

Fifth Speech: Tawhid And Denial Of Class System

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَا أَنْخَدَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ ۝ إِذَا لَذَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ

وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۝ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him]. (Qur'an, 23:91)

If we look at Tawhid as a faith that inspires action and puts responsibilities on us, then surely, this belief will put a series of duties and responsibilities on our shoulders. And we stated that we should understand these duties and responsibilities. However, these responsibilities are not specific to a man's individual life; they are more concerned with the communal life in a society and economics. When Tawhid reaches a society, the first thing it does is, it molds the society to this faith. Once this task is accomplished, then comes the monotheistic person's individual responsibilities.

Nonetheless, we will have to understand and know these responsibilities. We take this collection of responsibilities as a treaty on Tawhid. God willing, it behooves on us to recognize these responsibilities to live a monotheistic life. The first responsibility was to serve and obey only God. We discussed it in reference to a couple of verses. Today we will talk about the second responsibility the monotheistic faith places on a monotheist. We will discuss it under the topic of "tawhid and negation of class difference in a society".

We will go into more detail on denial of class difference in a society later. In summary, the monotheistic society as you understand it is a class-free society. It is a society in which different groups of people are not detached from each other as far as rights and privileges go. All men and women live with equal rights. Everyone lives and moves around on the same path with equal means, opportunities and rights. This is a society that the monotheistic faith brings to our vision from “class difference in a society” point of view.

Class System

When we look at history, we find the scourge of class system perpetually present in societies not only in undeveloped tribal societies in far flung areas but also in lands that are the mothers of civilized world. Incidentally, we find such lands to be the worst offenders having the ugliest class system on the pages of history. Class difference is truly a big cruelty in history and a huge blemish on the face of human history. What is meant by class difference? It means that all people living in a society are not equal. Some are forced to have nothing; suffer hardships; serve the other class; and not complain about the deprivation and suffering. The other group has everything; they enjoy luxuries of life; take advantage of all facilities and no one should object. The best example is India. As you know India is the cradle of Aryan civilization and beginning of Aryans' city living. The formation of a nation began in India. It is reported that Aryans came from the North such as Siberia. When they arrived in this area, one group went to India and the other went to Iran. Those who lived in India became civilized faster than the group in Iran.

Even though India is one of the cradles of civilization if not the cradle, yet look at the caste differences. They believed in four major castes; one below the other and hundreds in between. You can find details in books on history of religions. If you enjoy this sort of stuff, do research and ponder; then compare with Tawhid and Qur'an. The four major castes were Brahmins – civilized and priestly in the top tier of the society. The second caste was Kshatriyas – the princes and soldiers. These two castes had their differences and struggles. Initially the princes had the higher rank and priests were lower. Later, there were some turf wars and the Brahmins succeeded in capturing the top spot and that put the princes and soldiers in the second rank.

Then came the Vaishyas – the farmers, skilled labor and merchants. The first two castes did not do any work for the society. What did a Brahmin do other than mumbling some verses and moving around his hands? What did the princes and landowners do other than increasing their land holdings and wealth and acquiring a little more influence for their activities? The artisans and farmers did all the work for this vast land. They were the third caste. The fourth class was the ordinary people – they were the shopkeepers and those involved in odd jobs. There was another caste that was not Aryan. The first four (the Aryans) used to call them the fifth caste. Being non-Aryans, they were untouchables. What I am relating belongs to history; however, this history is perpetual and is still there.

What I stated before you, continued in India in full force. Perhaps, those who have studied India know

that India's deceased leader, Gandhi, eliminated the untouchables caste while questioning its merit. India's former Prime Minister¹ and his daughter, Indira Gandhi – the current Prime Minister² – belong to the Brahmin family. Nehru's father Pandit Nehru was a Brahmin. Nehru himself was non-religious and did not like to be called Brahmin or Pandit. In any case, what I am trying to say is that this is not ancient history. Even fourteen hundred or thirteen hundred some years after the rising of monotheistic sun, the class difference still exists in India, the cradle of human civilization.

Godly Nature

Now I want to explain the class difference in a society. There were four classes and according to David Noss³ who wrote history of religions, there were dozens, rather hundreds of smaller classes in between the four major ones. Two people from two different classes could not marry each other; could not talk to each other or shake hands with each other; could not sit together or walk together or make friends with each other; and on and on. They were separated from each other by an iron wall. Why should they be isolated from each other? What does a Brahmin have that I, a peasant, do not have; or I, a small shopkeeper, do not have? Or what about that big soldier? What distinction does he have that I, an ordinary person, do not have?

If such a question arose, do you know what their answer was? Don't talk rubbish? It is by nature that you have been created in two different groups. It has nothing to do with the law or the society's norms. Both of you have been created in two different ways because when the big god, Brahma, wanted to create humans, he created Brahmin from his head; the landlords, soldiers and princes from his hands; peasants from his arms and the laborers from his feet. The untouchables have no relationship with the Brahmins; they are not from the same pure root. What right does the fourth class created from Brahma's feet have, to consider it equal to Brahmin who was created from the head? All of you were not created equal. Some of you have been created better from the base and deserve more respect; their higher status is natural; they have been created to be served. The deprivation of the lower class is part of themselves. Such was their logic.

Do you think in such a society someday the class differences will be eliminated?

Is it possible?

How could it happen?

Who could do it?

Will the privileged class show its willingness to let go of its interests for God's sake?

It is not going to happen. The deprived class must demand its rights for the class difference to go. It must demand its share and object to selfish privileged upper class. However, it is almost impossible that the lower class in a society, that I painted before you, will raise their voice. Why not? Because he knows

from the depth of his heart that this is the way it is; he has been born this way. Any change is impractical; nothing can be done. This is the way he has been created. When somebody is convinced that God has created him in this manner, it is impossible to hope for a change and that he can enjoy any of the privileges not commensurate with his class. He will say that this is all he can get; this is all his destiny can bring him. Nothing can be done. We have been created with a misfortune; we have been created inferior.

به گوش جان رهی منهی ندادرداد

حضرت احمدی لالہ الاللہ

کہ ای عزیزکسی را کہ خواری ست نصیب

حقیقت انکہ نیابدہ زور منصب و جاہ

به اب زمزم و کوثر سفید نتوان کرد

گلیم بخت کسی را کہ بافتندسیاہ

Listen carefully. A voice from inside of you will block the sound of truth – there is no god but Allah; and will say, “O dear! The one who is destined to be indigent, cannot achieve anything significant. If his destiny has been created with a black thread, it cannot be whitened with the water of Zam Zam and Kauthar.”

If you take something black to a stream or to a sea and start washing, if is naturally black, do you think it would lose its color? Instead, the dust will wash over and the color would become even more pronounced. Therefore, as you noticed in the long history, these societies had such oppression with no solution in sight.

Number Of Gods

However, some reformers were born who altered the thinking. Ponder over this point. This is no place to explain, as it is a specific philosophy associated with religions. Reformers would come and first change the mindset; they would first change the customs in a society. First, they would say that the prevailing

philosophy was wrong; then they would convince the people about the brutality of the situation caused by the incorrect philosophy. This is the correct inference to the discussion about the historical changes. It is not true that first the situation on the ground or the society changed and then the philosophy and mindset changed. First the reformers came. This is our history. This is the history of the East. Those who thought and assumed the other way, in our opinion, did not study Eastern history; they only studied European history. This is India; this is China; this is Iran; this is Egypt. The reformers who came, changed the frame of mind; changed the philosophy. Once the thinking changed; ideology changed; then the environment was ready for change in the society. This is the way it was in the long history.

You see, this is the way, India was; Iran was similar; Egypt was the same way and so was China. Wherever you find civilization, situation was comparable. What does it mean? It was stated that humans had been created in different ways. Since they were created on two or more natures, their collective rights could not be equal; could not be alike. If someone said they should be equal, he was wrong. This is what they used to say.

When Islam came, it announced that several gods did not exist. There is only one God. Those who had imagined that two gods had created two types of humans with different levels of privileges and rights, were wrong. There is only one God Who created the whole world. He has total control over the world and its inhabitants and He has created everyone equal. He has created everyone with one base, one nature and one material foundation. There is an abundance of Qur'anic verses in this regard.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you. (Qur'an, 2:21)

Today we will talk about various verses related to this topic. Qur'an says that the source and foundation of all mankind is one. All humans came to this world with same resources. All men carry the potential to ascend to the unlimited and exalted station; all can become superior and greater. Everyone has this innate capability. However, note that there is some creation that is clearly above the normal human level; the prophets and imams are not included in this category. When we said that every human being can rise to unlimited ranks, it does not imply that he can work hard and become a prophet or an imam. It is a separate discussion. What is a prophet and an imam and how can one become a prophet or imam?

We will talk about it in another discussion. Briefly, the prophets and imams have certain attributes and qualities that do not exist in ordinary human beings. However, as you know, the prophets and imams are very few in number and they are exceptional. Whereas, our conversation is about the regular members of a society in general. Although the prophets and imams were no different from the ordinary people from material point of view. ابُوهُمْ آدُمُ وَلَامُ حَوَاءُ. Adam is the father of all and Hawwa is the mother of all. (Imam Ali)

Communal Discrimination

The people in the fold of Tawhid have been taught and proven that no class difference exists in a society. A society created by Islam is not split into groups. It is impossible that some members of the society have certain rights that others don't. It is never said in this society that people were created on two different bases or roots; or one person was created with clay and the other, for instance, from light. Everyone has the same material roots. Therefore, Tawhid, with the belief that there is one God, Who is the Creator of this world and He runs it, guarantees negation of class system in a society.

There is one other thing to keep in mind. The class system in societies, the way we described it for India, was not always the same. It is not that everywhere the same philosophy was in practice. It is possible that a claim from philosophical and ideological point of view could be made that everyone was at the same level in certain societies or nations; however, from practical point of view, class difference existed; just the way it is in today's world.

Today, if you look around, especially, the capitalist world with capitalism at its zenith, you will find class difference in play; even though nobody says that the laborer and the owner have been created with two different sources and roots. No. They don't say that a certain chief executive of a great company and the laborer in a certain mine were created from different roots. No. However, what actually transpires in the society; laws made for these two types of people; the way they are treated in the society, is analogous to what existed in a society that believed in the two different bases of creation. Some people have unlimited resources, while the other group is indigent. Some grab the whole world's wealth for themselves, while others are prohibited from enjoying the fruits of their manual labor.

The class difference is present in this form in today's world. I even say that this class difference is much more humiliating and brutal than the old one. In the old system, they clearly stated that they were different from each other; in the current one they say, "we are brothers and at the same level; we support your rights." However, it is not like this in real life. Same discriminating class differences are practiced. Sometimes there appears to be equality in execution of laws, such as a certain person belonging to the upper class committed a certain crime and was punished accordingly. However, when we look again, we find out that there is something else in play; same class differences and unjust discrimination are in full swing. In reality, only a few have the right to benefit from the resources; a large majority is deprived and the first thing they lack is true understanding and developed thought process.

Education And Grooming

Islam has rejected all this. Here, in summary, let us benefit from the Qur'anic verses that negate the class system in the society. When I pondered over it, I found out that there were a significant number of relevant verses; here I am presenting just a few that are very explicit in teaching this concept.

Exalted God is the Creator, Owner and Planner of all. This is Islamic. Everyone's creator is God. You

might say what difference does it make? Suppose we are convinced that there are two gods. The first impact will be that the community will split into two groups. When we have faith in one God, all members of the society are in one rank, one group and one class. We are all brothers and we are together. I am interested in this statement. I want you to pay attention to this concept that we believe in one God. What does it mean? God is one and not two; it implies that all servants of God belong to one class and not two. It is also because their creator is One.

Did God love one of the groups more when He created them?

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحَبَّاؤُهُ.

But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allah and His beloved." (Qur'an, 5: 18)

Exalted God divulges another of their crimes at another point; He answers and condemns.

قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ.

Say, "Then why did you kill the prophets of Allah?" (Qur'an, 2:91)

If you are such friends of God; you are so close to Him; you are related to Him; why did you murder His prophets; why did you kill His exalted servants? Why? Jews used to say that they were children of God and they had special privileges. No. Islam says it is wrong. At another place Exalted God says:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلَيَاءُ اللَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Say, "O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful." (Qur'an, 62:6-7)

If you are true, then wish for death. Get free from this worldly life. Go to your dear, beloved, companion and relative God; this should be your wish. Then He says ^{وَلَا يَتَمَنَّنَّهُ أَبَدًا} But they will not wish for it. A Jew and death wish?!

God is the Creator of everyone; He is the planner of everyone's affairs and He is the One to be worshipped. This is a very important matter, that if the Creator and Deity are one, then indeed all humans will be in one class and one rank. Materially all humans have been created from the same root and source. We are repeatedly stressing and paying special attention to the word "material". All humans have been created from the same base and root from material and physical structure point of view. Nobody has any peculiarity from creation point of view that makes him eligible for any additional rights.

Think about this thing too. It is not that he has no special trait.

Why not? It is possible that some people may get some special capabilities under certain circumstances; then it is an accolade. It is possible that a person is born genius. It is possible that somebody is born from accomplished parents; someone may be less capable; another person may have greater strength; someone may be weak and fragile; another person may be handsome; yet another not so good looking. These are differences, but they do not lead to differences in rights. It is not that someone with a strong body can have more rights in the society; absolutely not. It is certainly not that a child born in a rich and influential family will have more possibilities. If Islam opens schools, it will open for all children; if it grooms, it will groom all children; if it provides opportunities for work and efforts in life, it will provide to all.

Islamic Standard

In an Islamic society with Islamic government and under Islamic laws nobody needs someone's favor to get education; to get work; to earn a living; to seek a job; even to get to the highest position. Islamic society is like a vast plain with hundreds of thousands of paths for hundreds of thousands of people for all to benefit. In this level field, all can run to seek spiritual and material objectives; unlike non-monotheistic and ignorant systems that clear the path for some and create barriers for others. As Sheikh Sa'adi said, "they tie the stone and let the dog loose". This is not so in an Islamic society.

Everyone can reach the highest stations in an Islamic society. Just look at Bilal Habshi (RA), who became the prayer caller. A prayer caller has a very exalted position in Islam. Everyone does not get this position. Bilal Habshi, a black African who belonged to the lowest echelons of society according to the prevailing standards of the ignorant society at the time, reached the station of the prayer caller. Salman Farsi also belonged to a low class per the standards at the time since Arabs considered themselves superior to others and Salman was Farsi from Isfahan; he was a stranger from a remote area; probably did not learn Arabic properly so could not communicate very well; he reaches the zeniths in the Islamic society. There are plenty of such examples.

Therefore, by creation no one gets any merit that becomes the basis for special rights; even though he may be bestowed with some distinct capabilities. All privileges are available to everyone and they are a result of a person's persistent struggle. Everything and every position (I am not talking about some specific stations that have been provided to certain individuals for the guidance of mankind) in the world is His; i.e., for God, and people are beggars at His door; they all have to ask Him; they all have to get it from Him. Everyone extends his hand to Him and everyone is equal at His door.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), the son of the Prophet (S), son of Ali ('a), son of Fatima Al-Zahra ('a) and son of Hussain Bin Ali ('a), has to cry, wail and shed tears; and he did all that. And an ordinary person who does not belong to this pious family will also have to do it. Both Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) go out to earn a living and use a pick. An ordinary person also uses a pick. Not only Imam Al-Sadiq

(‘a) but also Master of the believers (‘a) also works during his reign as the Khalifa. During the Prophet’s (S) time Master of the believers is a high commander of the Prophet’s (S) army. And then he uses the pick, does agriculture, waters his fields and does similar other work. You see if you want to earn money, you have to work; if you want to gain knowledge, you have to study; if you want to attain a position in the political arena, you need to struggle accordingly. The path to effort is open to everyone; whoever tried it, he got there.

This is the Islamic logic and it can be seen distinctly in various verses of Qur'an. Here also I invite you to go to Qur'an. Go and open the Qur'an; look at Qur'an with the intent to ponder so that we don't become target of the verse:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts? (Qur'an, 47:24)

Kingdom And Power

Now look at the first part of verses 84–91 of Surah Al-Mu'minun.

قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ Say, [O Muhammad], "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?" Tell the polytheists who used to divide and allocate areas of influence of their gods. Ask them who owns the earth and whatever is in it? سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ They will say, "To Allah." The polytheists of Mecca had faith in God and considered their idols as intercessors with Him. قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ Say, "Then will you not remember?" Why don't you understand? Why don't you get into your senses?

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ Say, "Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?" What does throne mean? What are the seven heavens? We have briefly explained some of these things in the previous discussions and others have not been explained. (This is not the opportune time to discuss them, as there is lot to talk about. In any case when there is more time then I can bring them up; they are not that important anyway.) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ They will say, "[They belong] to Allah." The Lord's kingdom and sovereignty is spread all over the earth and the heavens. قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَقَوَّنَ Say, "Then will you not fear Him?" Why don't you conform your deeds and thoughts to His command?

قُلْ مَنِ بِيَدِهِ مَلْكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things – and He protects while none can protect from Him." Those with strong hands, the most they have is control over an object. You, being an owner of a house, can put one brick from one spot to another; that is the extent of your control. You can pick up a piece of iron from one place and put it at another place; you can join two pieces of iron or separate them. That is all you can do with a piece of iron. However, the being that governs the smallest particles of these physical things; that controls the movement of the atoms in these existences; that manages the growth of plants and the internal movements of the bodies of animals and

humans; in brief, everything in them is in His jurisdiction, is Almighty God. Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things" وَهُوَ يُحَارِّ عَلَيْهِ while none can protect from Him. Try running away from God and seek protection from someone else. As an example, can Christians run away from God and seek refuge with Jesus Christ? Will Christ help them against God? It is not possible. If you should know? إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ They will say, "[They belong] to Allah." قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ Then how are you deluded?

The Qur'an repeatedly talks about delusion and ignorance. It always wants people not to be ignorant; not to be misled; and open their eyes. Qur'an believes that if people would open their eyes, its purpose would be served and that is so true. This is exactly what we want to say today that if people would open their eyes, our Qur'an will rule the world. However, ignorance and arrogance do not allow it and from the other side some dishonest groups do not permit that the eyes of people should open.

Unity In Creation

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ Rather, We have brought them the truth and indeed they are liars. We made it clear to them; we gave them the truth. They make excuses for their thinking and the lifestyle they have adopted; they make false excuses. مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ Allah has not taken any son. Nor has there ever been with Him any deity.

As you notice, there is more emphasis on this part of the verse. However, the previous verses also argued about the point under discussion. إِنَّا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ If there had been more gods, then each deity would have taken what it created. Every god would have taken his creation in a certain direction resulting in conflict – formation of class difference between people; end of discipline and unity among the creation (the world and the people). A person who believes in a god for light; a god for darkness; a god for humans; and separate gods for upper and lower echelons of society; looks at the creation as many independent silos. However, Tawhid says that the creation is a connected and orderly unit. Humans, mountains, sky, earth and all other presences are mutually bonded and linked. There is unity among them. إِنَّا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ If there were several gods and deities, then every god and deity would have taken its creation in its chosen direction. وَلَعَلَّا يَعْضُّهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ And some of those gods would have dominated the other gods. سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him].

Monotheistic Material

The next part is from verses 21 and 22 of Surah Al-Baqarah. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ O People! O humans! Who are being addressed? The ones being called are not the upper or lower classes; not the dark skinned or fair skinned; not a certain group of people. The whole humanity is the focus. Our emphasis is on يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ. اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمْ يَكُنْ تَتَقْرَبُونَ O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. It means that this worship and submission leads to God-

consciousness. What leads to piety and sinless condition is submission to God. Therefore, God-consciousness is abundant in a society where everyone is a servant of God and the society at large is based on submission to God. There will be no scarcity of piety like our times.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ النَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ ۝ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا إِلَهً
أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

[He] Who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]. (2:22)

You see, everything is for everyone. He made it for you. Who is you? All men, everyone. He spread the earth for you; he made the sky robust; and made water fall from the sky; He grew fruit through the rain for you to consume; not for a certain class but for all. Now in such a situation do not consider two gods; do not split men into groups of twos, threes and tens by declaring some entities equals to one God; they all belong to one group and you know it.

Now let us talk about verse number 13 of Surah Hujarat that is on everybody's tongue.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female. Again, the whole mankind is being spoken to. We created you from a man and a woman – all of you. As Amirul Momineen said:

النَّاسُ مِنْ جِهَةِ التَّمِثَالِ أَكْفَاءٌ

أَبُوهُمْ آدَمُ وَأَبُوهُمْ حَوَّاءٌ

All human beings have been created the same way; Adam is their father and Hawwa is their mother.

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِيلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

The formation of groups and tribes is for identification. إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَاقُكُمْ In God's eyes the most pious deserves the most respect. This is an absolute command of Islam in denial of class system. In other words, belonging to a certain class, family or a group does not entitle you to respect.

And there is a fine, interesting and profound point here. The pious ones being superior to others less pious, still do not get more rights. It is not like the God-conscious get more money or get a larger share in the collective rights of the society. Absolutely not. إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ They garner more respect in the eyes of God. However, piety can create some opportunities. There are some jobs that require piety of character; and that is the end of it. إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْمٌ خَبِيرٌ Verily, God knows and is aware.

Next part is from verse 70 of Surah Israel. وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ And We have certainly honored the children of Adam. وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ and carried them on the land and sea. We provided means of transportation. As a side note, it may be alluding to contacts between people; if they could not visit each other, it may have created differences between them. وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ and provided for them of the good things. وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا. and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference. Who were given preference? Who are being talked about? Who did We honor? Who did We give good things? And who did We give preference over other creations? All mankind; no particular class or group.

Supplement

The conflict and difference in a society and existence of privileged versus deprived classes is a grave cruelty of the human history. Sometimes the foundation of such a brutal faith system is based on several gods who took hold of the formation and working of different classes; they invented every class based on a specific method and certain rights. Other times the One God created a group naturally and gave it special privileges. Sometimes the different groups came into being based on human faith that claimed that special treatment for the upper strata is a natural thing and deprivation of the lower echelons is also a natural phenomenon.

The creed of Tawhid not only declares everyone a servant of God and His creation but also their education and grooming is a part of Tawhid; it throws out the thought of class difference from the human mind and the society.

The following verses talk about the essence of Tawhid:

Almighty God is the Creator of every being and He manages their affairs. Everyone has come to this world with the Tawhidi perspective. No one in His creation is better than others, thus no one is eligible for special treatment.

Everyone's superiority and sphere of influence is dependent on his concerted search, effort and hard work. The whole world belongs to God and all mankind is dependent on Him.

Surah Al-Mu'minoon, (23) Verses 84-91:

قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ Say, [O Muhammad], "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?"

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ They will say, "To Allah."

قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ Say, "Why don't you understand?"

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ Say, "Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the

Great Throne?"

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ . They will say, "To Allah."

قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَقَوَّنَ Say, "Then will you not fear Him?"

قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلْكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ . Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things - and He protects while none can protect against Him."

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ If you know.

قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ . Then how are you deluded?

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ . Rather, we have brought them the truth and indeed they are liars.

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ . Allah has not taken any son; nor has there ever been with Him any deity.

إِذَا لَدَهُ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ Each deity would have taken what it created.

وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ . And some of those gods would have dominated the other gods.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ . Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him].

Surah Al-Hujurat (49), verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ . O mankind, worship your Lord.

الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ . Who created you and those before you.

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَقَوَّنَ . That you may become righteous.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً a ceiling . [He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky thereby fruits as provision for you.

فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ . So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى . O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female.

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعْارَفُوا . And we formed groups and tribes so you could identify each other.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاْكُمْ . In God's eyes the most pious deserves the most respect.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَيْرٌ. ***Verily, God knows and is aware.***

Surah Al-Isra' (17), verse 70:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ . ***And We have certainly honored the children of Adam.***

وَحَمَّنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ . ***And carried them on land and sea.***

وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيَّابَاتِ . ***And provided for them of good provisions.***

وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّا نَخْلَقُنَا تَفْضِيلًا . ***And preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.***

1. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was one of the leaders in the movement for India's liberation from the British. He studied law at Cambridge University and after watching the sufferings of Indians and the oppression carried out by the British, started the movement for India's liberation. He joined Congress Party. After India's freedom he was appointed the first Prime Minister of India. His daughter, Indira Gandhi, became Prime Minister sometime after her father.

2. These speeches were delivered in 1970–71 when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India.

3. In "A History of World Religions" David Noss surveys all religions from ancient times to modern age in four volumes – old religions, Indian religions, religions of Far East and religions of near East.

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