In the Muslim ethical tradition, which links spirit and matter, the Imam not only leads in the interpretation of the faith, but also in the effort to improve the quality of life of his community, and of the wider societies within which it lives; for a guiding principle of the Imamat’s institutions is to replace walls which divide with bridges that unite. [1] To the Imamat, the meaning of “quality of life” extends to the entire ethical and social context in which people live, and not only to their material well-being measured over generation after generation. [2]

When you inherit an office, which is a life office, you are simply a link in the chain. [Y]ou therefore look at life somewhat differently ... In my case, my concern is ... I would like the next Imam to have a structure and a system which enables him to be effective in the ethical and the human terminology of this institution.... Now some things are impossible to achieve [and] I simply have to try and move the issues forward as much as I can. The next Imam will then decide how he wishes to handle the issues. But, it is the continuum which is at the back of my mind ... And that’s why perhaps my time dimension appears different ... If I have to wait 12, 15, 20 years to achieve goals which I think are important, I will wait 12, 15, or 20 years. [3]

[The Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat] will be a symbolic seat for the Imamat’s permanent presence in Canada, and a platform for constructive exchanges that mutually broaden moral and intellectual horizons.... An open, secular facility, the Delegation will be a sanctuary for peaceful, quiet diplomacy, informed by the Imamat’s outlook of global convergence and the development of civil society. [1]

The Imam is first of all obviously responsible for the interpretation and practise of the faith and that is a role which my grandfather fulfilled which I fulfill today. Secondly, the Imam’s decisions with regards to matters of faith are binding obviously on members of the community. [5] Insofar as a institution can be democratic, yes [I am a democrat]. There are areas where in the interpretation of faith, democracy cannot, cannot play. But in the choice of leadership, in consultation on decisions, I do seek to consult as widely as possible. [6]

The Protocol of Co-operation between the Government of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imamat, which we signed this evening, is the first such Agreement that the Ismaili Imamat has signed with a Western Government ... For the Ismaili Imamat, the Ismaili Community worldwide and me, this is a highly important day. [2]

[1] The Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat Foundation Stone Ceremony (Ottawa, Canada) 6 June 2005
[4] Pranay Gupta Interview (United States, United Kingdom) 1999