



Global Lectures

Mubarak Speeches Series – Part 2

Global Lectures - Mubarak Speeches Series - Part 2

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Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park

By His Highness the Aga Khan, Cairo, Egypt · 25 March 2005



Bi-'smi Llahi 'r-Rahmani 'r-Rahim

Madame Mubarak, Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Twenty-one years ago we had a vision that launched us on a journey of inquiry, exploration and discovery that took us through some 1,000 years of history of this extraordinary city.

It was a journey in which we engaged with historians, archeologists, architects and horticulturalists. We worked with engineers, statisticians, sociologists and urban planners. We met with neighbourhood residents and businessmen, artisans and entrepreneurs, young people and old.

Like some of the great Muslim explorers such as Al-Idrisi, Al-Baruni or Ibn Batuta, our journey of discovery was an act of faith. We did not know what lay ahead, other than excitement and unpredictability. And we knew that it could be enthralling but would require patience, determination and tenacity.

The path we followed has led us finally to this evening, at the inauguration of this magnificent park with so many who have contributed to this historic achievement. Thank you all so much for being here. And thank you for your support.

There are too many people to thank individually. Let me start by expressing my warmest appreciation to President and Mrs. Mubarak. Without your support and commitment, our journey would not have gone beyond the first step.

Let me also thank the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hoshni, and his ministry; the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the present Secretary-General Dr. Zahi Hawass and his predecessor, Dr. Gaballah; the Governorate of Cairo, the current Governor Dr. Abdel Azim Wazier and his predecessors, Dr. Abdel Rahim Shehata and Omar Abdel Akher. I also want to acknowledge the Egyptian Ambassadors to France who were so helpful in the early stages of the project.

Her Excellency Madame Suzanne Mubarak understood from the very beginning we were creating not just a park - as great an achievement as that would be. The First Lady recognised we were giving birth to a catalyst for social, economic and cultural renewal and improvement that would grow for many years to come. She knew it would have far-reaching consequences for the urban fabric of one of the city's most historic, yet poorest neighbourhoods, touching some 200,000 individuals. The agencies of the Egyptian government were quick to see that as well, and they helped to create the enabling environment that made the project achievable.

Our experience in creating Al-Azhar Park has taught us important new lessons that will contribute to the international body of knowledge about preservation and development in world heritage cities, a substantial portion of them in the Muslim world.

We already have similar, if somewhat smaller-scale initiatives underway in the Stone Town in Zanzibar, at Bagh-e-Babur in Kabul, Afghanistan, and we will soon launch projects in Djenne and Mopti in Mali.

A fundamental lesson, which reinforced our experience in other countries, is that public-private partnerships can be effective mechanisms for enhancing the value of underused, unappreciated or even unknown social, cultural and economic assets.

The private, not-for-profit entities of The Aga Khan Development Network, led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, have been able to forge effective partnerships with government agencies at all levels here in Egypt and with a range of international, national and local NGOs and institutions. Without them, this project would not have been successful.

I would include here, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, the World Monuments Fund, the French Institute of Archaeology, the city of Stuttgart and the newest donor, the Social Fund for Development.

A second fundamental lesson is that when embarking on a project of this complexity we must be prepared for the unpredictability of discovery. There will be delays and added costs, but there will also be new and interesting opportunities. And each opportunity must be assessed to ensure it brings additional value at acceptable cost.

This, after all, is a project that cost several times the original budget and took more than 20 years from vision to realisation.

This is because what started as one project actually turned into three: the design and construction of a park, the restoration of the Ayyubid Wall, and the community redevelopment of the historically-important Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood. All are tightly interconnected and have added to the body of knowledge we can share with others.

Here in the park for example, we faced major engineering challenges in adapting the site. Then we had to select plants that would thrive in arid local conditions. The American University of Cairo established an off-site nursery for propagation and testing and as a result, the number of species planted is a new benchmark for park spaces in the region.

The Ayyubid Wall presented another particular challenge because so much of it had been covered by centuries of debris. We did not know how long it was, or how deep. We did not understand the complexity of the structure, or what archeological treasures it contained.

Portions of the wall had been buried for 500 years or more since the time of the Mamluks. We also found sections where buildings had seriously encroached on the wall.

These discoveries required detailed pilot investigations, in partnership with the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The result was unique policies aimed at avoiding harm to archeological sites, respecting cultural heritage and safeguarding authenticity.

That in turn helped us develop appropriate training for local craftsmen and artisans to shape their skills and to apply them to this project.

The lessons from Darb al-Ahmar are a compelling case study of the complex interactions that result from restoration in a densely-populated and historically-sensitive urban area. It is a story that continues to unfold and will do so for many years to come.

We found Darb al-Ahmar to be a resilient community with a large pool of skilled workers and small entrepreneurs. We were able to engage them in the restoration of houses and schools and the rebuilding of minarets that had long ago disappeared from the Cairo skyline.

Another lesson here was the important role that microfinance could play in helping residents of this community lift themselves beyond subsistence, enabling them to grow businesses and upgrade the quality of their living conditions.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a long and interesting journey of discovery that has brought us to this evening. Many projects continue and there are, no doubt, many surprises to come and many more lessons to be learned.

I look forward to that because this process has been particularly satisfying for me from a very personal perspective.

In our excavations and our historical investigations, I constantly have been reminded that we were touching the very foundations of my ancestors, the Fatimids, and the pluralistic history and intellectual profile of this city and this country to which they contributed so profoundly.

I am very humbled by the opportunity to return to Cairo, founded over a thousand years ago by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muiz, to build on that history.

Thirty-five generations later, through the work done here by my institutions, it is my prayer that this park will be a continuing contribution to the people of this great city."

Thank you.

Mawlana Hazir Imam Speech at Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park

Cairo, Egypt · March 25, 2005

By: Anila Surani

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/04072024-inauguration-of-al-azhar-park-2005-03-25/lesson/watch-lecture-video-144/>

Under a dusty mix of sand and pollution, Cairo looks like a crowded patchwork of old, worn-out buildings in shades of grey and brown. The Egyptian capital, with 17 million people, covers 350 square kilometers on both sides of the Nile, making it one of the most packed cities globally. Unlike London's Hyde Park or New York's Central Park that offer a break from the hustle, Cairo lacks such open spaces, leaving residents to deal with the continuous crowds, traffic, and noise.





Beyond the architectural splendour, however, problems were apparent. Roofs piled with debris. Garbage strewn in the narrow streets. Buildings falling apart. Poor people crammed in miserable conditions. No greenery.

In 969, Fatimid general Jawhar Al Siqili successfully invaded Egypt, establishing a new city called al-Manṣūriyyah northeast of Fustat. Upon Imam al-Mu'izz's arrival from the old Fatimid capital of Mahdia, Tunisia in 973, he bestowed upon the city its current name, Qāhirat al-Mu'izz ("The Vanquisher of al-Mu'izz"), from which the name "Cairo" (al-Qāhira) originated.

This marked a pivotal moment influencing Africa's beliefs, culture, and politics, resonating across Asia, Central Africa, and Europe.

The Fatimids' religious tolerance fostered cultural integration, blending African Maghreb, Sudan, Central Africa, Damascus, Baghdad, and Egypt's influences. Cairo, strategically situated, thrived economically and culturally due to the Fatimids' navy and Mediterranean seaports.



(The original Fatimid-period mihrab inside the al-Azhar Mosque)

The construction of al-Azhar Mosque was commissioned by order of the Imam, which developed into the world's oldest Islamic university, attracting scholars globally.

The Fatimid Caliphs championed knowledge, establishing the Palace Library housing 200,000 books and “Dar al-Hikma” for scientific research, where eminent scholars like Ibn al-Haytham contributed to astronomy, mathematics, and medicine.



Cairo's textiles gained international renown. By the twelfth century, Cairo emerged as a hub for world civilizations, fostering scientific and cultural exchanges.

Fatimid architecture adorned Cairo with alabaster and granite, featuring Islamic sculpture, inlaid panels, and vibrant chandeliers.

Original, splendid buildings characterized the city, epitomizing craftsmanship and ushering in a golden era of intellectual and artistic flourishing.



(Facade of Aqmar Mosque)

Al-Azhar Mosque: Originally constructed by order of the Imam, became the world's oldest Islamic university, renowned for attracting scholars globally.

Fatimid Caliphs' support for knowledge: Established the Palace Library housing 200,000 books and "Dar al-Hikma" for scientific research.

Scholars and contributions: Eminent scholars like Ibn al-Haytham contributed to astronomy, mathematics, and medicine.

Cairo's textile industry: Gained international renown by the twelfth century.

Cairo as a hub for civilizations: Emerged as a center for scientific and cultural exchanges.

Fatimid architecture in Cairo: Adorned the city with alabaster and granite buildings featuring Islamic sculpture, inlaid panels, and vibrant chandeliers.

Splendid buildings characterize Cairo: Incorporated craftsmanship, ushering in a golden era of intellectual and artistic flourishing.

In 1984, the Imam visited Cairo for a conference called “The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo” which was organized by his agency, the Aga Khan Prize for Architecture.

After meeting with prominent architects, urban planners and development experts at the conference, the Imam announced a decision to finance a park. **“It seemed that here, in Cairo, the best gift that could be left behind would be to create a public space in this city which was in great need of public spaces,”** he said.



“Twenty-one years ago we had a vision that launched us on a journey of inquiry, exploration and discovery that took us through some 1,000 years of history of this extraordinary city.

It was a journey in which we engaged with historians, archeologists, architects and horticulturalists. We worked with engineers, statisticians, sociologists and urban planners. We met with neighbourhood residents and businessmen, artisans and entrepreneurs, young people and old.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“Like some of the great Muslim explorers such as Al-Idrisi, Al-Biruni or Ibn Batuta, **our journey of discovery was an act of faith.** We did not know what lay ahead, other than excitement and unpredictability. And we knew that it could be enthralling but would require patience, determination and tenacity.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“The path we followed has led us finally to this evening, at the inauguration of this magnificent park with so many who have contributed to this historic achievement. Thank you all so much for being here.

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- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“Over the last seven years, the Aga Khan teams have become part of the local community and they will stay on, even after the restoration of the wall is finished, to carry on giving Darb Al-Ahmar support, to help create **what the Aga Khan calls “an enabling environment”, where hope and self-sufficiency and the civil society can flourish.** For the Aga Khan believes firmly that there is no point in restoring a physical environment without also facing up to the surrounding social issues; only by addressing them can development be effective and lasting.”
(Transcript of the Round Table Discussion at the opening of al-Azhar Park, The Art Newspaper)



Before and After picture of Al-Azhar Park



“Several years ago, I went to Cairo and saw the Al-Azhar Park, where the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has taken medieval rubble and garbage to create an exquisite place of gardens, trees, plants, and picnic grounds for the people of Cairo. To me this garden is a metaphor for what the Aga Khan Development Network does: the creation of beauty, utility and inclusiveness out of garbage, desecration and indifference. I will never forget that day wandering in that park watching the families enjoy the green space that Cairo has never had before”.

Speech by the Honorable Adrienne Clarkston at Convocation of Trinity College at the University of Toronto on 25th November 2013

“Her Excellency Madame Suzanne Mubarak understood from the very beginning we were creating not just a park - as great an achievement as that would be. **The First Lady recognised we were giving birth to a catalyst for social, economic and cultural renewal and improvement that would grow for many years to come.** She knew it would have far-reaching consequences for the urban fabric of one of the city's most historic, yet poorest neighbourhoods, touching some 200,000 individuals. The agencies of the Egyptian government were quick to see that as well, and they helped to create the enabling environment that made the project achievable.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

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This is because what started as one project actually turned into three: **the design and construction of a park, the restoration of the Ayyubid Wall, and the community redevelopment of the historically important Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood. All are tightly interconnected and have added to the body of knowledge we can share with others.”**

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

Al-Azhar Park sits on a high point overlooking Darb Al-Ahmar. More than 655,000 plants and trees have been planted, including date palms, royal palms, hibiscus, sycamores, blackthorns and acacias. Their colorful tones offer a striking contrast to the brown-coloured buildings.



“Here in the park for example, we faced major engineering challenges in adapting the site. Then we had to select plants that would thrive in arid local conditions. The American University of Cairo established an off-site nursery for propagation and testing and **as a result, the number of species planted is a new benchmark for park spaces in the region.**”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

Al-Azhar Park became the LUNG of Cairo

“They were always complaining about illnesses and lung problems and now the people who had the worst living conditions have probably the best view in Cairo and they appreciate that,” said Al-Rashidi, an urban planner and architectural historian working on the project since 1997.



In a paragraph of *Book of Healing* by Allamah Nasir al-Din Nasir Hunzai, he mentions that one form of self-healing and internal remedy comes through experiencing a beautiful garden:

“The holy Qur'an says: ‘We cause to grow with it (water) well planted orchards full of beauty and delight’. (27:60). God be praised! The heart-soothing beauty of gardens, whether it is newly sprouted verdure or the emerald floor, flower-scattering trees and scent-sifting pleasant breeze under the cool shade, the singing of melodious birds, the swinging of the branches of the weeping willow, the swaying of the poplar, **all these and many other alluring scenes are included in the beauty of a garden, seeing which the melancholy of the heart disappears. And this is an essential remedy.**”

The design of the park is organised around a marble and limestone walkway that cuts through the centre of the park. Eight metres wide and flanked by rows of royal palms, it directs the eye to a stunning view of the Mohammad Ali Mosque and the Citadel built on a bluff overlooking the Nile and the pyramids beyond.



Bubbling fountains, pools and water channels flow along this promenade, which proceeds through a series of formal gardens and branches off into seating areas furnished with white marble benches and custom-designed marble lamps.



The park includes a lake, a children's playground, an amphitheatre and sports fields.



“Our experience in creating Al-Azhar Park has taught us important new lessons that will contribute to the international body of knowledge about preservation and development in world heritage cities, a substantial portion of them in the Muslim world.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“The Ayyubid Wall presented another particular challenge because so much of it had been covered by centuries of debris. We did not know how long it was, or how deep. We did not understand the complexity of the structure, or what archeological treasures it contained. Portions of the wall had been buried for 500 years or more since the time of the Mamluks. We also found sections where buildings had seriously encroached on the wall.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

In 1996, as workers cleared 80,000 truckloads of sand and rubble, they made a wonderful archeological discovery. A 1.5-kilometre section of the fortification that had once encircled the old city had been buried up to its crenellated battlements.

The discovery was a turning point for the project. Realizing they would have to restore the houses beside the wall, the Aga Khan team decided to expand the project to include revitalization of Darb al-Ahmar.



“Today, after the grading works for the Azhar Park, the major portion of the remaining Ayyubid wall is once again emerging over a length of approximately 1,500 meters from Bab al-Wazir to al-Azhar Street, forming the boundary between the Darb al-Ahmar district and the Park. The outer face of the wall is now exposed to view and to natural elements.”

(Aga Khan Trust for Culture)



“The lessons from Darb al-Ahmar are a compelling case study of the complex interactions that result from restoration in a densely-populated and historically-sensitive urban area. It is a story that continues to unfold and will do so for many years to come.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

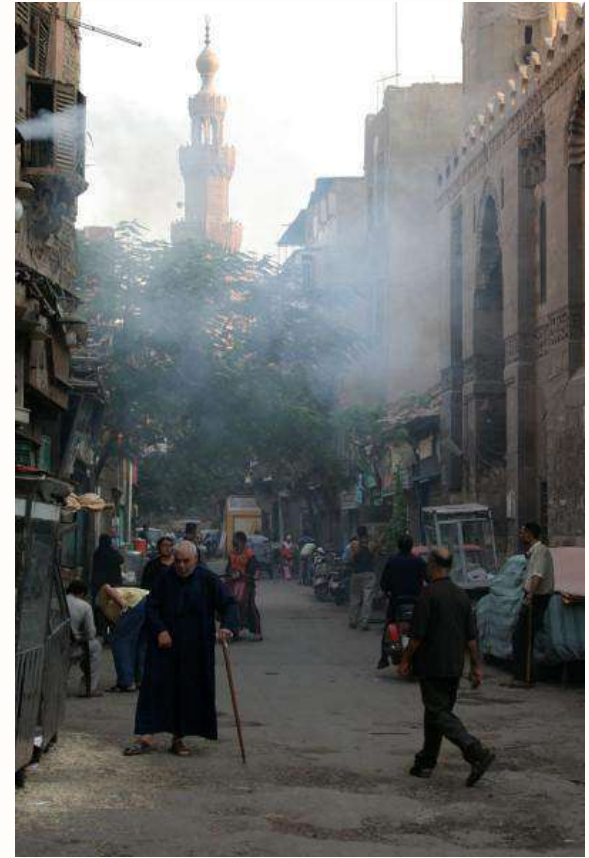
In the Middle Ages, this part of the city was the cultural, religious and intellectual center of the Arab world. Philosophy, physics, mathematics and the arts flourished. Hundreds of works of architecture of remarkable design and craftsmanship lined the streets. The decline began about a century ago when the wealthy merchant families who had dwelt there for centuries moved to fashionable new European-style quarters.



The Darb al-Ahmar district, which means “the Red Road” in Arabic, was considered one of the city’s worst slums. Rent controls, absentee landlords, thousands of squatters, and earthquakes have all contributed to a scenario where buildings are crumbling and in some cases have collapsed and killed people.

Anyone who could afford to, has moved out, making Darb Al-Ahmar one of the poorer areas of the city. Garbage is piled in the streets and courtyards. Plumbing and sewers are inadequate. Typically four to six family members live in three rooms, and the average person earns about a dollar a day.

“There was not a lot for children,” said Abeer Dergham, 28, a youth worker who grew up in Darb al-Ahmar. “They play in the street, fight and swear. I see the children very thin, not good skin. They are not clean. **I think it is changing.**”



The first thing the Aga Khan team did was conduct a survey of the community. It revealed that contrary to popular opinion, crime was negligible and the majority of the population were long-time residents who liked the area and helped each other. The community included many skilled workers and small enterprises. More than 80 per cent said they wanted to stay.

“When we started the project one of the mandates was to listen to local people,” said the Aga Khan. “They helped us understand their needs. We met with neighborhood residents and businessmen, artisans and entrepreneurs, young people and old.”



“We found Darb al-Ahmar to be a resilient community with a large pool of skilled workers and small entrepreneurs. We were able to engage them in the restoration of houses and schools and the rebuilding of minarets that had long ago disappeared from the Cairo skyline.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

A school built into the historic wall has been converted into a community center with two libraries, a computer lab, an employment center and an outdoor cinema. Activities such as choirs, theatre troupe and art classes help children climb the social ladder.

A row of renovated houses freshly painted in yellow, pink and blue stand along the wall that divides Darb al-Ahmar from the park. “Most of these were in terrible condition,” said Al-Rashidi. Workers repaired cracks and rotting wood, replastered façades, and replaced pipes.



Hundreds of young men and women in Darb al-Ahmar have found work in the park, in horticulture and on project teams through job training and apprenticeships, restoring the wall and monuments. “Project leaders brought in the best stonecutters and copper artisans and tile makers, and other master craftsmen to teach locals the ancient crafts,” said Michel de Salaberry, Canada’s former ambassador to Egypt.



“People were very suspicious at first when we said we were creating a park,” recalled Al-Rashidi. “They always thought what we wanted to do was demolish the area. They often said ‘Just tell us the truth. We won’t be upset but we want to know so that we prepare ourselves mentally.’”



“Another lesson here was the important role that microfinance could play in helping residents of this community **lift themselves beyond subsistence**, enabling them to grow businesses **and upgrade the quality of their living conditions.**”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

Many old neighborhoods, such as Darb al-Ahmar, have been taken over by rural migrants, the Imam said, in an interview with journalists. **“By working in historic cities, you’re actually moving to support the poor of the poorest. By upgrading them, you get new economic opportunities and you cause the process of change to occur.”**

“Giving people confidence in their hope is the most driving force for change. Being able to live in an environment of hope, that changes society completely.”



“Ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a long and interesting journey of discovery that has brought us to this evening. Many projects continue and there are, no doubt, many surprises to come and many more lessons to be learned.

I look forward to that **because this process has been particularly satisfying for me from a very personal perspective.**”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“In many parts of the world the Islamic heritage has not been seen as an asset,” said the Aga Khan. “Whole generations have been brought up to see their inheritance as a liability. That’s why highways are being put through historic cities and extraordinary buildings are being destroyed. **We sensed very early on that we had to build new values.**”

The challenge for al-Azhar Park was to show that the park need not be a drain on the city’s limited financial resources **but could actually stimulate new economic activity through tourism and urban renewal.**

“We want to show that if this is put together with care, it ceases to be charity but actually creates economic resources based on cultural assets,” said the Aga Khan.



“In our excavations and our historical investigations, I constantly have been reminded that we were touching the very foundations of my ancestors, the Fatimids, and the pluralistic history and intellectual profile of this city and this country to which they contributed so profoundly.

I am very humbled by the opportunity to return to Cairo, founded over a thousand years ago by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muizz, to build on that history.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

“There is an often quoted ayat [of the Qur’an] which says that **you should leave the world in a better environment than you found it. You have a responsibility of legacy of God’s creation of the world, to improve that legacy from generation to generation. So there’s an ethical premise to it.**”

- Imam Shah Karim Aga Khan IV, (A Garden in Cairo, 2008)



“In much of Islamic architecture you find a sense of spirituality. You find that spirituality not only in religious buildings. If you think of the history of landscape architecture and you relate that to references to heaven in the Qur’an, **you find very strong statements about the value of the environment, the response to the senses, to scent, to noise, music or water.”**

- Imam Shah Karim Aga Khan IV, (The Processes of Change, 2007)



“The existence of the Park is proof of brotherhood, proof of aspiration towards moving towards a common goal which is **to create in Cairo a place which is beautiful where all generations could find happiness and peace, where all people from different economic levels could feel comfortable as they perambulate throughout this space....**

And I want to assure you that until the Park is fully developed, the Wall fully restored, I will continue to watch over this project like a father watching a child grow up. And one day this child will walk on its own, with its own decisions and it will move forwards determining its own future.”

- Imam Shah Karim Aga Khan IV, (Event at the Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park, 2005)



Twenty-one years later, al-Azhar Park has risen miraculously from the site of a 500-year-old garbage dump. It is a 78-acre expanse of lawns, colourful flowers, fountains and paved walkways. Its hilly topography offers spectacular views of the surrounding medieval district.

“This is a totally unique historic gift,” the Imam told the Citizen. “It was a gift of a dumpsite, no buildings on it, desperately poor people around it, but critically situated right in the heart of historic Cairo.”

Today, mothers and young children visit the playground during the day. In the evening, workers arrive to meet friends. Families picnic. Young couples stroll. The park has become a popular venue for wedding photos.



“Thirty-five generations later, through the work done here by my institutions, it is my prayer that this park will be a continuing contribution to the people of this great city.”

- *Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park*

Just as how the Imam has put so much effort, emphasis, care, and love in transforming a barren desert of trash and misery into a paradisaal garden of beauty, water, and endless happiness, let us pray that may Mawla transform our hearts into such a garden of fragrant flowers, plentiful shade, flowing water (4:57), beautiful pavilions (55:72), and abundant fruit (36:57) just as how he established Al-Azhar Park. May Mawla renovate and restore our iman and faith to be as strong as a powerful, secure, and un-broken wall just as how he restored the Ayyubid Wall. Our Imam is truly that blessed garden, the Sanctuary. "Have We not established a sure sanctuary, whereunto the fruits of all things are brought, a provision from Our presence? But most of them know not" (28:57). It is the Imam who is the real sanctuary of God's sacred light and the hidden house of the secrets of His tawhid, where all the flowers and fruits of every season and every country are flourishing and prosperous in his self. May the Imam's pure and divine running river of ilmu'l-yaqin be that source of transformation upon our dormant hearts, to grow the seed of Ism-i Azam which will Insha'Allah be the means by which the Imam will bestow Nawruz upon our souls and transform our Personal World into a populated Sanctuary just as how he gave life and beauty back to the neighborhood of Darb al-Ahmar. Ya Mawla, always keep us with you in your Heavenly Garden, in your Sacred Sanctuary, in your Paradise. Ameen! Shukr Mawla

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Slide 26: aldarbahmar.com

Slide 27: aldarbahmar.com

Slide 29: aldarbahmar.com

Slide 30: traveladventures.org

Slide 31: traveladventures.org

Slide 33: tadamun.co

Slide 34: AKF / Christopher Wilton-Steer

Slide 35: tadamun.co

Slide 37: AKF / Christopher Wilton-Steer

Slide 39: ismaili.net

Slide 41: ismailimail.blog

Slide 42: Héctor de Pereda (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/hdepereda/4823491478>)

Slide 43: AKDN / Christian Richters

Slide 44: azharpark.com



Commonwealth Press Union Conference in Cape Town, South Africa

17 October 1996, Cape Town, South Africa

Mr Chairman,
My Lords,
Distinguished guests,
Members of the Commonwealth Press Union,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an enormous pleasure for me to join you today. I only wish I could have attended all of your sessions, for your programme touches on many subjects which are of great interest to me, and your speakers have included an impressive array of distinguished personalities.

In fact, as I looked at the long list of those who have already come to this podium, I wondered whether you would have any capacity left to absorb whatever I might say!

It was a great comfort, therefore, to see that, as the first speaker on the morning after a day of R & R, I could attack you while you were still fresh!

As I prepared for this talk I also wondered whether you would have the foggiest notion of why I was invited to this conference.

Who is the Aga Khan after all — and what is he doing here?

Some of you may have known that my title — which I have held since 1957 — means that I am the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. But I suspect that this phrase only makes my appearance here seem even more incongruous.

Others may have seen my name connected with the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds — but this connection will also seem incongruous for many of you and won't help much at all in explaining my place on this programme.

Still others of you may have heard me described as a “paper tiger”, in a recent book by that name which portrayed a long list of international publishing figures — thus the pun on the term “paper tiger”. We were all people whom the author took to be “media moguls”.

I am not sure whether it is better to be called a “media mogul” or a “paper tiger”. Personally, I would prefer to have been called a mogul tiger!

Perhaps all of these incongruities will seem less puzzling if I point out that, in the Islamic tradition, there is no sharp separation of the spiritual and material worlds — which is so pronounced in some faiths. For all Muslims, the concepts of *din* and *dunya* — faith and world — are inextricably linked. So it is not such a surprising or incongruous thing for a Muslim leader also to be involved in the world of business, the world of sport, the world of science — or the world of publishing.

Nor does it seem incongruous for me to be speaking to an audience which represents large populations in the developing world, where my family has worked for generations and I have concentrated so much of my work over the past four decades. My presence here today, in fact, grows directly out of my interest in the developing world and the forces that shape it, including the critical influence of the press.

The intertwining of these two interests — the developing world and the newspaper world — began for me in Kenya nearly forty years ago, when the British government was moving away from its colonial role. It became clear to me that this weaning process, in the political realm, could never wholly succeed unless it was matched by a similar process in the realm of public education and journalism.

At that time, East African journalism largely meant colonial journalism, and it was to help change that picture and with the encouragement of young African pre-independence politicians that I entered the newspaper field.

Our objective as we began our venture was to create a different sort of newspaper company, one that would truly speak for the new Kenyan nation. Our first step was to purchase a Swahili publication in Nairobi called *Taifa*, and

we made it our base. A new English language paper, the Nation, came a bit later. And through both newspapers we have since pursued a single mission: to report and reflect on those matters which are of direct and proper concern to the indigenous majority of Kenyans.

I tell this story because so many of you share my interest in journalism as a force of development. And I suspect, as a result, that you have been asking many of the same questions I have been asking.

One of these questions looms particularly large as we approach a new century. It is a question which arises in every part of the world where people of diverse cultures are building new relationships. And the question is simply this: how can the rapid acceleration of contact among these cultures be turned into co-operation rather than conflict?

Or to put it another way: How can the growing demand for cultural integrity be reconciled with the dazzling rise of “the global village”?

The Commonwealth experience is itself a tremendous resource as we explore this question. And so is the profound experience of the country in which we are meeting this week. Indeed, the recent progress of South Africa in bridging historical gulfs while honouring historical identities is one of the most inspiring stories of the twentieth century.

Such inspiring stories will be increasingly important for us as time moves on. For the challenge I am describing will grow more difficult as contact among cultures escalates in intensity.

The notion that our planet is shrinking is a commonplace one, but it has recently taken a radical new turn. It is no longer a simple matter of geography, with cultures bumping up against one another and struggling over borders and territories. Thanks to new methods of communication, cultures now increasingly intermingle — mixing with growing familiarity.

Some say that the fall of communism has brought us to “the end of history”. But an even more profound development has been “the end of geography”. The connection between community and geography has been broken. A single community can thrive across immense distances, while a tiny dot of land can be home to many communities.

Not only can we transport ourselves in a few hours to any spot on the planet, we can also transport our words and our values, our songs and our dreams, our newspapers and our films, our money and our credit, our books and even our libraries to any part of the world — in a fraction of a second. And we can do so at a rapidly shrinking cost, and a rapidly accelerating pace.

Some suggest that the developing world, and Africa in particular may be left behind by this revolution in communications technology — or worse still, be drowned by a burgeoning flood of information and influence. But I would argue that societies which have invested less in old technologies have the potential to leapfrog more quickly into new technologies. The telecommunications revolution — including the Internet and World Wide Web — is providing us with ever greater power at ever lower prices. And this fact could help enormously in redressing earlier imbalances in information flows.

Already we see hints of what new developments in tele-medicine or in tele-education can mean to rural communities, as they suddenly participate in advances which once were distant dreams. The “end of geography” after all, can also mean the end of isolation. And the end of isolation can mean an end to ignorance and impoverishment.

But if new technology can break down walls which have isolated whole communities from progress and enlightenment, that same technology can also remove the barriers to less welcome change. The communications revolution is a two-edged sword, opening exciting doors to the future — yes — but also threatening venerable cultures and traditional values.

On every hand we can see the rise of the global economy, and with it the global career and multinational family life, international fads and intercontinental life styles. Some find this process exhilarating, but many other find it frightening. And some even fear that this new intermingling of cultures will someday lead to cultural homogenisation.

Yet even as the waves of globalisation unfurl so powerfully across our planet, so does a deep and vigorous countertide. In every corner of the world one can also sense these days a renewal of cultural particularism, a new emphasis on ethnic and religious and national identity. What some have called a “new tribalism” is shaping the world as profoundly on one level as the “new globalism” is shaping it on another.

Sometimes this new tribalism can be a liberating thrust, as was the case when national movements overthrew the communist empire. Sometimes it can express itself in terribly destructive ways, as in the former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda or Burundi. Sometimes it means a radical casting-off of foreign influences, as happened in Iran. Or it can take on a separationist personality, as has been the case from Quebec to Kurdistan, from Scotland to Sri Lanka, from Northern Italy to East Timor. From the most developed to the least developed countries, we also see a resurgence of protectionism, a wariness about foreign immigration, a fascination with ancient languages, a rise in religious fundamentalism.

It is not surprising, of course, that the global and the tribal impulse should surge side by side. The desire to protect what is familiar intensifies in direct proportion to the challenge of what is different.

Wherever we look, we find people seeking refuge from the disorienting waves of change in the tranquil ponds of older and narrower loyalties, in the warmth of familiar memories, in the comfort of ancient rituals.

This recovery of cultural identity can be a nourishing and creative force, to be sure. But it can also mean a world where we define ourselves by what makes us different from others — and thus a world of chronic conflict.

Surely, one of the great questions of our time is whether we can learn to live creatively with both the global and the tribal impulse, embracing the adventure of a broader internationalism even as we drink more deeply from the wellsprings of a particular heritage.

The communications revolution means either a growing “homogenisation” that we know breeds its own hostile reactions, or we can search for a better course. We can hope that the spirit of the 21st century will be a spirit of creative encounter.

And this brings me back to the topic of publishing. For the spirit of creative encounter will never become a dominant force in our world without the strong and effective leadership of the information media.

How can the press best contribute to a spirit of creative encounter here in Africa and around the world? One simple requirement towers above all others: the ability to respect that which is truly different, to understand that which we do not embrace.

It is not as easy as it sounds. For it means much more than tolerance and forbearance. The word sensitivity is one of the most overused words of our time — and one of the least honoured. Why? Because sensitivity is too often seen as an emotion which can simply be willed into existence by a generous soul.

In truth, cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, something that requires a deep intellectual commitment. It requires a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves.

Cultural sensitivity is hard work.

We live in a time when the quantity of information has exploded in incalculable ways. Data flows in greater volumes, at higher speeds, over greater distances to larger audiences than ever before. And yet the result has not been greater understanding or enlightenment. In fact, it has often been just the reverse.

One is reminded of T. S. Eliot's haunting question: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Only as we reach beyond mere information and superficial knowledge can the spirit of creative encounter flourish.

Again, it is the press which should lead the way — not just newspapers and broadcasting outlets, but also the news services and press agencies which serve them and the organisations which support them. For centuries, the press has cast itself as the champion of understanding and enlightenment. And yet, even as the press has become more international, it has often left a trail of misunderstanding in its wake.

Confident that more information is a good thing in and of itself, the press has often focused too much on the quantity of what it can deliver, and too little on the quality of what it presents.

But if the media have sometimes been part of the problem — amplifying the threatening aspects of globalisation — then the media can also be part of the solution. If a careless or superficial press can exacerbate the clash of cultures, then a more sensitive and studious press can accomplish the opposite. The same media which serves to distort or discredit old cultures, can also be used to revalidate them, and to help explain them to others.

In some cases, this will mean a greater effort to adapt to the world's ways — to write or speak in the English language, for example — as we tell old stories to new audiences. If the mysteries of ancient Samarkand or Turfan or Kashgar are relayed predominantly in Uzbek or in Uygur, then the sharing will be incomplete and inconsequential. Global technologies imply the use of a global language — not to obliterate old traditions, but to rescue and revivify them.

There was a time when a variety of authentic cultures could thrive because of their separation from one another. But that day is past. The only answer now is that we come to understand and appreciate one another. And in that endeavour the media must play a central role.

I thought I would use the remainder of my time this morning to discuss three specific challenges which I believe the media must meet or obstacles it must overcome if it is to foster a spirit of creative encounter.

The first is the imperative need for expanded expertise, for a higher level of professional knowledge.

It is no longer enough that a journalist be a curious layman, who writes clearly and asks good questions. Good journalists in our time must be well- educated journalists. They must include in their number linguists able to understand the expressions of other cultures, anthropologists who can consider their deeper meanings, in addition to experts trained in their laws and histories, in their economics and sociology, and in a wide variety of other disciplines. Our publications must have access to a wide array of professional insights — not only through their own journalists, but also through the better use of press agencies and news services and outside guest writers.

The Commonwealth Press Union has done a great deal over the years to improve the level of journalistic education in many parts of the world. In the years ahead, such work will be more important than ever.

As an example of the need for greater expertise, I hope you won't mind if I share an example which is particularly close to my heart. I refer to the superficial and misleading way in which much of the world's media treats the world of Islam. Muslims now constitute nearly a quarter of the world's people. They comprise a majority of the population in some 44 countries and no less than 435 million live in the Commonwealth. And yet, this vast and varied group is often viewed by the rest of the world as a standardised, homogenous mass.

If asked to characterise Islam, many non-Muslims would have little to say, except perhaps that the world of Islam seems to them a distant and different world, a strange and mysterious place, a world which makes them a bit uncomfortable, and perhaps even a bit afraid.

The cultural contexts in which over one billion Muslims have been reared and shaped are simply not understood in much of the world. Even the most basic elements of 1,400 years of Islamic civilisation are absent from the curricula in most of the world's schools. The subject is just not on the world's educational radar screen. And the result is an enormous vacuum. When developments in Islamic societies break into the headlines, few journalists, and even fewer of their readers can bring the slightest sense of context to such news.

These failures are compounded by our pernicious dependence on what I call crisis reporting — the inclination to define news primarily as that which is abnormal and disruptive. As one journalist puts it: "It is the exceptional cat, the one who climbs up in a tree and can't get down, that dominates our headlines, and not the millions of cats who are sleeping happily at home."

Most of the public, however, has no context in which to place the story of the exceptional cat that climbs a tree. And without that context, the casual reader or viewer, never hearing about the cats that stay home, comes to think of all cats as tree-climbing pests who are forever imposing on the fire departments of the world to bring out their ladders and haul them down to safety.

Unfortunately, much of what the world thinks about Islam nowadays has been the result of crisis reporting. When terms like shia and sunni first entered the world's vocabulary, for example, it was in the emotional context of revolutionary Iran. Similarly, recent press references to the shari'a, the traditional Islamic system of jurisprudence, are illustrated by its manifestations in Afghanistan.

Journalists learn to use these words — but how many of them know what they really mean? How many of them understand, for example, that the shari'a is seen by most Muslims as a changing body of law, subject to what we call the fiqh, the capacity for evolving interpretation. How many of them are aware of the selective and moderate application of the shari'a in the legal systems of those Islamic countries which do allow its application? How many of them know that Arabic translators of the Old Testament used the word shari'a to designate the Torah, underlining a shared perception of the Divine Law that governs the spiritual relationship between God and His believers? How many are knowledgeable enough to appreciate the shari'a's illuminating qualities in civil law?

Without a proper sense of context, it is little wonder that those exceptional instances of Muslims theocratising Islamic politics are mistaken for the norm, and that the humanistic temper of Islamic ethics is overlooked. Among some observers, there is even a tendency to see political violence as a function of the faith itself — when in fact nothing could be further from the truth.

You may agree that all of this is regrettable. But I wonder how many of our news divisions, our reporting teams, our agency staffs, or even our journalism schools, include people who can recognise such distortions, much less set them right. When the educational background is so barren and when the rhythm of our learning — as reporters and as readers — is so often that of crisis, crisis, crisis, then deep misunderstanding will be the inevitable result.

I am not suggesting that every journalist must become an expert on Islam. But it would help greatly if more journalists at least were aware of when, and where they need to turn to find out more.

It should not be forgotten that journalists also have a broader educational role — a responsibility to provide readers and viewers with a context in which to understand individual events properly.

My concern about Islam is just one of countless examples which could be cited to make this point. I could also present a long list of examples growing out of my experience with media reporting on Africa.

The central point is simply this: no matter what group or what subculture we are covering, we must insist that our journalism is not only about what is perceived as unusual and bizarre.

If the spirit of the 21st century is to be a spirit of creative encounter among cultures, then journalists must relay to us the deeper truths about our neighbours, giving us a better sense of how they typically feel and think. They must dedicate themselves not merely to being “up-to-the-minute”, but also to seeing each passing minute within the larger sweep of history.

But there is no way this can happen — in an ever more complex world — without a substantially higher level of journalistic education and expertise. And that is the first of the three challenges I would present to you this morning.

The second challenge is equally demanding. It has to do with the goals we set for ourselves, and the need — as we set those goals — to rise above a domineering profit motive.

That sounds like a cliché. But clichés often identify important problems. And no media problem is more evident to me than the terrible distortions which occur when the highest priority, from influential world media groups to Third World pamphleteering, is merely to “maximise profitability”.

Invariably, what the pursuit of short term media profit means is the near term pursuit of the largest possible audience — the highest ratings, the best demographics, the most impressive circulation and advertising numbers. Inevitably, it seems designing products with instant mass or sectarian appeal — focusing on what is divisive or dramatic or diverting or sensational — at the expense of what is in the interests of society or truly significant.

Particularly deplorable is the growing journalistic tendency to exploit “quirks” in the human or social psyche. This is a major problem in the developing and the developed world alike. By “quirks” I mean curiosities, idiosyncrasies, anomalies, and dormant resentments or frustrations which can be developed among various segments of society. An irresponsible communicator can create an appetite for such materials by catering to one public’s voyeuristic curiosity, through the invasion of privacy for instance, or by pandering to the sectarian prejudice of one group about another. A market space for such offerings can be teased into existence and then prodded and nourished so that it becomes not only economically viable but commercially irresistible as well.

The public, at least in many Third World societies, is not as voyeuristic as some may assume. It is, however, immediately sensitive to sectarian views or news and the converse seems to hold true overall for Western societies.

The key is to sort out properly what belongs in the public sphere and what does not. And the complicating factor is that different cultures will draw that line in different ways. The same news story can thus have a different impact with different audiences.

It is not easy to be a sensitive journalist in a multi-cultural world. But the task will be far more difficult if our central concern is to attract the largest possible audience with the most easily digestible headlines.

The runaway profit motive is a culprit that must be curbed. But having said this, let me also argue that the best way to organise any publishing enterprise is as a private business entity. Private capital is the backbone of an independent press, and private capital will flow only where it sees the prospect of reasonable long range earnings.

Only when newspapers are healthy in the financial sense can they be healthy in the journalistic sense — attracting and developing talent, investing in technology, pursuing difficult stories, eliminating dependencies on patronage resisting the pressures of aggressive advertisers on the one hand and the lure of passing tastes on the other.

Our experience with the Nation newspapers in Kenya has demonstrated that journalistic improvement goes hand in hand with financial health. Both the content of our publications and the methods for producing them have grown more complex in recent years, and the only way to keep pace was by making new investments out of increasing earnings.

The Nation was in the 1960s among the very first newspapers outside North America to embrace computerised typesetting. More recently, we have moved into the new multi-media technologies — our major publications are now globally available “on-line”. And before the end of this current year we will open, just outside Nairobi, one of the most advanced new printing plants anywhere in the developing world.

There has been much discussion of late about how to improve the quality of journalism in places where the traditions of good journalism are still thin. But this endeavour will not only depend on the quality of editors and reporters. It will also depend on the skills and energies of capable commercial managers. Fostering business skills among media executives is a critical ingredient in the development equation; it too is part of creating an enabling publishing environment.

In its proper context, the profit motive will contribute to the success of all our publications — but only if we can avoid too much focus on short-term financial gain. And that, in sum, is the second of the three challenges.

The third of the media challenges I would discuss today is the need to balance concerns about press freedom with a greater emphasis on press responsibility. In my view, we are sometimes too preoccupied with the rights of the press as an independent social critic, and we pay too little attention to the obligation of the press as an influential social leader.

Too often, the press seems to be caught up with that obsessive individualism which seems so rampant in our world, an expectation that we must make our way in life through a sort of meritocratic free-for-all, ignoring those who are hurt in the process and those who are left behind.

Too often, we join in the celebration of success for its own sake, regardless of the means by which it was achieved or its impact on society. Too often the media spotlight overlooks the corrupt or manipulative methodology and dramatises the triumphant result. Too often, the right of an individual or the right of a publication to unfettered self-expression is enshrined as the most sacred of all values, independent of its impact on social or moral standards.

One of the most familiar of western political values is expressed in the phrase: "Freedom of the Press". I believe that press freedom, properly understood, is a universal human right. But we must be careful about how we define it and that it does not isolate the press from the rest of the social order. What is originally meant — and properly still means for me — is that the press should be free from the control or constraint of governments, and strong enough to resist all forms of intimidation.

Why is this precept so important? Because the health of any government should depend on public evaluation of its work. Not even the most enlightened government can do this for itself. And only if a pluralistic press is allowed to report freely about any government, will the public be able to hold their governments accountable.

The problem comes, of course, when freedom of the press is stretched beyond this meaning and used to shield the press — not just from government interference, but from any sense of social accountability. And that is when press liberty turns into press license.

Just as press freedom is a means for holding governments accountable, so must the press itself be held accountable for the way it does its work.

Accountable to whom?

To the political leaders of the moment? Never.

To the larger community and the cultures that comprise it? Always — provided we see the community not as a mere majority of the moment, but as an organic, pluralistic entity.

A most remarkable thing in our experience is that the larger community has invariably demanded better forms of journalism. Despite their relative lack of formal education, the first readers of the Nation sought something well beyond what the colonial press had given them.

Through the years, answering to the wider community has posed a changing array of challenges. When the demand for self-rule dominated everything, our tasks were fairly straightforward. The rise of tribal divisions — which were then reflected in political parties — complicated that picture, and so did the interplay of cold war rivalries. As the years passed, we also found that our work would sometimes be more in favour and sometimes less in favour with particular governments.

In recent years, the need for regional integration has become a central concern for the peoples of East Africa. Cross-border co-operation is essential if the patchwork quilt of small African nations is to cope effectively in a globalised economy. The Nation Group's commitment to regionalism was reflected in the founding, two years ago, of a successful regional newspaper, the weekly East African.

But perhaps the most dramatic way in which the Nation Group has expressed its ties to the larger community was through the broadening of its public shareholdings. We are particularly proud that a majority of the Nation's shares are owned by more than 9,000 indigenous Kenyan shareholders. This policy has widened the Group's financial base - making it a more stable and resourceful business. This policy has also broadened our social and cultural base - making our publications more responsive and responsible.

Our journalistic code — a set of explicit written standards about editorial goals and practices — was submitted to our shareholders for their deliberation and approval because we want our shareholders to feel involved and responsible, not just for the Nation's financial success but also for its moral success. They are, after all, the ultimate stewards, not only of the Nation's corporate body, but also of its journalistic soul.

In short, we have pursued a concept of press freedom — which not only means freedom "from" but also freedom "to" — not just freedom from improper governmental constraints but also freedom to advance the common purposes which give meaning to our lives.

Such a sense of social accountability is not an easy thing to achieve. It must begin with those into whose care the institutions of the press have been entrusted, our editors and proprietors. Those who are in charge must really be in charge.

Freedom of the press does not mean the right of any journalist to write and to publish anything he or she wants to say. It is not acceptable for a reporter to cry "censorship" when an editor or a publisher questions his accuracy or his judgement. Nor is it acceptable for editors, managers and proprietors to slip their solemn responsibilities by invoking the same line of defence.

They may sometimes say they don't want to "meddle" with the contents of their publications. This is a weak and dangerous excuse. And too often that comment really disguises an abdication of moral responsibility.

This abdication is particularly troubling when it is used by proprietors or editors to mask their personal quest for financial gain or political influence, or to sustain divisive sectarian agendas. For in the final analysis, the press and those who manage it must also be held accountable to the collective judgements of the community.

Responsible journalists and managers will not want to shield themselves from such judgements. To the contrary, they will eagerly seek them out. They will want to know what thoughtful readers are saying and how responsible advertisers are thinking. They will talk constantly with scholars and religious leaders, with artists and business leaders, with scientists and labour leaders, with educators and community leaders — and yes, with politicians and diplomats and governmental leaders as well. And through such continuing interaction they will develop and refine their sense of how the larger community can best be served.

Let me conclude by citing once again what I consider to be the enormous opportunity for the media to foster that new spirit of creative encounter which I described at the outset of this speech. And let me express my hope that as we in the press embrace that opportunity, we will respond creatively to the three challenges I have been discussing.

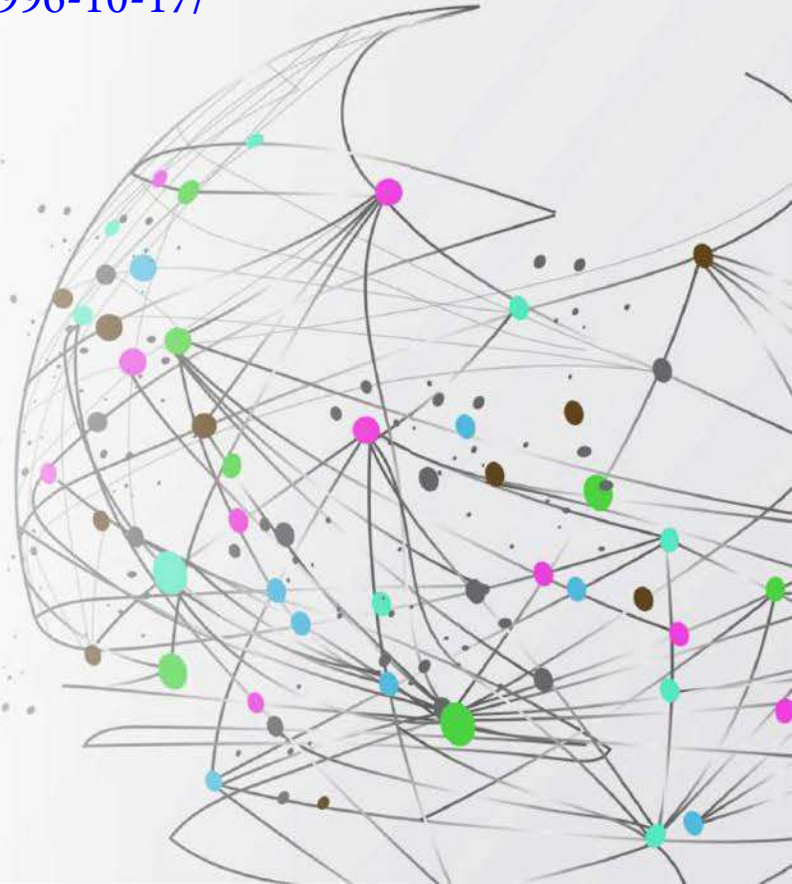
I hope, first, that we will contribute to a more expert and educated press whose achievements can be measured in the depth of its journalistic insights as well as the speed of its crisis reporting.

I hope, secondly, that while recognising the importance of the financial viability of the media, we press leaders will put the profit motive in proper context. This means resisting the temptation to define everything in terms of profit, and giving audiences due credit by producing socially responsible publications, rather than catering to quirks and sectarianism.

And, finally, I hope that we will recognise and foster press responsibility as vigorously as we defend press freedom.

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/03242024-commonwealth-press-union-conference-in-cape-town-1996-10-17/>

**Commonwealth Press
Union Conference in Cape
Town, South Africa**
17 October 1996, Cape
Town, South Africa



- Arif Karim
- London, UK
- Optometrist



So what's the Plan for today ?

- The major themes
- We are going to try to read between the lines
- Why Mawlana Hazir Imam is involved in the media
- Hopefully laugh a little and maybe cry a little !



Key Themes

Din and Dunya

Humour

Spiritual
Enlightenment

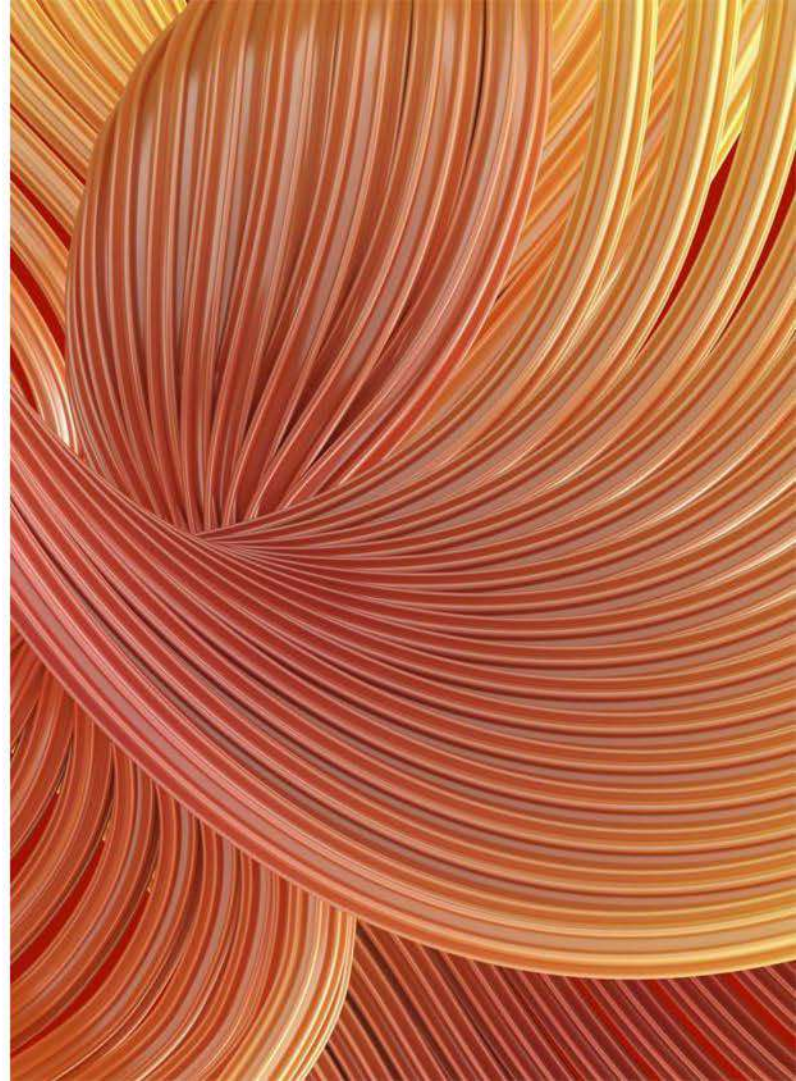
Intellect

Hard work and
Rigour

Values – Honesty,
Generosity, not
being greedy

Pluralism,
inclusivity, respect

Sharia law



It is an enormous pleasure for me to join you today. I only wish I could have attended all of your sessions, for your programme touches on many subjects which are of great interest to me, and your speakers have included an impressive array of distinguished personalities.

In fact, as I looked at the long list of those who have already come to this podium, I wondered whether you would have any capacity left to absorb whatever I might say!

It was a great comfort, therefore, to see that, as the first speaker on the morning after a day of R & R, I could attack you while you were still fresh!



- As I prepared for this talk I also wondered whether you would have the foggiest notion of why I was invited to this conference.
- Who is the Aga Khan after all — and what is he doing here?
- Some of you may have known that my title — which I have held since 1957 — means that I am the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. But I suspect that this phrase only makes my appearance here seem even more incongruous.
- Others may have seen my name connected with the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds — but this connection will also seem incongruous for many of you and won't help much at all in explaining my place on this programme.
- Still others of you may have heard me described as a “paper tiger”, in a recent book by that name which portrayed a long list of international publishing figures — thus the pun on the term “paper tiger”. We were all people whom the author took to be “media moguls”.
- I am not sure whether it is better to be called a “media mogul” or a “paper tiger”. Personally, I would prefer to have been called a mogul tiger!





Humility

Self deprecation

Humour

Recognition of others

In the first few seconds of speaking
all of this is abundant.

Slowly Mawlana Hazir Imam is
captivating his audience with
masterful oration and skilled
psychology of how he approaches
his subject

No Dichotomy

in the Islamic tradition, there is no sharp separation of the spiritual and material worlds — which is so pronounced in some faiths. For all Muslims, the concepts of *din* and *dunya* — faith and world — are inextricably linked. So it is not such a surprising or incongruous thing for a Muslim leader also to be involved in the world of business, the world of sport, the world of science — or the world of publishing.



Why is Mawlana Hazir Imam involved in the murky world of the Media Business ?

So why is MHI involved in the murky and mucky world of the media

Greed



Manipulation

Profiteering

Lies

Self Interest

The Role of the Imam



Sura Nisa 4 : 59

O you who believe ! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle
and holders of authority from amongst you



History of Mawlana Hazir Imam and Publishing

The intertwining of these two interests — the developing world and the newspaper world — began for me in Kenya nearly forty years ago, when the British government was moving away from its colonial role. It became clear to me that this weaning process, in the political realm, could never wholly succeed unless it was matched by a similar process in the realm of public education and journalism.

At that time, East African journalism largely meant colonial journalism and it was to help change that picture and with the encouragement of young African pre-independence politicians that I entered the newspaper field.

Journalism as a Force for Development

I tell this story because so many of you share my interest in **journalism as a force of development**. And I suspect, as a result, that you have been asking many of the same questions I have been asking.

One of these questions looms particularly large as we approach a new century. It is a question which arises in every part of the world where people of diverse cultures are building new relationships. And the question is simply this: **how can the rapid acceleration of contact among these cultures be turned into co-operation rather than conflict?** Or to put it another way: How can the growing demand for cultural integrity be reconciled with the dazzling rise of **“the global village”**?

“the end of Geography”

For the challenge I am describing will grow more difficult as contact among cultures escalates in intensity.

The notion that our planet is shrinking is a commonplace one, but it has recently taken a radical new turn. It is no longer a simple matter of geography, with cultures bumping up against one another and struggling over borders and territories. Thanks to new methods of communication, cultures now increasingly intermingle — mixing with growing familiarity.

Some say that the fall of communism has brought us to “the end of history”. But an even more profound development has been “the end of geography”.

Threats and Opportunities

Already we see hints of what new developments in tele-medicine or in tele-education can mean to rural communities, as they suddenly participate in advances which once were distant dreams. The “end of geography” after all, can also mean the end of isolation. And the end of isolation can mean an end to ignorance and impoverishment.

But if new technology can break down walls which have isolated whole communities from progress and enlightenment, that same technology can also remove the barriers to less welcome change. The communications revolution is a two-edged sword, opening exciting doors to the future — yes — but also threatening venerable cultures and traditional values.

Wow paragraph !!

On every hand we can see the rise of the global economy, and with it the global career and multinational family life, international fads and intercontinental lifestyles. Some find this process exhilarating, but many others find it frightening. And some even fear that this new intermingling of cultures will someday lead to cultural homogenisation.

Yet even as the waves of globalisation unfurl so powerfully across our planet, so does a deep and vigorous countertide. In every corner of the world, one can also sense these days a renewal of cultural particularism, a new emphasis on ethnic and religious and national identity. **What some have called a “new tribalism” is shaping the world as profoundly on one level as the “new globalism” is shaping it on another.**

Sometimes this new tribalism can be a liberating thrust, as was the case when national movements overthrew the communist empire. Sometimes it can express itself in terribly destructive ways, as in the former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda or Burundi. Sometimes it means a radical casting-off of foreign influences, as happened in Iran. Or it can take on a separationist personality, as has been the case from Quebec to Kurdistan, from Scotland to Sri Lanka, from Northern Italy to East Timor. From the most developed to the least developed countries, we also see a resurgence of protectionism, a wariness about foreign immigration, a fascination with ancient languages, a rise in religious fundamentalism.

It is not surprising, of course, that the global and the tribal impulse should surge side by side. The desire to protect what is familiar intensifies in direct proportion to the challenge of what is different.

The dangers of ignorance and intolerance

This recovery of cultural identity can be a nourishing and creative force, to be sure. But it can also mean a world where we define ourselves by what makes us different from others — and thus a world of chronic conflict.

Surely, one of the great questions of our time is whether we can learn to live creatively with both the global and the tribal impulse, embracing the adventure of a broader internationalism even as we drink more deeply from the wellsprings of a particular heritage.

The communications revolution means either a growing "homogenisation" that we know breeds its own hostile reactions, or we can search for a better course. We can hope that the spirit of the 21st century will be a spirit of creative encounter.

In truth, cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, something that requires a deep intellectual commitment. It requires a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves.

Cultural sensitivity is hard work.

Information, Knowledge & Wisdom

We live in a time when the quantity of information has exploded in incalculable ways. Data flows in greater volumes, at higher speeds, over greater distances to larger audiences than ever before. And yet the result has not been greater understanding or enlightenment. In fact, it has often been just the reverse.

One is reminded of T. S. Eliot's haunting question: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

The need of Ilm for Spiritual Enlightenment

Only as we reach beyond mere information and superficial knowledge can the spirit of creative encounter flourish.

Mawlana Hazir Imam's view on the role of the Media

But if the media have sometimes been part of the problem — amplifying the threatening aspects of globalisation — then the media can also be part of the solution. If a careless or superficial press can exacerbate the clash of cultures, then a more sensitive and studious press can accomplish the opposite. The same media which serves to distort or discredit old cultures, can also be used to revalidate them, and to help explain them to others.

There was a time when a variety of authentic cultures could thrive because of their separation from one another. But that day is past. The only answer now is that we come to understand and appreciate one another. And in that endeavour the media must play a central role.

3 Key Challenges for the world's Media

1. Need to Expand Journalistic expertise and knowledge
2. Setting the right Goals for media entities
3. Freedom of the Press

Journalistic Expertise & Knowledge

It is no longer enough that a journalist be a curious layman, who writes clearly and asks good questions. Good journalists in our time must be well- educated journalists. They must include in their number **linguists** able to understand the expressions of other cultures, **anthropologists** who can consider their deeper meanings, in addition to experts trained in their laws and histories, in their economics and sociology, and in a wide variety of other disciplines.


Example of the current problem with the Media

I refer to the superficial and misleading way in which much of the world's media treats the world of Islam.

If asked to characterise Islam, many non-Muslims would have little to say, except perhaps that the world of Islam seems to them a distant and different world, a strange and mysterious place, a world which makes them a bit uncomfortable, and perhaps even a bit afraid.

When developments in Islamic societies break into the headlines, few journalists, and even fewer of their readers can bring the slightest sense of context to such news. These failures are compounded by our pernicious dependence on what I call crisis reporting — the inclination to define news primarily as that which is abnormal and disruptive.

Cat up a tree



the inclination to define news primarily as that which is abnormal and disruptive. As one journalist puts it: “It is the exceptional cat, the one who climbs up in a tree and can’t get down, that dominates our headlines, and not the millions of cats who are sleeping happily at home.”

Mawlana Hazir Imam explains the misconception of Islam

Unfortunately, much of what the world thinks about Islam nowadays has been the result of crisis reporting. When terms like shia and sunni first entered the world's vocabulary, for example, it was in the emotional context of revolutionary Iran.

Shari'a Law is a Dynamic body of Law

Journalists learn to use these words — but how many of them know what they really mean? How many of them understand, for example, that the shari`a is seen by most Muslims as a changing body of law, subject to what we call the fiqh, the capacity for evolving interpretation?

How many of them are aware of the selective and moderate application of the shari`a in the legal systems of those Islamic countries which do allow its application?

So...Journalists must up-skill

When the educational background is so barren and when the rhythm of our learning — as reporters and as readers — is so often that of crisis, crisis, crisis, then deep misunderstanding will be the inevitable result.

The central point is simply this: no matter what group or what subculture we are covering, we must insist that our journalism is not only about what is perceived as unusual and bizarre.

If the spirit of the 21st century is to be a spirit of creative encounter among cultures, then journalists must relay to us the deeper truths about our neighbours, giving us a better sense of how they typically feel and think

Goals of Media Entities – the 2nd Challenge

And no media problem is more evident to me than the terrible distortions which occur when the highest priority, from influential world media groups to Third World pamphleteering, is merely to “maximise profitability”. Invariably, what the pursuit of short term media profit means is the near term pursuit of the largest possible audience — the highest ratings, the best demographics, the most impressive circulation and advertising numbers. Inevitably, it seems designing products with instant mass or sectarian appeal — focusing on what is divisive or dramatic or diverting or sensational — at the expense of what is in the interests of society or truly significant.

Profit must not be the central goal

It is not easy to be a sensitive journalist in a multi-cultural world. But the task will be far more difficult if our central concern is to attract the largest possible audience with the most easily digestible headlines.

The runaway profit motive is a culprit that must be curbed.

Mawlana Hazir Imam offers solutions, leading by example

Only when newspapers are **healthy in the financial sense** can they be healthy in the journalistic sense — attracting and developing talent, investing in technology, pursuing difficult stories, eliminating dependencies on patronage resisting the pressures of aggressive advertisers on the one hand and the lure of passing tastes on the other.

The Nation was in the 1960s among the very first newspapers outside North America to embrace computerised typesetting.

Fostering business skills among media executives is a critical ingredient in the development equation; it too is part of creating an enabling publishing environment.

Press Freedom– the 3rd Challenge

Mawlana Hazir Imam brings basic Islamic Values to the agenda

I would discuss today is the need to balance concerns about press freedom with a greater emphasis on **press responsibility**

In my view, we are sometimes too preoccupied with the rights of the press as an independent social critic, and we pay too little attention to the obligation of the **press as an influential social leader:**

Too often, the right of an individual or the right of a publication to unfettered self-expression is enshrined as the most sacred of all values, **independent of its impact on social or moral standards.**

Mawlana Hazir Imam's view on Press Freedom & Accountability

What is originally meant — and properly still means for me — is that the press should be free from the control or constraint of governments, and strong enough to resist all forms of intimidation.

Why is this precept so important? Because the health of any government should depend on public evaluation of its work. Not even the most enlightened government can do this for itself. And only if a pluralistic press is allowed to report freely about any government, will the public be able to hold their governments accountable.

Just as press freedom is a means for holding governments accountable, so must the press itself be held accountable for the way it does its work.

Accountable to whom?

To the political leaders of the moment? Never.

To the larger community and the cultures that comprise it?

Always — provided we see the community not as a mere majority of the moment, but as an organic, pluralistic entity.

Mawlana Hazir Imam's Conclusion

I hope, first, that we will contribute to a more **expert and educated press** whose achievements can be measured in the depth of its journalistic insights as well as the speed of its crisis reporting.

I hope, secondly, that while recognising the importance of the financial viability of the media, we press leaders will put the **profit motive in proper context**. This means resisting the temptation to define everything in terms of profit, and giving audiences due credit by producing socially responsible publications, rather than catering to quirks and sectarianism.

And, finally, I hope that **we will recognise and foster press responsibility as vigorously as we defend press freedom**



Launch of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital

18 March 2005, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

President Mkapa,
Excellencies,
Honoured Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining us today to celebrate the launch of the second phase of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital.

Yesterday, President Mkapa joined me for the groundbreaking of the new Aga Khan Academy School to be built here in Dar-es Salaam. The President spoke eloquently about the need to increase the capacity in Africa to educate and retain more indigenous professionals and to reduce the costly dependence upon expatriates.

Mr. President, you will be pleased to know that our vision for this hospital, and our wider health strategy for East Africa, are entirely consistent with those views.

This hospital already plays an important role in supporting medical education and health care delivery for the people of Dar es Salaam, and those referred to it from our up-country medical centers in Morogoro, Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya, and Mwanza. The new facilities planned for this site will enhance that capacity further. It will also solidify the hospital's wider role in education and health delivery for East Africa.

The goal is to invest in medical education, and health care facilities, to enable the delivery of patient care to international standards in a wider spectrum of medical specialities.

And we will continue to reach far beyond this facility and this community to help others strive for that level as well.

This regional approach will allow us to offer the best in training for medical specialists, nurses and medical technicians in East Africa. We will also have the facilities and the equipment to enable them to practice in their chosen fields of expertise.

I have every confidence we will be able to train and retain more specialists here in East Africa. I also have reason to hope that some medical specialists who have left to practice abroad may be persuaded to return.

Our approach is being driven by powerful trends that are rapidly changing health care practice and patient care demands throughout the world. Increased medical specialisation and advances in pharmacology, diagnosis and surgical techniques are making possible dramatic improvements in patient care. They are also changing the way health care is delivered, altering the mix between treatments that require hospitalization and most effective out-patient and community-based care.

We are also seeing here in Tanzania and East Africa generally, rising demands for cardiac, orthopedic and oncology treatment very similar to those in the industrialised world. And there is of course the added challenge of malaria and HIV/AIDS.

We expect these trends to accelerate here as they have internationally. And unless we make significant investments in education as well as new equipment and facilities, East Africa will fall further behind in health care delivery.

Let me say a few words first about education.

Through linkages between the Schools of Medicine and Nursing of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi, we are building here in Dar-es Salaam a regional hub of quality medical and nursing services. This hospital will be part of what amounts to a regional teaching hospital network.

Post Graduate Medical Education programmes are already in place between here and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi. The family medicine post graduate programme has been placed at this hospital, in part because of the important links to our five up-country community health clinics. Other post-graduate medical

programmes will be established here in future. These programmes will be opened to physicians from our own and other hospitals to gain greater regional synergies. The hospital already has a partnership with the Muhimbili College of Health Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam. Rotations for specialising physicians help them gain valuable clinical experience.

The hospital has been able to bring experts from abroad to help train medical staff in new surgical techniques. In the last six months, for example, the volume of less-invasive procedures known as keyhole surgery has increased significantly.

This is thanks to the assistance of an international specialist who has overseen training on recently-acquired laparoscopic equipment. In Nairobi, currently there are post graduate programmes in surgery, internal medicine and radiology.

But it is also in nursing education that we have made important commitments:

Our regional nursing education programme trains nurses in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. However it is here in Tanzania that it is considered the most successful. The East African regional programme now has more than 400 graduates. From this hospital alone, 45 nurses are currently enrolled in diploma and degree programmes – half of all the hospital nursing staff.

In addition to enhancing the status of professional women, we believe that by creating better academic opportunity for nurses and a rewarding work environment, we help reduce the rapid and damaging outflow of these crucial resources to the developing world.

Of course, the best training can only be put into practice with the right facilities. The aim of the Aga Khan Hospital is to create a virtuous circle of excellent training combined with the best facilities to increase the range of medical specialties at the hospital. That in turn will increase the capacity to train others.

Phase One of the hospital expansion, which opened five years ago, included a new Emergency Room department, 18 out-patient consulting clinics, a laboratory and a pharmacy.

It also included 56 new pediatric and medical-surgical in-patient beds in an air conditioned environment.

Since then the hospital has built up a sophisticated radiology department. In addition to x-ray and ultrasound technology, the hospital has added mammography, specialist dental and CAT scanners. Most recently the hospital acquired the county's first MRI scanner. The MRI means that more referrals, and patients, will be able to benefit from enhanced diagnostic accuracy, and patients will no longer need to travel abroad for these investigations.

The range of specialists available in the hospital supports the very busy out-patient clinics, which serve 100,000 patients a year. They also enable the hospital to provide specialist emergency treatment on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week.

Phase Two of the expansion, which we are launching today, will increase capacity further.

Five new operating theatres will be added. Maternity delivery rooms will increase to four from the current two. The intensive care unit will expand from four beds to 12.

There will also be further improvements in the radiology department to bring all these services together in one physical department and add new ultrasound capacity. There will be new physiotherapy facilities as well.

The new operating theatres will enable the hospital to do more advanced cardiac and orthopedic surgery. They will include modern air flow control technologies, to reduce significantly the risk of infection. This is particularly important for orthopedic surgery where the complications from infection can be extremely serious.

Tanzanians will thus no longer have to seek this kind of advanced treatment outside the country, at considerable cost and inconvenience.

Any hospital that expands its services, introduces new equipment, and harnesses new medical practitioners must pay special attention to quality care. To address this issue the hospital has also created 20 departmental quality teams to review working practices and ensure they progress to international standards. And it receives 200 questionnaires a month from patients to measure their perceptions of our services. The hospital was proud to receive ISO 9001 certification in October of 2003.

Launch of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital
By His Highness the Aga Khan, Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania · 18 March 2005 ·

Dr Salma Mughal

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/03312024-launch-of-the-expansion-of-the-aga-khan-hospital-2005-03-18/lesson/watch-lecture-video-142/>





Dar es Salaam (18 March 2005)

- **His Highness the Aga Khan, accompanied by his daughter Princess Zahra, today joined His Excellency, President Benjamin Mkapa in announcing the construction of the second phase of the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam.**
- The announcement was made at a **foundation-stone laying ceremony** that took place in the presence of government dignitaries, health officials, leaders and the general public.

<https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/multimedia/video/stone-laying-ceremony-phase-ii-aga-khan-hospital-dar-es-salaam>

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 18 March 2005

At the foundation stone laying ceremony of **Phase II** of the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam, His Highness the Aga Khan underlined **Africa's massive needs in healthcare and the growing demand for increasingly sophisticated hospital-based care.**

Anna Abdallah, Tanzania's Health Minister, spoke of the **strengthening of cooperation between the government and the private sector in order to improve health services and bring them closer to the people.**

Also at the ceremony, His Highness was accorded the status of **'Honorary Citizen of Dar es Salaam'** by His Worship Mayor Kleist Sykes in recognition of his contribution to the education and health sectors.

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His Excellency President Mkapa lays the first stone of the **Phase II development of the Aga Khan Hospital in the presence of His Highness the Aga Khan**, Minister for Health, Anna Abdallah and Mr. Shabir Abji, Chairman, Aga Khan Health Services, Tanzania.



18th March 2005

Some statistics regarding Tanzania

- The population of Tanzania in **2023 is 67,438,106, a 2.96% increase** from 2022. The population of Tanzania in 2022 was 65,497,748, a 3% increase from 2021. The population of Tanzania in 2021 was 63,588,334, a 3.05% increase from 2020. The population of Tanzania in 2020 was 61,704,518, a 3.06% increase from 2019.
- Population March 2024 is 68.9m
- Several other factors have also contributed to the high population growth rate that Tanzania is experiencing: **Infant mortality has halved over the last 25 years.** Early marriage: the median age at first marriage in 2010 was 18.8 years in Tanzania compared to 20.0 in Kenya and 21.4 in Rwanda. Average life expectancy is 59y
- Tanzania is **four times** larger than Great Britain, **seven times** larger than England, or a little larger than Texas. Tanzania, the **largest** of the Eastern African Countries (Kenya and Uganda)
- After two decades of sustained growth, Tanzania reached an important milestone in July 2020, when it formally **graduated from low-income to lower-middle-income country status. Still considered as one of the poorest countries, income per capita is US\$ 250/per annum.**

History of AKH – Dar es salam

Established in **1964**, the **Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam** is a multispecialty hospital offering **quality health care** for the people of Tanzania. (Nairobi in 1958)



His Excellency President Mkapa **lays the first stone of the Phase II** development of the Aga Khan Hospital in the presence of His Highness the Aga Khan and Minister for Health, Anna Abdallah (18/03/2005)



Princess Zahra visited the Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam and joined His Excellency Kassim Majaliwa, Prime Minister of Tanzania, to preside over the inauguration of Phase II of its expansion programme. (9th March 2019 i.e 14 y later.)



9th March 2019

Funding for Phase 2 Expansion

- Total cost -US\$ **79.8 million** (TZS 183 billion) expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam, which will enable the institution to serve over one million patients each year.
- Funded by a US\$ **53.5 million** (TZS 134 billion) loan from the French Development Agency (Agence Française de Development - AFD)
- a US\$ **26.3 million** (TZS 58 billion) contribution from the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

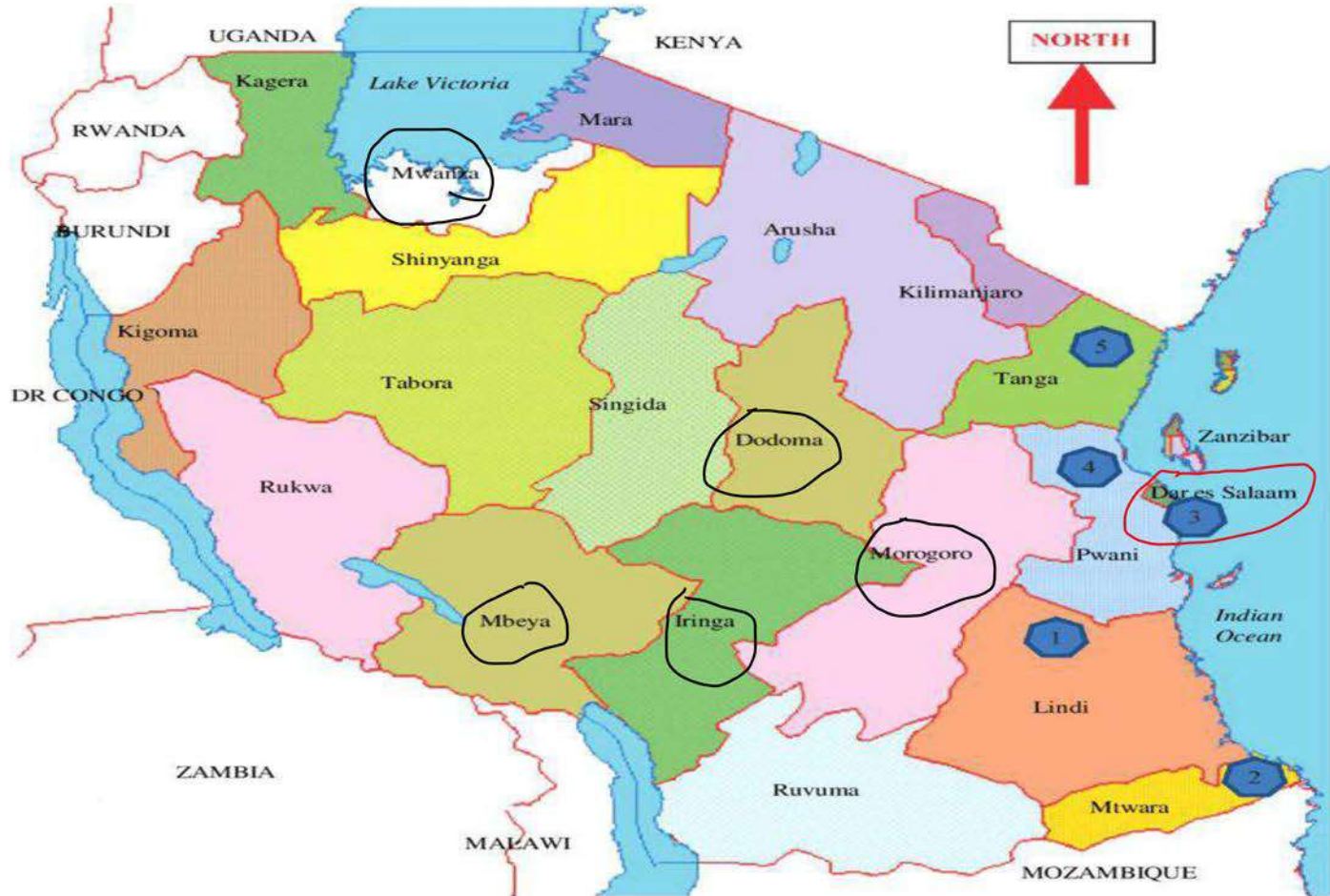
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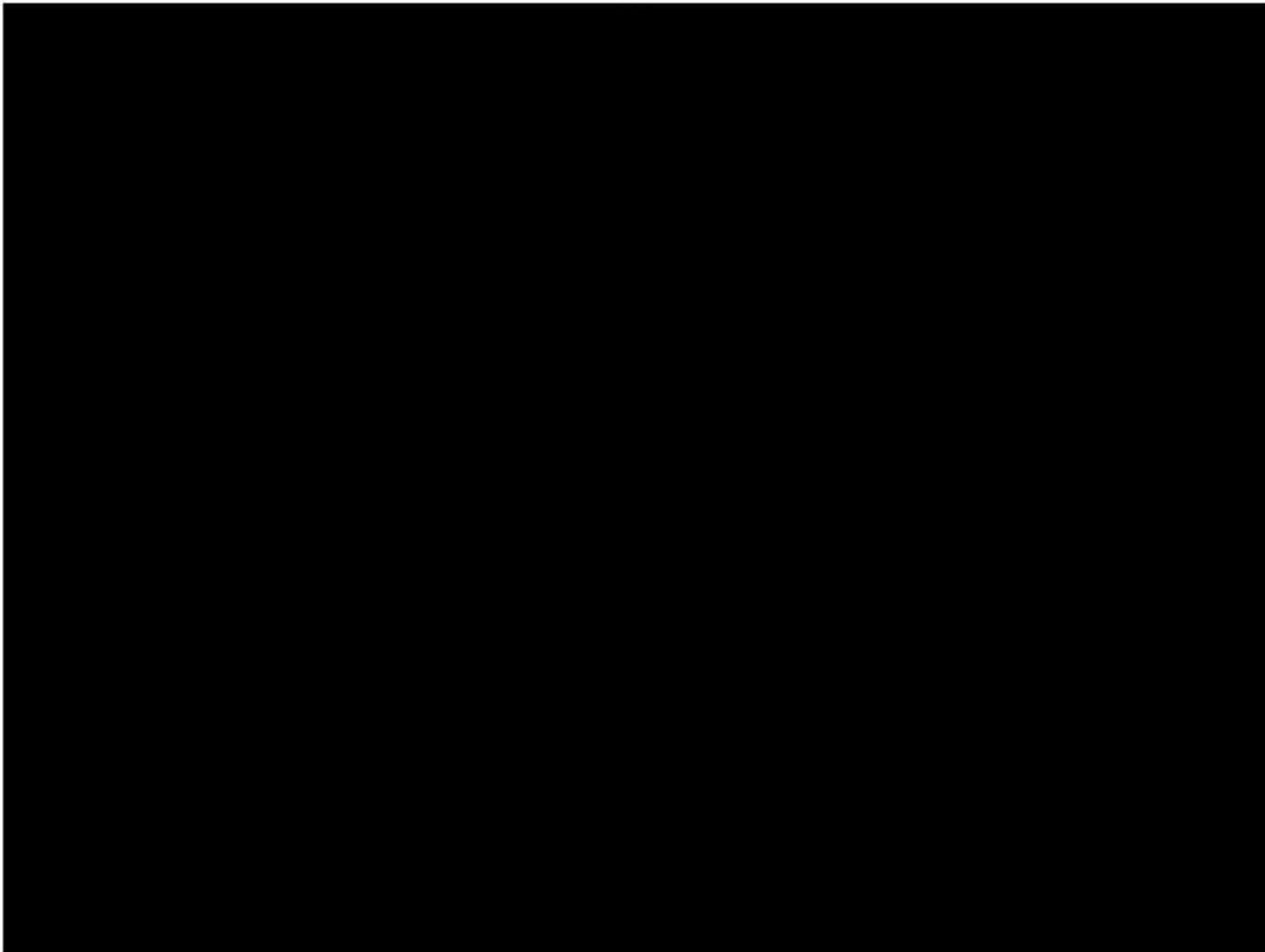
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“The goal is to invest in medical education, and health care facilities, to enable the delivery of patient care to international standards in a wider spectrum of medical specialties.

And we will continue to **reach far beyond this facility and this community** to help others strive for that level as well.

This **regional approach** will allow us to offer the **best in training** for medical specialists, nurses and medical technicians in East Africa. We will also have the **facilities and the equipment** to enable them to practice in their chosen fields of expertise.

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- Reach far beyond this facility and this community to help others strive for that level as well.
Regional approach to offer the best in training for medical specialists, nurses and medical technicians in E. Africa.
- Facilities and the equipment to enable them to practice in their chosen fields of expertise.
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“We are also seeing here in Tanzania and East Africa generally, rising demands for **cardiac, orthopaedic and oncology** treatment very similar to those in the industrialised world. And there is of course the added challenge of **malaria and HIV/AIDS**.

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Non-Communicable diseases



CARDIAC



CANCER



DIABETES



ORTHOAEDIC



MENTAL HEALTH



DEMENTIA



EMPHASISON
PREVENTION THROUGH
EDUCATION AND
LIFESTYLE CHANGES

“**Post Graduate Medical Education** programmes are already in place between here and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi. The **family medicine post-graduate programme** has been placed at this hospital, in part because of the **important links to our five up-country community health clinics**. Other post-graduate medical programmes will be established here in future. These programmes will be opened to physicians from our own and other hospitals to gain greater regional synergies. The hospital already has a **partnership** with the Muhimbili College of Health Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam. Rotations for specialising physicians help them gain valuable clinical experience.

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This is thanks to the assistance of an international specialist who has overseen training on recently acquired laparoscopic equipment. In Nairobi, currently there are post-graduate programmes in surgery, internal medicine and radiology.”



“..improving **maternal, neonatal and child health** should be one of the highest priorities on the global development agenda. I can think of no other field in which a well-directed effort can make as great or as rapid an impact.”

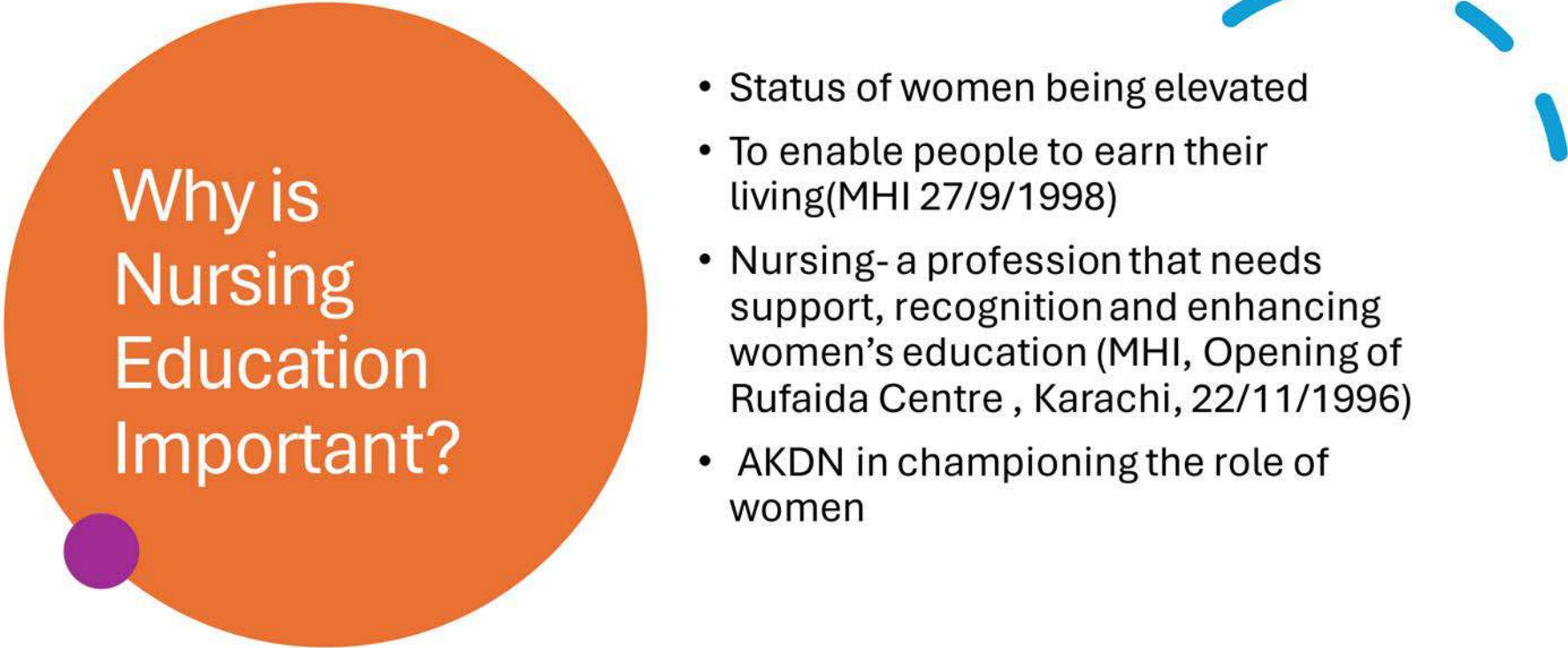
His Highness the Aga Khan
Toronto, May 2014

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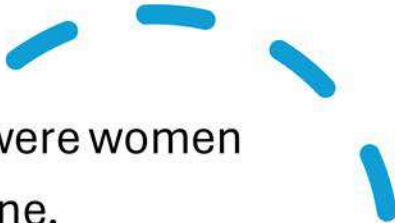


Why is Nursing Education Important?

- Status of women being elevated
- To enable people to earn their living(MHI 27/9/1998)
- Nursing- a profession that needs support, recognition and enhancing women's education (MHI, Opening of Rufaida Centre , Karachi, 22/11/1996)
- AKDN in championing the role of women

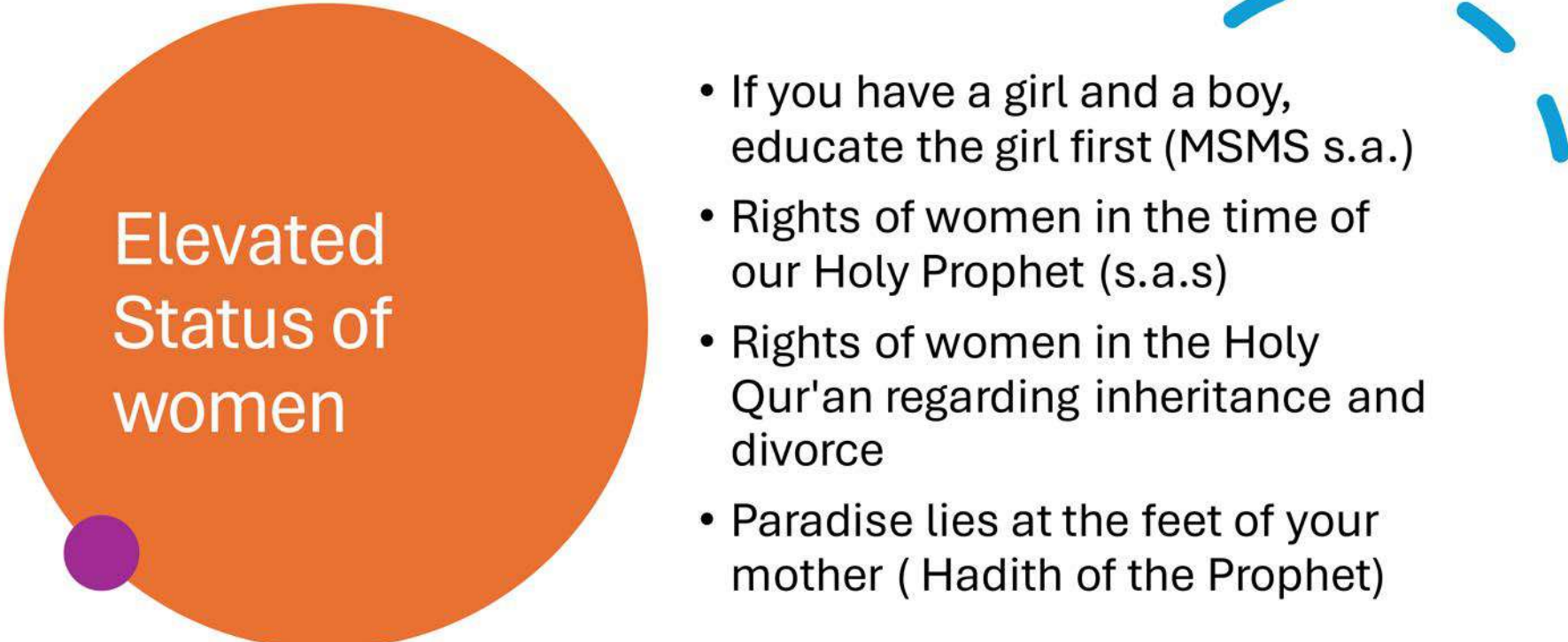
A large orange circle containing the text 'AKU Convocation Feb 2024'. A smaller purple circle is positioned at the bottom-left edge of the orange circle.

AKU Convocation Feb 2024

- 
- A decorative blue dashed arc in the top right corner of the slide.
- Out of 730 students, 70% were women
 - Degrees in nursing, medicine, journalism and Study of Muslim civilisations
 - MHI has consistently prioritised the upliftment of women through education, healthcare and economic empowerment through “positive action” (**not** positive discrimination!)

Princess
Zahra
(April 1998,
Houston)

- "A society which fails to educate its women, and which hampers their development, is ultimately wasting 50% of its most precious resource.
- A society whose women are educated is a dignified society and one to be proud of.
- The female contribution to the economy could have an enormous impact if women were encouraged to achieve the full scope of their potential productivity”



Elevated Status of women

- If you have a girl and a boy, educate the girl first (MSMS s.a.)
- Rights of women in the time of our Holy Prophet (s.a.s)
- Rights of women in the Holy Qur'an regarding inheritance and divorce
- Paradise lies at the feet of your mother (Hadith of the Prophet)

Global Standards of Healthcare

- We have to bring to Africa and Asia global standards of health care. The populations of these countries **cannot be isolated from the best** simply because they have been born in countries outside the Western world.
- It's clearly a challenge to build institutions of global quality in environments which haven't had those institutions before. And in order to achieve that goal the **essential is human resources – men and women who are educated to perform to the highest standards of their profession.** And that is why the Aga Khan Health Network has invested, and will continue to invest, in education.

Mawlana Hazar Imam, Creation of the Aga Khan University Hospital Kampala, Uganda (17 December 2015)

“Phase One of the hospital expansion, which opened five years ago, included a new Emergency Room department, 18 out-patient consulting clinics, a laboratory and a pharmacy.

It also included **56** new paediatric and medical-surgical in-patient beds in an air-conditioned environment.

Since then, the hospital has built up a sophisticated **radiology department**. In addition to x-ray and ultrasound technology, the hospital has added **mammography, specialist dental and CAT scanners**. Most recently the hospital acquired the county’s **first MRI scanner**. The MRI means that more referrals, and patients, will be able to benefit from enhanced diagnostic accuracy, and **patients will no longer need to travel abroad for these investigations**.

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Phase 1

2000

- new Emergency Room department,
- 18 out-patient consulting clinics,

- a laboratory
- a pharmacy

- 56 new paediatric and medical-surgical in-patient beds in an air-conditioned environment.

2000-2005

- xray Dept mammography, specialist dental and CAT scanners, first MRI scanner

- specialist emergency treatment on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week.

- 2 Maternity beds
- 4 IUC beds

- serve 100,000 patients a year

“Phase Two of the expansion, which we are launching today, will increase capacity further.

5 new operating theatres will be added. **Maternity delivery rooms will increase to 4 from the current 2. The intensive care unit will expand from 4 beds to 12.**

There will also be further improvements in **the radiology department** to bring all these services together in one physical department and add **new ultrasound capacity**. There will be **new physiotherapy** facilities as well.

The new operating theatres will enable the hospital to do more **advanced cardiac and orthopaedic surgery**. They will include modern **air-flow control technologies, to reduce significantly the risk of infection**. This is particularly important for orthopaedic surgery where the complications from infection can be extremely serious.”

“Tanzanians will thus no longer have to seek this kind of advanced treatment outside the country, at considerable cost and inconvenience.

Any hospital that expands its services, introduces new equipment, and harnesses new medical practitioners must **pay special attention to quality care**. To address this issue the hospital has also **created 20 departmental quality teams to review working practices and ensure they progress to international standards**.

And it receives **200 questionnaires a month from patients** to measure their perceptions of our services. The hospital was proud to receive **ISO 9001 certification in October of 2003.**”

End of Speech

What is ISO 9001?

- **The international Standard for Quality Management (QMS)**
- ISO 9001. It is part of the ISO 9000 family of Quality Management Standards and is used by **over 1 million businesses today**. It delivers a system of **continual improvement that is driven by the customers' needs**.
- It is the most **widely used QMS standard in the world**, with over 1 million certificates issued to organizations in 178 countries.
(29th Nov 2019)

Meritocracy & Best Practice

- “**Meritocracy** means a society in which people, institutions, improve, develop according to merit, according to competence, according to knowledge, according to ability.”

(Bombay, India, 22nd Nov 1992)

- **Best Practice** in every situation i.e. in our families, Jamats, Institutions, society and workplace

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Earlier, I discussed the need for **private** and **public** cooperation in the field of education. The same approach is also needed in the field of medicine. I am aware of perceptions that private health care in Kenya is **expensive** - health care worldwide, in fact, is becoming more expensive every year. Sophisticated **equipment is increasingly costly**, and **new technologies** are replacing old ones at shorter and shorter intervals. More and more, the treatment of **complex cases** is calling for teams of **specialized professionals** rather than single generalists.

Mawlana Hazar Imam, [Inauguration of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya](#) (13/08/2007)



Aga Khan Hospitals

- The Aga Khan Hospitals in Kenya, and everywhere else they exist - in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and **Tanzania** - operate on a **non-profit basis** - no dividends are ever distributed, but they also **aim to operate on a break even, self-sustaining basis**. In this way, if new external funding is available, it can provide for expanded facilities, new buildings and expensive new equipment, rather than compensating for operating losses. This is the only way that **private institutions can provide ever-improving services**, which will, in turn, have a beneficial impact on the quality of medical practice for the whole of society.
- Even as we recognize the realities of **private medical care**, so we must recognize the importance of the **public health care sector**.

Mawlana Hazar Imam, [Inauguration of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya \(13 August 2007\)](#)

AGA KHAN HEALTH SERVICES

- **AKHS began in 1920s**
- **Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS)** is one of three **AKDN** agencies that support activities in health, alongside the **Aga Khan Foundation** and the **Aga Khan University**.
- Together, they provide quality health care to **eight million people annually** and work closely on planning, training and resource development.
- AKHS also works with the Aga Khan Education Services and the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat on the integration of health issues into partnered projects.



Aga Khan Health Services

AKHS is organised into **national service companies** in **Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda**. **The Head Office is located at the AKDN offices in Geneva, Switzerland**. It coordinates the activities of the service companies through five-year plans, ten-year projections, annual budget submissions and the provision of technical assistance.

AKHS is also linked **internationally through network-wide strategies for regional geographies**, such as Central Asia and East Africa, **as well as in quality of care, digital health, virtual learning, climate change measures, population health, communications, human resource development and audit**.

While strengthening its institutions and the links between them, **each health service company joins government health services and other providers in building effective national health systems**.

AKHS and AKU manage 22 hospitals and more than 700 health centres.

AKHS see 8m patients as out-patients and 250,000 as in-patients in a year.

KEY MESSAGES OF THIS SPEECH

- Consultation and Partnerships between Public and Private sectors (between the **Government of Tanzania, AFD** and **AKDN** to improve the quality, consistency and equitable delivery of healthcare in the country.)
- Facilities do not lag behind
- Co-ordinate facilities from AKH- everyone can benefit, covering large areas (access affordable and quality health care at their doorstep)
- Importance of Post graduate Education- to benefit the country and retain staff and bring back those working overseas
- Best practice in all situations - meeting International standards in all areas
- Working within an ethical framework

Ethical Values of our Faith

- **Ethic is the faith that governs your life** (Toronto, 17th Nov, Afternoon)
- **Living with integrity, honesty, generosity, PEACE**
- **Honourable and happy environment**
- **Using Intellect to better understand Allah's creation** (Education/Wisdom/Knowledge)
- **Brotherhood** –Help where **help** is needed, be **generous** where generosity is needed, be **strong** where strength is needed, be **kind** where kindness is needed (Mumbai, 1st March 2018)
- **Improving the Quality of life** (Toronto, 18th Nov 2017, Morning)

(2012) Interview with project consultants Payette Associates

Tom Payette did some consulting for the Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi in the 1970s. We have been working with the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi since 2009, starting with master-planning that campus

The Aga Khan Hospital Dar es Salaam Phase II, with a preliminary budget of over \$50 million, is the single largest private health care project in the country's history.

In 2010 we were informed that His Highness has approved our appointment for similar work in Dar es Salaam. This marked the beginning of a broader engagement in projects for the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), beyond the original hospital project in Karachi.

The Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam is currently a **74-bed secondary hospital** on a relatively small site. An effective teaching hospital needs to be something on the order of **300 beds** at a minimum in order to offer the range **of tertiary-level** medical and surgical specialties that are needed to support **post-graduate medical education residency programs**. Our current project is an important first step.

Another key factor is the age of the hospital's facilities. The **original hospital building is from the 1950s** and it cannot keep pace with the changes in medical technology and their associated needs for space and infrastructure. The building needs to be **replaced by a modern facility** that can carry the Aga Khan Hospital into, say, the next 50 years. **Phase Two projects are designed to take over the bulk of the hospital's functions.**

We will be able to shift lower-intensity functions, such as consulting clinics and offices, to the old hospital building which will facilitate its eventual demolition in future phases of expansion and redevelopment. **Phase Two expansion will involve the building of a 10,000 square metre premise that connects to the current Phase 1 structure which will improve many of the hospital's inpatient functions.**

Q: **What would you highlight as your client's key vision and objectives for this project?**

A: His Highness the Aga Khan has taken a **personal interest** in this project and is keen to see it move forward quickly. He has expressed a desire that the **quality** of the facilities and the services provided keep pace with the **best international institutions** including the Aga Khan University hospitals in Nairobi and in Karachi. His Highness is also interested in having facilities that **attract and retain high-quality** physicians and staff.

Q: **What are some of the key distinctive architectural features of the project?**

A: Since we are building from the current Phase 1 building on Ocean Road we anticipate a similar design attitude with horizontal visual cues that come from the use of projecting balconies which provide a place to enjoy the view as well as shade from the heat and the sun.

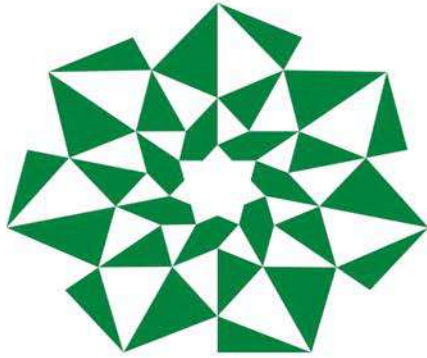
Passive sun-shading is important to reduce the building's energy footprint and to minimize glare and discomfort for the occupants. We also envision a strong, unifying roof form so that when viewed from a distance, the hospital is seen as an ensemble of fairly small pavilions with a lively roof-scape.

Since we embrace a fundamentally **humanistic** approach to design, it comes somewhat naturally though it does require constant focus. In the case of the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar we had some early, rather obvious, observations about **what makes this place special**, such as the **location overlooking the ocean**. What a wonderful amenity for those who are sick and for their families! **So we started with that, using views of the ocean as a touchstone for the patient and visitor experience. Everything revolves around that.**

<https://forum.ismaili.net/viewtopic.php?t=8172> Interview with project consultants Payette Associates who are represented by Mark Careaga, AIA Associate Principal. 7th Oct 2012

Future Challenges within the Health care system in Tanzania

- life expectancy at birth reaches barely 59 years and the human resources gap is estimated at 40%.
- significant increase in non-communicable diseases (diabetes, cancer, and heart diseases), particularly in urban areas. The number of deaths from these diseases is likely to double by 2030.
- the public health care system struggles to meet the growing demand in health services, both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- priority sectors: Water and Sanitation, Energy, Transport and Health. In this journey, the private sector has to be taken on board as they play an important role in addressing challenges related to poverty reduction and sustainable development.



AKDN

- **Founded by His Highness the Aga Khan (Imamu'n-Nas) as a private, international, non-denominational development organisation. It employs over 80,000 people in more than 30 countries.**
- **The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is dedicated to improving the quality of life of those in need, mainly in Asia and Africa, irrespective of their origin, faith, or gender. Our multifaceted development approach aims to help communities and individuals become self-reliant.**

Role of AKDN –AKH Dar es Salaam

- AKDN to improve the **quality, consistency and equitable delivery** of healthcare in the country.
- establish the Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam as a **premier, private not-for-profit** integrated and teaching health system.
- first **17 outreach centres** already active, spread across 11 regions of Tanzania.
- Strengthening health services affordability through a **Patient Welfare Programme**
- Training of **post graduate medical specialists** in family medicine, surgery and internal medicine (28 residents trained in 4 years) as the key elements of a **high-quality hospital**.
- Improving the **environmental treatment of clinical waste** with the agreement that Aga Khan Hospital will allow the public hospitals of Dar es Salaam to dispose of their clinical waste through the hospital at no cost.
- Establishing Aga Khan **Outreach Health Centres** across the country over several years. These will offer a range of essential **Maternal and child health services** to increase the accessibility and quality of services for women and children under five in targeted regions











THANK YOU
(Questions & Comments)

Al-hamdu Li'llahi Rabbi'l-
`Alamin



Upon receiving the "Tolerance" award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy

LOCATION

Tutzing, Germany (20 May 2006)

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Herr Minister

Dr Greiner Herr Landesbischof

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Minister Steinmeier has been very generous in his remarks -- for which I thank him most sincerely. And I would like to take this occasion at the opening of these comments, to tell him how much all the people who work with me around the world appreciate the support and the partnership of the people and Government of Germany in the work that we are doing. You have brought imagination, you have brought sophistication, you have brought flexibility to areas of need, areas of intellectual activity, which we consider unique, and I thank you for that.

In these times of misunderstanding and mistrust, I applaud the realistic outlook on international affairs that His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs brings to his work. I know that he views a constructive relationship between the West and the Muslim world as critical to global peace and stability, and I am grateful for his contributions to that goal.

I am also deeply grateful for your kind invitation and your generous award. This honor takes on special distinction for me because of the very high value I attach to the award's purpose, that is to increase awareness and respect between peoples and cultures through a discussion of political, cultural and religious topics. It is to these subjects that I will address my comments today.

In doing so, I would like to draw on my personal experience, as one who was educated in the West, but who has spent nearly 50 years working largely in the developing world. My particular preoccupation during this time has been with the countries of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where the Ismaili community is concentrated.

Since I became Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, I have watched my world -- or should I say the entire world? -- oscillate between promise and disappointment. In many cases, the disappointments can be attributed to the absence of a culture of tolerance.

Of course my experience includes the religious faith in which I have been nurtured. I was born into a Muslim family, educated as a Muslim and spent many years studying the history of the faith and its civilisations. My commitment to the principle of tolerance also grows out of that commitment.

One of the central elements of the Islamic faith is the inseparable nature of faith and world. The two are so deeply intertwined that one cannot imagine their separation. They constitute a "Way of Life." The role and responsibility of an Imam, therefore, is both to interpret the faith to the community, and also to do all within his means to improve the quality, and security, of their daily lives.

I am fascinated and somewhat frustrated when representatives of the western world -- especially the western media -- try to describe the work of our Aga Khan Development Network in fields like education, health, the economy, media, and the building of social infrastructure.

Reflecting a certain historical tendency of the West to separate the secular from the religious, they often describe it either as philanthropy or entrepreneurship. What is not understood is that this work is for us a part of our institutional responsibility -- it flows from the mandate of the office of Imam to improve the quality of worldly life for the concerned communities.

Our spiritual understandings, like those of your Academy, are rooted, of course, in ancient teachings. In the case of Islam, there are two touchstones which I have long treasured and sought to apply. The first affirms the unity of the human race, as expressed in the Holy Qu'ran where God, as revealed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, says the following:

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women." (4:1)

This remarkable verse speaks both of the inherent diversity of mankind -- the "multitude" -- and of the unity of mankind -- the "single soul created by a single Creator" -- a spiritual legacy which distinguishes the human race from all other forms of life.

The second passage I would cite today is from the first hereditary Imam of the Shi'a community Hazrat Ali. As you know, the Shi'a divided from the Sunni after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was, in Shi'a belief, named by the Prophet to be the Legitimate Authority for the interpretation of the faith. For the Shi'a today, all over the world, he is regarded as the first Imam.

I cite Hazrat Ali's words so that you may understand the spirit in which I have attempted to fulfill the mandate left to me as the 49th hereditary [Ismaili] Imam after the death of my grandfather. I quote:

“No belief is like modesty and patience, no attainment is like humility, no honour is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation.”

Hazrat Ali's regard for knowledge reinforces the compatibility of faith and the world. And his respect for consultation is, in my view, a commitment to tolerant and open-hearted democratic processes.

These Islamic ideals, of course, have also been emphasized by other great religions. Despite the long history of religious conflict, there is a long counter-history of religious focus on tolerance as a central virtue -- on welcoming the stranger and loving one's neighbour.

“Who is my Neighbor?” - one of the central Christian narratives asks. Jesus responds by telling the story of the Good Samaritan -- a foreigner, a representative of the Other, who reaches out sympathetically, across ethnic and cultural divides, to show mercy to the fallen stranger at the side of the road.

I know you will find nothing unusual in this discussion given your own spiritual foundations. But it is striking to me how many modern thinkers are still disposed to link tolerance with secularism -- and religion with intolerance. In their eyes -- and often in the public's eyes I fear -- religion is seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution.

To be sure, there are reasons why this impression exists. Throughout history we find terrible chapters in which religious conflict brought frightening results. Sometimes, a part of the problem grew; it came from proselytizing -- in which faith was not so much shared as imposed. Again in our day, many ostensibly religious voices aggressively affirm a single faith by denying or condemning others.

When people speak these days, about an inevitable “Clash of Civilizations” in our world, what they often mean, I fear, is an inevitable “Clash of Religions.” But I would use different terminology altogether. The essential problem, as I see it, in relations between the Muslim world and the West is “A Clash of Ignorance.” And what I would prescribe -- as an essential first step -- is a concentrated educational effort.

Instead of shouting at one another, we must listen to one another -- and learn from one another. As we do, one of our first lessons might well centre on those powerful but often neglected chapters in history when Islamic and European cultures interacted cooperatively -- constructively and creatively -- to help realize some of civilization's peak achievements.[I think] We must also understand the vast diversity that exists within individual faiths and cultures, including the diversity now at play within the Islamic world. And we must acknowledge that while such pluralism can be healthy and enriching -- it can also become destructive and deadly as it did for the Christian community in Europe half a millennium ago and it does in some parts of the Islamic world at the start of this new millennium.

Intolerance can thus result from one sort of presumably religious attitude, but profound tolerance can also be a deeply religious commitment.

The spiritual roots of tolerance include, it seems to me, a respect for individual conscience -- seen as a Gift of God -- as well as a posture of religious humility before the Divine. It is by accepting our human limits that we can come to see The Other as a fellow seeker of truth -- and to find common ground in our common quest.

Let me emphasize again, however, that spirituality should not become a way of escaping from the world but rather a way of more actively engaging in it.

There are a variety of ways in which we can work to build a culture of tolerance in a turbulent time. Many of them are reflected in the work of our Aga Khan Development Network. One example is the new Global Centre for Pluralism which we recently established in Ottawa -- in partnership with the Canadian government. The

Centre sees the minority experience of the Ismaili community as a helpful resource in the quest for a constructive pluralism -- along with the pluralistic model of Canada itself.

The challenges to tolerance are manifold -- in both the developed and the developing world. The revolutionary impact of globalization means that many who never met before now intermingle continually -- through modern communications media and through direct contact. The migration of populations around the world is at record levels; peoples who once lived across the world from one another, now live across the street.

But societies which have grown more pluralistic in makeup, are not always growing more pluralistic in spirit. What is needed -- all across the world -- is a new "cosmopolitan ethic"-- rooted in a strong culture of tolerance.

I recall a conversation I had some years ago with Jim Wolfensohn, then President of the World Bank, about perceptions of happiness in various societies -- and especially among the very poor. We decided that we should 'listen to the voices of the poor"-- and the World Bank commissioned an important study on that topic. One of its conclusions was that the emotion of "fear" was a central factor holding these societies back. Such fear could have many forms: fear of tyrants, fear of nature, fear of ill health, fear of corruption, violence, scarcity and impoverishment. And such fears inevitably became a source of intolerance.

There is a human impulse it seems -- fed by fear -- to define "identity" in negative terms. We often determine "who we are"-- by determining who we are against. This fragmenting impulse not only separates peoples from one another, it also subdivides communities -- and then it subdivides the subdivisions. It leads to what some have called the "fraying" of society -- in which communities come to resemble a worn out cloth -- as its tight weave separates into individual strands.

But the human inclination to divisiveness is accompanied, I deeply believe, by a profound human impulse to bridge divisions. And often the more secure we are in our own identities, the more effective we can be in reaching out to others.

If our animosities are born out of fear, then confident generosity is born out of hope. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.

Even in the poorest and most isolated communities, we have found that decades, if not centuries, of angry conflict can be turned around by giving people reasons to work together toward a better future -- in other words, by giving them reasons to hope. And when hope takes root, then a new level of tolerance is possible, though it may have been unknown for years, and years, and years.

Tolerance which grows out of hope is more than a negative virtue -- more than a convenient way to ease sectarian tensions or foster social stability -- more than a sense of forbearance when the views of others clash with our own. Instead, seen not as a pallid religious compromise but as a sacred religious imperative, tolerance can become a powerful, positive force, one which allows all of us to expand our horizons -- and enrich our lives.

Thank you for the honour of this Award.

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/04212024-tolerance-award-at-the-tutzing-evangelical-academy-2006-05-20/lesson/watch-lecture-video-146/>

"Tolerance" award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy

Lecture Presentation by Najmuddin Safdari

“Tolerance” award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy

- Tolerance (Definition of Tolerance - تحمل، بردباری)
- The root word of "tolerance" is "toler," which comes from the Latin word "tolerare," meaning "to bear" or "to endure."
"Tolerance" refers to the ability to endure or accept differences, especially the acceptance of different beliefs, practices, or cultures without discrimination

“Tolerance” award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy



The ***Evangelische Akademie Tutzing*** (Protestant Academy of Tutzing) is an education and conference center in [Tutzing](#), Bavaria, run by the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria](#). It was founded in 1947. The main building is Schloss Tutzing on [Lake Starnberg](#). The academy awards the [Marie Luise Kaschnitz Prize](#) for contemporary literature from 1984, and the [Toleranzpreis der Evangelischen Akademie Tutzing](#) prize for tolerance, which since 2000 has been given biennially to people who worked towards the coexistence of religions.

Prof Dr. Roman Herzog in the year 2000
Daniel Barenboim (2002),
Henning Mankell (2004)
Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. (2006)

“Tolerance” award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy

“This honor takes on special distinction for me because of the very high value I attach to the award's purpose, that is to increase awareness and respect between peoples and cultures through a discussion of political, cultural and religious topics.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

CENTRAL ASIA

We integrate social, cultural and economic projects in Central Asia, ranging from humanitarian assistance to building universities and energising musical traditions.



SOUTH ASIA

With programmes spanning rural and urban communities, extending from financial services to the long-term development of civil society, we offer multiple services to improve the quality of life in South Asia.



EASTERN AFRICA

Our programmes here cover agriculture, health, education, infrastructure and civil society capacity building, in a holistic approach to social development.



WEST AFRICA

In West Africa, we focus largely on economic and industrial development, while offering microfinance to ensure social inclusion.



MIDDLE EAST

We engage in cultural and educational activities in the United Arab Emirates, offer humanitarian assistance in Syria and get involved in several aspects of development in Egypt.



EAST ASIA

We work with the governments of Singapore and Malaysia on arts and architectural collaborations within East Asia.



Promise and Disappointment



- “I have watched my world -- or should I say the entire world? -- oscillate between promise and disappointment. In many cases, the disappointments can be attributed to the absence of a culture of tolerance.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ
وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

We will certainly test you with a touch of fear and famine and loss of property, life, and crops. Give good news to those who patiently endure—

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

who say, when struck by a disaster, “Surely to Allah we belong and to Him we will ‘all’ return.”

Interview of Mawlana Hazir Imam (a.s) with an Indian tv channel, Dordarshan.

“I think one of the specifics of Islam is that you live your faith. And you are not one day in your faith and the next day out of your faith. It is a permanent presence. It is a presence which brings you happiness. It brings you objectives in life and therefore, I don't think that one can make this sort of dichotomy. It is a permanency of thought, of attitude, of ethics.... It's not that if you are in a meeting on a given issue, that you forget that behind these decisions you are taking are the ethical principles of your faith. And they have to be there all the time. Whatever you do....” (Dordarshan)

Islamic faith is the inseparable nature of faith and world.

“One of the central elements of the Islamic faith is the inseparable nature of faith and world. The two are so deeply intertwined that one cannot imagine their separation. They constitute a “Way of Life.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

“The role and responsibility of an Imam, therefore, is both to interpret the faith to the community, and also to do all within his means to improve the quality, and security, of their daily lives.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

“Historically and in accordance with Ismaili tradition, the Imam of the time is concerned with spiritual advancement as well as improvement of the quality of life of his murids.”

امرت لصلاح دنياكم و نجات آخرتكم

I have been commanded with your well-being in this world and your salvation in the hereafter. (Wajh al-Din quoted in Chain of the Light of Imamat)

The western media, describe the work of AKDN as philanthropy or entrepreneurship.

“What is not understood is that this work is for us a part of our institutional responsibility -- it flows from the mandate of the office of Imam to improve the quality of worldly life for the concerned communities.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

“The importance of contributing one’s individual energies on a voluntary basis to improving the lives of others. This is not a matter of philanthropy, but rather of self-fulfillment – enlightened self-fulfillment.” (Canadian Parliament)

banī 'ādam a'zā-ye yek digarand
 ke dar 'āfarīn-aš ze yek gowhar-and
 čo 'ozvī be dard āvarad rūzgār
 degar 'ozv hā rā na-mānad qarār
 to k-az mehnat-ē dīgarān bīgham-ī
 na-šāyad ke nām-at nahand ādamī

بنی آدم اعضای یک دیگرند
 که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
 چو عضوی ب درد آورد روزگار
 دیگر عضو ما را نماند قرار
 تو که ز محنت دیگران بی غمی
 نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

Human beings are members of a whole

In creation of one essence and soul

If one member is afflicted with pain

Other members uneasy will remain

If you have no sympathy for human pain

The name of human you cannot retain

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ
 مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate,¹ and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another—and 'honour' family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you.

“This remarkable verse speaks both of the inherent diversity of mankind – the multitude – and of the unity of mankind – the single soul created by a single creator. A spiritual legacy which distinguishes the human race from all other forms of life.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

“At the very heart of the Islamic faith is a conviction that we are born ‘of a single soul’ we are ‘spread abroad’ to be sure in all our diversity, but we share, in a most profound sense, a common humanity.” (Harvard University Cambridge)

Hazrat Ali (a.s) is the legitimate successor of **Prophet Muhammad** (pbuh)

“After the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was, in Shia belief, named by the prophet to be the legitimate authority for the interpretation of the faith.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)

“The prophet had designated his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as his successor. From that early division, a host of further distinctions grew up – but the question of rightful leadership remains central. In time, the Shia were also sub-divided over this question, so that today the Ismailis are the only Shia community who, throughout history, have been led by a living, hereditary Imam in direct descent from the Prophet.” (Canadian Parliament speech)

Chapter 5 Verse 3

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ وَعَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.

Chapter 5 Verse 67

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ

O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

امام ابن مردویہ نے حضرت ابن مسعود رضی اللہ عنہ سے روایت نقل کی ہے کہ ہم رسول اللہ ﷺ کے زمانہ میں یوں پڑھتے (يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ أَنْ عَلَيْنَا مَوْلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) کہ حضرت علی شیر خدا رضی اللہ عنہ مومنوں کے مولیٰ ہیں۔

در حقیقت جانشین مُصطفیٰ باشد علی
از دلیلی نصّ قرآن هم ز روی انتخاب

The real successor of Mustafa (pbuh) is Ali (a.s)
On the basis of the text of the Quran and also by the
election.

“Allamah Nasir al-Din Nasir Hunzai”

Mawlana Hazir Imam quotes Mawlana Ali

وَلَا إِيمَانَ كَالْحَيَاءِ وَالصَّبْرِ، وَلَا حَسَبَ كَالْتَوَاضُعِ، وَ أَشْرَفَ كَالْعِلْمِ، وَلَا عِزَّ كَالْحِلْمِ، وَلَا مُظَاهَرَةَ أَوْثَقُ مِنَ
الْمُشَاوَرَةِ

“No belief is like modesty, and patience, no attainment is like humility, no honour is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation.”

(Tutzing Tolerance Award)

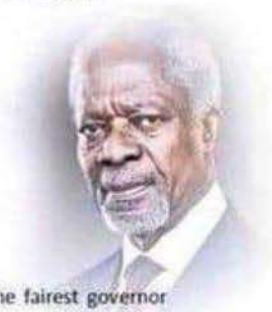
United Nations on Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib

Source: Ahlul-Bayt Student Association via Sarah Jaffery

UN Secretariat, the Committee of Human Rights in New York under the chairmanship of the Secretary General Kofi Annan issued, in 2002 A.D., this historic resolution:



United Nations
UN Secretariat
The Committee of Human Rights
New York



The Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib is considered the fairest governor who appeared during human history (After the Prophet Muhammad). So we advise Arab countries to take Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (AS) as an example in establishing a regime based on justice and democracy and encouraging knowledge.

إن خليفة المسلمين علي بن ابي طالب يعتبر اعدل حاكم ظهر في تاريخ
البشر يعدل الرسول محمد لذلك ننصح البلدان العربية الى الاقتداء به
كمثال لتأسيس نظام قائم على العدالة والديمقراطية وتشجيع المعرفة.

KOFI ANNAN
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UN

كوفي أنان
الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة

بن سلمان
Mohammed bin Salman



UNITED NATIONS



For those who are interested about the exemplary life and teachings of Mawlana Ali, I recommend to read this profound book.

<https://ismaililiterature.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Hazrat-Ali-1.pdf>

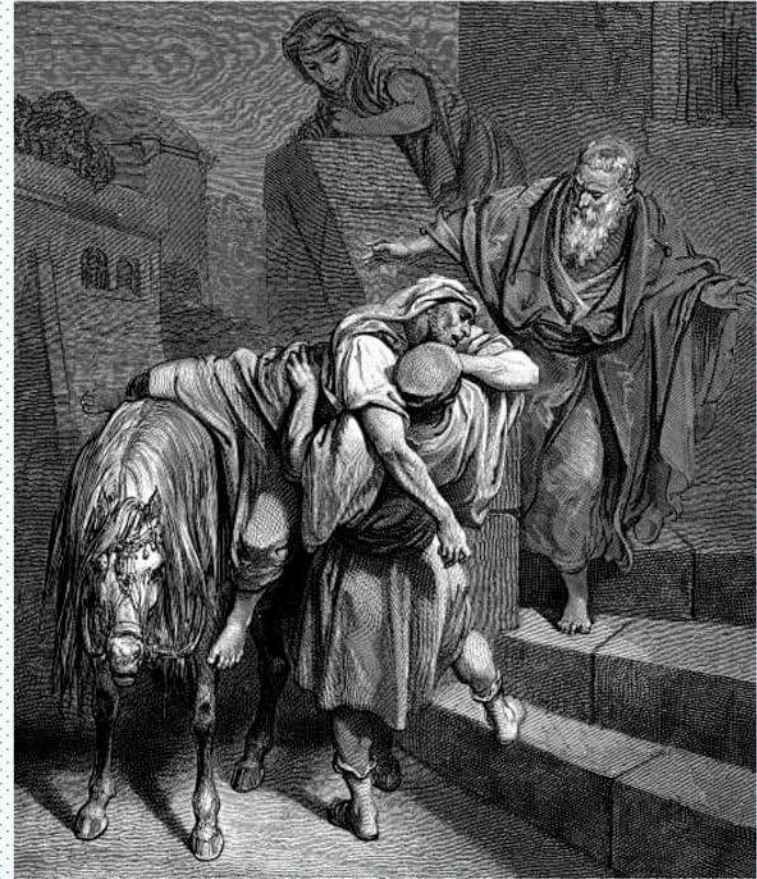
Ḥazrat ʿAlī^(c)



Rashida Noormohamed-Hunzai

Story of Good Samaritan

“Who is my Neighbor?” - one of the central Christian narratives asks. Jesus responds by telling the story of the Good Samaritan -- a foreigner, a representative of the Other, who reaches out sympathetically, across ethnic and cultural divides, to show mercy to the fallen stranger at the side of the road.”



Idea of looking after your neighbor and serving in Islamic teachings:

الخلق عيال الله، و احب الخلق الى الله من نفع عياله، و ادخل
السرور على اهل بيته.

دعائم الاسلام (ثاني كتاب العطايا)

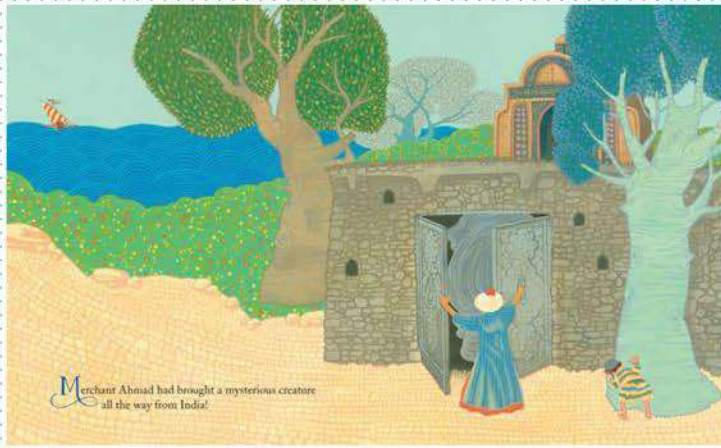
علمي علاج خدمت خلق

“People are God’s household, and the most beloved to God is the one who helps His household and makes them happy.”

Da`a'im, II, 320

Prescription on Clash of Ignorance

“The essential problem, as I see it, in relations between the Muslim world and the West is ‘A clash of ignorance’ and what I would prescribe – as an essential first step – is concentrated educated effort.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)



پیل اندر خانه تاریک بود
 عرضه را آورده بودندش هنود
 از برای دیدنش مردم بسی
 اندر آن ظلمت همی شد هر کسی
 دیدنش با چشم چون ممکن نبود
 اندر آن تاریکیش کف می بسود
 آن یکی را کف به خرطوم او فتاد
 گفت همچون ناودانست این نهاد
 آن یکی را دست بر گوشش رسید
 آن برو چون بادبیزن شد پدید
 آن یکی را کف چو بر پیش بسود
 گفت شکل پیل دیدم چون عمود
 آن یکی بر پشت او بنهاد دست
 گفت خود این پیل چون تختی بدست
 همچنین هر یک به جزوی که رسید
 فهم آن می کرد هر جا می شنید
 از نظرگه گفتشان شد مختلف
 آن یکی دالش لقب داد این الف
 در کف هر کس اگر شمعی بدی
 اختلاف از گفتشان بیرون شدی

Spirituality

“Spirituality should not become a way of escaping from the world but rather a way of more actively engaging in it.”

(Tutzing Tolerance Award)

Culture of Tolerance

“There are a variety of ways in which we can work to build a culture of tolerance in a turbulent time. Many of them are reflected in the work of our Aga Khan Development Network.”
(Tutzing Tolerance Award)

The world is turning into a global village.

“People who lived across the world from one another, now live across the street.”

(Tutzing Tolerance Award)

Replacement of fear by hope

“One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.”

(Tutzing Tolerance Award)

﴿ قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾

Say, 'O Prophet, that Allah says,' "O My servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah's mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins. ¹ He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Shaykh Faridu'd-Din Attar's poetry about hope

مغفرت دارد امید از لطف تو

زانکه خود فرموده لاتقنطوا

بحر الطاف تو بی پایان بود

نا امید از رحمتت شیطان بود

There is hope for forgiveness from Your grace.

As You said not to despair from Your mercy.

The ocean of Your grace is endless.

The one who is disappointed about

Your mercy is the devil.

(gist)

Conclusion!

“One of its conclusions was that the emotion of “fear” was a central factor holding these societies back. Such fear could have many forms: fear of tyrants, fear of nature, fear of ill health, fear of corruption, violence, scarcity and impoverishment. And such fears inevitably became a source of intolerance.”

“If our animosities are born out of fear, then confident generosity is born out of hope. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.” (Tutzing Tolerance Award)



Honoured guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Asalaam-o-aleikum

Presentation of the title of Honorary Citizen of the
Islamic Community of Timbuktu and an Honorary
Doctorate from the University of Sankoré

Allow me first of all to thank Minister Koné, Mayor Said Ould Mahmoud, and Imam ben Essayouti for their very kind words.

I should also like to express my thanks to the alumni, students and scholars of Timbuktu for presenting me with these honours. I am also grateful to the Governor and citizens of the city for the warm welcome extended to me and my family.

I have precious memories of my last visit to Timbuktu during which you presented me with the title of “Honorary Citizen” which I bear with very great pride. At the same time, I feel extremely humble, since there can be no greater honour than to be accorded citizenship of a city that has always been renowned for its dedication to the quest for knowledge.

Amid such a worthy and learned gathering I am reminded of the verses of the Holy Qur’an in which Allah reminds us that He gives the blessing of wisdom to whoever He wills, but only those with intelligence remember that He has done so.

My most sincere prayer is that I, my fellow citizens of Timbuktu and my brothers and sisters in Islam can continue our journey to bring greater wisdom and understanding to all.

For a thousand years, Timbuktu has been a town noted for its hospitality. Here, the desert and the River Niger converge and travellers arriving from across the Sahara have found a friendly welcome and an environment of knowledge and profound faith, as well as a cosmopolitan culture.

Today, I feel honoured and proud to belong to this town which has made a lasting contribution to the enrichment of Islam and world civilisation, not only through its scholarship but also in its role as a crossroads where rich cultural and commercial exchanges between Africa, Europe and Asia which have taken place.

I am also very happy to accept the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa from the prestigious University of Sankoré, the African continent’s most ancient higher education institution. Like Djingareyber and Sidi Yahya, this university has been the alma mater of the town’s 180 Qu’ranic schools and the birthplace of the many scholarly works which became uniquely influential in Africa during the Middle Ages. The sum of all that knowledge has been preserved in the richly-stocked libraries of Timbuktu which house thousands of manuscripts, most of them written by scholars born in the town. This tradition of learning and the transmission of knowledge is at the heart of Islam and the practice of the faith.

I am delighted to receive this degree in such a prestigious centre of Islamic erudition, facing the historic Djingareyber Mosque built in the 14th century in the reign of Emperor Mansa Kankou Moussa by the architect Abu Ishaq as-Saheli.

This mosque is the oldest and most typical example of a unique style of earth architecture developed in the very earliest years of Islam in West Africa and which survives to this day. Today, however, the process of rapid change means that the region is threatened with the loss of technical expertise and the

disappearance of the traditional banco technique. That is why the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and Mali's Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the mosque's governing body, have launched this heritage conservation programme with the aim of reviving traditional construction techniques, improving the state of preservation of the buildings, and ensuring their long-term maintenance so that they can be passed on to future generations.

I shall always remember this honorary doctorate as proof of the harmony between intellect and faith which is Islam's blessing to Muslims.

Thank you.

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/04282024-presentation-of-the-title-of-honorary-citizen-of-the-islamic-community-of-timbuktu-and-an-honorary-doctorate-from-the-university-of-sankore-2008-04-24/lesson/watch-lecture-video-149/>

Mawlana Hazir Imam (a.s)'s Mubarak Speech Series

Presentation of the title of Honorary
Citizen of the Islamic Community of
Timbuktu and an Honorary Doctorate from
the University of Sankore April 24, 2008

Humaira Hydari

April 28,2024

Mawlana Hazir Imam's opening statement

MHI started his speech with
Bismillahi'r-Rahmani'r-Rahim and
Asalaam-o-'Alaikum

Mawlana Hazir Imam expresses his gratitude

MHI, “I should also like to express my thanks to the alumni, students and scholars of Timbuktu for presenting me with these honours. I am also grateful to the Governor and citizens of the city for the warm welcome extended to me and my family”.

Mawlana Hazir Imam's last visit

- MHI, "I have precious memories of my last visit to Timbuktu during which you presented me with the title of "Honorary Citizen" which I bear with very great pride. At the same time, I feel extremely humble, since there can be no greater honour than to be accorded citizenship of a city that has always been renowned for its dedication to the quest for knowledge"
- Proverb: "Salt come from the north, gold come from the south, and silver from the country of white men, but the word of God, treasure of wisdom are only to be found in Timbuktu."

Mali

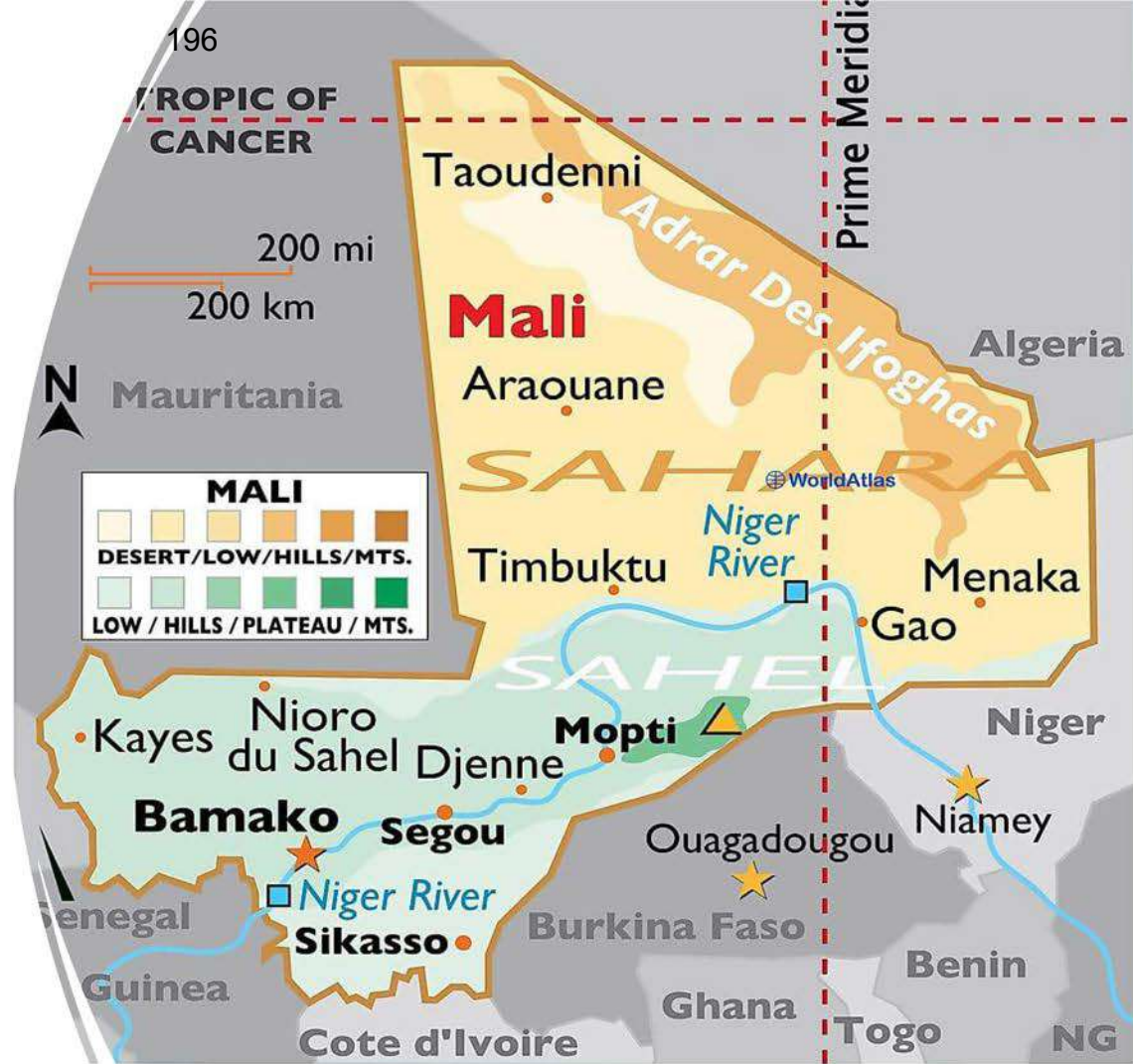
- **Timbuktu** - A city in Mali
- **Mali**- officially the Republic of Mali, is a landlocked country in West Africa. Mali is the eighth-largest country in Africa,
- **Cities:** Bamako (capital), Timbuktu, Segou, Sikasso, Mopti, Gao, Keyes
- **Population:** 20.57 million - 2019 census
- **Mopti**- Mopti is a town and an urban commune in the Inner Niger Delta region of Mali



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Mali

Mali is basically divided into two parts:

- 1- Sub-Saharan Southwest 90% of population lives
- 2- Arid Saharan



MHI'S First visit to Mali-Oct 13, 2003

- “Examining manuscript dated back to 13th century at the Ahmed Baba Centre. the Aga Khan recalled that visiting scholars from Timbuktu are reported to have lectured at Al Azhar in Egypt, the university founded by the Aga Khan's ancestor, the Caliph-Imam al-Muizz and one of the most eminent institutions of learning of the day”

<https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/news-release/aga-khan-urges-rediscovery-timbuktu-and-djenne>

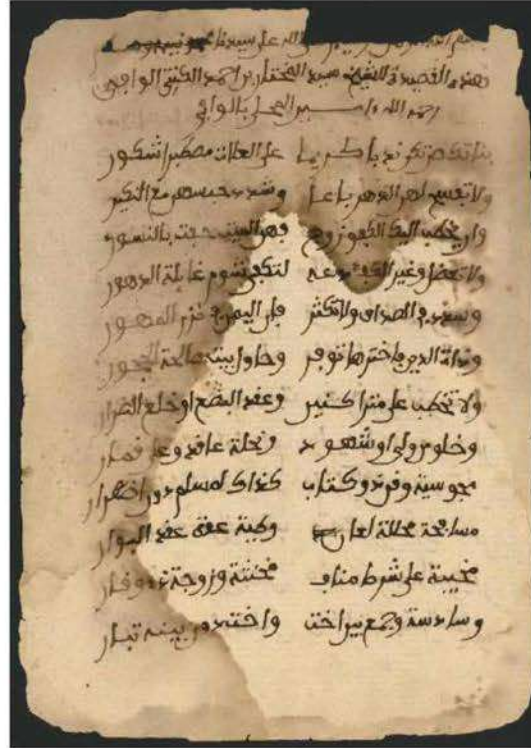
- In this photo MHI is in the centre, the Prime Minister Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamani (right), Mr. Abdramane Ben Essayouti and other local dignitaries

<https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/news-release/aga-khan-urges-rediscovery-timbuktu-and-djenne>

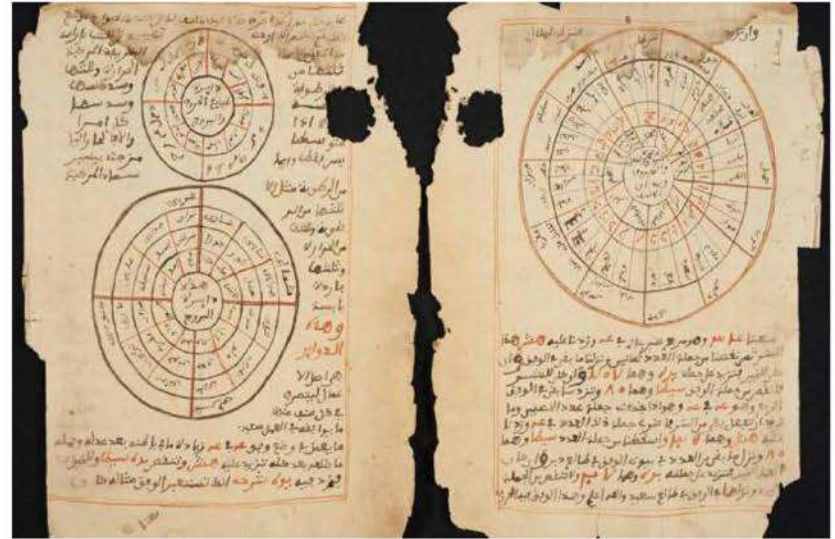


<https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/events/aga-khan-concludes-visit-mali-signature-agreement-expand-cooperation>

Manuscripts



More Manuscripts





The Verse of the Holy Quran

MHI, “Amid such a worthy and learned gathering I am reminded of the verses of the holy Qur’an in which Allah reminds us that He gives the blessing of wisdom to whoever he wills, but only those with intelligence remember that He has done so” [Qur’an, 2:269]

The Qur'anic Ayat in the speech

- **Yusuf Ali:** He granteth wisdom to whom He pleaseth; and he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the Message but men of understanding.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا
يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٦٦﴾

Explanation of Abundant Good (2:269)

- Abundant good: "...in addition to technical meaning, to know the other meanings of Quranic words and to draw conclusion of wisdom from them is called 'abundant good'" (Balance of Reality, p. 8)
- The following books, explains about the verse 269 of Surah Al-Baqarah:
 - A Key to Wisdom (p.11)
 - A Thousand Wisdoms (p.2)
 - Balance of Reality (p.8)
 - Book of Healing (p.215)
 - Flower of Paradise (p.1)

Mawlana Hazir Imam's prayers to continue the journey of spreading greater wisdom and understanding to all

- MHI, "My most sincere prayers is that I, my fellow citizens of Timbuktu and my brothers and sisters in Islam can continue our journey to bring greater wisdom and understanding to all"
- "As we work towards that vision of the future we will remember the Sura of Light from the Qur'an. It tells us that the light of the blessed olive tree lights the lamp of understanding. A light that belongs neither to the East nor West. We are to give this light to all." Asia society, Islamic architecture: a revival

- Hē dūr bahot ʿilmī safar tēz chalā chal
Pur-amn hē yeh rāh nah ɗar tēz chalā chal

The journey of knowledge is very long, continue to walk fast

Full of peace is this path, do not fear,

continue to walk fast

•
<https://ismaililiterature.com/audio-urdu-ismaili-arifanah-kalam>

Mawlana Hazir Imam's remarks on the ancient city of Timbuktu

- MHI, “For a thousand years, Timbuktu has been a town noted for its hospitality. Here, the desert and the River Niger converge and travellers arriving from across the Sahara have found a friendly welcome and an environment of knowledge and profound faith, as well as a cosmopolitan culture.” (Presentation of the title of honorary citizen of the Islamic community of Timbuktu and an honorary doctorate from the university of Sankore, 2008)

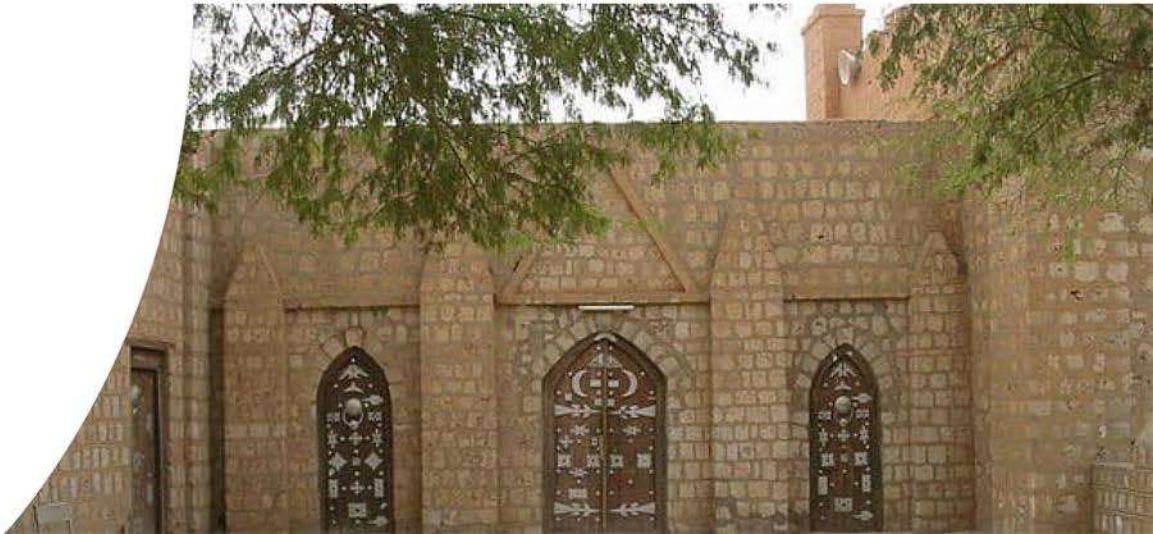
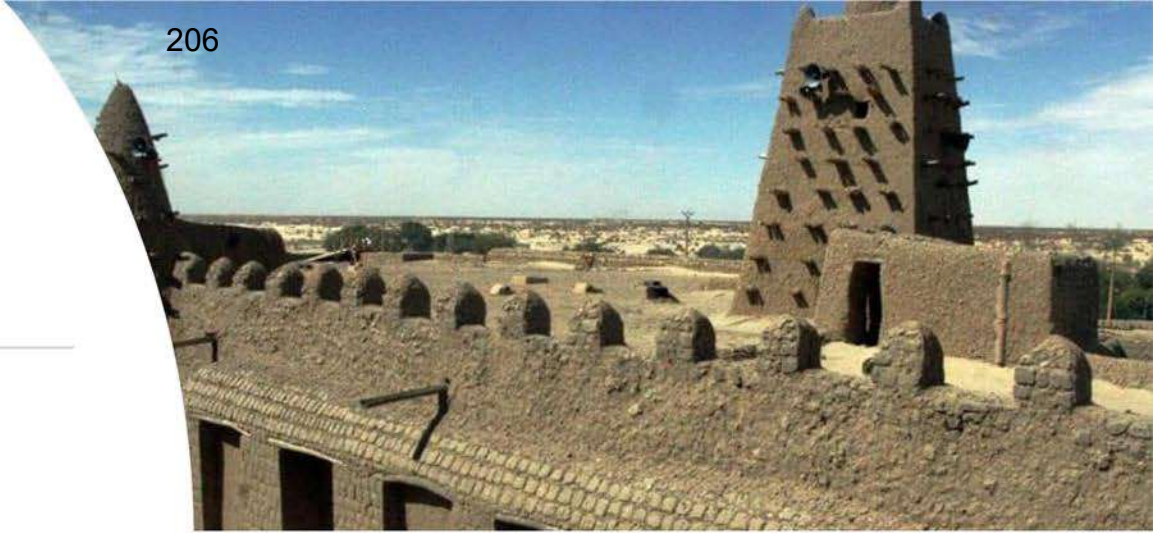
-

Mawlana Hazir Imam Expressing his happiness

- MHI showed his happiness in accepting the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa from the prestigious University of Sankore

Sankore University

- <https://thinkafrica.net/university-of-sankore-mali-989-ce-present/>



Sidi Yahia Mosque

<https://mosqpedia.org/en/mosque/130>



The Djinguereber Mosque

<https://thinkafrica.net/richest-man-in-history/>



Mawlana Hazir Imam talks about the Emperor and the architect

- MHI, “I am delighted to receive this degree in such a prestigious centre of Islamic erudition, facing the historic Djingareyber Mosque built in the 14th century in the reign of Emperor Mansa Kankou Moussa by the architect Abu Ishaq as Saheli”



Emperor Mansa Kankou Moussa

- Mansa Moussa was a ruler of the kingdom of Mali from 1312 C.E (Common Era) to 1337 C.E
- Known as Mansa Moussa is considered the wealthiest man in history.
- In 1324, C.E, Mansa Moussa made the most extravagant pilgrimage in the history of humanity to make a statement that Mali is not less than his neighboring countries
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansa_Musa

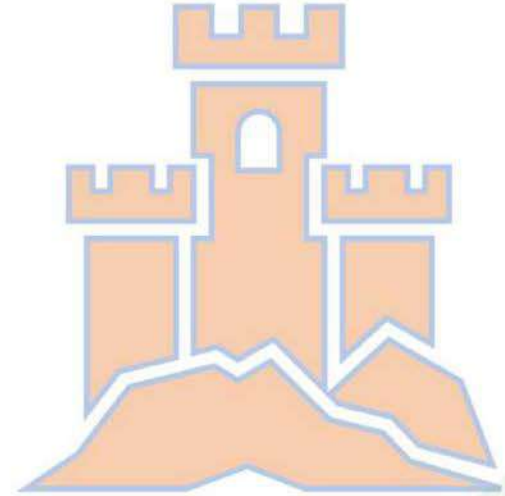


Architect Abu Ishaq as Saheli

- Born in Granda, Spain (1290 -1346)
- Poet and architect
- Design Sankore Mosque, Djingareyber Mosque, a royal residence
- He introduced the wooden framework into the mud wall of the facilities to allow repair

• <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Sahili>

• <https://www.britannica.com/topic/World-Heritage-site>



Signing agreement of cooperation

- MHI's concern for threat that these earth architecture are facing and how Aga Khan Trust for Culture play a role in its restoration and passing it on to the future generation
- His Highness the Aga Khan and president Amadou Toumani Toure sign an agreement of cooperation between the Ismaili Imamat and the Republic of Mali in Bamako



AKDN's Work in Mali

- According to the AKDN website, the project of restoration of the Great Mosque Mopti started in November of 2004 and AKDN handed over the keys to the Great Mosque on June 19, 2006, in ceremony attend by His Excellency Cheick Oumar Sissoko, Mali's Minister of Culture .
- “In Mopti, Mali, programmes began with the restoration of the Great Mosque but have since grown to encompass a water supply and sanitation programme, including a sewage network connecting all the households in the Komoguel area.”
- <https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/spotlights/integrated-solutions-urban-poverty>

Mopti Mosque after restoration



The Djingareyber Mosque after restoration



The Great Mosque of Djenne'



The Harmony between Intellect and Faith

- MHI, “I shall always remember this honorary doctorate as proof of the harmony between intellect and faith which is Islam’s blessings to Muslims”
- “Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has **created**. Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston 23 June 2002, Houston, Texas (USA)

Reflection

- What is our contribution to the journey of bringing greater understanding and wisdom to all?
- Do we see what Mawlana Hazir Imam wants us to see?
- Do we hear what He wants us to hear?
- Do we reflect and contemplate what he wants to contemplate on?

The of Intellect by *Al Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al Shirazi*-Shimmering Light

How many observers are there
With eyes that cannot, see?

How many seers are there
With hearts that cannot reflect?

For the human eye to see,
There are certain conditions;
He who disregards them
Loses his way in the darkness.

The eye is of no avail
If it does not receive light
From the sun or the moon,
Or from a burning torch.

Similarly, the intellect,
During reflection by itself,
Remains in the throes of
Doubt and bewilderment .

Except when it is helped
By a light from outside;
Then it ascends the ladder
Of enlightened contemplation
(Shimmering light, p.47)



Thank you!



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Annual meeting of the International Baccalaureate

18 April 2008, Atlanta, Georgia USA

Dr. Monique Seefried, Chairman of the IB Board of Governors
Members of the Board of Governors
Mr. Jeffrey Beard, Director General of the IB
Educators and Students from the IB Community
Distinguished Guests

What a great privilege it is for me to be with you today - I have looked forward to this gathering for a long time. And I am particularly grateful to Monique Seefried for her generous introduction, and for so beautifully describing both the local and the global context in which we meet.

This is a particularly significant occasion for me, for several reasons.

It is significant of course because it marks the 40th anniversary of what I regard as one of the great seminal institutions of our era - the International Baccalaureate program. I say that because the IB program incarnates a powerful idea, the confidence that education can reshape the way in which the world thinks about itself.

I am deeply honored to be giving this particular Lecture - the Peterson Lecture, as it, too, has a great legacy. It fittingly celebrates the life and work of Alec Peterson, whose intellectual and moral leadership have been central to this organization and to all whom it has influenced.

I was humbled when I was first invited to be the Peterson Lecturer. That sense of deference grew, I must confess, as I began to look at the distinguished list of former Lecturers. And then I took one more step, and looked at what these people have said through the years - and I was even more deeply impressed by the responsibility of this assignment.

The Peterson Lectures - collected together - would make a wonderful reading list, for an excellent University course, on the topic of international education. After looking through them, I wondered if there was anything left to say on the subject! But if anyone should ever incorporate these lectures into a university syllabus, then perhaps my remarks today could appropriately be placed under the heading of "optional additional reading!"

Finally, this occasion has special meaning for me because it comes, as you may know, on my 50th anniversary as spiritual leader, or Imam, of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. We are thus celebrating both a fortieth and a fiftieth anniversary today - and both provide important opportunities to connect our past with our future, our roots with our dreams.

I came upon a rather striking surprise in looking through the texts of earlier Peterson Lectures. Not just one - but two of those addresses in recent years have quoted my grandfather! It was from him, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, that I inherited my present role in 1957. I also inherited from him a deep concern for the advancement of education - especially in the developing world. These two topics - education and development - have been at the heart of my own work over the past fifty years, and they will form the central theme of my comments today.

Very early after the end of the second world war, my brother and I were sent to school in Switzerland, Le Rosey, and after a few years at that school, a new coach for rowing became part of the school and we were told that he would also coach the ice hockey team during the winter term. His name was Vaclav Rubik, not the one of Rubik's cube fame but rather, like the famous cube itself, a challenging influence. He was also one of the most talented and intelligent sportsmen that I have ever met. He was in the Czech national ice hockey team which has been one of the best in the world, and he was also in the national Eights and Fours without Coxswain. His wife was in the Czech national field hockey team. So Le Rosey was extremely fortunate to have two exceptional athletes available for coaching. But there was another dimension to Vaclav Rubik. He had a doctorate in Law, and he and his wife were political refugees who had fled on foot all the way from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland. He was a charismatic individual, and after only a couple of years of training he succeeded in putting together an under-18 crew of Fours, which won just about every race it competed in, including the Swiss National Championship for all ages.

We used to spend long hours in buses driving from one rowing competition to another, and from one ice hockey match to another. I remember asking him what he intended to do, as I could not see a man of such quality remaining indefinitely as a sports coach in a small Swiss school. His answer was that he had applied for acceptance as a political refugee to the United States, and that as soon as he would be allowed to come here he would do so. I asked him how he would earn his living once he came to the United States, as I was certain that he

would not want to continue his career as a sports coach, and his answer has remained in my mind ever since. He said, my wife and I fled from Czechoslovakia with nothing, other than the clothes on our back and the shoes on our feet, but I have had a good education and when I arrive in the United States, that is what will enable me to obtain the type of employment I would wish. Once he left Le Rosey, I somewhat lost touch with him, and the last thing I heard was that he had become a very senior executive in the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

The moral of the story is clear – you can have nothing in your pocket, and only the clothes and the shoes you wear, but if you have a well educated mind, you will be able to seize the opportunities life offers you, and start all over again.

I suspect that many members of the Ismaili Community, like other Asians who were expelled by Idi Amin from Uganda, and who made successful new lives in other parts of the world, would tell you the same story.

From its very beginnings, the International Baccalaureate Organization has understood this central truth. But as we move into a new century, I would like to combine my words of congratulation and commendation, with some words of inquiry and challenge.

What is the eventual place and purpose of the IB in developing societies - and in a Muslim context? What can those worlds contribute to the IB community? And how can institutions which are rooted in different cultural traditions best work together to bridge worlds that have too often been widely separated?

As a point of departure in addressing these questions, I would turn to those words from my Grandfather which were quoted in two earlier Peterson Lectures. He included them in a speech he gave as President of the League of Nations in Geneva some 70 years ago. They come originally from the Persian poet, Sadi, who wrote: “The children of Adam, created of the self-same clay, are members of one body. When one member suffers, all members suffer, likewise. O Thou, who art indifferent to the suffering of the fellow, thou art unworthy to be called a man.”

You will readily understand why such words seem appropriate for a Peterson Lecture. They speak to the fundamental value of a universal human bond- a gift of the Creator - which both requires and validates our efforts to educate for global citizenship.

I would also like to quote an infinitely more powerful statement about the unity of mankind, because it comes directly from the Holy Quran, and which I would ask you to think about. The Holy Quran addresses itself not only to Muslims, but to the entirety of the human race, when it says:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from one single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. “These words reflect a deeply spiritual insight - A Divine imperative if you will - which, in my view, should under gird our educational commitments. It is because we see humankind, despite our differences, as children of God and born from one soul, that we insist on reaching beyond traditional boundaries as we deliberate, communicate, and educate internationally. The IB mission statement puts it extremely well: “to encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

The IB community has thought long and hard about what it means for students to become powerfully aware of a wider world - and to deal effectively with both its bewildering diversity and its increasing interdependence. The IB program has wrestled vigorously with one of the basic conundrums of the age - how to take account of two quite different challenges.

The first challenge is the fact that the world is increasingly a “single” place - a wondrous web of global interaction cutting across the lines of division and separation which have characterized most of its history. This accelerating wave of interdependence is something we first defined as “internationalization” when the IB program was launched 40 years ago. We refer to it now as “globalization.” It brings with it both myriad blessings and serious risks - not the least of which is the danger that globalization will become synonymous with homogenization.

Why would homogenization be such a danger? Because diversity and variety constitute one of the most beautiful gifts of the Creator, and because a deep commitment to our own particularity is part of what it means to be human. Yes, we need to establish connecting bonds across cultures, but each culture must also honour a special sense of self.

The downside of globalization is the threat it can present to cultural identities.

But there is also a second great challenge which is intensifying in our world. In some ways it is the exact opposite of the globalizing impulse. I refer to a growing tendency toward fragmentation and confrontation among peoples. In a time of mounting insecurity, cultural pride can turn, too often, into an endeavour to normalise one's culture. The quest for identity can then become an exclusionary process - so that we define ourselves less by what we are FOR and more by whom we are AGAINST. When this happens, diversity turns quickly from a source of beauty to a cause of discord.

I believe that the coexistence of these two surging impulses - what one might call a new globalism on one hand and a new tribalism on the other - will be a central challenge for educational leaders in the years ahead. And this will be particularly true in the developing world with its kaleidoscope of different identities.

As you may know, the developing world has been at the centre of my thinking and my work throughout my lifetime. And I inherited a tradition of educational commitment from my grandfather. It was a century ago that he began to build a network of some 300 schools in the developing world the Aga Khan Education Services - in addition to founding Aligarh University in India.

The legacy which I am describing actually goes back more than a thousand years, to the time when our forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For many centuries, a commitment to learning was a central element in far-flung Islamic cultures. That commitment has continued in my own Imamat through the founding of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia and through the recent establishment of a new Aga Khan Academies Program. And this is where your and our paths meet.

As you have heard, the curriculum of our Academies is centered on the IB program. We hope that the network of Aga Khan Academies will become an effective bridge for extending the IB Program more widely into the developing world.

Each of you knows well the IB side of this bridge. I thought I might add just a few words about the Academies side of the bridge, and about my purpose in initiating this international network of high quality schools.

Our Academies Program is rooted in the conviction that effective indigenous leadership will be the key to progress in the developing world, and as the pace of change accelerates, it is clear that the human mind and heart will be the central factors in determining social wealth.

Yet in too much of the developing world, the capacity to realise the potential of the human resource base is still sadly limited. Too many of those who should be the leaders of tomorrow are being left behind today. And even those students who do manage to get a good education often pursue their dreams in far off places - and never go home again. The result is a widening gap between the leadership these communities need - and the leadership their educational systems deliver.

For much of human history, leaders have been born into their roles, or have fought their way in - or have bought their way in. But in this new century - a time of unusual danger and stirring promise, it is imperative that aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent - or to use an even better term - to meritocracies. Is it not a fundamental concept of democracy itself, that leadership should be chosen on the basis of merit?

Educating for leadership must imply something more than the mere development of rote skills. Being proficient at rote skills is not the same thing as being educated. And training that develops skills, important as they may be, is a different thing from schooling in the art and the science of thinking.

The temptation to inculcate rather than to educate is understandably strong among long frustrated populations. In many such places, public emotions fluctuate between bitter impatience and indifferent skepticism - and neither impatience nor indifference are favorable atmospheres for encouraging reasoned thought.

But in an age of accelerating change, when even the most sophisticated skills are quickly outdated, we will find many allies in the developing world who are coming to understand that the most important skill anyone can learn is the ability to go on learning.

In a world of rapid change, an agile and adaptable mind, a pragmatic and cooperative temperament, a strong ethical orientation - these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership. And I would add to this list a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and which welcomes pluralistic exchange.

These capacities, over the longer term, will be critically important to the developing world. They happen to be the same capacities which programs like the IB - and the Aga Khan Academies - are designed to elicit and inspire.

The Academies have a dual mission: to provide an outstanding education to exceptional students from diverse backgrounds, and to provide world-class training for a growing corps of inspiring teachers.

At these 18 Academies, each educating between 750 to 1200 primary and secondary students, we anticipate having one teacher for every seven students, and we will place enormous emphasis on recruiting, training, and compensating them well. We hope they will become effective role models for other teachers in their regions.

To this end, we expect within the next year or so to open new Professional Development Centres for teacher education in India, Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Similar planning is underway in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania and Uganda. These Professional Development Centres will operate before we open the doors to students.

In sum, our strategy begins with good teaching. We must first teach the teachers.

As the Academies open, one-by-one, they will feature merit-based entry, residential campuses, and dual-language instruction. This language policy exemplifies our desire to square the particular with the global. English will enable graduates to participate fully on an international stage, while mother-tongue instruction will allow students to access the wisdom of their own cultures.

Squaring the particular with the global will require great care, wisdom, and even some practical field testing, to ensure that it really is possible to develop a curriculum that responds effectively to both the global and the tribal impulses. While this will be a feat in itself, it will also be important to relate well to highly practical concerns such as the nature of each country's national university entrance exams, and the the human resources required by each country's multi-year development plans.

The Academies have given much thought to the components that we would describe as global in our curriculum. We intend to place special emphasis on the value of pluralism, the ethical dimensions of life, global economics, a broad study of world cultures (including Muslim Civilizations) and comparative political systems. Experienced IB teachers have already been helping us to integrate these important areas of focus into the Academies curriculum.

Many students will also study for at least a year in other parts of the Academy network, outside their home countries. And of course we have stipulated that our program should qualify our students for the International Baccalaureate diploma. Faculty too will have the opportunity to live in new countries, learn new languages and engage in new cultures.

You may be asking yourselves on what bases the Aga Khan Education Services and the Academies Program have selected new subjects to be added to the Academies curriculum, and I thought it might be useful to illustrate that to you.

With regard to pluralism, it has been our experience that in a very large number of countries in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East, and elsewhere, the failure of different peoples to be able to live in peace amongst each other has been a major source of conflict. Experience tells us that people are not born with the innate ability nor the wish to see the Other as an equal individual in society. Pride in one's separate identity can be so strong that it obscures the intrinsic value of other identities. Pluralism is a value that must be taught.

With regard to the issue of ethics, we see competent civil society as a major contributor to development, particularly where democracies are weak, or where governments have become dysfunctional. We are therefore concerned with the quality of ethics in all components of civil society, and reject the notion that the absence of corruption or fraud in government is anywhere near sufficient, to ensure to every individual a rigorous and clean enabling environment. Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are risks which have a dramatic effect on peoples' development. This is especially true in rural environments where the majority of the peoples of the developing

world live, but where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

Educating for global economics will also be essential to ensure that the failed economic systems of the past are replaced. But this must not mean a simplistic acceptance of the imbalances and inequities associated with today's new global economy. We need to develop a broad consensus which focuses on creating a global economic environment which is universally fair.

Our program will also teach about world cultures. Inter-cultural conflicts inevitably grow out of intercultural ignorance - and in combating ignorance we also reduce the risk of conflict.

Finally, we want to educate about comparative political systems, so that more and more people in the developing world will be able to make competent value judgements about their Constitutions, their political systems, and how they can best develop democratic approaches which are well tailored to their needs. Public referenda, to sanction new Constitutions, for example, make little sense when they call for judgments from people who do not understand the questions they are being asked, nor the alternatives they should be considering.

These planned subject areas share two characteristics: They all impact a large number of countries across the continents of our world, and they address problems that will take many decades to resolve. And, while the Academies have made reasonable progress in defining the broad areas of the curriculum, I must be frank in saying that the more tribal subjects, specific to individual countries, or perhaps regions, are areas where a great deal of work remains to be done, and where in fact we should expect to go through a prudent step-by-step process - cutting the cloth as each individual situation requires.

What we hope to create, in sum, is a network of 18 educational laboratories, all of them sharing a common overriding purpose, but each one learning from the others particular experiences.

The first Aga Khan Academy opened in Kenya four years ago, and the first cohort of IB Diploma graduates completed their studies last June. The quality of their academic work, including their success on the IB examinations, along with their records of community service, make us optimistic about the future.

As we move into that future, we would like to collaborate with the International Baccalaureate movement in a challenging, but inspiring new educational adventure. Together, we can help reshape the very definition of a well educated global citizen. And we can begin that process by bridging the learning gap which lies at the heart of what some have called a Clash of Civilizations, but which I have always felt was rather a Clash of Ignorances.

In the years ahead, should we not expect a student at an IB school in Atlanta to know as much about Jomo Kenyatta or Muhammad Ali Jinnah as a student in Mombasa or Lahore knows about Atlanta's great son, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.? Should a Bangladeshi IB student reading the poems of Tagore at the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka not also encounter the works of other Nobel Laureates in Literature such as the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk or America's William Faulkner or Toni Morrison?

Should the study of medieval architecture not include both the Chartres Cathedral in France and the Mosque of Djenne in Mali? And shouldn't IB science students not learn about Ibn al-Haytham, the Muslim scholar who developed modern optics, as well as his predecessors Euclid and Ptolemy, whose ideas he challenged.

As we work together to bridge the gulf between East and West, between North and South, between developing and developed economies, between urban and rural settings, we will be redefining what it means to be well educated.

Balancing the universal and the particular is an age old challenge - intellectually and practically. But it may well become an even more difficult challenge as time moves on and the planet continues to shrink. It is one thing, after all, to talk about cultural understanding when "the Other" is living across the world. It is often a different matter when the "Other" is living across the street.

I admire the IB organization's desire to take on the cultural challenges of our time, to move into parts of the world and areas of society where it has been less active in the past. But we all should be clear, as we embark on such projects, that the people with whom we will be dealing will present different challenges than before. As we choose our targets of opportunity, we should examine the environments and consider carefully the changes which can make these programs most relevant to the future.

Some people tell us that globalization is an inevitable process. That may be true in certain areas of activity - but there is nothing inevitable about globalizing educational approaches and standards. Conceptualising a global examination system is one of the most difficult intellectual endeavours I can imagine - though it should also be one of the most exciting. The intellectual stimulation of working on such a project could keep the world's best educators engaged for decades. That task may be more feasible, however, because of the head start which the IB organization has already made in thinking about a global curriculum. Your IB experience, independent of the Aga Khan Academies, as well as your Peterson lectures through the years offer an excellent foundation for that process.

As the IB moves beyond the Judeo-Christian cultures where it is most experienced, it will have to make educators in other areas of the world into its newest stakeholders. This will probably mean developing more explicit expressions of a cosmopolitan ethic, founded if possible in universal human values. That may well be a progressive, ever evolving process - one that will be increasingly inclusive but may never be complete.

What would it mean for example for the IB program to work in largely rural societies -where there have never been the resources or incentives to support serious and sustained education? What would it mean to apply the concepts of critical thinking and individual judgment in societies which are steeped in habitual deference to age and authority, to rules and to rituals.

What would it require for an organization which is deeply rooted in the Western humanist tradition to speak with relevance in profoundly non-Western cultural settings? And how should we go about the challenges of moral education - growing out of universal values -in settings where religious and ideological loyalties are particularly intense.

I ask these questions not because I have ready answers to them - but because I think the posing of such questions will be essential to our progress. I ask them not to discourage you from reaching out - but rather to encourage you - as you do reach out - to do so with a full understanding of the risks and the strains that you will inevitably encounter.

I believe we can find answers to these questions. They may not be full and complete and perfect answers, but there at least will be initial answers, tentative answers, working answers. And each step along the way will teach us more.

What is essential is that we search.

In the final analysis, the great problem of humankind in a global age will be to balance and reconcile the two impulses of which I have spoken: the quest for distinctive identity and the search for global coherence. What this challenge will ultimately require of us, is a deep sense of personal and intellectual humility, an understanding that diversity itself is a gift of the Divine, and that embracing diversity is a way to learn and to grow - not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge.

What is required goes beyond mere tolerance or sympathy or sensitivity - emotions which can often be willed into existence by a generous soul. True cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, and even more intellectual than that. It implies a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves. This is a challenging task, but if we do that, then we will discover that the universal and the particular can indeed be reconciled. As the Quran states: "God created male and female and made you into communities and tribes, so that you may know one another." (49.13) It is our differences that both define us and connect us.

I am confident that the IB program will continue to succeed as it extends its leadership into new arenas in the decades ahead. But as that happens, one key variable will be the spirit in which we approach these new engagements.

There will be a strong temptation for us to regard these new frontiers as places to which we can bring some special gift of accumulated knowledge and well seasoned wisdom. But I would caution against such an emphasis. The most important reason for us to embrace these new opportunities lies not so much in what we can bring to them as in what we can learn from them.

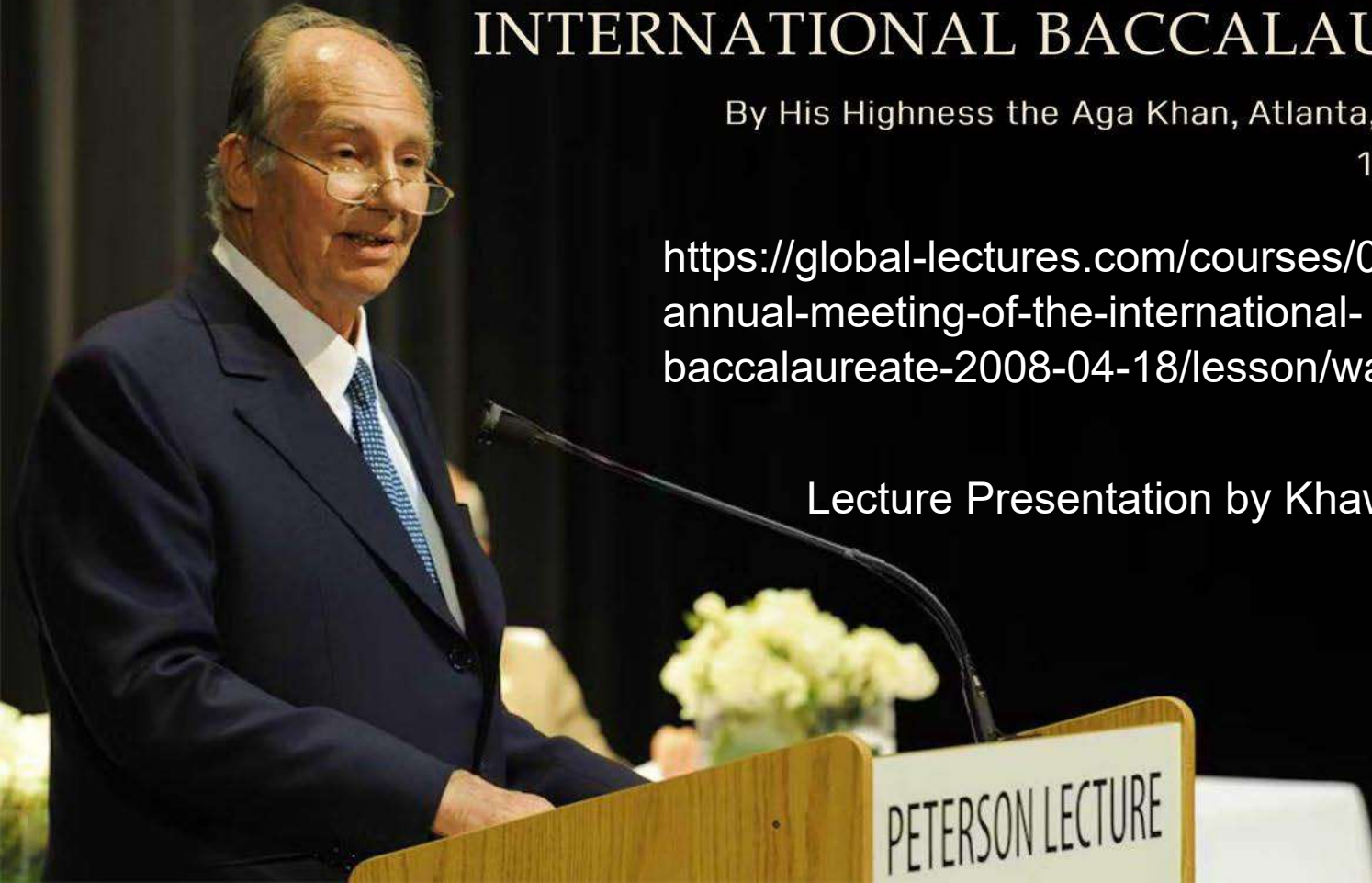
Thank you very much.

ANNUAL MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

By His Highness the Aga Khan, Atlanta, Georgia USA,
18th April 2008

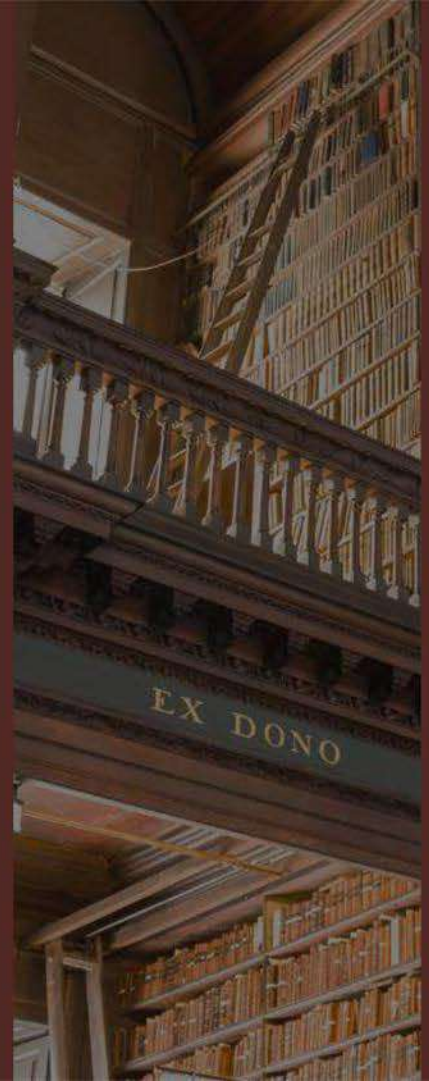
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Lecture Presentation by Khawaja Naeem



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

“Education can reshape the way in which the world thinks about itself.”

*“We are thus celebrating both a fortieth and a fiftieth anniversary today - and both provide important opportunities **to connect our past with our future, our roots with our dreams.**”*

THE MEETING

Celebrated both the fortieth anniversary of IB and the fiftieth anniversary of Mawlana Hazir Imam (S.A.) as spiritual leader, or Imam, of the Shia Ismaili Muslims

BACKGROUND OF THE MEETING AND THE SPEECH

*“It was from him, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan, that I inherited my present role in 1957. I also inherited from him a deep concern for **the advancement of education - especially in the developing world.**”*

*“These two topics - **education and development** - have been at the heart of my own work over the past fifty years.”*

PETERSON LECTURES

Mawla s.a. remarked the lectures as:

- A wonderful reading list
- ‘Optional additional reading’ (for universities)

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

“The moral of the story is clear – you can have nothing in your pocket, and only the clothes and the shoes you wear, but if you have a well-educated mind, you will be able to seize the opportunities life offers you, and start all over again.”

“I suspect that many members of the Ismaili Community, like other Asians who were expelled by Idi Amin from Uganda, and who made successful new lives in other parts of the world, would tell you the same story.”

HOW TO SIEZE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Story of Valav Rubik and his wife – a memory from Le Rosey days

ROLE OF IB AND ITS CHALLENGES

ROLE OF IB AND ITS CHALLENGES

که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
 دیگر عضو ہارا نماند قرار
 نشاید کہ نامت نہند آدمی
 (سعدی)

بنی آدم اعضائی یک پیکرند
 چو عضوی بہ درد آورد روزگار
 تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی

“The children of Adam, created of the self-same clay, are members of one body. When one member suffers, all members suffer, likewise. O Thou, who art indifferent to the suffering of the fellow, thou art unworthy to be called a man.”

POETRY OF SA'DI

Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah s.a. included them in a speech he gave as President of the League of Nations in Geneva.

ROLE OF IB AND ITS CHALLENGES (Contd.)

*“They speak to the fundamental value of a **universal human bond- a gift of the Creator** - which both requires and validates our efforts to educate for global citizenship.”*

“The Holy Quran addresses itself not only to Muslims, but to the entirety of the human race, when it says:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from one single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”

QURANIC VERSE

Surah 4, verse 1

TWO BIG CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

FIRST CHALLENGE: HOMOGENIZATION

*“It brings with it both myriad blessings and serious risks - not the least of which is the danger that globalization will become synonymous with **homogenization.**”*

*“Why would homogenization be such a danger? **Because diversity and variety constitute one of the most beautiful gifts of the Creator,** and because a deep commitment to our own particularity is part of what it means to be human. Yes, we need to establish connecting bonds across cultures, but each culture must also honour a special sense of self.”*

“DIVERSITY AND VARIETY
CONSTITUTE ONE OF THE
MOST BEAUTIFUL GIFTS OF
THE CREATOR.”

2ND CHALLENGE: A NEW TRIBALISM

*“The quest for identity can then become an exclusionary process - so that **we define ourselves less by what we are FOR and more by whom we are AGAINST.** When this happens, diversity turns quickly from a source of beauty to a cause of discord.”*

“A new globalism on one hand and a new tribalism on the other - will be a central challenge for educational leaders in the years ahead.”

KALEIDOSCOPE OF
DIFFERENT IDENTITIES

THE LEGACY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

THE LEGACY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

“I inherited a tradition of educational commitment from my grandfather.”

- Mawla Sultan s.a. build a network of some 300 schools in the developing world
- Founded Aligarh University in India.
- The Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo.
- Mawlana Hazir Imam founded the Aga Khan University, the University of Central Asia and established new Aga Khan Academies Program.

AKES AND IB

purpose of initiating international network of high quality schools.

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

*“Too many of those who should be the leaders of tomorrow are being **left behind today**. And even those students who do manage to get a good education often pursue their dreams in far off places - **and never go home again**. The result is a widening gap between the leadership these communities need – and the leadership their educational systems deliver.”*

“Is it not a fundamental concept of democracy itself, that leadership should be chosen on the basis of merit?”

“EFFECTIVE INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP WILL BE THE KEY TO PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.”

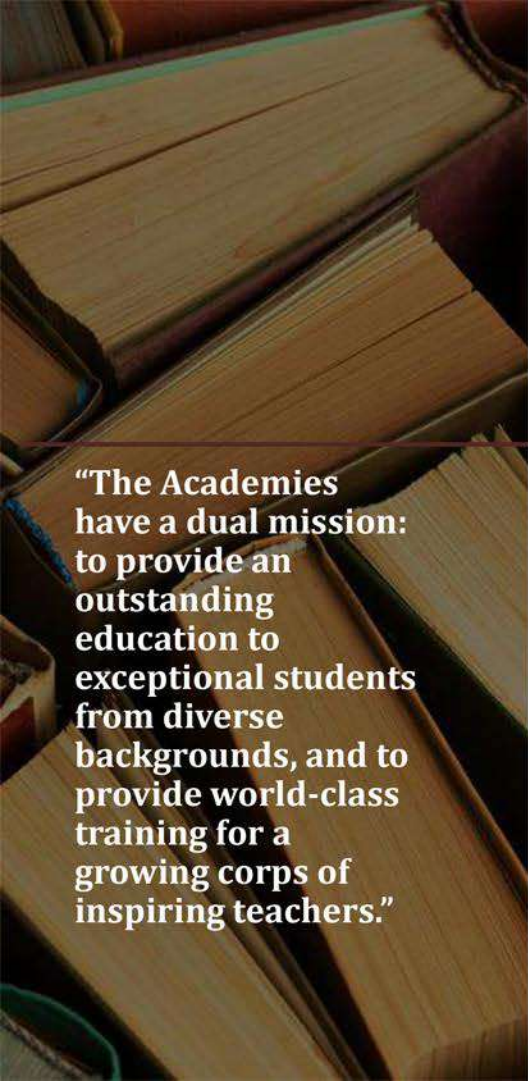
EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP (Contd.)

*“But in an age of accelerating change, when **even the most sophisticated skills are quickly outdated**, we will find many allies in the developing world who are coming to understand that **the most important skill anyone can learn is the ability to go on learning.**”*

“BEING PROFICIENT AT ROTE SKILLS IS NOT THE SAME THING AS BEING EDUCATED.”

THE AGA KHAN ACADEMIES AND EDUCATION

THE AGA KHAN ACADEMIES AND EDUCATION



“The Academies have a dual mission: to provide an outstanding education to exceptional students from diverse backgrounds, and to provide world-class training for a growing corps of inspiring teachers.”

The Aga Khan Academies focuses on:

- Availability of teachers, trained teachers
- Recruiting, training, and compensating them well
- To open new Professional Development Centers
- Feature merit-based entry, residential campuses, and dual-language instruction
- Study for at least a year in other parts of the Academy network

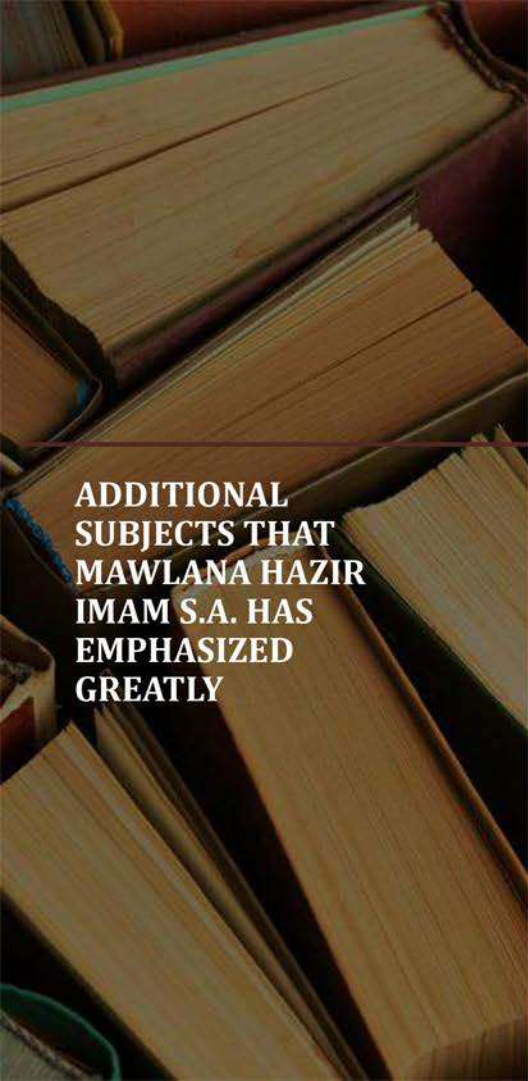
THE AGA KHAN ACADEMIES AND EDUCATION (Contd.)

**ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY**

The Aga Khan Academies emphasize on teaching:

- Pluralism
- Ethics
- Global Economics
- World Cultures (including Muslim Civilizations)
- Comparative Political Systems

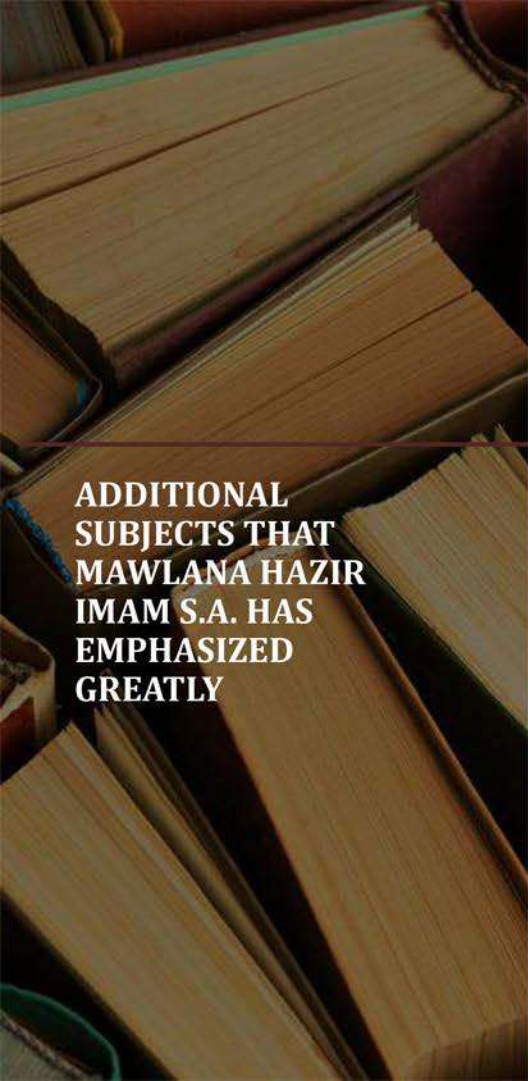
PLURALISM



ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY

*“With regard to pluralism, it has been our experience that in a very large number of countries in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East, and elsewhere, the failure of different peoples to be able to live in peace amongst each other has been a major source of conflict. Experience tells us that people are not born with the innate ability nor the wish to see the Other as an equal individual in society. Pride in one’s separate identity can be so strong that it obscures the intrinsic value of other identities. **Pluralism is a value that must be taught.**”*

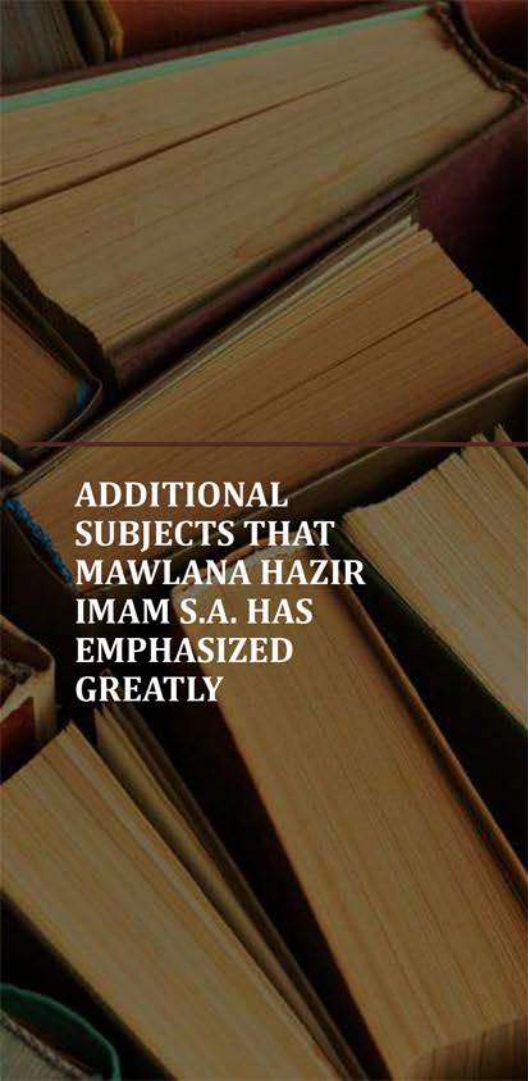
ETHICS



ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY

“Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are risks which have a dramatic effect on peoples’ development. This is especially true in rural environments where the majority of the peoples of the developing world live, but where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.”

GLOBAL ECONOMICS

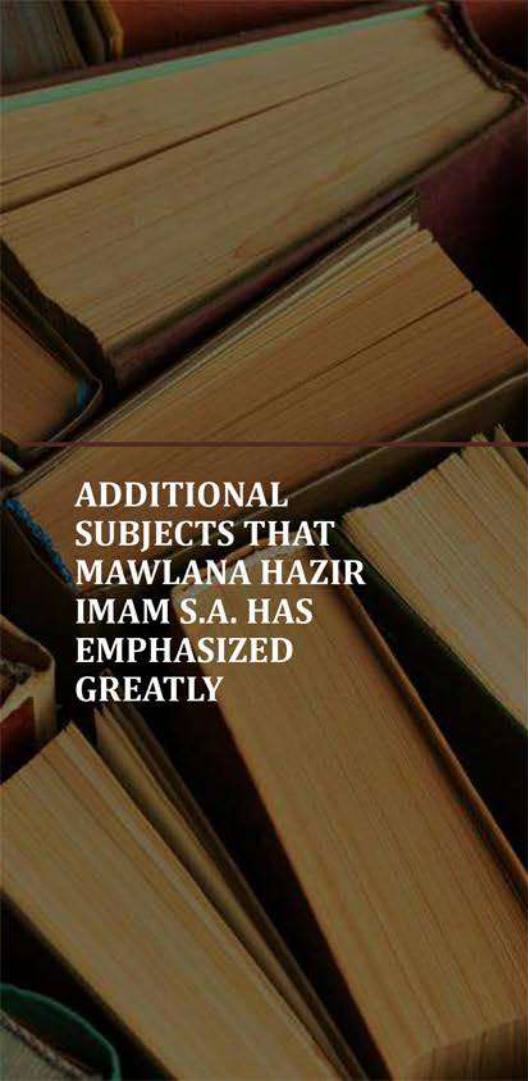


**ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY**

“Educating for global economics will also be essential to ensure that the failed economic systems of the past are replaced.”

“We need to develop a broad consensus which focuses on creating a global economic environment which is universally fair.”

WORLD CULTURES



ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY

*“Our program will also teach about world cultures. **Inter-cultural conflicts inevitably grow out of intercultural ignorance** - and in combating ignorance we also reduce the risk of conflict.”*

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

“We want to educate about comparative political systems, so that more and more people in the developing world will be able to make competent value judgments about their Constitutions, their political systems, and how they can best develop democratic approaches which are well tailored to their needs.”

**ADDITIONAL
SUBJECTS THAT
MAWLANA HAZIR
IMAM S.A. HAS
EMPHASIZED
GREATLY**

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

“As we work together to bridge the gulf between East and West, between North and South, between developing and developed economies, between urban and rural settings, we will be redefining what it means to be well educated.”

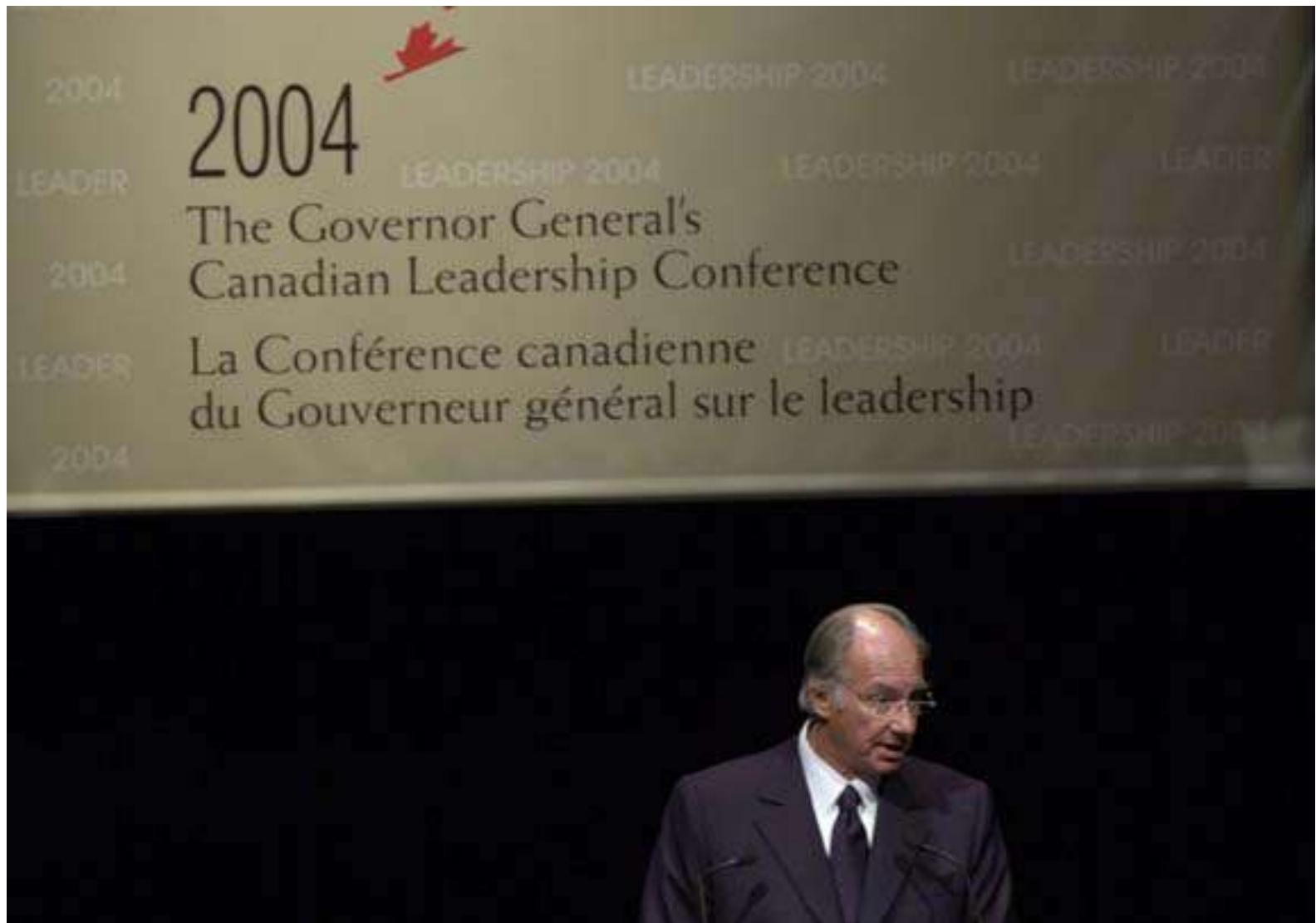
*“In the final analysis, the great problem of humankind in a global age will be to balance and reconcile the two impulses of which I have spoken: **the quest for distinctive identity and the search for global coherence.**”*

“Together, we can help reshape the very definition of a well-educated global citizen. And we can begin that process by bridging the learning gap which lies at the heart of what some have called a **CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS**, but which I have always felt was rather a **CLASH OF IGNORANCES.**”

REFERENCE OF THE SPEECH

<https://the.ismaili/speeches/annual-meeting-international-baccalaureate>

شُكْرًا لِلَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ



Leadership and Diversity Conference

19 May 2004, Gatineau, Canada

Your Excellency the Governor General,
 Excellencies, Conference Participants,
 Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank Your Excellency for inviting me to share some thoughts in this closing session of the Leadership and Diversity Conference. On this occasion, I would also like to thank Your Excellency and the Government of Canada for the warm welcome and the kindness and courtesies that have been extended to me.

In the course of the conference proceedings, you have had the good fortune of listening to people of high eminence and erudition, from Canada and abroad. I therefore seek your indulgence and generosity as I speak to you with much humility and no little apprehension!

I have not accepted to speak today about Canadians and Canada, because you have just completed a wide number of visits to different parts of your lovely country, and, as Canadians, you know a great deal more about her than I do. Where I feel I may have something worthwhile to contribute to your discussions and reflections today deals with Canada and the developing world.

It is a joy and a privilege to address the young leaders of Canada who represent different walks of national life, as well as its social, cultural and regional diversity. I am particularly happy at this opportunity as you have been jointly exploring a critical aspect of the role of leadership: How the leadership—political and civil—can help sustain the moral and dynamic coherence in public life that Canada has so successfully constructed, predicated on the ethic of respect for human dignity. This coherence recognizes and builds on difference, enables a spirit of compromise and consensus in public and legislative policies, and marks out a healthy space for the role of civil society as a sound – indeed an essential - bulwark for democratic processes.

Canada has an experience of governance of which much of the world stands in dire need. It is a world of increasing dissension and conflict in which a significant contribution is the failure of different ethnic, tribal, religious, or social groups to search for, and agree upon, a common space for harmonious co-existence.

This situation of conflict and instability poses a grave risk for the future relationship between the industrialized world and the developing world. The polarizing and paralyzing Cold War, which impacted millions of people in the developing world, has gone. The new issue that demands the attention of the international community is the need to create stable states with self-sustainable economies and stable, inclusive forms of governance.

Much of the world's attention is periodically focused on the phenomenon of so-called failed states. But of the global threats that face us today, apart from nuclear war or HIV/AIDS, the most preoccupying is not failed states. It is the failure of democracy. The global picture at the beginning of the 21st century is a story of failed democracies in the Muslim world, in Latin America, in Eastern Europe and in sub-Saharan Africa.

A startling fact today is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are failed democracies. The greatest risk to the West itself, and to its values, is therefore the accumulation of failed democracies. That in turn will cause deep under-currents of stress, if not conflict, among societies. It is essential, in the West's own interest, to admit to itself that democracy is as fragile as any other form of human governance.

It is essential that the question be asked, in every national situation and within each society, "if democracy is failing, why is this the case?" Every effort needs to be made to help correct the situation, rather than referring dismissively to failed states. To my knowledge, democracy can fail anywhere, at any time, in any society—as it has in several well-known and well-documented situations in Europe, as recently as the last 50 years. For it is self-evident, in Europe and across the globe, that the existence of political parties and elections do not alone produce stable governments or competent leadership.

Three concepts seem to me to be essential in creating, stabilizing and strengthening democracy around the world, including among the people of Africa and Asia with whom I have worked in the past. These concepts are

meritocracy, pluralism and civil society. In particular, I will ask, what role can Canada play, drawing upon her national genius, in creating or enhancing these great underpinnings of democracy in the developing world?

A recent UN audit of democracy covering 18 Latin American countries reemphasizes the virtues of democracy in advancing human development; but it also warns that stagnant per capita incomes and growing inequality, in access to civil rights as well as income, are producing doubt, impatience and civil unrest. Thus, the report underlines a key concept that you will all know instinctively, and which my experience working in the developing world has illustrated, decade after decade: the primary, daily concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life, which is intimately connected to their value systems. When it turns toward solutions, the report recognizes a crucial fact: “An important relationship exists between citizenship and organizations of civil society, which are major actors in the strengthening of democracy, in the oversight of government stewardship and in the development of pluralism.”

My interest in these themes of development and governance arises from my role as the hereditary spiritual leader—Imam—of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Culturally very diverse, the Ismailis are spread across the globe, mostly as a minority, in more than twenty-five countries, in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in Canada, the USA and Western Europe. Since succeeding to this office as the 49th Imam in 1957, I have been concerned with the development of the Ismailis and the broader societies in which they live. The engagement of the Imamatus in development is guided by Islamic ethics, which bridge faith and society. It is on this premise that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. This network of agencies, known as the AKDN, has long been active in many areas of Asia and Africa to improve the quality of life of all who live there. These areas are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world.

Our long presence on the ground gives us an insight that confirms the UN’s detailed assessment in Latin America, which is that a democracy cannot function reasonably without two preconditions.

The first is a healthy, civil society. It is an essential bulwark that provides citizens with multiple channels through which to exercise effectively both their rights and duties of citizenship. Even at a very basic level, only a strong civil society can assure isolated rural populations, and the marginalized urban poor of a reasonable prospect of humane treatment, personal security, equity, the absence of discrimination, and access to opportunity.

The second precondition is pluralism. Pluralism means peoples of diverse backgrounds and interests, coming together in organizations of varying types and goals, for different kinds and forms of creative expression, which are valuable and deserving of support by government and society as a whole.

The rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts. Examples are scattered across the world’s map: in Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Europe, in the Americas. No continent has been spared from the tragedies of death, of misery and of the persecution of minorities. Are such high-risk situations predictable? If the answer is, “Yes”, then what can be done about them, to pre-empt the risk that the rejection of pluralism will become the spark that sets human conflict aflame? Is the onus not on leadership, in all parts of the world, to build a knowledge base about such situations and consider strategies for preventing them? For, I deeply believe that our collective conscience must accept that pluralism is no less important than human rights for ensuring peace, successful democracy and a better quality of life.

I am optimistic that much constructive work can be done, and I would cite one example—only one from the perspective of forty years of experience of agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network—in which the careful, patient development of institutions of civil society helped to create the capacity to manage and legitimize pluralism.

In Northern Pakistan, once one of the poorest areas on earth, our Network has been working for over twenty years, with CIDA as our lead partner. Isolated and bypassed rural communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds—Shia, Sunni and non-Muslim—struggled to eke out a meager living, farming small holdings in the harsh environment of this mountain desert ecosystem. Relations among the communities were often hostile. The challenge for the Network was to create sustainable, inclusive processes of development in which diverse communities could participate together and seek joint solutions to common problems.

To summarize two decades of work in Northern Pakistan: over 3,900 village based organizations, comprising a mix of broad-based representations and interest-specific groups in such fields as women's initiatives, water usage, and savings and credit were established. The quality of life of 1.3 million people living in a rural environment, representative of the majority of the population of Asia and Africa, has been dramatically improved. Per capita income has increased by 300%, savings have soared, and there have been marked improvements in male and female education, primary health, housing, sanitation and cultural awareness. Former antagonists have debated and worked together to create new programs and social structures in Northern Pakistan, and more recently in Tajikistan. Consensus around hope in the future has replaced conflict born of despair and memories of the past.

This micro experiment with grass roots democracy, civil society and pluralism has also underlined for everyone involved the enormous importance of competence and advancement by merit. Inherent in the notion of merit is the idea of equality of access to opportunities. Citizens who possess potential, whatever the community to which they belong, can only realize their potential if they have access to good education, good health and prospects to advance through enterprise. Without this equity, merit does not develop.

A secure pluralistic society requires communities that are educated and confident both in the identity and depth of their own traditions and in those of their neighbours. Democracies must be educated if they are to express themselves competently, and their electorates are to reach informed opinions about the great issues at stake. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to pluralism and democracy, however, is the lacuna in the general education of the populations involved.

A dramatic illustration is the uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. The clash, if there is such a broad civilizational collision, is not of cultures but of ignorance. How many leaders even in the West, whether in politics, the media or other professions which in their own ways shape public opinion, grow up aware that the historic root cause of the conflict in the Middle East was an outcome of the First World War? Or that the tragedy that is Kashmir is an unresolved colonial legacy, and that neither had anything to do with the faith of Islam? To what extent is the public aware that the deployment of Afghanistan as a proxy by both sides in the Cold War, is a major factor in her recent history of tragic woes? These matters, which now touch the lives of all world citizens, are simply not addressed at any level of general education in most Western countries.

Humanities curricula in many educational institutions in the West, rarely feature great Muslim philosophers, scientists, astronomers and writers of the classical age of Islam, such as Avicenna, Farabi and al-Kindi, Nasir Khusraw and Tusi. This lack of knowledge and appreciation of the civilizations of the Muslim world is a major

factor that colors media stereotypes, by concentrating on political hotspots in the Muslim world, and referring to organisations as terrorist and Islamic first, and only obliquely, if at all, to their national origins or political goals.

No wonder that the bogey of Islam as a monolith, irreconcilable to the values of the West or, worse, as a seedbed of violence, lurks behind its depiction as being both opposed to, and incapable of, pluralism. This image flies directly in the face of the respect that Islam's cherished scripture confers upon believers in monotheistic traditions, calling upon Muslims to engage with them in the finest manner, and with wisdom. History is replete with illustrations where Muslims have entrusted their most treasured possessions, even members of their families, to the care of Christians. Muslim willingness to learn from Jewish erudition in medicine, statecraft and other realms of knowledge, is well exemplified by the place of honour accorded Jewish scholars at the court of the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt.

Intellectual honesty and greater knowledge are essential if current explosive situations are to be understood as inherited conflicts and—rather than being specific to the Muslim world—driven by ethnic and demographic difference, economic inequity and unresolved political situations. An excellent example of what is needed, to shape national sentiments as well as guide foreign policy in this perilous time, is the recent Parliamentary committee report entitled, "Exploring Canada's Relations with the Countries of the Muslim World". I wish there were time to comment on a number of the observations of the report, but in its very opening sentence, which begins, "The dynamic complexity and diversity of the Muslim world...." the report sets the tone of balance and wisdom that suffuse its recommendations. It emphasizes history, education, and the urgent need for communication and general knowledge in observing that, "Understanding Islamic influences on government and state policies, on social and economic relations, cultural norms, individual and group rights and the like, necessarily goes far beyond the question of the extreme, violent-minority edges of Islamist activity". I warmly hope that the resources can be found to bring to life the constructive recommendations of this fine report, as the need for such rational voices is great.

It is urgent that the West gain a better understanding of the Islamic world, which, as the Parliamentary report notes, is a hugely diverse collectivity of civilizations that has developed, and continues to evolve, in response to multiple societal influences—agricultural and rural, commercial and urban, scientific and philosophical, literary and political. Just like other great traditions, the Islamic world cannot be understood only by its faith, but as a total picture whose history is closely tied to that of the Judeo-Christian world.

In this situation of a conflict of ignorance between the Muslim world and the West, an example of Canada's bridging is the support given by CIDA and McMaster to the Aga Khan University School of Nursing. Not only did this partnership transform nursing education, and the nursing profession, in Pakistan, but is also now having a significant impact in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and Syria by offering women in these countries new and respected professional opportunities.

Canada is, in an almost unique position to broaden the scope of her engagement with the developing world by sharing very widely her experience in humane governance to support pluralism, the development of civil society, and meritocratic premises for action. For instance, incipient, home-grown civil society institutions in developing countries need expert assistance to strengthen their capacities for management, programme design and implementation, fund raising, self-study and evaluation. They require help in such other areas as defining answerability and the criteria that measure success, as well as in identifying how a sector can be financed and sustained. I am happy to note that this is the declared intention of your Government. In the words of Prime Minister Paul Martin speaking in the House of Commons: "One of the distinct ways in which Canada can help

developing nations is to provide the expertise and experience of Canadians in justice, in federalism, in pluralist democracy”.

In living through her history and confronting its challenges, Canada has established strong institutions to sustain her democracy, the cornerstone of which is your multi-faceted, robust civil society. Canada offers the world an example of meshing, and thereby fortifying, civil society with merit from all segments of its population. You are, hence, able to harness the best from different groups because your civil society is not bound by a specific language or race or religion.

My intention is not to embarrass you with too rosy a picture of the Canadian mosaic as if it were free of all tension. But you have the experience, an infrastructure grounded in wisdom, and the moral wherewithal to be able to handle challenges to your social and political fabric.

The Ismaili Imamatus strives to ensure that people live in countries where threat to democracy is minimal and seeks to draw on the experience of established democracies, which have a vibrant civil society, are sensitive to cultural difference and are effective in improving the quality of life of their citizenry. Canada is a prime example of such a country. It is for this reason that the Aga Khan Development Network is establishing, in Ottawa, what is to be known as The Global Centre for Pluralism.

This secular, non-denominational Centre will engage in education and research and will also examine the experience of pluralism in practice. Drawing on Canadian expertise, and working closely with governments, academia and civil society, the Centre will seek to foster enabling legislative and policy environments. Its particular emphasis will be on strengthening indigenous capacity for research and policy analysis on pluralism, while also offering educational, professional development and public awareness programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen: There are compelling reasons, as I have tried to articulate, why Canada can and should take the lead in investing to safeguard and enhance pluralism. We inhabit an overcrowded planet with shrinking resources, yet we share a common destiny. A weakness or pain in one corner has the tendency, rather rapidly, to transmit itself across the globe. Instability is infectious! But so is hope! It is for you - the leaders of today and tomorrow - to carry the torch of that hope and help to share the gift of pluralism.

Thank you.

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/05122024-leadership-and-diversity-conference-2004-05-19/lesson/watch-lecture-video-153/>

Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference

19 May 2004

Lecture

Lecture Presentation by Nina Merchant



Governor General Canada Leadership Conference

- ❖ Created in 1983 to broaden the perspectives of future leaders in business, academia etc
Its roots can be traced back to the first Commonwealth Study Conference in the UK in 1956, founded by the late Duke of Edinburgh.
- ❖ Conference main goal is to develop leadership skills, in particular **how leadership decisions impact the general welfare** of the communities they operate in. Annual conference in different locations in Canada
- ❖ All members are business leaders with high potential and ambitions to reach senior leadership positions.

Key themes in Speech

Canada as an important Global partner

3 Concepts and 2 pre-conditions for successful Democracy

Civil Society – success and challenges from Field

Pluralism- leadership role

Thoughts for reflection

A Global Partner for Development

- ❖ Thanked Chairman Desmarais
- ❖ Acknowledged young leaders.....

“I hope I will be able to articulate to you the reasons why Canada appears to be one of the most important partners in the process of development in various parts of the world.”

And he gives his reasons, some of the reasons given are earlier on in the speech and some later in the speech.



1. Canada's Leadership in Public Life

- ❖ Hazir Imam explains how Canada has been able to bring about togetherness in the political and civil arenas of public life
- ❖ He goes on to say, "this coherence recognizes and builds on differencesin public and legislative policies and marks a healthy space for the role of civil society.....essentialbulwark for democratic process"



2. Experience of Governance

Hazir Imam then talks about Canada's experience in governance that the world so desperately needs and he says:

- ❖ "In a world of increasing dissension and conflict in which a significant contribution is the failure of different ethnic, tribal, religious or social groups to search forharmonious coexistence".



3. Bridging Support

CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and McMaster (University) have given bridging support to the University School of Nursing in Pakistan

- This has transformed the nursing profession not just in Pakistan but also had a significant impact in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and Syria by offering women new and respected professional opportunities



Canadian International
Development Agency



4. Unique Position to Help Developing Nations

How?

- ❖ “sharing her experience in humane governance to support **pluralism**, development of **civil society** and **meritocratic** premises for action...provide expertise and experience of Canadians in justice, federalism and in **pluralist democracy**.”
- ❖ He states how Canada has managed to, “harness the best from different groups because they have not been bound by a specific language, race or religion.”



HI Interest in Governance & Development

- ❖ It arises from his role as the hereditary spiritual leader-Imam – of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community.

“Culturally very diverse, Ismailis are spread across the globe, mostly as a minority, in more than 25 countries...”

What holds us together?

- ❖ “The engagement of the Imamatus in development is guided by Islamic ethics, which bridge faith and society”

this was his purpose of establishing AKDN, a network of agencies to improve the quality of life of some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world.



Themes in Hazir Imam's Speeches

Total number of Hazir Imam's speeches = 595

171 Civil Society

65 Democracy

96 Leadership

233 Pluralism

64 Meritocracy



What is Democracy?

2016 Brexit Result: 50.4% of people voted to leave
49.6% to stay in the EU



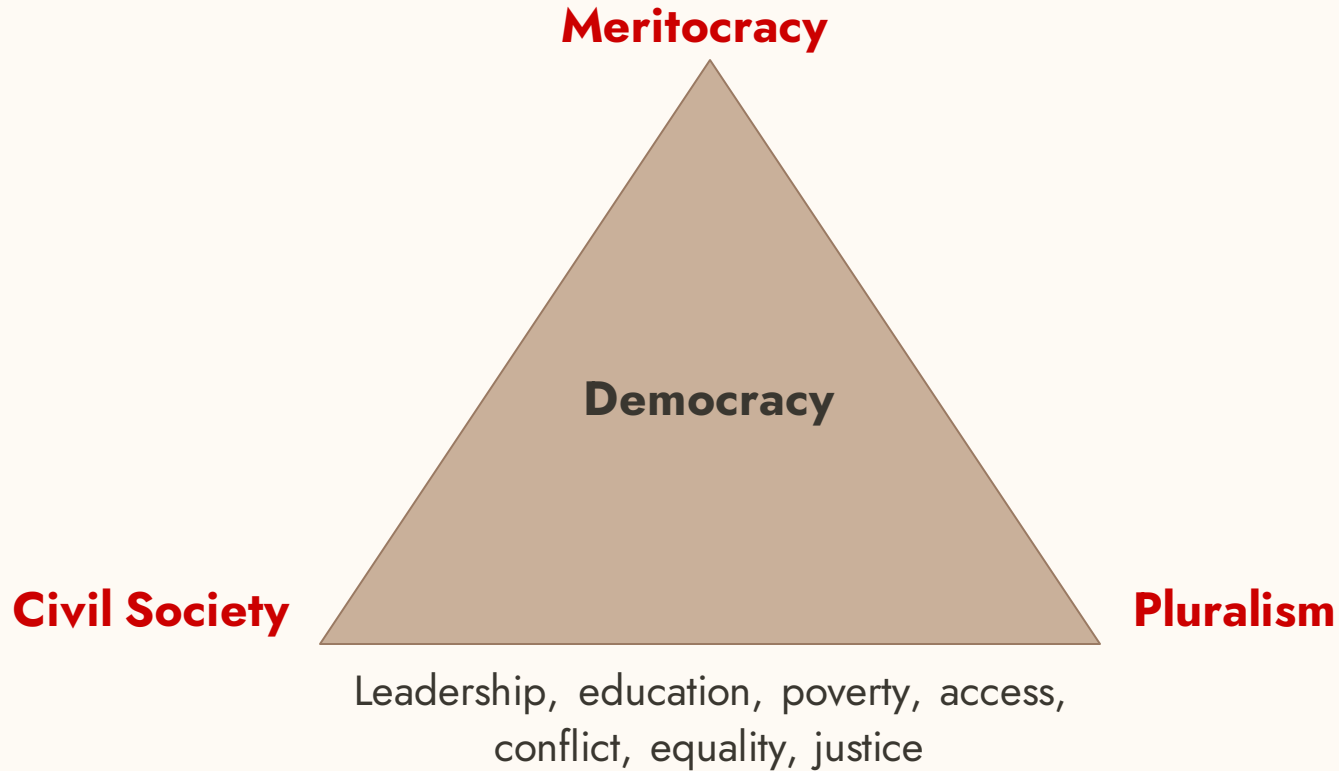
Ingredients for Successful Democracy

Hazir Imam makes a few statements on Democracy:

- ❖ He says that are three concepts essential in creating stable and strong democracies – meritocracy, pluralism, and civil society
- ❖ And then, he says, “democracy cannot function reasonably without **two pre-conditions**: The first is a healthy, **civil society**.....the second pre-condition is **pluralism.**”



3 Concepts & 2 Pre-Conditions



Failed Democracies

- ❖ Hazir Imam says “No failed states, only failed democracies” **

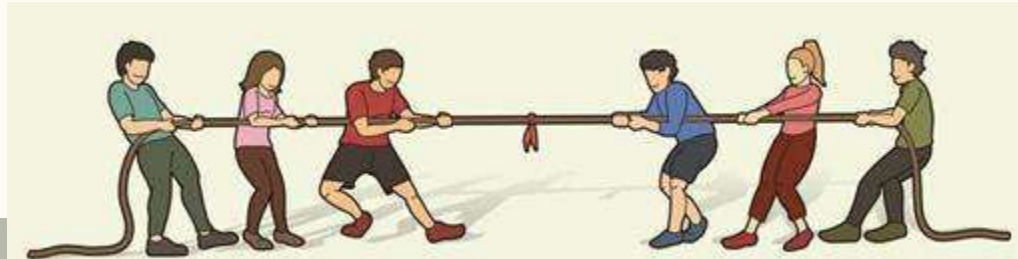
“the greatest global threat that face us today, apart from nuclear war or HIV/AIDS is the failure of democracy and it is in the **West’s own interest** to admit to itself that **democracy is as fragile** as any other form of human government”

- ❖ “40% of UN members are failed democracies”and will cause undercurrents of stress, if not conflict.....examples of failed democracies: Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan; today we see other examples

Hazir Imam asks “Are these high risks preventable?”

Consequences of Failure of Democracy

“This situation of conflict and instability poses a grave risk for future relationship between the industrialised world and the developing world”



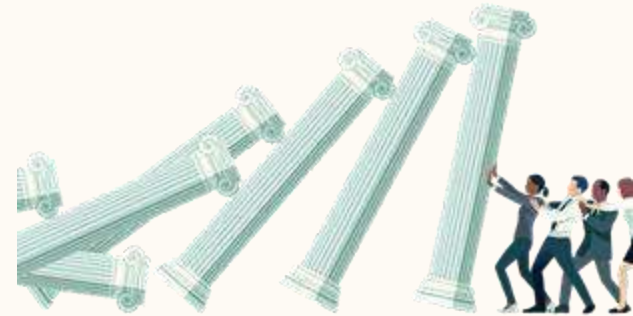
Why has Democracy failed

Why democracies fail? 'Greatest obstacle is gap in Education'

He explains that, "Democracies must be educated if they are to express themselves competently and their electorates are to reach informed opinions about issues at stake."

That "the existence of political parties and elections do not alone produce stable governments or competent leadership"

Can we think of examples of countries that have more than one political party but are failed democracies?



UN audit on Democracy

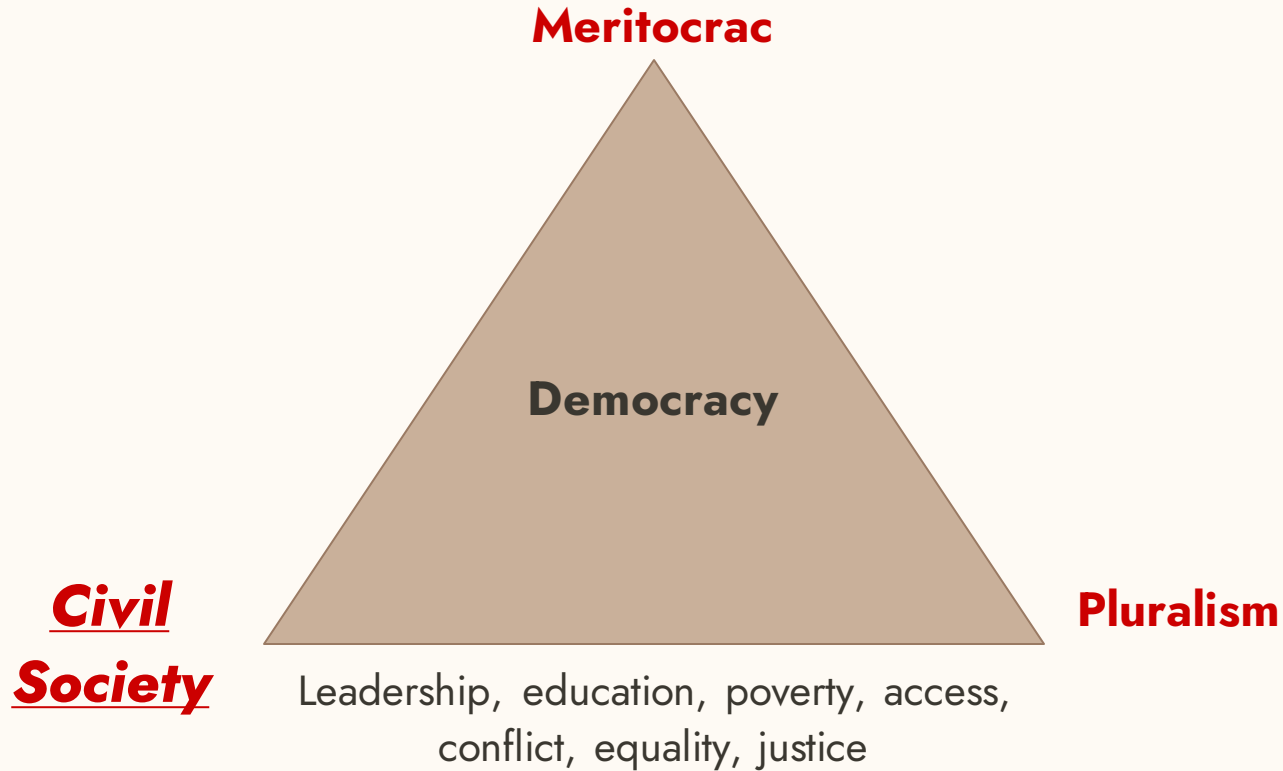
Hazir Imam shares the 2004 UN report findings:

- ❖ It emphasizes the **virtues of democracy in advancing human development but**
- ❖ also **warns** that stagnant per capita income, inequalities, lack of access to civil rights as well as income are producing **doubt, impatience and civil unrest'** .

Hazir Imam concludes by saying.....“the primary concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life which is intimately connected to their value system.”



3 Concepts & 2 Pre-Conditions



Why a Precondition for Successful Democracy

- ❖ Hazir Imam explains: “a strong and healthy civil society can assure **isolated rural populations and the marginalised urban poor** have a reasonable prospect of humane treatment, personal security, equity, absence of discrimination and access to opportunity.”
- ❖ “is an **important relationship between citizenship and civil society organizations**, which are the major actors in strengthening of democracy.”



European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD- 2003)

- ❖ Talking mainly to Bankers, Hazir Imam shares his perspectives on the criticality of civil society in development.
He asks the question, **“is Civil Society bankable?”**
- ❖ He says “institutional development is critical for broad based sustainable change.....” “.....that it applies to every sector of development including governments, private sector and civil society” ...” *“that Governments cannot do everything”*



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Hazir Imam's Definition

- ❖ ..."including all sorts of organizations and initiatives.....captured by the term NGO (Non-governmental organizations).....
but it **also includes professional organizations** that **aim to uphold best practices** that serve and contribute to a vibrant and effective business sector such as Chamber of Commerce....."

And then he says that there is confusion on the term **civil society** and that it is often confused with the term **charity** simply because both are not for profit organizations.

Are each one of us a member of Civil Society or should we be?



New type of Civil Society

- ❖ Need to generate fees/money for the services provided to cover the cost of operations, including salaries but **NOT** for profit of owners and investors

“ any income generated contribute directly to improve the quality of life for their beneficiaries”.....“these institutions face the fundamental problem of identifying resources that will keep them alive and grow”

One of the main challenges“is the need for strong and sustainable financial support system”

North Pakistan: a Success story

- ❖ Hazir Imam gives North Pakistan as an example of success, “of developing village based organizations with broad and mixed interests who have come together to seek joint solutions to common problems.”
- ❖ In 2004, Hazir Imam mentioned the figure 3900 village based organizations in N. Pakistan. Today, this number has increased to 8390.
- ❖ Various initiatives have increased per capita income for the poorest



Examples from the Field

- ❖ **2017 – Mozambique** - Severe floods, tens of thousands impact and village based organizations came to the rescue of those who had lost their livelihoods
Acted as host families and helped rebuild
- ❖ **Afghanistan** – pre- Taliban – multiple aid and development agencies
2021 Hazir Imam instructed AKDN to continue its work when all other agencies left Afghanistan walked
- ❖ Civil Society a **step change for education**, many gone on to Universities

Challenges for Civil Society

- ❖ It is a **long term commitment**;
- ❖ Civil society is a '**loaded term**'- western governments use it to promote their own interests and values and see civil societies as activist groups.
- ❖ Some governments have started pushing back on civil society development e.g. Tajikistan.
- ❖ In Uganda, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan **registrations** of civil societies are becoming harder.

Challenges:

- ❖ **Climate change** is affecting soil temperatures in countries like Pakistan and drought in countries like in Africa – indigenous ways of production are no longer viable
- ❖ **Role of private sector** is becoming increasingly necessary to improve capacity within civil society; to innovate, improve knowledge and technology. Hazir Imam says “that no government or civil society can meet the levels of funding required”; for private funding this means making Civil Society professional.....“**Is Civil Society bankable?**”



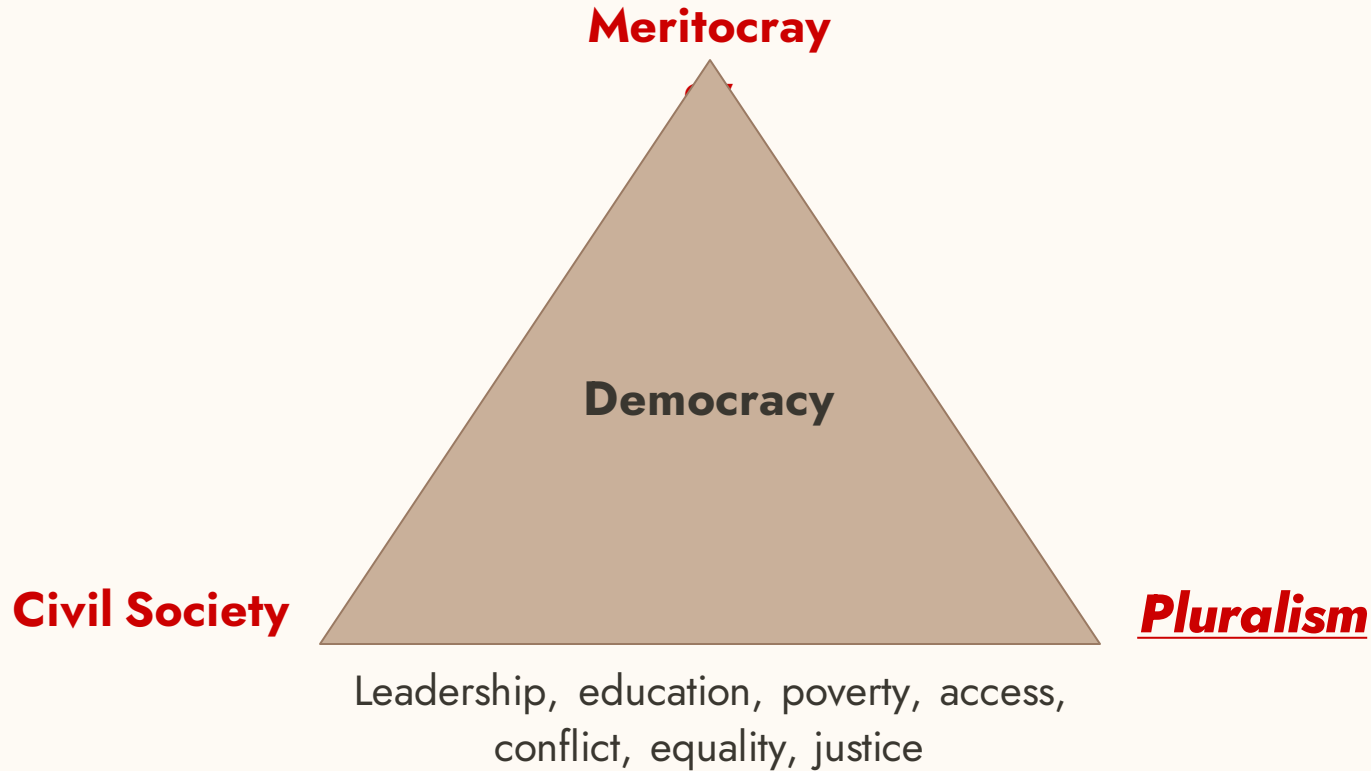
On Meritocracy

“This micro experiment with grassroots democracy, civil society and pluralism has also underlined for everyone involved the enormous importance of competence and advancement by merit. Inherent in the notion of merit is the idea of equality **of access to opportunities**...can only realise their potential if they have access to good education, good health and prospects to advance through enterprise. Without this equity, merit does not develop.”





3 Concepts & 2 Pre-Conditions



Definition of Pluralism

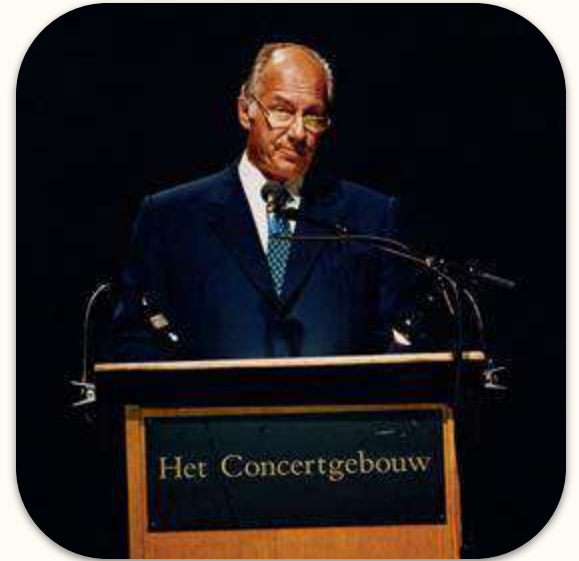
*“Let me emphasise a point about the concept of pluralism that is sometimes misunderstood. **Connection does not necessarily mean agreement.** It does **not mean** that we want to **eliminate our differences or erase our distinctions.** Far from it. What it does mean is that **we connect with one another** in order to **learn from one another**, and to **build our future together.** Pluralism does not mean the elimination of difference, but the **embrace of difference.** Genuine pluralism understands that **diversity does not weaken a society**, it strengthens it. In an ever-shrinking, ever more diverse world, a genuine sense of **pluralism is the indispensable foundation for human peace and progress.** From the start, this has been a vision that the Ismaili Imam and the Government of Canada have deeply shared...”*

Opening Speech at Global Centre for Pluralism, May 2017

Pluralism a Precondition

In his speech of 2002 in Netherlands at Prince Claus Fund Conference on Culture and Development, Hazir Imam makes a couple of critical points on Pluralism:

- ❖ “Pluralism is critical for welfare and progress of human society; it is as important as poverty alleviation and an inescapable condition for conflict prevention
.....pluralism must be nurtured everyday by everyone
- ❖ He goes on to say that “it is a **fundamental value** and **inescapable condition** for world peace and human development”



Global Differences³⁰⁰

- ❖ Hazir Imam acknowledges that building pluralistic societies is not easy
He stated at EBRD Meeting **“Global Cultural differences** that make it difficult to build strong pluralistic societies... Concept must be **nurtured everyday, every family and each one of us...play our role”**
- ❖ HOW?...**“through conduct of tolerance, openness and understanding towards others** cultures, structures, values and faith”
- ❖ **2002 Speech at Prince Claus Fund on Culture & Diversity**



Why Has Pluralism Failed?

“That the most common ingredient has been the failure to recognise that human society is essentially pluralistic ...

groups that seek to standardise, homogenise or normalise...must be actively resisted through countervailing activities......talks about one group imposing on others based on the principal of eradicating cultural basis that provide group identity.”



Prince Claud Fund 2002

Ignorance About Islam

- ❖ “the uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim and others... The clash if there is, **it's not of cultures but of ignorance**”
- ❖ When talking about clash of ignorance, Hazir Imam says “politics, media and other professions who shape public opinion, grow up aware of historic root causes of conflict e.g. in Middle East an outcome of WW1, Kashmir is an unresolved colonial legacy and neither of these two examples have anything to do with faith of Islam



Ignorance About Islam

- ❖ Humanities curricula in the West rarely include great Muslim philosophers, astronomers, Scientist of the classical age of Islam such as Avicenna, Farabi, Nasir Khusraw, Tusi and others
- ❖ “This lack of knowledge and appreciation of the civilizations of the Muslim world is a major factor that colours media stereotypes by concentration on political hotspots in the Muslim world referring to organizations as terrorist and Islamic first...”



Ignorance About Islam

❖ **Fatimid period:** History shows that Muslims have often entrusted their most treasured possessions, even families to the care of Christians; Jewish scholars had received honours in the court of Fatimid Imam and Caliphs of Egypt.

❖ What is needed is

“Intellectual honesty and greater knowledge are essential in current explosive situations...” not specific to the Muslim world...“that these conflicts are actually driven by **ethnic and demographic differences, economic inequity and unresolved political situations”**



Conflicts Caused Due to Rejection of Pluralism



Warning: Rejection of Pluralism

“rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts...no continent has been spared from the tragedies of death, of misery and persecution of minorities...rejection of pluralism will **become the spark that sets human conflict aflame**”



Who is responsible?

“Is the onus not on **leadership on all parts of the world**, to build a knowledge base about such situations and consider strategies for preventing them”

Leadership- Hazrat ` ` ` Ali (A.S.)

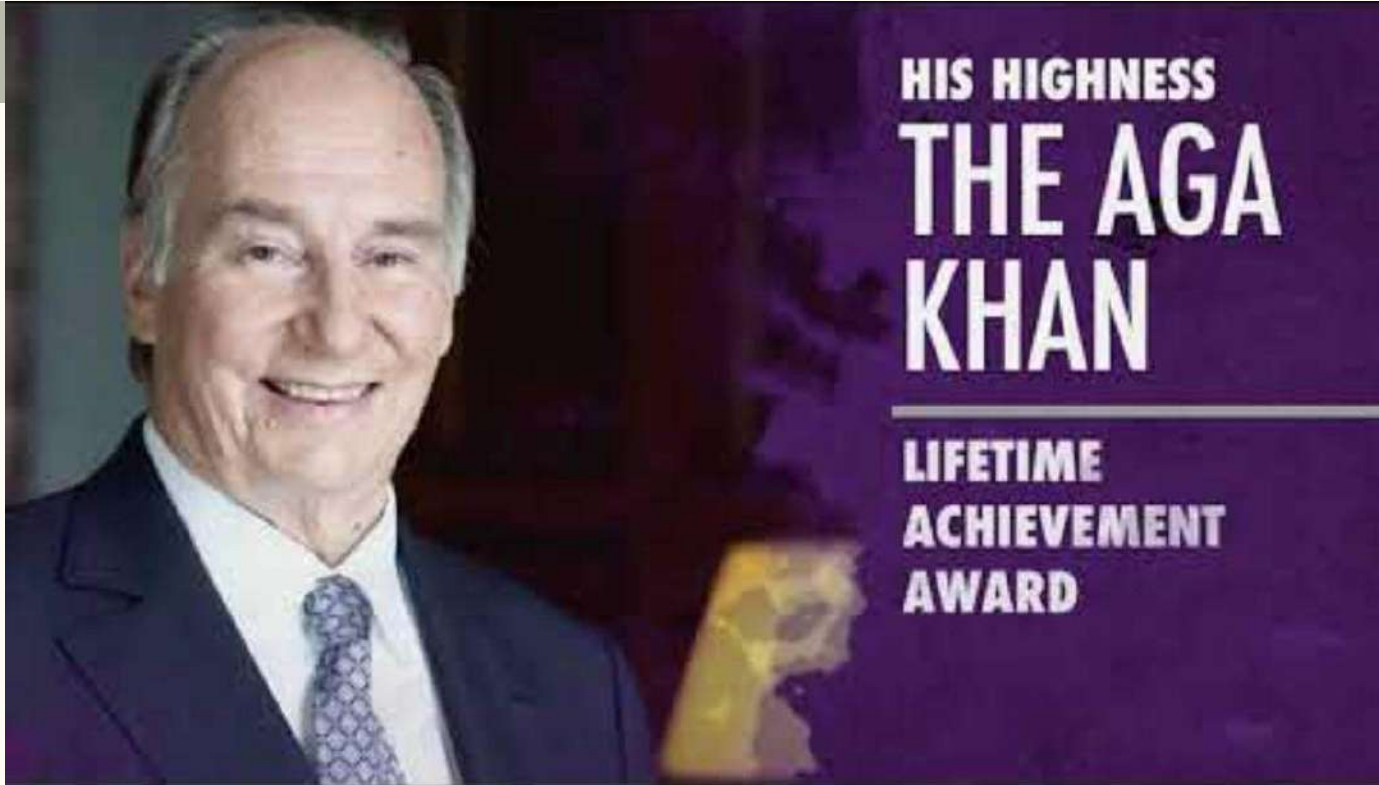
At the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1998), Kofi Annan referred to Mawlana Ali's letter to Gov. Malik Ashtar (written some nearly 1400 years ago) he said,

“it is a universal, timeless document that can be applied in any walk of life, whether in the position of leadership or not”



*96 speeches that includes guidance on Inclusive Leadership
Nimira's blog: Best practices in Inclusive Leadership*

Peace, Peace



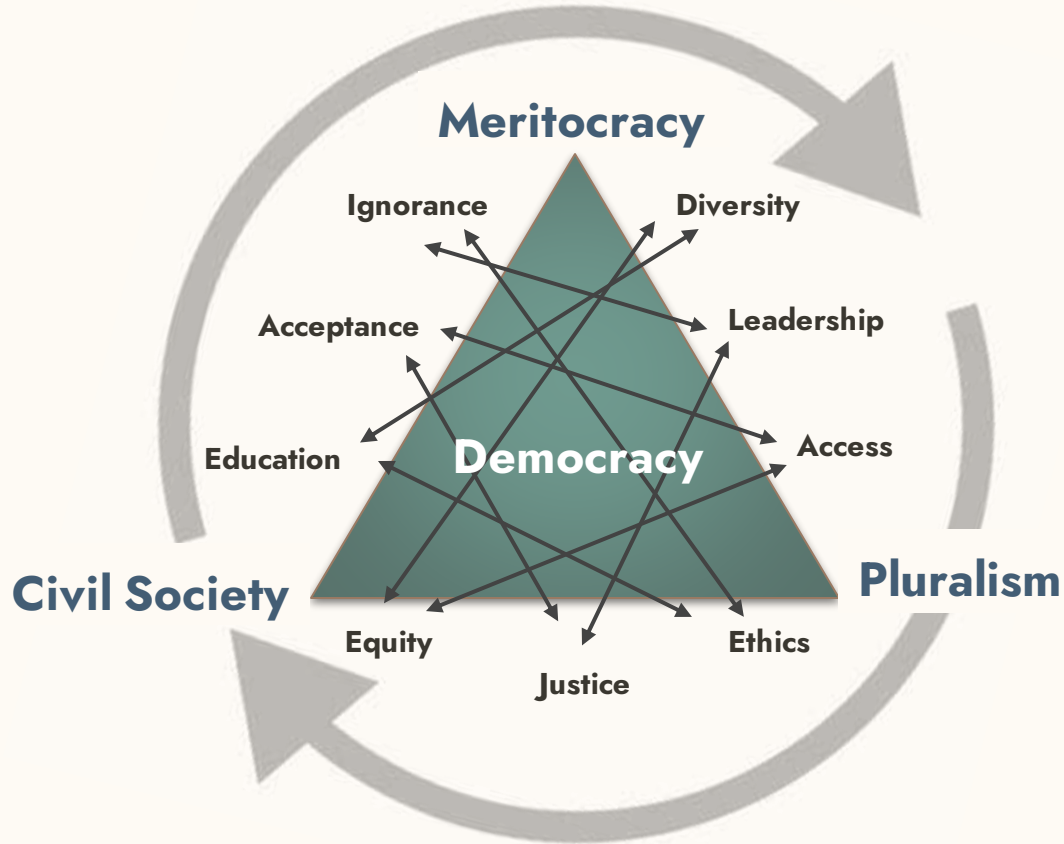
Global Centre for Pluralism³¹⁰

Hazir Imam first talked about setting up this Centre in Canada in 2004 – Opened May 2017

- ❖ Why Canada? “.....the Ismaili Imamat.....draws on the experience of established democracies which have a **vibrant civil society**, are sensitive to **cultural differences** and are effective in improving quality of life of their citizenship. Canada is a prime example...”
- ❖ He ends his 2004 speech by saying that he had tried to articulate, “why Canada can and should take the lead in investing to safeguard and enhance Pluralism”



Complex, dynamic picture



Thoughts for Reflection

- ❖ To what extent do we, each one of us demonstrate pluralism?
- ❖ What can each one of us do to promote/actualise Hazir Imam's guidance on the concepts and pre-conditions in our everyday lives?

Shukhar Alhamdullillah

Ya Ali Madad



Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, Dubai

06 October 2009, The Ismaili Centre Dubai

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum
 Your Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan
 Honourable Ministers
 Your Excellencies
 Distinguished Guests
 Ladies and Gentlemen

As-Salaam-o-Alaikum

I am deeply pleased that all of you have been able to join us for the inauguration of this elegant new Ismaili Centre. Your presence is itself a symbol of the wonderful diversity that characterizes Dubai. Your interest and support gives added meaning to our celebration – as we honour today a great architectural accomplishment, the exciting institutional activities for which it will provide a home, and the remarkable people who have made all of this possible.

Those extraordinary people include, of course, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who has so generously given the land for this Centre. Let me express once again, on behalf of the Ismaili community, our profound appreciation to His Highness and his family.

I am particularly pleased that you, Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum have again honoured us with your presence today. You were so gracious as to witness the ceremony at which the foundation stone of this Centre was laid a little over four years ago.

And let me also acknowledge, with deepest gratitude, the many other donors to this project, in Dubai and in so many other places, as well as those who designed and constructed and decorated this building and its adjacent park. Your dedication and generosity have been at the very heart of the long planning and building process which culminates so happily at this moment.

We gather today at a special place – and at a special time.

We welcome our new Ismaili Centre in a setting which has itself become a great centre – a hub of cosmopolitan activity, a truly global crossroads. We hear a great deal these days about the words “convergence” and “connectivity.” In my judgment, Dubai is a place where those words truly come to life. Dubai has become the very embodiment of the global village, placing itself at the forefront of an enormous surge toward global convergence.

The Dubai ethic is one that honours a generous exchange of knowledge and ideas, that welcomes the opportunity to learn from others, that celebrates not only our historic identities but also our open horizons.

This ethic of exploration and interconnectedness is one that is deeply shared by the Ismaili community. It is an ethic, in fact, that is firmly rooted in our faith – a value system which grows from deeply spiritual roots.

It understands that human diversity is itself a gift of Allah – that pluralism is not a threat but a blessing. It sees the desire to explore and connect as a way to learn and grow – not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge. This ethic emanates ultimately from a relationship to the Divine which inspires a deep sense of personal humility – and a relationship to humankind which is infused with a spirit of generous service and mutual respect.

This new Centre is itself a profoundly spiritual place. Its defining symbolism is inspired by the Fatimid tradition – stretching back over 1000 years and widely shared with sister traditions throughout the Islamic world – from Baghdad to Bokhara. As its architects have so effectively realized, this building exists fundamentally as a place for peaceful contemplation, but one that is set in a social context. It is not a place to hide from the world, but rather a place which inspires us to engage our worldly work as a direct extension of our faith.

Sheikh Mohammad has provided a powerful example of how the ethics of our Islamic faith can be taken into the world, through his affirmation of a pillar of Islamic values, the spirit of generosity toward others. As he wrote recently, and I quote him, "I always ask: How can I help? What can I do for people? How can I improve people's lives? That's part of my value system. The Dubai narrative is all about changing people's lives for the better..."

In that spirit, His Highness, in describing Dubai has replaced the word "Capitalist" with the word "Catalyst" – in that it inspires those who live and work here to greater levels of personal accomplishment. His philosophy, to paraphrase John Kennedy, calls us to ask "not what one can achieve for oneself, but what one can help others achieve." And this, too, is an expression which grows out of deeply rooted Islamic principles.

In our Development Network we have used a slightly different vocabulary to describe a very similar commitment. We like to talk about building what we call an "enabling environment," one that can provide what we have called "the spark" which can "ignite" a spirit of individual determination.

Our Development Network pursues that objective in many places in many ways – one apt example is the early childhood education programme here at the Ismaili Centre – a long-term investment in moulding human character at the most formative time of its life.

Of course, we must be realistic about the challenges we face. This is a region, after all, which Sheikh Mohammad has described as a "tough neighbourhood" – the locus in recent years of tragic clashes and cleavages, including many divisions within Islam itself. And yet at the same time, this is a region of powerful potential and promise. That promise will be increasingly fulfilled as the Islamic world learns to embrace ever more effectively the spirit of fundamental cohesion expressed so well in the Amman Declaration of 2005, along with its affirmation that the variety of expressions within Islam is not a curse but "a mercy." That spirit of comity, in turn, can become a great Islamic contribution to the future of this region – and to the future of our world.

Just as Dubai is indeed a very special place, this is also a very special time. For me this is particularly true because this new beginning coincides with my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims – a Golden Jubilee moment which connects the past to the future for me and in a special way.

And that is what this celebration today is all about – at a time of demanding challenge, we look for strength and inspiration from our spiritual and cultural roots.

My thanks again to all of you for sharing in this special moment.

Thank You.

Mubarak Speeches Series



Mawlana Hazir Imam's speech at the inauguration of the Ismaili Centre Dubai on 26 March 2008

Agenda

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/05192024-opening-ceremony-of-the-ismaili-centre-dubai-2009-10-06/lesson/watch-lecture-video-154/>

Lecture Presentation by Rozina Naem

1. Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE
2. Ismaili centre Dubai
 - 1982: Land gift from Sheikh Mohammad
 - 2003: Foundation laying
 - 2008: Inauguration
 - Architecture of Ismaili Centre Dubai
 - Structure of the Ismaili Centre Dubai
 - Jamati events in Dubai after the inauguration of Ismaili centre
 - Examples of the social events in Ismaili centre Dubai
3. Important points from Mawlana Hazir Imam's speech
 - Vote of thanks & Development of Dubai
 - Shared values between Dubai ethic and Ismaili faith
 - Ismaili centre & its purpose
 - Regional challenges & opportunities
4. Conclusion - Imam's vision for the modern Ismaili centres

Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE

Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE

- UAE was founded on 2nd December 1971.
- UAE consists of 7 emirates
- Dubai is one of the emirates/cities of UAE.
- Ruling family of capital Abu Dhabi, UAE – Al Nahyan family
- Ruling family of Dubai, UAE – Al Maktoum family
- UAE is an oil rich country. Oil was discovered in this region around 1960s
- A developed country in a politically volatile region
- Open minded ruling government which welcomes people from different cultures and traditions
- Very large Indian/Pakistani expat communities

Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE

UAE in general and Dubai in particular has undergone a remarkable transformation in a very short space of time



Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE



Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE



Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE



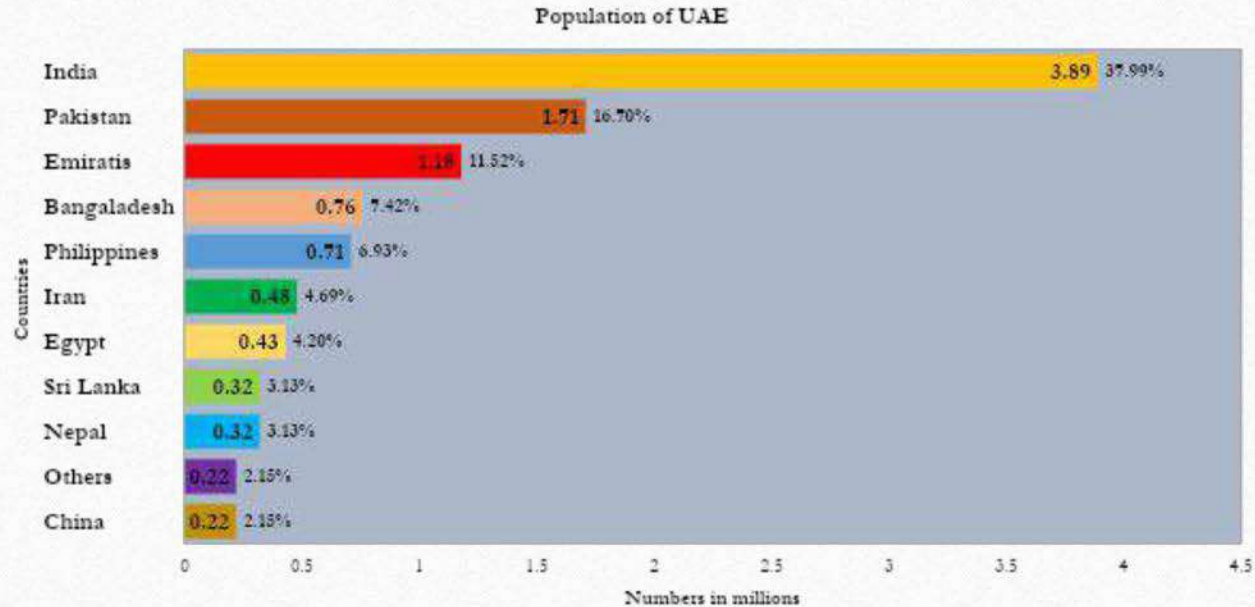
Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE



Dubai in 2024

Background and evolution of Dubai, UAE

- ▶ Current population of UAE: More than 10 million
- ▶ Current population of Dubai: More than 3 million
- ▶ Nationals of more than 200 countries live in Dubai today.



Ismaili Centre, Dubai

Ismaili centre, Dubai

1982

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum gifted a plot to Mawlana Hazir Imam on the occasion of his silver jubilee.



Mawlana Hazir Imam with Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum at the time of Diamond Jubilee visit to Dubai UAE.

Ismaili centre, Dubai

2003

On 13 Dec 2003, Mawlana Hazir Imam laid the foundation of Ismaili centre Dubai in the presence of representatives from the ruling royal family of Dubai



Ismaili centre, Dubai

2008

On 26 March 2008, during his Golden Jubilee visit to Dubai, Mawlana Hazir Imam inaugurated the Ismaili centre Dubai in the presence of representatives from the ruling royal family of Dubai.



Jamati events in Dubai after the inauguration of Ismaili centre

- Golden Jubilee darbar & Inauguration of Ismail centre – March 2008
- Jubilee games – July 2017
- Diamond Jubilee darbar – Jan 2018
- Upcoming Global encounters festival - 2025

Architecture of Ismaili Centre Dubai

The architect of Ismaili centre Dubai is an Egyptian architect Rami El Dahan. Like other Ismaili centres, the architect of the Ismaili centre Dubai is a local from the surrounding region who has the knowledge of local and Islamic architecture. Hazir Imam mentions in his speech that the architecture of ICD is inspired by Fatimid architecture.

“Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environments we build and the quality of the interactions that take place within them reverberate on our spiritual lives. As the leader of a Muslim community, and particularly one that now resides in twenty-five countries on four continents, the physical representation of Islamic values is particularly important to me. It should reflect who we are in terms of our beliefs, our cultural heritage and our relation to the needs and contexts in which we live in today’s world.”

June 2002, Mawlana Hazir Imam speech at the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center at Houston

“In the tradition of Muslim spaces of gathering, the Ismaili Centre will be a symbol of the confluence between the spiritual and the secular in Islam. Architect El Dahan has drawn inspiration from the Fatimid mosques in Cairo. Like its functions, the Centre's architecture will reflect our perception of daily life, whose rhythm weaves the body and the soul, man and nature into a seamless unity. Guided by the ethic of whatever we do, see and hear, and the quality of our social interactions, resonate on our faith and bear on our spiritual lives, the Centre will seek to create, Insh’Allah, a sense of equilibrium, stability and tranquillity. “

June 2002, Mawlana Hazir Imam speech at the foundation laying of the Ismaili Center Dubai

Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

- Main prayer hall
- Morning prayer hall
- Social hall
- Aga Khan Early Learning Centre
- Institutional rooms
- Baitu'l `ilm (REC)
- Library
- Open spaces and courtyards with fountains and landscapes
- Play areas
- Car park for 145 cars
- Dubai park across ICD

Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Bird's eye view



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Main Entrance



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Dubai park



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Main corridor



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Main prayer hall



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Main prayer hall



Watch later Share

Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

One of the courtyards



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Social hall



Structure of the Ismaili centre Dubai

Aga Khan Early Learning centre entrance



Examples of the social events in Ismaili centre Dubai

- Visits by government officials/ambassadors from more than 20 countries including Singapore, Canada, Tajikistan, India, France, Tanzania, Uganda, Romania, Denmark, Portugal, USA, Germany, Finland, Pakistan, Libya, Afghanistan, Mexico, France, Indonesia, Luxembourg
- Visits by officials of various organizations of UAE
- Visits by Ruling family of UAE
- AKDN events
- IIS events
- Musical concerts, performances from various cultures (Japanese, Finnish etc)
- Youth events

Important points from Mawlana Hazir Imam's speech

Vote of thanks & Development of Dubai

- Vote of thanks to the government, Sheikh Mohd and dignitaries
- Vote of thanks to the donors
- Imam appreciates the development and evolution of Dubai
- Dubai - a place where the words “convergence” and “connectivity” come to life
- Dubai - embodiment of global village
- Dubai Ethic
 - honors a generous exchange of knowledge and ideas
 - welcomes the opportunity to learn from others
 - celebrates not only our historic identities but also our open horizons.

Shared values between Dubai ethic and Ismaili faith

“This ethic of **exploration and interconnectedness** is one that is deeply shared by the **Ismaili community**. It is an ethic, in fact, that is firmly rooted in our faith – a **value system** which grows from deeply **spiritual roots**. It understands that **human diversity is itself a gift of Allah** – that **pluralism is not a threat but a blessing**. It sees the **desire to explore and connect as a way to learn and grow** – not to **dilute our identities** but to enrich our **self-knowledge**. This ethic emanates ultimately from a **relationship to the Divine** which inspires a deep sense of **personal humility** – and a **relationship to humankind** which is infused with a **spirit of generous service and mutual respect**.”

Ismaili centre & its purpose

- Profoundly spiritual place
- Inspired by Fatimid traditions
- Fundamentally exists as a place for peaceful contemplation but one that is set in a social context.
- “It is not a place to hide from the world, but rather a place which inspires us to engage our worldly work as a direct extension of our faith.”
- Dubai – spirit of generosity - Catalyst instead of Capitalist
- Development network – “enabling environment,” one that can provide what we have called “the spark” which can “ignite” a spirit of individual determination.
- Example – Early childhood education

Regional challenges & opportunities

- Tough neighborhood
- The locus in recent years of tragic clashes and cleavages
- Despite the challenges, it is a region of powerful potential and promise
- Islamic world needs to learn to embrace the spirit of fundamental cohesion
- spirit of unity expressed in Amman declaration – that “the variety of expressions within Islam is not a curse but a mercy.”
- That spirit of comity, in turn, can become a great Islamic contribution to the future of this region – and to the future of our world.
- “At a time of demanding challenge, we look for strength and inspiration from our spiritual and cultural roots.”

Conclusion - Imam's vision for the modern Ismaili centres

Conclusion - Imam's vision for the modern Ismaili centres

“The continuing **pluralism of human endeavour** will be manifested in the life of this Centre. It will be reflected in an array of exciting activities, **servicing people of many different backgrounds**. The Centre will have a space for **congregational gathering**, just like the array of Ismaili Centres in major cities across the world, both those which are now being developed and those that already exist, from London to Vancouver and Lisbon to Dubai. In addition, we hope and trust that people of all faiths and background will gather here for **educational and cultural events** – for seminars, lectures, recitals and exhibitions. We will seek to demonstrate **that spiritual insight and worldly knowledge are not separate or opposing realms, but that they must always nourish one another, and that the world of faith and the material world are the dual responsibilities of humankind.**”

Oct 2009, Mawlana Hazir Imam speech at the opening of the Ismaili Centre at Dushanbe, Tajikistan

“**Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one.** What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environments we build and the **quality of the interactions that take place within them reverberate on our spiritual lives**. As the leader of a Muslim community, and particularly one that now resides in twenty-five countries on four continents, the **physical representation of Islamic values** is particularly important to me. It should reflect who we are in terms of our beliefs, our cultural heritage and our relation to the needs and contexts in which we live in today's world.”

June 2002, Mawlana Hazir Imam speech at the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center at Houston, USA

Conclusion - Imam's vision for the modern Ismaili centres

“As its architects have so effectively realized, this building exists fundamentally as a place for **peaceful contemplation**, but one that is set in a **social context**. It is not a place to hide from the world, but rather a place which inspires us to engage our worldly work as a direct extension of our faith.”

26th March 2008, Mawlana Hazir Imam's speech at the inauguration of the Ismaili Centre Dubai

*Yeh nahīn ma' lūm mujh ko rāz kiyā hē? Ramz kiyā?
Is liyē hūn main hamīshah wālih-ū ḥayrān-i 'ishq*

(Sahib D.F.)

I know not: What is a secret? What is a sign?

Constantly bewildered and perplexed by love am I

THANK YOU!

References

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- The Ismaili website (<https://the.ismaili/>)
- Ismaili centre, Dubai website (<https://the.ismaili/ismaili-centre-dubai>)
- Dubai Pictures sources: Daily mail,



Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum and their park

28 May 2010, Toronto, Canada

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Prime Minister Harper,
Madame Clarkson,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my profound appreciation for the great honour which this country has paid to me today by extending this generous gift of Honorary Canadian Citizenship.

I have been deeply moved by your gracious gesture — which I also regard as a tribute to the institution of the Ismaili Imam, which I represent. It is a significant recognition of the values which our community of faith shares with the people of Canada.

Je suis très profondément touché par l'immense honneur que vous m'avez si généreusement accordé, à moi personnellement et à l'Imamat Ismaili.

Mr Prime Minister, I have always felt very much at home in Canada, but never more so than at this moment.

It also means a great deal to me that all of you can be here today. This Foundation Ceremony marks a particularly important moment for my family and me — and such moments take on added meaning when they can be shared with colleagues and friends, and with so many men and women whom I deeply admire.

The projects we celebrate have been in the development process, as you may know, for some time — and perhaps, if I may say so, for a somewhat longer time than some of us may have expected! But I have learned that sometimes a bit of extra patience in the planning process can lead to even wider opportunities — and that is precisely what happened in this case.

Our original plans were to build here a new Ismaili Jamatkhana, a space of prayer, contemplation and community interaction. But as time went along and added space became available, the concept grew. It now includes three elements: a new Ismaili Centre — the sixth such representational building in the world; a new Aga Khan Museum; and a beautiful, welcoming Park, which will link these two new buildings.

Together, these three projects will symbolise the harmonious integration of the spiritual, the artistic and the natural worlds — in keeping with the holistic ideal which is an intimate part of Islamic tradition. At the same time they will also express a profound commitment to inter-cultural engagement, and international cooperation.

Our gathering this afternoon signifies the emergence of these projects from the planning stage into the building stage — from the realm of creative imagination into the realm of tangible construction.

This creative process has itself been a remarkable international story — bringing together the designs of architects from Japan, India and Lebanon, working with the Toronto firm of Moriyama and Teshima, and adapting age-old architectural traditions in a contemporary Canadian idiom. We look forward to the full realisation of their aspirations.

But even as we look ahead, it is only right that we look also to the past, including of course, the story of Canada's historic welcome to displaced Ismailis in the 1970s and later, and to their successful integration. Certainly this process, and the contributions Ismailis have made in so many walks of life, have also reflected the encouragement they received to rebuild here, their traditional institutions and social structures.

In looking back over these recent decades, I also think of the close cooperation which the Aga Khan Development Network has enjoyed with Canadian institutions such as CIDA — the Canadian International Development Agency — which continues to be a key partner in addressing needs in the developing world.

We appreciate, too, the strong relationships our educational institutions enjoy with great Canadian centres of learning — including McMaster and McGill Universities, the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta.

We are also proud of the partnering with the Canadian Government in the development of the Global Centre for Pluralism, based in Ottawa, which will express our shared conviction that the progress of civilisation depends on our ability to understand, embrace and energise the power of human diversity.

You can see the strong base of cooperative endeavour from which this Wynford Drive project has emerged, inspired as well by Toronto's own success as a vibrant cultural centre.

Let me discuss briefly each of the three project elements, beginning with the Aga Khan Museum.

As our plans began to take shape, we came to realise that the Museum's focus on the arts of Islam will make it a unique institution in North America, contributing to a better understanding of Islamic civilisations — and especially of the plurality within Islam and of Islam's relationship to other traditions. It will be a place for sharing a story, through art and artefacts, of highly diverse achievements — going back over 1 400 years. It will honour the central place within Islam of the search for knowledge and beauty. And it will illuminate the inspiration which Muslim artists have drawn from faith, and from a diverse array of epics, from human stories of separation and loss, of love and joy — themes which we know reverberate eloquently across the diverse cultures of humanity.

In a world in which some speak of a growing clash of civilisations, we believe the Museum will help address what is not so much a clash of civilisations, as it is a clash of ignorances. The new Museum will have a strong educational vocation: it will be a place for active inquiry, for discussion and research, for lectures and seminars, and for an array of collaborative programs with educational institutions and with other museums.

A major part of the gallery space will be dedicated to visiting and temporary exhibitions — building on exhibitions of our collection that have taken place in London, Paris, Lisbon and Berlin — and are now planned for St Petersburg, Doha, Istanbul and Los Angeles. A state-of-the-art auditorium will also host programs featuring the performing arts and cinema.

My own family has been intimately involved in Islamic cultural history, notably during the Fatimid Caliphate which, a thousand years ago, founded one of the world's first, great universities in Cairo. The core collection of the new Museum in Toronto includes elements that have been gathered by my family through many generations, including the miniatures collected by my uncle, the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, which will be displayed in a replica of the Bellerive room from my late uncle's home in Geneva. We are deeply grateful to Princess Catherine for this generous gift.

I should emphasise, as well, that the Museum building itself will be an important work of art — designed by the great Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki. Many of you know his superb building in Ottawa that has been the home for the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat since 2008.

That Delegation building was inspired by the evanescent mysteries of rock crystal. The new Toronto Museum will take as its theme the concept of light — suffusing the building from a central courtyard, through patterned glass screens. From the outside, it will glow by day and by night, lit by the sun and the moon. This use of light speaks to us of the Divine Light of the Creator, reflected in the glow of individual human inspiration and vibrant, transparent community.

As the poet Rumi has written: “The light that lights the eye is also the light of the heart... but the light that lights the heart is the Light of God.”

The Museum in Toronto will belong to the institutional framework of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, already the sponsor of projects for restoring and preserving cultural heritage in places such as Syria, India, Pakistan, and parts of Central Asia, as well as museums in Egypt, Zanzibar and Chantilly in France.

Like the Museum, the Ismaili Centre will also be part of a supportive global network — a group of Centres that now includes Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dubai and Dushanbe — and with new Centres planned in Houston, Los Angeles and Paris. The focal point of the Toronto Centre will be a circular prayer hall, dedicated to spiritual reflection, while other spaces will provide for deeper engagement with the broader community among whom Ismailis live.

The Centre has been designed by Charles Correa, the award-winning architect based in Mumbai. The building will feature a crystalline frosted glass dome — standing like a great beacon on top of a building that is itself at the highest point of the site — and illuminating the Prayer Hall and its Qibla wall.

What about the Park?

The Park will comprise some 75 000 square metres — and what an impressive site it will be! It was designed by Vladimir Djurovic, a Lebanon-based artist, who was selected for this role following an international competition.

His design draws upon the concept of the traditional Islamic garden, and especially the gardens of the Alhambra, which flourished during the great era of Spanish history when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in creative harmony.

The Park will combine quiet spaces with lively ones, open areas with more defined shapes, formality with informality, the traditional with the contemporary. It will be part of a series of parks developed through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture — ranging from Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, to the Khorog Park in Tajikistan, from the restoration of Babur’s Gardens in Kabul and the gardens of Humayan’s Tomb in Delhi, to the Forodhani Park in Zanzibar and new parks now under development in Bamako, Nairobi, Vancouver and Edmonton.

All in all, the Wynford Drive complex will represent a rich tapestry woven from widely varied strands. And the fact that we have come so far in pursuit of this dream owes everything to those who have believed in it so deeply.

We are grateful for the support of so many public officials, successive Canadian Prime Ministers, regional and city leaders, and local ward councillors like John Parker and his predecessor, Jane Pitfield. We also salute the contractors from Carillion who are working to implement the project, as well as our museum partners from

around the world, the members of the Bata family whose support has been so helpful, and the staff and volunteers who have given so much of themselves to this effort.

We owe a great deal to all who have made gifts of time and treasure and endeavour to this project, including, most especially, the Ismaili community in Canada and around the world who have contributed to the development of Ismaili Centres and Jamatkhana, and to the fund which was set up to commemorate my Golden Jubilee. This project has been designated as a Golden Jubilee project, and is a beneficiary of those generous gifts.

Finally, my thanks, again, go to all of you for joining in this event. I hope you will feel, as I do, that you have been part of a distinctive observance — celebrating efforts which is impressive in scale, in aesthetic ambition, and in its cultural inspiration — contributing in the best way possible to Canada's pluralism.

As we look ahead, we can anticipate with some confidence that the Wynford Drive project will be a beautiful part of the future — a proud gift from our generation to future generations — even as it celebrates so fittingly what past generations have given to us.

Thank you.



Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum and their park

28 May 2010, Toronto, Canada

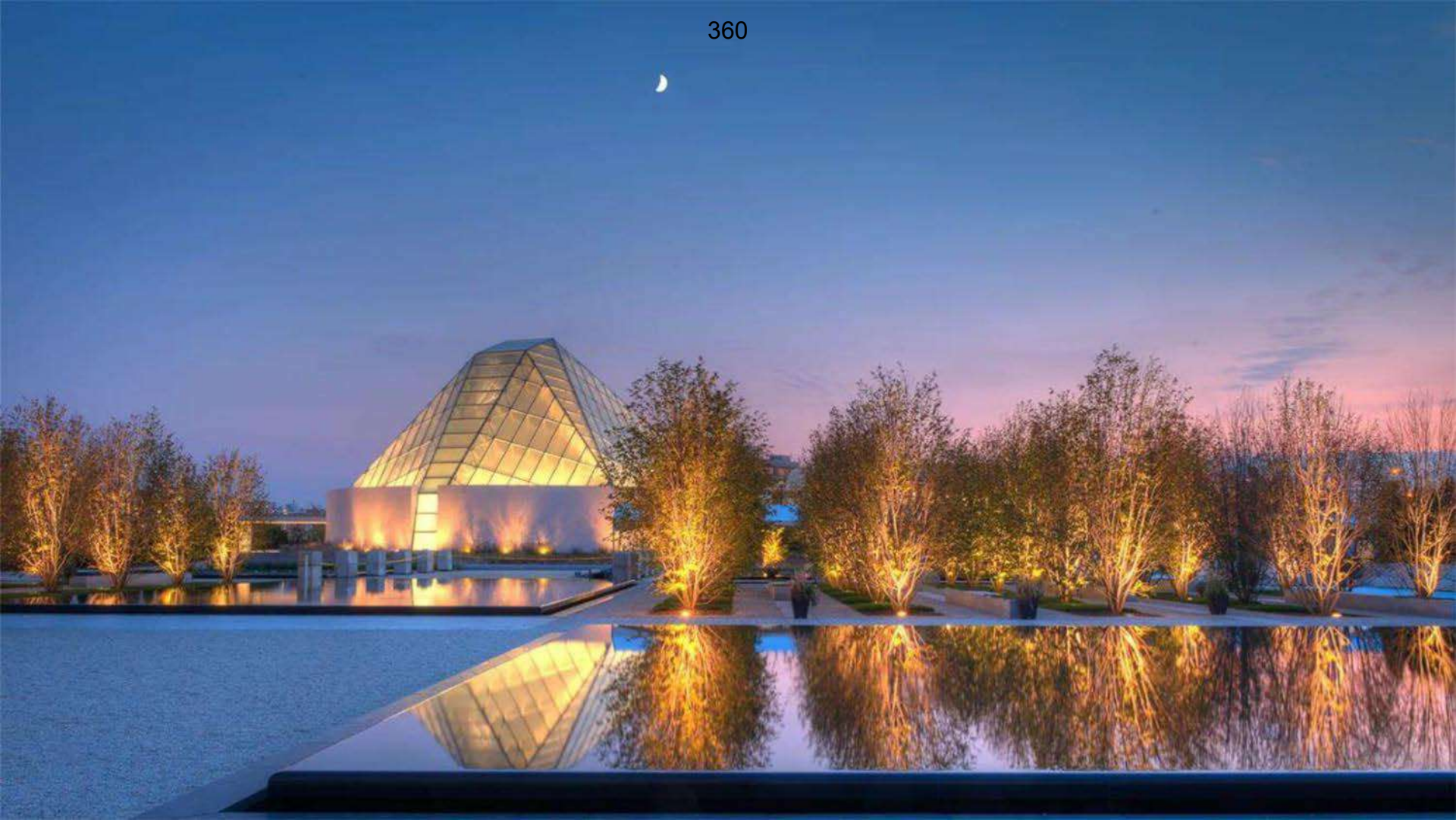
<https://global-lectures.com/courses/05262024-foundation-ceremony-ismaili-centre-the-aga-khan-museum-and-park-2010-05-28/lesson/watch-lecture-video-156/>

by

Muṣṭafā Ahmadi

Toronto, Canada

May 26th, 2024





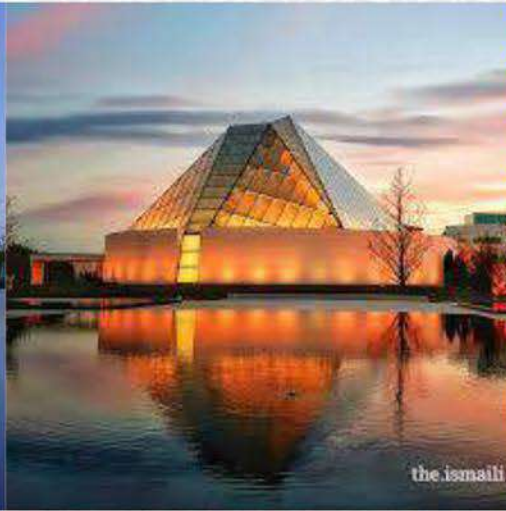
“I have always felt very much at home in Canada but never more so than at this moment”¹

“This Foundation Ceremony marks a particularly important moment for my family and me - and such moments take on added meaning when they can be shared with colleagues and friends, and with so many men and women whom I deeply admire”¹

1. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



“This creative process has itself been a remarkable international story – bringing together the designs of architects from Japan, India and Lebanon.”²



2. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park

“It is only right that we look also to the past, including of course the story of Canada’s historic welcome to displaced Ismailis in the 1970s and later, and to their successful integration. Certainly, this process, and the contributions Ismailis have made in so many walks of life, have also reflected the encouragement they received to rebuild here, their traditional institutions and social structures.”³

3. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park

“In looking back over these recent decades, I also think of the close cooperation which the Aga Khan development Network has enjoyed with Canadian institutions such as CIDA – the Canadian international development Agency – which continues to be a key partner in addressing needs in the developing world.”

“We appreciate, too, the strong relationships our educational institutions enjoy with great Canadian centres of learning – including McMaster and McGill Universities, the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta”⁴

4. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



Four flags:
Ismaili flag, the City of Toronto,
Ontario and Canadian flag

A portion of the Wynford Drive
renamed **Aga Khan Boulevard**



“The project we celebrate have been in the development process as you may know for some time and perhaps if I may so say, for a somewhat longer time than some of us may have expected! but I have learned that sometimes a bit of extra patience in the planning process can lead to even wider opportunities – and this is precisely what happened in this case.

Our original plans were to build here a new Ismaili Jamatkhana, a space of prayer, contemplation and community interaction. But as time went along and added space became available, the concept grew. It now includes three elements: a new Ismaili centre – the sixth such representational building in the world; a new Aga Khan Museum; and a beautiful, welcoming park, which link these two new buildings.”⁵

5. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



ISMAILI CENTRE

20m height of the prayer hall
 1680 panes of glass to build the prayer hall
 11 educational spaces
 Designed by **Charles Correa**

AGA KHAN MUSEUM

350 auditorium seating
 740 tons of structural steel used in construction
 1000+ artifacts in collection of the Aga Khan Museum
 330 artifacts on display at any one time
 Designed by **Fumihiko Maki**

CONSTRUCTION

16.8 acres
 620 underground parking spaces
 1.5 million hours in construction

AGA KHAN PARK

1600m paved walkways
 5500 shrubs
 5 reflective pools
 550 trees
 Designed by **Vladimir Djurovic**

“in **1848** Mohamed Shah's reign came to an end, and my grandfather settled peaceably in Bombay and there **established his Durkhana**, or headquarters. Not only was this a wise and happy personal decision, but it had an admirable effect on the religious and communal life of the whole Ismaili world. **It was as if the heavy load of persecution and fanatical hostility, which they had had to bear for so long, was lifted.**” ⁶

6. Mawlānā Sultān Muhammad Shah (a.s), Memoirs of the Aga Khan, World enough and time, p.182

“Together, these three projects will symbolise the harmonious integration of the spiritual, the artistic and the natural worlds — in keeping with the holistic ideal which is an intimate part of Islamic tradition. At the same time, they will also express a profound commitment to inter-cultural engagement, and international cooperation.”⁷

7. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



AGA KHAN MUSEUM



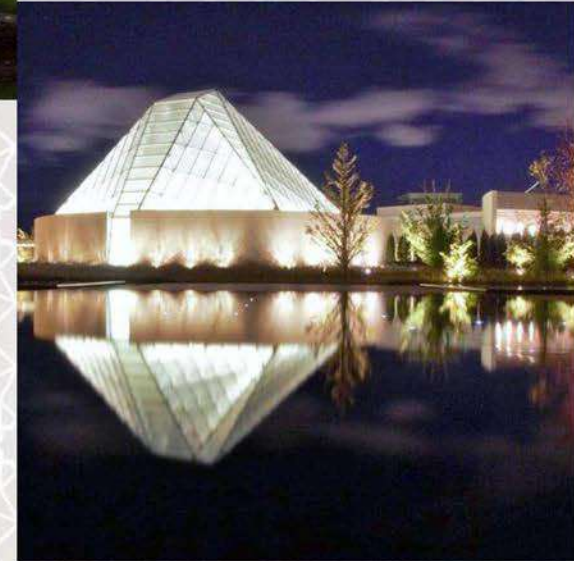
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ISMAILI CENTRE



AGA KHAN PARK

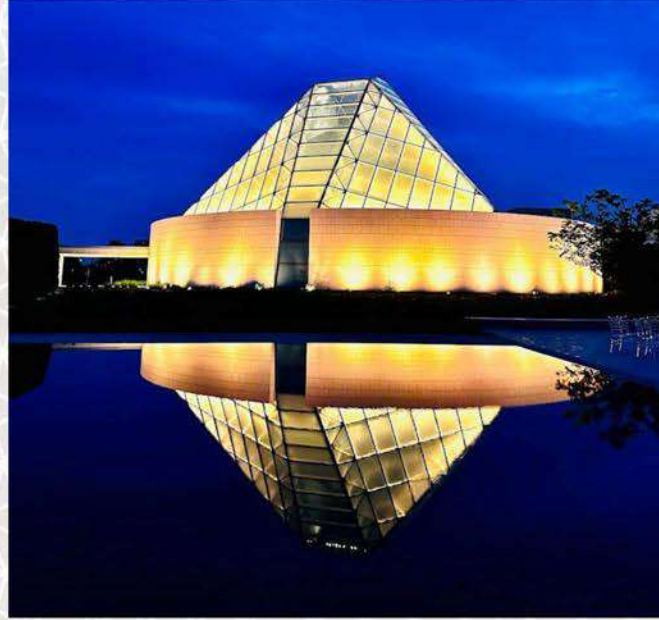


الدُّنْيَا مَزْرَعَةٌ لِـالْآخِرَةِ ٨

This world is cultivation farm for the next world



کس عرض سے آگے ہو اس جہان میں یاد ہے؟“
 ”معرفت مقصود کلی ہے نہ بھولوسا تھیو!“¹⁰



10. . `Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai, Dīwān-i Naṣīri (urdu), p. 86

“The building will feature a crystalline frosted glass dome — standing like a great beacon on top of a building that is itself at the highest point of the site — and illuminating the Prayer Hall and its Qibla wall.”

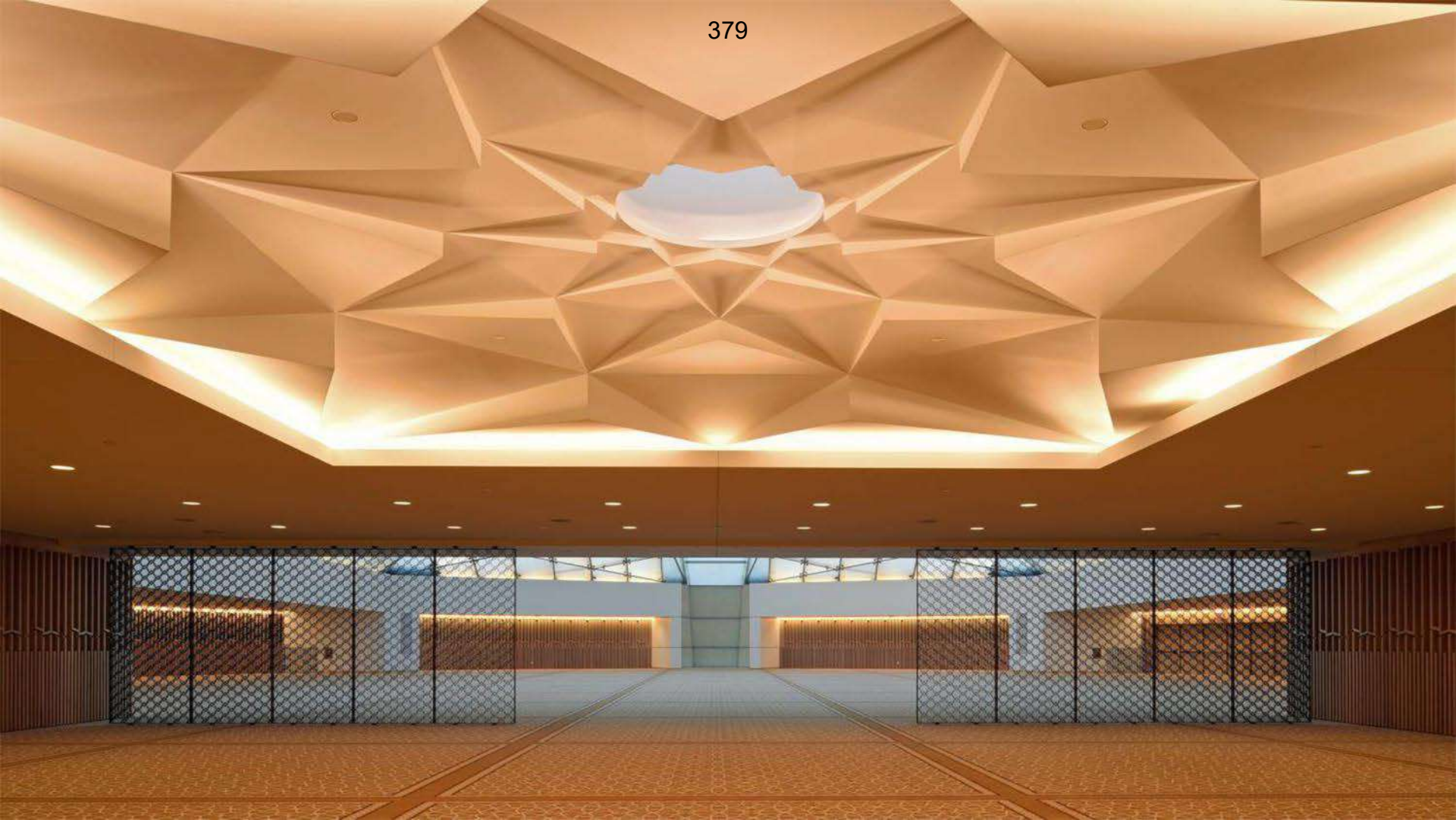
“The focal point of the Toronto Centre will be a circular prayer hall, dedicated to spiritual reflection” ¹¹

1. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



"يا ابتاه، يا سيداه، يا اسماعيلاه، يا ابا الطاهراه، يا بحر العلوم
 الائمة الطاهرين، الهداة المهديين، يا بقية ابناء الرسول، و ابناء
 الوصى و الطاهرة البتول، يا امام الامة و مفتاح باب الرحمة،
 يا سراج الهدى و شمس الورى، و مجلى الطخياء"

“O my father, O master, O Ismail, O abu ul tahir, O sea of the knowledge of chaste
 Imams, of mahdi-ist guidance, O remnant of the sons of the Messenger and sons of the
 legatee and the immaculate lady, O imam of the community and key of the door to
 mercy, **O lamp of the right guidance, sun of mankind, he who casts light in the
 deep darkness**”¹²



"چشم سربى آفتاب³⁸⁰ آسمان بیکار گشت
چشم دل بی آفتاب دین چر ابریکار نیست"

“If the head’s eye becomes useless without heaven’s sun;
Why not the heart’s eye without religion’s sun?”¹³

"نور نور چشم خود نور دل است
نور چشم از نور دلها حاصل است
باز نور نور دل نور خداست"

“The light that lights the eye is also the light of the heart... but the light
that lights the heart is the light of God”¹⁴

13. Pīr Nāṣir-i Khisraw, Dīwān (Taqawī edition), p.78 (English translation, Dr. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, The position...p.30)

14. Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Mathnawī (English . Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park)

“the Ismaili Centre will also be part of a supportive global network — a group of Centres that now includes Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dubai and Dushanbe — and with new Centres planned in Houston, Los Angeles and Paris.”¹⁵

15. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



“In a world in which some speak of a growing clash of civilisations, we believe the Museum will help address what is not so much a clash of civilisations, as it is a clash of ignorance. The new Museum will have a strong educational vocation: it will be a place for active inquiry, for discussion and research, for lectures and seminars, and for an array of collaborative programs with educational institutions and with other museums.”¹⁶

16. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park





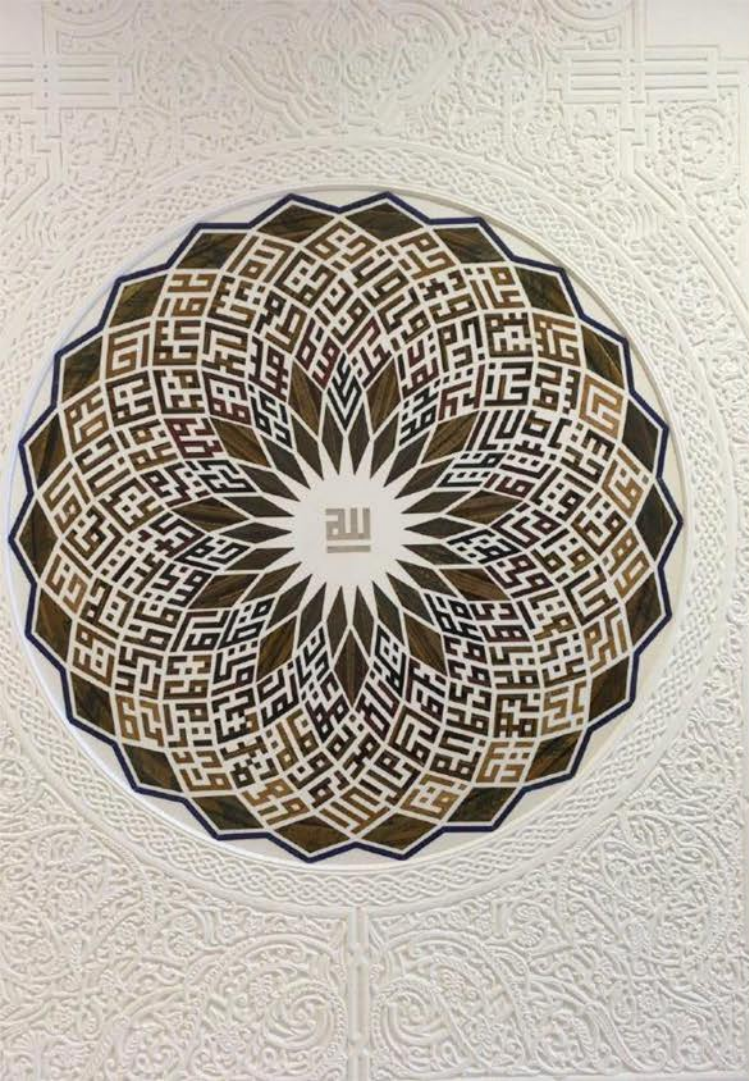
“The garden of Islamic tradition is also a place³⁸⁶ where the flow of refreshing water reminds us of divine blessing, it is a place for meditation, and quiet renewal. But I would likewise to emphasise that the garden, through history, has also been seen as a social place – a place for learning, for sharing, for romance, for diplomacy, for reflection on the destiny of human race.”¹⁷

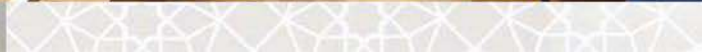


17. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), The Aga Khan Garden inaugurated at ceremony in Edmonton, 15 October 2018

“It will be part of a series of parks developed through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture — ranging from Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, to the Khorog Park in Tajikistan, from the restoration of Babur’s Gardens in Kabul and the gardens of Humayun’s Tomb in Delhi, to the Forodhani Park in Zanzibar and new parks now under development in Bamako, Nairobi, Vancouver and Edmonton.”¹⁸

18. Mawlānā Hazir Imam (a.s), Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and their park



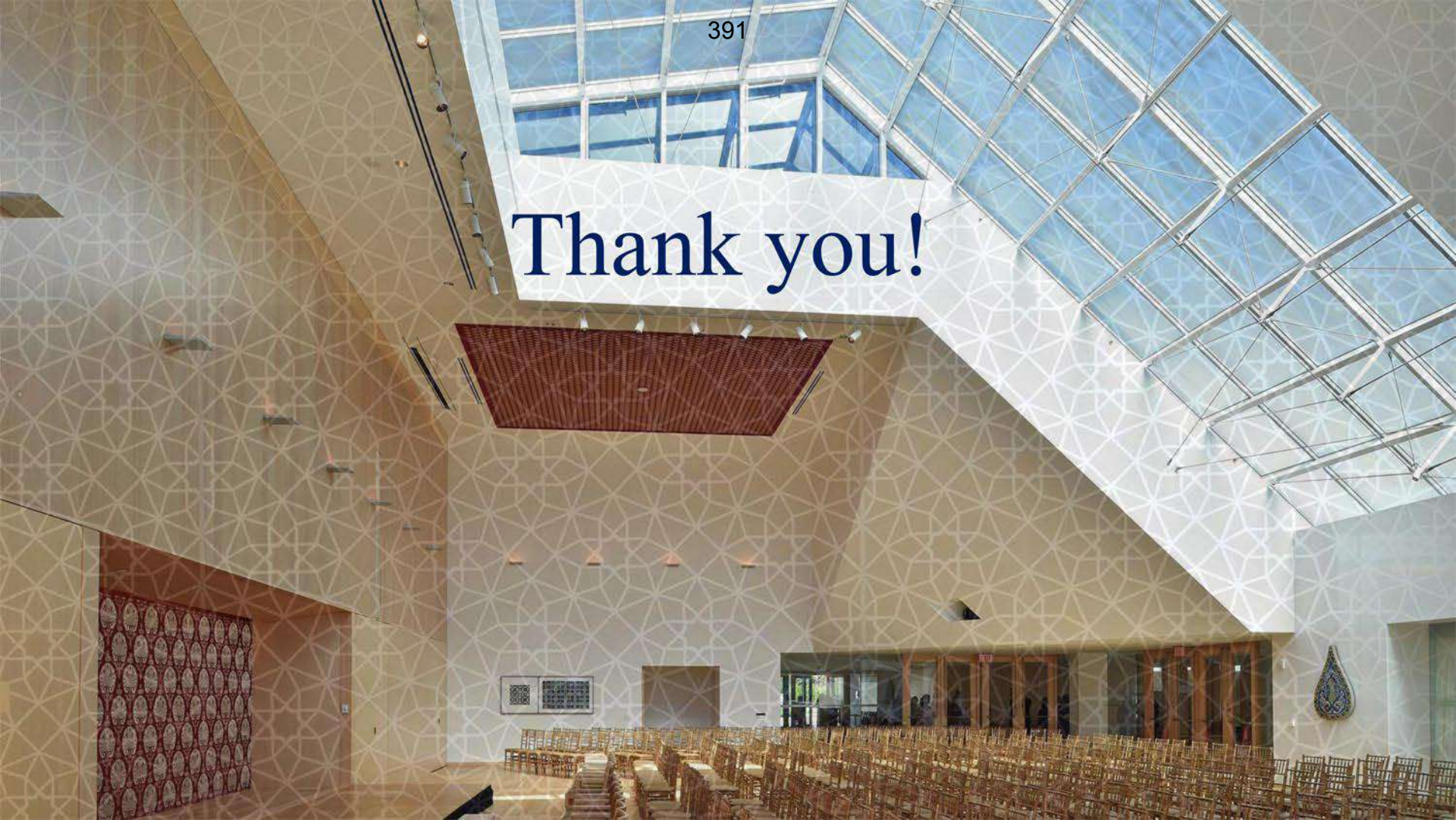


“I captured the following photos of a hawk at Aga Khan Park on the morning of August 7, 2021 between 6:37 AM and 6:58 AM. When I arrived at the Park, I saw the majestic bird perched on the horizontal top of an electric pole with a fresh kill”

*Hawk at Aga Khan Park, Toronto, a sizeable chunk, August 7, 2021. Photo: **Malik Merchant/Simerghphotos***



Thank you!







Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at 2006 Evora University Symposium

12 February 2006, Evora, Portugal

“We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders? Our system of Aga Khan Universities and Aga Khan Academies

are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards which will stretch our students rather than patronizing them.”

President Sampaio,
Rector Manuel Patricio,
Professor Adriano Moreira,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour to be invited here today to address this esteemed audience on such a relevant topic. Our title speaks of societies which are at once plural and peaceful—a goal which is important but also elusive. For even our best efforts to combine stability with modernity seem to be constantly disrupted.

Some of these disruptions come from new technologies—from internet blogs to biogenetics. Others spring from nature—from changing weather patterns or mutating viruses. Still others arise from social transformations—new patterns of family life, --and enormous migrations of people.

Newspaper headlines remind us daily of growing strains and stresses: Civil disorder in places as affluent as France and Australia; the plight of hurricane victims in Louisiana and earthquake victims in Kashmir; the uses of nuclear energy; the sense of impotence amid suffering in places like Darfur.

The planet becomes more crowded and its resources less abundant. The gap widens between rich and poor. People everywhere cry out against these evils. But change, when it comes at all, is painfully slow, and we sometimes seem to be sliding backward.

I should also mention here the headlines of this past week—which chart the widening gulf between Islamic and Western societies. Here the culprit has not been military action or diplomatic failure but the power of media images----deeply offensive caricatures -- which have profoundly offended one billion four hundred million Muslims around the world— including myself.

The question I ask—as I read all these headlines—is this: Why are political and civil leaders, in rich and poor nations alike, unable to develop the vision and harness the will to confront such challenges more effectively?

What makes this sense of impasse especially disturbing is that it so often represents a failure of democracy. For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic. The great barrier to progress, they said, was that governments listened to the special few— rather than the voice of the many. If we could only advance the march of democracy, they argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place.

But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer. For the past half century, we have seen great waves of ostensibly democratic reform—from the fading of colonialism in mid-century to the fall of the Iron Curtain. But despite this apparent progress, the results have often been disappointing.

I can scarcely count, nor fully catalog, the variety of governments which I have visited over the past five decades—from the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true—and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. In fact, nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized as “failed democracies.”

Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand—and the growing threat of “Failed States” can often be described as “the Failure of Democracy.”

Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents’ positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do—but are rarely held accountable.

Corruption for some becomes a way of life. Meanwhile, the Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed-- but to be entertained.

The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances-- and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems—and they are often too factionalized or too subservient to sustain a coherent view.

For all these reasons, democracies often make bad decisions. And when democracies are ineffective, disenchanted publics are tempted in other directions.

Latin America is one place where democracy was thought to be expanding in recent years. Yet the UN Development Program reports that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress.

The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings.

The challenge of democratic renewal has been vastly compounded by another development which is also mentioned in the title of this symposium. I refer to the rapid proliferation of cosmopolitan populations. The world is becoming more pluralist in fact—but it is not keeping pace in spirit. “Cosmopolitan” social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call “a cosmopolitan ethic.”

Peoples mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. Waves of migration indelibly change the rhythms, colours and flavours of their host communities.

Some 150 million legal immigrants live outside their country of birth, joined by uncounted millions who have immigrated illegally.

These trends will continue. Globalization has dissolved the tight bond between community and geography. Economic opportunity—for rich and poor alike—can lie in distant lands. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year--but there are not enough jobs at home for all of them. Meanwhile war and civil conflict add their refugees to the mix.

Immigration brings both blessings and problems. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD, where an aging workforce requires new young workers. Meanwhile, remittances sent home by immigrants total some \$145 billion a year—and generate nearly \$300 billion in economic activity— more than is provided either by Foreign Development Aid or Foreign Direct Investment.

At the same time, immigrant communities can sharply strain public and private resources. The resulting competition with older residents can cause resentment and hostility. More than half of the respondents in various European opinion polls have a negative view of immigration. The so-called “Clash of Civilizations” is both a local and a global danger.

But it need not be this way. Nor has it always been this way down through the sweep of history. Yes-- cultural clash has been one major theme in the human story. But so has inter-cultural cooperation.

This country and this university know from your own history how Islamic and Christian cultures met in this part of the world many centuries ago—and how enriching their interactions were for both traditions. This is a good time and place to emphasize the manifold blessings that come when peoples decide to stop shouting at one another, and instead begin listening and learning.

Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. The ethics of Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community well being.

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live -- as minorities -- in more than twenty-five countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe – including Portugal -- and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the Aga Khan Development Network —working with a wide array of partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin. We are pleased, for example, that our work in Portugal has recently been formalized in cooperative agreements with both the Portuguese Government and the Patriarchate of Lisbon.

In discussing cultural diversity, let me also mention our recent partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives—and where—in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes immigration as a positive development

In honoring me today, you honor the tradition which I represent, and, in doing so, you are renewing an inspiring story of intercultural affection and intercultural respect, of mutual dependence and mutual reinforcement.

This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted? I would make three suggestions—each of which is reflected in the experience of this university.

First, we must strengthen our civil institutions. This means realizing that a democratic society requires much more than democratic politics. Governments alone do not make democracy work. Private initiative is also essential, including a vital role for those institutions which are collectively described as “civil society.”

By civil society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis—but which are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to science and research. They include commercial, labor, professional and ethnic associations, as well as entities devoted to maintaining health, protecting the environment, and curing disease. Religious institutions are central to civil society—and so are institutions of the media.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government and politics, we neglect the importance of civil institutions. I am not suggesting we ignore politics—but I am suggesting that we think beyond our political preoccupations. A thriving civil sector is essential in renewing the promise of democracy.

The second democratic pillar I would mention is education—rigorous, responsible and relevant education. We must do a better job of training leaders and shaping institutions to meet more demanding tests of competence and higher standards of excellence. This means moving beyond the notion that better education simply means broader schooling—wider access to formal learning. We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders?

Our system of Aga Khan Universities and Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards which will stretch our students rather than patronizing them.

For too long some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices—rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving. Too often, education made our students less flexible—confident to the point of arrogance that they now had all the answers—rather than more flexible—humble in their life-long openness to new questions and new responses.

An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called “the great conversation” of our times. This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.

This brings me back to the current headlines. For I must believe that it is ignorance which explains the publishing of those caricatures which have brought such pain to Islamic peoples. I note that the Danish journal where the controversy originated acknowledged, in a recent letter of apology, that it had never realized the sensitivities involved.

In this light, perhaps, the controversy can be described less as a clash of civilizations and more as a clash of ignorance. The alternative explanation would be that the offense was intended—in which case we would be

confronted with evil of a different sort. But even to attribute the problem to ignorance is in no way to minimize its importance. In a pluralistic world, the consequences of ignorance can be profoundly damaging.

Perhaps, too, it is ignorance which has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license –implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework. This is not to say that governments should censor offensive speech. Nor does the answer lie in violent words or violent actions. But I am suggesting that freedom of expression is an incomplete value unless it is used honorably, and that the obligations of citizenship in any society should include a commitment to informed and responsible expression.

If we can commit ourselves, on all sides, to that objective, then the current crisis could become an educational opportunity—an occasion for enhanced awareness and broadened perspectives.

Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity—these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.

Let me move, then, to my third suggestion for strengthening democracy in a pluralistic world —the renewal of ethical commitment.

Democratic processes are presumably about the sharing of power, broadening the number who help shape social decisions. But that sharing--in and of itself-- means little apart from the purposes for which power is finally used.

To speak of end purposes, in turn, is to enter the realm of ethics. What are our ultimate goals? Whose interests do we seek to serve? How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations—reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism.

The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity—these are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.

In the ethical realm—as in the educational realm—one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling—which should be such a positive force--can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness. All of the world's great religions warn against this excess—yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves—rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility—a recognition that strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals, that climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. It means recognizing our own creaturehood—and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment—and the ethical framework that goes with it--will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion—then societies will find

themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape—with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.

In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world—and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.

For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see “the other” not as a curse or a threat, but as an opportunity and a blessing-- whether “the other” lives across the street-- or across the world.

What Makes Democracy Work?



**“Cosmopolitan Society, Human Safety and Rights
in Plural and Peaceful Societies”
Evora, Portugal, February 2006**

Karima Khan 9 June 2024

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/06092024-remarks-at-2006-evora-university-symposium-2006-02-12/lesson/watch-lecture-video-159/>

What's so special about Portugal?

401



HONORIS CAUSA

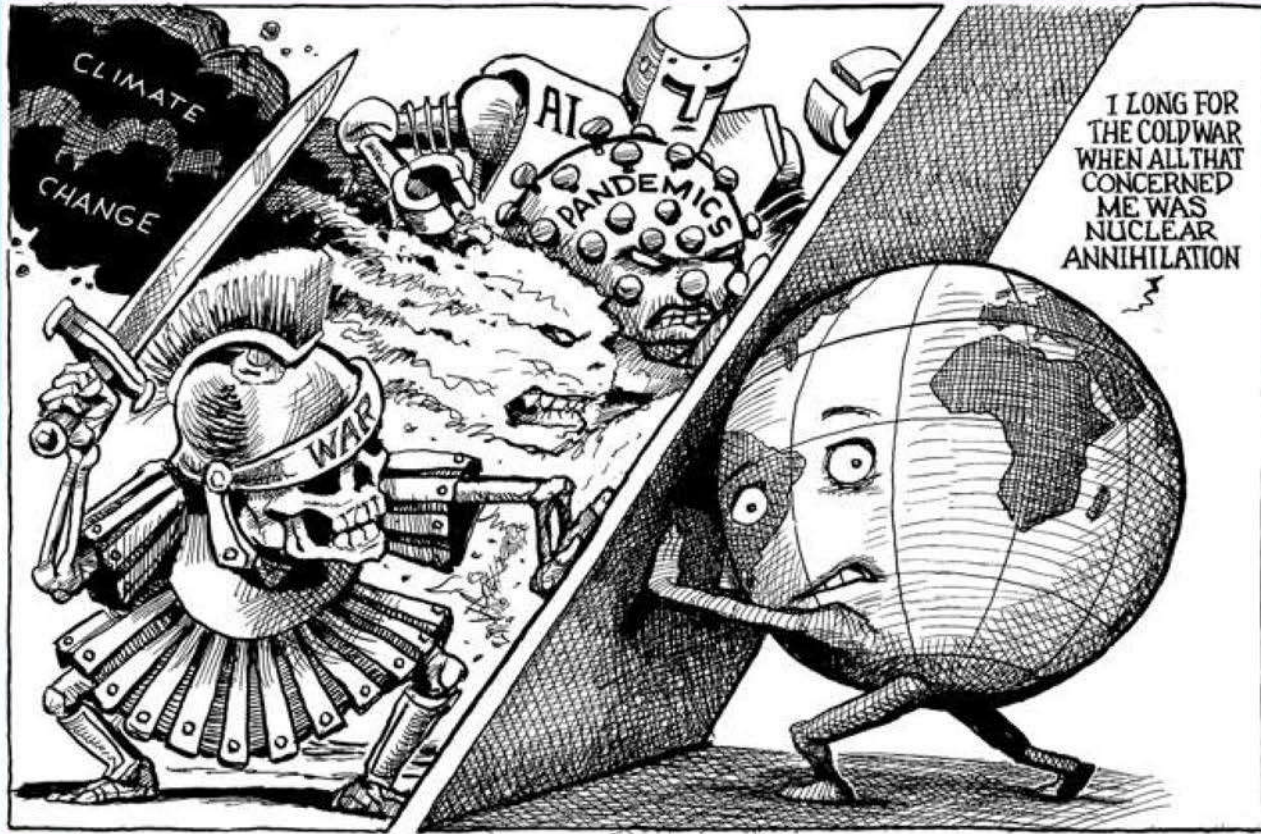


...two of the most...
...is to be an...
...and progress.

#AKDN



Disruptions



Darfur - a case study

405



Suffering in Darfur

406



What can we do?

London, United Kingdom, 5 July 2008
Golden Jubilee Darbar

“..First of all, obviously, we want to do **everything possible, everything possible**, to assist the **pacification** of societies which are at war. **This is the first duty of every murid of the Imam**: to ensure that, around the world, our Jamat and others can live in peace.”

Islamabad, Pakistan, 14 December 2017 (Morning)

“**Keep the peace** - no society in the world can make progress where there is tension or conflict.”

Karachi, Pakistan, 16 December 2017

“...to this Jamat and my Jamat globally: work towards peace, assist in building peace, where there are stresses **do not participate in the stresses. Try to eliminate the stresses** so that our Jamat, worldwide, can live in peace, in tranquility...”

Islamabad, Pakistan, 14 December 2017 (Morning)

“...So I say to my spiritual children: through your own actions **build a happy future....** And keep in mind that if you live according to our ethics, **I as the Imam, am going to be by your side every day, every day.** So you should keep in mind that this is your Imam’s wish..”

Our Imam Guides Us

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 24 May 1995

“We must not kill to resolve our differences - - whatever they may be. They must be resolved...through **dialogue**, through **compassion**, through **tolerance**, through **generosity**, through **forgiveness** and through **kindness**. These are the pillars on which to build a strong society in modern times - - not through weapons

Failed States Index



What can we do?

Mahajanga, Madagascar, 23 February 2003

“Islam forbids corruption. From an ethical point of view, it is **unacceptable.**

The ethic of Islam says: be honest in your work...Africa has suffered corruption, but we have to **help eliminate this corruption, not participate in it.**

...how many times we are taught by the Western world that there are, what we call, “failed states” ... I tell you, be careful! It should not be that...we should be given lessons about democracy... What has happened? It is that **democracy itself has failed.**



Porshnev, Badakshan, Tajikistan, 25 September 1998

"The natural beauty and resources of our world are **entrusted** to us during our lifetime, and we must leave the world **improved**."

Hot, Hot, Hot!

World Sees Record Heat Waves

Selection of heat records by country (or continent) recorded during the last six years, in °C



As of July 10, 2023.

* European record still being validated by the WMO.

Sources: World Meteorological Organization, media reports, Statista research



“The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk gently on the earth..”

Holy Qur'an 25:63



Enormous migrations of people⁴¹⁶





How to nurture healthy, competent democracies?

- Strengthen our civil institutions
- Rigorous, responsible and relevant education
- The renewal of ethical commitment



Rigorous, responsible, relevant education



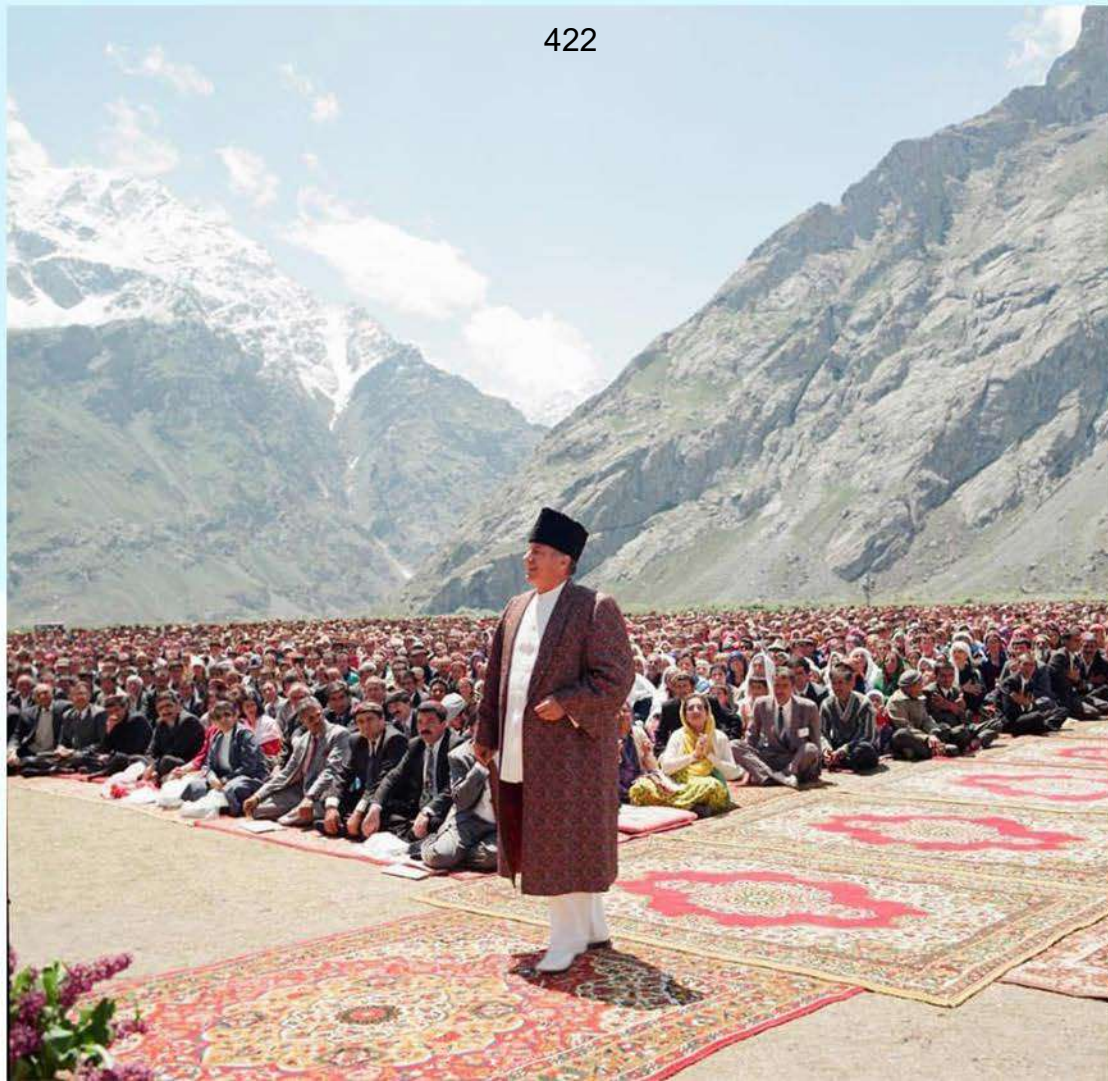
Zanzibar, Tanzania, 24 August 1997

...**carry in your heart, in your work**, the ethics of Islam: the directions of **respect**, of **humility**, of **integrity**, of **honesty**, of **generosity**...”

“**Live in unity. Respect each other.** Respect each other’s pluralism of views...fundamentally important in the decades ahead...”

“..bring that bridge between the **spiritual and the material** into **constant unity**...”

“..**principles of brotherhood should be part of your vision of society.** Whether an Ismaili is a Tajik or a Kyrgyz or an Afghan or an Iranian or a Zanzibari - - he and she are your brother and your sister. And **their concerns are your concerns; and your concerns are their concerns.**”





White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy

28 November 2000, Washington DC, USA

Thank you Mr. President. It is an honour to be associated with this distinguished panel in a discussion of a topic which I have long felt has received too little attention, particularly at the policy level. Thank you for the invitation.

I offer my comments this morning from the perspective of someone who has been a long-standing observer of cultural evolution in the developing world of Africa and Asia, and from more than twenty-years of experience with activities such as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture that have attempted to make a positive contribution to that process.

At present there is a great deal of apprehension about the future of local and national cultures in most countries in the developing world. What can the cultural diplomacy of the United States do to address these anxieties and replace them with a sense of confidence through new and shared initiatives?

If the cultures and value systems of the developing world are being challenged -- or are believed to be under threat - I think it valuable to try to identify the nature of the challenges. For the sake of discussion, I would put the major issues under the headings of language, institutions, people, communications, and funding.

First, there is the issue of language. During the process of de-colonisation in Asia and Africa, the driving objective of the governments of the newly independent countries was to create nation states. A national language was seen as an important part of this process. Forty years later, the world's dominant foreign language, English, is viewed as a necessity in most areas -- but not yet as an opportunity. For cultures in the developing world to be globally accessible, understood, respected and admired, and to be represented in electronic communications, they must ensure that their cultures find expression not only in the national language, but also in English.

The second issue is institutions. In most parts of the developing world institutions and places of particular importance to cultural inspiration and expression are all too often abandoned or neglected by both governments and civil society. Museums, conservatories, and buildings and public spaces in historic cities are generally in a precarious state. This is also true of higher education, particularly in the arts and the humanities. In their present state these institutions cannot contribute to the survival and reinvigoration of inherited value systems, and may actually contribute to their further degradation.

The third issue is people. Culture is by its nature rooted in people. Unfortunately, in the countries of Asia and Africa which I know, cultural expression as a life-long vocation nearly always leads to a dead-end. Artists in the industrialised world at least have the possibility of mobilising the resources necessary to live with dignity. The economic environment for cultural professionals in the industrialised world does not exist in the developing world. Indeed it is being weakened further by the collapse of traditional value systems and the cultural production they supported.

The fourth issue is communications. Cultures that do not or cannot communicate become increasingly isolated, inward-looking, and, in due course, marginalised. Some would argue the United States' dominance of global communications systems is, because of what has been called the digital divide, a contributor to this problem. I would offer a different perspective. It seems to me that by a purposeful effort, the United States could play a significant role not only in making the cultures of Asia and Africa available globally. Doing so would also make a massive contribution to the full acceptance to the legitimacy and value of social and cultural pluralism, something that is urgently needed in most parts of the developing world.

The last issue is funding. The reality in the countries of Asia and Africa is that the material resources required to sustain cultural activities are either not available because of higher priorities, or because there are no incentives to support culture. But with their economies becoming increasingly liberalised, an increasing percentage of national wealth being will be created by private initiative. It is my dream that private individuals and organisations will come to the support of culture, as has been the case for centuries in the industrialised world. For this to happen, many new methods of giving will need to be stimulated and developed through appropriate public policies.

In response to the challenges facing countries in Africa and Asia that I have outlined, the United States, with a wealth of educational, private philanthropic institutions and global corporations that is unparalleled in human history, can play a leadership role. Specifics can be discussed later this morning or in this afternoon's sessions. Much very important work devoted to the issues of language, institutions, people, communications and funding is already underway, but there is scope, and I would say a need, for a massive expansion.

It is my hope that this meeting will lead to a re-conceptualisation of the role in culture in public life and international policy and move more public and private institutions to initiate or expand their activities devoted to the support of culture. I can assure you that you will find interested and reliable partners in the parts of the world with which I am familiar to join you in this process.



WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CULTURE AND DIPLOMACY

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/white-house-conference-on-culture-and-diplomacy-2000-11-28/lesson/watch-lecture-video-162/>

By His Highness the Aga Khan, Washington DC, USA · 28 November 2000

a presentation by Amin Momin



CULTURE

Culture is a concept that encompasses the social behavior, institutions, and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.



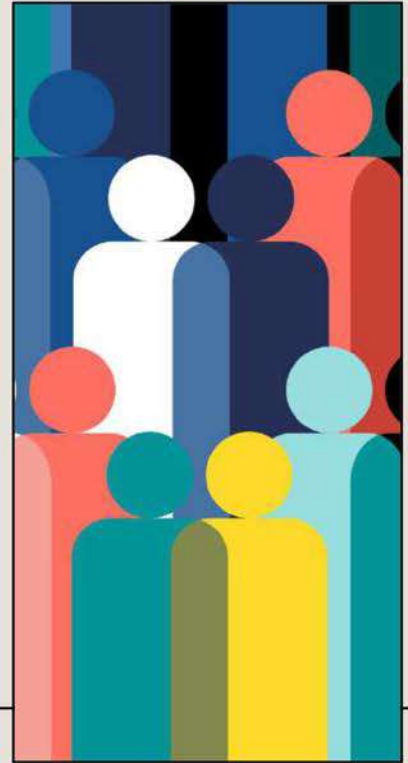
CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Exchange of ideas, information, art, language and other aspects of culture among nations and people in order to foster mutual understanding.

WHY IS IT *IMPORTANT*?

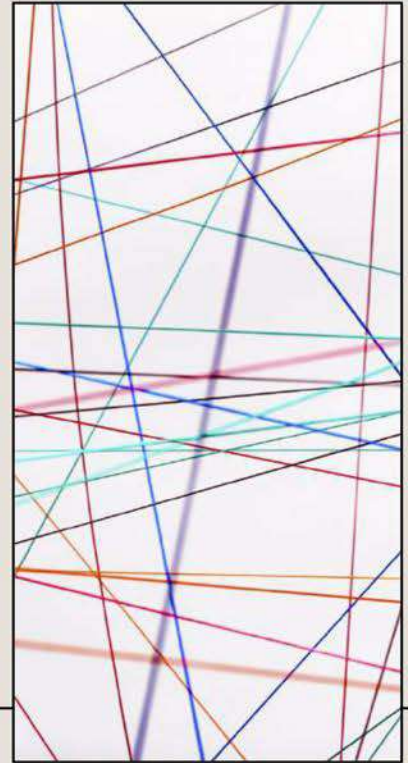
CULTURE WILL TEACH
US TO UNDERSTAND
OUR DIFFERENCES
AND AFFIRM OUR
COMMON HUMANITY.

President Bill Clinton



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE
UNDERSTAND AND
APPRECIATE OUR
DIFFERENCES,... AND FIND A
WAY TO ELEVATE OUR
COMMON HUMANITY. THAT'S
WHERE CULTURAL
DIPLOMACY COMES IN.

President Bill Clinton



THERE IS A GREAT DEAL
OF APPREHENSION
ABOUT THE FUTURE OF
LOCAL AND NATIONAL
CULTURES IN THE
DEVELOPING WORLD

quote by Mawlana Hazir Imam



MAJOR ISSUES

LANGUAGE

INSTITUTIONS

PEOPLE

COMMUNICATIONS

FUNDING



WHAT CAN THE
UNITED STATES
DO?

LANGUAGE



IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

- English, is viewed as a necessity but not yet as an opportunity
- To be a part of a global community cultures should find expression in:
 - English
 - National language.

REMEMBER THAT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MORE THAN
EVER BEFORE IN HISTORY IS AN INTERNATIONAL
PASSPORT OF COMMUNICATION...

Dodoma, Tanzania Tuesday, November 23, 1982

ENGLISH IS BECOMING A LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE, AND IT
SEEMS TO ME IMPORTANT THAT A GRASP OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THE JAMAT
IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IN THE FUTURE...

Paris, France Saturday, July 9, 1983

IF DURING YOUR CAREERS...YOU SEEK TO IMPROVE
YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IT IS THROUGH THE COMMAND OF
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO
IMPROVE THAT KNOWLEDGE...

Islamabad, Pakistan Monday, November 23, 1987



EVERY LANGUAGE IS CREATED
BY GOD AND IT HAS THE
NATURAL CAPACITY AS A
WORLD LANGUAGE TO
EMBRACE KNOWLEDGE,
MEANING, PROGRESS,
TEACHING AND EXPLANATION

quote by Allamah Sahib



Balance of Realities

(Mizān al-Ḥaqā'iq)

ʿAllāmah
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai



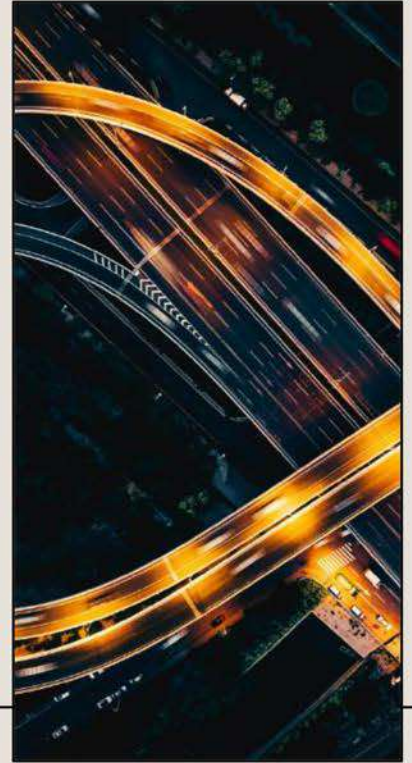
CULTURAL INSPIRATION & EXPRESSION

- Places of particular importance to cultural inspiration and expression are all too often abandoned or neglected by governments and civil society.
- This is also true of higher education
 - Particularly in the arts and the humanities.

("White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy")

CULTURAL HERITAGE IS A
POWERFUL TOOL THAT CAN BE
HARNESSED TOWARDS
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF
HUMAN LIFE WHICH IS A
CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF THE
ISMAILI IMAMAT.

quote by Mawlana Hazir Imam



AL-AZHAR PARK

440



FORMER GARBAGE DUMP

("Egypt - Cultural Development")

The Azhar Park Project

Cairo, Egypt
March 2005

AL-AZHAR PARK

442



TO BEAUTIFUL PARK

("Egypt - Cultural Development")

443 MARIDANI MOSQUE



("Maridani Mosque Opens after Full Rehabilitation")

444
ALTIT FORT



("Pakistan - Cultural Development
- Conservation and Development
in Gilgit-Baltistan")

445 ISMAILI CENTER



("Ismaili Center Houston")

White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy



CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS

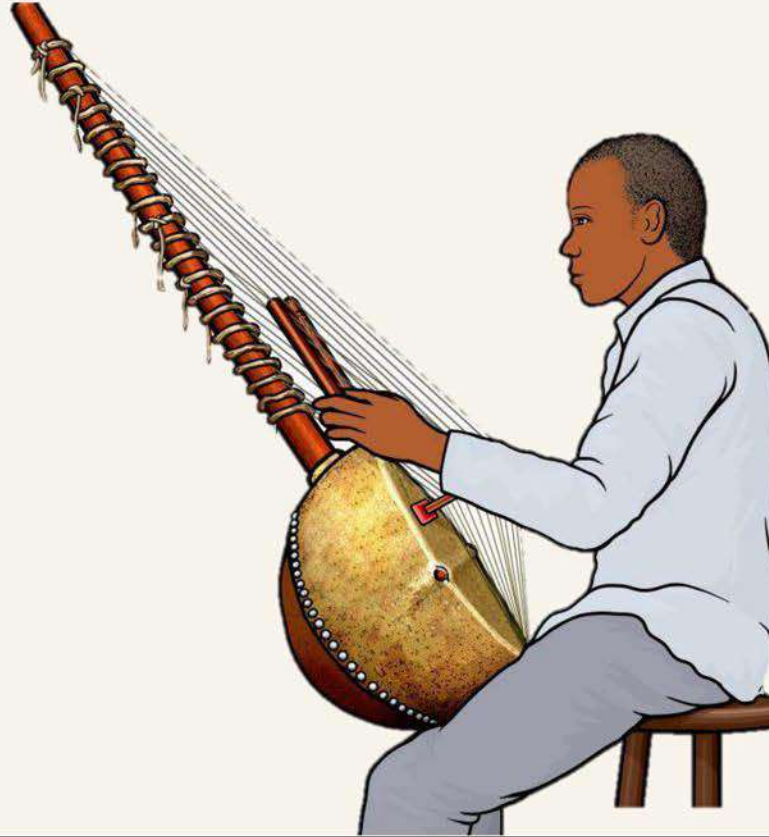
- Artists in the industrialized world have the possibility of mobilizing the resources necessary to live with dignity.
- The economic environment for cultural professionals in the industrialized world does not exist in the developing world.
- It is being weakened further by the collapse of traditional value systems and the cultural production they supported.

A GREAT RISK TO THE
 MODERNIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC
 WORLD IS IDENTITY LOSS – THE
 BLIND ASSUMPTION THAT WE
 SHOULD GIVE UP ALL OUR
 ESSENTIAL VALUES AND CULTURAL
 EXPRESSIONS TO THOSE OF OTHER
 CIVILIZATIONS

Quote by Mawlana Hazir Imam



448 EXAMPLE OF AMADOU





AGA KHAN MUSIC
AWARDS

CELEBRATING CULTURAL
HERITAGE THROUGH MUSIC

- foster the development of living musical heritage in societies across the world
- disseminate this work internationally through collaborations
- AKMP was launched in Central Asia

("Aga Khan Music Programme")

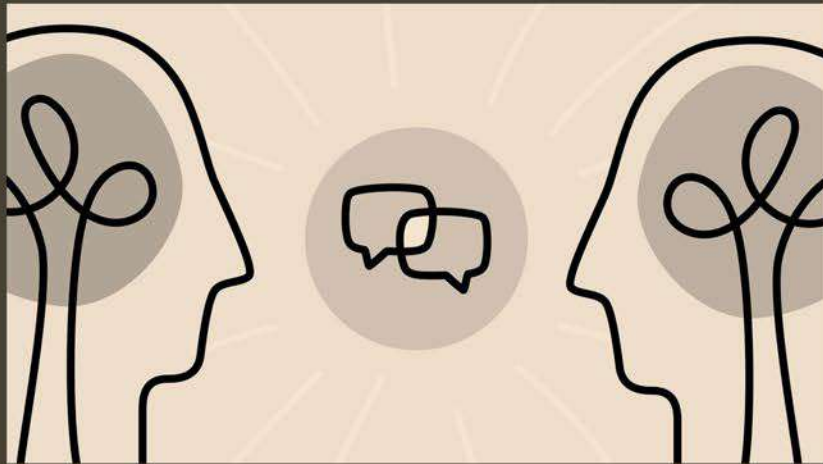
The logo graphic consists of several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of blue, green, and yellow, resembling a stylized wave or a musical staff.

SILKROAD

UNITING PEOPLE THROUGH THE ARTS

- Silkroad builds upon a musical language founded in difference and collaboration.
- It draws on the rich tapestry of world traditions.
- These traditions make up our many-layered contemporary identities.
- Brings music, hope, and healing to underserved, culturally rich, urban, rural, indigenous, and refugee communities.
- Silkroad uses the arts to ignite passions and foster education all around the world.

(About Silkroad – Silkroad)

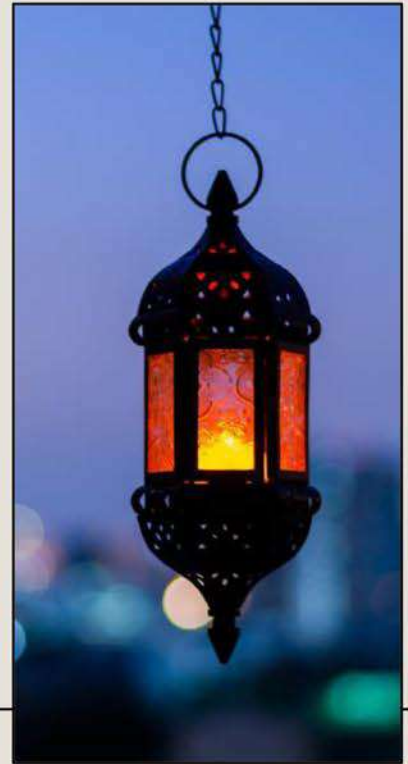


INTERCONNECTEDNESS

- Cultures that do not or cannot communicate become increasingly isolated, inward-looking, and marginalized.
- The United States could make the cultures of Asia and Africa available globally.
- Make a massive contribution to the full acceptance to the legitimacy and value of social and cultural pluralism.

O PEOPLE! VERILY WE HAVE
CREATED YOU FROM A MALE AND A
FEMALE, AND MADE YOU NATIONS
AND TRIBES, SO THAT YOU MAY
RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER. VERILY
THE MOST HONORED OF YOU WITH
ALLAH IS THE ONE WHO IS THE
MOST RIGHTEOUS (ATQAKUM).
VERILY ALLAH IS KNOWER, AWARE.

Quran (49:13)



YOU COME FROM DIFFERENT
LANGUAGE AREAS, DIFFERENT
BACKGROUNDS, BUT THIS
PLURALISM IN OUR TARIQAH IS
NOT A WEAKNESS, IT IS A
STRENGTH.

Farman by Mawlana Hazir Imam





IMPACT OF CULTURAL INSPIRATION & EXPRESSION

- Connecting isolated rural communities with the global community
- Building human capital needed for modern economies and stable governance
- Enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future.

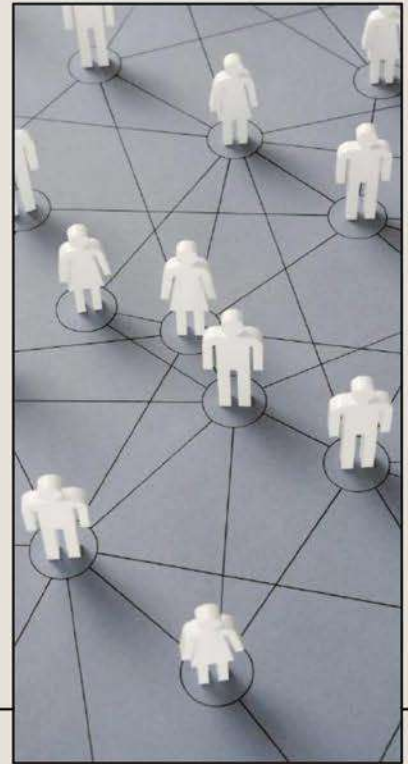
WHAT THIS UNIVERSITY IS ALL ABOUT IS NOT ONLY THE POWER OF EDUCATION, BUT ALSO THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. IT IS A POWER THAT CAN CHANGE PEOPLES' LIVES.

quote by Mawlana Hazir Imam



BY CREATING INTELLECTUAL SPACE
AND RESOURCES, THIS UNIVERSITY
(UCA) WILL HELP TURN THE
MOUNTAINS THAT DIVIDE THE
NATIONS AND TERRITORIES OF
CENTRAL ASIA, INTO LINKS THAT
UNITE ITS PEOPLES AND ECONOMIES
IN A SHARED ENDEAVOR TO
IMPROVE THEIR FUTURE WELL-BEING.

quote by Mawlana Hazir Imam

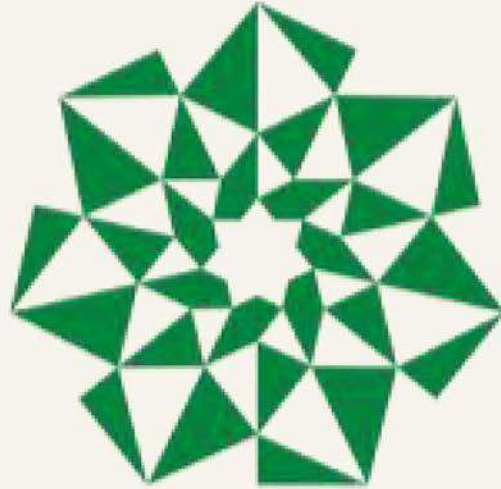




MATERIAL RESOURCES

- The material resources required to sustain cultural activities are either not available
- Private individuals and organizations should come to the support culture
- New methods of giving will need to be stimulated and developed through appropriate public policies.

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT
458
NETWORK (AKDN)



AKDN



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

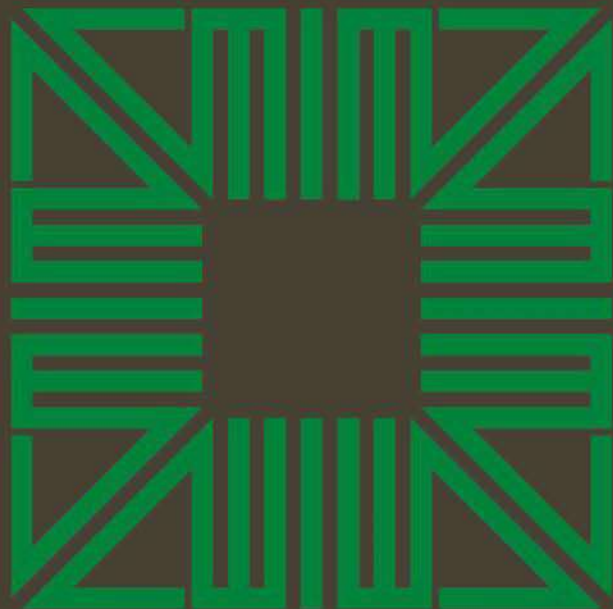
WHAT THEY DO

- Engage in the physical and social revitalization of communities
- Advance music and musical education
- Connect cultures through material and intangible arts

(*Aga Khan Trust for Culture*)

AGA KHAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

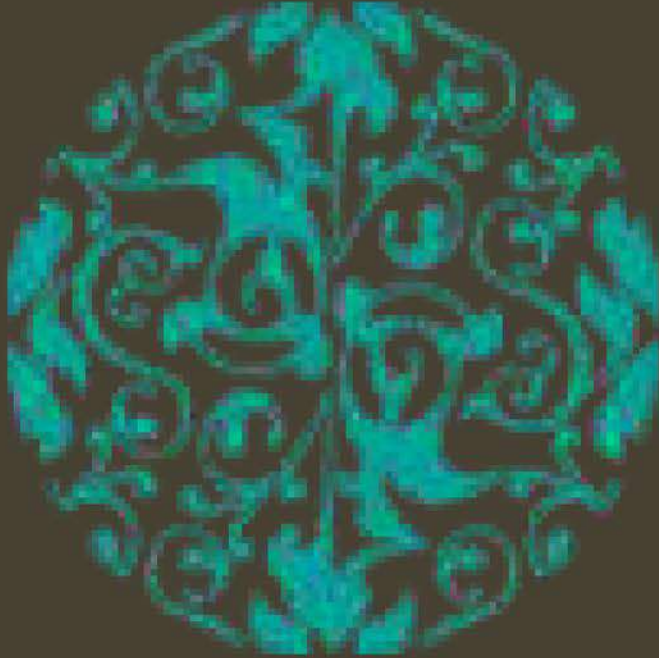
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SEEKS TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

1. How could Islamic architecture embrace more fully the values of cultural continuity?
2. How could we mirror more responsively the diversity of human experience and the differences in local environments?
3. How could we honor inherited traditions while also engaging with new social perplexities and new technological possibilities?

("Aga Khan Award for Architecture")



GIVING THROUGH DIFFERENT WAYS

- Submitting to the Imam of the time an unconditional Nazrana (gift)
- Offer intellectual capacity to assist the Imamat's efforts for the progress of the communities within which the Jamat lives.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

THE HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION

- foster understanding and exchange between cultures

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

- supports global initiatives that promote education, health, and arts and culture

THE GETTY FOUNDATION

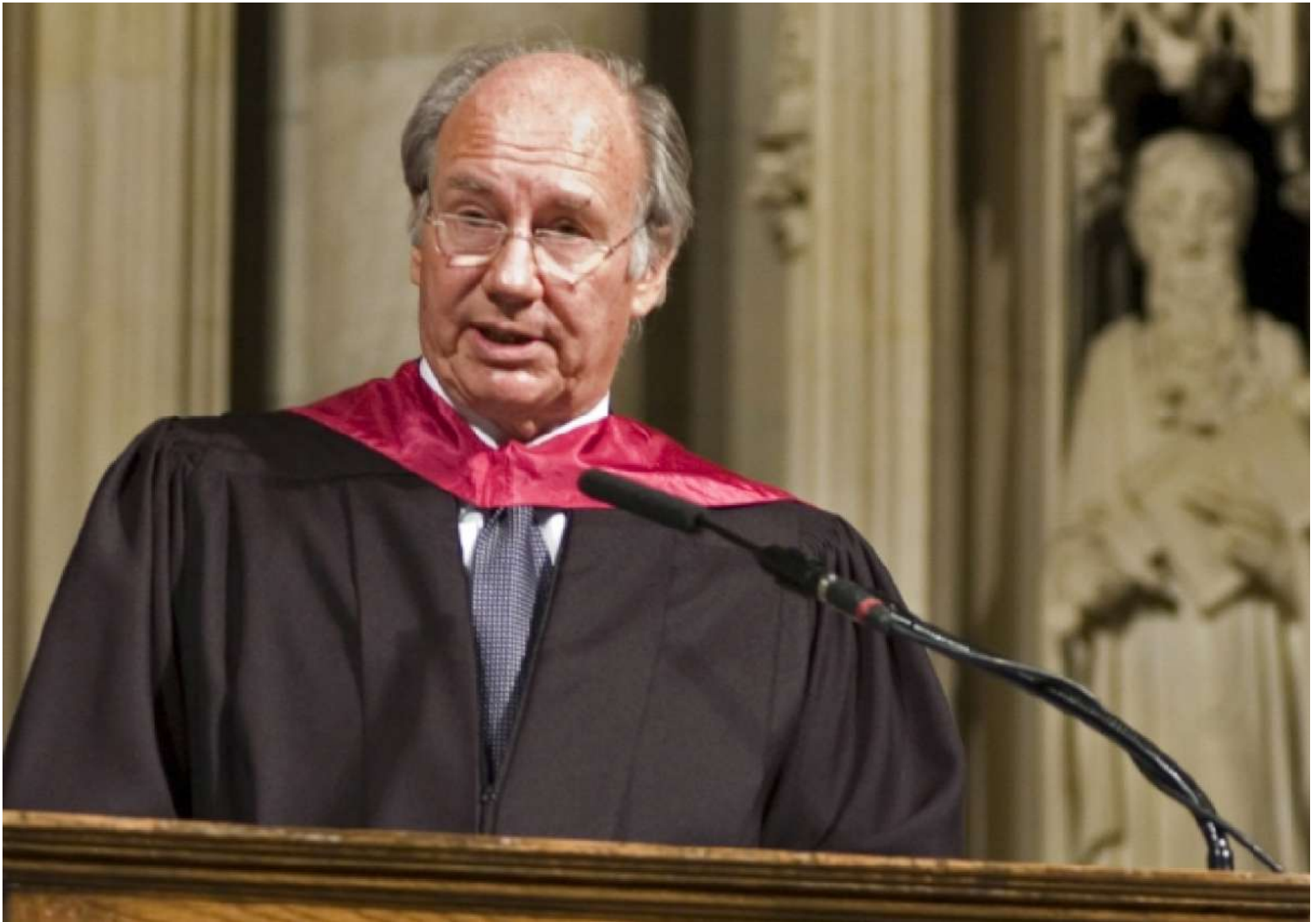
- supports the understanding and preservation of the visual arts

SUMMARY

THANK YOU

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Graduation ceremony at the School of International and Public Affairs, USA

15 May 2006, New York, USA

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Dean Anderson,
Faculty Members,
Graduating Students and Parents,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured to be here and deeply grateful for your invitation. This is a memorable day both in your personal lives and in the life of this School—and I am pleased to share in it.

They say that a good graduation speaker is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep. I hope we can break that pattern today.

An opinion poll reported recently that what American graduates want as their graduation speaker more than anyone is "someone they could relate to". But that test, says the poll, showed the most popular university speaker in recent years was the Sesame street character, Kermit the Frog. I found it a bit intimidating to wonder just where the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims would rank on the "relating" scale in comparison to Kermit the Frog.

Ceremonies of the sort we observe today are valuable because they help us to bridge the past and the future – to see ourselves as players in larger narratives. This School's narrative is now sixty years old – embracing the whole of the postwar period. In that time you have dramatically broadened both the communities you serve and the programs through which you serve them.

Your history reflects a continuing conviction that the challenges of our times are fundamentally global ones – calling both for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses.

Even as SIPA marks its 60th anniversary, I am approaching an anniversary of my own – the 50th anniversary next year of my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

While I was educated in the West, my perspective over these fifty years has been profoundly shaped by the countries of South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where the Ismaili people live and where they are largely concentrated. For five decades, that has been my world – my virtually permanent preoccupation. And it is out of that experience that I speak today.

For the developing world, the past half-century has been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointment. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape – from the crumbling of colonial hegemonies in mid century to the recent collapse of communist empires. But too often, what rushed in to replace the old order were empty hopes—not only the false allure of state socialism, non-alignment, and single-party rule, but also the false glories of romantic nationalism and narrow tribalism, and the false dawn of runaway individualism.

There have been welcome exceptions to this pattern, of course. But too often, one step forward has been accompanied by two steps back. Hope for the future has often meant hope for survival, not hope for progress. The old order yielded its place, but a new world was not ready to be born.

Today, this sense of frustration is compounded – both in rich and poor nations – by a host of new challenges. They range from changing weather patterns to mutating viruses, from new digital and bio-genetic technologies to new patterns of family life and a new intermingling of cultures.

As the world economy integrates, global migrations are reaching record levels. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 developed countries of the OECD. Once homogenous societies are becoming distinctly multi-cultural.

Meanwhile, the gap widens between rich countries and poor. Populations explode and the environment deteriorates. The nation-state itself is newly challenged by the influence of non-state forces—including global crime and terrorism.

Whenever I sit down with leading thinkers and policy makers – I come away with a haunting question. Why is it, given the scope of our collective learning – unprecedented in human history – that we have such difficulty in controlling these developments? Why is our growing intellectual mastery of the world so often accompanied in practice by a growing sense of drift?

My response to that question focuses increasingly on the fact that democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential. In both the developed and the developing world, the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed.

For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute.

In countries where I am directly involved, the 21st century has already experienced at least a half-dozen constitutional crises. The sad fact – hard to swallow and difficult to deny – is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized not merely as failed states – but as “failed democracies.”

Our central challenge in this new century – as leaders and future leaders of our world – is to renew the democratic promise.

The saving grace which democratic systems are most likely to possess, after all, is that they are self-correcting. A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence. And that virtue alone redeems the entire concept. It explains Churchill’s famous view that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others.

Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work.

In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations – four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes.

My comments involve, first, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public’s capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity-- on which democracy rests. Let me say a few words about each.

My first concern is that we must define the paths to democracy more flexibly. We like to say that democracy involves a pluralistic approach to life – but too seldom do we take a pluralistic approach to democracy. Too often, we insist that democracies must all follow a similar script – evolving at a similar pace – without recognizing that different circumstances may call for different constructs.

The ultimate recourse in any democracy must be to the concept of popular sovereignty. But within that concept there is room for variation. One size need not fit all – and trying to make one size fit all can be a recipe for failure.

The world's most successful democracies have had widely differing histories – each taking its own shape according to its own timetable.

How is power best divided and balanced? How should secular and spiritual allegiances interact? How can traditional authority – even monarchical authority – relate to democratic frameworks? How is the integrity of minority cultures and faith systems best reconciled with majority rule?

It is simplistic to wish that our democratic destinations should be similar – that they cannot be reached by many paths. The democratic spirit of freedom and flexibility must begin with our definitions of democracy itself.

Even as we think more flexibly about democracy, we should also consider a second goal: diversifying the institutions of democratic life.

One of the reasons that governments often fail is that we depend too much on them. We invest too many hopes in political promises and we entrust too many tasks to political regimes.

Governments alone do not make democracy work. The most successful democracies are those in which the non-governmental institutions of “civil society” also play a vital role.

Civil society is powered by private voluntary energies, but it is committed to the public good. It includes institutions of education, health, science and research. It embraces professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organizations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government, we discount the impact of civil society, including the potential of constructive NGO's. But we can no longer afford that outlook. Meeting the realities of a complex world will require a strengthened array of civic institutions. They spur social progress – even when governments falter, and because they are so intimately connected to the public, they can predict new patterns and identify new problems with particular sensitivity.

But such developments cannot be coerced. They require an encouraging, enabling environment, supported by a broad public enthusiasm for social goals. And let me be clear: I am here because I believe SIPA, with its annual outpouring of able graduates, can make an enormous worldwide contribution to such a response.

The development of civil society can also help meet the rising challenge of cultural diversity. As communities become more pluralistic in fact, they must also become more pluralistic in spirit. A vibrant civil society can give diverse constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities, even as they interact with new neighbours.

We are often told that increased contact among cultures will inevitably produce a “Clash of Civilizations,” particularly between Islam and the West. Such predictions could become self-fulfilling prophecies if enough people believe them. But that need not, and must not, be the case.

The true problem we face is what I would call a “Clash of Ignorance” – on both sides – one which neglects, for example, a long history of respect and cooperation between Islamic and Western peoples, and their respective civilisations.

This is an appropriate place to recall how North American history was shaped over the centuries by diverse cultural groups. In the future as in the past, such diversity can be an engine of enormous creativity – if it is sustained by what I would call “a new cosmopolitan ethic”. To encourage that process, the Aga Khan Development Network has recently formed a partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Drawing on both the Ismaili experience and the pluralistic model of Canada itself, the Centre recognizes that we cannot make the world safe for democracy unless we also make the world safe for diversity – and that strengthening can be achieved by the institutions of civil society. They can contribute significantly to that goal.

My third point involves the public capacity for democratic government. This is a problem we too often treat with too much sentimentality, reluctant to acknowledge that democratic publics are not always all-wise.

Inadequate public communication is part of the problem. Driven by short-term circulation and profit goals, media increasingly tell audiences what they want to hear rather than what they ought to hear. And what too many people want is not to be informed, but to be entertained.

One result is the inadequacy of international news. I am told that world news now represents a substantially lower percentage of mainstream American news than it did a generation ago. Thanks to the Internet, specialists can get more information from more places than ever before. But for the general public, in America and elsewhere, global information has declined, while global involvements have expanded.

If better communication is one part of the answer, better education is another. This means, above all, developing new curricula which will meet new demands – especially in developing countries. We must do more to prepare the leaders of the 21st century for economic life in a global marketplace, for cultural life in pluralistic societies, for political life in complex democracies. Our system of Aga Khan-sponsored universities and academies is working throughout the developing world to create new educational models. But the scale of our work only begins to address the enormity of the challenge.

Improved communication and education can be helpful, but we also must be realistic about public capabilities. I believe, for example, that publics are too often asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. In recent months, both in Africa and in Asia – new national constitutions have been left to the mercies of mass public referenda – posing complex, theoretical issues well beyond the ability of politicians to explain, and publics to master. Nor is this matter unique to the developing world. We saw a similar pattern last year when the French public rejected a new European constitutional treaty that was 474 pages long.

Democracies need to distinguish responsibly between the prerogatives of the people and the obligations of their leaders. And leaders must meet their obligations. When democracies fail, it is usually because publics have grown impatient with ineffectual leaders and governments.

When parliaments lack the structure or expertise to grapple with complex problems – or when a system of checks and balances stymies action rather than refining it – then disenchanted publics will often turn to autocrats. The UN Development Program recently reported, for example, that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress. There, in too many cases progress and democracy have not gone hand in hand.

The best way to redeem the concept of democracy around the world is to improve the results it delivers. Developed countries, rather than talking so much about democracy on the conceptual level, must do more – much more – to help democracy work on a practical level. Our goal must be “fully functioning democracies” – which bring genuine improvements in the quality of life for their peoples. We must not force publics to choose between democratic government and competent government.

This brings me to my final topic: the need for a sense of greater public integrity.

Expanding the number of people who share social power is only half the battle. The critical question is how such power is used. How can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent individualism, and unprincipled relativism.

One answer is to augment our focus on personal prerogatives and individual rights, with an expanded concern for personal responsibilities and communal goals. A passion for justice, the quest for equality, a respect for tolerance, a dedication to human dignity – these are universal human values which are broadly shared across divisions of class, race, language, faith and geography. They constitute what classical philosophers – in the East and West alike – have described as human “virtue” – not merely the absence of negative restraints on individual freedom, but also a set of positive responsibilities, moral disciplines which prevent liberty from turning into license.

Historically, one of the most powerful resources for any culture has been the sense that it is heading somewhere, that tomorrow will be better than today, that there is reason to embrace what I would call “a narrative of progress.”

The right of individuals to look for a better quality of life within their own life-spans – and to build toward a better life for their children – these are personal aspirations which must become public values.

But a healthy sense of public integrity, in my view, will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning. In the Islamic tradition, the conduct of one’s worldly life is inseparably intertwined with the concerns of one’s spiritual life – and one cannot talk about integrity without also talking about faith.

For Islam, the importance of this intersection is an item of faith, such a profound melding of worldly concerns and spiritual ideals that one cannot imagine one without the other. The two belong together. They constitute “a way of life.”

From that perspective, I would put high among our priorities, both within and outside the Islamic world, the need to renew our spiritual traditions. To be sure, religious freedom is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion – then I fear we will soon be lost on a bleak and barren landscape – with no compass or roadmap, no sense of ultimate direction.

I fully understand the West’s historic commitment to separating the secular from the religious. But for many non-Westerners, including most Muslims, the realms of faith and of worldly affairs cannot be antithetical. If “modernism” lacks a spiritual dimension, it will look like materialism. And if the modernizing influence of the West is insistently and exclusively a secularising influence, then much of the Islamic world will be somewhat distanced from it.

A deeply rooted sense of public integrity means more than integrity in government, important as that must be. Ethical lapses in medicine and education, malfeasance in business and banking, dishonesty among journalists, scientists, engineers, or scholars – all of these weaknesses can undermine the most promising democracies.

Let me finally emphasize my strong conviction that public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Quran says: “There is no compulsion in religion”. The resurgence of spirituality – potentially such a positive force – can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness and imposes itself on others. Like all of the world’s great religions, Islam warns against the danger of comparing oneself with God, and places primary emphasis on the qualities of generosity, mercy and humility.

A central element in any religious outlook, it seems to me, is a sense of human limitation, a recognition of our own creature-hood – a posture of profound humility before the Divine. In that sensibility lies our best protection against divisive dogmatism and our best hope for creative pluralism.

In conclusion, then, I would ask – as you move out from this University into a diverse and demanding world – that you think about four considerations for renewing the promise of democracy: defining democratic paths more flexibly; expanding the role of civil society; increasing public capacities for self-governance; and strengthening our commitment to public integrity.

In all these ways, I believe we can help restore confidence in the promise of democratic life, affirming with pride our distinct cultural identities, while embracing with enthusiasm our new global potentials.

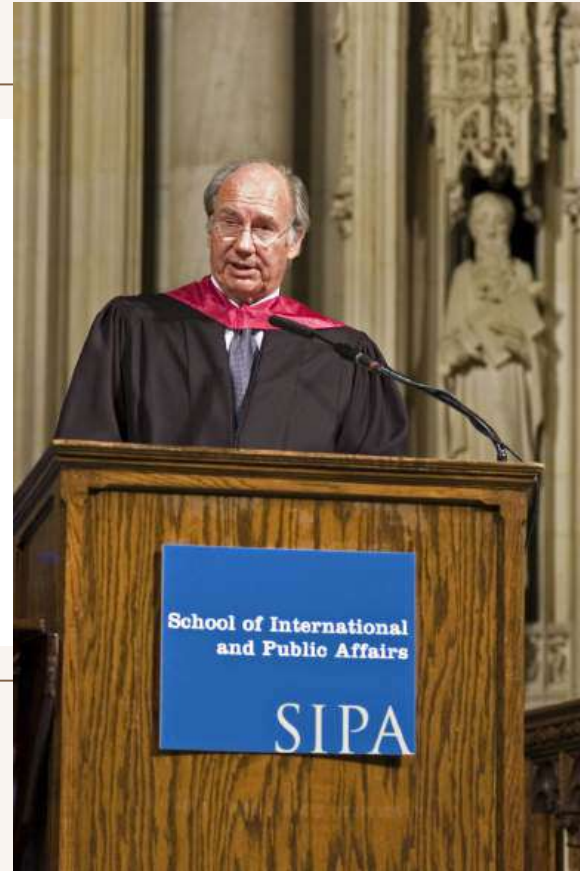
To the graduants, my prayer is that God may guide you and accompany you as you fulfil your destinies.

Thank You.

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

<https://global-lectures.com/courses/school-of-international-and-public-affairs-columbia-university-new-york-2006-05-15/lesson/watch-lecture-video-163/>

Lecture Presentation by Nina Merchant



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

- Top 8 Ivy League Universities in the USA
- Average applications per annum 60,000
- Acceptance rate is 3.7%
- Founded in 1754 by King George 11
- Oldest University in New York
- Pulitzer Prize winners administered at Columbia Universityt
- A large number of Nobel Prize winners from Columbia



FAMOUS PEOPLE



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

- **4 Presidents** – Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Barack Obama
- **13 Alumni** changed the world.
 - New York subway system engineered by Columbian graduate & later a Trustee – William Barclay Parsons
 - Legendary Hollywood screenwriter Howard Koch (award for Casablanca)
 - William Eckert (famous for calculations) helped guide Apollo Mission
 - Edwin Armstrong, Class of 1913 invented FM radio in 1923

FAMOUS PEOPLE

4 of Major American Publishing Companies founded by University Graduates:

- Simon & Schuster
- Harcourt Inc
- Random House &
- Alfred & Knopf

5 Alumni Basketball players/coaches in the Hall of Fame:
Jim McMillan, Dave Newmark, John Azary, Harry Fisher, Jack Rohan

Some others.....



SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (SIPA)

- Established 1946 - Public, private, and nonprofit organizations to make a difference in the world.
- Rigorous **social science research** and hands-on practice - **world class researchers**
- ‘To improve social services, advocate for human rights, strengthen markets, protect the environment, and secure peace, in their home communities and around the world’



SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (SIPA)

- 300,000 Alumni
- 50+ languages
- 160 Countries
- Dual and International Dual Degrees e.g. with AKU dual Masters degree signed in 2020
- Established many International Agencies e.g. Global Policy Public network (GPPN), Centre for Environmental Economic Policy (CEEP).....

Motto: Commitment to DEI =

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

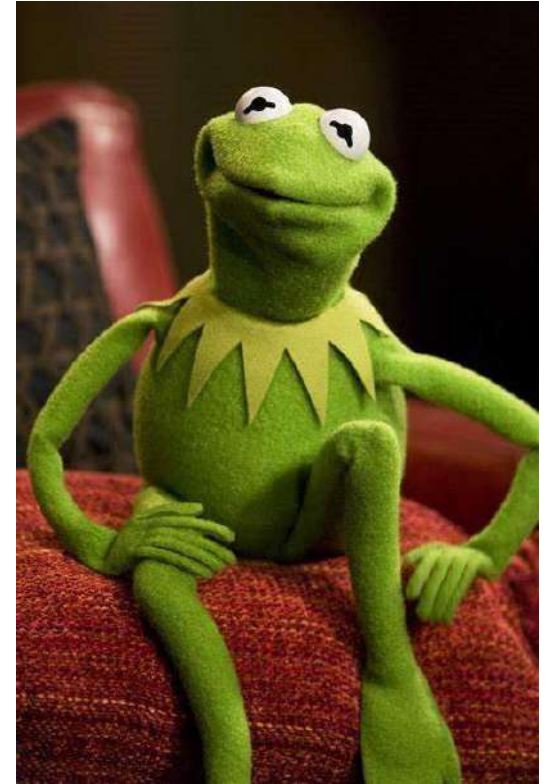
Mission: Advance human progress



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- Deeply honoured and deeply grateful for the invitation as it was a memorable day in both the personal lives and life of the school
- A good graduate speaker is “[someone who can talk in someone else’s sleep](#)”
- Recent opinion poll of American graduates showed “the most popular university speaker in recent years was the Sesame street character Kermit the frog”.

Hazir Imam went on to say that he wondered how the Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims would rank compared to Kermit



REFLECTS ON SIPA AND HIS OWN ROLE

“Ceremonies bridge past to the future”

- In 60 years, how Columbia had broadened the communities it serves and the relative programs that included the challenges of current times which are fundamentally global , “calling for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses”
- Hazir Imam then talks about his upcoming 50th anniversary and went on to say that although educated in the West, his perspectives profoundly shaped by countries in which Ismailis live – “that this had been his world in past 5 decades. And it is from this experience that I speak today”



OLDER ORDER VS NEW ORDER

“Past half century been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointments. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape”

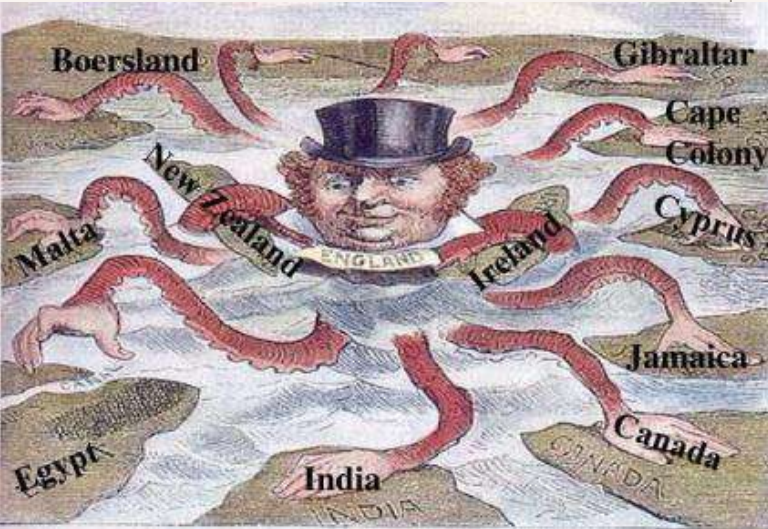
Collapse of Old Order

crumbling of colonial hegemonies & communist regimes

Vs

New Order

empty hopes, allure of State Socialism, romantic nationalism and the “false dawn of runaway individualism”



“one step forward has been accompanied by two steps back. Hope for the future has often meant hope for survival, not hope for progress. The Old Order yielded its place but a new world was not ready to be born”

NEW CHALLENGES

- Changing weather patterns & mutating viruses,
- New digital and bio-genetic technologies
- New patterns of family life and a new intermingling of cultures”
- Global **migrations-two-thirds of population growth** in 30 developed countries of OECD due to migration. **“Once homogenous societies are becoming distinctly cultural”**
- Non state forces e.g. global crime and terrorism
- Populations explode and **environment deteriorates**

Surah Luqman 31:20 emphasizes the responsibility of believers to care for and protect Allah's creation, both in the heavens and on earth; everything in the universe is under the control and subjugation of Allah, and believers should recognize and appreciate the favours and blessings that Allah has bestowed upon them.



HAZIR IMAM REFLECTS

A haunting Question:

“Why is it, given the scope of our collective learning – unprecedented in human history – that we have such difficulty in controlling these developments?. Why is our growing intellectual mastery of the world so often accompanied in practice by a growing sense of drift?”

- “democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential”
- “the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed”
- **But Democracy is a saving grace: A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence”**
- Quotes Churchill: “democracy is the worst form of government, except all others”



KEY THEME IN THIS SPEECH

“Our central challenge.....**RENEW THE DEMOCRATIC PROMISE**address our democratic disappointments and advance our democratic hopes”

Makes FOUR suggestions

2024 is democracy’s biggest year – more than 2 billion voters in more than 50 countries around the world

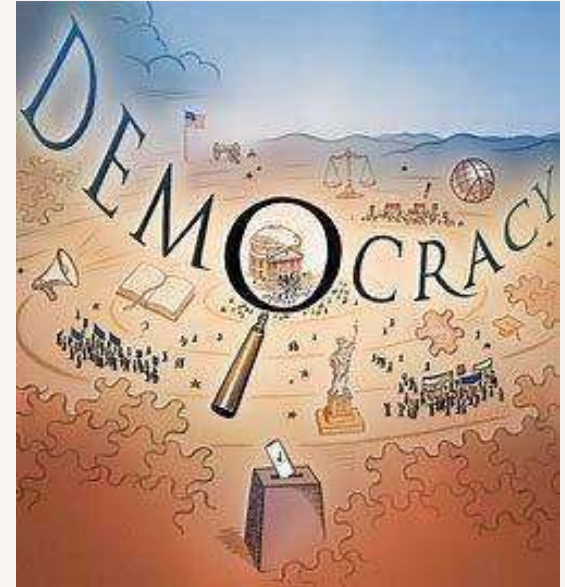


1. FLEXIBLE PATH TO DEMOCRACY

“Popular Sovereignty”

Successful democracies consider:

- “How is power divided and balanced?”
- “How do secular and spiritual allegiances interact?”
- “How can traditional and monarchical authority relate to democratic framework?”
- “How is the integrity of minority cultures and faith systems reconcile with majority rule?”



SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRACIES

The World Economic Forum 2017 report include Norway, Sweden , Iceland, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

Why successful?:

- Robust, Independent Judiciary
- Freedom of press
- Balanced and Fair elections
- Equal protection for all
- Decentralised power
- Long history of civil rights and political liberties; checks and balances
- Monarchy respected but simply a figurehead e.g. Denmark

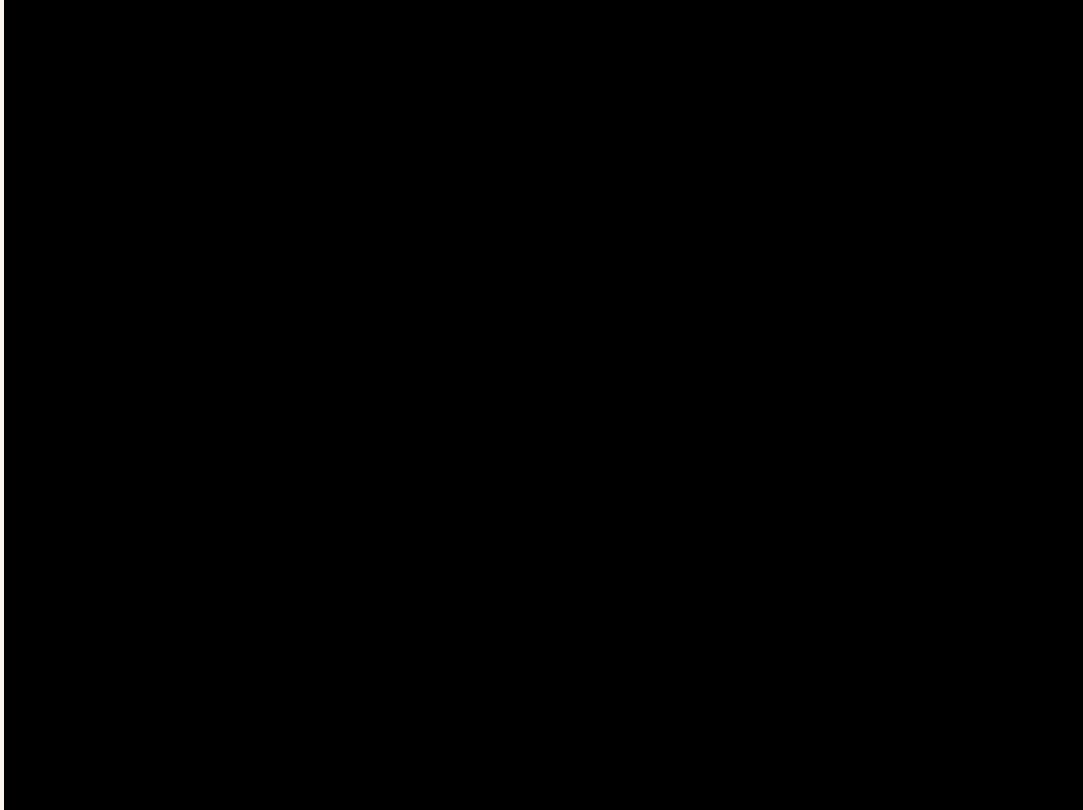
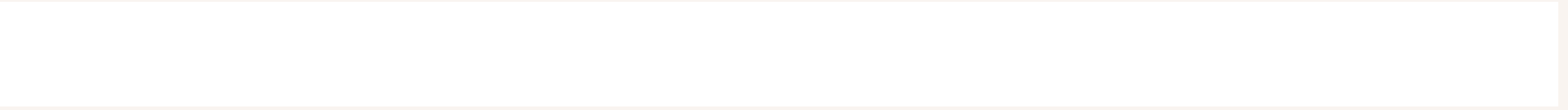


DEFINE DEMOCRACY

- Demos means people and
Kratos means power/force
= **people power**
- Birthplace Athens, Greece, as early as
4th to 6th Century
- History of Democracy was as
complicated and turbulent as it is today



**Clash of Civilizations
Vs
Clash of Ignorance**



2. DIVERSIFY INSTITUTIONS

Hazir Imam mentions two critical things:

1. **Diversity** can be seen as an engine of enormous creativity if it is sustained by what he would like to call '**cosmopolitan ethics**'
2. "we cannot make the **world safe for democracy** unless we make the **world safe for diversity**"



DIVERSITY

Why is diversity important in Islam?

Surat 49, ayat 13: “We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the righteous of you. Lo! Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted”,

Surat 4, ayat 1: “ O! Mankind! fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the pair hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (rights) and toward the wombs (that bore you). Lo! Allah ever watches over you”

Yusuf Ali

COSMOPOLITAN ETHICS

Harvard Speech 2015

Jodidi lectures established in 1955 for the explicit purpose of tolerance, understanding and goodwill amongst nations.

What is cosmopolitan ethics?

- “a readiness to work across frontiers of distinction and distance without **trying to erase them**”.
- “as world becomes more interconnected, it also become fragmented**challenge of living together**”
- “the term most often used in describing the search for human understanding was the word **tolerance.**”



TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

Hazrat Mawlana Murtaza Ali (as):

“ Be tolerant (and) your status will be lofty”

Tahammal: Arabic word meaning to be patient, forbearing, ability to endure hardships, afflictions, humiliation and shortcomings of others without losing composure or retaliating

“Be like the flower that gives its fragrances even to the hand that crushes it”

Letter to Governor Malik Ashtar (of Egypt)

“People are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation. They will commit slips and encounter mistakes. They may act wrongly, wilfully or by neglect. So, extend to them your forgiveness and pardon, in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and pardon to you...”

If we are not connected through religion, we are connected through our humanity

TOLERANCE FROM HOLY QUR'AN

- 109:6 “For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.”
- 2:256 “There is no compulsion in religion “
- 3:133 “And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous”
- 3:134 Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good

LIFE OF OUR HOLY PROPHET (SAS)



- When his companions asked him to curse their enemies, he replied: “I have not been sent to lay a curse upon men but to be a blessing to them”
- Story of Jewish lady who threw garbage on the prophet every morning when he went for his prayers.....
- Forgave and freed all the opponent Quraysh on the conquest of Mecca
- In the City of Taif, Prophet Muhamad (sas) was stoned heavily and bleeding badly. Angel Gabriel asked him if they should be punished. Prophet’s reply was “no, just pray for them”

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN, MAY 24TH, 1995

“ We must not kill to resolve our differences.....whatever they may be. They must **be resolved**...through dialogue, through compassion, through **tolerance**, through generosity, through forgiveness and through kindness.....”

Is tolerance much more than what one thinks....?



COSMOPOLITAN SOCIETY

- “....distinctive threads of our particular identities bring **beauty to the larger social fabric**”.
- “A cosmopolitan ethic accepts our ultimate **moral responsibility to the whole of humanity**” .
- One word that we have come to use more often in this regard is the word “**pluralism.**” And the other is the word “**cosmopolitan.**”
- “A pluralist, cosmopolitan society is a society which not only **accepts difference**, but actively **seeks to understand** it and to learn from it. In this perspective, diversity is not a burden to be endured, but an opportunity to be welcomed”



READINESS TO LISTEN

Hazir Imam quotes Adrienne Clarkson (Governor General of Canada)

“to listen to your neighbour even when you may not particularly like him.....**listen to people you don't like...**”

Hearing Vs Listening





See through the eyes of compassion.
listen with ears of tolerance.
Speak with the language of
love.

~ Rumi
peaceful_life166

3. PUBLIC CAPACITY

- **Communications** used to entertain rather than be informed
“Inadequate international news meant turning to the internet”
- **Education** – improved models – prepare leaders for political life
- **Be realistic** about public capabilities e.g. new constitutions left to referenda = Bewildered public e.g. French public rejected European constitutional treaty – why? 474 pages long
- **Failure of parliamentary structures** to grapple with complex problems and beyond ability of politicians to explain
 - “55% of voters in 18 of Latin America prefer authoritarian government if it meant progress” (UNDP)
 - “progress and democracy have not gone hand in hand” – people should **NOT** have to choose between democracy and incompetent government

4. GREATER PUBLIC INTEGRITY

Critical Question:

“who shares power and how such power is used”

“how can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent, individualism and unprincipled relativism?”

- Develop **universal human values** that are shared by all class, races, faith, language and geography:
 - respect for tolerance,
 - passion for justice,
 - quest for equality
 - dedication to human dignity
- Balance increased personal freedoms with responsibility for moral disciplines “which prevent liberty from turning into licence”



IMAM ALI: THE VOICE OF JUSTICE

- **be just**, for if you are not just, you are a tyrant and a tyrant is an enemy of God”
- “**justice** is better than courage, and if everyone is fair to each other then there will be no need for courage”
- “When the heart is forced into something it will go **blind**”
- “No one is **superior** by virtue of their **belief or race**”
- “**Justice** is the foundation of any prosperous society.”
- “ Treat others like you would like to be treated. It is the golden rule of **equality**”
- “Good governance is about empowering people to **take charge of their own destiny**”



IMAM ALI: THE VOICE OF JUSTICE – TASNEEM INSTITUTE (SHIA SITE)



ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

“ a healthy sense of public integrity will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning”

- Intersection of worldly concerns and spiritual ideals
- Cannot have one without the other- belong together; constitutes a way of life

“need to renew our spiritual traditions.....if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then I fear we will soon be lost on a bleak and barren landscape- with no compass or roadmap, no sense of ultimate direction”



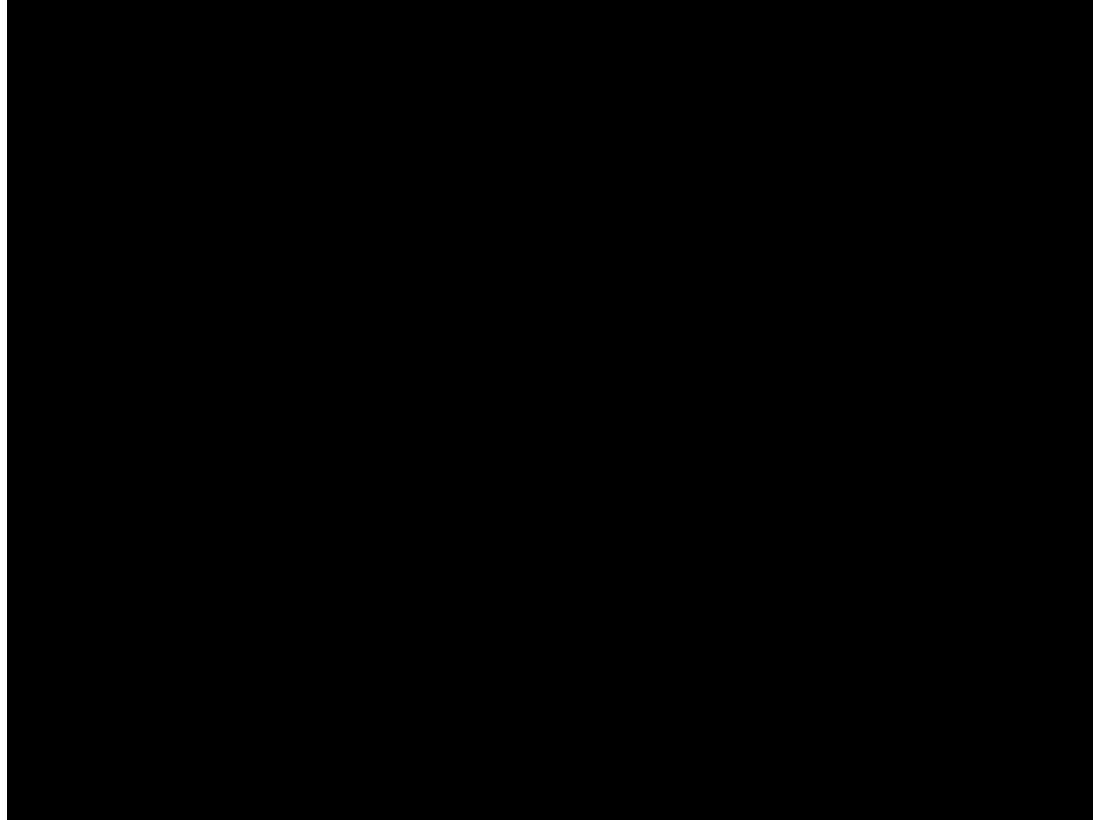
PUBLIC INTEGRITY MEANS MORE THAN

integrity in government.....

“Ethical lapses in medicine and education, malfeasance in business and banking, dishonesty among journalists, scientists, engineers or scholars – all of these weaknesses can undermine the most promising democracies”

“There can be no coercion in public integrity, it must be rooted in human heart and conscience”





https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RWUDSaKauFXKnIG7u9sw-5bkpoP6PEhl/view?usp=sharing_eil_m&ts=6675a8a0

“Let me finally emphasize my strong conviction that public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Quran says: “There is no compulsion in religion”.

The resurgence of spirituality – potentially such a positive force – can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness and imposes itself on others. Like all of the world’s great religions, Islam warns against the danger of comparing oneself with God, and places primary emphasis on the qualities of generosity, mercy and humility”.

Successful Democracy = People Sovereignty

Diversity of Institutions

Cosmopolitan Ethics =
Pluralism

VALUES

Tolerance
Mercy
Compassion
Justice
Humility
Equality

INCLUSIVE
LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION
&
COMMUNICATI
ONS

PUBLIC
INTEGRITY

REFLECTIONS

- Mawla Bapa's recurring themes in so many different ways aimed at different levels and types of audience
- Teaching Qur'an to the peoples of this world and to us
- 171 speeches on Civil Society, 65 Democracy + 96 on inclusive leadership and 233 Pluralism =
how many PhD theses?
- Can one concept be effective without addressing other concepts?



WHAT CAN WE DO?



TORONTO, CANADA, 17 NOVEMBER 2017 (AFTERNOON)

“Let the respect for pluralism become part of the psyche of our Jamat around the world. And...people amongst whom we live will say, “This is the way we wish to live our value system.” If you are able to do that I think you will be fulfilling one of the most remarkable goals of our faith because you will be putting into practice respect for all amongst whom you live.”

