Excerpts: His Highness the Aga Khan on ideas and innovation: on nurturing, respecting, harnessing them from whomever they come

"I have seen situations where there has been an attempt to marginalise the intelligentsia of a given community and that of course is an extremely unwelcome feature of a society."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2015 Samuel L & Elizabeth Jodidi Lecture and apres lecture conversation with Diana L. Eck, Harvard University (Cambridge, USA) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10936/

"[T]he role of Civil Society is often misunderstood or taken for granted. At times, Civil Society has been marginalised, discounted, or dismissed.... Even more disturbing have been efforts in some places to constrain or even repress these institutions, stereotyping them as illegitimate, unelected and unaccountable. These attitudes may simply reflect a reluctance to share power and influence, or perhaps a feeling that the creative energy and sheer diversity of Civil Society is daunting and dangerous. Such attitudes have been exceptional, but they are highly regrettable, discouraging the qualities of vision, innovation and forward thinking that progressive societies so badly need."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2016 Keynote Address to ‘Africa 2016: Business for Africa, Egypt and the World’ Conference (Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10948/
"What was behind all this attention to structure and process [of the Steering Committee and Master Jury of Aga Khan Award for Architecture]? The goal was to create an intellectual space -- something we might think of as a beautiful bustan in which there would be no possibility of suffocation from the dying weeds of dogma, whether professional or ideological; where the flowers of articulation and challenging ideas could grow without restraint; where the new plants of creativity and risk-taking could blossom in the full light of day; where beauty would be seen in the articulation of difference and for seeking diverse solutions in the form of plants of different sizes, shapes, textures and colours, presented in new configurations and arrangements; a bustan whose glory would stem from the value and legitimacy of the pluralism of the infinite manifestations of culture in the human community....

"Many Muslims today, of which I am one, carry with them a memory of the historical achievements of Islamic civilisations. What is the significance of this historical memory for the Ummah in the contemporary world with its many and varied challenges? How can we look back and reinvigorate aspects of it, and what level of significance should be accorded to it? Since there is this general feeling that something has been lost, it is critical to look back in order to look forward. This is the debate that must occur, in which there must be broad participation on a basis that, like that used in the Award, provides freedom for full exchange. The goal should be to turn this great resource into an intellectual trampoline to generate ideas for building the future productively and constructively in terms that will be meaningful and beneficial for Muslims generally."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2001 Eighth Aga Khan Award For Architecture Prize Ceremony address (The Citadel, Aleppo, Syria) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6043/
"In conclusion I would offer several propositions based on lessons drawn from the experience of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. They are relevant to its future work, and perhaps, more globally, to the process of cultural development and change. The loss of our inheritance of cultural pluralism -- the identity it conveys to members of diverse societies, and the originality it represents and stimulates in all of them -- will impoverish our societies now and into the future. Sustaining this inheritance will require conscious and concerted effort involving the best minds and most creative institutions around the world. This effort must be grounded in an informed understanding of history and cultural context, and yet be forward looking and imaginative as it addresses the needs of contemporary societies. It will require an Enabling Environment, characterised by open and unfettered debate of ideas, a trust in cultural diversity, the celebration and reward of innovation, and a commitment to civil society and pluralistic government. It will also necessitate that the cultures of the developing world establish a presence on the rapidly growing information superhighway to balance those that currently dominate the new electronic media. This will require an investment of time and resources and a mastery of regional and international languages. Unless these cultures develop creditable and creative ways to present themselves effectively in this new and powerful medium of communication, cultural pluralism will suffer a massive setback."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1998 Seventh Aga Khan Award For Architecture Prize Ceremony address (The Citadel, Aleppo, Syria) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5583

"[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."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2000 Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy address (Islamabad, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5811/
"Throughout history, when the great empires broke up, whether it be the fall of the Roman or Byzantine empires, or of the Caliphate, you will find that the **youth had lost its dynamism, its personality and its imagination.**"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1960 Prince Aly Khan Library, Karachi University, Foundation Stone Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]  
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1202/

"In the first place we must be morally and materially strong and united. The world which we live on is indeed getting smaller every day, there is increased communication between human beings of different areas and we can already see how the technical intelligentsia of the world, regardless of all existing barriers, are joining together ... If we, as a small community, are to face the challenge of the future and overcome it and make sense of it and use it for our own good, we must leave no stone unturned to strengthen ourselves in the years ahead.

"Individual groups, separated by thousands of miles, can no longer attempt separately to mould new ideas and new concepts into intelligible and acceptable forms. It is necessary, therefore, to have more and more consultation, discussion and investigation so as to find out what institutions, what organisations and on what foundations we can prepare ourselves to make good use of the future which Allah allows us to perceive.

"In the next few days we must exchange large amounts of knowledge, experience, learning and hope.... I believe also that the delegates will not embark on futile discussions as to which jamat has done the best or less well, but that they will pool their knowledge so as to create through this exchange new tools with which to forge the jamats of the future.

"I hope that during the following days the discussions in your groups and committees will proceed in an orderly manner to compare the results..."
which have been achieved in your various programmes all over the world, and whether the means by which you have obtained these results have been adequate and flexible, or whether, on the contrary, they must be reviewed for not having achieved the results for which you aspired...."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1964 First World Socio-Economic Conference address (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9999/

"[T]he scope of the Award, spanning such large parts of the globe, looking to the future while protecting the past, seeking to broaden the participation and involvement of all those concerned with the built environment, has required that it adopt an approach that is intellectually and ethically demanding. It eschews the simplistic promotion of a single viewpoint. It seeks instead to create a space of freedom where patient, motivated searches for innovative and culturally adapted solutions to the problems of the built environment of Muslims can be pursued. The Award is determined to premiate excellence where it finds it. It holds up as exemplars, efforts deemed worthy of encouragement in this ongoing search.

"We strive for appropriate solutions to the problems of today’s Muslim societies. Firmly anchored in the present, the best architectural efforts are those that dare to innovate, to start from what we have, and actively invent the future in practical, empowering terms, thereby creating a heritage for the future. Invariably, such efforts do not copy the past, or import solutions developed for other problems and other cultures. What the Muslim world needs today, I suggest, is more of those innovative architects that can navigate between the twin dangers of slavishly copying the architecture of the past and of foolishly ignoring its rich legacy. It needs those who can thoroughly internalise the collective wisdom of bygone generations, the eternal Message and ethic with which we live, and then reinforce them in the language of tomorrow."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1989 Award For Architecture Prize Ceremony address (Cairo, Egypt) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/4382/
"Creativity knows no frontiers: it is not of the East nor the West, of the North nor the South, but it sometimes needs awakening, to be set alight, to be shown a purpose."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1979 Address to the Asia Society (New York, USA)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2010/

"[I]et me emphasise that healthy institutions will tap the widest possible range of energies and insights. They will optimise each society’s meritocratic potential, so that opportunity will reward competence, from whomever and wherever it may come ..."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2010 10th Annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture, Institute for Canadian Citizenship (Toronto, Canada) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9601/

"The process of searching for new ideas and solutions can be facilitated in a number of ways. The most important for any society or nation is the effective mobilisation of the talents, existing and potential, of all its citizenry. This required the creation of structures and values that stimulate the fullest possible participation of all groups and individuals ... Human genius is found in its variety which is the work of Allah. Harnessing that genius to the fullest should be one of the goals of all modern societies and nations in addition to mobilising creative capacity from all segments of society."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1998 Address to the Gorno-Badakshan Assembly (Khorog, Gorno-Badakshan, Tajikistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5445/
"In the final analysis, no nation, no race, no individual has a monopoly of intelligence or virtue.... [We must] harness the very best contributions from whomever and wherever they may come."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2009 University of Alberta Graduation Ceremony address (Edmonton, Alberta) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9281/

"In everything we do we must look to the future, **seeking always to think creatively, to innovate and to improve.**"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1983 address on the Acceptance of the Charter of the Aga Khan University (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2817/

"Genuine hope ... has usually been rooted in a tough sense of realism -- a recognition that no one has all the answers, that today's answers may not work forever, that good people do not all think alike, and that we must constantly learn from one another ..."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2007 State Banquet address (Nairobi, Kenya)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8187/

"[T]he best path to knowledge is to admit first what it is we do not know, and to open our minds to what others can teach us."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s Preface to the 2008 book 'The Aga Khan Museum' by Philip Jodidio (Aiglemont) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8373/
"And I think one of the lessons we've learned in [our work] is to listen -- quite simply to listen and listen and listen and listen. The moment you become deaf in development activity, you're out of the park."

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

"I have been amazed and thrilled frankly, at the capacities of even the completely illiterate populations, to express themselves about the correct priority that should be addressed. And if you follow their agenda, nine times out of ten, you'll get it right!"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2002 Pakistan Television Interview with Talat Hussain (Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6224/

"Trust in people. Trust in people. It's an extraordinary phenomenon of development that the most powerful force is people changing their own environment."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 remarks to the press at the inauguration of the Aga Khan Agency For Microfinance (Geneva, Switzerland) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7211/

"[D]evelopment is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots level and is given the ways and the means to take responsibility for its own future."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Address to the Conference on Afghanistan (London, UK)
"[H]uman progress can only be sustained when people are able to participate in their own governance."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2005 Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat Foundation Stone Ceremony address (Ottawa, Canada)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7314/

"The great effort of humankind to organise itself for the common good must change with changing environments. For thousands of years our environment was largely agricultural, where value attached primarily to land. Three centuries ago, agriculture began to yield to industry, as machines took centre stage, along with standardised processes and the efficiencies of scale. But in the last few decades, Agricultural Society and Industrial Society have gradually been displaced by what has been called the Knowledge Society, propelled by new digital technology and the expansion of cyberspace.

"As a result, enormous social influence has been transferred from the owners and workers of farms and factories, to those whom we now call 'Knowledge Workers,' people who create and exchange information. For them, power attaches more to ideas and values than to money or physical force. Among them, power itself is widely dispersed."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 American University in Cairo Commencement Ceremony address (Cairo, Egypt) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7719

"A vast decentralisation of decision-making is already occurring in many countries; it has the advantage of placing new responsibilities in
the hands of local communities.... For the key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation....

"Social progress, in the long run, will not be found by delegating an all-dominant role to any one player -- but rather through multi-sector partnerships. And within each sector of society, diversity should be a watchword.... The world ... increasingly resembles a vast web in which everything connects to everything else -- where even the smallest groups and loneliest voices can exercise new influence, and where no single source of power can claim substantial control.... [T]he key to intellectual progress will not lie in any single body of instruction, but in a spirit of openness to new expression and fresh insights.... [The Ummah] must become full and even leading participants in the Knowledge Society of the 21st Century. That will mean embracing the values of collaboration and co-ordination, openness and partnership, choice and diversity -- which will under-gird the Knowledge Society.... [I]n the Knowledge Society, productive research is most often partnership research ... sharing agendas and exchanging insights."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7997/

Times of India: In the context of world events, has this award cycle been different from past cycles?

Aga Khan: Every cycle is different. Three years is a substantial period. Every time we compose a new master jury. There is a new cast of characters and new ideas. We try and involve young people. Every time new priorities are outlined. This time at the risk of oversimplifying, I would say the award highlights experimentation.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2004 Times of India Interview (New Delhi, India) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7094/
Aga Khan: ... Now I learn from the younger generation. They think in different terms than I do. They have different competencies than I do. They have a different vision of how new technologies can work for us. So bringing my children on board is a very intimate way of accessing the talents of younger people. And in so far as the Aga Khan network, you know, it's an ongoing institution, I would like to continue to be able to mobilise young people and benefit from their knowledge and competencies.

Aga Khan: ... By nature I am suspicious of fashion, of isms, of dogmas, because I think human society changes all the time. And the moment you get frozen into a mental prison, then, you know, things actually start becoming very damaging. But my sense is that at the present time there is increasing opportunity to achieve results.

"President Nyerere of Tanzania, whose country I recently had the pleasure of visiting again, remarked in 1977 that 'the widespread addiction to cement and tin roofs is a kind of mental paralysis.'"

"Both cement and corrugated iron are expensive and I agree with President Nyerere that at times architects, planners and legislators tend to be excessively influenced by technology and consequently underrate local know-how and materials. I have seen for myself what is being done to utilise local resources in China. In Indonesia the Islamic pesantren schools include carpentry and masonry in their curricula. Many other Third World communities have long established building techniques."

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

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His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1983 address at the Association of Builders and Developers Seminar on 'Shelter for the Homeless', 'Rural Housing' (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
“Eighteen months ago, my network convened ... a conference in Nairobi on the Enabling Environment in Africa. Its purpose was to examine ways in which private business, non-governmental organisations and governments could join together to promote development more effectively. During that fascinating and intensive week, I found a new spirit alive in Africa -- a willingness to discard old myths, to recognise that development is not the business of governments alone, and to embrace new ideas and policies.”

His Highness the Aga Khan’s remarks at the 1998 Overseas Development Administration (ODA) Accord of Co-operation Signing Ceremony (London, United Kingdom) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3531/

“It is genuinely exciting to see things beginning to happen. New ideas are not being thrown out because they don’t fit a pre-established external philosophy. We are bottoming out of 30 to 40 years of horrible blockage which had a terrible impact on the Third World.”

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1991 Financial Times Interview with William Dawkins and Edward Mortimer (London, United Kingdom) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/4462/

“In many cases new industrial and production processes can be tested more thoroughly and less expensively in the developing countries than in the Western world where labour is costly and unionisation often chokes young and new ideas before they can reach maturity. Here in Pakistan many new industrial ventures are utilising processes which are at least partially experimental. This enables your youth to be in
permanent contact with the vanguard of industrial developments and such an adventurous spirit must be encouraged. I fear less the inability of young countries to create new ventures than the rapid assassination of new projects by obsolescence.”

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1967 Peshawar University Convocation Address (Peshawar, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1494/

"If governments are constrained from devoting additional resources to the social sector, private business can and should do more. We need to seek imaginative incentives to raise these contributions....

"Throughout these remarks, I have repeatedly stressed the theme of voluntarism. Let me conclude with a personal vision of the human energy contained in that idea. We have all seen examples of God’s most wonderful creature, the person, whether in a government bureau, a business, or a private development agency, who is inspired to give generously of himself, to go beyond the mechanical requirements of a task. Such men and women, paid or unpaid, express the spirit of the volunteer, literally the will to make a product better, a school the best, a clinic more compassionate and effective. Their spirit, generating new ideas, resisting discouragement, and demanding results, animates the heart of every effective society.

"I submit that one of our great goals, if we are to create an Enabling Environment of hope and determination, is to give our volunteers opportunities to become more expert and professional -- more rational and skilled, without killing their passion. At the same time, our leaders of government and business must arouse in their professionals, the will and conviction of the volunteer. In this way, we must suffuse purpose with structure and structure with purpose."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1986 Aga Khan Development Network’s Enabling Environment Conference, Opening Session Address (Nairobi, Kenya) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3331/
"I believe that it is a reflection of the urgent need to make the fullest use of all a nation’s available resources, of which in the Third World the efforts of individuals are a major component. Islam emphasises the duty of man to be productive within the context of his family and his society, but warns that enterprise without a social conscience is not acceptable.

"When they can be creative, people are far and away the Third World's largest resource. Obviously individuals cannot realise their potential unless governments provide an environment which enables them to do so."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1985 Ismaili Centre Opening Ceremony address (London, United Kingdom) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3127/

"The ingenuity and imagination of peoples of the developing world continue, unfortunately, to remain untapped resources.... Our experience from Aleppo to Zanzibar has taught us that private initiative, properly applied and encouraged, can help revitalise historic cities of the Islamic world, even in resource-poor environments."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2003 remarks to the press while in Mali (Timbuktu, Djenne & Bamako, Mali)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6766/

"Even the materially rich countries are rethinking the notion of the State and are emphasising the State's role in helping to free and mobilise the energy and creativity of civil society to meet the challenges of development. The importance of private initiative has become clearly evident in economic development. In addition, the not-
for-profit or non-commercial contribution is increasingly being recognised as indispensable in the face of the phenomenon of market failure, and the limits on what the state can provide by way of social services. A richly diverse yet purposefully united citizenry is capable of making a critical contribution to social development in the struggle against poverty."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2003 Ismaili Centre Foundation Stone Ceremony address (Dushanbe, Tajikistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6717/

"As we look around us today, we are reminded of other times down through history when a variety of cultures and traditions have come together happily in this land. It is inspiring to remember how enriching encounters of ideas and viewpoints have so often prevailed against opposing forces of ignorance and prejudice."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2009 Ismaili Centre Opening Ceremony address (Dushanbe, Tajikistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9331/

"Links and meeting places created by the bridges do more than simply facilitate commerce. We exchange questions and answers. We trade in products, but we can also trade in ideas. Communities on each side of the border will know one another better and be better able to help one another grow, prosper and share the lessons of life."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Ishkashim Bridge Opening Ceremony address (Ishkashim, Tajikistan; Afghanistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7982/

"This year a second [Aga Khan Award for Architecture] jury will once
again select a number of completed projects for a similar kind of recognition. Whatever the judgements of the jury may be, the search for ideas, the continuing critical examination of what is happening in the environment, the exchange of information, even debates between opposing points of view must continue. For, even though we shall not -- nor do we want to -- come to a single truth or a single doctrine about architecture and planning, the more we discuss these matters, the better equipped we shall be individually or collectively to meet the challenge of our time and to help the communities of the faithful and, by extension, of all mankind. It is for this continuing discussion and for this continuous learning that we have gathered here for the eighth seminar in the series sponsored by the Aga Khan Award ..."

"The Award has consistently sought to avoid becoming a school. I am extremely concerned that this should never be allowed to happen. On the other hand, I do think that one of the key roles the Award could play is to become a forum for thought, for exchange of ideas, for sharing of concerns, and, perhaps, for developing solutions to some of the problems which we are dealing with. I have been genuinely excited by the results of our Workshops that have come forward with a number of creative ideas which I hope would be implemented in the years ahead, in some, if not all, of the teaching institutions, both in the Islamic world and elsewhere."

"[F]or various reasons, the vital interchange of ideas and
technical information between [architects, planners, decision-makers, and] professionals working in Islamic countries is too seldom achieved. This was a major reason for the creation of the Award and is why it organises seminars. Although it is not a teaching institution, it can hope to stimulate all those concerned with the built environment to think about the future implications of their plans and actions and to disseminate knowledge through its publications. Because our aim is to act as a catalyst and a motivator, ...

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1984 Opening Remarks, Ninth Seminar, ‘The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo’, The Aga Khan Award For Architecture (Cairo, Egypt) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3101/

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"The [Global Centre for Pluralism] was founded as a place where we all can learn from one another about the challenges of diversity, and about the enormous possibilities that can open for us when we respect diversity as an opportunity rather than fearing it as a burden. To that end, the Centre is also a destination for dialogue, a place to exchange ideas with true champions of pluralism."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2014 Remarks introducing Antonio Guterres, The Global Centre for Pluralism’s Third Annual Lecturer (Ottawa, Canada) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10799/

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"Together [the 18 Aga Khan Academies] will constitute an inter-related community of learning exchanging students and teachers, sharing ideas and insights. And they will also share a variety of environmental experiences.... Everyone, everywhere, faces the challenge of engaging -- productively and creatively -- in the global arena of action and ideas, while also respecting the unique character of family roots and cultural traditions."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2007 Aga Khan Academy, Kampala, Stone
"We intend these Academies to be beacons of academic excellence which will attract the best teachers. Some will be recruited from other parts of the world, both for long-term appointments and short-term rotations, bringing with them fresh ideas and bountiful experience."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 Aga Khan Academy, Dar es Salaam, Foundation Stone Ceremony address (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7224/

"Our experience over the last two decades suggests that trusting in good character, good ideas and a willingness to work hard is a sound investment."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 remarks at the Inauguration of First Microfinance Agency -- Premiere Agence de Microfinance (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7462/

"The true sign of maturity and excellence in a university is its ability to contribute to the knowledge of mankind, in its own society and beyond. It is equally essential that its faculty be challenged, as a matter of university policy, to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. Any vestige of dependence is cast off, any suspicion of a young scientist or scholar that he or she may sacrifice intellectual excitement by leaving the West is allayed, when a university becomes known for generating new ideas, making new discoveries and influencing events."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2003 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony
"In the first place, the [Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications] will work on the newest frontiers of media technology, with state-of-the-art equipment and innovative pedagogies... This does not mean that we will ignore old skills and values. Our core concern must always be the ability of our students to think critically and creatively, to pursue the truth ethically and responsibly, and to articulate ideas clearly and vividly...."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2011 Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications Foundation Stone Ceremony address (Nairobi, Kenya) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9953/

"It is our hope that wide distribution of this report among those who have made AKU what it now is, and care about its future, will stir lively interest and careful examination of the ideas it contains.... The Trustees and I have thought that the Commission's efforts to conceive what a university concerned with the developing and Muslim worlds might aim to do in the next quarter century might also offer ideas to others facing similar challenges for the future. We believe that the Commission has viewed the future with sober realism but also with hopeful imagination. We find its report a source of inspiration for AKU that we intend to keep before us. We hope others too may find inspiration and enlightenment from it."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1994 Preface to the Report of the Chancellor's Commission on 'The Future of the Aga Khan University: Evolution of a Vision' (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10692/
"Not surprisingly, there are, throughout the Ummah, strong and legitimate aspirations to be, once again, a respected and central player on the stage of world civilisations.

"In bringing these aspirations to fruition, I am struck by the close relationship which exists in Islam between intellect and the faith. During the glorious periods of Muslim history, Muslim thinkers, scientists and philosophers were beacons of light, sharing their knowledge freely with the non-Muslim world, indeed often leading it. I am convinced that the way for the Ummah to achieve its aspirations is through the development of first-rate institutions and professionals, steeped in the ethos of the faith, but applying their intellects and resources to help humanity develop solutions to the very real problems facing it today ...

"With your background, President Akayev. the atmosphere of political and religious tolerance which exists in your country, and your courage to innovate, it is my fervent hope that the Kyrgyz Republic will soon be in a position to contribute significantly to this enhanced role of the Ummah and to the well-being of its peoples."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1995 address at the Dinner in honour of the President of Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) [Emphasis added] http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10467/

"How can Europeans be so ignorant as to have forgotten that in the first century of Islam the Khalifas ordered that all that was best in Greek and Roman cultures should be assimilated; that not only the philosophy, medicine, and science of Greece but its poetry and drama were carefully translated into Arabic and were generally sought not only by the learned but also by the pious?

"The Muslim attitude towards the absorption of ideas was based on the principle of Islam which enjoins to acquire knowledge wherever available, and there is a well-known and authentic saying of the Prophet that 'his followers should seek learning even if they have to go to China.' ... In fact, in the interest of the universal unification of mankind the Qur'an ignores the minor differences and says: 'Come, let us unite to
what is common to us all,' which obviously encourages Muslims to assimilate ideas and even customs from others."

Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III's 1951 reply to The Times of London, 'The Tolerance of Islam' (London, United Kingdom) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10052

"It is a particularly happy day, for me, that we are extending this partnership [with Canada], strengthening it, giving it new opportunities ... And [it] is a unique partnership because it's a partnership for people. It's a partnership for people in difficulty. It's a partnership where imagination is essential if you want to build strong programmes."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2014 Massey Hall remarks (Toronto, Canada) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10727/

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am immensely grateful for the collaboration between the AKDN and the German development institutions. It illustrates the scope of partnership between the West and the developing world, especially the Muslim world. I have the hope and the confidence that our partnerships will continue and be characterised by a willingness to innovate, to take risks for great reward, and to have the patience and determination for the long term commitment required."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2004 Keynote Address to the Annual Conference of German Ambassadors (Berlin, Germany) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7073/

"I would underscore the growing potential of what some call PPP's --
public-private partnerships. **Such collaborations can tap the unique strengths of both sectors, overcoming outmoded dogmas** which depreciate the role of the market-driven enterprises on the one hand, or which denigrate the capacities of publicly supported agencies on the other. Effective public-private partnerships must be genuinely participative, as committed leaders coordinate their thinking, **sharing objectives, sharing strategies, sharing resources, sharing predictions.** And this approach can be powerful, indeed very powerful, in the social and cultural development fields, not only in the more established economic one."

*His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2010 Address to the ‘Marketplace on Innovative Financial Solutions for Development’ Conference (Paris, France) [Emphasis added]*
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9437/

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See also: *His Highness the Aga Khan on embracing controversy in the search for new knowledge, truth and creative solutions*


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See also: *His Highness the Aga Khan on thinking independently and the search for new knowledge -- the spirit of adventure*


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See also: *His Highness the Aga Khan on dogma, myopia & asphyxiating policies vs research, innovation, creativity & pragmatism*

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the essence of the Enabling Environment: enabling and assisting individual creativity


See also: His Highness the Aga Khan’s advices for leaders which enables sound national and community progress and development


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