Excerpts: His Highness the Aga Khan on his successor

*ITV:* What do you think of are the qualities that you’ll look for when it is your turn to appoint your successor?

*Aga Khan:* I think I would hope the next Imam has a thorough and deep understanding of the faith which he has to represent and lead in its interpretation. I think he must have a good understanding of the issues which the Ismaili community and the countries in which they live will have to be addressed and that is essentially the countries of Asia and Africa. He will have to have a good understanding of the forces that are at play and that are likely to be at play. Therefore, he is going to have to be well equipped to deal with the leadership office.

*ITV:* The next Imam cannot be appointed during your lifetime?

*Aga Khan:* Oh, he is appointed during my lifetime in the sense that I am the person who knows who the next Imam would be, but only me. But he becomes Imam when I die.

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*Pranay Gupte:* You’ve been characterised variously as a ‘Renaissance Man’ and ‘visionary.’ Would you add other characteristics that would be needed for your successor?

*Aga Khan:* Well, that is very kind and very generous of the people who said those sorts of things. They often think that when you inherit an office,
which is a life office, you are simply a link in the chain. And, yes, you therefore look at life somewhat differently than if you were, I suppose, a professional who moves around and is free to do what he wishes. In my case, my concern is, I inherited an office, I would like the next Imam to have a structure and a systems [sic] which enables him to be effective in the ethical and the human terminology of this institution. And that is the nature of what I seek. Now some things are impossible to achieve, I well know that. And if that is the case, I simply have to try and move the issues forward as much as I can. The next Imam will then decide how he wishes to handle the issues. But, it is the continuum which is at the back of my mind, which in a sense, affects the way I look at things. And that's why perhaps my time dimension appears different, than it might for other people. If I have to wait 12, 15, 20 years to achieve goals which I think are important, I will wait 12, 15, or 20 years. That simply is the nature of the issues that we have to address.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1999 Pranay Gupte Interview (United States, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5676/

"I think that the Imam who succeeds me will inherit an institution that will have developed considerably. It will become even more international than the present one in which expatriates from the Canadian, British and American communities already make up the fifth generation. The Imam is a transitory being, who forms a link between the past and the future. For this reason, ensuring the continuity of the institution and its ability to fulfil its role is what my life is all about."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 Paris Match Interview (4th) with Caroline Pigozzi (Paris, France) [Translation]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7190/

"[B]eing a hereditary office, the succeeding Imam does not know at what age he will inherit, what will be the state of the world in which he will
live. Certainly, if he has been exposed to the activities that are there, he will be hopefully in a position to take on the work in an appropriate manner."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1989 All India TV and Radio Interview with Rajiv Mehrotra (India)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/4296/

Question: Have you designated your own successor? I am not asking you who, but have you in fact written a document anywhere naming your successor?

Aga Khan: Well I have thought of that problem yes.

Question: Have you done it?

Aga Khan: Yes I have.

Question: You have. Because, obviously, accidents could happen.

Aga Khan: Well that is, of course, a very important factor in my own life.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1958 interview by four members of the UK Press (London, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1095/

ITV: The next Imam cannot be appointed during your lifetime?

Aga Khan: Oh, he is appointed during my lifetime in the sense that I am the person who knows who the next Imam would be, but only me. But he becomes Imam when I die.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1985 Independent Television (ITV) Interview (London, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3134/
**Margot Dougherty/Richard B. Stolley:** Have you made the decision on who will be the next Imam?

**Aga Khan:** (Laughing) It would be very foolish of me not to. Life is no more eternal for me than for anyone else.

**Margot Dougherty/Richard B. Stolley:** So the assumption is that you have a will in which you have named the next Imam?

**Aga Khan:** You may make the assumption that I have indicated who the next Imam will be.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1983 Life Magazine Interview with Margot Dougherty and Richard B. Stolley (New York, USA)  
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2997/

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**LBC:** And you have appointed your successor? How does it work?

**Aga Khan:** The Imam names his successor and then, of course, he is of his choice up to his last day.

**LBC:** So we do not know your successor in principle?

**Aga Khan:** I do not talk of it.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2001 Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation Interview (Aleppo, Syria and Lebanon) [Translation]  
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6073/

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**Interviewer:** ... just going off to East Africa to be installed as leader of the Ismailis. What exactly happens at the ceremonies there?

**Aga Khan:** Well the ceremony is a public installation of the Imam. The Ismailis pay homage to the Imam and that is when you are recognised by
the world at large as the Imam. Officially as soon as one Imam passes away, his successor takes on from the very minute that the Imam has passed away. But this is a public installation. I will probably wear the robes that my grandfather wore during his last jubilee and I will receive a sword which is the sword of justice of the Imamat.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1957 interview with an unidentified media outlet 9 days prior to the first Takht Nashini (Enthronement) Ceremony in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (London, United Kingdom?)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/mwblog/10260/

See also: Their Highnesses the Aga Khans III and IV on the Imam's gender

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the institutional accomplishments of his Imamat
https://www.facebook.com/notes/nanowisdoms-archive/excerpt/306857039332487

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