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## **Welcome to the Art of Living**

The Universal Sufi Order's Art of Living Course conducted by Sufi Master Younus AlGohar is a unique course catering to the inner aspect of life. Learn how to optimise your inner and outer being to create your ideal life and broaden your intuitional intellectuality. There has never been a course quite like this before, so get ready to participate in an unprecedented transformation and awakening!

What you need to know for this course

Video lessons and revision text will be added regularly to this course.

Live lessons start 4 January 2020 at 10:30 PM GMT on the ALRA TV YouTube Live Broadcast. They will be conducted every night at 10:30 PM GMT until the completion of the course.

There is no prerequisite but a basic understanding of the English language is necessary.

## **Introduction to the Art of Living Course by Sufi Master Younus AlGohar**

Everything needs a discipline whether it is education, business or life. Without discipline, it is a mess. In this course, we are going to discuss how to live better.

For example, sometimes you go to the shopping mall and you do not know what you want. You waste your time. This suggests that you do not value time and that your mind is not clear. When you know what you want, you do not beat about the bush. You go straight to a particular shop, you buy what you want and you go back home.

When we are born into this world, we don't know anything. Even years after our birth, we don't know who we are or what we want. Therefore, our parents are responsible for whatever colour of life, whatever way of life they introduce to us. We begin to understand things after a certain age. At least seven or eight years after our birth, we have no clue what life is.

Behaviour, temperament and desires come from our parents. A child will not listen to you and your lectures, but a child will copy what you do.

If you are a good man, you are like a textbook for others; especially to your family - and more specifically, for your children.

Whatever your character is, it discreetly sneaks into the character of your children.

It has become an adopted way that the child, when the child is three years of age, has to go to a school where they learn to read and write. It is extremely unfortunate, especially in western countries, that we do not teach our students ethics and moral values.

Therefore, when the child has spent 10-12 years in the schools and colleges, that child grows into a young man and a young woman. They become a knowledgeable person. However, the character of that young man or woman is void of any morality.

The Art of Living is concealed in ethical and moral values. If you do not adopt moral ways, ethical ways, no matter how knowledgeable you are, your life becomes very difficult.

You need morality in your character. You may not want help from others, but no matter how self-sufficient you become, a time comes when you need moral support from others.

In most of us, our ego doesn't allow us to ask for help. But, there are times when you need help from others. Times change. Maybe today, you are a billionaire and you have comforts, luxuries and everything; but tomorrow, you may become broke. When you become broke, you will need somebody's help. If, with an ugly character, you have made everybody hate you, then at the time of adversity, you will be alone.

When we have morals and we are ethically rich in character, then we have compassion and gratitude; we know what appreciation is.

Don't you think it is important that we should appreciate what God has given to us? But most people cry and nag for what they don't have. They do not appreciate what they have. They are always negative. Nobody in the world is right in their eyes. As they see it, everybody is wrong and everybody is conspiring against them.

Your eyes will only show you things that you want to see.

Live in such a way where every single human being is pleased with you. Where nobody is hurt by you and nobody has a complaint against you. In order to do this, there is an art.

## A Positive Attitude: The Law of Attraction

Sometimes, when we are financially down for some reason, we become so depressed, negative and pessimistic that we lose everything. Sometimes, our approach to life is very limited. Think big.

18 years ago, after the Seclusion, His Divine Eminence Gohar Shahi came to me and said to me, 'Move your feet'. I moved my feet.

HDE Gohar Shahi said, 'Look under your feet', and I saw that there were all the treasures of the world under my feet.

HDE Gohar Shahi told me, 'Always think big about this mission. Do not worry about the resources, I am the Provider.'

Jesus said to his disciples, 'If you have trust in God, you will tell the mountains to move and they will move'.

Think big! Always have a positive attitude towards life.

A positive attitude towards life is very important. To a certain degree, you should have belief in the Law of Attraction. If you have a positive attitude and you think positive, they say that positivity will attract.

Have a big heart.

Many years ago, in the early days of the mission, HDE Gohar Shahi would go to Karachi from Kotri for a week every month. There was a small office that had two rooms and a small courtyard. Only 10-12 people could fit in the courtyard.

One time, it was Ramadan and HDE Gohar Shahi was opening the fast with a few people in the small office in Karachi. There were a few dates left and a follower tried to save them for the next day.

His Divine Eminence Gohar Shahi told him, 'This is not the custom of a dervish. When tomorrow comes, we will see. Eat them today'.

Those whom the Lord loves, he does not count how much he is giving [to them].

The Art of Living - how to live better - starts with a positive attitude. Do not have uncertainty in your heart about anything.

## **Chapter 1: Setting Up Your Priorities**

## **Lesson 1: Why You Need to Prioritise**

In order to have a good standard of life, it depends on what is good in your eyes. There are two types of lifestyle: a luxurious lifestyle and a simple lifestyle. A luxurious lifestyle may be a little more comfortable in terms of physical comforts, but simple lifestyle is a little more peaceful. A luxurious lifestyle is heavily focused on the acquisition of material wealth, material gains, material comfort and luxuries - which may not guarantee peace of mind or peace of heart. In a luxurious lifestyle, luxury is your priority. In a peaceful lifestyle, your priorities are different.

Dedication comes after setting up priorities. You only become dedicated and devoted to something when you have known your topmost priorities.

For example, someone must have thought it out that his topmost priority was to serve this mission. When he found out what his priority was, now was the time to pursue, execute and get what he is supposed to get. That is why he is dedicated. Those who are not still dedicated and devoted are those who are unaware of their priorities.

Sometimes, you walk in two different directions. This is when you get nowhere.

Sometimes you want to be holy, and at the same time, you want to be rich. Either you can become rich or you will become holy. Either you walk on Earth or you fly in the sky. You cannot do two things at the same time.

So you have to set up your priority list.

Those who have come to know that HDE Gohar Shahi, this mission and their own spiritual growth is their topmost priority, it becomes clear in their mind what is more important to them. Maybe what is more important to me is not that important to you. Why? Because whether something is important or not depends on what our priority is.



Sometimes, we follow shadows. For example, we might say 'Don't waste money'. Why? Well, sometimes we have this natural inclination in us to hold back - if something is very expensive, we don't want to do it. This is because we have not set up our priority. If our priority is to give spread the message of love no matter how much money it takes, then we wouldn't think about it.

So first, you should ask yourself what is on the top of your priority list. If you [say you] know your priorities and still you do not pursue them, you are a liar.

Let's talk about a boy who is a Muslim. He wants a very good life. He wants to have a good job. He wants to be financially sound. In order to have a good job and a good lifestyle, he has to work eight hours every day. He spends two hours of preparation for work, making that ten hours every day. But at the same time, he wants to love Prophet Mohammad, he wants to become a good Muslim and love Allah. However, he does not have time to please Prophet Mohammad and become a good Muslim. Why? Because he works ten hours every day. Now is a point where we are at loggerheads with our own mind. We do not know what is more important.

We think, 'How should I become a good Muslim? I don't have time. If I don't work, then that is my livelihood - how will I live on?'

Well, there may be many other different types of jobs in which you may have a little bit of time for your own self as well. Jobs where you may have to work four or five hours a day and you can enjoy three hours of education about your religion about spiritually.

This drive of seeking luxury and comfort in our life has paralysed our brains. We can't think beyond this [thought]: the job is very important. We don't even want to reconsider.

A job is important but this particular job is not important - you will find some other job and some other means of livelihood [eventually].

In the olden times, people had fewer temptations, overhead and responsibilities. Now, the type of lifestyle that we are inspired by requires total dedication to our job or business. We have to give in so much time to our job that we cannot think of doing anything else. We are sort of stuck. Our financial temptations, our financial targets have outclassed our priority lists.

A priority is something that you cannot walk without. A priority is something that is more important in your practical life.

So, when you have a list of priorities in your iPhone and you keep looking at it and say to yourself, 'I wish I could do this but my job or business doesn't allow me to do this' - this is a fake priority list. Because your true priority is your business. Your true priority is your job. I am not asking you to leave your job to shun your businesses; but rather to make adjustments.

Not everybody wants to be a Sufi and not everybody knows the Art of Living. The Art of Living tells us that it depends on what the topmost priority in our life is. Only after setting up our priorities can we work out how to live.

If you think, 'My priority is to become financially strong', then the Art of Living will take you on a different level of living.

For example, if your priority in life is to become financially strong, then, in that case, you remain focused on your business or job. You want to make sure that at your workplace, your boss is happy with you and you're very efficient at work. You want to ensure you are very good with your colleagues so that there is no complaint against you - so that you are easily promoted.

You have to steer into one prescribed direction. If your priority is diverse, if your priority consists of many, little tiny priorities - like becoming a Sufi, being a good father, being a good neighbour and being financially strong - then you need discipline. It is like multitasking. You have to work hard on this.

When you have too many priorities then you have to really discipline your time, discipline your thoughts. You have to live by the clock. You cannot make one wrong move.

As a Sufi, our topmost priority is to be a Sufi. But in order to reach our goal, there are many different priorities in the way. You have to be financially strong. You have to be a good father and a good husband as well. You have to be a law-abiding citizen of the country. You have to discipline everything with a positive attitude.

Here is a simple rule: do what you love doing.

Most of the time, we don't do what we love to do. When you are forced to do something, it doesn't come from your heart.

## **Lesson 2: The Four Principles - An Introduction**

Spirituality is a brand of science which plays a very central role in our life. Everything is interconnected. Our social life, our matrimonial life, our emotional life; our religious life.

Every single aspect of life is closely related. It is spirituality which will determine how well you are emotionally and socially.

We live in this world with millions of human beings who practise different religions and faiths - who have embraced different philosophies. Therefore, society is always multidimensional and multi-faith. But even then there are certain rules which are a standard to everybody. There are certain principles which are abided by all citizens of the world.

The Art of Living course is aimed at giving you some fundamental knowledge about your life. We always talk about the life hereafter. We always talk about our time in the future. But today, we are going to address how you should behave in your present.

Generally, it is believed by sceptics about Sufism that Sufis become hermits. It is alleged by sceptics - so-called orthodox, religious people - that those who practise Sufism and spirituality, become antisocial somehow or other. They say that they do not mingle with common people.

In Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, oftentimes, orthodox Muslims always allege that those who adopt Sufism leave their homes and are not bothered about the rights of their parents or their families. They leave everybody in the lurch. So it is important to know what kind of life a Sufi is supposed to lead.

One component of this topic is a set of five key principles to lead a successful life. These principles will be discussed in the subsequent lessons.

### **Lesson 3: Awareness - How Do You View Yourself?**

You have to first become aware of how you view yourself, the world, and everyone around you. How do you view yourself, how do you view others and how do you view the world? Start digging into how you identify yourself. A key component of true awareness is realising that you are a divine being with limitless abundance at your fingertips, you first have to tap into it. - 'The 5 Principles That Will Get You Anything You Want In Life' by Chris Scott

Do you have the ability to view yourself and know yourself, what kind of a person you are?

Oftentimes, I ask our very close colleagues about my behaviour. How do I conduct myself? How do I carry myself and how do I behave when I meet with [strangers]? Because I want to find out: have I enclosed myself in a spiritual shell, in a bubble, and do I never come out of this bubble? And when I bump into a non-spiritual person, do I forget all the norms of spirituality? How do I behave?

I, for example, view myself as human-friendly. I have techniques; I know how to deal with different types of people no matter how aggressive they are, no matter how cynical they are. I keep my cool; I do not reply to them in the same way as they address me. If their behaviour is abusive, anti-social and imperative, I take it very easy. I let go of the mistake they are making.

You have to first become aware of how you view yourself.

On many occasions, I noticed that someone [was misbehaving] and later, after they left, I heard others saying, 'What an idiot'.

Carry yourself in such a way that even after you have left, people do not pass any bad remarks about you. Have a charming personality and be caring and loving.

You might have seen that when some people are around you, you feel really uneasy. If you go somewhere, your presence should not hurt anybody.

A Sufi, when he has become a true Sufi, his presence is so light. His presence is fragrant; people feel at ease [with him].

Now, you may think highly of yourself, but if you want to know the reality about you, ask others. You can never judge yourself, can you? Find out how you view yourself and how others view you - then see if there is any difference between the two.

We have to see what kind of human beings we are.

Ask yourself: What kind of character do you have? How do you deal with others? Is anyone hurt by your words or actions? Are you welcome everywhere? Are people happy when you mingle with them? That is what you want to know.

Is our presence a burden to others? Some people are so rude that their presence creates a feeling of discomfort, even in a group setting. Others feel uncomfortable because they know them to be ill-mannered people who are likely to insult and degrade them.

This is the first step to creating massive change. Once you become aware of why you do the things you currently do, it is time to shift that awareness to the person that creates their own reality. This is called shifting your identity. This works by getting super clear and focused on what you want, feeling it and coming from already having it. - 'The 5 Principles That Will Get You Anything You Want In Life' by Chris Scott.

Awareness is very important.

Some people will walk past you and push you without even bothering to say, 'Excuse me, I need to pass'. That is [an example of lack of awareness and manners]. If somebody is blocking your way and you see that somebody is talking, you should simply say, 'Excuse me', rather than bumping into them or pushing them.

For example, if I am speaking live [on ALRA TV] to a large audience from all over the world and somebody is standing a few feet away on their phone, or walking loudly, it is a disturbance for me. I wave at him and politely ask him to get off the phone; if he doesn't listen, I ask him to stop again. If he doesn't listen for the third time, I might get angry and ask him to leave the room. This is a case where somebody was unaware [of his surroundings] and did not respect another person speaking. We have to show respect; if we don't, nobody will call us considerate people.

Now, when that person acts inconsiderately over and over again, maybe I will get angry and shout, 'Leave', and that is all. But what will happen next? My view of them will be badly damaged. When my view about them is damaged, sooner or later, it will develop into a bad conjecture. Then I will permanently hold it back in my heart, 'That man is not good'.

In this way, they are not only destroying themselves, but they are destroying me too because now I will be holding a grudge against them (although religion allows me to hold a grudge if it for the right reasons). I will not view them as a good person, but in their view, they have their excuses and it is perfectly fine.

We have this tendency in our Negative Psyche - when we are caught red-handed doing wrong things, we instantly look for an excuse to justify it. If we don't find an excuse, then we blame others. This is a mark of a bad character.

So the number one principle is how do you view yourself. If your view about you is honest, then your view about you should match others' view about you.

You should be aware of who you are socially. You need to learn this because people will not have an insight into your inner being. People will not have an insight into how close you are to God. People will judge you by your social behaviour.

If you are very close to God in the heart, but socially you [do not behave well], then nobody will recognise you as a man of God.

Nobody will recognise you as a Sufi. When you lack etiquettes and manners, people dislike you and your quality of life is badly affected.

Your quality of life doesn't only depend on who you are and what you do, but it also depends on others. We live in a world where we need each other's help and support, where we scratch each other's backs.

There are two types of rights: the rights of human beings on each other and the rights of God on you and your rights on God.

It is very natural to be mindful of and to care about how others view you. You generally have an idea of what people might think of you when you misbehave; you know that the image of you in their minds will be damaged because of any abusive behaviour on your part. It is very natural to want to behave well to preserve your image.

#### **Pointers for Good Social Awareness**

Those who follow His Divine Eminence Gohar Shahi should be aware: when you say that you belong to HDE Gohar Shahi, you are actually inviting others to put you through a very, very exhaustive scrutiny. They will want to know just how trained you are.

### **Eating**

As a human being, you should be aware of and have etiquettes especially when it comes to how you sit and eat. For example, when eating, chew your food with your mouth closed. Eat in a way that people do not feel disgusted by looking at you.

### **Cleaning Your Environment**

Let's talk about rubbish. Do we put our trash in a dustbin or do we just throw it away? A lot of people don't do that, but as a Sufi, you have to do everything right in order to become a better person.



Suppose you have cleanliness of the Lower Self and the Spiritual Heart, but you are very unclean physically. Wherever you go, you create mess. How will this unclean behaviour of yours convince others that internally, you are pure and clean?

### **Personal Hygiene**

Personal hygiene is very important. If you are stinky, don't go out. Clean yourself because you are going to mingle with people. Don't make others smell your body odour.

If you have bad breath, I take it as an antisocial behaviour; brush your teeth and if you have a gum problem, get specialist toothpaste and mouthwash like Corsodyl to treat it. Use it every morning and night as well as after food.

Make sure you don't have food stuck in between your teeth when you talk.

It is also important to take care of your fingernails. Many people carry a thick layer of germs underneath their fingernails. [So clean them and cut them to maintain good hygiene].

Maintain a groomed appearance; shave your face as needed. It is not a sin to look good!

### **Sharing the Load**

Get used to doing your own chores. Some men, especially from Pakistan, may be accustomed to having their wives bring them water, iron their clothes or bring them food - but this is not good. There is no harm in both parties sharing the house chores. One person could do the dishes and the other could vacuum; when both work together, it proves that they think of others as their equals. So help each other out; it would be arrogant not to.

## **Lesson 4: Letting Go and Removing Blocks**

This is the next natural transition of becoming truly aware and focused. You have to begin to let go of stuck emotions, limiting beliefs, old identities, people, places and things that no longer serve you or aren't in alignment with your identity and vision for yourself. You skip this step and making these profound changes will be much harder if not impossible. Start letting go and watch your success skyrocket. - 'The 5 Principles That Will Get You Anything You Want In Life' by Chris Scott

Sometimes, we have these stuck emotions due to something that happened in the past.

HDE Gohar Shahi gave me the example of Umar bin Khattab, a famous companion of the Prophet. Before accepting Islam, he was a fierce enemy. He opposed Islam. Finally, when he found out that his sister and his brother-in-law had converted to Islam, he became furious. He went to his sister's house, beat her and his brother-in-law and then he took the sword out. He started running towards Prophet Mohammad's house.

People asked him, 'Where are you going? You look really angry'.

God forbid, Umar bin Khattab replied, 'I am going to kill the Prophet'.

When he arrived at the Kaaba, Prophet Mohammad was standing there alone. The moment he saw Prophet Mohammad, he was punctured and all his anger dissipated.

The Prophet asked, 'Why have you come?'

He said, 'I was coming here with an intention to kill you, but I accept your religion'.

Then HDE Gohar Shahi said to me, 'If the Prophet did not let go of the emotions about Umar when Umar was opposing Islam and the fact that he was coming to kill the Prophet, Umar would not have become a very close companion of the Prophet'.

It is important to let go of stuck emotions.

Suppose somebody wronged you in the past and now they are sorry and they haven't done it again. In that case, let go of these emotions. If you don't, you are blocking your own way; so do not hold back those emotions.

Now let's imagine a scenario where we are playing cricket: I am bowling and there is an edge, but somebody drops the catch - either the wicket-keeper, the player in the first slip, the player in the second slip or the player in the gully. If I lose my cool, start swearing at him and get angry, then that is practically the end of the match.

The right thing to do if a catch is dropped is to forget about it and move on to the next delivery. If you don't forget the dropped catch, it will ruin your momentum and limit your abilities. As a result, you will be completely off your game during the rest of the match.

So let bygones be bygones. It is a new day. Make sure your past doesn't haunt you in the present. Do not let your yesterday ruin your today.

If you keep holding onto your past, the chances are that your present will be badly affected by it. If you do not forget your past and you still live in your past, you have blocked yourself. If somebody has done anything wrong to you in the past, let go of it now. Forgive and forget.

Some people, when they make a mistake doing something, they [give up] and think they are not capable of it. That is not a good attitude. Sometimes, we do silly things not because we want to do them but because we are not careful enough. If you make a mistake, it doesn't mean you will always make a mistake. Focus on rectifying the mistake.

## **Lesson 5: Integration and Support**

Once you've performed these first two steps you can now integrate new positive changes, beliefs, emotions, people and places. You will also identify where you may need extra support. That may come in the form of eating better, fasting, a coach, trying new thing, enhancing skill sets or anything in that realm. Again, this is a key part that can't be left out if you want to achieve freedom.

Integrate here means to adjust yourself according to the environment. if you don't, then you suffer.

When I came to England from Pakistan 30 years ago, travelling was difficult for a number of reasons. One of the reasons was that if we were travelling from Rochdale to Manchester or from Manchester to Birmingham via the motorway and had to stop at services to use the toilet, there would be only toilet paper - no water. I would be disturbed and wouldn't know what to do. Even after thoroughly cleaning with toilet paper, I would feel uneasy about not having water initially.

I used to eat Nihari (a famous Pakistani dish) every day in Pakistan, but when I moved to England, there was no Nihari; I had to adjust. When we started travelling to Europe, we found that the food was very expensive. So we used to buy Snickers chocolates for about 50 pence a piece to sustain ourselves.

Do as the Romans do when in Rome. You need to integrate into the environment and adjust yourself. If there is no food [to your liking], eat what is available. If the sofas are full and everybody is already sitting on the chairs at a gathering, sit down on the floor.

Don't be too picky and nosy. Go with the flow!

## **Lesson 6: Notice and Express Gratitude**

This ties in with awareness but at the same time, it is its own unique step. You must notice changes that are occurring and all the wonderful things to be grateful for. Expressing true heartfelt gratitude is the key for receiving more. It starts with noticing first.

How many of us do often express gratitude? The problem with us is that if we have a few problems in our life, we become so grumpy. We are always grumpy and always nagging, but do we express our gratitude for the things that we already have in our possession?

For example, there are many thousands of people in this world who are blind, but we have eyes. Shouldn't we express our gratitude for this gift of God? There are thousands of people who are homeless. There are thousands of people who do not have basic necessities of life. But we live in comfort; we have everything [we need].

We need to express our gratitude on a daily basis and say, 'Thank you, my Lord, for giving me everything that I have today'.

When you are always grumbling, always nagging, you are building up a negative attitude. You are actually denying everything that God has conferred on you.

A time comes when, after a long period of grumbling and nagging, you begin to think you have nothing. You feel left out. You think that God helps all others but God never helps you. You think, 'Why me? Only I am suffering, everybody else is happy'.

Then you begin to debate with God.

For the followers of HDE Gohar Shahi: at least we should express our gratitude for the fact that now we belong to HDE Gohar Shahi.

Now, there are ways of expressing your gratitude.

One way of expressing your gratitude for the fact that you belong to HDE Gohar Shahi is to take this mission and message of HDE

Gohar Shahi to as many people as you can. This act of taking this mission and message to others will be considered by HDE Gohar Shahi to be a form of expressing your gratitude to the Lord.

#### Self-Care: An Expression of Gratitude

We are still living. This life is very holy. It is a gift of God. Do not abuse this life. When you are sick, find a cure. Do not abuse your body. Take care of this life so that you can take this message of love and peace to every single human being on Earth.

If you know you are diabetic and you should not consume a lot of carbohydrates, then don't do it. If you know you suffer from high blood pressure, cut down on or completely cut out anything that has sodium. We have seen people who suffer from heart disease and still, they are eating red meat and oily food. This is not the way to live life! You are just going after the taste - how inconsiderate are you about your health! This is carelessness.

As a Sufi, if you do not care for your life, how will you convince God that if God grants you his love, you will care for his love?

You are proving to be incompetent in preserving and protecting the most precious gift of life that God gave you. How would you care for God's love - which is even superior to your life?

As a Sufi, always remember these three golden principles: eat less, sleep less, speak less.

Funnily, when you eat less, you naturally speak less. You want to preserve your energy. You also naturally sleep less. You sleep more when you eat more and you only speak a lot when your stomach is full.

For a Sufi, sleeping for five to six hours a night is more than enough.

If you eat less, there will be fewer problems. Not to mention, when you eat less, you have to relieve yourself of waste less.

The results of research on intermittent fasting are remarkable. In intermittent fasting, you do not eat anything for 14 or 16 hours. Then you eat something or you drink something and then you give a break of four hours. Then you eat something again and give a break of four or five hours.

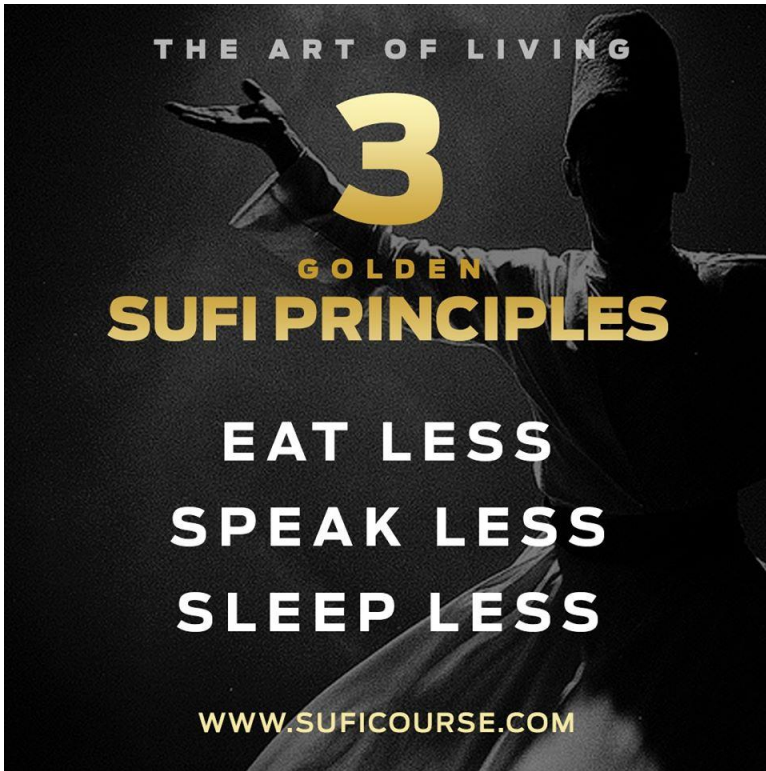
It is a proven fact that if you eat less, you are actually utilising your body and your organs less. The more you make your body work the faster the process of ageing will become.

Completely cut down on red meat. The amount of cholesterol in red meat is unimaginable. Eating red meat simply means you are inviting trouble. When red meat is digested, it releases a lot of free radicals which are very, very bad for your health.

Do not eat oily foods. When you are young, it is okay [to eat] because you are very active. But the moment you are 50, then it is like you are walking on a very thin rope; you don't have room to manoeuvre here and there. There is no margin for error. You cannot make a mistake. There are no mistakes after 50. Everything you do is a blunder because your metabolism slows down with age. When the metabolism slows down, it takes longer for you to digest your food than before.

You should know what to eat and what not to eat. Some people release more gas than others. You should know what foods make you gassy. You are what you eat. The more carbohydrates and sugary things you consume, it is more likely it is that you will be passing more gasses.

As a Sufi, eat less. When you eat, make sure a portion of your meal is green vegetables and green leaves, especially rocket leaves. If you eat green vegetables, it will detoxify your liver. If you drink a lot of water, it will detoxify your kidneys.



When you do not eat the right food, you are actually putting your vital organs in jeopardy.

Some people cannot sleep unless their stomach is full. To go to sleep immediately after eating is literally a sin against your body.

This isn't in the books. It takes at least three hours for food to digest. If you sleep immediately after eating, maybe now it will take nine hours for the food to digest instead of three. Then what will happen once it is digested? All the energy that was produced from the food after you fall asleep - since you are not engaged in any activity - all those calories will convert to fat. Most of the time, it doesn't matter what you eat. Anything you eat will turn into fat if there is no activity.



The Prophet of Islam, Prophet Mohammad, advised people to divide the stomach into three parts: one portion dedicated to food, one to water and one to air.

Know how much you should be eating. Many health apps are available today that help you monitor your food intake based on your height, weight and age. They calculate your BMI and determine how many calories you should be eating. Generally speaking, a man should eat between 2000-2500 calories and a woman should be eating between 1500-1800. If you need to track your activity, devices like the Apple Watch tell you how many calories you have burned in the day.

If you walk briskly for at least 10 minutes, your heartbeats will rise and you will burn calories. Most people don't have much time to exercise, but as a Sufi, there is no excuse. If you can't exercise, then walk in place. Or better yet, go for a brisk walk for at least a mile.

## **Chapter 2: Interpersonal Relationships**

## **Lesson 1: Support and Silence**

These courses are aimed at easing your burden off in your efforts to uplift your spirits, purify your character and to make your life purer, cleaner and more enjoyable.

Life is all about practice. When you are given knowledge, you need to put that knowledge into practice. If you don't do that, you will be lowering yourself in esteem, spirituality and character. According to great mystics of all religions, if you have knowledge and you don't practise it, it brings calamity upon you.

Whatever knowledge you have, you are bound to practise it. If you don't practise it, you put yourself in trouble.

It was very hard for me to decide whether or not to take up this course because directly, it has nothing to do with spirituality. However, indirectly, it is quite helpful in becoming a spiritual person.

One thing is very important to understand. Our life, happiness and progress are not entirely dependant on our own efforts. Our friends, our community - the people around us - also play a very important role.

In order to have a comfortable lifestyle, a peaceful lifestyle, you have to make sure that people around you are not hurt by you. Have a very healthy relationship with everybody, a relationship in which you have this principle law of give and take, forgive and forget. Support others when they need your support - and when you need their support, you don't have to ask for it. It will come by itself.

Our happiness is not in keeping ourselves happy; rather, it is related to the happiness of other people as well. If people around you are miserable - if they are tense and buried in problems and ailments, they can never extend any sort of support. So make sure you help each other and support each other.

Sometimes, physical torture is less likely to change your life than mental torture. The wounds given by sharp words are more severe than wounds given to us by the sword.

The Prophet of Islam, Prophet Mohammad, said to one of his companions, Abu Bakr, 'O' Abu Bakr, if you guarantee to me that you will take care of two things, I will guarantee to you that you will enter heaven'.

Abu Bakr asked Prophet Mohammad what those two things were. The Prophet of Islam replied, 'Guard your tongue and guard your genitals'.

Then Abu Bakr asked, 'Which one is more pernicious with respect to damaging my trust in God?' The Prophet of Islam said, 'Your tongue is more pernicious'.

This tiny thing in our mouth which we use to utter out our thoughts in the form of words - sometimes it is very sharp, sharper than a sword. Sometimes, our tongue is more injurious than poison.

Therefore, think before you ink. Be watchful over your words. You want to make sure that when you open your mouth and say something, you do not say anything that can hurt anybody's feelings. Some people are very irresponsible with their tongue; they speak recklessly.

You cannot afford to be reckless in your utterances. Speak gently. Because when you speak, what is hidden in your heart comes out through your words.

Sometimes, a person who is quiet appears to be a decent man, but the moment he opens his mouth, all his decency fades away.

Remember the three golden points: eat less, speak less, sleep less.

What exactly does it mean when we say that a Sufi does not speak in vain? It means to only speak when it is utterly necessary to speak.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, when he was asked when to speak, said, 'You speak only when you are asked something'.

The Prophet of Islam said, 'Observance of silence is an act of worship'.

Yet another Tradition of the Prophet said, 'One who was silent succeeded'.

Triumph touches those who remain silent. So keep quiet most of the time.

### Do Not Discuss Others

Do not discuss others. Whatever so-and-so is doing is none of my business. Why should I discuss anybody?

If you have a problem with somebody, then the right thing is to take the matter up with the concerned person.

Why must you speak against somebody behind their back? It shows that you are a liar. If what you said to somebody behind someone else's back were true, you would have said it to their face. You always say things behind their back when you have nothing true to say to others. This is called backbiting.

Let's say so-and-so is very bad. If they are bad, everybody can see that already; it is not a secret, so what is the point of discussing it? If you feel the need to discuss how bad someone is behind their back, it only proves that you have some grudge or animosity towards that person. If you are able to make that judgement about someone, others are just as capable of it as you. So there is no point in talking about it.

## **Lesson 2: Rules to Live By**

### **Part - 1**

This lesson includes excerpts from 'The Rules of Life' by Richard Templar

#### **Keep it Under Your Hat**

You are about to become a Rules Player. You are about to embark on a life-changing adventure, possibly, if you choose to accept your mission. You are about to discover ways to become positive, happy, and successful in everything you do. So there's no need to say anything to anybody about it. Keep quiet. No one likes a smart arse. That's it.

There may well be times when you do want to talk to other people about what you're doing because, quite naturally, you want to share it with somebody. Well, you can't and you don't. Let people find out for themselves with no clues from you. You may think this unfair, but it is actually fairer than you believe. If you tell them, they'll shy away. And quite rightly so—we all hate being preached at. It's a bit like when you give up smoking and suddenly find this new healthier way of living and you simply have to convert all your old smoking friends. Trouble is, they aren't ready to quit yet and you find they label you as smug or self-righteous or, even worse, an ex-smoker. And how we all hate those.

So the first Rule is, quite simply, don't preach, propagate, try to convert, shout from the rooftops, or even mention this.

You will get a warm glow from changing your attitude to life and having people ask what it is you have done, are doing, and you can say that it's nothing, merely a sunny day and you feel better/happier/livelier/whatever. There is no need to go into any detail because that's not really what people want to know. In fact, it's exactly the opposite of what they want to know.

It's a bit like when someone asks how you are. What they want to really hear is just the one word, 'Fine'. Even if you are in the very

pits of despair, that's all people want to hear because anything more requires commitment on their part. And for a casual 'How are you?' that's most certainly not what they want. What they want is just, 'Fine'. And then they can be about their business without any further involvement. If you don't say 'Fine' but instead unburden yourself, they will back off pretty quickly.

If you ask me, 'How are you?' You are most definitely expecting this word, 'Fine'. If I say 'I am not fine, I have this problem or that problem', you will run away.

Anything that you are learning, any efforts you are making to change your lifestyle or to become good - don't publicise it for a number of reasons.

You may have just started and if you start telling people about what you are doing, the next day, they will say, 'What is the progress?'

You will say, 'Oh, it's good'.

The next day, they will ask again, 'How is the progress?'

You will reply, 'Oh, it's good'.

What if they say, 'I do not see any change in you'? That is not good.

So do not preach, propagate or try to convert. Do everything under the hat, whatever you do.

You'll Get Older But Not Necessarily Wiser

It is generally believed by everybody that elders are wiser. You become wise with age. Getting grey doesn't mean getting wiser but this is what people generally believe.

There is an assumption that as we get older we will get wiser; not true, I'm afraid. But we can carry on being just as foolish, still making plenty of mistakes. It's just that we make new ones, different ones. We do learn from experience and may not make

the same mistakes again, but there is a whole new pickle jar of fresh ones just lying in wait for us to trip up and fall into. The secret is to accept this and not to beat yourself up when you do make new ones. The Rule really is: Be kind to yourself when you do muck things up. Be forgiving, and accept that it's all part of that growing older but no wiser routine.

Looking back, we can always see the mistakes we made, but we fail to see the ones looming up. Wisdom isn't about not making mistakes, but about learning to escape afterward with our dignity and sanity intact.

### **Accept What is Done is Done**

People make mistakes. Sometimes very serious ones. As often as not, the mistakes aren't deliberate or personal. Sometimes people just don't know what they are doing. This means that if, in the past, people have behaved badly toward you, it wasn't necessarily because they meant to be horrid, but because they were as naïve, as foolish, as human as the rest of us. They made mistakes in the way they brought you up or finished a relationship with you or whatever, not because they wanted to do it that way, but because they didn't know any different.

So what is done is done and you need to just get on with things.

Let bygones be bygones. Those stuck emotions in our breast will only hurt us. We have to let go of those old emotions. Forget yesterday - apart from learning a lesson from the mistakes you made yesterday.



## **Lesson 2: Rules to Live By**

### **Part - 2**

This lesson includes excerpts from ‘The Rules of Life’ by Richard Templar

#### **Accept Yourself**

If you accept that what’s done is done, you are left with yourself exactly as you are. You can’t go back and change anything, so you’ve got to work with what you’ve got. I’m not suggesting anything New Age here such as love yourself—that’s far too ambitious. No, let’s begin with simple accepting. Accepting is easy because it is exactly what it says—accepting. You don’t have to improve or change or strive for perfection. Quite the opposite. Just accept.

Sometimes we are angry with ourselves when we make a mistake. You cannot reverse what you have done, so there is no point in wasting your time.

Accept the fact that you have made a mistake. The only way to rectify what you have done is not to repeat it.

If you are sorry for what you have done wrong, then the best possible thing that you can do to rectify it is to learn a lesson and not to repeat it. Accept it. Own your mistakes.

When you don’t own your mistakes, you start lying. You start making excuses. You look for reasons to justify yourself. You start arguing. Then, in order to prove yourself right and defend yourself, you make more mistakes. You end up hurting others and yourself more.

The best possible remedy to rectify your mistakes is to accept it wholeheartedly.

Tell people, ‘I am sorry’, but do not say, ‘I will not do it again’.

Be determined not to do it again, but do not verbalise it. When you verbalise it, half of your determination will be gone.

When you say, 'I won't do it again', you are looking for a reward for something that you haven't done yet. When you don't do it again, nobody will complain. It will be obvious [to them that you have made an effort not to repeat your mistakes].

## **Know What Counts and What Doesn't**

Being here counts. Being kind and considerate counts. Getting through each day without seriously offending anyone or hurting anyone counts. Having the latest technology doesn't.

So being kind counts. Being nice, not seriously hurting anybody counts.

## **Doing something useful with your life counts.**

Taking up a new Sufi Course counts. I can give you a book and ask you to read it - but honestly, when I read the same book for you with examples, it will have a different effect.

There are some things in this life that are important and a whole lot of things that aren't. We need to be able to identify what things in our life are more important than others. Then in the order of what is more important, we should do those things. Perhaps this is what is called, 'Setting Up Priorities'.

## **Dedicate Your Life to Something**

To know what counts and what doesn't, you have to know what you are dedicating your life to. There are, of course, no right or wrong answers to this one because it's a very personal choice—but it's really useful to have an answer, rather than not really knowing.

As an example, my own life has been driven by two things: (a) someone once told me that if my soul or spirit was the only thing I was likely to be taking with me when I went, then it ought to be the best thing I had; (b) my curious upbringing.

This is beautiful. What is the most prominent thing and the most dominant thing? What is on top of your priority list? What is the drive in your life? What is one thing that is pulling you towards life? Some people just live without a purpose and some people live up to something.

There is a difference between living your life and living your life up to something.

For example, my purpose in life is to propagate love, Universal Sufi Master His Divine Eminence Gohar Shahi's message. Had it not been the purpose of my life, I would be emotionally dead. I would be stagnant. I wouldn't want to do anything. This dictation in my life is keeping my life colourful and active. Those who live their life without a purpose are very cold, stagnant and boring.

So look into your heart and try and find out what it is which is dictating your life. Does your entire life revolve around a purpose?

For some, money is dictating their life. They are living to earn more and more money. Their quest for wealth never ends. The more money they have, the more inclined they are to make more money. They know money begets money.

Many people say they work hard day and night for their wife, kids and parents to provide them with comforts. So supporting their family is what dictates their life. This is what their life is circumambulating around.

What do you think is dictating your life? This is the question to ask yourself.

### Be Flexible in Your Thinking

It is very important to be flexible.

Let's suppose you have said something to somebody and now people tell you, 'There would be adverse effects of what you are planning to do, so please change it', but you are unmoved and you don't change [your decision]. This is not good. It means you are not flexible.

Once your thinking gets crystallised, rigid, and formed, you've lost the battle. might as well hang up your boots. Once you get set in your ways, you're already part of history. To get the most out

of life, you have to keep all your options open, keep your thinking and life flexible. What is the key?

To get the most out of life, you have to keep all your options open, keep your thinking and life flexible. You have to be ready to roll as the storm breaks—and, by golly, it always breaks when you least expect it. The instant you are established in a set pattern, you set yourself up for being knocked off-course. You might need to examine your thinking pretty closely to understand what I mean. Flexible thinking is a bit like mental martial arts—being ready to duck and weave, dodge and flow. Try to see life not as the enemy, but as a friendly sparring partner. If you're flexible, you'll have fun. If you stand your ground, you're likely to get knocked about a bit.

In other words, learn to compromise.

That attitude of, 'My way or the highway', will only hurt you and others. You cannot live happily with that attitude.

If you become stagnant and stubborn, you might say, 'I want 100 per cent, not even one per cent less than that - and if I don't get 100 per cent, I will go for 0'. That is not going to serve your purpose. Get as much as is available. Get the most out of it. Something is better than nothing.

So be flexible in your thinking. Try to see life not as an enemy but as a friendly sparring partner.

And if others just want to harm you, change your way. Why must you embark upon a journey which can leave you wounded? Don't keep the company of people that hurt you, simple.

## **Lesson 2: Rules to Live By**

### **Part – 3**

This lesson includes excerpts from ‘The Rules of Life’ by Richard Templar

#### **Take an Interest in the Outside World**

Taking an interest in the outside world is about developing you, rather than for the world’s benefit. I’m not suggesting you have to watch the news constantly, but by reading, listening, and talking, we keep abreast of what is happening.

Successful Rules Players don’t get bogged down by the minutiae of their own lives; they don’t live in a tiny bubble. Make it your mission to know what’s going on in the world—in current events, music, fashion, science, movies, food, transport, even TV.

Everything is interrelated. Don’t live in your own bubble thinking that what is happening is irrelevant. You need to know everything. We are not directly affected by what is happening in the world, but indirectly, we might be affected. The entire world has become a global village.

Do not cut off from the outside world. You should be aware of the current affairs, you should know what is happening around you. I recommend everybody who has a Facebook account to subscribe to these local newspapers because they instant news telling you what is happening and what is going on.

#### **Be on the Side of the Angels, Not the Beasts**

Every single day of our lives we are faced with an immense number of choices. And each and every one of them usually boils down to a simple choice between being on the side of the angels or the beasts. Which are you going to pick? Or did you not even realize what was going on? Let me explain. Every action we take has an effect on our family, people around us, society, the world in general. And that effect can be positive or detrimental—it’s

usually our choice. And sometimes it is a difficult choice. We get torn between what we want and what is good for others—personal satisfaction or magnanimity. Look, no one said this was going to be easy. And making the decision to be on the side of the angels is often a tough call.

But if we want to succeed in this life—and I measure success by how close we get to generating that self-satisfaction/happiness/contentment—then we have to consciously do this. This can be what we dedicate our lives to—angels and not beasts. If you want to know if you have already made the choice, just do a quick check of how you feel and how you react if someone cuts in front of you in a line of traffic in the rush hour. Or when you're in a big hurry and someone stops to ask you for directions. Or if you have teenage children and one of them gets into trouble with the police. Or when you lend a friend money and he fails to pay it back. Or if your boss calls you a fool in front of the rest of your colleagues. Or your neighbor's trees start to encroach on your property. Or you hit your thumb with the hammer. Or, or, or. As I said, it is a choice we have to make every day, lots of times. And it has to become a conscious choice to be effective.

It's very simple. To be angels, to be on the side of the angels means to support somebody if they are doing something right.

Support the right thing whoever that somebody is [who is doing it]. If somebody is wrong and you are siding with them just because you are related to them, you are 'siding with the beasts'.

So be on the side of the angels means to support the truth. Whoever they are, support [them]. Discourage people who do wrong even if they are related to you.

We get torn between what we want and what is good for others.

Sometimes we are a dilemma we want something to fulfil our desires, but at the same time, we know it is not good for others. Sometimes, we want to do something but we are hesitant because

we think it is not good for others - so who wins: morality or our desire?

In the book, morality always wins but in your life, desire always wins.

For example, we need yet another runway at Heathrow Airport. But the residents of Hounslow and Southall are not letting it happen because they are concerned about the noise. It adds to noise pollution. They have the right to have a good quality of life.

If there is a petrol station in your locality and at night time, it is noisy, you can complain to the police and they can shut it down. You have the right.

So the residents of Hounslow and Southall have the right not to allow the government to make yet another runway. But if they were to allow an additional runway to be made, then it would be good for the economy and for the passengers at the airport. Now, some people who are more inclined towards having a good British economy will allow yet another runway to be made. Those who care more about their personal comfort will not allow it to happen. It's just how you see it.

### **Contribute to the Community and Society**

You see a blind person trying to cross the road. How do you react? Do you take the initiative and tell them that you want to help them cross the road? Or you just pity them and walk by? How many people have [practically extended their support]?

Not everybody will understand spirituality, but at the same time, you want to contribute to the betterment and welfare of the community. Maybe they are not interested in spirituality. But it doesn't and shouldn't stop you from contributing to society and community.

For example, start an initiative to provide free blankets or sleeping bags for the homeless in your area. Maybe even start or work with a local food bank.



It is good to share what you have with others. If God has helped you improve your quality of life, share it with others. Now is the time to help others, improve their quality of life.

The Art of Living is not just making our own life comfortable. The real Art of Living is making others' lives comfortable.

## **Lesson 5: Sarcasm and Responding to Sarcasm**

Let's be very clear. A Sufi should not be sarcastic in conversation. You have to be extra careful about it: no sarcasm, no satire. Be simple and straight. Stick to the point. Do not use any sort or form of sarcasm.

Can you tell the difference between a sense of humour and intended sarcasm?

For example, the people born and bred in the United Kingdom understand the British sense of humanity. The British sense of humour is very subtle. People who are naive to the British sense of humour might be easily offended by it. But those who do understand it might not be offended.

If you fail to do something and you know how to do it, I may say, 'Oh wow, you are a genius'. This is the British sense of humour.

Every single nation has a very subtle sense of humour. Like Pakistanis like to take the mickey out of someone and then they laugh about it. Someone I know will literally degrade and humiliate others and then say, 'This is my sense of humour!'

I think there is a big difference between a sense of humour and sarcasm.

A Sufi is not suited to being sarcastic. Sarcasm is hurting somebody undercover. It is a form of insulting others without being noticed. It is not good; it is malicious.

Sometimes, one's own complex reflects in one's sarcastic remarks.

A superiority complex is the main component in making somebody a really sarcastic person. If someone suffers from an inferiority complex, the sarcasm is directed towards himself. Such a person speaks very low [of himself] while someone with a superiority complex actually targets others. It is degrading.

## **Responding to Sarcasm**

Have you ever felt that you have been victimised, targeted, cornered or had the mickey taken out of you by certain individuals? Certain individuals, who are always ready to open the gates and steer the canons at you?

If you ignore them, maybe they will think you are timid, a coward. By not responding to them, you are giving them plenty of space to manoeuvre. The best way is to tell them [to stop].

Do not allow others to disrespect you. Some people will keep disrespecting and degrading you only if you stay quiet. So tell them. Draw a line.

Tell them straight away, 'You are being sarcastic and I do not approve of your way of talking. I will not allow this'.

Some people are not persistent and some others are really persistent. With persistent people, you have no escape other than having a big hot argument.

I used to be constantly victimised and targeted by some of the individuals in our own group. They would gang up against me. They would always target me and make me subject to a lot of unreasonable criticism. They were very shrewd, sarcastic and persistent. To avoid the situation escalating further, I would stay quiet and I would want to absorb all the negativity.

If I ignored them, they would continue and accelerate. If I would say to them, 'Do not be sarcastic', they would even get stronger and they would come really strongly at me. Sometimes they would cross all lines. So I decided not to keep their company. This was the best solution.

In order to behave like a donkey, you have to be a donkey. As a Sufi, you cannot degrade yourself to their level. When you have degraded yourself to their level, what is the difference between you and them?

Perhaps a little stronger form of sarcasm is bullying.

Especially when you are practising self-denial and self-negation, others will be taking advantage and you remain quiet because you don't want to ignite your inner devil. This is the reason you stay quiet, but they don't know that you are practising spirituality. They don't know that you are practising self-denial. So they think you are timid and a coward; they are then emboldened to [bully you more].

Even if you are practising self-denial and self-negation and you think it is too much to handle, tell them, 'Stop. Not another word now! Before I get out of my control, leave. If you do not stop, get ready for trouble'.

Iron cuts iron. If somebody is trying to target you, confront them. Be vocal. Do not let the trouble mount.

Tell them, 'If you continue to be sarcastic, then from now on, we will not be on speaking terms with each other. I do not want to speak to a person who doesn't respect people's feelings'.

The moment you show your weakness, [bullies] will come back strongly. They will not stop there. You have to show some kind of resilience.

### **In Conclusion**

We have talked about being a victim a lot but now, let's talk about not victimising others. As a Sufi, you have to completely cut off from usage of sarcasm. When you insult others, you break their hearts and God doesn't like it. You must not use sarcasm. You must not bully anybody. You must weigh your words before you utter them out. Think before you ink.

You cannot just open your mouth and say just anything without knowing the consequences of what you are saying. You should know the value of the words you are using.

You should know what impact or effect it will leave on others when you utter them out. You should always find ways of reconciliation rather than making divisions.

There is no room for sarcasm, bullying or mocking others.

Sometimes we think, 'That guy is really weak and meek, so let's make fun of him'. We do that from time to time. One particular person initiates it and then it turns into a mob. Everybody starts victimising and targetting that one person. This is actually bullying. This is not the character of a Sufi.

You shall not be sarcastic as a Sufi. Like the Ten Commandments: lo and behold, thou shalt not bully your neighbour.

The Prophet of Islam said, 'When you meet arrogant people, show arrogance to them'.

If you do not know the Art of Tit for Tat, then you suffer. If somebody is holding a sword and you want to fight them with a needle, that is funny.

You will always weigh your words before you deliver them and you will only speak when it is quite necessary for you to speak. Without needing to speak, you shall not speak.

Do not speak until you think it will benefit others. If you speak and it benefits others, then do not stop speaking. But if you speak and it will not benefit anybody, better not speak.

Some people are very arrogant and they don't know that they are arrogant.

For example, you ask somebody, 'Do you have the flu?' And they tell you, 'If I had the flu, I wouldn't be sitting here'.

They could have simply said, 'I don't have the flu'. This is [a discreet way of] showing off your arrogance. The simplest answer is yes or no. There is no need to make it difficult or offensive. Maybe they don't know that this is arrogance, but these [words are] poisonous. Sometimes, the way we answer others is not really

appropriate or suitable for our age or our culture - for the fact that we are trying to be a Sufi.

## **Chapter 3: Aspects of Life**

## **Lesson 1: The Physical & Spiritual Life**

### **The Art of Living is all about how you live your life.**

Some people want to add a taste of glamour and luxury to their life. In our society, it is like we are competing with each other in terms of having a higher standard of living and having more luxury and comfort available to us. We are all racing [against one another], trying to undo others. This happens when you do not know what the purpose of your life is.

The most important factor in the Art of Living course is to acknowledge the fact that our life has two different aspects: the physical aspect and the spiritual aspect.

Unfortunately, even the religious people and contemporary spiritualists are naïve to the nature of spiritual living.

In the life that we live, we only care about the physical aspect of living. We think, 'What will I wear? What will I eat? Where will I live? What car will I drive? What gadgets will I have?' We want to make sure that all these luxuries and facilities are available to us. We strive to get all these luxuries. We spend all our lives striving for all these things.

But the source of your physical life is your soul. How come you are not catering for the needs and necessities of your soul? We exert, toil and go to any length of trouble to ensure that all these luxuries and comforts are available to us.

But are we raising the standard of our life by neglecting the source of life? Should we not distribute our time in two portions - one portion to raise the standard of our physical life and the other portion to raise the standard of our spiritual life?



Our physical life is confined to this phenomenal world. The moment this physical life comes to an end, the life that we have in our possession shifts to our spiritual life. You are never dead; you go through a transition.

There are two categories of people.

### **Non-religious, secular-minded people**

The first category is non-religious, secular-minded people who care less for the spiritual aspect of life. Day and night, their only concern is to make as much money as they possibly can. Religious knowledge and religious understanding are not their goals. So these individuals who go after the physical aspect of life, they do nothing to preserve their spiritual life. They are not aware of the fact that life itself has two aspects: the physical and spiritual aspect of life.

How many people know that the quality of the life of their soul is good? This is because the theosophical hierarchy in the world - people who are responsible for holding the knowledge regime - are unaware of the nature of the soul. They are unaware of whether or not the soul has a shape; if only they knew the soul has a shape, they would have thought about the spiritual aspect of life.

So these secular-minded people who are alien to the religious knowledge, they are only concerned about the quality of their physical life. All their lives, they strive for the comforts and luxuries of the physical life. Then, they gather a lot of money, become filthy rich and live a lavish lifestyle but deep down in their hearts, they have no peace. They feel this emptiness in the heart. They are not content with anything, with their achievement, with their success.

There are thousands of stories in which people became billionaires, they had all the luxuries and comforts of life available to them yet they suffered from depression. How? How come a

man who has everything - who has every single luxury and comfort in life available to him - suffers from depression and feels emptiness? An alarming number of wealthy people, at one stage in their life, commit suicide. If the acquisition of money, wealth and material gains was everything, why are they still not happy?

Somebody said, 'Money cannot buy everything'.

If you are a billionaire with all the luxuries and comforts of life available to you yet you still feel suicidal, depressed and anxious, then something is missing. You are not addressing a very important component and compound of life.

### **Religious people**

The other category is religious people. We expect religious people that have the know-how of the spiritual life, but they don't. Their knowledge of religion is very superficial. It is confined to the exterior aspect of the religion only. Therefore, despite becoming regular visitors to the mosque, temple, church and synagogue, they are still depressed.

Even those who have become discerning, learned scholars of the religion feel an emptiness in the heart. They speak to large gatherings; they preach to the entire world but they cannot preach to their own family. There may be some exceptional people among the Muslim scholars in Pakistan and India, but let's talk about the majority. A majority of people who are religious leaders, scholars - the lifestyle of their family is non-religious.

If you speak to their daughters and their sons, they often complain, 'What my father is teaching me, I do not find it effective because he doesn't practise what he preaches'.

So, not even religious people are aware of the spiritual aspect of life.

## **Lesson 2: Catering to the Spiritual Aspect**

You only become aware of the spiritual aspect of life when you are born again: when the dormant souls start breathing, when there is a movement of souls in the breast - when they are awakened.

The only reason why you do not even spot the presence of spiritual life in you is that all the souls are dormant. They are in sleep mode; they are not enlightened.

When you are initiated into spirituality, you get the Heart Activation and life is restored in the Spiritual Heart. When the heart starts vibrating with God's name, this is when you begin to feel the presence of spiritual life in your chest. Those who manage to awaken even one soul out of all the souls in the body begin to take care of the necessities and needs of spiritual life.

The Art of Living is not complete without acknowledging the spiritual aspect of your life. The physical aspect of your life is very temporal. Physically, you might live up to 50-70 years. The spiritual life is nothing but eternity; this is eternal life.

Your spiritual life is your destiny. The physical life is just a teaser. In reality, true life is spiritual life.

To master your lifestyle and convert it into a divine lifestyle; to live happily, full of bliss, contentment and satisfaction, you need to take care of both the physical and spiritual aspects of life.

The body will be happy with the luxuries. Let the heart be happy and content in love with God.

It would be a gross mistake if you strive to improve the quality of your physical life and let your spiritual life be ignored. It would be a mistake to let your spiritual entities die even before they awakened.

The death of your spiritual life - the death of your heart - is your eternal demise.

Let me tell you: those who have improved the quality of their spiritual life, even if they have fewer luxuries and comforts for their physical life, they are satisfied and content. But if this spiritual aspect is missing from your physical life, no matter how luxurious and comfortable your lifestyle is, you will suffer from depression. You will suffer from an unknown emptiness.

Something is missing. And whatever that thing is which is missing, it is so important that without it, even all the luxuries and comforts appear to be futile. You can imagine how important and essential component of your life is the spiritual aspect of your life.

Prophet Mohammad was not a rich man. He was given by God both types of poverty: Spiritual Poverty and mundane poverty. He had Spiritual Poverty: he didn't have anything except God in him. Therefore, there is a very thin membrane between the Mohammad and God; a thinner membrane than the colourless onion skin. But the physical aspect of Prophet Mohammad's life was full of starvation, turmoil. He had no luxury. If you study the life of Mohammad. You will not find a single element of luxury and comfort in his life.

One day, the Prophet of Islam was visiting his beloved daughter, Fatima. He knocked on her door and the beloved daughter replied, 'Father, I do not have enough clothes on my body to cover it completely, out of poverty. I am sorry but I cannot open the door.'

Prophet Mohammad used to carry a black shawl. The Prophet threw his shawl into her house and said, 'You can use this shawl to cover your body and allow me to come inside.'

The beloved daughter of the Prophet covered her body in the shawl and Prophet Mohammad entered the house. There was no food in the house. One tear came out and the Prophet said, 'O' Fatima, God has granted your father so much authority and power that if I want to turn the stones and bricks of your house into gold, I can do this now. Tell me: what do you wish for?'

Fatima Zahra, the beloved daughter of the Prophet replied, 'Father, in this physical poverty, I am content and happy because, in this poverty, I feel the nearness of God'.

Then God said to Prophet Mohammad, 'O' Prophet Mohammad if the value of mundane wealth was equivalent of a wing of a fly, I wouldn't have given any facility, any luxury and comfort to the non-believers. The reason why I have given wealth and material objects to the non-believers is that I do not value it at all'.

The Prophet replied, 'God, I am happy in what you are happy in'.

One day, HDE Gohar Shahi said, 'On the Day of Judgment, there will be an announcement, "Whoever thinks he is wise should rise". All these presidents, prime ministers, army generals and colonels will all rise.

'Then God will say, "Sit down! Who said you are wise?" God will gesture towards poor people who lived their lives hand to mouth. God would ask them to stand up. And everybody would be surprised.

'They would ask God, "How come these people who had no distinction in the world - who had no living standard in the world - are wise? They were the daft ones!"

'God would say, "The reason I think they are wise is that, when they lived in the world, they did not entertain the necessities of their physical life. They only strived to improve the quality of their spiritual life. Because it is the spiritual life that has the touch of eternity. The physical life is very temporal"'.

In the end, HDE Gohar Shahi said, 'Strive as much for this physical life as much you are going to live in this world [which is very temporal]. Strive more for the spiritual life because the spiritual life is eternal'.

So the most important element of life is awareness of our spiritual life.

How much do we struggle to improve the quality of our physical life? Day and night, every day! But then, in comparison to our spiritual life, what is the length of our exertion? How many minutes, how many hours every week do we spend on improving the quality of our spiritual life? The more you take care of the spiritual aspect of your life, the more holy and spiritual you will become.

Once the Spiritual Master has activated your heart, it is your job to work towards improving your spiritual life. You have to be honest with yourself.

At the end of the day, if you are lazy and not doing anything to improve your spiritual life, it is you who will suffer. The moment you die and transition from your physical life to your spiritual life, what will happen if your spiritual life is damaged? So act now to improve your spiritual life.

A time comes when your physical life is dictated by the spiritual aspect of life. When your physical life is dictated by your spiritual life and your spiritual life gains the dominion of the entire sphere of life, you come out from the perimetres of time and place.

## **Chapter 4: The Divine Lifestyle**

## **Lesson 1: Absorbing the Divine Characteristics**

Last time, we discussed two different aspects of life. The temporal aspect of life is the physical aspect of life. The eternal aspect of life is the spiritual aspect of life.

According to a Prophetic Tradition, the Prophet said, 'One who engages with his souls in remembrance of God is alive. One who doesn't engage his souls in remembrance of God is dead'.

This means that to be fully alive, Hayat-e-Kamil, we need to revive the inner aspect of life as well. Without the awakening of the souls, our life is incomplete.

According to the Bible and special traditions of the Prophet, God created man in his own image.

So you have the image of God, but with the knowledge of spirituality, God wants to grant you the characteristics of God.

For example, there is a picture of you and there is you, live, sitting somewhere. What is the difference? There is a whole lot of difference. Your pictures cannot do what you can do. We have been granted by God his image, but God's image is lacking the characteristics of God.

There are beautiful words that everybody talks about: compassion, empathy, kindness, forgiveness, love. These words are often heard in a sermon in a church, mosque or temple. A lot of people want to adopt these attributes of God. They want to be compassionate. They want to be kind and nice. They want to adopt all good attributes of God but they never manage to do it.

If I tell you, 'Go and learn to be compassionate', what will you do? It is very easy for us to say that somebody doesn't have compassion or empathy or that somebody is not kind. It is very easy to say these things, but where is the solution? Do you want



to teach them to be compassionate? Can you teach them to be compassionate? Can you teach yourself to be compassionate? Without the awakening of the soul, without obtaining the spiritual aspect of our life, no matter how hard we try to become good - no matter how hard we try to quit our crooked ways, no matter how hard we try to be compassionate, kind and forgiving - we never become compassionate.

There is no separate formulate that can give you compassion or turn you into a kind person. Then how do you obtain all these attributes of God? If you don't have them in your character, it simply means that your life is incomplete. The most essential, crucial components of your life are missing.

The moment you manage to awaken your heart and your soul, you begin to feel that you are becoming compassionate and kind. These are the effects of the awakening of your souls. Your temporal life is the beneficiary of what you obtained in your spiritual life.

Enlightenment, awakening, purification of the souls will have a direct effect on your physical character: on your physical culture and your physical, mental, emotional understanding.

Therefore, you will see that people who have obtained knowledge and education - who have become engineers, doctors and scientists - educationally, they are perfect. But they may not necessarily be compassionate towards humanity.

Had all scientists been compassionate, would have they created the nuclear bomb? This is negativity, to invent something which can wipe out human life from the world in seconds. But had they been compassionate, they would at least want to try and invent something which can stop the ageing process, something which can bring about peace in this world or something which can turn human beings into kind, compassionate human beings. Since their

life is incomplete and they lack the spiritual aspect of life, therefore, even though they have the image of God, they do not have the characteristics of God.

You have only been granted the image of God. To get familiar with the characteristics of God, you need to work on the spiritual aspect of life.

Like the Quran and Prophet Mohammad said, those who are enlightened, who have awakened their souls, who have tasted the flavour of eternal life - they are the ones who absorb divinity in them. They are the ones who absorb divine attributes in their souls.

Once your souls are enlightened, awakened and have absorbed God's attributes, the entire effect of this enlightenment and awakening comes to the surface of your character. This is when your lifestyle changes. This is when you behave like God. This is when you live like God does.

God doesn't hate anybody, does he? But we do.

If we hate people, can we be justified to say that we live like God does? That is not God's lifestyle. God's lifestyle is to love everybody.

You can see a lot of people who are quite learned and knowledgeable - they are scientists, doctors, engineers, etc. but love and care for humanity are missing in their life.

You only behave like God when you have God inside you.

The very word, 'Deen' - which means 'religion' in English - literally means 'lifestyle'. So religion means lifestyle. If you follow the religion of Islam, what it means is the Islamic Lifestyle. But you will see people who claim to be Devout Muslims, who grow a beard, and they take pride in putting a turban on their head yet

at the same time, they put all the important things of Islam aside. They claim to be holy but they live like a devil.

If you live like a Devil, your religion is the Devil. If you live like Jesus, your religion is Jesus. If you live like Gohar Shahi, your religion is Gohar Shahi. The Art of Living, in one sentence, is to learn to live like God.

## **Lesson 2: How to Live Like God**

To live like God, one has to bring God in his heart. To bring God in his heart, one has to find a Spiritual Master, for a Spiritual Master will activate and awaken his heart with a special divine formula.

Once the divine, mystical formula has been implanted in the soil of your heart, the spiritual concentration of the Spiritual Master will then cultivate the soil of your heart into a tree of divine love.

The Art of Living is not to be fully dependent on one aspect of life only. The most important thing in the Art of Living is to find the missing link of our eternal life.

Religious people generally believe the eternal life will start after their demise in this phenomenal world but this is wrong. Your soul, which is the source of eternal life, is inside you. Why can't you begin your journey of eternity now and here? The source of eternity lies within you, it is inside you. All you need to do is awaken it and expose it to the divine eyes.

I often say a phrase, 'Do not look for God, let God find you'.

In order to be found by God, we need to expose our spiritual aspect to the divine eyes. The moment God catches a glimpse of our spiritual aspect, he will confer on our souls his love. This is how God will find us and we will confide in God.

When the spiritual life is active, it gains control of the entire regime of your life. Because the spiritual life is reality. The physical life is not reality.

This temporal, physical life is extremely uncertain. Death keeps no calendar. When you live, you think you will live on forever. For example, you are alive today - you cannot believe you will die

for some reason. But when you have died, you don't even have an opportunity to regret and repent.

You become immortal when every single soul in you has broken the shackles of this world. When the souls are dormant, they are not independent. In your body, they live together and they correspond with each other to make life intact in the body. Their existence is dependent on other souls. But when they are enlightened, every soul becomes independent in characteristics and in the existence of life. When they have obtained freedom, these souls can come out of your body at any time. Sometimes, even all the souls from the body will go out and they will be so independent that they will not need your body to contain them or to protect themselves. They stay in the body to be protected; but once they have become strong, free and independent, then they live independently.

#### The Sole and Independent Divine Existence

The Jussa-e-Tofeeq-e-Ilahi (a sub-spirit of God) is independent. [When it resides in someone on Earth], it is like one unit of the divine life is living on Earth independently. It is a soul created from God's light. It is not a human being; it is a substance of divine energy which took shape of a body. The Jussa-e-Tofeeq-e-Ilahi is an independent entity yet it is part of God.

Similarly, the sub-spirits of His Divine Eminence Gohar Shahi are independent existences. For the past 18 years, HDE Gohar Shahi has decided to become obscure from the eyes of the elite and commoners alike. But HDE Gohar Shahi has granted some hearts to house a sub-spirit of HDE Gohar Shahi. The sub-spirit of HDE Gohar Shahi in the heart is one form of independent existence of HDE Gohar Shahi. Those who have eyes to see the [presence of HDE Gohar Shahi in their heart] will not differentiate between the sole existence of HDE Gohar Shahi and an independent existence of Gohar Shahi.

When you have such a wonderful source of eternal life in you, whether this soul comes from Lord Jesus Christ, God or HDE Gohar Shahi, you represent an independent existence of whoever you have in you.

That independent existence you have in you of either Jesus, Gohar Shahi or God, will come inside you and take control of your temporal and spiritual life. There begins a Goharian reign.

God says, 'Through additional forms of worship, when my servant becomes closer to me, I form his legs through which I cover the distances. I form his arms and hands through which I grab things. I form his eyes. Through these eyes, it is not he who will see; it will be me who will see'.

So when you reach such a station in spirituality, that is to do with the spiritual aspect of life. Your spiritual life is now dominated by the divine existence.

You will not see the face of God, miracles of God or wondrous acts of God [from an independent existence of God]. But the problem is, for a majority of people in this world the only expression through which they will accept somebody to be divine is when he works miracles.

However, a miracle, a wondrous act will come from the sole existence of God. When God blesses somebody with a unit of his life, which becomes an independent existence of God - he resides in the hearts of such people.

Without the spiritual life, without awakening of the souls, your behaviour is sometimes like animals and sometimes, it is even worse than animals. The Art of Living is in combining both aspects of life. Those who have combined both aspects of life not only become good human beings but they also become friends of God.

In some cases, they become an independent existence of God on Earth. A complete divine embodiment on two legs. A walking, talking God.

In simple words, when you start reflecting the attributes of God, you begin to live like God.

In certain situations, your attributes manifest to react. Whoever is inside you, his attributes will manifest. If it is God, God's attributes will manifest. If it is the Devil, then an evil manifestation will take place.

For example, suppose somebody is in need and they are in front of you. How do you react? What is your reaction? Either you will ignore that somebody in need and walk by, or you would want to help. In both cases, your attributes will manifest, either negative or positive.

If someone is swearing at you, now is the time for you to react. How do you react? Before any reaction comes from you, there has to be a manifestation of one of your attributes. If you have the Devil inside you, then it will be the Devil who will be manifesting in your attributes. So if somebody is swearing at you, maybe you start beating them up in response.

The Art of Living is to kick out the Devil from our being and invite God to come and make our heart his abode. It lies in the revival of the spiritual life.

Remember well: when God will come in your heart, it will not be the essence of God. In order to facilitate his lovers, he will introduce an independent existence which is part of God. But that will be a divine facility for you to be engaged with. Based on it, you can represent God on Earth.

The most important component is our spiritual life. When our spiritual life is activated, then it becomes connected to God and God's attributes manifest from within us throughout the different stages of life. And it can then be said that we have adopted God's lifestyle.

We can speak a zillion words on this but if we don't mention the core values of life, everything goes into a waste. When the spiritual aspect is revived and our souls are awakened, then everything we do changes because the source has changed. Our behaviour will change; our thought process and mindset will change. The way we behave with people will change. We will be compassionate, nice and kind to each other. We will help the poor. Those who fight against each other, we will want to reconcile them and put them back on the track of friendship.

So in short, the core of the Art of Living lies in awakening of our souls.