Excerpts: His Highness the Aga Khan on the permanent relationship immigrant Ismailis have with their original, 'home countries'

**Geoffry Barker:** What prospect do you see of Ismailis going back to Uganda now that Amin has gone?

**Aga Khan:** I don’t think the thousands [of] Ismailis who went to Canada and who went to the UK will return to Uganda. I, generally speaking, have advised families who have been through a very, very deep crisis not to expose themselves to that again in the same generation because that is highly destructive.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1979 The Age Interview with Geoffry Barker (Melbourne, Australia) (Emphasis added)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10329/

"I believe that the first problem facing every Muslim living in the industrialised world, is that Muslim children will be born in the West for two or three generations to come. They will be young people having no personal contact with their family traditions, cultural background, or country of origin. Most likely, they will not speak their mother tongue: Arabic, Urdu or Persian for example. They will have no contact with their language, its culture or its civilisation."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1986 Riad Naguib El-Rais Interview, ‘The Critical Time’ (Al Mustaqbal, Cairo, Egypt) (Emphasis added)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2074/
Aftab Ahmad Khan: A number of professional people from the Islamic countries have settled down in Western countries. What should they do to help their own societies?

Aga Khan: I think these are people who are living in what sociologists call a cross-cultural situation. It is an unpleasant word but it says, I suppose, what it tries to say. My concern would be that these people who are exposed to this cross-cultural situation should use that exposure to strengthen their contribution to their own countries and to their own societies by drawing from the culture which is not theirs but which is beneficial and by not accepting without question a whole lot of attitudes and principles which come from a part of the world alien to us.

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1983 Pakistan and Gulf Economist Interview with Aftab Ahmad Khan, 'Aga Khan's Three-point Strategy for Third World' (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2799/

"[Canada has given Ismaili immigrants from the 1970s] the wherewithal to return to their countries in due course and bring back to Africa, bring back to Asia ... the pluralism, the values of Canada, the knowledge society that you have created here in Canada."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2008 address at the Luncheon hosted by Premier of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) (Emphasis added)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9179/

"It is due to your wisdom, your knowledge, your willingness to help each other and to have the courage to think past crises. Because
that ultimately is the nature of what we all have to do is, is think past crises.... And I am infinitely proud, infinitely proud of the leadership that is coming from Canada, or from communities that have left their homelands in difficult circumstances, built a new future for themselves here in Canada, empathised with Canadian values and are able today to bring back to their **home countries** not only new knowledge, new competencies, but also Canadian values.”

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2008 Jamati Institutional Leaders Dinner address (Vancouver, Canada) (Emphasis added)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10306/

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**Don Cayo:** One thing astonishes me when I look at many other groups who’ve left homelands under difficult conditions. They often look back with anger, with bitterness, with resentment which sometimes lasts for generations. You guys go back and help out!

**Aga Khan:** As I told you, our hope is that these countries will become countries of opportunity, and we’ve lived through some pretty difficult situations.

**Don Cayo:** But is it the faith? Is it a plan? Is it a policy? What has allowed or fostered that sort of graciousness in your community, to look back not with anger and resentment?

**Aga Khan:** In a funny way I think many of the countries we have lived in have gone through a maturing process. They are coming out of a historical context which was theirs, and then they come into a new context and they move forward and they don’t necessarily understand when they get things wrong....

I don’t think [our] communities [now] should envisage leaving these countries. You see, that’s one of the reasons why we’re concerned about where they’re going. If you look at the Ismaili community -- or in any other community that’s as diverse as this -- it’s unrealistic to expect it. Hundreds of thousands of people will not be able to move
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from a country like Pakistan or India or Afghanistan to the West. That’s not realistic, and therefore we are actually committed to try to improve what happens there. If it takes five years or 10 years, we just have to try and make sure it’s as good as possible and as quick as possible. But we can’t change the historic demography of the community. It is what it is.

There is more mobility, but what we’re really excited about is mobility of knowledge. That’s the thing we’re really excited about. If you go back to 1957 the possibilities we had for mobility of knowledge were just about zero. When my grandfather died, I think there were probably 10 members of the community who lived in the UK. There was no-one in Canada, no-one in the US. Now these communities are trampolines of knowledge, of service, which are absolutely amazing.

So that mobility of knowledge is fantastic -- and it’s not one way.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2008 Vancouver Sun Interview with Don Cayo (Vancouver, Canada)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9087/

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See also: His Highness the Aga Khan explains his intellect is in the West but his heart is in the East

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