Excerpts: His Highness the Aga Khan on volunteering time and knowledge

by NANOWISDOMS ARCHIVE OF IMAMAT SPEECHES, INTERVIEWS AND WRITINGS

Antonio Marujo/Faranaz Keshavjee: The Ismailis are known as a very generous community in material terms. However, during these Golden Jubilee celebrations, you have introduced the notion of Time and Knowledge. What is it about?

Aga Khan: In Shia Islam, intellect is a key component of faith. Intellect allows us to understand the creation of God. We live in a world in which there is increasingly more information that people can employ. The question is, how we access it and how we employ it. In many countries in which we work, in Africa and in Asia, there is a colonial history, and they are facing difficulties in overcoming that history to the history of today and the objectives for tomorrow.

One of the ways to solve the problem is through institutional and human enablement, so that society can create its own knowledge base, through universities, research, etc. Sharing time and knowledge is saying that I will make available the knowledge that I have to those people who, otherwise, would not have access to it. One would make it available in such a form that this knowledge could be employed in building capacities for the future, which can happen in many different forms: joint research, teachers teaching in a school over a couple of years in order to increase the quality in teaching mathematics, financial institutions that develop products for micro-finance.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2008 Paroquias de Portugal Interview, António Marujo and Faranaz Keshavjee, ‘The West should accept that Islam does not separate the world and faith’ (Lisbon, Portugal)

Click here to read more at NanoWisdoms.org ...
"I think again it comes back to the motivation. I just don't believe that people are entirely motivated by greed or power or that sort of thing. I think they give of the best of themselves if they contribute from all aspects of their being, their own aspirations. If they see that they are sharing things with people, which isn't only material things, [but] the sharing of knowledge -- the ability to see results is I think a very important thing."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1986 CBC Interview (1st) with Roy Bonisteel (Canada)

Click here to read more at NanoWisdoms.org ...

"[G]iving can take many forms -- funds, time, ideas, and professional skills. Everyone can and should be a donor, not just the wealthy, and all forms of giving should be encouraged and recognised. Volunteerism is critical, and is obtaining greater and greater recognition and encouragement."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2000 Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy address (Islamabad, Pakistan)

Click here to read more at NanoWisdoms.org ...

Ashfaq Ahmed: Any message for the community?

Aga Khan: The spirit of Islam is to share knowledge and I always tell the community not to think in material terms. Think in terms of knowledge and think what you can offer our institutions in various parts of the world. Raise our performance in healthcare, education, financial services and in civil society. Many minorities from the Middle East countries are living in the West. Just think how wonderful it would be if young women and men return to their respective countries to strengthen institutions and do voluntary work for their countries.

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2008 Gulf News Interview with Ashfaq Ahmed (Dubai, United Arab Emirates)

Click here to read more at NanoWisdoms.org ...
Eric Chol/Christian Makarian: What are you expecting from your followers?

Aga Khan: A large part of the Ismaili community lives in the rural world, in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Iran and India. Another part is established in the cities of North America and Western Europe. However the idea of a gift is very much anchored throughout the community: I would like therefore to use this opportunity of the Golden Jubilee to encourage knowledge transfers, not only gifts of money. We have already received a fantastic reaction from youth educated in the industrialised countries, who are ready to share their knowledge and to come and work throughout our institutions in the third-world for lengthier durations. These are fabulous gifts and they are also an act of faith. The ethic of Islam rests on this generosity.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2007 L’Expess Interview with Eric Chol and Christian Makarian (Paris, France) [Translation]

Click here to read more at NanoWisdoms.org ...

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

NOTE: This post updated on 30 December 2012.

Click here for this post in PDF format.
Click here to review our Facebook posts organised by theme.
Click here to subscribe and receive our Facebook posts by e-mail.
[NOTE: For some reason NanoWisdoms' Facebook posts do not always appear in many Facebook newsfeeds due to a problem in Facebook and/or individual newsfeed settings. Please visit our wall to review all our posts if you do not always see our posts. Thank you.]

Original URL: