop stars only so think that if I innocently listen to a little bit of music, if I am joining in the *hangama* of a *mehndi*, I am just going with the flow so no harm done. No one is authorised to change His words, **no one**.

Slide 46:

Sometimes we hear people say, *hijab tu bus annkhon ka hota hai! Sar ka thori hota hai* (Hijab is of the eyes only, not of the head). Don't change His words. That's a very stern warning and if you dare make any change, you will find no refuge from Him.

Slide 47:

In simple words, Allah (swt) is saying, when in Rome, do as Muslims do.

It doesn't matter where you are and what other people are doing, you follow the teachings of Islam no matter where you are. Whether you are in a wedding hall, school or college, on a vacation in Hawaii or in Disney Land, just do what Muslims do.

Slide 48:

Another very important point to ponder is that 'don't be a rebel without a cause'. At your age, 14, 15, 16, we love to be rebels. Is that true or not? Sometimes we say, *no amma* (mother) *I am not going to do that* just for the heck of it.

Allah (swt) is saying something to the effect in this verse that don't try to be a rebel without a cause, find a real cause to stand up for. Don't just waste your energy and time on useless stuff. It's not worth it.

Slide 49:

And then Allah (swt) has given us an entire formula for protection against *dajal*. In verse 28 of Surah Al Kahf, Allah (swt) says;

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“Keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Rabb, morning and evening seeking His face and let not your eyes overlook them desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of this world. And obey not those whose heart we have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follow his own desires and goes to extremes in the conduct of his affairs.”

Slide 50:

We have been told to have patience and self control because a lot of times when we are invited to a party or there is a wedding in the family and you are aware of what is going to happen over there but since all your friends are going, all your family will be there, we lose self control and how do you stop yourself?

Have patience! and how can you do that? Make friends with those who want to please Allah (swt).

*Wasbir nafsaka m'alladhina yad'una rabbahum*

Keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Rabb morning and evening seeking His face (pleasure);...(Surah Al Kahf 18: Verse 28)

Make friends with people who talk about Allah (swt), whose aim in life is to please Allah (swt), who want to be practising Muslims and who remember Him at all times. So basically Allah (swt) is telling you to hang out with the people who can help you remain steadfast on your *deen*. They may not be “popular” in school, they may be considered the geeks, or *ninjas* (derogatory term used for women in hijab), but they are the company that will save you from getting sucked in the deceit around you. For example, when you are with friends and it’s time for *Asr salah* and everybody gets up for prayers, then it is not an issue to pray or not to pray but if you are hanging around with a group of friends who don’t pray, then often one might feel self conscious of being the odd one out. You might think that *chalo mei ghar ja kar parh lungi* (I’ll go home and pray). The company of our friends influences us profoundly so Allah (swt) is telling us to be with people who remember Him.

Another example is that if one of you starts covering your head and if you are the only one among your friends to take that first step, then you might be the object of mockery and taunting remarks and at times may feel alienated. Peer pressure and peer support is a big thing but Allah (swt) tells us to see behind this deceit and glamour and remain steadfast. The words that Allah (swt) has used here are,

*Wa la tadu ‘ainaka ‘anhum tureedu zeenat al hayat adduniya*  
... and let not your eyes overlook them desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of this world ... (Surah Al Kahf 18: Verse 28)

We often come across exaggerated expressions of swooning over ice cream or a similar product in our daily lives on billboards and in TV commercials. They make the consumer feel that either you should have this or die trying! But Allah (swt) makes things simpler and easier by saying forget it, don’t get easily impressed or taken in.

*Wa la tutie aghfalna qalbahu un dhikrina wattab’a hawahu wa kana amruhu furuta*  
... And obey not those whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follow his own desires and goes to extremes in the conduct of his affairs (Surah Al Kahf 18: Verse 28)

Don’t make friends with those who don’t remember Allah (swt) and follow their desires. Such people are extreme in their behaviour. We all know very well that the company we keep, the friends we hang out with affect us profoundly. We sometimes do stuff with friends that we would perhaps not indulge in otherwise. An extreme example would be of young kids who join gangs – they may not be such bad sorts individually, but their “gang” does them no good at all and before you know it they get totally sucked in.

On the contrary, when you have god fearing friends, they not only stop you from doing wrong but also motivate you to do good and in this way our good company can be our protection from *dajal InshaAllah*.

This is *subhanAllah* an amazing amazing Surah – may Allah (swt) give us the *tawfeeq* to ponder over it and take heed from it, *ameen*.

We will continue the same topic next week and we will see why Allah (swt) is giving us this warning and what are the consequences of shrugging it off, and not taking heed.

Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*