His Highness the Aga Khan on educating for pluralism and the Canadian experience

by NANOWISDOMS ARCHIVE

Alison Smith: Tell me what you mean by “pluralism” and how that fits into your notion of civil society?

Aga Khan: In the past decades I have had a feeling that in Europe, but also in Asia and Africa, many, many of the conflicts have been driven by peoples or faiths or tribes who do not accept the existence of others, who want power or who want to normatise religious attitudes or things of this sort. And I don’t believe these societies are born into the acceptance of pluralism. I think societies get educated about pluralism. I think young children can be educated without even it being a process -- to recognise and accept people of different backgrounds, of different faiths, etc. And I would hope that there could be a process in place drawn from Canadian experience -- and I mean drawn from Canadian experience -- where it becomes the psyche of these countries to base their development programs on the acceptance of pluralism, seen as an asset.

Alison Smith: Why Canada?

Aga Khan: Because you of all the developed countries that I know, have committed yourselves infinitely more than anybody else to this exercise. And Canadians are humble about it. They talk about it as a work in progress. They are right. It is always going to be a work in progress. And I think that you have accumulated experience over decades which we really can learn from.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 CBC Interview with Alison Smith (Toronto, Canada)

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