

*Surah Al-
Jumma*

For an introduction to our tafsirs and for a discussion of the Basmallah, which is the first ayah of this Surah, please see our tafsir of *Surah Fatihah* which is also on Quran-Tafsir.org

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَكِيمِ

2. Every single thing in the heavens and every single thing in the earth is making Tasbih for Allah, *Al-Malik, Al-Quddos, Al-Aziz, Al-Hakim.*

Allah (swt) begins this Surah similar to how He (swt) began other Surahs in this series of short Madini Surahs found in this portion of the Quran. However there are some subtle differences in the way Allah (swt) begins this Surah when compared to other short Madini Surahs. One difference that here Allah (swt) mentions two more of His (swt)'s names and they are *Al-Quddos* and *Al-Malik*. Although Allah (swt) mentions them at the end of Surah *Al-Hashr* when He (swt) tells us about all of His (swt)' names which describe the perfection of His (swt)'s attributes, this is the first time these two names come in the first ayah of the Surah. Also in the previous Surahs we have seen, the verb to make *Tasbih* is in the past tense where here in this ayah it is in the present tense. Just like everything has been making Tasbih for Allah (swt) since the dawn of time, everything is making Tasbih for Him (swt) now.

To make Tasbih for Allah (swt) is to declare how Perfect and Pure Allah (swt) IS. It is to affirm every perfect attribute of Allah (swt) and remove any weakness or deficiency in that attribute. This is Allah (swt), He (swt) is Perfect and without flaw. This is also why He (swt) deserves the worship and servitude of all things for every second of existence. Everything in the universe is limited and weak in some way. Everything has some deficiency, everything has some limitation, and everything is limited in what it can do. For example take something like the sun which has been worshipped by many cultures. It is limited in its size, it is limited in that it sets, it is even limited in the amount of heat it produces. A winter morning finds the sun shining brightly above but it does not give enough warmth because there is a limit on the amount of heat it can produce. This shows the sun is only a creation and not a Creator. It also shows why the sun can never be worshipped or obeyed. Why would you want to worship or obey that which is only a creation like yourself? So all things in the universe are limited, and they are always making Tasbih for the One that is without limitations.

Also notice from the symbol *shaddah* that is above the letter *ba* that the verb for Tasbih is in the intensive form. So not only is every single thing always making Tasbih for Allah (swt), they are also making this Tasbih to the best of their ability and with all of their efforts. When you apply all force and all ability in doing an action then that action would be described with a verb in the

intensive form. Just imagine, everything in the universe at this moment, including everything that you see around yourself at this moment, every particle of matter, is making Tasbih of Allah (swt) to the utmost that they possibly can. How then can we ever forget Allah (swt)? How then can any people ever be disobedient of Allah (swt)?

In the final portion of this ayah, Allah (swt) mentions some of His (swt)'s names. The first name that Allah (swt) mentions is *Al-Malik*, this means "The King" or "The Sovereign". Since Allah (swt) is Perfect in every way and without any flaw or weakness, does this not mean that Only Allah (swt) deserves to be the Ruler for the entire universe? How can a creation that is weak and limited in every way have the audacity to think that it can tell others what to do? Allah (swt) is the Only One Who deserves the authority to legislate laws both for the individual and for the society. The Only One Who can bring laws for how we should live our life in this world and laws on how we should prepare ourselves for the next life. The King is also the One Who owns everything in the land, since Allah (swt) created every single thing in the universe, does that not mean that everything belongs wholly to Him (swt)? We should always thank Allah (swt) for everything that we have, everything that we own belongs to Allah (swt) and He (swt) has given it to us only for a short time and in the trust that we would only use it serve and worship Him (swt). So we see that since Allah (swt) owns everything and since Allah (swt) is the Only One Who is Perfect without limitations, He (swt) deserves to be the Only King for this entire universe.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is *Al-Quddus*. The meaning that this word gives is "The Pure" and "The Holy". At the beginning of the Surah we saw how all things were making Tasbih for Allah (swt) because He (swt) is Perfect and without flaw, this name *Al-Quddus* gives the meaning of that Perfection. Allah (swt) is the One without any kind of weakness or limitation and so Allah (swt) deserves the worship and obedience of all things.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is *Al-Aziz*. This means the "The Mighty". Allah (swt) has all of the Power and all of the Authority in the universe, there is nothing that He (swt) cannot do. Allah (swt) can destroy the greatest of civilizations just as He (swt) can raise them. Allah (swt) can conquer any enemy or any force that dares to resist Him (swt) or the Message that He (swt) sent. Compared to the Might and Strength of Allah (swt), there is no power in this universe whatsoever. This awesome Power is captured in His name *Al-Aziz*, it is why He (swt) deserves all of the worship and all of the sanctification.

Finally Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is *Al-Hakim*. This means the "The Most Wise". Allah (swt) has knowledge of every single thing. The Knowledge of Allah (swt) is Infinite and without limit. So Allah (swt) is also The Most Wise and there is wisdom in everything that Allah (swt) does and everything legislates for us to do. So every decision and every judgment that Allah (swt) puts down is always the best choice and the most just of judgments. Every law that Allah (swt) gives is always the best law for mankind. So just as Allah (swt) deserves all of the worship because He (swt) is *Al-Aziz*, He (swt) also deserves all obedience because He (swt) is *Al-Hakim*.

When you are lost and need guidance on where to go, why would you look anywhere but the Most Wise? In Islam Allah (swt) has sent us a complete guidance on how to behave for every moment of our lives. Since He (swt) is the Most Wise, we have to trust and believe that every law that He (swt) gives us to guide our actions is what is best for us in this world and the next. Once we realize Who Allah (swt) IS, we have to submit our desires and our emotions to what He (swt) legislates and follow it without question.

We ask Allah (swt) to allow us to know Him (swt) through all of His (swt)'s attributes that He (swt) has told us about in the Quran. We ask Allah (swt) to allow this knowledge of the perfection of His (swt)'s attributes to increase our humility and submission before Him (swt). We ask Allah (swt) to make us realize that He (swt) is the Most Pure and the Most Holy as well as the Most Mighty, this should make us want to worship and make Tasbih for Him (swt), just like does all of the creation does. We ask Allah (swt) to make us realize that He (swt) is the One True King and to realize that He (swt) is the Most Wise, this should make us want to obey and follow no one except Him (swt). We humbly implore Allah (swt) to grant us the correct knowledge of Him (swt)!

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

3. He is the One and Only Who raised among an illiterate people a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His Signs, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom, although before that they were in clear error.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about Him (swt) and how everything in the universe was making tasbih for Him (swt) and how He (swt) was the Mighty and the Pure Who deserved all of the worship and how He (swt) was the Wise and the True King Who deserved all of the obedience. When we think about Allah (swt) as He (swt) described Him (swt) like this, it makes us want to worship and serve Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) also gives us another reason to make us want to worship and serve Him (swt), instead of telling us about Who He (swt) IS, in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what He (swt) has done.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us that He (swt) is the One and Only Who raised among the illiterate people a Messenger from among themselves. This ayah is telling us about the Arabs and the Prophet (saw). The Arabs were an illiterate people in that most of them could not read or write. Because they were unlettered, the messenger who was sent from among them was also unlettered. There was much wisdom in the choice of Allah (swt) to send this Message to an unlettered messenger among an unlettered people. Since the Prophet (saw) was illiterate, it shows that he (saw) could not have learned the narrations that the Quran has about the previous

prophets from the books of the Jews and Christians. Since the Prophet (saw) was never known to interact with either Jews or Christians, it was not possible from him (saw) to have gotten this information from them, The Quran has so many detailed accounts of the lives of the previous prophets and their nations, that there was simply no way a simple merchant could have dreamt all of them up himself. So there is a great wisdom in Allah (swt) choosing a man who could not read or write to be the bearer of this Message, it clearly shows to all people that this Quran is the words of Allah (swt).

There is also an advantage in Allah (swt) choosing a people that were illiterate. Because most of them could not read, they did not get a chance to read many of the irrational philosophies of the Greeks and Romans. These works had many foolish thoughts about Allah (swt) that were not based on the reality. Any simple-minded person who studied the reality around them would know that this universe has a Creator. As a simple yet wise Bedouin from the desert once said "the tracks of the camel in the desert sand are signs for the camel, is not then the sky, the mountains and this vast earth a sign for Allah (swt)". But the Greek philosophers brought many strange and foreign thoughts that turned people from this reality. For example some of them said that there was nothing definite in the universe, everything was doubtful and you had to question everything, even your own existence. So even if a fire would burn them, they would deny that fire exists. Such a thought was completely false and had no basis in the reality. With a sick and corrupt thinking such as this, how can anyone believe in anything definite? We learn everything that we know from the reality around us, when someone says the reality does not exist or is only a dream, they are throwing away all of the knowledge that we have learned since the time Allah (swt) created Adam (as). Moreover with a thinking like this how can anyone arrive at the conclusion that Allah (swt) Exists? So because the Arabs were an unlettered they were protected from these strange foreign philosophies. When the Quran told them to look at the reality around them, they immediately recognized the signs of Allah (swt) all over the universe, and they saw the Truth of the Creator and Controller of all things in the world around them.

Even though the Arabs were an unlettered people before they received Islam, look at the transformation this Message brought to them. We know that the very first word of the very first ayah ever revealed by Allah (swt) was "Read". In that first revelation Allah (swt) also tells us that He (swt) has taught mankind with the pen. This means that the pen and the books that they write is a tool for the communication of thoughts and ideas. After Islam, the Muslims became a nation of scholars. The amount of books and literary works produced by this Ummah is beyond belief. It has been reported that when the Mongols invaded the Islamic State and seized Baghdad, they made a bridge across the Euphrates river with only books. A large river was crossed by throwing books into it and filling it from the basin to the surface with books. Can you even imagine how many books there must have been? There were so many books in the water that the color of the water became black from the ink for several weeks. It was not only in Islam where Muslim

scholars existed. Muslims also made great advancements in the areas of science and mathematics. Many of the advancements that the West enjoys today were built on the shoulders of these Muslim scholars. For example it was the Muslims who first introduced to Europe, the concept of zero as a number. Computers and the digital revolution is built on binary language, or the alternation of one and zero, this would not have been possible without the Muslims. So we see how this Message from Allah (swt) changed an illiterate nation into a nation of writers and scholars.

This is not to say that everything that the Muslim scholars produced was good. For example when some Muslims translated the works of Greek philosophers into Arabic, they may have thought that they were doing good, but in fact this was the beginning of much corruption in the thinking of the Muslims. These philosophies lead to much confusion in the thinking of the Muslims and it caused many Muslims to break off into sects which had corruptions in their Aqeedah like the Muatizzila. The problem however was because these Muslims abandoned the Quran as the base of their thinking and adopted the thinking of the Greek philosophers. The Quran teaches us that we must only think based on what we can sense. If a thought does not have its basis in the reality then that thought is not valid. So all these foolish questions that these philosophers put forward like "why does not god create a stone which he cannot lift" are not valid because they attempt to think on what cannot be sensed. We know from the signs in the universe around us that Allah (swt) Exists and that Allah (swt) is Perfect and without limitations. But that is all that we can say based on the signs in the universe, we cannot think any further about Allah (swt) because we cannot sense Allah (swt). From this point on, we need Allah (swt) to tell us about Him (swt) in the Quran. The Muatizzila and other Muslim philosophers did not see this distinction and like the Greeks they also started thinking into that which cannot be sensed. This ultimately lead to a lot of corruption in the thinking of the Muslims, the effect of this is still being felt in the Ummah today. May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from such corrupt foreign thoughts and return the thinking of the Muslims to the thinking which He (swt) taught us in the Quran, to know and achieve certainty in Allah (swt) through His (swt) signs in the universe around us.

Then Allah (swt) tells us how the Prophet (saw) recites onto them His Signs. The word "Signs" here refer to the ayahs of the Quran, and Allah (swt) is describing here how the Prophet (saw) would recite the ayahs of the Quran onto the Arabs. Every ayah in the Quran is a sign that it could only have come from Allah (swt). Every ayah contains so much deep meaning, and every ayah uses the perfect combination of words from the Arabic language to have the greatest impact on the listener, every ayah is perfect in grammar and sentence structure with no mistakes or flaws whatsoever, every ayah uses the best words to express the meaning it wants to express, every ayah is neither poetry nor prose but somewhere in between. It was something the like of which the Arabs had never heard before, despite their long history of being poets. Every ayah completely destroyed all the works of Arabs that they had produced before. When they heard the

Prophet (saw) recite to them the Quran, even those who were the greatest opponents of this Message, had to admit that this Quran could not have come from the mind of a man.

Do you ever get tired listening to the Quran? How many times have you heard the Quran? How many times have you heard the Fatihah in Salah? Does it ever becoming boring or repetitive? When you hear a beautiful recitation of the Quran, know that it is not the Qari that makes it beautiful, but the words of the Quran themselves are beautiful. They are Divine Words and they are Signs for all mankind that this Message is from Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to purify the people. The Prophet (saw) is a purification for mankind in so many ways. The Prophet (saw) first and foremost purified the Arabs of that time from the dirt of idol worshipping. There is nothing as disgusting as bowing down before a stone that has no life and that has no power to harm or benefit anyone. Allah (swt) created the human being in the best manner possible, and placed in the human the capacity to achieve great things. Even the angels at one point bowed down before Adam (as). So how unfortunate it is that despite this great potential that Allah (swt) has placed within the human being, they have chosen to bow down and worship stones and animals. So the first way in which the Prophet (saw) was a purification was that he (saw) cleansed the society of idol worship.

The next way in which the Prophet (saw) was a purification for the people was that he (saw) cleansed the society of all the evil and lewd actions that they performed. Although idol worship is the most fowl of actions, there are many more disgusting actions that the human being commits. Among these adultery and fornication, homosexuality, sodomy, child molestation. When a human being does not recognize that he has a commitment to serve Allah (swt), he allows his desires and his passions to control him. For many humans, they will commit these indecent actions because they are unaware of the consequences. Islam came to destroy all of these lewd and obscene practices. It came to regulate and control the behavior of the human being so that he lives a pure and clean life in the service and worship of his Creator and Sustainer.

The Prophet (saw) also purified the people by removing the diseases in their heart. How many are the evil diseases of the heart that Islam came to destroy? From jealousy and hatred to despair and fear of this world, there are many negative emotions that can haunt the human heart. Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to purify the people of these diseases of the heart just like He (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to purify the people from the evil of idol worship and from the evil of indecent actions such as idol worship. The scholars have said that the root of all diseases of the heart is to be satisfied with your self, to think that you are the best and that there is no reason for you to improve. The heart which is always attached to Allah (swt) will never think in this way. It knows that Only Allah (swt) is Perfect, and all humans are all imperfect and weak creatures who are always striving to please our Creator, but are capable of many errors and shortcomings. The True Muslim is the one who is always aware of this fact, and so is always trying to improve himself. He is always trying to improve both his actions and the emotions and feelings in his

heart. That is the purification of the heart that the Prophet (saw) brought for mankind. In the Quran that the Prophet (saw) brought to us we have words that will always remind of Allah (swt) and the Hereafter. These thoughts that the Quran gives us reminds us that nothing else should matter except Allah (swt). When we remember Allah (swt) in this way, we will not have jealousy and hatred for anyone. Why should we even care about other people when our heart is filled with thoughts of our Creator? Why should we have fear of anything in this world when we realize that all good is from Allah (swt) and all harm comes only with the permission of Allah (swt)? Similarly in the life of the Prophet (saw), we see a man who was the best of creation in every sense of the word. Not only was he (saw) protected from both the major and minor sins, but even his (saw)'s heart was always attached to Allah (swt). So we see that the Prophet (saw) also purified this Ummah from the diseases of the heart just as he (saw) purified us from worshipping other than Allah (swt)

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the Prophet (saw) was sent to teach the people the Book and the Wisdom. The scholars tell us that this refers to the Quran and the Sunnah. The Quran is the Book of Allah (swt), and just like the Prophet (saw) would recite to the people it's ayahs, he (saw) would also teach them it's meanings. Many of the ayahs of the Quran have been explained by the Prophet (saw), and the many of the rulings that the Quran has given have been detailed by the Prophet (saw). For example Allah (swt) commanded us in His (swt)'s Book to establish the Salah, but it was through the actions and the words of His Messenger (saw) that Allah (swt) showed us how to pray.

Just like the Prophet (saw) taught us the Quran, he (saw) also taught us the Sunnah which Allah (swt) refers to in this ayah as *Al-Hikmah* or "the wisdom". There is great wisdom in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). First and foremost because like the Quran it is also from Allah (swt). When it comes to the Quran the Prophet (saw) conveyed to us literally what Allah (swt) revealed to him (saw) and as for the Sunnah the Prophet (saw) used his own words and actions to describe the revelation that Allah (swt) had sent him (saw). But in the end, they are both from Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw) never gave us anything that was from his (saw)'s own mind. Because the Sunnah is eventually from Allah (swt) and He (swt) is the Most Wise, there is wisdom in every portion of the Sunnah. There is wisdom in the laws that come from the Sunnah, for example the prohibition of any kind of nationalism. We see today the problems that are happening across the Ummah which come from nationalism. Muslims associate with their tribe or their country or their race, and they start killing their own Muslim brothers. All of the nation states that the Ummah has been broken up today are based on nationalism. They are all weak because they are divided. The Prophet (saw) taught the Sahabah that all Muslims were brothers despite the land from which they came or the color of their skin. We know that among the Sahabah of the Prophet (saw) was a Persian in Salman (ra) and an Abyssinian in Bilal (ra). Although these two men were not Arabs, they were accepted into the Muslim community and they were never looked

down upon. This is because they were united on something much greater than the land from which they came or the language they spoke, they were united in the belief which they carried in their hearts and that is the greatest of bonds on which humans can unite. Their unity gave them strength and they were able to conquer all of the enemies of this Message who will still be divided on language and nation. So we see great wisdom in the prohibition of nationalism, and this is just one of many laws that Allah (swt) gave us through the Prophet (saw). There is also wisdom in the type of character that the Prophet (saw) tried to build in the people. We know the hadith where a man came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) for advice. The Prophet (saw) simply told him not to become angry, the man asked the Prophet (saw) again and again he (saw) gave the same reply, and the man asked the Prophet (saw) a third time and he still got the same reply. The man did not realize it, but the Prophet (saw) had in fact given him great advice on the evils of anger. We as Muslims should only become angry for the sake of Allah (swt). Personal anger will only consume our hearts and distract us from the worship and servitude to Allah (swt). It will also cause rancor and animosity between our Muslim brothers and us. So how much wisdom was in the advice of the Prophet (saw) to all Muslims to control our anger.

Even though the Sunnah has been called *Al-Hikmah*, the wisdom within it may not always be obvious to us. There are many commands that the Prophet (saw) has told us to do for which we may not be able to see the wisdom in them. For these commands we simply have to accept the fact that they are from Allah (swt) Who is the Most Wise, we must tell ourselves that there is wisdom in these actions which Allah (swt) knows but He (swt) has chosen not to tell us. So for these commands where the wisdom or the reason behind them is not known, we still have to carry them out because they come from our Lord and Master. As part of our submission and humility before Allah (swt) we must perform these actions even if we do not know the reason why Allah (swt) has legislated them for us. It would be wrong for us to go and seek out the reason for these commands ourselves, if Allah (swt) has not given us the reason in the Quran or Sunnah. That would be questioning the wisdom of the One Who we already know is the Most Wise. We seek refuge in Allah (swt) from that. An example would be that we cannot question why Allah (swt) has told us to pray Maghrib as three rakahs, we cannot ask as to why it was not four. It would be wrong for us to look for the wisdom in these commands. In a case like this where Allah (swt) has given us a command without giving a reason for it, we must simply carry it out to the best of our ability and we must not question this command. This is because Allah (swt) is the Creator and we are only creation, He (swt) is the *Rabb* and we are the slaves. Even when we cannot see the wisdom behind a command, there is still wisdom in it because it is from the Most Wise and so it is *Al-Hikmah*.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that before He (swt) had sent the Prophet (saw) to the Arabs, they were in clear error. There were some good qualities about the Arabs before the Prophet (saw) was sent to them that made them eligible to carry this Message,

such as their being protected from the corrupt Greek philosophies, their simplicity in lifestyle, their patience and steadfastness, and their commitment to their pledges. But even if the people among the Arabs had these good qualities, their society as a whole was extremely corrupt and barbaric. When Allah (swt) tells us that they were in clear error this can be seen from every aspect of their society. In every way their society was corrupt and misguided. First and foremost was because they were a society that worshipped idols instead of worshipping Allah (swt). They lived their lives to serve their desires instead of serving Allah (swt), and they ruled by a law other than that of Allah (swt). In their economic system they would cheat the people in their business transactions. In their social system, they would oppress their women and treat them as mere objects. Another corruption in their social system is that they would bury their infant daughters alive. They were also always fighting each other. For no valid reason, one tribe would declare war with another tribe and they would feud with each other for generations. Countless lives were lost in these battles that were fought for no reason. In all of these ways and more, they were a people who were in clear error.

Then Allah (swt) saved them by sending Islam to them. This Message rescued them from the darkness they were in and brought them into the Light. They saw that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah (swt). They realized that the purpose of their life must be to serve and worship Allah (swt). They knew that only Allah (swt) could bring the laws with which they can govern their society. They came to be fair and honest in all of their economic transactions, and they learned not to cheat the people or to take interest from them. They learned that the woman must be honored and looked after, and not be treated merely as an object. They saw that peace was better than war, and brotherhood was better than disunity. All of this was possible because Allah (swt) sent this Message to them. It was this Message and this Message alone that transformed these backward and barbaric people into the greatest civilization that mankind has ever seen. We ask Allah (swt) to allow the Muslims today to realize the potential that this Message has to also do the same for our community today, to rescue us from the darkness that we are in!

وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

3. And others from them who have not yet joined them. And He is *Al-Aziz* and *Al-Hakim*.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) told us that He (swt) is the One Who raised a messenger from an unlettered people. This messenger would recite to them the ayahs of the Quran, purify them from idol worship, sin and diseases of the heart, and teach them the Quran and Sunnah. So the previous ayah was telling us about how the Prophet (saw) was sent to such a people. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about another group of people to whom the Prophet (saw) was also sent.

Allah (swt) describes this other group of people to whom the Prophet (saw) was sent as "others from them who have not yet joined them". The word "others" tells us that such people are not from the Arabs to whom the Prophet (saw) was originally sent, the ones whom Allah (swt) described in the previous ayah as the "unlettered people". The scholars say that the word "others" refers to the all of the Muslims who will come after the time of the Prophet (saw). Bukhari and Muslim have narrated to us that the Prophet (saw) was sitting with the Sahabah when this ayah was revealed. At that point the Sahabah asked the Prophet (saw) what Allah (swt) means in this ayah by the word "other". The first time they asked him (saw), he (saw) remained silent, then they asked him (saw) again and a second time he (saw) was silent. When they asked for the third time, he (saw) put his hand on the back of Salman Farsi (ra) and said "If Iman were on Pleiades, even them some men or a man from these people would attain it". Scholars like Mujahid have interpreted this hadith to explain the ayah as meaning that "others" are all the people who would become Muslim after the time of the Prophet (saw), including non-Arabs like the Persian people whom Salman (ra) were from. We also see here an example of how the Prophet (saw) taught the Quran because he (saw) explained the meanings of the ayahs.

The scholars have said that the words *minhom* or "from them" means that these people are also from the Muslim community just like the Sahabah (ra) were. This is a great honor that Allah (swt) has given to the generations that come after the time of the Prophet (saw). We know that the Sahabah were the greatest generation of Muslims, they helped the Prophet (saw) to establish the Deen of Allah (swt). The blessings that we have today from Islam are from their hard work and sacrifice. We know that Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to be the ideal model on whom we should follow to be a true servant of Allah (swt). The Sahabah were the closest to the Prophet (saw), so their behavior is the closest to him (saw). They were with him (saw) through times of difficulty and ease, they suffered with him (saw) and they were victorious alongside him (saw). So for Allah (swt) to join us with that community is a great honor and privilege for us.

But the question we must ask ourselves is how exactly are we connected to that great generation of people who lived with the Prophet (saw)? We do not come from the same land as the Sahabah, many of us do not speak the same language, we eat different foods and wear different clothing. The type of houses in which we live in are different and the way in which we earn a living is different. So how are we connected to the Sahabah? What do we have in common with them? It is only in one way in which we are connected to the Sahabah but this is the best way in which any group of human beings can be connected, and it is we all share the same Aqeedah. We all believe that there is none worthy of worship and servitude except Allah (swt), and that the Prophet (saw) is the servant and messenger of Allah (swt). We base our entire life around this belief. That is how we are connected to the Sahabah and that is how we will be included in that group whom Allah (swt) says *minhom* or "from them".

Then Allah (swt) says “who have not yet joined them”. With these words Allah (swt) includes all of the generations of Muslims who will come after the time of Sahabah. The Prophet (saw) was sent to us just like he (saw) was sent to the Sahabah. Like he (saw) did for them, he (saw) also purified us, and taught us the Quran and Sunnah. Just imagine where you would be if not for the purification that Islam brought about in your life. Can you imagine a life for yourself without knowing about Allah (swt)? Can you imagine yourself living a life where you only exist to serve your desires? Now think how grateful you should be that Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to purify you so that you live only to serve the Creator and Controller of the universe? Insha Allah it is up to us to realize how fortunate we are to have the Prophet (saw) be sent to us and be included in the company of the Sahabah and be a part of this Ummah. We have to show our gratitude through our efforts to work for the cause of Allah (swt) just like the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah (ra) did. Insha Allah if we do that, we will be included in their company, not just in the fact that we are Muslims like them, but also Insha Allah we will be united with them in the gardens of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) grant us the company of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah in our final home!

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again that He (swt) is *Al-Aziz* and *Al-Hakim*. *Al-Aziz* means “The Mighty” and “The Strong” and because of such Might and Strength Allah (swt) IS also “The Great” and “The Honored”. This is why Allah (swt) deserves all of the worship and all of the sanctification. *Al-Hakim* means “The Most Wise”, the One Who has the Wisdom in everything that He (swt) does and everything that He (swt) commands. This is why Allah (swt) deserves all of the obedience and servitude. The Sahabah (ra) recognized these two attributes of Allah (swt). That is why they dedicated all of their worship to Allah (swt) and they never followed anyone except Allah (swt). They knew that when they obeyed the Prophet (saw), they were in fact obeying Allah (swt). So we also must always remember these two Names of Allah (swt) and always live by them. When we think of Allah (swt) as *Al-Aziz* we should remember how Powerful Allah (swt) IS and how Allah (swt) can do all things. It should make us want to bow down and prostrate ourselves in worship before the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt). When we need something and we realize how Mighty Allah (swt) IS, it should make us turn to no one but Him (swt). Similarly when we think of Allah (swt) as *Al-Hakim* we should realize that there should be no one who deserves our obedience except Allah (swt). When Allah (swt) tells you to do something, you should know that is the best thing for you to do because He (swt) is The Most Wise. Even if the whole world tells you to do something else, and even if your own desires tell you to do something else, you should do what Allah (swt) tells you to do. What is the knowledge of the creation compared to the Knowledge of the Creator? How much wisdom do you have compared to the Wisdom of the Lord and Master of all things? So for every moment of your life you should only worship Allah (swt) and for every moment of your life you should only obey and

follow the guidance that Allah (swt) sent to you in the Quran and Sunnah. Only then would we realize Allah (swt) as *Al-Aziz* and *Al-Hakim*. May Allah (swt) allow us to do that!

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ



5. That is the *Fadl* of Allah, that He bestows on whom He wills. Allah is the Owner of great *Fadl*.

The word *Fadl* means “bounty”, “grace” or “great gift”. In this ayah Allah (swt) tell us “that is the *Fadl* of Allah that He bestows on whom He wills”. The word *Fadl* refers to everything that Allah (swt) has told us about from the previous ayahs. That is the bounty and gift that He (swt) bestows on whom He (swt) pleases. Let us now look back on what Allah (swt) has told us since the beginning of the Surah and see how that is such a great gift for all mankind.

In the first part of the Surah Allah (swt) told us how every single thing in the creation, with the exception of the evil among mankind and jinn, were always making *Tasbih* for Allah (swt). In other words, almost everything in the creation is declaring how Glorious and Perfect Allah (swt) IS with every fiber of it's being. We as human beings have forgotten our Creator and Sustainer, our Lord and Master. When Allah (swt) tells us how every single thing in the creation is making *Tasbih* for Him (swt), it reminds us that we should also do the same. How could we live such a heedless experience where we would not realize the Greatness of Allah (swt) and not want to glorify Him (swt) for it? If we knew the Glory and Majesty of Allah (swt), we would be worshipping Him (swt) for every second of our existence, just like all of the creation is doing. When Allah (swt) tells us about His (swt)'s attributes such as Him being the Most Holy and the Most Mighty, it makes us want to worship Him (swt) even more. When Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is the One True King and the Most Wise it makes us want to obey and follow none but Him (swt). This is a great gift that Allah (swt) has bestowed upon us. One reason is because we would never know about these attributes of Allah (swt) unless He (swt) told us about them. From the signs that are in the universe we can tell that there is a Creator and the Creator is Perfect without flaw or weakness. But since we cannot sense Allah (swt), that is all that we can say about Him (swt). For us to gain more knowledge about Allah (swt), we need Allah (swt) to tell us about Him (swt) in the Quran. So these descriptions that Allah (swt) gives us are a great bounty and blessing because they allow us to know our Creator. These Names of Allah (swt) tells us about the One we are worshipping and why He (swt) deserves the worship. They tell us about the One we are serving and why He (swt) deserves our obedience. So how fortunate are we that Allah (swt) has told us so much about Him (swt) in the Quran, that is the first part of the *Fadl* that Allah (swt) has

bestowed on us. Just think where we would be if Allah (swt) would not have granted this knowledge to us? What would we be worshipping and who would we be obeying and following?

Then Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) has sent us the Messenger (saw) who recites to us His Signs and purifies us. Allah (swt) told us how Prophet (saw) also teaches us the Quran and the Sunnah. How great is the blessing that Allah (swt) gave us when He (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to us? Allah (swt) gave the Prophet (saw) the Quran where every ayah is a clear sign that it can only be the words of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) also guided the Prophet (saw) to purify us of all of the evil that we have. He (saw) took us away from the worship of idols and away from the worship of the temporary and fleeting things of this world to the worship of Allah (swt) Who will be there forever and never go away. He (saw) purified us of all evil, indecent, and immoral actions and he (saw) showed how we should live our life so that every moment we are worshipping and serving Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) was the perfect model for all human being to follow realize the purpose of their creation. So the Quran and the Prophet (saw) were among the great gifts that Allah (swt) has given us. We must show gratitude to Allah (swt) for this bounty by always reciting the Quran and trying to learn it's meaning, and by always following the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Just imagine once again how it were not for the Quran and the Prophet (saw), where would we be? How would our lives be like? More importantly where would we end up in the life after this?

So we can see that this guidance that Allah (swt) sent for mankind is among the greatest of gifts from the Creator. More than mansions and palaces, more than wealth and gold, what could be more valuable than your iman? Would you give away the Quran that is in your heart for all of the riches in this world? The riches and adornments of this world will eventually fade away and be destroyed. Whatever you have in this world that you think will bring you happiness will only be with you for a very short time. When you leave this world you cannot take of your possessions with you. The only things you can take with you from this world into the next, is the belief that you have in your heart and good actions that you did based on that belief. We also know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that the ones who memorize Quran sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt) will be rewarded with paradise and they will even be able to save members of their family from the hellfire. Is there anything in this world that could be more valuable?

As Allah (swt) tells us in the ayah, that is *Fadl* of Allah (swt) that He (swt) bestows to whom He (swt) chooses. If we are among those in mankind that He (swt) has chosen to give this Fadl to, then just think how fortunate we are. However the fact that Allah (swt) has chosen us among all mankind to have this Quran and chosen us to be in the Ummah of the Prophet (saw) should not make us to start believing that we are better than other people simply because of the fact that we are Muslim. Rather this knowledge should motivate us to work hard to be worthy of this honor that Allah (swt) has given us. Allah (swt) has chosen us to be the bearers of this Message, and there is certainly a great reward for that in this life and the Hereafter, but there is

also a great responsibility associated to it. It is now our duty to carry this Message to mankind. We must not become frightened or overwhelmed by this responsibility. Although it is a great task to establish this Deen of Allah (swt) and carry it to mankind, we must also remember that Allah (swt) says in this ayah that He (swt) gives this *Fadl* to whom He (swt) chooses. Since Allah (swt) chose us we have to believe that we have the capacity to work for this dawah, all we have to do is put our trust in Allah (swt) and make our best effort. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is the Owner of great *Fadl*. There are many different kinds of gifts or bounties that Allah (swt) can bestow upon a people. Even for the sinners and the disbelievers, Allah (swt) grants them some wealth and some enjoyment in the life of this world. However unless they make Tawbah and return to Allah (swt), this wealth will actually be a source of their destruction. For the righteous believers, Allah (swt) may bless us with a good family, a nice home and a decent and halal way in which to earn a living. These are different kinds of gifts and bounties that Allah (swt) can bestow on whoever He (swt) chooses. But in this Surah we can see that the greatest of blessing that Allah (swt) can bestow on anyone is Islam. It is guidance that shows the path on how to worship and serve the Creator and Master of the universe. It is the Quran whose very ayahs are a miracle and it is the Sunnah where there is wisdom in every action and saying of the Prophet (saw). This is the *Fadl* that Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. That is why Allah (swt) is the Owner of great *Fadl*. There is no bounty or gift that is greater than this, and it belongs completely to Allah (swt). He (swt) will bestow it on whom He (swt) pleases. We ask Allah (swt) to be among those who are worthy of this great gift.

So far in this Surah Allah (swt) has told us how fortunate we as a Muslim Ummah are in that He (swt) has chosen us to bear this Message. How blessed are we that Allah (swt) sent His (swt)'s beloved the Prophet (saw) and His (swt)'s own words in the Quran to us? But as we have been emphasizing, we must show gratitude for this great bounty that Allah (swt) has given us. We have to show our Creator and our Master that we are worthy of this Message that He (swt) has entrusted us with.

In the next part of this Surah, Allah (swt) describes to us the community that had the responsibility of carrying this Message before our community. Since the responsibility of calling mankind to Islam has now fallen on our Ummah, it is obvious that this prior nation failed in their duty to carry this Message. As we read the ayahs where Allah (swt) tells us about them, it is very important that we remind ourselves that the purpose of these ayahs is not so that we can look down upon them and think that we are better than them. Rather the point of these ayahs is so that we can see and learn from their mistakes, so that we do not make them ourselves. All guidance and all good comes from Allah (swt) and we humbly beseech Allah (swt) to show us the way to His (swt)'s pleasure and to keep us away from the ways of those who earn His (swt)'s anger.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ
الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

6. The example of the ones who were entrusted with the Tawrah but who did not live up to their trusts is like the example of the donkey that carries a load of heavy books. Evil is the example of the people who are the ones that *kadhab* the signs of Allah, and Allah does not guide the *Dhalimoon*.

Allah (swt) told us in the previous ayahs how He (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to an unlettered people to purify them and to teach them the Quran and the Sunnah. If Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to the Arabs when they were an unlettered people, what about the people who already had scriptures from Allah (swt)? Why did Allah (swt) not choose to send this Message to them? After all since they already had scriptures with them should they not have been more qualified to receive the messenger from Allah (swt)? In this ayah Allah (swt) about these people. They are the Jews who were living in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (saw).

Instead of going through the long history of the Jews and detailing all of their acts of transgression and disobedience, Allah (swt) gives us a beautiful example to their situation. Allah (swt) begins this example by telling us who the Jews are. They were the ones who were entrusted with the Tawrah. The Tawrah as we know was the Book that Allah (swt) revealed to Musa (as). Just like our Quran, that Book also had beliefs and laws. Before the Prophet (saw) was sent, the Jews had the responsibility of believing what was in this Book, and of practicing it's laws and of spreading it's teaching to mankind. This is what Allah (swt) means when He (swt) tells us that the Jews were entrusted with the Tawrah.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that even though they were entrusted with this Tawrah they did not live up to the trust they had been given. They did not follow the laws that were in the Tawrah. For example Allah (swt) had told them that interest and usury was forbidden but they took it from the people. Allah (swt) told them that they could not approach their neighbor's wives but they approached them. Later on they even changed the scriptures of Allah (swt) with their own hands to justify their sin. They would even make up stories of the prophets of Allah (swt) committing these sins so that they can justify it for themselves. So the first way in which they fail to live up to the trust they had been given with the Tawrah was that they failed to follow the laws that it contained.

They next way in which they failed in their responsibility to the Tawrah is that they stopped carrying this Message to mankind and inviting them to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Not only did they stop calling other people to this guidance they had from Allah (swt), but they started thinking that this guidance was only for them and that they were the chosen people of Allah (swt). They started looking down on the rest of humanity who were not from their people. They thought they were better than all of mankind, and they even thought they were free to exploit and cheat other people without having to face any consequences from Allah (swt). Their racism got so bad to the point where they even did not see the rest of mankind as human beings. They would call the non-Jews as *goyim*, and they even said that if you saw a *goyim* drowning you did not have to make any effort to save them. So the next way in which they failed in their obligation to the Tawrah was that they stopped caring about the rest of mankind, they stopped carrying this Message from Allah (swt) to mankind, and they forgot that all of mankind were the children of Adam (as) like they are.

They also failed in their trust to the Tawrah by not believing in everything that it contained. Their books clearly told them that a messenger would be sent to them after Musa (as). They knew that they were obligated to follow and support this messenger as he carried the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. The Prophet (saw) had all of the signs that their scriptures predicted the messenger would have. The signs were so clear that the Jews of the Prophet (saw)'s time even admitted with their own mouths that he (saw) was indeed the messenger that their books speak about. But despite this knowledge, they refused to follow the Prophet (saw), they opposed the Message that he (saw) was sent with, they made alliances with his (saw)'s enemies, they broke their treaties and agreements with him (saw), they mocked and ridiculed his (saw)'s followers and they even tried to kill him (saw). See how much they had failed in the trust that Allah (swt) had given them when He (swt) sent Musa (as) to them, saved them from Firaun and gave them Tawrah.

Yet despite all of this sin and all of this transgression, they still had the Tawrah with them. Even if they had altered or removed many portions of it, it was still the Law that Allah (swt) had given to Musa (as). So what was their relationship to this Tawrah? Allah (swt) tells us that the example of their relationship with the Tawrah is like the donkey that carries a load of heavy books. What does the donkey know about the books that it is carrying? It only carries them but it does not benefit at all from the guidance that is in those books. Similar is the case of the Jews, they had this Book from Allah (swt) but they did not benefit from it at all. The benefit that one can take from the revelation that Allah (swt) sends is that it must bring that person closer to Allah (swt), it must guide that person to Allah (swt). These Jews were not guided to Allah (swt) because they failed to live up the trust that Allah (swt) had given them when He (swt) gave them their Book, so just like a donkey carrying a load of heavy books they did not benefit from what they had at all.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always remember why we learn any knowledge about Islam. When we seek knowledge we must always do it as a way of getting closer to Allah (swt). We must not seek any other goal except the pleasure of Allah (swt) when we set out to gain knowledge of Islam. This is because if this knowledge does not lead us to fear and worship Allah (swt), then there is no benefit for us in this knowledge whatsoever. The way in which we can try to get this benefit is first and foremost to keep the pleasure of Allah (swt) as the sole reason why we are doing that action. Then we must apply that knowledge that we learned. If it is a matter of belief, and we are convinced of its evidences, then we must believe in it, and if it is a matter of action then we must do that action. The knowledge that we learn cannot simply be knowledge that sits in our mind. It has to be reflected in the beliefs and the emotions that we have in our heart and it has to be implemented in the actions that we do with our limbs. Finally we must carry this knowledge to others. The knowledge of this Deen is from Allah (swt). It does not belong to any scholar or any Muslim. Whatever knowledge that we have, if we are convinced that it is from Allah (swt), then we must carry it to others. We know the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) told to relate from him (saw) even if it is just one ayah. So any knowledge that we have, we must teach it to others. So they will benefit from it, just like we have. These are a few ways in which can ensure that the knowledge that we learn leads us to Allah (swt) instead of just being information in our minds.

Yet another lesson that we can take from this example of the Jews and their relationship with the Tawrah is the importance of us developing the proper relationship with the Quran. If we simply hold on to this Quran and we do not make an effort to learn it and live by it, then what would be the difference between them and us? We must never allow Shaitan to deceive into underestimating the importance of this Quran. We must always remember that these are the words of Allah (swt), the Creator and Controller of the universe. This is the greatest miracle that has ever been given any prophet. Can you imagine standing before Allah (swt) when you had this Quran with you and you did not make every effort to benefit from the guidance that it contains? So we must not become like a people who had the guidance from Allah (swt) and then kept it on a shelf. This guidance leads to peace and tranquility in this life and salvation and eternal happiness in the Hereafter. It is the most valuable of gifts that any human can receive. So the proper relationship that we must have with the Quran is that we must live our lives according to it.

In the next portion of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that evil is the example of the people who are the ones that *kadhab* the signs of Allah. The word *kadhab* means to give "lie to", it means to treat something as a lie when you know it is the truth. Allah (swt) describes these Jews as considering the signs of Allah (swt) to be false when they are certain that it is the truth. Saffiya (ra), one of the wives of the Prophet (saw) was the daughter of the chiefs of the one of the Jewish tribes in Madinah. She tells us of a time one day when one of her uncles visited her father, and the two of them spoke of the man who had come to Yathrib claiming to be a messenger from

Allah (swt). Saffiya's father was very knowledgeable in the Tawrah and the prophecies it contained about the coming of the final messenger from Allah (swt). So when her uncle asked him if the Prophet (saw) was truly the messenger that they had been waiting for, he swore by Allah (swt) that he (saw) was indeed the messenger. Her uncle then asked her father what he was planning to do, and her father replied that he would oppose the Prophet (saw) in every way. This is how they *kadhab* the signs of Allah (swt). They knew that the Prophet (saw) was truly the messenger of Allah (swt) but they chose to reject him (saw). The words "signs of Allah" in this ayah could refer to the ayahs of Quran which even the Jews knew that no human could reproduce, or it could refer to the verses of the Tawrah which described the messenger and how the Prophet (saw) matched those descriptions perfectly. Both of these are signs that Allah (swt) gave the Jews so that they can know for certain that the Prophet (saw) was indeed His (swt)'s messenger to them, as he (saw) was for all mankind.

How evil are a people who when a messenger comes to them from their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master, they would then reject that messenger? Allah (swt) created us. We were nothing and then He (swt) brought them into existence. Then Allah (swt) provided for us and raised us into adulthood. For every moment of our existence, we are in need of Allah (swt). So after all this that Allah (swt) has done for us, think how ungrateful and evil we would be if Allah (swt) sent us a messenger and we turn away from that messenger. That is what these Jews have done. When Allah (swt) tried to communicate with them, they turned away from Him (swt). Allah (swt) has sent them a message and a guidance and they ignored and abandoned it. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

The question can also be asked as to why the Jews decided to oppose the Prophet (saw). Why did they reject him (saw) when they were certain that he (saw) was indeed sent to them from Allah (swt)? The answer to this question is arrogance and pride. Ibrahim (as) had two sons in Ismail (as) and Ishaq (as). As we know the Arabs were the descendants of Ismail (as) and the Jews were from the children of Ishaq (as). Even though they had the same father, many Jews had looked down upon the Arabs and thought themselves to be better than the Arabs. They believed they were the chosen people since Allah (swt) had sent them so many prophets and Allah (swt) had chosen them to carry this dawah to mankind. So they were expecting and waiting for the messenger to come from their own people, from among the descendants of Ishaq (as). So when Allah (swt) sent the final messenger to mankind who had the greatest miracle from among the Arabs, the Jews simply could not accept it. Even though Islam was not only for the Arabs and the Prophet (saw) called them to this *Deen* as well, they simply could not accept the fact that the messenger would come from a community other than their own. So their jealousy and hatred for the Prophet (saw) made them reject him (saw) even when they were certain that he (saw) was indeed from Allah (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this is that we must never allow any personal jealousy or hatred that we might have for anyone distract us in our quest for guidance from Allah (swt). Shaitan would like nothing more than to see as many people as possible go astray from the worship and servitude of their Creator. So he will use every trick that distracts people from this goal. He knows that if you were to see this Message clearly you would believe in it because it has such convincing arguments and such undeniable proofs, so he will try his best to take your attention away from this Message. He will take your eyes away from this Message and onto the messenger. He will make you find some fault with the messenger, some reason why you do not like him. Thus he will make you reject this Message because of some fault he made you to find with the messenger. In the end, you will be the loser before Allah (swt) because you have turned away from the Message that your Creator and your Sustainer sent you. May Allah (swt) save us from that! So always remember that you are involved in this dawah for the sake of Allah (swt), do not allow any grievances that you have with any other Muslims distract from your goal which is to please your *Rabb* in every way that you can.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us He (swt) will not guide the people who are *Dhalimoon*. *Dhulm* means any kind of oppression or injustice, but the worst kind of injustice is to turn away from one's Creator and one's Master. Could there be anything worse than to turn away from the who created you and who is keeping you alive at every moment of your life? Could such a people expect anything good from Allah (swt)? The greatest of gifts that Allah (swt) give any human is guidance. Can people who do such evil ever hope to be guided by Allah (swt)? If Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) still could have guided them despite their insolence and their evil. But since they chose to reject the signs of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) lets them go astray. Allah (swt) will not guide those who do not seek guidance from Him (swt). Allah (swt) will not guide those who do evil and injustice. They made a choice to buy misguidance with guidance and Allah (swt) will allow them to make that purchase. Even though Allah (swt) could have guided them, He (swt) will let them go astray because they preferred the life of this world to the next and because they chose to serve themselves rather than to serve their Creator.

The lesson that we can take from this final part of the ayah is that if we want Allah (swt) to put the light of guidance in our hearts, then we must try our best to stay away from all kinds of *Dhulm*. Any kind of action that Allah (swt) has made forbidden would be action of *Dhulm*. Purposely failing to do any of the actions that Allah (swt) has made obligatory would be *Dhulm*. Thinking that anything can bring benefit or harm except Allah (swt) would also be a sign of *Dhulm*. Calling on anyone besides Allah (swt) in our time of need would be *Dhulm*. Obeying or following the law of anyone except Allah (swt) would be *Dhulm*. So if we want Allah (swt) to guide us, to keep us on the straight path that leads to His (swt)'s pleasure and the garden, then we must try our best stay from all the actions that are *Dhulm* because Allah (swt) will not guide a people who are *Dhalimoon*.

قُلْ يَتَّيِبُهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا
الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١﴾

7. Say “O you have become Jews, if you claim that only you are the *awliyya* of Allah to the exclusion of all mankind, then wish for death, if you are indeed truthful.

In this ayah we see a command that Allah (swt) gives to the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to call out to all the Jews and tell them the following statement. Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to tell the Jews that if they claim to be *awliyya* of Allah (swt) to the exclusion of all mankind, then they should wish for death. The word *awliyya* is the plural of the word *wali* which means “close friend” and it also gives meaning of “supporter” and “protector”.

First we should notice in this ayah that Allah (swt) does not address the Jews directly but Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to address them. This should tell us right away that they are indeed not the close friends of Allah (swt) since He (swt) will not even speak to them in Quran directly. We know that when Allah (swt) wants to speak to the believers or even to mankind, He (swt) would address them directly. But in this ayah Allah (swt) does not address the Jews directly but He (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to speak with them. This fact shows us that Allah (swt) is angry and displeased with these people, may Allah (swt) save us from ever being in His anger or wrath.

Mawdudi also asks us to note that Allah (swt) does not call them “Jews” but rather He (swt) calls them “O you have become Jews”. This is because the religion of Musa (as) was Islam and the Bani Israil were originally Muslims. It was only after the time of Musa (as) that their priests and rabbis changed the books and introduced all of these corrupt and racist teachings into their beliefs. It was then that they became Jews.

Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to declare to the Jews that if they were indeed the *awliyya* of Allah (swt) to the exclusion of all mankind then they should wish for death. In other words if they were really the close friends of Allah (swt) and He (swt) was their protector then they should pray to Allah (swt) for them to die now. Someone who is a close friend of Allah (swt) and who is being supported and helped by Allah (swt) should have nothing to fear in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) will protect His (swt)’s *awliyya* on the Day of Judgment and in the life after it. So Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to tell the Jews that if they were truly the *awliyya* of Allah (swt) as they claimed to be then they should wish for death.

Allah (swt) knows that the Jews would never make such a wish. There was no one who was more attached to the life of this world and who feared death more than these people. This was because they had done so much evil and they had caused so much corruption, and they had

such arrogance and pride that they even thought themselves to be better than Allah (swt)! The last thing they would want is to leave this world that they had built up for themselves and be faced with Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment.

Even though the Jews would never make such a wish, this ayah does expose to the Muslims the kind of people that they really are. In the final portion of the ayah Allah (swt) says "If you are truthful". This means that if there was any truth or any honesty in any of the boastful claims that these Jews were making about being the *awliyya* of Allah (swt) then they would have accepted this challenge from the Prophet (saw) and wished for death. With all of the suffering and hardships in this world, who would not prefer to the paradise of Allah (swt) to the life of this world? If someone was really the *awliyya* of Allah (swt) and they were guaranteed paradise, why would they not wish to leave this world and go to paradise? But because they never made such a wish, it shows that they are not a truthful people. All that they said about being the close friends of Allah (swt) was merely lies that they made up in their minds so that they can be exempt from having to submit to the Law of Allah (swt) and also so that they can look down upon the rest of mankind.

So one of the reasons why they claimed to be the *awliyya* of Allah (swt) when in reality they were not was because they could be excused from following the Law of Allah (swt). They were so full of pride with themselves at having been the chosen people of Allah (swt) that they believed that they no longer needed to abide by the Law of Allah (swt). They did not want to curb their desires and their greed in order to submit to Allah (swt). So they claimed to be the close friends of Allah (swt) and they said that no matter what they did, they would never have to suffer any consequences from Allah (swt) for their actions. They said that the worst case scenario was that the Fire would only touch them for a few days. By saying such words, they hoped to place themselves above the Law of Allah (swt).

The other reason why they claimed to be *awliyya* of Allah (swt) when in reality they were not was because they could look down upon the rest of mankind. If a certain group of people were indeed the close friends of Allah (swt) from among all of mankind then they really would be the best of all mankind because they were so close to the Creator and Master of the universe. So in order to gain this status for themselves over mankind these Jews claimed to be the *awliyya* of Allah. So in their books which they wrote themselves, they said all of the rest of mankind was *goyim*. They considered themselves to be so superior to the other races and tribes of the world that they did not even consider others to be human. As we mentioned, this gave them the free reign to exploit and cheat other people as much as they pleased. They could give out loans to non-Jews and charge exuberant amounts of interest on those loans, they could cheat non-Jews in business transactions, and they can start fights and conflicts between the non-Jews so that they could arm and make a profit from their wars. This was why they claimed for themselves the title of *awliyya* of Allah (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this example of the Jews and how they claimed to be awliyya of Allah (swt) is that we must never claim such a thing for ourselves. We know the prophets were definitely the awliyya of Allah (swt), as were many of the close Sahabah of the Prophet (saw) like Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (raa). But how could anyone after the time of the Prophet (saw) claim that they are a wali of Allah (swt)? These Sahabah were among those whom the Prophet (saw) himself promised them paradise, and that knowledge could only have come from Allah (swt), but after the time of the Prophet (saw) how can anyone know if they are a close friend of Allah (swt) since Allah (swt) has not communicated with them? We should all wish to be awliyya of Allah (swt) and we should all strive hard to earn that position with Allah (swt), but we should never believe for sure that we have reached that station. If we start thinking that we are definitely the awliyya of Allah (swt), then we would start becoming like these Jews. We would become lazy in following the Law of Allah (swt) because we would think that we are already His (swt)'s favorites and we might even start looking down on others. This is how Shaitan tricks us by giving us an aura of self righteousness by making us think that we are the best and that Allah (swt) is pleased with us. We must learn from the example of these Jews and never claim such a position for ourselves. Only Allah (swt) Knows who His (swt)'s close friends are, and we only ask Allah (swt) to be joined in that company.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must never wish for death. None of us can be certain whether or not Allah (swt) has accepted our deeds, and so none of us can be certain of whether it is reward or punishment that awaits us on the Day of Judgment. We know from others ayahs of the Quran that only those who have believed and whose scale of good deeds is heavy will be saved on that Day. So we should always hope that we would be alive for a little while longer so that we can accumulate more good deeds and make Tawbah for all of the evil deeds that we have done. At the same time we must not hate death either. Because if we say hate death, we are saying that we hate to meet with Allah (swt) and who among us would not love to meet our *Rabb*. Nor should we ever keep the false hope that death is a long way away for us. Even those of us who are still in our youth, we should always keep in our minds the possibility that the angel of death may visit us today. Insha Allah this should make us rush to do the good deeds and it will prevent us from doing evil deeds and thinking that we can ask forgiveness for those sins later on. Instead of wishing for death or wishing for life, we should make the prayer that the Prophet (saw) taught us where he (saw) said "None of you should wish for death because of some harm which has befallen him. If he has got to do something, he should say, 'O Allah, make me live if life is best for me and make me die if death is best for me". This hadith clearly teaches us that wish for neither life nor death. We should hope instead for the contentment of Allah (swt) with our actions. Although we must always remember death and fear that it may reach us at any moment, we should never yearn for it. Because one more moment in the life of this world is one more moment to do an action that may be pleasing to our *Rabb*.

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

9. And never will they wish for it because of what their hands have sent forth, and Allah Knows well the *Dhalimoon*.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how these Jews would never wish for death, not even for one moment. The reason is because of what their hands have sent forth. Most of the actions that we do are done with our hands. When our hands do an action that is evil, an action that is forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt), it is a sin that is created by our hands. That sin is then sent forth from the present into the Day of Judgment. If we do not make Tawbah for that sin, or if Allah (swt) decides not to forgive it, then we will find that sin waiting for us on the Day of Judgment. That sin is what our hands have sent forth from the life of this world into the Hereafter.

So Allah (swt) is telling us in this ayah that these Jews will never wish for death because of the sins they have committed with their hands. Only Allah (swt) knows all of the sins that they have done with their hands. We do not know all of them, but we do that they have committed so much evil with their hands that they are scared of death. They are terrified of having to meet Allah (swt) with such sins. That is why they love the life of this world and would like to stay in it for as long as possible. Even if they claim that they are the awliyya of Allah (swt), they will never for one second wish for death.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) Knows well the *Dhalimoon*. No matter how many sins they may have committed, not even the smallest sin escapes the Knowledge of Allah (swt). Every single wrong action that you do with the hands that Allah (swt) has given you is an action of *Dhulm* for which you will have to answer for in front of your Rabb. So the fact that Allah (swt) Knows each and every one of the evil actions that they have done shows that they will definitely be held accountable for all their evil. Even if they claim to be the awliyya of Allah (swt), even if they claim to have a guarantee of paradise, they will never wish for death because they knew these statements are false. They know all of the evil that their hands have sent forth, they know that all of it is *Dhulm* because all of it is in flagrant disobedience to the Law of Allah (swt). From the interest that they took from the poor with their hands to the wives of the neighbors whom they approached with their hands, it was all *Dhulm* because it was in disobedience to their Creator and Sustainer. They know it was *Dhulm* and they know that Allah (swt) knows what they did. So no matter how much they claim to be the awliyya of Allah (swt) they will never wish for death. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like them!

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves once again how sins in the life of this world can make us hate death and so make us hate meeting with Allah (swt). Once we start hating death and start hating the meeting with Allah (swt), we will push that inevitable event to the back of our minds. We will think about it less and less, and we will think about the life

of this world more and more. This will in turn only lead to us committing more sins because we would become more heedless of the consequences of those sins in the Hereafter. So as much as possible we should try to avoid doing the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). We should always keep death and the Day of Judgment at the forefront of our minds, so whenever we feel tempted to do something forbidden or we become lazy in doing our obligations we would be motivated to serve Allah (swt) despite our desires and feelings. That is the test that Allah (swt) has given us in the life of this world, to see if we can control our desires and emotion in order to follow the Law of our Creator and Sustainer. However if we ever find ourselves having committed a sin, we must bring death and the Day of Judgment to the forefront of our minds even more, because it would hasten us to make Tawbah to Allah (swt). We must remind ourselves how Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and if we only find it within ourselves to make a sincere Tawbah to Him (swt) with a resolve never to return to that sin, then we should have a hope that Allah (swt) will forgive us. May Allah (swt) forgive us and forgive all of our brothers and sisters! May Allah (swt) prevent us from ever becoming like a people who hate death and who flee from it because of the great sins that their hands have done!

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ
الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9. Say “Surely the death, the one that you are running from it, Fa Surely it will overtake you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen. Fa He will inform you of all that you have been doing”.

We saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) described beautifully to us the relationship between the Jews to their Tawrah as a being similar to the relationship of the donkey to a pile of heavy books that it is carrying. They simply have this knowledge but it does not benefit them at all, it does not guide them to Allah (swt). They did not follow the commandments that it gave, they did not carry it to others and most importantly when the messenger came that it was describing they rejected him when they knew he was a true messenger from Allah (swt). One of the ways in which they justified their rejection of the Prophet (saw) was to say he (saw) was not from their people, and their people were the chosen people and they were *awliyya* of Allah (swt). Then Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to tell them that if they really were awliyya of mankind to exclusion of all other people, then they should wish for death. Allah (swt) then told us how they would never wish for death because of all of the sins that their hands have sent forth, and then Allah (swt) calls them Dhalimoon on account of all the evil they had done and He (swt) knows well such evil

In this ayah we see another statement that Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say to the Jews. Once again we see that Allah (swt) does not address the Jews directly, and this shows the anger that He (swt) has for such people. Can you imagine how unfortunate a people are if the anger of Allah (swt) is on them and He (swt) would not even speak to them directly? Can you imagine the extent of the evil they must have done to deserve for the One Who is the Most Merciful and the Most Kind to treat them in such a way?

The first thing that Allah (swt) tells them is "Surely the death". The word *inna* means so much certainty that there is no word in the English language that gives the means of such certainty. Also notice how Allah (swt) uses the definite article "al" to refer to death so that it becomes "The Death", this brings our attention to the importance of this event and its certainty. Then Allah (swt) connects the words *inna* with the word "The Death" to emphasize for even more us the certainty of this event. There is nothing more certain than death, every single one of us must die. It is very important that we remember death because one of the many reasons for disobedience to the Law of Allah (swt) is an attachment to the life of this world. The Prophet (saw) called death "the destroyer of pleasures", and that is how we must think about it well. All of the pleasures of this life that keep us distracted from our worship and servitude of Allah (swt) will come to an end with our death, so it is very important that we always keep the certainty of this event in the forefront of our minds. That is why Allah (swt) begins this ayah by stating death and putting both the definite article and the word *inna* in front of it to show its importance and to emphasize its certainty.

After bringing our attention to the certainty of death, Allah (swt) describes it as "the one that you are running from it". This is the attitude that many people have towards death including the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw). Not only had they committed sins but they wanted to persist in their sins. They did not want to make Tawbah and return to serving and worshipping Allah (swt), they preferred to serve themselves rather than to serve their Creator. As long as they lived in the life of this world, they knew they could do that. They knew that it was only after death that they had to meet Allah (swt) and face the consequences of their actions. So they tried to avoid death to the best of their ability. First they convinced themselves that death was a long way away, and then they did their best to avoid the circumstances where death could happen. This means that they never fought in battles unless they were well protected, they did their best to remain healthy and avoid all kinds of diseases, and they made sure to accumulate more and more wealth so that they had the best foods and the best medicines. In the previous ayah when Allah (swt) called on them to wish for death if they are truthful in their claim to be the awliyya of Allah (swt), they avoided making such a wish at all costs. Their intention through all these efforts was to avoid meeting Allah (swt) and to continue in their life of sin. So Allah (swt) describes them as "running away from death".

Then we see the word Fa which we know is used as a literary tool of consequence similar to the English words “so”, “therefore” or “because”. Thus the meaning that Allah (swt) is giving in this portion of the ayah is “because you are running away from death, it will surely catch up to you”. This means that because they were trying to out run death, that is why it will catch up to them and overtake them. This is different from the true believer who does not try to run away from death but is always prepared and ready for death. When death comes to the believer, it does not overtake him because it was something that he was expecting. Whereas for these people who do not live their life as they were created to, in servitude to Allah (swt), when death comes to them it comes to them suddenly, just as a like a gazelle is suddenly overtaken by the lion that was stalking it. So the meaning that we see in this portion of the ayah is because these people were trying to run away from death, by not making preparations for it with good deeds and avoiding it as much as possible, it will overtake them suddenly when they do not expect it. That will only make their deaths all the more tragic and all the more painful for them. May Allah (swt) always make us prepare for death and save us from such a fate!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says “then you will return to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen”. Of course this refers to Allah (swt), Who has knowledge of every single thing, including what is hidden from the eyes and ears of men. Notice once again that whenever Allah (swt) refers to one of His (swt)’s attributes, He (swt) uses the perfect attribute for that is best for that situation. So here Allah (swt) does not say that they will be returning to the Forgiving and the Merciful, but He (swt) says they will be returning to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen. The One Who has knowledge of every single thing, including the sins they did in private and the sins they did in public. Can you imagine a prospect more frightening than that? Than to return to the One Who Knows all of the evil that you did? We ask Allah (swt) to save us from the evil actions that our hands send forth to the Day of Judgment. We ask Allah (swt) that when we return to Him (swt), we return to Him (swt) with actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). We ask Allah (swt) to always make us remember that He (swt) Knows every single action that we do in private or in public.

In the final portion of the ayah we see the word Fa once again, then we see Allah (swt) say “He will inform you of all that you have been doing”. The fact that Allah (swt) will inform them of everything that they have done is a consequence of their returning to Him (swt) and a consequence of Him (swt) being the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen. They will be standing before Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Knows every single thing that they did. Then Allah (swt) will inform them of what they did, He (swt) will inform them of all of their evil actions.

Notice in this ayah how the verb *thaalamoona* which means “you are doing” is in the present tense. Allah (swt) started this ayah in the present tense to describe how they were running away from death. Then Allah (swt) shifted to the future tense to tell them how death will certainly overtake them, how they will return to Him (swt) and how He (swt) will inform them of all

that they have been doing. When Allah (swt) mentions their actions with the verb *thaalamoona* He (swt) brings the tense back to the present tense, thus Allah (swt) makes a connection between the events of the future where He (swt) is informing them of their deeds to the events of the present where they are currently doing those deeds. So Allah (swt) is telling them that it is these deeds that they are doing today that He (swt) is going to inform them about on the Day of Judgment. So Allah (swt) is reminding us that it is our actions today, in the here and now, that we will be informed about on the Day of Judgment. Very soon, you will be standing before Allah (swt) and He (swt) will inform of what you are doing at this exact moment. Are you doing an action that is pleasing to Allah (swt) or an action that is displeasing to Him (swt)? So this is how the mindset of the believer should always be like, he must think that the action he is doing at this very moment is an action that Allah (swt) will tell him about on the Day of Judgment. Insha Allah then we will make the most moments of our lives into moments where we are doing actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ
 ٱللَّهِ وَذَرُوا ٱلْبَيْعَ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

10. O you who believe, when the Adhan is sounded for Salah on the Day of Al-Jummaḥ, then rush to the remembrance of Allah and leave all business, that is much better for you if you but knew.

We saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) showed us what a great blessing it was for our community to have the Prophet (saw) be sent to us, and how he (saw) purified us and taught us the Quran and the Sunnah. We then saw Allah (swt) give us a warning by citing the example of the Jews. Allah (swt) told us to live by the Quran and to hold fast to the Sunnah, otherwise we risked becoming like these people. They were a people who had the revelation from Allah (swt) also but since they did not practice it they became like a donkey carrying heavy books, having the knowledge but not benefiting from it at all. The result of their abandoning the revelation that Allah (swt) sent them is that they became a people who were attached to the life of this world and they forgot about death. Because of this they became a people whose hands committed many sins. Allah (swt) promised them that He (swt) would inform them of all that they have done when the death from which they were running overtakes them. In their example, there is a lesson for us not to become too involved in the life of this world to the extent that it distracts us from the remembrance of Allah (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) brings a specific example of a time when every believer has to choose between Allah (swt) and the life of this world. It is a choice that we all have to make every week of our lives.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by calling out to the believers. As we have mentioned when Allah (swt) begins an ayah in this way, it means that we have to pay extremely close attention to what is being said because Allah (swt) is specifically addressing the community of believers from among all mankind. This is not the imam of the masjid that is saying these words, nor is it your parents or your spouse, it is your Creator and your Sustainer. Do these words then not deserve your complete and undivided attention?

Allah (swt) begins the ayah with the words *idh* which as we know means “when”. So Allah (swt) is bringing our attention to a specific point in time. That point of time is when “the adhan is sounded for the Salah on the day of Jummah”. The adhan as we know is the call to prayer, it is what invites Muslims to come to the Salah. In this ayah Allah (swt) specifically mentions Salah on the day of Jummah. Although the ayah does not specify which of the five daily prayers it is referring to, most likely it means the adhan for Salatul Jummah which is the congregational prayer that replaces Salatul Dhuhr on Friday. The scholars agree that it is an obligation for all male Muslims to make this prayer in congregation provided that they are not sick or traveling.

Once Allah (swt) has established the point of time, He (swt) tells us what to do when that time comes. Allah (swt) tells us that when the adhan is called, we should rush to the remembrance of Allah (swt). The scholars say that the word “rush” here does not mean we have to run to the masjid because we know from the hadith that the Prophet (saw) has commanded us to come to the prayer with calmness and tranquility. The word “rush” here refers to the state of our hearts when the adhan is made. We should be determined that we have to go the salah. Our hearts should be fixed on attending the salah and not be distracted by anything else.

Also note that Allah (swt) refers to Salatul Jummah as the “remembrance of Allah”. Although we should always remember Allah (swt) in any salah, in Salatul Jummah there is something extra which is the Khutbah that the Imam gives. During the Khutbah, the Imam reminds the believers to remember Allah (swt) and remember their duty to worship and serve Allah (swt). We as human beings have been created as forgetful creatures and we need constant reminders. If we do not have these reminders then we fall into a state of heedlessness where all we see is the world in front of us and we forget Allah (swt) and our duty towards Him (swt). That is why the Khutbah is so important, it is to remind all believers that they are on this earth for a purpose. It is to remind them that there is a reality to this universe that they cannot forget, and that is they exist to worship and serve Allah (swt) and one day soon they will stand before Him (swt) and He (swt) will judge them on how well they did in their duty towards Him (swt). We will then be rewarded or punished based on our actions in the life of this world. So in addition to the remembrances of Allah (swt) that we get from the Salah we must also be reminded of our Creator and Sustainer and our duty towards Him (swt) from the Khutbah.

The Prophet (saw) himself gave the Khutbah when Allah (swt) blessed this Ummah by having him (saw) with us. When the Prophet (saw) passed away, may Allah (swt) raise him (saw)

to the highest station in paradise, the Khulafah after him (saw) would give the Khutbah. So Abu Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra) would both give Khutbahs for this Ummah. When the Islamic State expanded and it became difficult for all of the Muslims to come to the capital to hear the Khutbah, the Khalifah would appoint an imam for the masjid in a particular province of the State. So that person that the Khalifah appoints would be the imam for that part of the State. The Hanafi scholars even maintain that Salat al Jummah can only be conducted by the Khalifah or by someone he designates, so in their school if there is no Khalifah there can be no Salat al Jummah. This then is yet another example of a Law of Allah (swt) that cannot be implemented without the Islamic State. It shows how it is impossible in Islam to separate the spiritual and political spheres. Even Salat al Jummah needs for Khalifah to be present.

Furthermore even during the Khutbahs, the Imams would often speak about the current affairs that the Muslims are facing. They would bring the attention of the Muslims to the issues and problems that were affecting the community. Sadly in most of the Khutbahs given today, not only have the Khatibs not been appointed by the Khalifah but they also rarely mention the real problems the Ummah is facing. They never bring the attention of the Muslims to the most dire issues that we are facing such as the fact that we are living without a State. So we pray to Allah (swt) to return Salat al Jummah to the way it was in the time of the Prophet (saw) and the righteous Khulafah.

Mawdudi notes that in this ayah is yet another evidence that the Sunnah can be source of legislation that is obligatory and binding just like the Quran. Because the hukum of Jummah Salah is not established in this ayah. When this ayah was revealed, the hukum already existed from an order that the Prophet (saw) gave to establish Jummah Salah. This ayah only comes to confirm that hukum and remind Muslims that when the adhan is called, then they must rush to the Salah. So this ayah is not bringing a new law to the people, it is merely confirming a law that Allah (swt) had already established through the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw).

In the next portion of this ayah Allah (swt) commands the believers "to leave all business". This means that we should not allow any kind of trade or commerce or worldly activity to distract us from attending Salat al Jummah. It is an obligation for us to leave and abandon all the affairs of the life of this world when the time of Salat al Jummah comes. If you are a male Muslim, and unless you are sick or traveling, then you have no excuse before Allah (swt) if you do not go to Salat al Jummah when the time comes. Although Allah (swt) mentions only "business" in this ayah, the scholars have used the usuli principle of Qiyas to say that it extends to all actions that a Muslim can take. So whatever you are doing, whether it is sleeping or studying or working, you must leave all of that and go to Salat al Jummah.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) says that is much better for you if only you knew. Even if you were in the middle of a business deal that could have made you millions, it is still better for you to go leave that transaction and go to Salat al Jummah. This is because if you

do not go then you have failed in the obligation that Allah (swt) has given you. To purposely fail to do an action that Allah (swt) has made obligatory on you has two consequences. One is that you will miss the reward from Allah (swt) that you could have gotten if you had done that action. The second is that you make yourself liable for punishment from Allah (swt) for disobeying His (swt)'s command. If we have been reading the Quran we know the extent to which Allah (swt) can reward the obedient in paradise and the extent to which He (swt) can punish the disobedient in hellfire. Is any business transaction worth even missing one second in paradise or spending one second in hellfire? That is why Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that to go to Salatul Jummah is much better for us than anything this world has to offer. May Allah (swt) allow that for all our Muslim brothers in the world!

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا
 اللَّهُ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. So when the Salah is completed, then disperse the land, and seek (for yourself) from the *Fadl* of Allah, and remember Allah much so that you may be successful.

In the previous ayah we saw that Allah (swt) gave a command for the believers that when the call is made for Salatul Jummah they should go to the Salah with determination and leave everything else that they were doing. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that when the Salah is completed, that means when the Khutbah is over and the Imam has completed the Salams, then we should go out in the land and seek for ourselves from the *Fadl* of Allah (swt). The linguistic meaning of the word *Fadl* means “bounty”, and Allah (swt) used this word previously to refer to the Bounty of Islam that He (swt) has granted for this Ummah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) uses this word to refer to the provisions of the earth that He (swt) grants for all mankind. It is reported that when Iran ibn Malik (ra) completed the Salatul Jummah he would stand at the entrance of the masjid and say “O Allah, I have responded to your call and performed the Salah that you prescribed for me as an obligation, and now I am going out as you commanded me in search of livelihood. So grant me my livelihood out of our grace and you are the best of giver of sustenance”. So we see from this ayah and this narration that what Allah (swt) means “by dispersing in the land and seeking from the *Fadl* of Allah” means to go out and seek of the provision of Allah (swt) that this earth gives. The way that we seek the provisions of Allah (swt) is through trade where we conduct business or employment where we earn a wage. School could also be an example because it prepares us for employment and prepares to do business. So we see a clear command from Allah (swt) in this ayah for the Muslims that they should not simply stay in the masjid when the Salah is complete, but instead they should go out in the earth and do

business or go to work or school so that they can seek for themselves from the Fadl of Allah (swt).

Notice even the language that Allah (swt) uses when He (swt) gives us this command. He (swt) did not say "go and take your Fadl" but He (swt) tells us that you have to disperse through the land and seek of this Fadl. This implies that we have to work hard to earn our sustenance. We have to go out into the world and look for it. Just like the birds that leave their nests in the morning with their stomachs empty, they go out in the world and seek of Allah (swt)'s provision. They work the whole day looking for their food until finally when they come back to their nests in the evening, their stomachs are full. So similarly when we seek a livelihood through halal means, we have to consider it as part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt). We have to work hard in this world to seek the sustenance from Allah (swt). Only in paradise can we simply relax and have all of our food and provisions come to us with no effort. In the life of this world, Allah (swt) has mandated that all of us must work hard to seek His (swt)'s Fadl.. This is true for the animals, it is true for disbelievers and it is true for the Muslims as well. Although it is Allah (swt) Who provides our sustenance, it is our responsibility to work for it. We cannot sleep the entire day or pray the entire day and expect Allah (swt) to provide us with everything. As this ayah clearly shows, even our working to earn a livelihood is a responsibility that we have before Allah (swt). When we realize this responsibility and work to seek our provisions, then our work also becomes a way through which we serve our Creator.

When it comes to seeking the provisions of this world, we see many Muslims falling into one of two extremes both of which are wrong. For some Muslims all that they can think about is gaining the provisions of this world. They wish to spend all of their time and effort to acquire as much wealth as possible. They forget the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said that we should be in this world as if we are a traveler. A traveler does not seek too many provisions, he only looks for what can sustain him on his journey and what will get him to his destination. Our destination is the paradise of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s pleasure. That is the goal that we must always focus and that is what we must strive to achieve. However bearing that in mind we must also prevent ourselves from becoming like the other extreme of some Muslims who completely renounce everything from this world. They say that to live a life of poverty and hunger is a sign of piety and closeness to Allah (swt). Those Muslims should be reminded of this ayah where Allah (swt) is telling us to go out and seek of the *Fadl* of Allah (swt). So we see that both extremes are wrong. We must not be concerned only with acquiring wealth and the material things of this world to the extent where we forget Allah (swt) and forget our duty to Allah (swt), and at the same time we must not live a life of poverty and renunciation of the world and think that this is having Taqwa. Although our goal and our focus should always be on Allah (swt) and on winning His (swt)'s reward in the Hereafter, we must be aware that Allah (swt) has told us that there is a portion of this earth that is for us and we must work to attain it.

Even though we work to seek the Fadl of Allah (swt), we have to remember however that ultimately Allah (swt) is the Provider of everything that we have. We have to remember that our sustenance has already been written for us even before we were born, how much of food, shelter and clothing that each of us would receive has already been written for us. So we should never think that any of our provisions comes from our own effort. We should not think that anything that we have is because we have worked hard to earn it, rather we should know that everything that we have is only from Allah (swt). Thus when we work we only work because Allah (swt) has commanded us to go forth and seek of His provision. But Allah (swt) is the Provider of what we get not ourselves. Our part is simply to make an effort to seek that provision and try to the best of our ability to do so. Then we let Allah (swt) provide for us if He (swt) so pleases. May Allah (swt) provide the sustenance for all the sincere Muslims who earnestly search for it.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) says “and remember Allah much that you may be successful”. So Allah (swt) is telling us in this ayah that although we must go out in the world and seek of the Fadl of Allah (swt), we must remember Him (swt) at the same time. When our mind is always remembering Allah (swt) it will prevent us from getting distracted by the life of this world. Then even while we are working, even when while we are doing our business, we will be remembering Allah (swt). We will be reminding ourselves of the fact that even this job or this business that we are doing is only part of our servitude to Allah (swt). One of the worst of places that distracts us from Allah (swt) is the marketplace. While we are working or while we are doing some business, our mind can become so focused on completing our task or making the sale that we completely forget about Allah (swt). We might forget that we are only doing that work or that business to earn the pleasure of Allah (swt). We might start to think that the reason why we are working or doing business is to gain wealth. That is why Allah (swt) tells us that while we are working, while we are doing whatever business we are in, we must always remember Allah (swt) much. The reason why Allah (swt) tells us to remember Him (swt) is so that we can be successful. The word “successful” could refer to this worldly life, so it could mean that if we think about Allah (swt) much during our work or our business then He (swt) will bring us success in our work and our business. But most likely it refers to success in the Hereafter. If someone works or does trade without remembering Allah (swt) at all he might start thinking that he is only doing that job or business for himself, only to gain wealth for himself. He might forget that the only reason why he is doing that job is to seek the pleasure of Allah (swt). So if he does that work only with the intention of getting some money and not for the pleasure of Allah (swt), then he will have no reward for that action with Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. However for the one who works with the intention that even his work is part of his worship and servitude to Allah (swt), then even for his work or his business he will be rewarded. That action which many people would consider an action of this worldly life would be an action for which Allah (swt) keeps a reward for him on the Day of Judgment. It might even be that action which tips the Scale of good and bad deeds in

his favor and allows him to enter paradise with the Mercy of Allah (swt). That then would be the real success and it was all possible only because he remembered Allah (swt) during his work or his business and he kept as the intention of that action the pleasure of Allah (swt). So while the people of this world strive hard in their businesses or in their offices or in their farms to gain something of this world, the Muslim strives hard in these places as well. But he not only seeks the Fadl of Allah (swt) from the life of this world but he seeks the pleasure and the great reward of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter as well. How much better then is what the Muslims works for, only because of the intention he kept, only because he remembered Allah (swt).

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا أَنْفَضُوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

12. And when they see some trade or some amusement, they disperse towards it and leave you standing. Say “That which is with Allah is much better than amusement or trade, and Allah is the Best of Providers”.

The scholars of Quran such as Imam Ibn Kathir explain to us that this ayah was revealed about an incident that happened one Friday afternoon while the Prophet (saw) was giving the Khutbah. They say that at the time when this ayah was revealed the prayer was held before the Khutbah and not after the Khutbah like it is done today. So the prayer had already finished and the Prophet (saw) was already giving the Khutbah when everyone in the masjid heard the sound of drums. They knew that this was the sound of the trading caravan belonging to Ibn Khalaf Kalbi because this merchant would always signal the arrival of his large caravan with the beating of drums. Everyone in Madinah was anticipating this caravan because their reserves of food and other provisions were becoming low. Because of their anticipation of this caravan’s arrival and because everyone wanted to be sure they got food and provisions for their family, when they heard the sound of these drums many of the Muslims who were listening to the Khutbah of the Prophet (saw) got up and left the masjid. It is said in the narration that only twelve of the Sahabah remained behind with the Prophet (saw). Everyone else had gone to the trading caravan and they left the Prophet (saw) standing on the mimbar.

So it is this incident that Allah (swt) relates to the Prophet (saw) in this ayah. Allah (swt) brings the attention of the Muslims to how they had left the Prophet (saw) only for some trade and amusement. Scholars say that the word “amusement” here refers to the drums in Kalbi’s caravan. Allah (swt) is then showing the Muslims what a wrong thing they have done in abandoning the Prophet (saw) and the guidance that he (saw) was giving them to Allah (swt) in his Khutbah. They had left such guidance only for trading and some amusement. How terrible was the choice they

made when they decided to abandon the Prophet (saw) only so that they can get some provisions? They earned the displeasure of Allah (swt) only for some material goods of this world. Could there be a worse trade that anyone could make than to sacrifice something eternal which is the contentment of Allah (swt) to something temporary like the fleeting material goods of this world.

Some scholars have tried to give explanations as to why so many Muslims simply left the Prophet (saw) standing on that day. One reason could have been because the Salah was already completed and these Muslims did not view the Khutbah as an obligation. Another reason could have been because many people in Madinah at that time were in desperate need of food and provisions for their family. Some of these people may have been afraid that what they needed from the caravan may have been sold out by the time the Khutbah ended. These are both probable explanations as to why that generation of Muslims, which was the best generation, left the Prophet (saw) standing on that day.

For us however, the lesson that we can take from this part ayah and the behavior of the Muslims is that it shows how the life of this world can distract people from the remembrance of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has warned us about how the life of this world has been made sweet and alluring, and how we should beware of it. The Muslims who were listening to the Khutbah of the Prophet (saw) on that day were from the best generation and they saw the Prophet (saw) with their own eyes and heard him (saw) with their own ears. Still they decided to leave him (saw) and go after the material objects of this world when they heard it call to them with drums. This shows that the lure of this world is so strong that it can sometimes takeover even in the best of people. So we have to be very careful when we think about the material things of this world, especially when we consider the extremely materialistic culture that most of us live in today. We must never allow these material things to distract us from Allah (swt) and the purpose for which Allah (swt) created us. We must always remind ourselves that we as Muslims work and seek a livelihood as part of our worship and servitude of Allah (swt) and not because we are going after the material things of the world.

In the next part of the ayah we see that once again Allah (swt) gives a command to the Prophet (saw) to "say". This time the Prophet (saw) is commanded to say that which is with Allah (swt) is better than amusement and trade. What is with Allah (swt) is the reward that He (swt) has prepared for those of His (swt)'s righteous servants. That reward is much better than any trade of amusement that this world has to offer. Notice also that Allah (swt) uses the word *ma* which includes all of the different kinds of reward that He (swt) kept reserved for the righteous Muslims. There are so many different kinds of rewards that Allah (swt) can give in the Hereafter. For example one reward is one is to be saved from the punishment in the grave and one reward is to be saved from the horrors of the Last Day, and one is to be saved from the hellfire. We seek refuge in Allah (swt) from all of these and we ask that He (swt) saves us from them! The next

reward that Allah (swt) can give is that He (swt) can cover and forgive our sins, and not allow the rest of mankind to see the sins that we did in private. Finally Allah (swt) can permit us to enter the garden and He (swt) can let us know that He (swt) is pleased with us. Is there any trade of amusement that this world has to offer which is better than this?

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again that He (swt) is the Best of Providers. Allah (swt) is the Provider of every single thing that we have. Every drop of water we drink, every morsel of food that we eat, every breath of air that we take, every garment of cloth that we wear, every roof that protects our heads and walls that keep us safe. All of these different forms of sustenance come only from Allah (swt). This fact alone should remind us that it is not worth to sacrifice our Hereafter because of the things of this world. All of the sustenance that we have is already provided for by Allah (swt), so why should we violate the Law of Allah (swt) to attain the things of this world when it is Allah (swt) who provides us with everything that we have? May Allah (swt) always provide for everyone in this Ummah everything that they need! May Allah (swt) always keep our focus on Him (swt) and the Hereafter and not on the temporary and fleeting things of this world!