

MODULE 2

Class Title: Surah Al-Falaq (3rd part of a 4 lesson series)

Aim of Lesson: To understand the importance of seeking protection of Allah (swt) against the evil caused by His creations

Lesson Format: PowerPoint presentation and 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:

We just did a series on magic and fortune telling and the idea behind that was to understand Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas.

Slides 2 – 4:

Man can be attacked externally in two ways; through people around you or natural calamities like earthquakes and hurricanes. Here we're talking about physical attacks on our bodies - natural calamities and external attacks.

Slides 5 – 7:

One of those external attacks is through magic. That is also an attack on your physical being; you've also heard of the evil eye or *nazar*, right? Let us take a look at the historical background of Surah Al-Falaq.

Slides 8 – 9:

The Jews had done magic on the Prophet (pbuh) and the spell took a whole year to have an effect on him (pbuh). He (pbuh) started feeling unwell and forgetting things. [Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 89]

So the two symptoms that the Prophet (pbuh) displayed when he was under a spell were memory loss and a feeling of being ill. Other people didn't even notice the fact that the Prophet (saw) was under the spell of magic. [Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 89]

When we think of a person under the spell of magic, what kind of a picture comes to our mind?

Slides 10 – 11:

When we think of a person under the spell of magic, we think of somebody who acts weird, somebody who starts screaming and losing their temper. If a person is under a

spell, the first thing you can think of is your own protection because that person becomes highly dangerous for people around him/her but with the Prophet (saw) that was not the case. The Prophet (saw) did not show any signs of being under a spell.

Slides 12 – 13:

The magic was actually contained in three things: in a comb which had the Prophet's hair; usually when we brush our hair, there's some hair in the brush or the comb. So there was hair in his comb and the magic was done on the hair in the comb. The second thing was a cord with eleven knots in it. People who did the magic took a string and put eleven knots in it. The third thing was a wax image with needles pricked in it. These were the three things that were used to apply magic on our Prophet (pbuh).

Gabriel (as) told the Prophet (pbuh) to recite *Mu'awwidhatayn*, and this freed him from the magic. It was as simple as that. He was worried about it, he didn't feel like himself but he couldn't put a finger on why. This is something that can happen to any one of us, we all feel unwell sometimes and we all forget things sometimes. Rather than getting paranoid about the whole thing however, we need to think about the solution. The solution is a very basic one. Gabriel (as) came and told the Prophet (pbuh) to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn*¹.

Slides 14 – 16:

What is *Mu'awwidhatayn*? Which two *surahs* are called *Mu'awwidhatayn* - "the two (verses) for seeking refuge."

Surah An-Naas and Surah Al-Falaq are called *Mu'awwidhatayn*. That's the whole idea of doing this series with you, because you don't know who can cast a spell. Magic is a very real thing. The idea is not to make you paranoid so that the moment you start sneezing or the moment you start forgetting your tables or something you start thinking that someone has cast a spell on you, that's not the point. The point is that there is no way anyone can actually tell you whether you are under a spell or not. But we have a solution that is very basic and simple for all of us. That is to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn* and at the end I'll tell you how to do it.

Just as we take medicine for illnesses, likewise we must read the *Mu'awwidhatayn* if magic is cast upon us.²

Slide 17:

Some people go to specialists to handle the problem of *jinn*. They say that they feel they've been possessed by a *jinn*, or a magic spell has been cast on them, and they

¹ Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 71, Number 660

² Bukhari and Muslim

actually go to professionals to get rid of this problem. Have you heard of people going to these specialists who can handle *jinn* or say they'll take care of it? We don't need to do that. Why don't we need to do that? Because it's a very simple thing; does it actually matter who puts the medicine in your mouth when you're ill? If you've got a headache and aspirin will take care of it, will it actually make a difference if you put it in your mouth or your mom does?

No. Likewise, we have the medicine for magic and the medicine is called *Mu'awwidhatayn*.

So we really don't have to go and give money to a so-called specialist, he will do the same thing. He'll put the same medicine in your mouth. This is the most effective medicine because the messenger (saw) used it when he was bewitched.

Please let me tell you here that the chances of a person actually being possessed by *jinn* are one in a million. Most of the time when a person starts acting funny, it's because of some illness; you need to take him to a doctor. Unfortunately however, because the level of literacy in our country is so low, if anything goes wrong with us that we don't understand, we feel it's the *jinn*'s influence. Most of the time, it is not the influence of the *jinn* or magic upon you and that's what we need to understand.

Slide 18:

Allah (swt) says in this *surah*, '*Qul a'uzoo birabbil falaq*', 'Say; I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn'. What is 'Refuge'?

Slides 19 – 20:

There are basically two types of refuge; the first refuge is with material things, people or power. Protecting yourself with bulletproof vests, taking refuge under a shade of a tree are all means of protection. So that's one kind of protection that we need, with things and people around us.

Then there is another type of refuge in a Being that rules the world. That is Allah (swt). In Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas we seek the second kind of refuge. We're not taking refuge in a bullet proof jacket or of a tree, we're taking the second type of refuge, which can only come from Allah (swt) and nothing else.

Slide 21:

There is a slight misconception about *shirk*. If I am wearing a bulletproof jacket to protect myself, it is not *shirk*, because that's something Allah has given me the means to protect myself from in this world. Allah (swt) tells me to make sure that I protect myself within the given resources and for that which I do not have control, I ask Allah (swt) and no one else. There are certain things from which only Allah (swt) can protect us and if I seek refuge with anyone else in those matters - like going to someone to rid me of the powers of the *jinn*, believing that they can help me and not Allah (swt) then that is problematic. I

can ask some person to help me in a manner prescribed by Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh) if my knowledge is limited and I cannot do it myself – but my belief is that Allah is going to help me and not that person.

Slides 22 – 30:

‘*Rabbul Falaq*’ - ‘The Lord of the Dawn’, why did Allah (swt) say ‘Lord of the Dawn’? Allah (swt) has a lot of qualities, why is He especially talking about this one quality? Everything in this world appears by the splitting of something.

For example, a plant sprouts by a split-opening of the seeds, small animals are born out of an egg that splits open, the day appears by piercing through the curtains of the night; the light of the sun splits through the darkness, raindrops pierce out from the cloud. Even the earth and the heavens were actually one big mass and then they broke and parted and what do you call that theory? You call it the Big Bang Theory.

So practically everything was born out of a split. Just as Allah (swt) brings out daylight from the darkness of the night, likewise He may bring well-being for us from all dangers. That’s the reason why Allah (swt) talks about this quality of being the Lord of the Dawn.

Slides 31 – 32:

Now in this *surah* Allah (swt) says ‘*min sharri ma khalaq*’, ‘(I seek refuge from) the evil of all His creation’.

This is another quality of Allah (swt). He is talking about the evil that is in this world; in His creations. There is an element of evil in them, but has Allah created all the evil things for their wickedness?

He did create them but Allah (swt) has put good in everything He makes and they choose to do wrong. Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, not man or *jinn*. Even *Shaytaan* was not bad initially. He decided to become evil of his own will. He was a *jinn* and he had the freedom of choice.

Slides 33 – 34:

Sometimes, evil appears from some creatures because of the freedom of choice that is given to *jinn* and human beings. So Allah (swt) has not created us to become evil, it is because of our freedom of choice that we do that.

Thus, refuge has to be sought with the Creator. For example if someone has a dog that goes crazy and you want protection against the dog, whom would you call for help? You will scream for the owner, saying, ‘Hey please take care of your dog.’ So, all of us belong to Allah (swt) and if somebody goes mad and starts showing signs of evil then you have to call to the Creator, the Owner and that’s Allah (swt). The only difference is that perhaps the dog doesn’t decide to become mad himself, and we choose to become evil

ourselves. But otherwise, it's pretty much the same thing. So, Allah (swt) has control over everything because He created everything, but if we become evil, that's not because Allah (swt) created us that way.

Slides 35 – 37:

Now, '*Min sharri ma khalaq*' - remember we are basically talking about dangers from outside ourselves.

Let's just list out all the dangers or evils from outside, what kind of dangers are we talking about? When we are seeking Allah's (swt) protection, what do we have in mind? *Shar* and evil can actually be a loss; misplacing something precious, it could be because of a human being and most probably **is** because of a human being. Forgetting things could be a *shar* for you, or a loss can be through another person. Your friend borrows something and she loses it. That could be a *shar*. So, when you seek Allah's protection (swt), you're asking for protection for all these mishaps too.

When you say '*Min sharri ma khalaq*', all these things come under this category and also any kind of injury. You're walking down the stairs and you twist your ankle; any physical pain caused to you is a *shar*.

Slide 38:

Anything that bothers you in this world or any trouble in your life could be a *shar* for you. It could be a fight with someone, some kind of misunderstanding or if you don't get along with your parents. That thing in itself is *shar*, and if you are trying to get rid of all the misunderstandings between you and your parents you recite this *surah* as well. You recite it if there's any kind of friction that you feel with another person; either you are not getting along with your parents or friends, feeling neglected or hurt. Sometimes, there's a group of friends and you feel neglected by them, like they're not giving you enough importance; that could be a *shar*. Allah (swt) covers a lot of things when He says '*Min sharri ma khalaq*'.

Slides 39 – 41:

Exams and studies are what come to the mind when we speak of hardships. There's a lot of competition, you have to work very hard and there are times when you work very hard and you still don't get good marks. So, when're you seeking Allah's protection, you're talking about all those hardships as well. It could be in some kind of sport you play. Also, it means losses like hunger; hunger is also a *shar*. It's very disturbing, so that's *shar* too. It could even be for an illness that you have, if you were to start having a headache or suddenly develop a stomach ache. Allah (swt) is covering every kind of discomfort we have in. this word.

Slides 42 – 44:

Injury in an accident is another aspect. Sometimes you have a very responsible driver who drives very carefully, your parents trust him completely, but then another car comes and bumps into your car and you can get injured. You can lose your life because of that or become seriously hurt. So Allah (swt) is talking about that too.

Being hurt by fire is extremely painful. You can apply anything you want on the wound and it still burns for a while. So that's *shar* too. Also, being stung by a poisonous animal or insect, like a bee; it's excruciating.

Slides 45 – 48:

The death of a loved one; may Allah (swt) protect us from this because it is so painful, especially if it is somebody very close to you. It could be God forbid, our parents, or our siblings, our friends, it could be anyone. Reciting this *surah* protects us from so many things that we are scared of. We don't want to be faced by these situations in our lives.

Next, '*Min sharri ghaasiqin idha waqab*', 'From the evil of the darkness of night when it appears/ spreads'. Again, what is Allah (swt) trying to tell us?

Most crimes take place at night, acts of wickedness take place at night. Usually people make evil plans at night.

When the enemies of the Prophet (saw) decided to murder him (saw), they schemed to attack him (saw) late at night.

Thus evil is most rampant late at night. Most of the movies that we're not supposed to watch come late at night, so we see that *Shaytaan* is very active at night. That's the reason our parents always tell us to sleep early, because staying up till late is like exposing yourself to a lot of evil. Even if once in a blue moon you have a sleepover, you've friends over and you've done your '*Isha salah* and read your *Mu'awwidhatayn*, there's nothing wrong in staying up. I'm not saying that you can absolutely not stay up, but as a habit you must try and sleep early because that's a way of protecting ourselves ³.

Slides 49 – 51:

Harmful animals also come out late at night. For example, snakes, scorpions, bats. You don't see them in the mornings; they come out late at night. Also, plans for murder are made for late nights. Burglaries also happen late at night.

These days the situation of crime is so bad it happens any time of the day, but generally speaking, when you think of a thief entering your house what time of the day do you have

³ Hadith Reference of get your children and animals inside at maghribBukhari

in mind? When you're sleeping, right? So it's a very good idea to read the *Mu'awwidhatayn* and surah Ikhlaas, each thrice before sleeping, blow in your hand and rub all over the body⁴. We should read it after every salah, thrice after *maghrib* and *isha* and before sleeping too.⁵

Slides 52 – 55:

'Min sharrin naffaathaati fil 'uqad' - 'And from the evil of the blowers into knots.'

Magicians usually tie knots on a string and blow upon them, that's how they do magic. The point is that for example a bullet from a rifle can't hurt you without Allah's (swt) consent. What about a bomb from an aircraft? Can it hurt you? We're talking about big, serious things. Magic too can't have any effect on us without Allah's (swt) permission. If such huge things cannot hurt us, how can magic hurt us? How can *jinn*s possess us without Allah's (swt) consent?

Slides 56 – 57:

Why does Allah (swt) allow magic to affect us? Obviously, if magic does affect us, it is with Allah's (swt) permission. But why would Allah (swt) allow it, especially to us Muslims? Yes, it's a test for us. Just like falling sick, getting injured and other mishaps in our lives, magic too is a test for us.

'Min sharri haasidin idha hasad', that's the last verse of this *surah*, 'And from the evil of an envious one when he envies'. What happens when you're envious, when you're jealous? The first thing is that you start feeling unhappy. Why do you feel unhappy when you're jealous?

Slides 58 – 59:

You are not happy with the good fortune of the other person, you wish that this thing would be taken away from that person and given to you. That's the second level of jealousy and this is more intense jealousy. For example your friend comes first in the class, you say I wish she would just fail and I come first, that's the second level of jealousy. Can anyone tell me the third level of jealousy?

Slides 60 – 62:

The third level, the extreme level of jealousy is if you don't care if you get it or not, as long as it gets taken away from the other person. I don't care if I come first or not but I want her to fail. You hate that other person so much, you're so jealous of the other person you don't care if you get it or not, as long as she doesn't get it. That's the extreme form of jealousy.

⁴ Bukhari

⁵ Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi

The stepmother of Snow White was initially just unhappy because the mirror always told her that she was not the fairest. She was unhappy and gloomy, that was the first level but did she stop her jealousy at the first level? No. What was the second level? It becomes evil when that person says or does something to harm the other person, to satisfy their own desires and that's exactly what the queen did, so that was the second level of jealousy.

Slides 63 – 68:

What is evil eye and what is *nazar*? *Nazar* is misfortune inflicted due to jealousy or praise. You experience some kind of misfortune in your life because either the other person is jealous of you or he thinks very highly of you and is praising you.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 7.636 , Narrated by Abu Huraira, The Prophet (pbuh) said, "The effect of an evil eye is a fact."

So *nazar* is not because of somebody just being jealous of you, *nazar* could come from your parents. Your mother might look at you in the morning and say 'Aww, look at my daughter, she's so cute.' Then while going to school you twist your ankle, whoosh, that's *nazar*. So *nazar* could be from people who love you too.

Man has always been interested in finding ways of avoiding misfortunes in life. We want to know all those things that will make us avoid misfortune and we go to great lengths to do so. We are so over-enthusiastic about protecting ourselves that we are willing to do anything that is told to us. We need to know how real *nazar* is, and the things that protect us from *nazar*.

The Prophet (saw) said that the influence of an evil eye is a fact. That means it's real. "If anything would precede the destiny it would be the influence of an evil eye." [Sahih Bukhari]

Slides 69 – 70:

What are the usual measures that are taken if you want to ward off the evil eye from a baby? Some people put a black spot on the cheek of the baby just to avoid that *nazar*. They think this will take care of it and the child will not fall sick because of this spot. It looks ugly, maybe that's the idea. And then of course they put charms and omens. Different types of charms that you'll see people hanging in their houses. Charms are basically these objects that are supposed to have the power to bring good luck.

Slides 71 – 75:

Basically we need to understand that charms are a type of idol worship, they could be something as simple as a pen. I've noticed certain students in my college would use just one pen for their exams because they felt that was a lucky pen. So that's a good luck charm. Or they would use a certain hair clip or a certain thing that's lucky, but this is

non-Islamic. Commonly used charms are copper or brass bracelets or rings to cure sickness. If you are using it for some physical sickness and you feel that the elements that come out from the copper bracelet will have a medical benefit, that's fine. But if you're doing it because a copper bracelet is lucky for you, or will give you good health, then it's not allowed. Rabbit's foot is used for bringing good luck also. A lot of Arabs have a rabbit's foot hanging in their houses. The horseshoe is also used for good luck; have you seen houses with a horseshoe at the entrance? They're more common in the UK and England.

Slides 76 – 77:

The purpose of the Qur-an is to get guidance, definitely not for wearing it.

If you go to a doctor, the doctor gives you a prescription; have you ever seen somebody wearing a prescription in a chain? Will that cure you? What is a *ta'weez*? It has certain letters of the Qur-an; so how can wearing verses of the Qur-an cure you or protect you from the evil around you?

Slides 78 – 80:

What are the disadvantages of *ta'weez*? You are actually giving someone the power that you're supposed to give to Allah (swt). People become so paranoid that the moment they forget to wear the *ta'weez*, they fear that now something will happen to them. They start depending on it. Tiny, unreadable Qur-ans that are worn in chains are a type of *shirk* if they are worn for protection, but if you are wearing it for decoration it is not *shirk*. If you're wearing it because it looks pretty, it's not *shirk* but if you're wearing it because you think it will protect you, then that's wrong because Allah (swt) protects us, not the name of Allah (swt) written in gold. The Qur-an cannot be used as a good luck charm.

It was narrated from 'Uqbah ibn 'Aamir al-Juhani that a group came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) [to swear their allegiance (bay'ah) to him]. He accepted the bay'ah of nine of them but not of one of them. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, you accepted the bay'ah of nine but not of this one." He said, "He is wearing an amulet." The man put his hand (in his shirt) and took it off, then he (the Prophet (pbuh)) accepted his bay'ah. He said, 'Whoever wears an amulet has committed shirk.' (Narrated by Ahmad, 16969)

Slides 81 – 82:

In weddings you see people holding the Qur-an over the bride's head as she's being given away. They're not obeying the commands of Allah (swt). The actual purpose of the Qur-an is to follow it instead of keeping it as a good luck charm. This is *shirk* and not allowed.

Whenever the Prophet (saw) saw a cute baby or child or a person he would say '*Allah humma baarik fee hi*' (Oh Allah put blessings in it)⁶ This is a very simple thing that you

⁶ (It has been reported by Ibn Sunni on the authority of Sahl ibn Hunayf (Allah be pleased with him) who said, "that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) when he used to fear of anything

can learn and say for nephews, nieces, younger siblings etc. when you see them and think that they're looking very cute.

Slides 83 – 89:

Now, we move on to food and bad omens. For example people knock on wood as a practice for good luck. If salt spills, people throw it over their shoulder and think that will take care of the bad omen. The breaking of a mirror is supposed to be a bad omen, the number 13 too. In a lot of buildings in the U.S. the 13th floor is called the 14th floor. Obviously when you count it is the thirteenth floor, but they call it the fourteenth floor.

Slides 90 – 94:

Also, Friday the 13th; it's a bad luck thing. It's a superstition and we as Muslims must not follow it because its *shirk*. People now are giving more weightage and importance to Friday the thirteenth, but it is Allah (swt) who decides if we're going to face some mishap in our life or not. Avoiding walking under a ladder is also *shirk*. What are the disadvantages of omens? You lose your faith in Allah (swt). And why would you need to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn* if you're going to believe in all these things?

Slides 95 – 96:

We must seek refuge from Allah (swt) from all kinds of evil things around us. How do we protect ourselves? By reciting Surah Al-Ikhlaas, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas three times each, then blowing on your hands, almost spitting into your hand without saliva and then you rub your hands all over your body. This is how the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to protect himself ⁷.

(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*

being afflicted with his eye, he used to say 'Allahuma Barik fihi' and it did not harm anything. (See: Nawawi, Kitab al-Adhkar (Book of Supplications) Pg 398).)

⁷ Bukhari