

Lesson 22

Supplementary Notes

Walā' and Barā'

Avoiding Imitation of the Kuffār

Based largely on Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ghumārī's "*al-Istinfār li-ghaz wa'l-tashabbuh bi'l-kuffār*"

The Ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) is at a time of crisis never seen before in our long history. Europeans gained domination over our lands; they attacked our homes, used their military might against us, occupied our countries, and established their domination over us, causing the loss of many Muslim lives in the process. Then, they turned towards taking people away from Islām - by setting up missionary centers, missionary charity organizations (such as the Red Cross - In Somalia - the Red Cross distributed food along with bibles), schools, cinemas, theatres, prostitution (Turkey - prostitution legal), bars, homosexuality, and all manner of decadent practices connected with the frivolous, aimless western lifestyle. People growing up in such an environment would doubtless break out of the confines of Islām. When the Russians invaded Afghanistan they took thousands of children to be reared on the Communist ideology, and these numbers do not include those who had already been indoctrinated before the invasion. America now considers Islām one of its largest threats, after the Soviet empire's demise. Just a few days ago, Reuters World News Service reported President Clinton's concern over the expansion of Muslim populations.

(And they will continue fighting you until they turn you renagades upon your religion, if they are able to do so.) [Sūrah al-Baqarah] (The Jews and Christians will never be happy with you until you follow their ways. If you were to follow their desires after knowledge has come to you (from Allāh), you would have no protector or helper before Allāh.) [Sūrah al-Baqarah]

Largely as a result of this, there has arisen a generation which attaches little value to religion. Even some of those Muslims who clung to their religion were not so fortunate with their children. These children, overwhelmed and dazed by the "liberated" life of material and sensual gratification prevailing in the society in which they live, not surprisingly in many cases became somewhat estranged from Islām. This estrangement can basically be categorized as one of **two** types:

1. There are those who have **lost touch** with even the basic faith and doctrine ('Aqīdah) of Islām. Often, the fathers married non-Muslims, and did not make the effort to bring up their children correctly, so that they were raised as

Christians, so that we actually have a priest named Ali. This is extremely serious. What is still worse is that some “**mixed**” (Muslim-non-Muslim) couples say, “We’ll teach the children both religions and let them choose”, or, “The sons will be Muslims and the daughters Christian.” In this case, the father is committing Kufr, by agreeing to his children being Kāfir. Ignorance is no excuse in such a situation.

2. Those who **have the basic doctrine** of Islām, but due to the corruptive, degenerative and spiritually repressive character of the Western lifestyle, they are not operating to their optimum Islamic potential.

Brothers and sisters, let us be honest with ourselves. The sad truth is that the effect of this society is to make a Muslim lax about his religion. Only if we are wary and consciously strive against the forces of evil can we hope to safeguard and improve ourselves in this society. The first danger is imitating the Western lifestyle and committing sins which are common and acceptable in the eyes of the West. Eventually, a person may lose his faith altogether by not feeling any guilt when doing wrong, or by thinking that truth and good are relative and can be decided on by the individual. This is very easy for the unaware person to fall into, for here in the West, ideas such as “**alternate lifestyles**”, “**personal freedom**”, “**right to choose**” are all too common.

Brothers and sisters, let us not be deceived. (The religion before Allāh is Islām) (Whoever desires a religion other than Islām, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers) [Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān] Islām is the one and only way - there are no alternate ways. Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and so on are not acceptable alternatives. They are not, as some claim, “**different windows to the same light**”, nor “**different paths to the same destination**”. All previous religions are now abrogated. Anybody who obstinately seeks a way to Allāh other than the way shown by Muḥammad (ﷺ) is doomed to failure and torment. (Whoever diverges from the Messenger after the guidance has been made plain to him, and follows a way other than that of the believers, We shall turn him over to that to which he himself has turned, and We shall roast him in Hell - how evil a destination!) [Sūrah al-Nisā’]

The Prophet (ﷺ) has said that even if Moses (ﷺ) were alive on the earth today, he (Moses) would have no option but to follow him (Muḥammad (ﷺ)) [Reported by Abū Dāwūd and Bazzār]. Similarly, Muslim and others have reported the Ḥadīth: There is no Jew or Christian who hears about me, and about that which I have been sent with, and yet does not believe in me, except that Allāh must enter him into Hell.

So, Islām as taught by Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the only way to success. Knowing this, we must then take precautions to avoid losing our faith. In a land of Kufr such as this, we must be especially alert. The attraction of the material advancement which we are surrounded by is certainly very appealing.

(Attractive to mankind is the love of (material) desires, of women, children, piled-up treasures of gold and silver, and horses, cattle and produce. That is the provision of this world. The best destination is with Allāh. Say, 'Shall I inform you of (something) better than that? For those who believe, before their Lord are gardens, beneath which flow rivers, they shall abide therein, (and furthermore they shall have) purified mates, and pleasure from Allāh.) [Sūrah Āli 'Imrān] Oh mankind, the promise of Allāh is true, so let not the life of this low world deceive you, nor let the Deceiver (Shayṭān) deceive you from Allāh.) [Qur'ān]

Yet, this is a temptation we must overcome if we are to be successful. "Hell is veiled by lusts, and Heaven is veiled with difficulties." [Riyaḍu'ṣ-Ṣāliḥīn]

We must oppose the ways of Kufr in all their guises. Are we so ashamed of making Wuḍū and praying in our work place or school that we are delaying 'Aṣr until after sunset? This is not acceptable. Our religion is not something to be ashamed of - and after all, are we more ashamed to pray in front of people, or to stand in humiliation and disgrace before Allāh on the Day of Judgement? We must try our best to fulfil our obligations despite what people may think and say. "Islām began as something strange, and it will return to being strange, so blessed are those (true Muslims) who are considered strange."

Living in a country like this, we must try to detach ourselves from love of the materialist lifestyle. A true Muslim will never love Kufr and the Kuffār. (You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and in the last day loving those who turn away from Allāh and His Messenger, even if such people be their fathers, sons, brothers or close relatives or tribe-members. Such are those in whose hearts (Allāh) has inscribed faith, and He has supported them with a spirit from Him. He will enter them into gardens, beneath which flow rivers; they shall abide therein. Allāh is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the party of Allāh. Surely, Allāh's party are the successful ones).[Qur'ān] (Oh believers! Do not take (those who are) My enemies and your enemies as intimate friends, inclining toward them with love, while they have rejected the truth which has come to you) [Sūrah al-Mumtahinah]

If we truly love Allāh, how can we love the enemies of Allāh? How can we love people who deny the truth when it is presented before them, and who argue and dispute barrenly against it? How can we love and be deeply attached to a lifestyle that thrives on disobeying Allāh? We should treat people based on their position towards Islām. The Kuffār, including the Jews and Christians, can never become our intimate friends, confidantes or close allies. This does not mean we isolate ourselves from them and give up hope for them. What it means is that our relationship with them should be fair, kind and equitable, and not rude or arrogant, but we should always be thinking about how to bring them to Islām. If, however, they display open hostility to Islām, then we should treat them as enemies. Those who seize our lands and oppress, torture and kill our Muslim brothers and sisters cannot be our friends.

This is not a question of having an open mind - it is a matter of common sense, and of obeying Allāh's order to separate ourselves from such people's company. If we leave our mind too open, Shayṭān will occupy it.

(Allāh does not prohibit you from being kind and just to those who have not fought you on account of religion, nor expelled you from your homes. Allāh loves those who are just. Allāh only prohibits you from being intimate friends with those who have fought you on account of religion, and expelled you from your homes, and assisted others in your expulsion. Whoever befriends them is a wrongdoer.) [Sūrah al-Hujurāt] (Oh believers, take not the Jews and Christians as protectors/friends. [Sūrah al-Mā'idah] Oh believers, take not as friends/protectors those who have taken your religion as a joke and game, from among those who were given scripture before you, as well as from among the Pagans. And keep your duty to Allāh if indeed you are believers. [Sūrah al-Mā'idah] Whoever does that, Allāh has nothing to do with him [Sūrah Āli 'Imrān] "O you who believe! do not take as allies a people upon whom is Allāh's wrath." "Indeed, there was an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Indeed, we have nothing to do with you, nor with that which you worship besides Allāh. We reject you, and there has appeared between us and you enmity and hatred until you believe in Allāh alone.'" [Qur'ān]

Part of separating ourselves from them is avoiding **imitation** of their ways. For by becoming assimilated with the Kuffār, we incline towards their ways, and are led toward Hell. (Then, We set you upon a code of life, so follow it and do not follow the lusts of those who do not know. They will not benefit you at all before Allāh.) [Qur'ān] And do not incline towards those who commit injustice (Ẓulm), lest the fire smite you, in which case you would not have any helper or protector besides Allāh, and then you would not be helped.) [Surah Hūd]

The scholars of Tafsīr have said that "inclination" comprises **love**, attachment of the heart and feeling pleasure in their actions, and to feel honour and respect for them. Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه) said that "inclining" towards the disbelievers means being favorably disposed towards them. We should behave similarly towards unjust rulers who do not rule by the law of Allāh and do not establish Islām as a complete system. In the same vein, the Prophet (ﷺ) has said, Do not say "Sir" to the hypocrite, for if he is indeed your master, then you have displeased your Lord, the Mighty, the Majestic. [Riyāḍu's-Ṣāliḥīn]

(Whoever among you takes them as allies is one of them. [Sūrah al-Mā'idah]) How are we going to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong if we are always in the company of non-Muslims who do not believe in the right and wrong? By silently witnessing their sins, we become their partners in disobedience to Allāh. Such behavior led to the fall of the Children of Israel. (They used not to forbid the wrong which they did. Evil is that which they did. You see many of them befriending the disbelievers. Evil is that which they themselves have prepared for themselves, (which is) that Allāh is

displeased with them, and they will abide in the Fire. And if they did believe in Allāh and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would not take them as (close) friends, but most of them are rebellious.) [Sūrah al-Mā'idah]

Give news to the hypocrites of a painful punishment- (they are) those who take disbelievers as allies in preference to believers. Do they seek honour before them? (If so, they should realize that) honour is all Allāh's. [Sūrah al-Nisā'] In fact, Honour belongs to Allāh, the Prophet and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know. [Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn]

Similarly, the Prophet (ﷺ)'s Ḥadīth tell us to differ from the disbelievers. In fact, scholars have noted that to differ from the Kuffār in their **habits, dress, attitudes, practices, appearances**, and so on is one of the most important parts of the Prophet (ﷺ)'s message. There is the Ḥadīth of the two Persian messengers who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with long moustaches, and shortened or removed beards. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked them, "Who has ordered you to do this?" They replied, "Our lord," meaning their emperor. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "My Lord has commanded me to grow the beard and shorten the moustaches." In another Ḥadīth, he (ﷺ) said, "Differ from the pagans- shorten your moustaches and grow your beards." [Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī]

"Whoever imitates a people is one of them." [Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, also Tabarānī and Bazzār] On the Day of Judgement, people will be resurrected with those whom they loved dearly. "The man will be with those whom he loves." [Riyaḍu'ṣ-Ṣāliḥīn - Ḥadīth Mutawātir] Every soul will be resurrected according to its love. So, whoever loved Kufr will be with the disbelievers, and his good deeds will not benefit him at all. [Tabarānī] Whoever loves a people, Allāh will resurrect him in their group. [Tabarānī]

There are so many instances in the Ḥadīth which instruct us to differ from the Jews and Christians, and other disbelievers that no rational person has any doubt that to imitate or love them is prohibited and in fact detrimental to one's Īmān. The Jews used to separate themselves from their wives during their menstrual periods. The Prophet (ﷺ), [as reported by Abū Dāwūd, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and Tirmidhī] following the revelation on this matter, told Muslims to "do everything except intercourse" during menstruation. The Jews remarked that he differs from them in every matter.

The method chosen for calling people to prayer was Adhān- distinctly different from the bells, trumpets and fires used by Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians for the purpose. We have also been instructed to refrain from praying and burying our deceased at times which are peculiar to other religions, such as sunrise and sunset for the sun-worshippers. Numerous other actions in Ṣalāh have also been prohibited or discouraged since they resemble those of the Kuffār's prayers. e.g. swaying in prayer, putting the hands on the hips, talking during prayer. Also, graves must be left level ,

and not raised up in the manner of the Kuffār. Fasting people should eat Suhur before dawn, and break the fast early, to differ from the Jews and Christians, who fast all day and night, and delay breaking the fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) intended to fast on the ninth of Muharram as well as on 'Ashūrā' in order to avoid resembling the Jews who fasted only on Ashārā. [Aḥmad, Bayhaqī] Even in Jihād, the Prophet (ﷺ) disliked Persian bows, and advised the Muslims to use Arabian weapons. He also forbade the Muslims from pre-battle rites which the Kuffār used to engage in.

Muslims are encouraged to marry, unlike the Christian monks. "Marry, for I will outnumber other nations on the Day of Resurrection on account of you, and don't imitate the Christian monasticism." [Bayhaqī] Muslim women are forbidden to parade their beauty publicly, in contrast to the practice of Jāhiliyyah. "There are two categories of the inhabitants of Hell that I have not seen: People with whips like the tails of cows, with which they beat people, and women who are clothed yet naked, swaying, and moving out of Allāh's religion; their heads are like an inclined camel's hump. they will not enter Heaven, nor smell its fragrance, though its fragrance can be smelt from such and such a distance." [Muslim, Aḥmad, Mālik] Men with whips - police; common today. The women- don't enter Jannah because they wage war on Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ), and imitate the disbelieving women, hair on head like hump, or some kind of hat resembling a hump.

In another Ḥadīth reported by Aḥmad, we are instructed to differ from ahl-al-Kitāb in our garments, in our footwear, in shortening the moustache and growing the beard, and in every way possible. We should wear what Allāh has provided, but refrain from imitating the disbelievers' ways of dressing, even if we may be wearing some of the same garments as they do. Police- (And differ from the allies of Satan in every way you are able to) [Tabarānī] The Prophet (ﷺ) also told us not to shave part of the head and leave hair on part of it. He said, "either shave it all, or leave it all". [Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah] Again, the reason is that it is a practice of the disbelievers.

In other Ḥadīth we find we should not resemble the Kuffār in our speech also, nor participate in their religious festivals. The Prophet (ﷺ) told people not to take pride in their ancestry from Jāhiliyyah. [Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Bayhaqī, Tayālīsī, Ibn Mājah] Similarly, we should not attach any pride to being "American" (if we are) - our pride and dignity should stem only from Islām and being Muslim. We are not allowed to live and mingle totally with disbelievers. Whoever gathers with a pagan and lives with him is [just] like him. [Abū Dāwūd]

Thus, we see that Muslims must differ from Kuffār in every possible way, in every possible aspect. In our knowledge too, we should strive for an Islamic perspective, bearing in mind that the Western sciences today are based on an atheistic foundation. All this is something we can strive for on the individual level.

On the level of the Ummah, we should realize that the way to success and earthly

power is only by following the ways of Islām. Not by any so-called deceptive 'peace' treaties set up by our enemies. In particular, when the Muslim lands are being attacked, and the Muslims are being raped and killed, the only solution prescribed by Allāh is Jihād. Jihād is for all times. The way to prosperity is by establishing Islamic government and economic systems. Eventually, Allāh's victory will come to the dedicated and committed Muslims. Let us strive to be among them. "A group of my Ummah will always remain supporting the truth, and fighting (for it) until the decree of Allāh comes while they are in this state." [Ḥadīth mutawātir in meaning] "Allāh has promised those among you who believe and do good deeds, that He will appoint them as successors in the land, just as He appointed those before them. He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and will replace their fear with safety." [Surah al-Ḥajj]

May Allāh teach us that which is beneficial to us, and benefit us by what we know. Surely, He is the Most Merciful of the merciful. We seek refuge with Allāh from knowledge which is of no benefit; a heart which does not fear (Him), and a soul that is never satiated.

May Allāh send blessings and peace upon Muḥammad, his Household and Companions.