His Highness the Aga Khan on his legacy

by NANOWISDOMS ARCHIVE

Pranay Gupte: How would you be liked to be remembered as on four counts: First, as the Imam, what would you have done to this community? Secondly, as a father, what would you have done to shape the life and sensibilities of your children? Third, sir, what would you have done during your lifetime to have shaped the secular societies around you? And finally, what would you have done to put into effect the very things you emphasise -- pluralism, secularism, peace, tolerance?

Aga Khan: As the Imam, I think it would be important to try to have been an interpreter of the faith which enabled people to continue to look to a spiritual world and a world of faith, which is not only a material world. I feel very, very strongly about that. So interpretative nature of the role of the direction it gives seems to me central to the nature of the office that I have.

With regard to the children, I would like them to feel if it were possible that they have a sense of direction in their lives which they can work with, whatever it may be. When my grandfather died, my father was alive, my uncle was alive, my brother was alive. The widow of my grandfather was alive. My mother was alive. So there’s the family context. And I would like that family context to remain strong.

With regard to let’s say some of the notions that I’ve tried to develop, it would be important that those notions should be validated by time. I would be uncomfortable if some of these notions turned out to have been fashionable short-term issues. I wouldn’t want that. By nature I am suspicious of fashion, of isms, of dogmas, because I think human society changes all the time. And the moment you get frozen into a mental prison, then, you know, things actually start becoming very damaging.

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

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