"[T]he reality is that our world is pluralistic and multi-cultural, and destined to remain so.

"Ought we not, then, to focus our attention on periods of history when pluralism was happily embraced? May we not learn thereby the need to nurture what I have recently called a cosmopolitan ethic? For this is the foundation of a merit-based civil society capable of harnessing the best in all walks of life from all groups of people. This is the only way to manage, and build on, pluralism, the critical test of democracy anywhere.

"This brings me to Toledo which has so successfully preserved, over many centuries, the evidence of its three-fold culture: magnificent churches, synagogues and mosques. This was an era when each of these cultures, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, retained its independent identity while all worked and came together in a glorious intellectual and spiritual adventure. The legacy was a truly enabling environment conducive to prosperity, harmony, scientific discovery, philosophical insights and artistic flowering -- all the defining features of a thriving civilisation."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2006 Acceptance Address -- Royal Toledo Foundation Award Ceremony (Toledo, Spain)

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