Excerpts: His Highness the Aga Khan's interpretations of the Qur'anic injunction to 'leave the world a better place'

by NANOWISDOMS ARCHIVE OF IMAMAT SPEECHES, INTERVIEWS AND WRITINGS,

"There is an often quoted ayat [of the Qur'an] which says that you should leave the world in a better environment than you found it. You have a responsibility of legacy of God's creation of the world, to improve that legacy from generation to generation. So there's an ethical premise to it."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2008 PBS/E2 programme interview for 'A Garden in Cairo'

http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10364/

"I think it would be useful here to tell you what the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is, because questions often arise and it is important to remember that first and foremost it is a foundation in legal terms. In other words, it is a non-profit-making body. Why do we call it a 'Trust' rather than a 'Foundation?' In Islam it is said that Allah makes us responsible during our lifetime for His creation and the good management of His creation. We are effectively the 'trustees' and not the owners of His creation. It is for this reason that I have chosen the word 'Trust' because that is the word that seems to correspond best to the ethics of Islam and the individual in the face of Allah's creation. That is why the trust, whilst being a foundation, is called 'Trust.'"

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2008 address at the Urban Park Announcement Ceremony (Bamako, Mali)
"There are many, many interpretations of Islam within the wider Islamic community, but I think one on which there is greatest consensus, is the fact that we are trustees of God's creation, and we are instructed to seek to leave the world a better place than it was when we came into it. Therefore, the question is: What is a 'better place', in physical terms? And that 'better place', in physical terms, clearly means trying to bring values into environments, buildings and contexts, which make the quality of life better for future generations than it is today. I think that is the interrelationship that exists between a Muslim and the precepts on which he or she works, in terms of intervening in the physical environment."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2002 Architectural Record interview with Robert Ivy (New York, USA)

"The Qur'an commands us to be good stewards of Allah's natural creation -- even as we employ His gifts of time and talent to shape our surroundings. Neither environmental protection nor economic development can be long sustained unless both objectives are prioritised. They are part of a Common Agenda."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2007 (10th) Aga Khan Award For Architecture Presentation Ceremony address (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Aga Khan: The creation of civil societies must be at the heart of all efforts, alongside mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue. Efficient judicial systems, democracy, freedom of the press, education -- these are the biggest challenges we face today in bringing underdeveloped societies forward. This is both a moral duty and, very clearly, in our own interests.

Peter Hahne: That is easier said than done.
**Aga Khan:** Yes. We indeed face huge challenges.... You see, we must be patient, but it is our duty to leave the world a better place.

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2005 Neue Ruhr Zeitung (NRZ) interview with Peter Hahne (Essen, Germany) [Translation from German back to English]

http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7558/

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"My hope is that the regeneration of the areas around the mosques will mean the preservation and protection of the heritage of our glorious past which deserves our respect and admiration. And it is our duty as Muslims to contribute to and to encourage this effort, as the Holy Qur'an reminds us by commanding us to leave the world in a better condition than that in which we received it, and instructing us to help one another in the performance of good works."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2008 address at the Great Mosque of Mopti Opening Ceremony (Mopti, Mali)

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"As trustees of God's creation, we are instructed to seek to leave the world a better place than it was when we came into it. If ArchNet can help bring values into environments, buildings, and contexts that make the quality of life better for future generations than it is today, it will have served its purpose."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2002 remarks at the Launch of ArchNet.org at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, USA)

http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6367/

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