

MODULE 1

Class Title: Surah Al-Kafiroon

Aim of the lesson: To understand the message of the *surah*

Category: Scripture

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalamu 'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Ta'ooz*) *A'oodhu billahi min Ash Shaytaanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul 'uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* [Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verses 25-28]

Slide 1:

Today *InshaAllah* we will be doing this beautiful *surah* called Surah Al- *Kafiroon*.

How many of you know it by heart or are familiar with this *surah*? It's a beautiful *surah* which has a lot of lessons for us; Allah (swt) had actually asked Prophet Muhammad (saw) to tell the *kuffaar* (disbelievers) the things that are mentioned in this *surah*, and we are going to correlate how these things are applicable to our challenges today.

To analyze this, we need to look at the background; what was happening when this *surah* was revealed?

Slide 2:

When Prophet Muhammad (saw) brought Islam, the Quraysh wanted to stop him and told him that if he believed in their god they would believe in his God, but Allah (swt) asked the Prophet (saw) not to listen to him and not to force the disbelievers if they don't want to enter into Islam.

A lot of Arabs used to come to Makkah to worship the idols; when they came, they got all the goods that they made in their cities and sold it here and made a lot of money and then they took stuff from Makkah and sold it in their cities and made more money. So the advantage that the Quraysh had was that they bought the goods from the visitors and sold them into other cities, rather than going to other cities to buy them, they used to get them in their cities, so that helped to reduce their travelling. Besides this, when these people came for the pilgrimage they needed food and a place to stay, and we see this today too, when you go for *'Umrah* or Hajj today, you pay a lot for the hotel and the food and they make a lot of profit on that. So that was the situation then too. They went to worship their many idols, so they were afraid that if they agreed with Prophet Muhammad (saw) to break all the idols, they would lose the economic control.

This was the back ground. ¹ Prophet Muhammad (saw) started talking about Islam and the Quraysh flatly denied it; they said that they would absolutely not embrace Islam; it was not good for them.

Some of them did believe that what Prophet Muhammad (saw) said made sense and was the truth, but the worldly benefits were more important to them. There were a lot of people who embraced Islam; e.g. Abu Bakr (ra), who was a rich man and he used a lot of his wealth to help other Muslims but not everyone was willing to make that sacrifice, especially the Quraysh; they had the power, leadership and money and they were not willing to give up everything for that one person who said that Allah (swt) is one.

Saudi Arabia is still making a lot of money with one Ka'bah, one Allah, because of this pilgrimage; but at that time they thought it would not work because some Arabs worshipped one idol, others worshipped another and so on and they all came because all the idols were in the Ka'bah. They make more now and that is what *Shaytaan* does; when we need to make even a small sacrifice, he tells us that we will lose a lot, so forget it, don't do it, and this is what he tells the Quraysh, that you are not going to benefit from it.

Slide 3:

It is mentioned in the *tafseer* of Ibne-e-Katheer, that the Quraysh proposed different compromises, because they wanted to stop Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from spreading Islam. What were the deals that they offered?

Slide 4:

1) We shall give you lots of wealth; if it is about money then we can help you out, as we have a lot of money. Let us compare whatever compromises the Quraysh gave with our lives; it can be an individual challenge, it can be a challenge for school or it could be a challenge for the Muslim *ummah*. We need to draw a relationship and see if that thing is happening today or not. So the first was that we will give you a lot of wealth. How are you going to correlate that?

Let's focus on our challenges as Muslims, what is it that is stopping me or us as the Muslim *ummah*, what are the techniques used by non-Muslims to stop us? Is wealth one factor that is used? What is happening in west? What are we getting from the west? Funds! They give us funds and then they want to control us. They say ok we will give you this amount of money and you have to kill this certain person or they put restrictions on us religiously and tell us that we shouldn't go to *madrasahs*. They want us to stop practicing our religion; they want to hold us back. What is happening in France? Girls are having issues with wearing niqab; they simply aren't allowed.

¹ Bukhari – Book of Tafseer – Surah *Al Kafiroon*

Slide 5:

The second technique was that you can have any woman that you want to marry. They actually bribed him and said that you can have any woman. How can you correlate this to the present? What is the biggest threat to a girl who starts to wear the *hijab*? They say, “Ohh; she isn’t going to get any marriage proposals.” Does that happen? People say that when you start wearing the *hijab* you won’t find good boys; boys that are up to your level. That is only to try to stop girls from wearing the *hijab*.

Slide 6:

Then they said that we will make you our leader if you stop talking about Islam. When the Quraysh said that, what were they trying to do? They were trying to stop the spread of Islam. What happens in schools today? Who are the leaders of your groups, what kind of people are they? They are not very religious, they think they are cool, they think they are the best, and who are the people who are not really cool? The ones who are religious. They say if you want to be a part of our group then you have to be cool; we don’t want any un-cool person; this is what generally happens. Sometimes it’s just the body language that says it, the attitude and the arrogance, but this is what *Shaytaan* does; he tries to make people stop us from being religious.

Slide 7:

The Quraysh said another thing; it’s okay; if you don’t speak ill about our gods, you can do whatever you want. Just don’t say that what we are doing is wrong. They said do whatever you want but just leave us alone and let us do what we are doing; don’t try to convince our people about not having so many gods around them. What is happening today? People say if you want to wear a *hijab* or be religious then go ahead but don’t come and preach to me, and don’t come and tell me that I should not have a boyfriend, don’t tell me that it’s wrong to go to mixed parties. Have you ever tried going to the other side and telling your friends that what they’re doing is not right, you shouldn’t lie to your parents, it’s just wrong to be mingling so much with guys, you have to keep a distance and you need to be decently dressed up, you can’t go to certain parties. You try and tell them, and what is the reaction that you get? Mind your own business. So this is what the Quraysh said; mind your own business, do whatever you want to, but just don’t tell us that what we are doing is wrong. Do you see the connection? The same techniques are used today.

Slide 8:

They said that if you worship our gods for a year then we will worship your gods for a year. So what were they trying to do? They said alright, if you really want to preach whatever, at least compromise, a little bit of yours and a little bit of ours, so at least the people who are coming to worship our gods should carry on doing so. You could have your gods and we could have our

gods. They said that for one year we will worship only your god and for the other year you will let us worship our gods.

What is happening today? What is the correlation? How is this technique used today? You have people who say, at least I'm praying and still go to parties, and we have those who say, "At least I am doing my *Jumu'ah* or *dhuhr salah*." Or "At least I fast." and after that, they go to parties. It is again the same technique that is used today by Muslims, non-Muslims and non-practicing Muslims. These are the same techniques used today. So what they do is mix *haraam* and *halaal* and say that at least I am praying and fasting and it is fine that I do this if I do that.

Slide 9:

They said, "What is the harm in kissing our idols? We will also worship your gods." They wanted the Prophet (saw) to go and kiss their gods to sanctify them. They asked him to worship the idols. They wanted the world to see that prophet Muhammad (saw) was fine with their idols, he (saw) didn't have any problems with them. They wanted to show the world that he was doing what he was doing but he was sanctifying their gods and felt that what they were doing was fine as well.

Today too, they say what is the harm in copying the disbelievers? What is *haraam* in the disbeliever's celebrations? What is the harm in doing what they are doing, as long as we are celebrating Eid too? They can also celebrate Eid if they want to; at least their religion does not stop them from celebrating it - but they DON'T celebrate it. The religion does not stop them but they still don't, and here it's the opposite, our religion is stopping us but we celebrate their festivals.

Slides 10:

They said let's just take the good things of both the religions and make a new religion. Have you heard the term "Moderate Islam"? It is a blend of this and that, they say fine you can do the eastern things as well as the western things, it is just doing the basics like offering *salah*, giving *zakah*, being nice to people and along with that they import things from the disbelievers, like dance parties, Valentine's and Halloween, etc. Celebrating Christmas is becoming more and more of a trend as well.

Slides 11-13:

The *surah* categorically says that Islam and *kufir* cannot be mixed, because this is what the Quraysh wanted. Can you tell me the difference, the key difference between Islam and *kufir*? The basic difference is that they wanted to mix theirs and our religion and Islam on the other hand, wants purity. The *kuffaar* don't really mind if they have to bend in any way to make us compromise in certain things, as long as they don't face any losses.

Now let me just explain this to you, this is dirty water and this is pure, clean water. Let's say you were fine with drinking this dirty water and there is another person who is only comfortable drinking pure water. So two volunteers for this, now, Mariam only takes pure water and Sabah is fine with dirty water. If Sabah runs out of this water and there is very clear water left and Mariam says that you can share mine, she puts some pure water in this, will Sabah mind having this? She wouldn't mind, it was dirty before, it is dirty now. The next day Mariam runs short of water, so Sabah says that you were so nice to me, so this time you can share mine, so will Mariam now have this? Why will she not have this water? Because she believes in having pure water.

This is exactly what I am trying to tell you; they didn't have any problem with having a little bit of impurity in their religion, because that religion in itself was impure, they were not only worshipping Allah (swt) but along with HIM (swt) they were worshipping the other idols too. And Muslims or Prophet Muhammad (saw) were not willing to do this; because Islam is pure; it believes in *tauheed*, in the oneness of Allah (swt). So this compromise was out of the question. So the person who drinks tap water doesn't mind mineral water being mixed in it, but if there is somebody who wants pure water, he wouldn't even take a drop of impure water, like prophet Muhammad (saw) was told by Allah (swt) to forget it, this is not going to happen. Allah (swt) asked Prophet Muhammad (saw) to tell them this. Now that you know the back ground, do you understand what was going on? Islam is pure like mineral water and you can't mix anything in it.

Slide 14:

Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to recite this *surah* in Fajr *sunnah salah* and Maghrib *sunnah salah*.² So let's just make this a habit of following the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and recite it in these *salahs*.

Slide 15:

This is the whole *surah* and a very simple *surah*, it's not really rocket-science but the message is really powerful and that is the reason why I have spent half an hour explaining its message. We will pass quickly through the *surah*.

Slide 16:

Ayah-1: translation: "Say, 'O you disbelievers'."

Allah (swt) was saying this to Prophet Muhammad (saw); that you (saw) go and tell them, O you disbelievers, and then he said,

² Abu Hurairah (ra) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) recited in the two supererogatory Rak'ah of the Fajr prayer Surat Al-Kafirun (No. 109) [in the first Rak'ah], and Surat Al-Ikhlās (No. 112) [in the second rak'ah]. [Muslim]

Slide 17:

Ayah-2: translation: “I do not worship what you worship.”

The question that comes to mind is, what did they worship that he didn't, as they also used to worship Allah (swt), so how can prophet Muhammad (saw) say ‘I don't worship what you worship’?

Slide 18:

They worshipped small idols to please Allah (swt), these idols were called the small gods. Along with Allah (swt) they were worshipping the angels, the jinn, the prophets, etc. Some people also worshipped animals, saints, spirits of dead men, the moon, the stars, anything; images of god, so many things they were worshipping along with Allah (swt), and that is *shirk*, and this is what Islam came to stop. You need to worship Allah (swt) alone. They were not willing to do that because they thought they would be making a lot of worldly compromises.

Slide 19:

Ayah-3: translation: “And nor are you all worshippers of what I worship.”

What does this mean? That you do not worship what I worship, so the Quraysh must have said, you worship Allah and we worship Allah, but why did Allah (swt) actually tell the Prophet (saw) in the third *ayah* to go and tell them that they do not worship what he (swt) worships?

Slide 20:

Because the *kuffaar* were also worshipping Allah (swt) along with other gods, but their concept of Allah was totally different to ours; for example her name is Aaminah, and let's say her name was also Aaminah, so the only common thing between the two of them would be the name, that's it! So if I say I love Aaminah, and you say I love Aaminah too, I don't love the Aaminah that you love. The only common thing is the name. Likewise, the people who said that they worship Allah (swt); even the Allah was not the same as the one the prophet Muhammad (saw) was talking about. So the only common thing was the name, that's it.

Slide 21-25:

Their god for example, got tired on the seventh day after creating the earth in six days; this was their concept of Allah, and we know that is not our Allah (swt), this is actually a quality of a man, they considered their Allah to be the father of Jesus Christ *na'uzubillah*, we know this is not true, they had used the word Allah and had said that he has wives and children but produced only daughters, this is all mentioned in the Qur-an. These are all false notions about Allah (swt), so you see, they said they worship Allah but it was just the name, and they also believed that it was Allah who created the world but then after that he had nothing to do with it, these were all the notions that the *kuffaar* had about Allah (swt), which were absolutely not true.

Slides 26-27:

Ayah-4: translation: “And nor am I a worshipper of what you worship.”

Ayah-5: translation: “And nor are you worshippers of what I worship.”

Slide 28:

Basically if you notice there is a repetition of an *ayah*, it is basically for emphasis, like we sometimes say, “I hate you! I hate you!” So it is to make sure the other person knows what I am saying, how intensely I hate him. So Allah (swt) is repeating because he wants the Quraysh to stop trying, He (swt) is sending a message that it is not going to happen.

Slides 29-30:

Ayah-6: translation: “For you your way of life and for me my way of life.”

Meaning what? That you and I can never walk on the same path together, I have my path and you all have your path, if you want to continue disobeying the message of Islam, then your way is separate from mine.

Slides 31-32:

The whole idea of this powerful *surah* is to disappoint the *kuffaar* and tell them that this mixing cannot happen. This is something that is not going to happen, and this is the message that we have to put across as well, we can't have this mixing, I can't take this water, it's not good for me. I am a Muslim and I am supposed to have pure water. So there is a very powerful lesson for all of us, but having said that, does it mean that you should actually harm the innocent non-Muslims? NOT AT ALL. This is not what is meant by this *surah*, or maybe not work with them, can we work with non-Muslims? Of course we can. Or can we talk to them? Yes we can. How about helping them? Yes.

Slides 33-34:

Now, what are the things we can't do? This *surah* does not talk about what I have just talked about. What are the things we shouldn't be doing? Let's just list down the things we should not do, keeping this particular *surah* in mind:

We should not to go to their events, like Christmas, Valentine's day, *Holi*, *Deewali*, Easter, New Year's, *Basant*, *Mehndis*, *Mayoons*, Halloween, dance parties etc.

You can't be mean to them but this does not mean that you disobey Allah (swt). Sometimes they even pull this line that your religion says not to be mean so you'd better come to my New Year's party (for example), but you shouldn't go. It should not be at the cost of disobeying Allah (swt). You should not be rude; say that you are sorry you won't be there and that you hope she has a great time and that your best wishes are with her. It is not right to celebrate it because we have to

follow our own Islamic rituals; we have Eid, which we find very boring because our whole focus is on birthdays and a billion other festivals. We don't make an effort to understand that we should only make the two Eids our occasions of celebration³.

You can generally go to their parties or invite them just for the sake of getting together and not for celebrating any specific thing and have a great time. It is not against our religion to have sleepovers or girls-only parties if your mom allows.

So the message is absolutely clear about this fantastic *surah*; no compromises, we will have fun in our own religion, find ways of enjoyment and have great fun, and we will not depend on their rituals and their occasions to have fun in life.

Slide 35:

So the idea is not to be too pally with disbelievers, so much so that rather than influencing them you get influenced by their ways and culture. They CAN be your friends but not best friends with whom you share your inner feelings and thoughts.

Rasul Allah (pbuh) said: "A man follows his friend's religion. So each of you should consider whom he makes his friend." [Mishkat Al-Masabih]

Likewise their success must also not intimidate us and we must understand that the success of this world has nothing to do with our *aakhirah*.

The Qur'an declares: "Do not raise your eyes in longing for what we have given for enjoyment to various groups among them (the disbelievers), (it is) the splendour of the life of this world so that we may test them thereby" (20:131).

Slide 36:

So what is extremism in Islam?

The hadith which condemns extremism is narrated by 'Abd-Allah ibn Mas'ood (ra) who said: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Those who go to extremes are doomed." He said it three times. [Muslim (2670)]

The scholars have many explanations for what is meant by extremism and those who go to extremes:

- Those that are very strict or very hard where strictness and hardness is not called upon

³ The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'These (Eid-ul-Fitr & Eid-ul-Adha) are days of eating drinking & remembrance of Allah.' {Bukhari}. The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'For every people (nation) there is a feast and this is our feast.' {Bukhari}

- Or those who go to extremes, when going to extremes is not called upon
- Or being overly argumentative about something

All of these may be summed up as meaning one thing; it boils down to overburdening oneself and being too strict in matters where strictness is inappropriate.

Let's look at a few examples:

Going to extremes in worship (doing more than what is prescribed by the Messenger (pbuh)) – like you keep doing *wudu* over and over again because you **think** you haven't washed your arms properly! What would happen? Many things can happen. You will end up wasting water, wasting time, *salah* time may be almost at the end and worse of all, you would make *wudu* such a burden on yourself that if you are out of the house, say in school, you would think, forget it, I won't do *salah* as doing *wudu* is such a tedious chore. So you see how dangerous this going to extreme can be.

Introducing innovations in religion is another way of going to extreme. Innovation in religion means, doing things that are not prescribed by Allah (swt) or the Prophet (pbuh) and thinking this is a righteous thing to do.

With regard to the hadith of 'Aa'ishah (ra), in which she said: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was never given the choice between two things but he would choose the easier of the two, so long as it was not a sin; if it was a sin he would be the furthest of the people from it. [Bukhaari (3367) and Muslim (2327)]

Scholars say that this is in regards to worldly matters⁴.

Based on this, in respect to our dealings with non-Muslims, extremism would be either being influenced by their ways or being mean or cruel to them.

Slide 37:

So a believer keeps a balance in his dealings with the disbelievers. You are neither too pally and chummy nor are you rude and mean. The teachings of our Prophet (pbuh) and his shining example tells us to be kind, considerate and helpful to everyone, regardless of their beliefs – so obviously, we follow that example when we are dealing with disbelievers.

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

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

⁴ Ref (Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Fath al-Baari (6/575)