Excerpts: The Imamat's warnings against drinking alcohol

**Nicholas Tomalin:** Could you explain the Muslim attitude to drink? Isn't that, perhaps, puritanical?

**Aga Khan:** Our belief is that the thing which separates man from the animals is his power of thought. Anything that impedes this process is wrong. Therefore alcohol is forbidden. I have never touched alcohol. But this, to me, is not a puritan prohibition. I don't want to drink. I've never wanted to drink. There's no pressure being placed on me by my religion.

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"I don't drink alcoholic beverages for several reasons. For one thing, I am a Muslim. For another, I am an athlete in year-round training. Thirdly, I just don't like the taste of the stuff....

"[(A) cause of embarrassment is the numbered jersey he must wear while racing. It often displays an ad for some alcoholic aperitif -- this being a ski-race sponsor's right.] I do not like the thought that the Ismailis may see a newsreel film of some competition and think their Imam was drinking, or urging other people to do so."

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His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1965 The London Sunday Times interview, Part I, with Nicholas Tomalin (London, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1400/

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1964 Sports Illustrated Interview with Paul Evan Ress (United States)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10341/
"The greatest danger to every Muslim citizen -- I have not the least hesitation in saying it -- is alcohol. Time has shown that it is an injury to you; an injury to your person; an injury to your health. It is forbidden because it carries greater evil than good. Believe me, in a community like yours, alcohol is a very grave danger. Once you got into the alcohol habit, I do not know where it would lead you. A handful, here and there, of the weak, or of the unhappy, find their way to this terrible poison. Avoid it at all costs. Avoid it, I say, for in this country you cannot afford to lose one man."

Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III's 1954 Guidelines for the Muslims of Transvaal (Johannesburg, South Africa)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10699/

"No Prophet was raised at all except that Allah taught him that, once he has perfected his faith, that alcohol is forbidden. Alcohol has never, ever ceased to be forbidden."

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (p)
Al-Hurr Al-Amili. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a 25:296

"The drinker of alcohol will appear on the Day of Judgment with his face blackened, his tongue hanging out, screaming 'The thirst, the thirst!''"

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (p)
Al-Hurr Al-Amili. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a 25:297

"Whoever drinks a thimble full of hunger Allah curses him and the angels and the prophets and the believers. If he drinks until he is drunk, the spirit of faith is torn away from him."

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (p)
Al-Hurr Al-Amili. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a 25:297

"Three will never enter paradise. The one who sheds blood, the one who drinks alcohol, and the talebearer."
"Nobody disobeys Allah more than the one who drinks alcohol."

"A man asked Imam as-Sadiq: 'Which is worse, drinking alcohol or abandoning the prayer?' The Imam said: 'Drinking. Do you know why?' The man said no. The Imam said: 'Because he will enter a state in which he cannot know his Lord.'"

"Indeed, Allah has made a house for disobedience, and has made for this house a door, and has made for this door a lock, and has made for this door a key. And the key to the house of disobedience is drinking alcohol."

"Alcohol is the lord of all sin."

"Drinking alcohol is the key to every sin."

"Alcohol is the key that opens every evil."

"An atheist said to Imam as-Sadiq: 'Why does Allah forbid alcohol?' The Imam said: 'Because alcohol is the mother of everything evil.'"
"It was said to Imam Ali: You claim that drinking is worse than adultery and theft.' The Imam said: 'Yes, because a person who commits adultery will probably not do anything but that, but the person who drinks will commit adultery and will steal and will kill a soul that Allah has made sacred, and will abandon the prayer."

Hazrat Ali
Al-Hurr Al-'Amili. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a 25:316