

BASHSHAAR



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Hazrat Ameer's Eid ul Fitr Message

Shawwal 1432, August 2011

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. (Al Baqarah 2:185)

Assalaam-o-Alaikum Wa Rakhmatullahi Wa Barakaato Hoo.

Eid is an occasion for giving thanks to Almighty Allah for providing us, yet again, an opportunity to follow faithfully His injunctions. In doing so, we try to develop a special bond with our Creator.

In Ramadan, the month of fasting and prayers, we carry on a *Jihad*, that is, a struggle to overcome and subjugate our worldly desires and to nourish our spiritual self. It is an ongoing strife throughout the year but our chances of overcoming the forces of evil are greatly enhanced when we make a conscious effort to submit ourselves totally to the Will of God. Perfect Guidance for doing this is provided to us in the Holy Qur'an, which was revealed in this Blessed Month. Only by following, in letter and spirit, the dictates of this Holy Book can we vanquish our greatest internal enemy - the temptations and distractions which lie concealed within ourselves. The exercise of persevering for a whole month with hunger and thirst; spending long hours in praying to Allah and abstaining from all kinds of wrongdoing and sins, prepares us thoroughly for facing this great challenge. The further we move away from worldly temptations, the closer we get to Allah. This close bond with Almighty Allah should not be loosened with the passing of Ramadan. In fact the following year should see us strengthened with special relationship with God which has evolved during this month. This is a big challenge but not for people who persevere and are steadfast in their love and submission to Allah.

Let us all resolve on this blessed day of *Eid ul Fitr* to maintain the closeness with Allah and not let it slip in the days ahead. We will not let our supplications of Ramadan be an exercise in futility. If we succeed then our *Jihad* against our inner enemy is won and we have moved forward in our struggle to keep the soul alive and flourishing. This would be the real reason to celebrate as we would have achieved an "everlasting happiness" the literal meaning of *Eid*.

I pray that this *Eid* brings joy to the whole world and Allah protects all nations and faiths during these trying times of trials and tribulations for humanity. *Aameen!*

I wish you all a very Happy *Eid ul Fitr*.

Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed
Ameer and President
Worldwide Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

Ramadan – The Month of Realisation, Resolution and Compliance

By Dr. Jawad Ahmad
(Text of Eid-al-Fitr sermon
delivered at the Lahore
Ahmadiyya

Centre at Wembley, England on
31st August, 2011)

“You are the best nation raised up for men; you enjoy good and forbid evil and you believe in Allah” (3:109).

“And surely you have the sublime morals.” (68:4)
“(On the day of reckoning) We shall seal their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness as to what they earned” (36:65).

“Surely Allah enjoins justice and doing of good to others, and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and rebellion. He admonishes you that you may be mindful” (16:90).

I thank Allah for providing us yet another opportunity to get together and celebrate this blessed day of Eid. This day has special significance for all of us who have kept the fast and tried to engage ourselves in as much voluntary prayers, Quranic recitation and supplication as possible.

Ramadan is a month of special significance when good deeds and prayers are multiplied manifold in reward and more so it provides us an opportunity to live our lives as close to the Islamic teachings as we possibly can. It is quite surprising that in this blessed month we perform our five daily prayers, fasting, voluntary supplications as well as late-night or *Tahajjud* prayers in spite of our usual busy and hectic daily routine. In a way this is a month of training and annual refreshing that Allah has so kindly prescribed for us. During this month Allah also provides us with strength and courage to invigorate our fine qualities and make our lives virtuous and sublime and earn the mercy and blessings of Allah for this life and the life hereafter.

In medicine, when we are presented with an illness, we have to consider how this was caused in

the first place. We need to know the exact stage of the disease and then according to the diagnosis, we prescribe a treatment plan. If the patient is compliant then we can see the results in either controlling the disease or curing it. The word “compliance” is very important, because controlling or curing the disease mainly depends on the compliance by the patient.

A doctor can make the best diagnosis and prescribe the best treatment plan with most modern equipment and medical know-how, but if the patient is not prepared to comply with it or for one reason or another the action plan is not followed, then it cannot help the patient in any way. In subsequent visits when a doctor looks at certain results he can easily judge whether the medicine prescribed is having the desired effect in controlling the disease or not, or whether something is wrong with the dosage of the medicine or if the patient is not complying with the instructions. This alerts the doctor as to find out where the problem lies.

Hopefully we can all say that we have been compliant in this month as far as possible and we hope and pray that one whole month’s exercise should give us strength and conviction that we can carry on this exercise in our daily lives. And that is the object and message of Ramadan. We all believe that the message of Allah and the 5 pillars of Islam are prescribed by the All-wise Allah for our physical and spiritual progress but unless we adopt them in our daily lives with the same amount of conviction as we follow the instructions of a doctor, only then we can see the results. And if the results are not there then the compliance on our part is lacking in some way for which we are to be blamed and not the prescription prescribed by Allah, as He says in the following verse at the very start of the Holy Quran:

2:1 I, Allah, am the best Knower.

أَلَمْ

2:2 This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty,

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

Let us go back to the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw), when the Last Sermon was delivered. It was and still is a landmark in the history of Islam as far as universal human rights and morals are concerned. *Jabl-e Rahmat* or the Mount of Mercy in Makkah was the venue from where the Divine human charter was announced which made each and every believer responsible to maintain justice, guarantee humane treatment to

women, avoid exploitation, practice brotherhood, shun discrimination on the basis of colour, race or religion, be ready for accountability and hold fast to the commandments of Allah and the precept of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) in order to evolve a universal and egalitarian society. It was on this occasion that Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) the following momentous announcement:

“...This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion...” (The Quran 5:3)

And with this the Divine prescription for human guidance was completed.

At this point a well-known Urdu couplet by late Maulana Zafar Ali Khan comes to my mind which portrays the beauty of this Divine light of guidance which shined forth from the Cave of Hira and is gaining lustre and glory with the passage of time:

*“Woh shama’ ujaala jis ne kiya chaalis
baras tak gharon mein*

*Ik roz chamknay waali thi woh dunya kay
darbaron mein”*

The light which was lit in a cave for 40 years was destined to glow one day in palaces all over the world. Now the figure of 40 is significant. It is the stage when a person gets maturity in thought and action. Fasting for 40 days seems to be a universal practice. Prophet Moses and Prophet Jesus (may peace be on them) fasted for 40 days. Our beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) according to authentic traditions received the first revelation in the Cave of Hira after fasting for 40 days. This was besides what he practised during 40 years prior to the time when he was commissioned by Allah to be the prophet to deliver to the world His Universal Message. In these 40 years his unblemished character and unique service to the people of his community earned him the title of Al-Amin, the most trustworthy and honest person. But Allah regards Holy Prophet’s character as “the most sublime moral”.

In-na-ka la ‘a-laa khu-lu-qin ‘a-zeem (Surely you have the sublime morals” (68:4).

Fasting has been the universal institution prescribed by Allah for all men appointed for the reformation of mankind and his followers. The Holy Qur’an testifies to it in the following words:

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil” (2:183).

Now coming to the light which was revealed by Allah on the heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) for the guidance and reforming his people, its resplendence and gradual glow was destined to spread in the East as well in the West, has been beautifully described in the Holy Qur’an in the form of a parable in the following inspiring words:

“Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp — the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star — lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, even though fire does not touch it — light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He pleases. And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is Knower of all things - that light is in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name to be remembered within them. Therein do glorify them, in the mornings and the evenings, men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the poor-rate – they fear a day in which hearts and the eyes will turn about, that Allah may give reward for what they did, and give them more out of His grace. And Allah provides without measure for whom He pleases.” (24:35-37)

After describing this Allah mentions the responsibilities of the people who are entrusted to derive benefit from the light and to carry the flame onward.

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali has explained the significance of this parable in his commentary of the Qur’an as follows:

“Allah is called here the light of the heavens and the earth because he has manifested hidden things and brought them into existence. In this parable, Islam is represented as a likeness of the Divine light - the light placed high on a pillar so as to illuminate the whole world; a light guarded by being placed in a glass, so that no puff of wind can put it out; a light so resplendent that the glass itself in which it is placed is as a brilliant star. It should be noted that the religion of Islam is repeatedly spoken of as divine light in the Holy Quran: “ They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will allow nothing except the perfection of His light, though the disbelievers are averse” (9:32 ; 61:8)

Hence it is of Islam that the parable of Divine light speaks. The blessed olive, from which the light is lit, and which stands here for a symbol of Islam. The reference seems to be to the welding together of East and West in Islam, a prophecy which is now approaching its fulfilment in the awakening of the west to the truth of the principles of Islam. Therefore it is our duty to keep that flame of Islam burning in our hearts and carry it to the four corners of the world with sacrifice, zeal and conviction.”

Now I would like to discuss briefly how the light of Islam dispelled darkness from among the people of Arabia. We know that pre-Islamic period is usually called period of Ignorance. The word ignorance generally conveys the meaning of utter lack of knowledge and understanding. But Islam not only brought knowledge and enlightenment but revolutionized the whole social and moral behaviour and pattern of Arab society. This is what a well-known Christian author Karen Armstrong has tried to explain in her book entitled “Muhammad – A Prophet for our Time.”

She writes on p. 79 of her book:

“The chief vice of the kafirun or disbelievers was Jahiliyya. Muslims have traditionally used this term to refer to the pre-Islamic period in Arabia and so it is usually translated as “The Time of Ignorance”. But although the root jahl has some connotation of “Ignorance”, its primary meaning is “irascibility”: an acute sensitivity to honour and prestige; ignorance, excess and above all a chronic tendency to violence and retaliation. Jahili people were too proud to make the surrender of Islam, (i.e. to submit to the will of Allah). Why should a karim moderate his behaviour and act like a slave (or ‘abd) praying with his nose on the ground and treating the base-born like equals? The Muslims called Abu l-Hakam, their chief enemy, “Abu Jahal” not because he was ignorant of Islam – He understood it all too well—but because he fought Islam arrogantly, with blind, fierce and reckless passion...

Instead of succumbing to the Jahili spirit, the Quran urges Muslims to behave with hilm, a traditional Arab virtue. Men and women of hilm were forbearing, patient, and merciful. They could control their anger and remain calm in the most difficult circumstances instead of exploding with rage; they were slow to retaliate; they did not hit

back when they suffered injury, but left revenge to Allah. Hilm also inspired positive action: if they practised hilm, Muslim would look after the weak and disadvantaged, liberate their slaves, counsel each other to patience and compassion, and feed the destitute, even when they were hungry themselves. Muslims must always behave with consummate gentleness and courtesy. They were men and women of peace: “for true servants of the Most Gracious are they who walk gently on the earth, and who, whenever the jahilun address them reply ‘peace’ (salam).”

Towards the end of the book, the Christian writer, talking about reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in view of the present tense situation in the world and how the powerful personality of Prophet of Islam can play a positive role which may seem impossible but can certainly bring peace. Please note that this author is the only living Christian writer on Islam whose 10 books have been translated into Urdu and are very popular in Pakistan.

She writes: *“The brief history of the twenty-first century shows that neither side has mastered these lessons. If we are to avoid catastrophe, the Muslim and Christian worlds must learn not merely to tolerate but to appreciate one another. A good place to start with is the figure of Muhammad - a complex man, who resists facile, ideologically-driven categorization, who sometimes did things that were difficult or impossible for us to accept, but who had profound genius and founded a religion and cultural tradition that was not based on the sword but whose name – “Islam” – signified peace and reconciliation.”*

Karen Armstrong has also referred to Chapter 25 Luqman verse 63 and has called Muslims as “men and women of peace”. Complete English translation of the verse is: *“And the servants of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, Peace.”*

Throughout her book she has used the word *hilm* (or kindness) as against *Jahiliyya* (or arrogance). In fact Peace or *salam* is crux of Islamic teachings. In other words it is the spirit of peacefulness which permeates throughout its teachings and practices. For instance the moment we wake up in the morning we say *assalamo alaikum* “peace be on you” to the people at home. At the end of each five daily prayer and in all ritual prayers we say *assalamo alaikum wa rahmatullah*. Again in sitting posture before the end of the prayer we send salutations and blessings not only on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his followers but also on Prophet Abraham and his followers. Are

not the Jews and Christians followers of Prophet Abraham? Then why do we believe that in the final triumph of Islam people of other faiths will be killed? Similarly when we meet each other anywhere we greet each other with *assalamo alaikum*. Even when we visit any graveyard we say *assalamo alaikum yaa ahlal qaboor* (Peace be on you, o inmates of the graves) to the deceased persons. This kind gesture has struck a Christian writer. But the big question mark is why it has not become hallmark of our character? We verbally utter these words scores of times during the day but its spirit has not touched our hearts and has not brought any change in our behaviour.

The month of Ramadan comes every year to remind and rekindle this kind gesture of humiliation and well-being in us so that it may become part and parcel of our way of life. Allah wishes us to realise the significance of these fine qualities by repeatedly referring to the accountability of our actions – actions of our mouths, actions of our hands, actions of our feet. This is how the Qur'an draws our attention to it:

“That day We shall seal their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness as to what they earned.” (Chapter 55:65).

In short all the principles and practices of Islam are aimed at creating realisation in a person to shun evil, do good deeds, maintain justice and promote human welfare. In the second sermon on every Friday day, on both Eids and even on every solemn occasion such as performing of marriage we repeat these objects as an essential part of the sermon. The purpose is to keep on reminding a Muslim that all his worship and good deeds must have these objectives in view and such a life of virtue and humane service will earn everlasting rewards in the form of Paradise. The English translation of the Qur'anic verse recited on these occasions is as follows: **“Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good to others and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion. He admonishes you that you may be mindful.” (16:90).**

In my humble view Ramadan provides us an opportunity to practise, though on a small scale, all that is good for strengthening one's inner self and to fulfil his moral and social obligations.

Brothers and Sisters!

Ramadan in a way provides us a touch of every practical aspect of Islamic teachings, which if put into practice in our daily lives will definitely make it peaceful and rewarding. I would like to end this sermon with these inspiring supplications of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) which were presented by my grandfather, the late Maulana Aftab ud Din Ahmad, Imam of the Shah Jehan

Mosque Woking, at the World Congress of Faith's meeting held in Cambridge University in 1938.

“O God! You are the Author of peace, and from You comes peace. Blessed are You, O Lord of Glory and Honour!

“O God! Bring affection between us and reform us and open for us the paths of peace, and take us out of the spheres of darkness into light, and save us from overt and hidden sins, and bless us in what we hear, and in what we feel. And accept our repentance. For surely You are He Who accepts repentance.

“O God! We ask of You steadfastness in our pursuits. We ask of You the intent for good action and power to thank You for Your benevolence, and the power to render You devoted service. We ask of You the tongue that speaks truth, and the heart that entertains no misgivings and the gift of fellow-feeling.”

Rab-ba-naa ta-qab-bal min-naa, in-na-ka an-tas sa-mee-'ul 'a-leem.

O our Lord! Accept our supplications as You are the best in accepting prayers and You are the best Judge Who knows what is good or harmful for us.

Thank you for your patience and I wish you all a very hearty Eid Mubaarak.

TAHAJJUD PRAYERS

by **Maulana Muhammad Ali**
From his biography

Maulana Muhammad Ali concentrated profoundly, to the highest degree, when saying his prayers. He gave importance to saying prayers in congregation, of course, but his practice of saying the *tahajjud* prayer, a habit acquired in his youth, was so firm that he did not miss this prayer for the rest of his life. Whether he was travelling or ill, he said his *tahajjud* prayer without fail and always exhorted the *Jama'at* in forceful, passionate words to adhere to this prayer. Even during illness he would wake up at *tahajjud* time and if he could not rise out of bed he would say his prayer sitting or lying in bed. In 1950, when he suffered the most serious heart attacks and the doctors declared it as absolutely essential for him to sleep as much as possible, he still would wake up for the *tahajjud* prayer. In severe pain the doctors had to give him injections to sedate him but even then he would be awake at the time of the *tahajjud* prayer despite the effects of the injection. A Christian nurse who was

attending him in those days remarked that he must be a "saint" to worship so much on his sick bed. His children, near relations staying with him, and travelling companions were all witnesses to the fact that in the later part of the night, in seclusion, he would be falling before God the Most High in prayer. Whenever anyone woke, he or she would hear a melodious, wonderful sound of heart-felt crying and supplicating, which included glorification, praise and sanctification of the Almighty. God alone knows if at that time he was in this world or in another world, but his voice was like that of one who is cut off from this world and all its trappings, and was elsewhere, having lost himself in the Divine Being, and expressing before Him the pain and concern in his heart. This was a picture of what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had expressed in a poetic verse as follows:

"At this time of affliction [for Islam], we the helpless have no remedy,

But to pray in the morning and cry before dawn."

Once a lady guest of Maulana Muhammad Ali's wife, belonging to a family who were well known for their hostility to the Ahmadiyya Movement, stayed for one night in their house. Before leaving she disclosed to the Maulana's wife that she had stayed there purposely in order to know the real truth, at home, about Maulana Muhammad Ali's reputation for religious observance. She had stood outside the room where he had just started saying his *tahajjud* prayers and observed him through the slightly open door. She related:

"He was reciting the Holy Quran with utter humility. I could hear some echo of his voice. He stood for so long that I got tired. At long last he went into *ruku* and was in that posture for a considerable time. Then he went into *sajda* and spent an equally long time in that position. I could not stand any longer, and I found a stool and sat on it. He raised his head from *sajda* at long last and then went into the second *sajda* for a long time. As he had taken more than half an hour in the first *rak'a* of the prayer, I could not wait any further and went back to bed. Sometime later I again went to have a look, and saw him still at prayer. Many hours later, when the call for the *fajr* prayer was sounded, he went to the mosque. I am now sure that he is not an ordinary man but a saint of God. I came here with many doubts and ill-feelings [about Ahmadis], but I am leaving after being deeply convinced of his righteousness and greatness."

BASHSHAAR

(Bringer of Glad Tidings)

Layout & Design: Farhaz Khan

MESSAGE ON THE 'BURN A QURAN DAY'

by *Hazrat Ameer*

Prof. Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed

Ameer and President

Worldwide Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

A Message to all the people of the World

Quran Burning

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

'Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian.'

[The Holy Quran, Al-Hijr (The Rock) 15:9]

The insane threats of Quran burning by Pastor Terry Jones are an example of extreme bigotry against another religion. Islam, a religion which stands second in the world after Christianity based on the number of adherents, is being portrayed by this person as an extremist religion. The paradox is that he who dubs Muslims as extremists and sets out to burn the Holy Scripture of Islam forgets that he is an extremist himself.

The Muslims as well as non-Muslims, leaders as well as common people, scholars as well as the illiterates; citizens of many Nations and their peoples have condemned the very thought of such an act as 'an act of intolerance' and 'provocation' and 'aggression'.

The world at large has taken a sigh of relief as the Pastor has 'retracted' his threat to burn the Holy Quran. He may have gained some mileage through his evil plan with some like-minded fanatics; but the majority of Muslims have a strong belief in the Quranic verse that I have cited above. The truth is that Quran is not a name of a collection of bound papers but a Book that is preserved respectfully in the minds, hearts and souls of every adherent to Islam. And it is also revered by many non-Muslims. So much is the love of this Book that as expression of love for it even the dots in Arabic scripture, the language in which the Holy Quran was revealed, have been counted to 1,015,030.

I do not for a moment suggest that counting the dots was the purpose of the Revelation of this Book. The main purpose lies in acting on the injunctions laid down by the Book that matters. However it does mean that a person who counted

loved the Revelation from the core of his heart and that is what matters. It is such hearts that have been hurt by the senseless stance the Pastor adopted.

As a Muslim, I would be swayed by my devotion to the Holy Quran but let me quote a non-Muslim source on this matter:

‘However often we turn to it [the Qur’an] at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds, and in the end enforces our reverence. Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim is stern, grand, terrible; ever and anon truly sublime. Thus this book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.’ (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Quoted in TP Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam, p. 526)

This Book was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who God had chosen to guide the entire mankind and bring them out of darkness into light. Though in the name of freedom of press and speech this great person is much maligned; there are many fair-minded persons who revere him even when they are not Muslims. I quote below an example of a tribute paid to Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him:

‘My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.’ (Michael H. Hart, The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, New York, Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, p. 33.)

Then there is the matter of Muslims as fanatics. I fully agree that some of those who call themselves Muslims are misguided or exploited and do some mad things in the name of Religion. A ‘bad Muslim’ does not make Islam bad just like a ‘bad Christian’ does not make Christianity bad. In this matter I would quote another non-Muslim who plays the game by fair rules:

‘History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.’ (De Lacy O’Leary, Islam at the Crossroads, London, 1923, p. 8.)

Now let me draw the attention of the fair-minded people to what the Holy Quran has to say about the various Religions of the world and I quote verse 2:62:

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.”

(My interpretation of Sabians is that it encompasses all the Religions of the world that believe in God and the Last Day. It excludes cults created as religion by men to serve their own interests and personal gain).

So, such is the teaching of the Holy Quran which the Pastor planned to burn. It is stated that one who wears dark spectacles sees everything dark. It is time that the Reverend removed his spectacle and read the Holy Quran with an open mind; not just study and quote ‘out of context verses’ to incite hatred and rebellion amongst the peoples of the world. This world is a place created for all and ‘God is far, far too big to fit into just one religion’ especially the ‘one’ the Pastor advocates and uses it to gain popularity by doing senseless acts.

I request all Muslims to practice the Holy Quran’s true teachings and not be misled by the false interpretations and misinterpretations of selected verses, out of context. Any religion that teaches hatred cannot be a religion from God Who has ordained Mercy for Himself; He has placed His two attributes, *Al-Rahman* (The most MERCIFUL) and *Al-Rahim* (The most COMPASSIONATE) in the beginning of this Blessed Book.

Questions I ask are:

‘Can a Merciful and Compassionate God advocate senseless killing?’

‘Can the One Who calls Himself as *Rabb-ul-Aalamin* (Lord of the Worlds) be partial to Muslims, Christians, Jews or Sabians only?’

As we revere the Holy Quran and follow its teachings we should also make an effort to remove all the misunderstandings about Islam that are being portrayed in the world, especially the West.

As the Holy Quran has been revealed by Allah for all mankind and its protection is assured by Him, as the verses above state, this message is not only for Lahori Ahmadis who have the sole mission of spreading Islam through the teachings of the Holy Quran, it is for all people who dwell in this global village. If today, hatred for Islam has incited some

people to plan the burning of the Holy Quran, this would only reflect the intolerance of the very people who stand there declaring that Islam is intolerant.

It is time for all the residents of this global village to realise that misinterpretation of Quranic verses by some of those who profess Islam do not make these verses 'unholy'. All Scriptures have to be interpreted in the context of their revelation, otherwise, many, including the Bible and the Bhagavada Gita, have passages in them in which killing enemies while fighting is allowed. Just like we, as Muslims, interpret them in context it would be fair to ask the non-Muslims not to lose sight of the context in which the Quranic verses were revealed.

I appeal to the worldwide community to abandon aggressive and extreme steps like the sacrilege of Holy Books to score points against one another. Burning of pages neither brings us closer together nor closer to our common goal of a peaceful world for all to reside in. Following the teachings of our Scriptures, however, will unite us, as all Religions teach love, peace and harmony amongst the people created by *Rabb-ul-Aalamin*, the Lord of the Worlds (Not *Rabb-ul-Muslimeen* [Lord of the Muslims] or *Rabb of another Religion*).

The protection of the Holy Quran we leave to Allah who says: **'Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian.'**

All Muslims should make an effort to protect it and its honour by being good and practical followers of its teachings and teachings of Islam (literally meaning Peace and Submission to God).

I pray for a better understanding amongst all religions and all the peoples of the world. I pray for those facing difficulties resulting from misdeeds of some who call themselves Muslims but don't practise Islam.

I pray for the souls of all those, Muslims and non-Muslims, who lost their lives in the tragic events of 9/11 and the relatives they left behind. AMEN.

Meet our President MRS NUR JEHAN ALAM

Born in Fiji Islands to Dr Abdul Habib and Mrs Chand Bibi Sahu-Khan, Nur migrated with her family to Australia in 1963. After competing her BA and Dip Ed (Primary), Nur travelled extensively in Europe and Asia before returning to Australia to complete her MA in History and to marry the love of her life, Mohammad Bashir Alam, a Pakistani national, in 1980. Her work career spanned 22 years in the financial services industry. One of her roles, amongst others, was Support Services Manager which included the role of Head of Training and Development, Customer Services at Westpac Financial Services. Nur has held many board appointments, including NSW President Australian Customer Service Association. She was recognised for her contributions to Customer Service by being invited to be a member of International Who's Who of Professionals in 2000.

Nur, a mother of three, was widowed in 2002 and is at the moment working with the community, especially new migrants and refugees, as the President of Auburn Community Development Network, She has been President of ACDN since 2008.

Nur, along with her parents, was a founding member of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Sydney Australia in 1989 and throughout the years has held various positions on the AAIL Board. She was elected the first female president in 2011 of the AAIL, now an incorporated body. She is passionate about serving humanity and promoting the Unity of God. She also devotes time to writing stories, short plays, poetry and other business interests. Nur belongs to the Auburn Poets' & Writers' Group, NSW Writers Association, WOW – BG (World of Words – Burwood Group), which is a group of women from many different cultural backgrounds sharing stories and being a support to each other as well as being Co-director of Abes Babes, a group dedicated to promoting understanding between various religious groups.

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