Pranay Gupte: You’ve been characterised variously as a “Renaissance Man” and “visionary.” Would you add other characteristics that would be needed for your successor?

Aga Khan: Well, that is very kind and very generous of the people who said those sorts of things. They often think that when you inherit an office, which is a life office, you are simply a link in the chain. And, yes, you therefore look at life somewhat differently than if you were, I suppose, a professional who moves around and is free to do what he wishes. In my case, my concern is, I inherited an office, I would like the next Imam to have a structure and a systems [sic] which enables him to be effective in the ethical and the human terminology of this institution. And that is the nature of what I seek. Now some things are impossible to achieve, I well know that. And if that is the case, 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, which in a sense, affects the way I look at things. And that’s why perhaps my time dimension appears different, than it might for other people. 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. That simply is the nature of the issues that we have to address.

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1999 interview with Pranay Gupte (United States, United Kingdom)

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