

New Years Message 2021

We live in dark and difficult days. A virus, a small, virtually invisible, killer has brought the mighty world of commerce, politics, travel, entertainment and even ordinary human social contact, across the entire world, to its knees. Life as we knew it has changed. Even religious organisations have been deeply affected as churches, mosques, synagogues and temples have been closed or operate in a very limited way. The huge Hajj gathering has functioned with a few thousand locals instead of the three million from around the globe that might normally have participated. Shrines such as that of Khawaja Saheb in India or Mevlana Rumi in Turkey have been closed or operate with restrictions. Even the New Year celebrations are discouraged and muted except in some places.

This difficulty has also not passed quickly. After a year it remains a potent threat, interrupting life as we used to know it. In Ajmer the view was that this is due to the malign influence of Jinns and that the lighting of candles in religious places was the only thing that would help. I have no certain insight into this though I accept it as a real possibility. It appears to me that even if this is the case then it could only happen with permission of the All-mighty. This implies that it must be taken as a warning to mankind that, despite extraordinary achievements in the field of technology and commerce and medicine and so on man should not feel he is in charge and can do whatever he likes. The divinity has pulled on the reins and the runaway horses must respond. Of course we hope by the time you read this what we are talking about is history but Allah knows best.

We begin by offering a prayer for all those affected whether directly or indirectly.

Within the framework of all of this, our individual spiritual evolution continues. It is not a question that the outward circumstances should dictate entirely to us our inward pattern of development. Of course they impact our outward activity, as for instance people could not come to Konya for the Seb-i-Urus as they would like to do. Nevertheless when the heart has made a firm inner intention the person may travel spiritually instead of with the body. Time and space do not inhibit the Prophets and saints in their activity. They seek out those souls who have the potential for inner growth and self realisation and they bring them bit by bit to a state of spiritual maturity. This is not a soft option for the persons concerned. There is an outward dimension of course but the real development takes place within. The holy ones operate on the chosen persons like a team of highly skilled surgeons, but in this case it is not on the body but on the heart, mind and soul.

You may ask what of those who do not have that potential? Does not God love everyone? The love of God surpasses our understanding. The recipients of His love receive what suits their particular needs. The sun does not discriminate it shines on all but some things respond by growth others remain unaffected or become like an arid desert. This should not affect us. It is God's own business. Our business is to respond with growth and appreciation for His mercy. To love God is a thing we cannot claim. Allah knows His true lovers. There is a story that the lovers of God were in line looking towards Allah. One of them made a claim to be a lover of God. The others moved away from him. They did not want to be associated with someone who makes a claim.

Let me guess, your life is full of difficulty is it not? You may not lack food or shelter but things are not as you would wish. Do you ignore the many blessings you have and concentrate on those things? There are people better off and people worse off. Neither is your concern. Your own appreciation of what you do have is what you should be absorbed by. The holy Qur'an reminds us that the difficulties we have are from ourselves and it is Allah's mercy that makes it less bad than it would be. You accepted some negative thoughts as your own, at some later point they became actions and thus part of you. Now you complain to Allah, or worse to anyone who will listen. Why do you not complain to yourself and determine to change the future by changing the present.

Let me make a suggestion. Start by reviewing what you do have with a sense of gratitude. Don't compare yourself with others for that will not lead to appreciation of what you have. Your concern is to value your own blessings. Maybe you start with superficial gratitude of the mouth but don't stop there. Make it heartfelt.

Your attention is now drawn to the positives. Begin to list mentally all the things you have and do so in a spirit of gratitude. Don't compare them with what others have; but at the end you may wish to add a prayer for those to whom Allah has given more difficulty. Never allow envy of those who appear to have more to take hold. Rather be glad for the blessings they have whilst at the same time knowing the essence of those blessings belong in eternity to he or she who earns the favour of Allah. Those who envy others make themselves poor in a very negative sense. Zahurmian was materially far from wealthy but he would read about the super rich or powerful with interest and not any hint of envy.

This, however, is only about material prosperity. There is more! You may have difficulties with relationships or health or some other aspect of life. First understand that the same principle applies. The situations that arise derive their negativity from our own past and the thoughts and feelings. Change the pattern of your current thoughts and then return to Allah with a plea for His mercy. In looking at the situation we must accept our own faults and focus on His mercy. Hazrat Sarmad wrote 'Great are my sins but greater still Your mercy.

Prophet Ayub (Job) was subject to many terrible tests but did not fail in turning to God alone. Turning to God alone does not imply ignoring or not seeking medical or other advice but that help is understood as deriving its efficacy from God not from any other source. When you take medicine remind yourself that 'God is enough'. Right thinking consists in seeing that God alone is the immediate and only Cause.

*Seek the treasure beyond any price or any other thing,
Let peace of mind be the reward for all your struggling.
Let the solace of a love that has no limit nor any border,
Fill your heart, mind, body and soul for now and forever.*

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The last year has been unusual to say the least. At the beginning of January we were more or less expecting a normal year with the usual landmarks. We passed the New Year Day in Tibilisi, Georgia. As a matter of fact their Christmas was also later than in the West and the celebrations were extraordinary. Seemingly endless lights and fireworks went on day after day. Then by the grace of Mevlana Rumi we managed to get temporary residence permits to stay for a year in Konya. It was about this time awareness of the seriousness of the Corona virus emerged. Nur travelled to Iran on what turned out to be virtually the last flight and I reached England just in time before flights were cancelled.

In March Maryam Teighmor and Marjan from Shiraz travelled to Ajmer for the Urs of Khwaja Saheb. Going there it was possible still to travel but getting back proved to be most difficult. Many small adventures occurred but eventually by the grace of Khwaja Saheb they both returned to Shiraz safely.

Here is an extract from a record of the Urs sent by Marjan. I hope the whole will be published on the website. Here she begins by talking of the flag ceremony.

*The whole environment was filled with the beautiful sound of music and percussion.
..... on the way people came and gave money to the Murshid and showed respect
for him and threw flowers too. It took a long time to reach the shrine of Khawaja
Gharib Nawaz. With lots of people we entered the shrine in front of a place where
they put the flags. Then all did Fatiha and prayed in specific place before the shrine
of Khawaja Sahib where Zahurmian (as) and also Inam Mian and Hazrat Jamil
Sahib would sit.*

*On 25 Feb 2020we got up at 8 am. After sending morning message to my Dear
Hazrat Jamil Sahib, we went to the dining room. Maryam was familiar with everyone*

in the house. After saying Salam to Mehr daughter of ZahurMian (as) and Amina (Inam Mian's wife) we went for Ziarat to Chillah. I was so eager to visit this holy hill again. We bought some flowers and took off our shoes. Some people there knew Maryam. First is a cave where Khwaja Sahib had his Chillah (retreat) when he arrived in Ajmer. It is an amazing place for meditation and my tears were coming down unconsciously. I said salaams and did Fatiha from my dear King of Love and others especially those who asked me to carry their Salams. I recited Sura Rahman for Khawaja Sahib from my Dear Hazrat Ishq who gave this Sura to my heart last year. Before this I didn't know it by heart completely. I gave gratitude to Allah for this and all blessing from my Dear Sahib. They are uncountable. We put flowers on two holy place in the cave and went to the next saint. Saeenji Sahib (as) the first guide of the Gudri Shahi and the place where my "Dearest Moon of life" did his Baiyat with Zuhurmian (as). We went around, kissed the tomb, put flowers, did Fatiha, and gave money to the man who sat there kindly for managing and blessing people by his bunches of tree branches. Next saint is Qazi Sahib (as) the second guide of the Gudri Shahi. Like other shrines we went around it and kissed and offered flowers, did Fatiha and a little meditation there. The beautiful shrine of Nawab Sahib the third Gudri Shahi guide is the fourth place for Ziarat he brought the relics of Khwaja Uthman Harooni from Baghdad. Also we went around, kissed the tomb and offered flower and sat in a corner in front of him to recite Fatiha. Near his shrine there was a Tazia, a replica of the tomb of Hussain the son of Hazrat Ali. We did Fatiha there too. Our beloved spiritual guide Hazrat ZahurMian who is the fourth Gudri Shahi leader was the last place for Ziarat. After turning around, kissing tomb and offering flowers I said salam specially from my Dearest Sahib and all and asking his help.

Inam Mian kindly greeted us among all his works and busy times and they served tea. Faiz Bhai and Nezam also joined us. All people there especially Inam Mian and his family asked us about our Dear Hazrat Jamil Sahib and Maryam said he is Masha'Allah good and gave his Salam to them. Also they were happy because of Maryam's wedding. Inam Mian said to her "When you settle down it is like we settle down." And this sentence sticks in my mind and told myself, "All divine men are more kind and more responsible than we think", and always I am asking myself "Who are they?" Maryam explained about books which consist of many saints of Shiraz that she is writing with Jamil Sahib and also mentioned about Narges who runs the ceremony of Urs in Kerman with her nice family.

The family were kind to all and paid attention to everyone. At night near 11 o'clock we got ready to go to Qawali. One point that happened every night in the mosque between Sema they brought us tea and Maryam told me, "Marjan we didn't have tea before this year, and it is the first time, it's for you". I smiled and answered 'Come on Maryam, it just happened for all of us'.

Next day on 27 Feb, on an awesome Thursday in Chillah by grace of Allah we had a connection with Our Dear Sea of Kindness and he said us some beautiful points. He guided us with these words "Try to have journey inside not outside and try to meditate on how to

be, not how to do". He also spoke about Fana, saying that "There is a divine light in your heart and with you, your body is dark but around you like a sphere there is your soul that is made of light; and your soul want to be united with the divine light in your body. The light in your body tries to grow and grow so the darkness of your body disappears. This light wants to be one with your soul and then the divine secrets start." It was our great new lesson to focus on and meditate on.

So we stayed longer in Chillah, especially near Zahurmian's shrine. At night we went to Qawali in Dergah. It was amazing with good Qawali.

One of our job in these day was helping Mehr in counting money which was collected in Qawali in evening and making batches of 50 bill of 10 Rupee. In this evening I got familiar with Mehr and she asked me to speak about myself and family.

Meanwhile, Nur and her family and others celebrated the Urs of Khawaja saheb in Kirman for the first time. Present with her were Naz, Jamileh, Rabiah, Jeyran, Shirin and Yasi who all gathered in Rabiah's house for the occasion and were joined by Yahya from Isfahan. Jhali from Kirman joined in too. The Corona problem had by now started in Iran in all seriousness but despite the difficulties the Urs went ahead. The same qwaali music on disc was used as was played in Southampton. The blessings of Khwaja Saheb were very much felt and some people found themselves in tears. There was a gathering every night and most people stayed the night in Rabiah's house. Rabiah and her husband were said to be excellent hosts.

Money was changed into small value notes and offered to Nur who sat in for Jamil. This is a tradition in Ajmer where the money goes to the musicians. Later the money given to Nur was used to buy food from from Sena and that was donated to the poor. The people attending found themselves quite spiritually drunk. One day when the celebration in Southampton included a session in the mosque the murids in Kirman went to the shrine of Abdul Salam and they listened to a Farsi translation of Jamil's speech in Southampton. When they came out of the shrine the shoes of three people were missing. This is common in Ajmer but had never been known before in Kirman. Not only that the key to the car was locked inside. It was for about an hour. Jamil was called on the phone but fortunately the key was obtained by the efforts Jhali. The Ajmeri atmosphere was felt strongly. The love from Khwaja Saheb was so powerful it affected everyone. Even the people who had never been to Ajmer felt the atmosphere. During the informal celebrations of Hazrat Ali's birthday at the end of Urs people danced and sang and recited poetry or played on instruments.

In England people gathered in Zahuri Manzil for the usual flag ceremony in the garden and then every night for food, Zikr and Qwaali. The full impact of lockdown and limitations were not yet present. There was some internet connection with Ajmer at this time and quite good internet connection with people from Kirman, as well as from other places in England. The Qwaali, though recorded was from CDs from Ajmer and was widely enjoyed. Good food was eaten, prayers and Zikr offered and many blessings received. Thanks to all the people including Farhana who made the food. It was good to see Zulfikar and Tiara and Farhan, Abbas, Riaz and family, Mikail and Clare, Hussam, Abbas and Humaira and children, Nili and family, Baby and Akbar and Hussain and his grandfather. Asma, Danish and their sons, and Arshad.

We offer special condolence to Hussain and his family on the sad and unexpected passing of his father. May Allah comfort the grieving.

The programme included a session at Razvia mosque which was watched on line by the people in Kirman. There was Zikr, speeches and free food (langar). There was also an internet connection with people from Shiraz. Though they could not travel even to Kirman they could participate in these events. A complete reading of the holy Quran was made in Iran and another in England. Jamil completed the readings by reciting Juz Ama in Zahuri Manzil near the end of the

celebrations. By means of the internet Maryam was able to inform us of the closure of Urs in Ajmer.

This poem expresses the spirit of Urs.

*In Ajmer the entrance to the endless energy of ecstasy can be found,
Where the presence of the Emperor of Love is everywhere, all around.
Where the capacity to purify in the celestial fire of Love has its centre,
Where the sincere seeker is bidden by the unsleeping sentry to enter.
Where the words of Allah take on a life not suspected by the foolish,
Where passion for truth is a vehicle carrying us beyond a mere wish,
Where the spirits of saintly souls impregnate the soil with their purity,
Where the world despairs and at last departs, leaving just His infinity.
O Khwaja there is in me that which would ask for a thousand favours,
But you know best where to pour divine Love, with its myriad flavours.*

Zahuri

After the joyous time of Urs the restrictions by the government came in. Thanks to Allah that we were able to keep in touch by internet most of the time.

Other important events included of course the fasting month of Ramadan. Jamil read the entire Qur'an on line and it was heard by many that way. People gathered in Sirjan at the house of Parivash the mother of Rabiah and Jamileh. Parivash recited passages from the Holy Qur'an and also poems from the mystics. Others listened from home. Kiya also joined. By this time restrictions due to corona virus made gatherings in Southampton very limited.

At the behest of Riaz we completed a relaxation track in English in a local studio. Later a Farsi version was completed by Nur with natural sounds. The father of Riaz has been very ill and we wish him well.

The joyful news of Maryam Teighmoor and Hussain from Shiraz getting married was very happily received. Because of the virus it was a small but memorable ceremony. We pray for them both. Jamil joined a small gathering on line. The close relatives were present. Later Hussain and Maryam visited Kirman and the company of both was much enjoyed. In December Marjan and Roya also visited and stayed with Yasi.

In July Jamil and Nur managed by the grace of Mevlana Rumi to return to Konya. Almost immediately after this flights were cancelled and it proved to be a very narrow window that Mevlana in his kindness had opened. We completed Ziarat to the graves of Shemsuddin Tabriz, Mevlana Muhammed Jalaluddin Rumi, Nuri Baba, Ali Baba, Bey Hekim Effendi and Hazrat Kazerooni in Konya. In Mehram we visited the tomb Sadeeduddin Konevi the disciple of Khwaja Ibn Arabi. We also went to the graves of Mevlana's cook Hazrat Atesh Baz Veli and to Tavus Baba and Jamel Ali Dede.

September 30th was the birthday of Mevlana and traditionally this is almost as important as the Seb i Arus. This year of course it was a very muted affair with musical offerings on line. The sema was held in the shrine and broadcast on line with very few participants. We managed however to celebrate it in Zahuri Manzil (Konya) with on line Zikr and reading of the holy Qur'an. The atmosphere was full of good blessings from Mevlana. Ali and Samaneh were present. Sometimes Narmin from Konya joined.

Ali has been working incredibly hard on the outer part of Zahuri Manzil (Southampton) while Jamil is in Konya and received help at times from Hussam and Asif. From pictures seen on line it appears very impressive indeed.

Ajmer itself became, it seems from photographs, rather deserted and home to vast numbers of lighted candles. Hazrat Inaam considered the use of candles in religious gatherings to be most effective in countering the virus.

Bahar Tadikonda contracted a severe form of Corona Virus known now as 'long COVID' and even today so many months later is not fully recovered. Our prayers are with her.

In early October Nur, Samaneh and Ali who were visiting Konya, accompanied Jamil on a short holiday. Nur and Ali were the drivers. We went to visit the shrine of Haji Bektash Vali. We reached rather late but were able to make another visit when we had more time to spend there. It is a very special holy place. We also went to Cappadocia which is a famous tourist destination. The landscape is extraordinary with many amazing caves and rock formations. We stayed in the Blue Moon Hotel and also participated in some cross country three wheeled motorcycling. We watched many balloons rising at dawn full of tourists. We also stayed for three days by the warm gentle Mediterranean Ocean at a place called Mersin, where there was opportunity for swimming and riding in the air towed by a boat. It felt like James Bond up there.

On the way back we went to visit the shrine of Mevlana's mother and a shrine for Yunus Emre the famous Turkish Sufi poet.

There were nice celebrations of Jamil's birthday in October. Nur made a biscuit cake and many joined on line. There were balloons and very good performances.

During the whole year we continued the online Zikr with participants from the UK, from Iran and Jordan. The programme consists of recitations of Qur'an verses, making the intention of remembering Allah, singing a song written by Nawob Saheb praising Allah and his holy Prophet, recitation of the silsila, two forms of Zikr - la Ilaha ilallah and Allah hu la Ilaha ilallah hu. Because of the Corona virus a third short Zikr is added - Ya Hayy. In addition several people know by rote the 99 beautiful names and they are recited, often by a group in Sirjan or by individuals. The children of Behar and Karim, Betty, William and Eveline helped a lot by reciting Cul Ho beautifully every week whilst Anna and sometimes Luqman recite the other Culs. Mikail recites the silsila. Nearly everyone recites a verse from the holy book, Farhana, Jamileh, Marjan, Hussam, Riaz, Parivash, both Ghazals, Yasi, Shirin, Maryam Isfahani, Shayla, Mehboob, Nur, the Kirmani or Sirjan Choir, Jeyran, Maryam Isfahani adds her unique enthusiasm to the event. The programme continues online whether Jamil is in Southampton, Konya or elsewhere. In addition to people already mentioned often Mehboob's son was present. Shima recites a passage from the holy Qur'an with great beauty and Samaneh played the drum in Konya. Marjan's sister Maryam joins in as do Jaleh and Kiya. Kiya also is learning English and recites 'If' by Rudyard Kipling, beautifully. Fredi, the father of Yahya also attends sometimes. Nazanin and Nur recite the Durood at the end.

On Wednesdays we have a Masnevi session with English translation and original Farsi. Special mention must be made of Maryam Teighmor's translation skills and memory and Nur's recitation of the Ney Nama. Also thanks to Parivash for her reciting poems and for various other contributions. On Fridays we have a shorter session of mainly Zikr.

The passing away of the son of Parivash was a moment of great sadness and our prayers are for Allah to console those who are grieving.

Recently we have added some singing of Turkish or Farsi verses with the Zikr recitation. There are usually about twenty five to thirty people participating. Sometimes poetry is recited at the end after durud and dua. Parivash from Sirjan is particularly fond of doing this.

In Konya, during the lockdown for Corona, both Mevlana's birthday and the Seb-I-Urus was externally very quiet indeed. During the birthday celebrations there was a whirling dervish ceremony performed in the shrine but with almost no live audience - though it was broadcast online. The Dergah of Nuri Baba remained closed entirely throughout the year. The Seb-i-Urus was likewise very restricted. All of this however did not prevent us celebrating on line and for many nights we had Zikr. We also celebrated with 'performances' of dance, music, singing and poetry by participants.

We visited a disciple of Nuri Baba who had been ill. His name is Jalal and he has a shop near to Mevlana. He presented Jamil with a copy of a book he has recently completed.

Of course we phoned Muharram the successor of Ali Baba to congratulate on the Urs.

We must give special congratulations to Yahya who passed his exams to become a qualified dentist and to Nazanin for developing her dressmaking business and to Jeyran for her teaching job. Shirin has begun to develop her musical skills on the piano and her English is really improving. Kiya continues to do well working in a gold shop in Tehran. Marjan works very hard and contributed a paper about education and the blind. 'Soft' Ghazal works very hard as always and is very good at helping others. Hard Ghazal's contribution to the Qur'an recitation is well appreciated. Yasi continues in her work in the hospital and even managed to visit Zahuri Manzil in Southampton. There are too many people to mention everyone but work is important and it is not separate from spiritual development. Yasi, Marjan and Anna have been working on translations into Farsi of some of Zahurmian's books.

We had been hoping that by December 17th it would be possible for people to join us for the Seb I Urus of Mevlana but it was not to be, though Adam from England came for a few days. With Narmin from Konya and Samaneh we at least made a small group and we were joined by an American visitor called Brian on two occasions. So many people joined us on line that it felt really like Urs. We had longer Zikr than usual every night for ten nights and Nur found some Turkish and Farsi songs to accompany the Zikr just as happens in Dergah usually. At the end of each evening we had some performances by people on line as well as in Konya. Nur braved the cold on the 17th afternoon to video the large screen in the square outside of Mevlana. Thus we were able to see the Dua Torreni.

We got a microphone to help with the quality of sound and altogether it was a very good programme. Nur even did some 'Turning' and once she was in the full dervish dress. Others danced or sang or played instruments.

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Now the New year is once again upon us.

After a very hard year for people across the world there is hope that vaccines will bring relief in due time. Whatever happens we should do our best to realise in our daily life that there is really only real safety and security in The Divinity.

There have been heart warming tales of how people helped each other in times of difficulty. The brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity remains a potent force for good. We must hope and pray that out of the ashes of this experience there rises like a Phoenix new hope for our individual and collective spiritual growth. The holy Qur'an talks of people at sea who were on a ship that was in trouble. They made sincere repentance to God and were rescued. Then having reached shore safely they forgot and began to associate others with God. May we take warning from them and learn our lesson that it is to the Divinity alone all praise is due and all gratitude is due. Remembrance of Him as in Zikr and Fikr is what gives life its quality.

It remains now to apologise if I did not mention anybody who has made this last year such a good one despite all the bad things around. May Allah forgive each and everyone of us with His all encompassing Mercy and may He make the next year better in every respect.

*The light of guidance is not earth bound,
It is everywhere in every sight and sound.
Let despair depart and hope lift your heart,
With real love make a new and better start.*

Jamiluddin Morris Zahuri, Konya, January 1st 2021.