

LIVING

LIVING ISLAM

Close your eyes and transport yourself back in time to a busy market place of Makka – the hub of the Arab business world. Life was about material acquisition; the strong thrived on exploiting the weak, women were used and abused and success was measured through the size of the purse. Suddenly a man stands up whom you recognise as Muhammad (SAW) – The Truthful and Trustworthy one and he says:

- “If you wish to be truly successful then be aware of your Creator,
- when you see each other greet each other,
- tell the truth,
- make good your trust,
- maintain blood relations,
- be good to your neighbours,
- avoid indecency
- and in the dark of the night when all creation is sleeping, wake up and talk to your Rabb and there will be nothing stopping you from reaching your full potential. “

These first words of Rasulullah (SAW) are in essence living Islam.

Living represents the second step after learning..

Making the vision happen. It is the execution of the intention by first negating the negative to achieve the positive. Thus the first word of the shahada being : LA (NO)

Imam Ali (AS) has said:

“Your sickness is from you – but you do not perceive it

You remedy it within you – but you do not sense it

You presume that you are a small entity – whereas within in you is enfolded the entire universe

You are indeed the evident book, by whose alphabet the hidden becomes manifest,

Therefore you have no need to look beyond yourself; what you seek is within you, if only you reflect.”

The negation of gods that we have created is the first step.

Thus the awe inspiring slogan for every Muslim لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (There is no God except Allah)

Shahid Mutahhari in his book “Polarisation around the character of Imam Ali” categorises human beings into 4 categories according to the way their life manifests itself:

1. Individuals who do not attract and do not repel

No one likes them, nor is anyone their enemy; they incite no one's love, affection or attachment, nor anyone's hostility, envy, hatred or odium; they go among men indifferently, just as if a slab of rock were to be among them. Such a creature is as nothing, produces no effect, a person in whom no positive thing exists either in terms of goodness or in terms of evil (the meaning of "positive" has to do not only with virtue - it has to do with wickedness too). He is an animal, he eats, he sleeps and walks among men. He is like a sheep which is no-one's friend and no-one's enemy, and if he is looked after, if he is given his water and grass, it is because his meat will be consumed after a while. He neither starts any wave of approval, nor any wave of disapproval.....

2. People who attract but do not repel: They get on well with everybody, they establish cordial relations with all people, they make people of all classes their admirers. In life, everyone likes them, and no-one disowns them, and when they die, the Muslims wash them with water from the spring of *Zamzam* in Mecca and bury them, while the Hindus cremate them.

It is often imagined that excellence of character, civility in social intercourse, or, in the language of today "being sociable", consists of just this, making all men one's friends.

However, this is not feasible for the man who has an aim, who follows a path, who, among men, pursues a particular way of thinking or ideal, and does not consider his own advantage; such a man, like it or not, has only one face, he is decisive and explicit in his behaviour, unless, of course, he is a hypocrite.

The Qur'an presents the Rasulullah (SAW) as a mercy for all Being: *(rahmatan li'l alamin)*

We have not sent you, except as a mercy to all beings (Anbiya', 21:107) .

This means that you (i.e., the Prophet) should be a mercy even for the most dangerous enemy, and should love even them.

Love does not mean that we leave everyone free to follow their inclinations, or still more that we should approve of their inclinations; this is not love, rather it is hypocrisy..... Love is that which coincides with reality, it causes one to reach good, and sometimes those things which bring us to the good take a form that does not attract the love and affection of the other person. How many individuals there are to whom someone is loving in this way and who, when they observe that this love is at odds with their own inclinations, become hostile instead of appreciative. Besides, rational and intelligent love is that in which is the good and interest of the whole of mankind, not the good of one individual or one special group. There are many things which can be done to bring good to individuals and to show love for them which are the very same things which bring evil to society as a whole and may be its enemy. `Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn Muljam was one of the most adamant enemies of 'Ali, and `Ali understood well that this man was a very dangerous opponent. Sometimes, even, others would say to him that he was a dangerous man, and that he should get rid of him. But `Ali (AS) asked in reply, "Should I punish before the crime? If he is my murderer, I cannot kill my own murderer: he is to murder me, not I him." It was about this person that 'Ali (AS) said- *I want him to live; he wants to kill me.*' (i.e., "I have love for him, but he is my enemy and has malevolent designs against me.")

3. **People who repel but do not attract:** they make enemies but they make no friends. These are also deficient people, and it shows that they are deficient in positive human qualities.....

'Ali (AS) said:

The most powerless person is he who is unable to find any friends, and more powerless than these is the one who loses his friends and remains alone.'

4. **People who both attract and repel:** they are people travelling a path, who act in the way of their beliefs and principles; they draw groups of people towards themselves, they take a place in people's hearts as someone loved and wanted. But they also repel certain groups from themselves and drive them away. They make friends as well as enemies; they encourage agreement as well as disagreement.....And it may become so intense that centuries after the death of that person their attraction and repelling will still be effective in people's minds and will exercise a wide influence. This three-dimensional attraction and repelling are among the particular characteristics of the *awliya'*, (the "friends" of Allah), just as the three-dimensional invitations to the way of Allah are peculiar to the chain of the prophets.

Thus every person attracts his own kind, and drives away those unlike him. A just and noble person attracts towards himself benevolent people who strive for righteousness, and drives away from himself sensual, money-loving, hypocritical people. A criminal person attracts criminals around himself, and repels those who are good.

There is another difference in the strength of the power of attraction. Just as is said about Newton's gravity, that the degree of pull and attraction becomes greater in proportion to the size of the mass of the body and in inverse proportion to the size of the intervening distance, so also among men there is variation in the power of attraction and pull which derives from the individual who has that attraction.

Rasulullah (SAW) had both the powers to attract and repel strongly. It was not limited by time or distance neither did race, colour or creed affect it. It has continued to manifest itself through time.

The testimony of 'living' is in it's perpetuity where one lives even whilst one is buried under the earth.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ وَكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ

Surely We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have recorded everything in a clear writing. 36:12

“Those who amass wealth are dead even when they are alive, but those with knowledge will remain as long as the world remains. Their bodies may have disappeared, but their images continue to exist in the hearts.

(Nahjul Balagha : Saying no. 47)