Excerpt: His Highness the Aga Khan on the state of the Ummah today

"One of the challenges that has concerned me over many years, and which I have discussed with leading Muslim thinkers, is how education for Muslims can reclaim the inherent strengths that, at the height of their civilisations, equipped Muslim societies to excel in diverse areas of human endeavour. Clearly the intellectual development of the Ummah, is, and should remain, a central goal to be pursued with urgency if we wish the Muslim world to regain its rightful place in world civilisation. Today, any reasonably well-informed observer would be struck by how deeply this brotherhood of Muslims is divided. On the opposite sides of the fissures are the ultra-rich and the ultra-poor; the Shia and the Sunni; the theocracies and the secular states, the search for normatisation versus the appreciation of pluralism; those who search for and are keen to adopt modern, participatory, forms of government versus those who wish to re-impose supposedly ancient forms of governance. What should have been brotherhood has become rivalry, generosity has been replaced by greed and ambition, the right to think is held to be the enemy of real faith, and anything we might hope to do to expand the frontiers of human knowledge through research is doomed to failure for in most of the Muslim world, there are neither the structures nor the resources to develop meaningful intellectual leadership.

"You will forgive me, I hope, for presenting to you such a grey picture of where we in the Ummah stand today, but, unless we have the courage to face unpleasant reality, there is no way that we can aspire realistically to a better future."
His Highness the Aga Khan's 2003 Institute of Ismaili Studies 25th Anniversary Graduation Ceremony address (London, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6826/

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