

**RELIGION AND POLITICS: THE ISMAILI
PERSPECTIVE (1957 - 2010)**



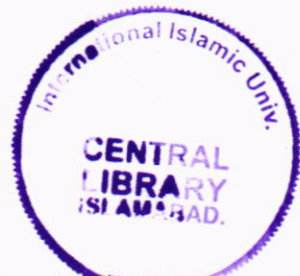
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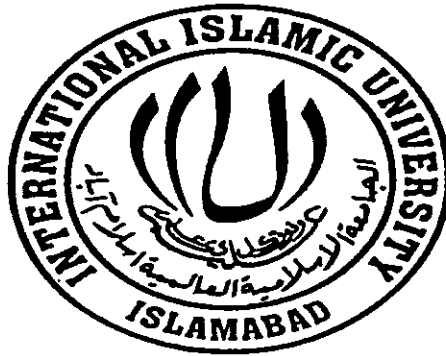
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RELIGION AND POLITICS: THE ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE (1957 -2010)



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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy degree in discipline Politics & International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Department of Politics & International Relations
Faculty of Social Sciences

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD

2012



In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious,
And the Most Merciful.

DEDICATION

To my most precious Grandpa (Late Muhammad Yousuf),

Grand Mom, Parents,

Dr Qandil Abbas (my supervisor)

And my caring brothers

Whose sincere encouragement towards my studies

Enabled me to accomplish this work.

DILSHAD BANO

Certification

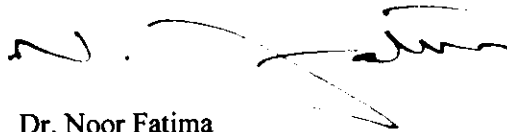
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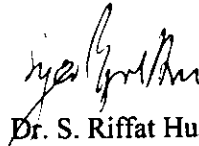
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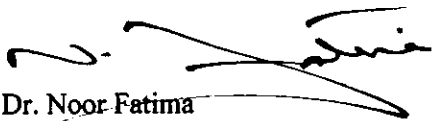


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ABSTRACT

Ismailis as an Islamic religious community emerged in 765 AD. Basically they belong to mainstream Shia Ithna Ashariyyah school of thought and they alienated from mainstream Shia's sixth Imam Jafar Sadiq while it was Ismailis fifth Imam. Here Ismailis gave their adherence to Imam Jafar as-Sadiq's eldest son Ismail, from whom they originate their name. Ismaili history has been divided into seven different phases: *Arabian Period, Dawer-Satr Period or Period of concealment, Fatimid Period, Alamut Period, Post-Alamut Period, Modern Period or Aga Khan Period and contemporary Period.*

Religion and politics in Ismaili ideology remained practically associated with each other during the Fatimid period and the Almut period when they established their own states, where both religion and political institutions were functioning under the guidance of same leadership of Ismaili Imam/ Caliph. But Ismailis practically remained politically isolated during their second period and fourth period of history (Dawer-Satr) and Post –Almut period. During their last phase (Modern Period/Aga Khan Period 1957–up till now) once again Ismailis became remained active politically but with different strategies. This research is focused on the period of Aga Khan IV (1957-2010) who significantly changed religio-political ideology of Ismailis and tired to make Ismailis religio-political behavior compatible with the modern requirement of the time.

After the demise of Aga Khan III in 1957, the Aga Khan IV adopted a new strategy about religious and political affairs of Ismailis which is the main focused of this dissertation. During this period, Ismailis did not follow state politics and their

political role had not been prominent with the exception of their political activities in the Northern Areas of Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan). They are also playing a partial political role in Canada, which is not very considerable. In general, from 1957 to 2010, both religious and political activities in Ismaili have been focused on human welfare activities and through this strategy they are following their religious and political goals. Ismailis had their own political stance about war on terror especially about democracy, pluralism and civil society.

Ismaili leadership is emphasizing on democracy as an ideal form of government currently prevalent in the world. However most of Muslim school of thoughts considers democracy as a western system and contrary to Islamic political thoughts. Considering education as a pre-requisite for democracy, Ismailis are focused on promotion of education. The second important pillar of Ismaili political strategy is promotion of civil society. Aga Khan IV is of the view that flourishing democracies around the world are the product of dominant role of civil society; democracy is not possible by governments alone. The role of civil society is very critical in strengthening democracy in a society. The third pillar of Ismaili political approach in modern era is promotion of pluralism which is considered as the engine of peace, stability and development around the world. For the promotion of pluralism Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has established the global centre of Pluralism in Canada. The entire religio political activities of Ismailis in the contemporary world mainly revolve around these three all important pillars. Their first religio political priority is human welfare, elimination of poverty and unemployment. Ismailis do not believe in conventional trends of active politics.

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DILSHAD BANO

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

- (AKA) Aga Khan Academies**
- (AKAM) Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance**
- (AKDN) Aga Khan Development Network**
- (AKES) Aga Khan Education Services**
- (AKF) Aga Khan Foundation**
- (AKFED) Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development**
- (AKHCP) Aga Khan Historic Cities Program**
- (AKHS) Aga Khan Health Services**
- (AKMI) Aga Khan Music Initiative**
- (AKPBS) Aga Khan Planning and Building Services**
- (AKTC) Aga Khan Trust for Culture**
- (AKU) Aga Khan University**
- (ECD) Early Childhood Development**
- (EU) European Union**
- (IAEA) International Atomic Energy Agency**
- (ITREB) Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board**
- (NATO) North Atlantic Treaty Organization**
- (UCA) University of Central Asia**

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims constitute the second largest Shia Muslim after the Ithna 'Ashariyyah or twelevers (those who believe in twelve Imams) in the Muslim world. Ismailis Imam (Aga Khan IV) is known to the world as social, political and spiritual leader of Ismailis faith.¹ Today, the Ismailis live in more than twenty different countries, mainly concentrated in South and Central Asia, East Africa, North America, Middle East, Australia and in many European countries.² Ismailis constitute as one of important interpretation of Islam and the history of this school of thought has had a significant contribution within Islamic history vis-à-vis towards the history of religions and world at large. It traces its origin back from 292 A.H. /909A.D to-567A.H/1094 A.D when Fatimid Caliphs/Imams ruled from North Africa to many other parts of Middle East³. The Fatimid's classical period of dominance lasted for 185 years⁴ where Ismailism became the state religion of an all powerful empire that was time-honored in Ifriqiya (Tunisia) in the commencement, and whose center was transferred to present day Egypt in the year 362 A.H/973.A.D. This period is called the 'golden

¹ John Steinberg, *Ismaili Modern Globalization and identity in a Muslim community* (USA: university of North Carolina, 2011)10 .

² Ismaili Community: History. *The institute of ismaili studies*. November 17, 2009. UK http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=104448 (accessed Januaray 08, 2011).

³ Sami Nasib Makarem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis* (Beirut: The Arab institute for research and publishing, 1972), 11.

⁴ Farhad Daftary, *The Ismailis: Their history and doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1990), 114.

age' of Ismailis, when they had their prosperous state in Egypt. After the successful Fatimid rule, the Alamut period of Ismailis started around 283A.H/1090A.D and lasted till 654A.H /1256 A.D. This epoch lasted for about 188 years and during this period Ismailis made their effectual endeavor to set up an Ismaili State in Persia and Syria. Throughout this period, mainland Persia and Syria were ruled by the Saljukq Turks. However Ismailis were able to maintain independent states of their own in diverse parts of Persia and Syria.⁵ Finally, the Nizari (Ismailis) state of Persia (Alamut) was destroyed under the excesses of the victorious Mongols in 624 A.H /1256 A.D. Following the downfall of Persia, Ismaili state in Syria was also shattered by Mamluk Sultan Baybars in 671A.H/1273 A.D. After the collapse of Alamut by Mongols, the Nizari Ismaili epoch of Post-Alamut began, this spanned over 580 years (655-710 A.H/1257-1310 A.D to 1206-1233A.H /1792-1817A.D). It was the longest period in Ismailis history which also happened to be their darkest and obscure phase. Their effective political power in Persia had ended. Ismailis had to implement, once again the policy of Taqqiya⁶ in order to escape more persecutions under the aegis of the Iikhanids, and the Timurids.⁷ In such state of affairs the survival became the primary concern of Ismailis. Approximately for two centuries, Ismailis could not get in touch directly with their Imams. Ismailis were in a struggle to survive their faith, by espouse Taqiya and were also without their former political significance.⁸

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Precautionary dissimulation of one's true religious beliefs, especially in time of danger; used especially by the Sha'is.(Daftary, op.cit,566).

⁷ Daftary, op.cit, 435-566.

⁸ Ibid.

Subsequent to Post-Alamut period, the period of Aga Khan I started in 1817. The Aga Khan I served as Governor of Kirman in 1251 A.H/1835 A.D. In the period of 1257 A.H /March 1841 A.D Aga khan I had to leave Iran and migrate to India.⁹ Aga Khan I endeavored to take over Hyderabad as well as the entire Sind under the British rule in India and his struggle became successful. He also became successful in maintaining control over certain parts of Baluchistan. The Aga Khan II (1298 -1302 A.H /1881-1885 A.D) was appointed to the Bombay Imperial Legislative council from 1880 to 1885.¹⁰

The Aga Khan III (1302-1376 A.H/1885 to 1957 A.D) was the forty- eight Imam of Ismailis. His efforts were instrumental in the foundation of All-India Muslim League.¹¹ Aga Khan III was elected as the first President of All-India Muslim League in 1907 to 1912. It was Aga Khan III who recommended a separate electorate for Muslims in Simla, as a leader of Muslim delegation in an official meeting with Viceroy Lord Rippon in 1906.¹² Aga Khan III propped up Khilafat Movement and urged the British Government to uphold the sovereignty of Turkey and the sacredness of the caliphate. In 1928, he took the chair over the 'All Parties Muslim Conference'. In 1930 and 1931, he represented Muslims of India in the first and second Round Table Conferences respectively. Aga Khan III escorted the Indian delegation to the World Disarmament Conference in 1932.¹³ Sultan Muhammad Shah (Aga Khan III) as

⁹ Ibid, 590.

¹⁰ Ali, op.cit, 653.

¹¹ Ibid, 676.

¹² Naqvi, H.H. Sir Aga Khan III, President League of Nations, "*Pakistan*", 2006), <http://pakistanprayers.blogspot.com/2006/04/hh-sir-agma-khan-iii-president-league.html> (accessed December 22, 2010).

¹³ Habiba Siddiqui, *Ismaili mirror* (Karachi: Pak Ismailia, 14 August, 1978), 6.

well remained President of League of Nations in 1937 and this depicts his eminent international stature and the public role that he commanded at a time when there was a widening gap between east and west.¹⁴ After the death of Aga Khan III, his grandson Prince Karim Aga Khan IV became the hereditary Imam of Ismailis in 1957. During his period of Imamt, Aga Khan IV (1957 to 2010) continued his family's legacy of services in international associations. His father Prince Ali Khan worked as Pakistan's permanent delegate to the United Nations and his uncle Prince Sadruddin served as United Nations High Commissioner for Immigrants. Prince Amin Muhammad (brother of Aga Khan IV) worked in the department of Economics & Social Affairs of United Nations for three years.

In 1972, the government of Kenyan President Idi Amin enforced Ismailis to evacuate Kenya. In these challenging times, Aga Khan had to take imperative steps to facilitate their relocation. Therefore he resettled Ismailis in Canada and in other European countries and remained busy in ensuring their social and economic resettlement. Such developments during the era of Cold War alienated Ismailis from politics. This means that the Ismailis were only involved in political activities till the mid of twentieth century.

After that, the role of Ismailis from political front became less prominent and isolated. Here questions arise: why in the contemporary times (1957-2010) Ismailis do not take part in politics? Do they not believe in political activities? Or is it that they do not get opportunity to take part in politics? Or, do the present Ismaili preferences for social-welfare and economic activities can be compared with the political activisms?

¹⁴ Aziz Esmail, Azim Nanji, *The Ismailis in history* (Tehran: imperial Iranian, 1977), 255.

Whether Ismailis believe in separation of religion and politics? Whether politics is possible without the existence of State? Do Ismailis subscribe to the western discourse of religion and politics? If not, what is their own stance towards the issue? More importantly, this research specifically aims to focus on the religio-political approach of Ismailis in modern epoch (1957-2010).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Keeping in view the active political role of Ismailis during different phases of history, it becomes evident that their modern strategy made them politically isolated but religiously and socially active. Here a question arises about whether Ismailis have changed their view about the relationship between religion and politics? Or do they have not given opportunities to play an active role in politics.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

During the course of time Ismailis have changed their political strategy and presently their role is silent on political front but studies show that they are playing political role through the promotion of civil society, pluralism, democracy, and socio-economic activities in modern epoch.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By looking over Ismaili political perspective regarding political participation, governance (rule) and other similar notions will drive readers towards the core significance of this research. Primarily, it this school of thought has a significant contribution towards Islamic history in terms of Ismaili interpretation of governance

(a political dimension). This research aims to further a new understanding about Ismailis political views regarding state and its rule. Presently Ismailis are world over known by their present Imam's (Spiritual Leader, the Aga Khan IV) contributions towards humanity in the field of education, health, economy, preservation of Islamic culture etc. and also are known as a peaceful community in the religion of Islam as well as among other religions of the world. Despite this the whole world is still in dark about Ismailis political views.

In contemporary time world is facing critical hardships in terms of unfolded challenges posed by economical and political strain. The modern socio-political and geo-strategic developments have brought out a contending race between states, groups, societies, and civilizations for their survival and the need to actively look for ways to avoid major crisis and for peaceful co-existence. All this can be achieved by educating the society and turning ignorance into 'knowledge based societies'. As, Thomas Friedman's book *The world is flat: a brief history of the twenty-first century*¹⁵ also stresses upon specialization, intellectual growth, and educating individuals according to the rapidly changing response of globalized world.

If we see trace the development pattern of the world we can clearly see that the modern development and advancement is mainly due to the blessing of technical progress and innovation. Commenting and endorsing the benefits of technological and technical advancement, James Rosenau¹⁶ writes in his work *Distant Proximities*:

¹⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, *The world is flat: a brief history of the twenty-first century* (New York: Picador, 2007), 349-361.

¹⁶ James N. Rosenau, *Distant Proximities: Dynamics beyond globalization* (New Jersey: Princeton University press, 2003), 256-315.

Dynamics beyond globalization that technology is basically neutral; it purely depends on societies and individual for deciding its direction, whether negative or positive.

Today, societal norms and religious practices are also relying on modern developments to advance their influence and sometimes ending up in a rift with challengers (specially who modify according to new patterns of life, without changing their fundamentals) and those who wanted to preserve or follow according to historical methods are left at a disadvantage. It can be seen that in the history there have been various religions which withstood the strains of times for centuries but have now become powerless to exercise any instrumental kind of influence for serving the spiritual and social needs of humanity, in the life of the society, and towards the progress of nations.¹⁷

Ismailis have developed their religion thousand years ago and it has become successful in developing a system of spirituality for individuals as well as a social ideology and a system of social organization. With the passage of time Ismailis' ideals became surprisingly modern. In Ismailis there is equality; it means they have classless society, based on an effective system of cooperation.¹⁸ They are a more prosperous and progressive community within Muslims with a distinct identity and maintaining their religious traditions. Under the leadership and guidance of their Spiritual Leader (Aga Khan IV), Ismailis established schools, hospitals, health centers, housing societies and a variety of social and economic development institutions for the common good of all citizens regardless of their race or religion.

¹⁷ Ivanow, Professor W. "*The Importance of Studying Ismailism*". *Ismaili web*.
<http://www.amaana.org/ISWEB/ivanow1.htm> (accessed 11 15, 2010).

¹⁸ Ibid.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

The answers to the above questions require an in-depth study and analysis of the history of Ismailis. Little authentic data is available on historical background of Ismaili political perspective. One of the main sources of their literature, the library of Alamut, was completely destroyed by Halaku and Mangol Khan. Whatever of historical account was left remained scattered. Even today, it is very difficult to get a single primary source that contains a continuous historical and chronological narrative of Ismailis. Therefore it is a very challenging task to look at, and collect the available data and bring out the Ismaili perspective on religion and politics in contemporary period.

Many writers, including some prominent western scholars, have done a lot of work on the history of Ismailis including their achievements in Fatimid era, their literature and other aspects of their faith. But until now, no work or treatise has been prepared which could address the primary question of Ismaili political view of state in its entirety. This work intends to invoke the interest of researchers towards this very important and completely ignored academic area.

Shafique N.Virani in his book *The Ismailis in the Middle Age* has tried to make an inquiry into the most critical period of Ismailis i.e. the middle ages (from mid thirteen to the end of fifteen century). In this book, he has described the political significance of Ismailis in the middle ages. Due to the same reason, he explains how the Mongol warlord Gengish Khan went against them in a bid to eliminate them from the world map, which resulted subsequently in the massacre of thousands of Ismailis. After their mass annihilation, it was thought that the voice of Ismailis had been

silenced forever. In this book, the writer has explored how Ismailis survived in the aftermath of the massacre and their political devastation, which was followed by the most obscure period in the history of Ismailis, till the period of Anjudan when Ismailis finally began to surface again.¹⁹

A very productive book *The Fatimid Theory of State* by Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis has successfully attempted to describe the Fatimid State. The book was unique in the sense that before this book, there had been no studies on the Fatimid Theory of the State. In this book, writer had explained what the apocalyptic nature of the Fatimid State was.²⁰

Asghar Ali Engineer in his book *The Bohras* includes a chapter on “The Fatimid State and its Policies” where he clearly mentioned how Ismaili Movement during Fatimid’s era was religious-cum-political in nature. The movement had a clear cut religious ideology as its distinct feature, besides having a political motive to establish a government based on Ismaili religious ideology. He has further explained the judicial system of the Fatimid period.²¹

In his book “*Islam, the Religion of my ancestors*” Ismailis’ 48th spiritual Imam (Aga Khan III) says that he and his all ancestors have advised Ismailis to be loyal to and abide laws of their governments which are legally constituted and Ismailis must access to their respective governments if they face any grievance. Aga Khan III has favored the republican form of government and called it as a most rightful form of

¹⁹ Shafique N Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages* (New York: OUP, 2007), 22-35.

²⁰ Panayiotis Vatikiotis, *The Fatimid theory of State* (Lahore: Oriental publishers, 1957), 68-79.

²¹ Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Bohra* (New Dehli: Vikas publishers, 1980), 40.

government. He has condemned the system of monarch. He has vividly described how keeping the balance between the worldly and spiritual life brings peace and tranquility in both worlds.²²

In *Exploring an Islamic Empire*, the writer Paul E.Walker has briefly explained the Fatimid history and its sources. In the second chapter of the book, the writer has called the Fatimid State as “A century of Empire” where he has described how Fatimid state rose to its political peak in the era of 202/996 after a very stressful and prolonged struggle in many Muslim parts of the world and how Fatimid became successful in establishing their foreign relations.²³

Where Hope takes Root is the compilation of Aga Khan IV’s 14 speeches which have been compiled into a book by Adrienne Clarkso. In his speeches Aga Khan IV has explained the significance of three basic corner stone’s on which the developing countries are standing: that are civil society, pluralism and democracy. Aga Khan says that these three basic things can unify the world at large. The same three elements constitute the vision of Aga Khan IV, towards building a peaceful and productive society. He also talks about democracy and how it could be successful in any part of the world.²⁴

Farhad Daftary’s book *The Ismailis: Their history and doctrines* very briefly covers all the major phases of the Ismailis history from Arabian period to the contemporary period. At the end of his book, the writer has explained the revival of

²² Aga Khan, *Islam: The Religion of my Ancestors* (Karachi: Gulco Printers, 1961), 29.

²³ Paul E Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire* (London: I.b.Publishers, 2002), 55.

²⁴ Aga Khan, *Where hope takes root* (Canada: Friesens Publishers, 2008), 11-16.

Nizari Ismailism, particularly in South Asia and Iran. He also discusses the socio-economic development of Nizari Ismailis in the present world.²⁵

Mumtaz Ali Tajddin Sadik Ali's book *Ismailis through History* discusses and explains the background of the successful Ismaili movement in the political scenario of Islam in Iran and in North Africa between the eras of 9th to 13th century. He also discusses Ismailis rule in Sind and in Hind.²⁶

For contemporary issues, data is mostly based on speeches of Aga Khan IV which are available on the official website of Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).²⁷ These speeches intend to give an insight and reflection on the contemporary issues faced by the world and the knowledge society. Aga Khan IV discusses the need to bridge the gap between the societies and the importance of creating intellectual discourse. The speeches highlight Aga Khan's vision of pluralism and cultural diversity and also portray his efforts to improve the image of Islam in the society of nations.

Aga Khan terms the notion of "clash of civilizations" as nothing but a "clash of ignorance". AKDN is currently working to promote civil society and strengthen democracy across the globe. It plays a very significant role in promoting world peace and development. Its efforts aim at establishing new economic partnerships for future. Aga Khan IV and AKDN emphasize the need of working towards improving quality of life of the underprivileged in the developing countries, improving quality of

²⁵ Daftary, op.cit, 93.

²⁶ Mumtaz Ali Tajddin Sadik Ali, *Ismailis through history* (Karachi: Islamic book Publishers, 1997), 267.

²⁷ Aga Khan Development Network, "*Aga Khan Development Network*" <http://www.akdn.org/> (accessed December 14, 2010).

education and health services and role of institutions and philanthropic work in creating an enabling environment. They have made vital contributions in this regard.

1.6 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: CONSTRUCTIVISM

The researcher has adopted theory of constructivism of international relations as a theatrical framework for an understanding of Ismailis' view towards religion and politics in their contemporary period (1957-2010). The theory of constructivism is rooted in 18th century, but most of the theorists consider it as a new theory as constructivism was brought after the breakup of cold war.

Constructivism deems that social world and history were formed by human ideas and notions. This theory mainly talks about human construction of the world. Its focal point is towards the institutional and cultural attributes which influence the state direction.²⁸ The basic assumption of this theory is that, how the institutions, norms and ideas form state interest and identity. After the end of cold war, contemporary constructivism revitalized this argument, and presented a point of view that the world, society and human relations are not the result of physical or natural process but they are shaped by human belief, ideas and faith. Constructivists believe that all human associations as well as international relations are properly made through conscious

²⁸ Rizwan Hussian, *Paksitan and the emrgence of Islamic militancy in Afgahnsitan* (England & USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 6.

hard work of human being and state is socially constructed. It is possible to rule the international politics by natural laws; therefore they are controlled by man-made laws. Wendt said that social structures come out by human ideas.²⁹ Theory of constructivism's emphasis on the elucidation of dynamics in the international politics among the agents that are the individuals and actors as well as structures that also include the international organization and treaties.³⁰

1.7 CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

First, constructivists view the world as socially constructed. Rooted on sociological theory, this notion has a number of related elements, including the claim that the perceptions, identities and interests of individuals and groups are socially constructed, rather than existing outside or prior to society. It means that actors and structures are equally composed. This shows that the interactions of actors produce a social structure.

Second, constructivists hold that agents and structures in world politics are mutually constitutive. That is, agents constitute structures through their beliefs, actions and interactions. Such a conception is particularly important in bringing human agency back into international political analysis, a contrasting position to the structural determinism of approaches such as neo-realism.

²⁹ Aneek Chatterje, *International relations today concepts and applications* (India: Dorling Kindersley, 2010), 50.

³⁰ Jhon . T.Rourke, *International Politics On the world Stage* (USA: Publisher Mc Graw Hill, 2005),141.

Third, constructivists view ideational factors- representation, identities, beliefs, perceptions and norms –as central to the dynamics and process of world politics. It means constructivist argue that ideas shape identities, interests and behavior. Although some critical constructivists argue that only ideas matter, most constructivists are satisfied with the claim that ideas are an important element of any behavioral explanation. In other words, material factors alone cannot explain the actions of individuals and states.

As the world is socially constructed between actors, forms and processes of communication become crucial. For constructivists, norms are central to world politics, constituting that society as well as conditioning the interests and realms of possible actions of states within it.³¹ Different people have different perception of the world even though it apparently presents itself to them in the same way. One central assumption of constructivism is that actors are deeply rooted in their environment and its social structures.

All of their actions and decisions are based on their socialization into this environment and their current role in it. The actors reconfirm and recreate the norms and rules of their environment continuously through their actions; Individual's actions thus always take place in a predefined social context by which it is continuously influenced.³² This is what the Ismaili school of thought has similar point of view towards international politics; that it is socially structured. In Ismailis their dominant actor and identity is entirely unique from other Muslim school of thoughts as they

³¹ Inderjeet Parmar, Linda B. Miller and Mark Ledwidge, *New directions in US Foreign policy* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 21.

³² Marion .K. Lotz, *Creating identity through delimitation: the discussion about lifting the EU's weapon embargo against China* (Germany: Gren verlag, 2006), 4.

have their living Imam Aga Khan IV, who has his strong voice in his community about their religious and political activities and around the world for his well-known welfare activities.

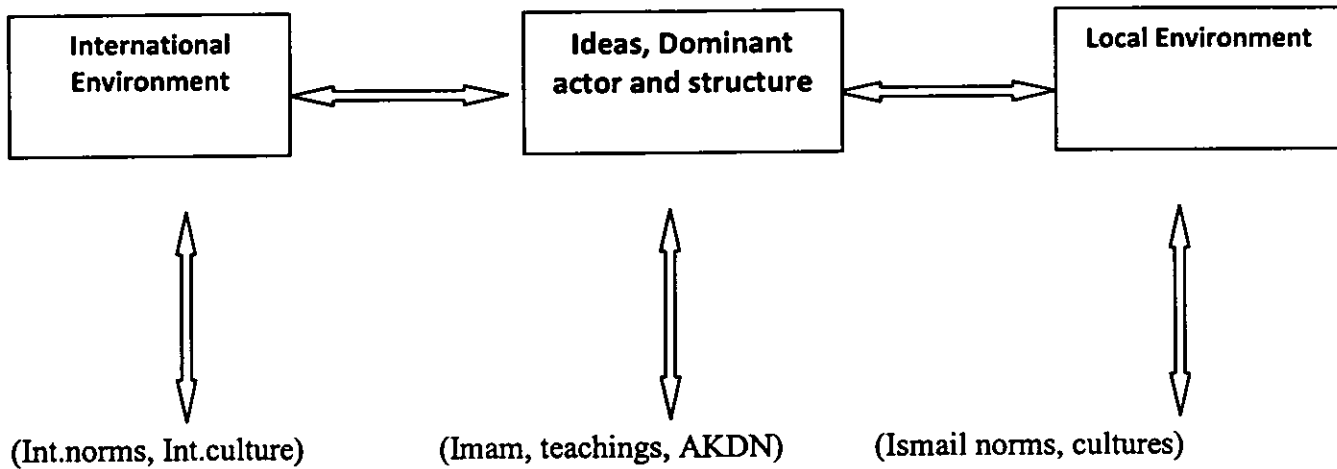
The Ismailis identity became successful in achieving their societal structure in poorest region of the world by doing work in the field of socio-economic activities with the help of their successful structure that is Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

1.8 THEORITICAL MODEL

There are many political philosophies such as idealism, realism, liberalism. Researcher deems that the constructivism theory's model suits Ismaili school of thought. As in Ismailis the dominant actor is their living Imam Aga Khan IV and they have structure of their international organization that is Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) which is non State actor is working towards the development of human progress.

Such developments are in the field of health, education, humanitarian assistance, historic cities, microfinance, rural development, culture, architecture, civil society and economic development. When such developmental programs accomplished, the element of human reason naturally generates among human beings and this also creates element of social construction as well as promotes element of cooperation among various countries of the world. Such developmental phrase initiates the process of modernization and such modernization is the way for the development of a modern State.

THEORATICAL MODEL



Theoretical model has created by the researcher herself.

1.9 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on following objectives:

1. Study the background of religion and political vision of Ismailis.
2. Compare the prominent political role of Ismailis during their history with the present invisible involvement in politics.
3. Investigate the reasoning as to why no effort has been made to create any Ismaili state in contemporary period while all Ismailis are more prosperous and well educated.
4. Bring forth new analysis about their views of state.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose to execute the study with sound systematic method, both primary and secondary data, desk work as well as descriptive method was used. A primary source consists of the statements and interviews taken from online sources. The secondary sources consist of different books and articles published in various journals and in magazines. Different libraries such as National Library of Islamabad, Library of International Islamic University Islamabad, Quaid-e-Azam University's Library, National Defence University's Library, Lahore University of Management Sciences Library, Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board (ITREB) as well as from Allama Iqbal Open University's Library have been visited for this purpose.

CHAPTER 2

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: WESTERN AND MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

2.1 RELIGION AND POLITICS: WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

There is a great variation between Western perspective and Muslim perspective over the issue of religion and politics. In earlier west, there was a strong hold of religion over the state and later on the dominancy of religion totally declined and religion got to be treated as a private affair. To understand the relation between religion and politics, it can be divided into the following two periods:

2.1.1 CLASSICAL PERIOD

The correlation between religion and politics is as old as history itself. In classical period, there were numerous forms of relationship between politics and religion but religion remained dominated. The connection between religion and politics traced back through centuries of human history in various civilizations. Likewise in 4th century, Christianity became state religion and was prominent in all spheres of life till 9th century when Pope claimed as an absolute ruler of the world with the expansion of their territory.³³ In classical epoch, West was feinted by feudal lords, aristocracy, king, and by the Church. The faith of classical era was that the

³³ Kazem Alamdari, Religion and Development Revisited: Comparing Islam and Christianity with reference to Iran, "*Journal of Developing Societies*" (2004), <http://jds.sagepub.com/content/20/1-2/125.abstract> (accessed on April 16, 2011).

place of man in the social order was predetermined by God. It meant king had to be king intensively and ordinary man intensively was a blacksmith so he would remain a blacksmith. It illustrated that the fate of the man was unwavering. These states of affairs logically generated a clash between the state and the subject.

Around the same time the period of innovation and science started to develop in Europe and new innovations of science started a clash with Church philosophies.³⁴ It was the epoch of Renaissance, when Europe instigated to unlock its sphere, for the reason that it was the time when the discovery of fourth continent Australia, created a problem because church taught that there were only three continents in the world. Besides, the scientific innovations escorted the Industrial Revolution: furthermore the balance of power transferred towards Europe in the global arena

. The thinkers also started to stir the preaching of the Church. The intellectuals, like Nicolo Machiavelli, wrote in his famous book "The Prince" that there should be a nation state instead of Christian state.³⁵ Europe was moving away from the Christian state to the model of a nation state. The voice of freedom developed strongly as a result of ruling power oppression and religion started to lose its importance and was taken as superstitious and backward.³⁶ It was in 14th century, with emergence of City –States in Italy and France and with the rapid developments when intellectuals started explicitly to favor the absolute power of the Pope, secularization of State and the laws related to the matter of religion were seriously

³⁴ Yasmin Zakaria, "*Politics and Religion-Can they be separate?*" <http://www.an-nahdah.org/an-nahdah%20books/Politics%20&%20Religion.pdf> (accessed on March 26, 2011).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

questioned and this produced a situation for institutional change. All the well-known intellectuals like Thomas Hobbes, J.J Rousseau, John Locke and Montesquieu called for the individuals not to be in shackles but to be free. As a result, the king was merely condensed and the function of the Church was exposed off its power. Thereafter a secular society emerged. The same thing happened all around the western world, where the role of Church was made limited within the personal adoration and towards ethics.

Actually in West the political thoughts became secular by the papal reform movement and the reformation of protestant. Christianity became personalized since then.³⁷ Subsequently, the process of secularization had started in the historic movement of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which had ended the thirty years of war in Europe that was between Protestants and Catholics. The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) made it conventional rule that secular leaders would decide which religion would be favorable for their running polity.³⁸

Under the shadow of Enlightenment Period (1720-1780), the Western Europe totally undercut religion from their daily lives and had adopted the idea of secularism. It was secularism which had entirely eradicated the element of religion from their everyday life. Secularization played crucial role in separation of power between Church and State in most of the European countries.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Linda Woodhead, Hiroko Kawanami and Christopher partridge, *Religions in the Modern World Traditions and transformation* (USA: Routledge, 2009), 431-435.

In the West, it was due to the Enlightenment period as well as due to the continuous development of modern secular society that escorted the separation of religion from politics. At this instant, religion turned into a theme of personal alternative for the individual. As a result, religion was left with no function to take part in the state matters. Now, in any part of secular state, the function of religion has become submissive to the interest of the state. The ideology of secularism gotten as its strongest behest in western societies and West also wants to impose their ideology of secularism in all parts of the world by imposing economic or military financial support.

2.1.2 MODERN PERIOD

Religion appears as a political jargon in modern times and it is getting more imperative status on the international political scene. In the West, Enlightenment phase (1720-1780) had already split up religion from public life. Also the process of secularization started in which there had to be no religious policy implemented on social norms. These developments made the undemanding means in modern period to further drop off the role of religion.

In modern period, Western States have made certain efforts to trim down the role of religion over politics and have become successful in lessening the weight age of religion and privatizing it. In 19th century, the organization of Church and State was divided in Europe. Religion turned and became engaged more progressively into the process of colonization of Africa and Asia. Consequently, the present third world

countries were under the shadow of Western colonization.³⁹ In modern period, West had separated religion from the State due to the factor of secularism in their society.

It was general perception of all the Western countries that religion has no specific role to play at State level and at society level from any angle.⁴⁰ It was due to the mass developments in commerce and rational philosophy in Greek Roman.

Civilization in ancient times and presently the growth of bourgeoisie class separated religion completely from politics in the West.⁴¹ It was due to scientific innovations that had produced two gigantic things in Western civilization. Firstly, the scientific developments guided the people towards a direct clash with the preaching of Church. Subsequently, people started to lose their confidence in the Church. Second, important hallmark was the emergence of secular government that led to novel technical or scientific developments, as well as burly and affluent west emerged on the international political scene.

Its consequence was so cruel that it started to rule over the world by the process of colonialism and their process of colonialism spread through to social, political and economic spheres. So it was after the epochs of Renaissance and sixteenth century reformations that Christianity made the politics entirely secular. It means politics was limited to worldly dealings and religion was reserved as a personal issue and was entirely kept away from public sphere. Presently, if they find the involvement of religion into politics, it is considered just a symbolic connotation.

³⁹ Jeffrey Haynes, *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics* (UK: T & F Books, 2008), 436.

⁴⁰ Zakaria, op.cit.

⁴¹ Alamdari, op.cit.

2.2 RELIGION AND POLITICS: MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

Muslim perspective about religion and politics was different from the Western perspective. Early religion of Islam viewed religion and politics largely concurrent and up- till now Muslims consider that both religion and politics have strong relation and it cannot be separated on any basis, unlike West which viewed that it was the element of enlightenment and modernization that had broken the relation of religion from politics. To understand the relation between religion and politics in Muslim perspective, it can be broadly divided into the following two periods: classical and modern period.

2.2.1 CLASSICAL PERIOD

The connection of religion and politics is as old as when preaching of Islam emerged on the Arab land. Though the Western world had alienated religion from politics completely in the 17th and 18th centuries nevertheless in Islam the integration of religion and politics existed from the era of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Holy Prophet conveyed the message of Islam according to aspirations of Allah and he obtained his political support from his religious status. Holy prophet (PBUH) set up the first Islamic state of the world in Madina where he structured the state by making various treaties and put Sharia into practice.

He used to send ambassadors to other regions and also receive ambassadors from other regions.⁴² Even after the death of Holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH), there

⁴² Alamdari, op.cit.

still remained close relationship between religion and politics during the period of Islamic Caliphate, which used to issue both religious and political order. Regional rulers were contented from Caliphs for the reason that religious authority nominated judges and judiciary was running according to Sharia.⁴³ The death of Holy Prophet first time raised the question of political leadership.

Mainly two groups came out of leadership debate. One group favored the son-in-law, and cousin brother of Holy Prophet, who was Hazrat Ali, elected as their Imam and were called as Shi'ite School of thought. Other group favored to elect their leader according to the consensus of their community's prominent leaders so they elected Hazrat Abu Baker as their first Caliph (from Khalifa, successor) and these were called as Sunni school of thought. It means the inception of Caliphate as a political institution came out in 1,300 years Umayyad till its abolishment in 1924 by Mustapha Kamal Atatürk in Turkey.⁴⁴

The most important sketch of classical Islam was that the Caliph reinstates as his first name specifies the prophet. He had dual tasks: one was to defend religion and second was worldly, to govern secular affairs.⁴⁵ In Islamic point of view, the notion of separation of religion from politics is solely mock. The separation of religion from politics in the west is the result of the ill-timed history of West. One hundred and twenty four thousand prophets were sent to the world to transform the society because the religion Islam emphasized on the organization of society.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (USA & Canada: Routledge, 2007), 28-29.

⁴⁵ Jan-Erik, Lane, Hamdi Redissi and Riyad Saydawi , *Religion and Politics: Islam and Muslim civilization* (UK: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2004),152.

All the Messengers of Allah were sent to the world to administer society and people. They were never told that religion was a personal matter and the actions were totally isolated from belief. In the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and even after the demise of Holy Prophet (PBUH) the religion was closely linked with politics.

In the period of classical Islam, the connection between religion and politics among Ismailis was closely connected with each other. Their spiritual leaders were at the same time religious and Political leaders. The Ismaili community remained faithful to their states where they lived as it was the order of their spiritual leaders. The Ismaili guidance had maintained a balance between religion and politics during the classical period of Islam.

2.2.2 MODERN PERIOD

It was the result of Western colonial occupation during the period of 19th and 20th century over the Muslim world that the modern Muslim religious revival came out.⁴⁶ It was the European Imperialism that enforced Muslims to submit their rule over them.⁴⁷ The last great Muslim institution, Ottoman Empire captured by the Turkish sultan in 1517⁴⁸ and finally it was blown part by the defeat of Turkey in World War I in 1918. Turkey had to fight against Allied powers in World War II and the defeat completely pulled down Ottoman Empire in 1924 when Kamal Ataturk

⁴⁶ Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, Why religion has become the new politics "*Financial Times*" (January 2005) <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1391fb70-68f6-11d9-9183-00000e2511c8.html#axzz1SMoua4Hu> (accessed April 10, 2011).

⁴⁷ Marjorie Kelly' *Islam: the religious and political life of a world community* (USA: Praeger Publishers, 1984), 137.

⁴⁸ Angel M. Rabasa *The Muslim world after 9/11* (USA: Rand Publishers, 2004), 268.

closed down the institution of Khilafat.⁴⁹ The demise of Khilafat institution did not mean that Muslims had separated religion from politics because general Muslims believed that Islam is a way of life and it is very close to be an integral part of politics.

It is because Islam considers the economic, social life, education and law as a part of the religious doctrine and not separate from it. That is why in the modern period, religion and politics finds a very close affinity in Islam. Before the emergence of Iranian revolution, many new advancements in the Muslim world had started to forestall and transform the intellectual social and political thought. There were many factors that had a role in transforming such happenings: Israel's conquer of the Arab Armies in the 1967, the breakdown of Arab Nationalism to convey either affluence or justice, the oil explosion that fortified Muslims self-possession, and Iranian revolution itself all led towards the re-emergence of Islam as a basis of identity and political enlistment. All over the Middle East and in the Islamic world the happenings of religious revitalization started in the form of religious practices.⁵⁰

From the late 1960s, the period of Islamic revivalism started in the Muslim world. The Arab Israel war of 1967 was a major blow to the Islamic world by losing holiest city in Islam: Jerusalem. It meant the war of 1967 erupted the issue of Arab- and Palestine as an Islamic issue all over the world and liberation of Jerusalem became a dilemma of regional political issue and also became world Islamic religio-political slogan.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Muhammad Ikaram Rabbani, *Pakistan Studies* (Lahore: Carvan Publishers, 2008), 77.

⁵⁰ Trevor C. Salmon and Mark F. Imber, *Issues in international Relations* (USA: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 211-212.

⁵¹ John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: OUP, 2005), 160-161.

From 1970s, the Muslim politics became more active in the sense that Muslims activated Islam practically in their life by making dress code compulsory in cities of Istanbul, Cairo, Tunis to Mindanao and Kuala Lumpur. Muslim countries used politics by adopting Islamic laws, punishments, taxes and by making Islamic banks. In this regard various Islamic States implemented State Islam with the help of religious institutions and state also supported religious leaders. There were many living examples where different leaders such as Egypt 's Anwar Sadat(1970-81), Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini(1979-89), Sudan's Colonel Jafara al- Numayri(1969-85) and General Omar ul Bashir(1989-) Pakistan's Zia ul-Haq(1977- 88) and the Taliban in Afghanistan (1996-2001) used Islam to enhance their legitimacy and to implement their own policies. Many Islamic governments have used Islamic manifestos and Islamic ideologies. In many Muslim countries such as in Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia and Iran, the states tried its best to boost their legitimacy and policies by using Islam as an instrumental tool.⁵² In modern period of Islam, the religion and politics are very much interlinked with each other and in the contemporary period of Islam, the interlink between religion and politics has been associated with the emergence of Islamic movements in the countries of Middle East.⁵³

Many more gigantic events took place around the world on the name of religion. The Arab-Israel war was the basic foundation of such events. And the most striking paradigm of modern involvement of politics in the religion of Islam is the revolution of Iran 1979 as Iranians became successful in establishing Islamic republic

⁵² Ibid, 160-161.

⁵³ Frederic Volpi, *Political Islam A critical reader* (USA: Routledge, 2010), 17.

of Iran that is running well till today. Many Islamic governments are using religious slogans over political motives of their governance to win the hearts and minds of public.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION OF ISMAILI SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

3.1 GENESIS OF ISMAILIS

Ismailis are in reality The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, belonging to the Shia (Ithna 'Ashariyyah or twelevers) offshoot of Islam. Ismailis affirm as a true Muslim, the basic Islamic testimony of Shahada according to which there is no God except Allah and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the final messenger of Allah and the Holy Quran is the last message towards humanity revealed to Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Ismailis have their roots in the Shia traditions and its roots are very closely related to Shia Ithna 'Ashariyyah or twelevers.⁵⁴

Like Shia Ithna Ashariyyah Muslims, Ismailis also do affirm that after the demise of Holy Prophet (PBUH), the succession of spiritual leadership of Muslim community goes to the hands of Hazrat Ali who was cousin and son in law of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Ismailis believe that it is by the hereditary succession that the spiritual leadership transferred from Holy Prophet to Hazrat Ali and such spiritual leadership is called Imamatus because as after the demise of Holy Prophet (PBUH) the institution of Prophet-hood had ended. According to Shia doctrine, succession to Imamatus is by the process of designation.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Marc Van Grondelle, *The Ismailis in the colonial Era: Modernity, Empire and Islam* (UK: C.Hurst & Co, 2009), 9.

⁵⁵ Ismaili Community: History, *The Institute of Ismaili*, op.cit.

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The question of succession made the two different interpretations of Islam. That is the Shia and Sunni's school of thought whose origin traced back to the crisis of succession of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It was the period of nascent Islamic community when majority of Muslims accepted the Sunni view of Islam and while minority of Muslim followed the Shia interpretation of Islam with its typical characteristics of concept of Imam. Ismaili Muslims were also the Shia appearing in the middle of the 2nd/ 8th century. The main crux of Ismailis faith goes to the institution of Imam where they believe in Hazrat Ali as their first Imam and still the rope of Imam is and will be continuing till the Day of Judgment.⁵⁶

3.2 EARLY POLITICAL HISTORIES OF ISMAILIS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF FATIMID DYNASTY

The middle of 2nd/ 8th century was the period when the name of Ismailis Imami Shia, Ismailis was derived after Imam Ismail the son of Imam Jaffer-Sadiq. Ismailis became further divided within their community into numerous branches but two of them were major branches and are still in majority. Presently, the Ismailis are from the Nizari branch and Tayyibi Mustalian branches.⁵⁷ The major division between Shia into two major branches split after the demise of Imam Jaffer Sadiq, accepted as Fifth Imam of Ismailis and as a sixth Imam of Shia Ithana 'Ashari. Those who accepted the affiliation of Musa Kazim (who was the younger son of (Jaffer Sadiq) as Imam were called twelevers or Ithana Ashari and others who gave their allegiance to the Ismail who was the elder son of Imam Jaffer Sadiq as their Imam were known as

⁵⁶ Daftary, op.cit, 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid,1.

Ismailis.⁵⁸ The Ismailis history had a lively and date back to the decisive phase of nascent Islam. Ismaili history can be divided into the following seven parts; Arabian Period, Dawr-i Satr Period, *The Fatimid Period. The Alamut Period, The Post-Almut or Anjudan Period, The Indo-European Period or Aga Khan Period, Modern Period or contemporary Period.*

ARABIAN PERIOD - 600-765AD

The very first period of Shia Islam initiated with the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The first four Caliphs of Islam, the bitter unpleasant incident of Karbala and also the ups and downs of Umayyad and Abbassid dynasties are part of this period.⁵⁹ Throughout this period, Shia Ismailis had led their lives under five Imams. In the first phase of Ismaili history, there was very close relation between religion and politics. Imams were their political as well as spiritual leaders and were bound by the affiliations of their Imams. Ismailis had to act according to their Imams decree.

DAWER- I-SATR PERIOD / PERIOD OF CONCEALEMNT

The demise of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq in 148 A.H/765A.D made the Shia split into two major branches. The abundant resources available state that it was Imam Ismail who was chosen by Imam Jafar al-Sadiq as his next successor.⁶⁰ That group who accepted Musa Kazim, the younger son were called as Ithna 'Ashariyyah (or

⁵⁸ Engineer, op.cit, 8.

⁵⁹The Arabian Period, *Heritage Society* <http://ismaili.net/heritage/node/18744> (accessed March 22, 2011).

⁶⁰ Daftary, op.cit, 93.

twelevers) and those who chose Ismail, the elder son of Jafar al- Sadiq were called as Ismailis.⁶¹

After the demise of Jafar al- Sadiq, the Abbasid started to increase their persecution of Ismailis. When the persecution and hostility of Abbasid reached to its peak, the Ismaili Imam decided to escape from them and started to live in some hidden place. Ismailis called this period of history as Dawar –Satr (period of concealment).⁶² The imam's secret place was known to no one except the trusted disciples. It started from the Ismailis sixth Imam Ismail to their 11th Imam, Imam Mehdi.⁶³

In the concealment period, the Ismaili Imams lived in Salamiyya (city of Syria) and their residence place was known to no one except Imam's trusted disciples. In such period, Imams prepared their representative or emissary for the purpose of da'wa⁶⁴ to spread their Ismaili propagation. And their Ismaili da'is or missionary became successful to spread da'wa in Sind and in North Africa.⁶⁵ It was the period of around one fifty years and this period became defunct with the emergence of Ismailis eleventh Imam Abdullah or 'al-Mahdi.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Engineer, op.cit, 8.

⁶² Concealment, veiling, in Ismailis doctrine , it is used specifically in reference to a period, called dawr al-satr, when imams were hidden from the eyes of their followers, Daftary, op.cit, 565.

⁶³ Jahangir A. Merchant, "The Establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate in North Africa and the Conquest of Egypt" *Simerg* (January 2011), <http://simerg.com/literary-readings/great-moments-in-ismaili-history-the-establishment-of-the-fatimid-caliphate/> (accessed April 07, 2011).

⁶⁴ Mission or propaganda; in the religio-political sense, da'wa is the invitation or call to adopt the cause of an individual or family claiming the right to the imamate, Daftary, op.cit. 559.

⁶⁵ Aziz Esmail, Azim Nanji, op.cit 245-255.

During this phase of Ismailis the religious and political activities worked side by side. There was a dominancy of religious activities under the secret representatives of Dai's. The practical political role of Ismailis was not as much dominated as Ismaili activities were limited towards the propagation of their faith in the far regions of the world such as in Sind and in Northern Africa. Ismaili dai's were searching the areas to make their state. Therefore in phase Ismailis could not get any political success to make any area as their sphere of influence over other their opponents.

THE FATIMID PERIOD

Abd Allah al-Mahdi, Ismailis 11th Imam asserted the Imamate in 286 A.H/899A.D and was decreed the first Fatimid caliph in 297 A.H/909A.D at Raqqada, in contemporary day of Tunisia.⁶⁷ Fatimid State from A.D. 909 to 1095 presented to show the political trends during the first two centuries of the Fatimid Caliphate, the extent of its efforts to win the allegiance of the Muslim world, and its struggle for power against the 'Abbassid of Baghdad'.⁶⁸

It was their first Political supremacy that gained in 296A.H/909 A.D in North Africa, after a long tenure of great effort in numerous parts of the Islamic world and finally in 297A.H/910A.D, the Fatimid's declared publicly their Caliphate.⁶⁹ It was the

⁶⁶ Dr Shainool Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire and the Founding of Cairo*, The institute of Ismaili studies (August 2009).
<http://iis.ac.uk/WebAssets/Large/RG%20TSME%202011%20%20FINAL%20for%20web%20site%20with%20edits.pdf> (accessed April 27,2011).

⁶⁷ Sumaiya A. Hamdani, "Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood" , *The institute of Ismaili Studies*(March 2007)
<http://www.iis.ac.uk/SiteAssets/pdf/Between%20Revolution%20and%20State.pdf>(accessed March 28,2011).

⁶⁸ Vatikiotis, op.cit, x.

⁶⁹ Walker, op.cit, 1.

earliest time in Egyptian history that under the banner of Islam Egypt became not only province but also an independent state.⁷⁰ The Fatimid Caliphate was zenith of Ismailis political success, at the peak of Ismailis this political power of Fatimid, they lagged behind the Abbassid and Umayyad who were their rivals.⁷¹

The Fatimid Caliphs combined both, the religious and secular power in their person and thus were more respected than the Umayyad or Abbassid Caliphs. These Caliphs wore a religious halo. Husan Ibrahim Hassan enlightened that the Umayyad and Abbassid were tyrant while running the affairs of the State. The Fatimid State was theocratic-autocratic.⁷² Ismaili movement was the greatest challenge to Abbasid rulers because it was well- organized and also because of its careful strategies and well planning, it became spreading vastly.⁷³

In the supremacy of al-Mahdi, Fatimid set up a well-built naval fleet that dared to face the two regional powers at that time: Spain of Umayyad *and the Byzantines parts of Southern Europe and the Middle East from its capital Constantinople (present-day Istanbul)*.⁷⁴ The Fatimid period of Ismailis was called as 'Classical Fatimid period' which lasted over 185 years where Ismailis faith was the state religion as a powerful dynasty in Ifriqiya (Tunisia), first and then after 362A.H/973 A.D, its center of empire transferred to Egypt.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Ibid, 40.

⁷¹ Virani .op.cit,6.

⁷² Engineer, op.cit, 76-77.

⁷³ Ibid, 33.

⁷⁴ Jiwa,op.cit.

⁷⁵ Daftary, op.cit, 144.

This period was also called as 'golden age' of Ismailism, because it was first time that Ismailis achieved a state of their own which was prosperous enough and where their literature and their ideology was on its peak. After making Ifriqiya as their center of power, Fatimid rulers moved their religio –political influence towards Transoxiana and India. Even the navy of Fatimid became successful to attack on the southern part of France and was successful to capture its islands of Sardinia and Corsica.

It was under the Imam al-Mu'izz (341-365A.H/952-975A.D) reign that Fatimid made the world first university al-Azhar in 378/A.H 988-989A.D.⁷⁶ Imam al-Mu'izz, made Cairo his capital after Egypt was conquered in 969A.D.⁷⁷ During Fatimid reign of Imam Mu'izz, Multan was made as their Vassal state in Sind. In Multan, Ismaili missionaries or da'is succeeded to convert their local ruler before the period of 348 A.H/959 A.D. After this great success, the Khutba was read in the Fatimid Caliph. This led to strengthening Fatimid in Makran, where their Khutba was also read on Fatimid Caliph's name.

The conquest of Egypt in 973 A.D was its historic achievement during the Ismailis 14th Imam, al-Mu'izz by the great general al-Jawahr. The Fatimid's rule over Egypt was its peak of military, religious and political attainment. The new capital of Egypt al-Qahirah (Cairo) was established in 969 A.D by Fatimid. The strength of Fatimids rule relied mainly on the strong naval power. With that, the Fatimids became able to capture the islands of Crete, Corsica, Malta and Sicily under their authority

⁷⁶ Ibid.173.

⁷⁷ Merchant, op.cit.

which gave great importance to Fatimid's suzerainty over their maintenance of authority over Mediterranean.

Fatimids had such a great strategic position due to which they took advantage by building ports such as Mahdiyya, which was opening way to wealthy maritime trade. Beside these achievements, the Fatimid's became successful to capture other far regions beyond the Egypt to Palestine, the Hijaz, Syria, Yemen and Sind. The Fatimids became successful to capture Baghdad for short time under their authority by snatching power from Abbassid in 1058 A.D.⁷⁸

During the al-Muizz, the economic transformation that he kicked off in Egypt became greatly influential in altering the moribund economic and political destiny of Egypt. Egypt was being made as core of his Mediterranean domain and it brought political constancy, economic opulence and social equality. Imam al-Muizz became successful to change the regional Fatimid Empire into powerful and remarkable Mediterranean empire broadened from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The Fatimids Empire presented the first continued knowledge of the Shia domain, the fundamental set of guidance illustrated the Shia version of Islam.⁷⁹

It was in Fatimid's rule that Egypt made its international trade relations with Far East, North Africa, India, Nubia, Byzantium (particularly Constantinople) and the islands of the Mediterranean. In terms of Political organization, Fatimid had made an extraordinary system of centralization; where Imam was the head of administrative hierarchical body. Under the authority of Imam, there were ministers who ran the

⁷⁸ Esmail, Azim, op.cit.

⁷⁹ Jiwa, op.cit.

administrative body and who also supervised the internal institutions and Fatimid's colonial provinces outside. The military force and civil service had the same kind of centralized hierarchical authority.⁸⁰

It was under 15th Imam of Ismailis, Imam Al-Aziz (365-386A.H/975/996A.D) that Christians were allotted many ministries under the Fatimids. Even Jews were also nominated on high positions but not like Christians to be appointed on the Vizierate seats. It was only in Fatimid reign that both Christians and Jews were in practice of their religious practices.⁸¹ Imam Hakim (996-1021 A.D), 16th Imam of Ismailis took significant steps by constructing the organization of the Dar al-Hikma (House of wisdom), from time to time it is also called Dar al-Ilm that was structured in 395A.H /1005 A.D in Cairo.

Library was very well that served at the same time as a summit place for astronomers, traditionalists and for jurists, as well as it was for the spread of Shia set of guidelines in broad-spectrum and the propagation of Fatimid Ismailism in particular. Sunni jurists were tolerable as well to be educated at the Dar al-Hikma. Fatimid's reign made various important contributions to live the Islamic civilization as living heritage due to which L. Massignon called the 4th/10th century as the 'Ismaili Century' of Islam.⁸²

The Fatimid Sate was not only the splendid time period in Ismailis history but it also marked as a glorious period in Muslim and especially in Egyptian history.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Daftary, op.cit, 185.

⁸² Ibid, 145.

Cairo was at its peak in terms of giving scholarships, in art and science, culture and also to serving the Ismaili da'wa as their main headquarter which also became successes to spread their propagation outside the Fatimid period even. During the Fatimid reign, their Caliph had all power to control the state affairs and had equal authority among its three supreme branches of government that was by having full control over the bureaucracy, the armed forces and on their religious hierarchy.⁸³ The Ismaili movement was totally religious –cum- political movement during the Fatimid reign. It was clear cut religious ideology with its unique characteristics having political intention to make their own government based on Ismaili religious ideology. The Ismaili religious doctrines were based on the religion of Islam, higher learning and on philosophy. Ismailis religious doctrines had very close adherence with their religious philosophy.

FATIMID DECLINED AND REBELLION

It was from the period of Imam Al-Mustansir supremacy of his lengthy period (427-487 A.H/1036-1094A.D) that the Caliphate of Fatimid started declining from its political perspective. In Swiftly series, Fatimid started to lose their almost entire belongings exterior of Egypt only some coastal urban cities in the Area of Levant. Imam Mustansir death (487A.H/1094 AD) resulted in hot discussion over the succession that escort split in Ismailis. AlFadal was Vizier (Minster) as well as “commander of the armies” He deprived Imam Al-Mustansir’s elder son Nizar who was also heir designated from his succession right. Younger –half brother of Nizar

⁸³ Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins The Radical sect of Islam* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 33-34.

was installed by Al-Afdal as Fatimid Caliphate by giving him the title of al-Musta'libi'llah. Soon Al-fadali succeeded in his mission as people of Cairo instantly gave their commitment to al-Musta'li. As an objection Nizar mounted in rebellion in Alexandria, however was defeated as well as executed soon in 488/1095. These occurrences eternally divided the Ismailis da'wa as well as community into two adversary groups, elected as Musta'liyaa and Nizaryya subsequent to al-Mustansir sons who had asserted his inheritance.⁸⁴ This dissertation focus is on Nizari Ismailis who are the followers of Prince Karim Aga Khan IV as their 49th spiritual Imam.

FATIMID'S COLLAPSED

Meanwhile, the Musta'li Ismailism had to face an internal division of its own with decisive effects. Al-Musta'li' died untimely in 495A.H/1101A.D: All followers of Musta'li Ismailis accepted his son al-Amir as their next imam and heir to the Fatimid caliphate. There was close association existing at that time between Fatimid Egypt and Sulayhid Yaman that Queen al-Sayyida also recognized al-Amir's Imamate. Al-Amir was killed in 524A.H/1130A.D that created a major disaster for Musta'li da'wa as well as communities. It was the time, when Fatimid caliphate was collapsed swiftly, where as the Sulayhid state was overwhelmed by its own rising complexities.

Under such critical conditions, after the assassination of al-Amir, power was taken by al-Amir's cousin 'Abd al-Majid, whereas al-Amir's infant son al-Tyayyib

⁸⁴ Farhad Daftary, "The Ismaili dawa Outside the Fatimid dawla", *The Institute of Ismaili studies* (November 2008), 29-43, http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=104468#anchor27 (accessed on February 22, 2011).

was vanished in strange state of affairs who was his designated heir. Soon after that in 526A.H/1132A.D, Abd al-Majid auspiciously declared himself as the Imam of the Musta'li Ismaili as well as the Fatimid caliphate by the name of al-Hafiz li Din Allah. His succession was also acknowledged by the supporters from Egypt and Syria who were the reliant on the Fatimids. These Mustali Ismailis who accepted Al-Hafiz (d. 544A.H/1149A.D) were called as Hafiziyya.⁸⁵

END OF FATMID RULE

Saladin Ayyubi (d. 589A.H/1193A.D) was the last Fatimid minister who eliminated the Fatimid rule in 567/1171, and also read the Khutba in the name of Caliph Al-Mustadi (d. 575A.D/1180A.D) from Abbasyid in the Cairo. Hence they declared in Egypt publicly about their suzerainty. Saladin Ayyubi kept a very severe resentment in his nature towards Fatimids, and for the reason, the writer wrote in *"The Encyclopaedia of Islam"* (Leiden, 1936, 3rd vol., p. 353) that, he had all the assets of the fort, as well as books which he had been sold more than ten years.

Many precious books were on fire, many books were thrown into the river of Nile and also many books were thrown into mound and then that mound was covered with sand, thus they made a normal "hill of books" was shaped and also their military forces used to make soles of their shoes with their well binding. Large amount of books were dissipated away which were from 120,000 to 2,000,000. Hence, the Fatimid rule was established in North Africa in 297A.H/909A.D. This rule was representation of supreme religio-political and also the cultural achievement of

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Shia of Islam. This phase ended after a glorious rule of 262 years, where Fatimid's ruled over Egypt for golden time of 191 years.⁸⁶

Even president of Libya, Qaddafi became amazed of Fatimid period's policies of peace and tranquility that he called North Africa Shi'ite and entitled for organization of New Fatimid State. He was addressing the tribal leaders of Niger to Tuareg on 31st March 2007, where he emphasized to establish a second Shi'ite Fatimid state in North Africa by following the replica of 10th to 13th century of Fatimid state.

Qaddafi said that we would like to revitalize for a second time. He further said that we express a renewed dub to the first Fatimid state to restore it in a new modern way, as a second Fatimid State but on the terms and conditions that it should be from every sectarian clash as well as free from the discussion about the Imamate and (spiritual or religious) decree (or Hakimmiyya). Qaddafi said that it was in Fatimid Period that all schools of thoughts were granted a free hand to worship.⁸⁷

The initiation of the Fatimid Empire and its states in North Africa manifested the renovation of Shia movement into the most important Islamic dynasty, instigating simultaneously the 'golden age' of Ismailis. The caliph of Fatimid dynasty was not merely head of state of huge and flourishing state; he was Ismaili Imam too, progeny from Holy prophet's (PBUH) family through his daughter Bibi Fatima belonging to

⁸⁶ Ali, op.cit, 359.

⁸⁷ Muammar al-Qaddafi, "In Overture to Iran, Qaddafi Declares North Africa Shi'ite and Calls for Establishment of New Fatimid State", *The Middle East Media Research Institute* (April, 2007) <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/2137.htm> (accessed February 16, 2011).

the Ahl-Al-Bayt. It meant he was the religious head of the Fatimid Ismailis, consisting of the chief body of the Ismailia; anywhere they were to be setup.

The message of Ismailis did have had substantial call to diverse communal groups as well as exterior of Fatimid power; go through by the clandestine and hierarchical Fatimid da'wa association that guaranteed to ease Muslims from the cruel rule of the Abbasid and other rising dynasties. For the quest of these principles, the Fatimid da'is spread the memorandum of Ismailism in numerous lands, particularly the provinces of Abbasid in the Eastern part of Muslims.

The Fatimid's realization could not be completed. Fatimid's had befallen as unsuccessful to amalgamate all the Muslim's on their Fatimid Alid Imamat platform as well as became unsuccessful in their strategy to take over the eastern part. However, they accomplished in cheering exhaustive, academic and literal activities in Fatimid Egypt. Fatimid made Cairo as a prosperous centre of sciences, arts and of commerce that challenged Baghdad in the 5th/11th century. Through the decisive time period of Islamic history century, the Fatimid reign stood the key cultural and political power of the Muslim humanity till the capture of Saljuq power.⁸⁸

The faith of Ismailis was the official religion of Fatimid Empire that successfully preserved its harmony for about two centuries, even though it had to face sporadic inner discard of slight weightage. The central body of Ismaili's remained loyal to their Fatimid Imams, either within Fatimid authority or outside Fatimid power but could not be triumphant over the Sunni Muslims who were in majority. In such

⁸⁸ Daftary, op.cit, 254.

religio-political surrounding where there were antagonists, such as Saljuqs as well as dissention from inside put the Fatimid caliphate on a track towards turn and finally it fall down. This fall down had irreversible outcomes for the movement of Ismaili school of thought. Fatimid Ismailis faced its most disastrous inner inconsistency and it grounded a main division among Ismailis at the time of Mustansir death in 487/1094. The official religion of Ismailis at Fatimid empire had almost collapsed. By that time, Ismailis of Fatimid had forsaken their wish to rule over world as universal leadership of Islam, and until now their intellectual accomplishments and their contributions had enhanced Islamic civilization and Islamic thought.

All these activities have clear proof that in the period of Fatimid, there was very much close integration of religion and Politics. Both religious and political activities were under the leadership of Ismaili Imams/Caliph. At a time, Fatimid's Imam/ Caliph worked as head of state as well as led their community as Imam. It was first ever Ismaili empire where practical politics remained successful by capturing many states under their sphere of influence. This period of Ismaili history was very glorious in terms of close relation between religion and politics side by side.

THE ALAMUT PERIOD

Alamut is the fortress located in the district of Rudbar in the Alburz Mountains which is in the south of Caspian Sea. The Alamut period started from 438A.H/1090A.D which was the foundation period of Ismaili state at Persia and in Syria till the collapse of Persian State in 654/1256,⁸⁹This period started from Imam

⁸⁹ Ibid, 322.

Al-Hadi bin al Nizar (490/530 A.H/1097-1136 A.D)⁹⁰ to 27th Imam Ruknuddin Khur Shah (653-655 A.H/1255-1257 A.D).⁹¹

The Alamut period lasted for some 166 years, under the strong leadership of Ismaili da'is Hassan-bin- Sabbah, Ismailis became successful to maintain their independent state among their antagonistic Sunni's who possessed power mainly in the hands of Saljuq Turks. The Nizari State of Alamut is extending from Syria to Eastern Persia, where Ismailis succeeded to capture various other fortresses which were near to Alamut valley and even they gained control over villages and towns also. With the passage of time, Nizari State became weakened due to its extended wars against its dreadful enemies.

Eventually it was collapsed by Mongol; Persia was attacked by Hulegu's Mongol Armies in 654 A.H/ 1256 A.D.⁹² Fortress of Alamut which was also under the control of Syrian Ismailis was taken by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars I. Till 671 A.H/1253 A.D, Baybars snatched all fortresses from Ismailis.⁹³ This was the end of Ismailis political dominancy in Persia and after this demise; Ismailis could never regain any political power as a state in any part of the world. This was the second most important phase of Ismaili history in terms of political dominancy where religion and politics worked closely. This period continued their Fatimid's political policy to keep control the states in Persia and Syria. This was the first phase of Ismailis where mountainous parts of Iran became their sphere of influence.

⁹⁰ Ali, op.cit, 415.

⁹¹ Ibid, 470.

⁹² Daftary, op.cit, 322.

⁹³ Ibid, 325.

GENEGHIS KHAN'S MASSACRE

Genghis Khan was one of the great adverse of Ismaili Muslims. As Genghis Khan professed regarding the Ismailis as a major menace towards his movement. Thus he sent his brother Hulagu Khan at the head of powerful army to exterminate the entire Ismaili community.⁹⁴ Genghis Khan had ordained that the Ismailis were to be annihilated: "*None of that people should be spared*", he decreed, "*not even the Babe in its cradle*". These terrifying words were harbinger of the history's most shocking example of mass annihilation.⁹⁵ Ismailism being a state religion and its political power was already ruined prior to the Mongols and the Mamluk invasion. Even after the ebb of Ismailis political worth they kept hold perilously throughout the after Alamut phase that was permanently vanished in the year 654A.H/1256A.D.

By the collapse of Alamut, the splendid mountainous stronghold chosen by Hassan Bin Sabah as the actual headquarter of their movement, after this phase Ismailis had gone through entirely diverse and frequently murky time of their history, existing only as a small Shia Muslim faction lacking its previous political importance.⁹⁶

Genghis Khan's efforts could not wipe out Ismailis but as far they became successes to expunge Ismailis political domain. Since then to up till now Ismailis could not manage to make any part of the world as their own autonomous state.

⁹⁴ Virani, op.cit,29.

⁹⁵ Ibid,4.

⁹⁶ Daftary, op.cit, 434.

THE POST-ALAMUT OR ANJUDAN PERIOD

The darkest period and obscure in the Ismailis throughout history is the Post-Alamut Period. It is the longest period of some 580 years and eighteen Imams had led their community. In post Alamut period, Ismaili Imams were in clandestine in many parts of Persia, the purpose of clandestine was to preserve the institution of Imam. Ismailis had no communication with their Imams. Ismailis had to repeat their method of Taqiya to survive their faith from the further persecutions of the Ilkhanids and Timurids who had great animosity towards Ismailis. Under such circumstances Ismailis had to adopt the method of Sufism.⁹⁷

It was in post Alamut period that Nizari community split into two groups after Imam Shams al-Din Muhammad, the Muhammad Shahi and the Qasim-Shahi. After Imam Shams al-Din Muhammad, the line of Muhammad Shia ceased two centuries earlier, while present Nizari Ismailis were from Qasim- Shahi lineage.⁹⁸

The Post-Alamut was a period where practical political activities of Ismailis became almost ended. The reason behind these non-political activities during this period was that thousands of Ismailis were persecuted at the hands of Ilkhanids and Timurids. This was the longest ever period of Ismailis where the practical political activities were restrained by their Imams. As their faith was in danger from their opponents, therefore Ismailis practically became alienated from politics but not in theoretical.

⁹⁷ Daftary, op.cit,435.

⁹⁸ Ibid,446-447.

Consequently Ismaili Imam had given the survival of faith as their prime concern rather than to involve in political activities. This phase indicate that although Ismailis had theoretically kept religion and politics side by side but in practice religion was dominant over political activities.

MODERN PERIOD/ AGA KHAN PERIOD

Modern Period or Aga Khan Period is the sixth phase of Ismaili history and it started from 46th Imam Hassan Ali Shah known as Aga Khan I (1808-1881) to living Imam 49th Imam Shah Karim al-Hussaini, Aga Khan IV (b1936). The modern Period of Ismailis started when Hassan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I) shifted to India (Bombay) from Iran in 1841.⁹⁹

RELIGION AND POLITICS DURING AGA KHAN I (1804-1881)

Hassan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I) was the forty-sixth Imam of Ismailis and was the first Ismaili Imam to stand the title of Aga Khan, which was given to him by the then Persian King Fatah Ali Shah Qajar.¹⁰⁰ During this phase the relation between religion and politics became dominant and there was balance between religion and politics. Aga Khan I served as governor of Kirman in 1251/1835. Aga Khan I (Hassan Ali Shah) soon succeeded in restoring law and order in Kirman without receiving any payments from the Qajar Treasury. Both Bam and Narmashir, held for a long time by rebellious elements, were also reduced to obedience.

⁹⁹ Alexander De waal, *Islamism and its enemies in the Horn of Africa* (USA: Indiana University Press, 2004) 174.

¹⁰⁰ Zulfikar Hirji and Azim Nanji, "Modern Ismaili Communities", *The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (September 2010), 208-210, http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=110057 (accessed on March 17, 2011) .

Aga Khan I's effort was to annex Hyderabad and all Sind to be part of British India that bore fruit. Aga Khan I sent his brother Muhammad Baqir Khan in April 1844 to occupy the fortress of Bampur (Banfahl), which was in Persian Baluchistan but soon Aga Khan I sent his other brother Sardar Abdu'l-Hassa Khan to finally capture Bampur (Baluchistan). A tremendous change came during the period of 1840s, after seven centuries the institution of Imamatus shifted from Persia to India.¹⁰¹ In 1257/March 1841, Aga Khan I had to leave Iran.¹⁰² During their modern period, Ismailis once again repeated his ancestor's history by involving practically in political activities. Here religion and politics became closely integrated after a more than 580 years.

RELIGION AND POLITICS DURING AGA KHAN II (b1830-d1885)

Aga Khan's history started in subcontinent (India) when Aga Khan I went to Sind in the year 1842 along with his Ismaili community.¹⁰³ From this period the political role of Ismailis started as well in Subcontinent politics. The Imamate (as Imam) tenure of Aga Khan II (Aga Ali Shah) was very short as it hardly consists of four years. Being a religious leader, he had concerned about his communities and kept continuous contact that lived in East Africa, Samarkand, Burma and in Badakhshan.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, 590.

¹⁰³ G. Allana, *Muslim Political thought the ages:1562-1947* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1988), 252.

During the short period, Aga Khan II made his political relations with Indian British.¹⁰⁴ Imam Hassan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I) was led by his son Aga Ali Shah (Aga Khan II) in 1881 as 47th Imam of Ismailis, who also played vital role to educate the Indian Muslims with the contemporary education. He had very vivid role in representing Muslims in the booming political institutions during the period of British rule in India.¹⁰⁵ Aga Khan II (1298-1302/1881-1885) was appointed to the Bombay Imperial Legislative council from 1880 to 1885.¹⁰⁶ It was Aga Khan II who helped the Indian Muslims (Bombay) to organize the Bombay Muhammadn National Association.¹⁰⁷ After the creation of association, Aga Khan II was elected as president of Central National Muhammadan Association till his demise 1885.¹⁰⁸ It was political institution made by Ameer Ali in 1877 towards the advancement of subcontinent Muslims.¹⁰⁹

Aga Khan II Imamate tenure dominated with both religion and politics equally and there was closer integration between religion and politics. He served as Imam of time as well worked for subcontinent Politics. Although his life span was very short as Imam, however during this short period he served the Indian Muslim community. This showed that Ismaili leadership was involved in the political activates even before the emergence of congress.

¹⁰⁴ Mumtaz Ali Tajdin Sadik, AGA ALI SHAH, AGA KHAN II (1298-1302/1881-1885), 47TH IMAM <http://ismaili.net/heritage/node/10146>(acces.sed March 23, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ali, op.cit, 653.

¹⁰⁷ G.Allana, op.ct,253.

¹⁰⁸ Syed Amir Ali <http://www.storyofpakistan.com/person.asp?perid=P006>

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

RELIGION AND POLITICS DURING AGA KHAN III (1877-1957)

Aga Khan III (Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah) succeeded as Ismailis 48th when Imam Aga Ali Shah (Aga Khan II) died in 1885. At that time, Aga Khan III served as Imam for 72 years which was the longest period in Ismailis Imam history. It was in his tenure that there became a revolutionary change in political, social and from economic front among Ismaili Muslims not only in subcontinent but also at world level.¹¹⁰

It was Aga Khan's prominent role during the establishment of Aligarh movement that Lord Curzon nominated Aga Khan III as the Viceroy of India, on the seat of legislative council.¹¹¹ It was Aga Khan III in 1906 who was leader of Muslim delegation meeting to the Lord Minto at Shimla, where he asked the viceroy that Indian Muslims should not be treated as minority but should be equally treated just like others: The Muslim members also deserved to be members of both loyal and legislative councils.

Aga Khan III became the first president of All-India Muslim League in 1907 and led as president till his resignation in 1912.¹¹² Again it was the deputation of Aga Khan III in Morley Minto Reforms of 1909 that viceroy became agreed to give a separate electorate for Muslims.¹¹³ He had also great role to separate Sind from Bombay and also to establish Sind as a separate province with its own administration

¹¹⁰ Hirji and op.cit.

¹¹¹ Allana, op.cit, 260.

¹¹² Daftary, op.cit.481.

¹¹³ Allana, op.cit, 260.

and with its own Governor.¹¹⁴ Aga Kahn III heartedly supported Khilafat Movement and he urged the British Government to maintain the sovereignty of Turkey and the sanctity of the Caliphate. In 1928, Aga Khan III presided the All Muslim Conference. In 1930 and in 1931, he was the representative of Muslims from Indian subcontinent in the round table conferences. Aga Khan also led the Indian delegation to the World Disarmament conference in 1932.¹¹⁵ He also served as the President of League of Nations in 1937;¹¹⁶ he was the only Asian to get this post.¹¹⁷

AGA KHAN III: POLITICAL GUIDANCE TO ISMAILIS

Aga Khan III (Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah) had given his political guidance headed for his spiritual children, where he said that it had been the cultural practice of his ancestors and to which he also personally sticks, he constantly did counseling of Ismailis to be loyal and faithful to the state to whom they were its subjects and no matter what kind of its constitution is, whether republican or monarchial. Aga Khan III said on other occasion that he himself and even his ancestors had always told their followers to be loyal of their constituted lawful authority of the country. If Ismailis face any political difficulty, they can contact their governments as lawfully constituted.

Political guidance of Aga Khan III illustrated that his school of thought had emphasis not only on religious segment but on political segment too. Ismaili

¹¹⁴ Aga Khan, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World enough and time* (London: Cassell & Co Ltd, 1954), 230.

¹¹⁵ Siddiqui, op.cit, 6.

¹¹⁶ Daftary, op.cit. 522.

¹¹⁷ Allana, op.cit. 265.

leadership asked their followers to make contact with the administration by legal means if they faced any political intricacy. It indicated that Ismailis were not restricted to keep any political contact with government.

TOLERANCE AND RIGIDITY: SURVIVAL AND CONTINUITY OF ISMAILIS

The Ismailis leadership (Aga Khan III) expressed his views on the matter of rigidity in Ismaili school of thought by saying that Ismaili faith had stayed alive for the reason that it has been constantly fluid; inflexibility was divergent to Ismailis throughout their life and in their stance. In Ismailis, there has not been any cut and desiccated system.¹¹⁸ By and large perception with reference to Ismailis was that their school of thought was not rigid one as other schools. It was proved as the Ismailis 48th Imam stated that stiffness was totally contradictory to their faith and there was continuously fluid.

AGA KHAN III: VOICE IN DEFENSE OF ISLAM

Westerns had been annoying to make the religion of Islam as a disreputable one. From centuries and it is still going on the basis of freedom of speech. Such manner of experience was also tested in London in October 1951, when London press "London Times" made several excessive accusations against the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 185.

The Aga Khan III defended Islam whenever Islam was criticized by the West. Aga Khan responded very energetically to the "London Times" on October 22, 1951. He made it clear that Islam promotes tolerance. It is the religion which shows respect for other faiths. Rather, Islam has its foundations in accepting all the divine faiths before it. The violent reaction against the west among the Muslim countries is not because of Islam or intolerance of Muslims for non-Muslims. It is the attitude of the West towards Muslims and their values. The Westerners are ignorant of the Islamic faith and cultures. This has been refereed from the article by the West against Islam.¹¹⁹

Ismailis spiritual leadership response indicated that they cannot tolerate any Western propaganda on the subject of the Islamic faith and he visibly said that it was the slip-up and anti- Islamic propaganda of West when Muslim countries had to stand against the western world. This statement of Ismaili leadership portrayed the clear picture that they had voice to keep the esteem of Islam. The role of Aga Khan III in political activities has been widely accepted by the high political officials of West.

It was because of Aga Khan III political activism in subcontinent politics that on 5th February 1924 the council of state passed a resolution to grant Noble prize for peace to him. This resolution was request from the Indian government to the president of Norwegian.¹²⁰ It was because of Aga Khan III vast knowledge over International Politics and his deep erudition that King Edward gave statement about him,

¹¹⁹ Ali, op.cit, 688.

¹²⁰ Allan, op.cit, 263.

*I am hopeful that during the next half century the Aga Khan will play that part in directing the destinies of the world of Islam for which is position and abilities so eminently qualify him.*¹²¹

This statement indicates the shrewdness towards world politics. It was Aga Khan III active involvement in politics that the press used to take many interviews regarding Indian politics but gave their emphasis to Indian Muslims. All these activities are vivid proof of Aga Khan's political role. During the period of Aga Khan III, There was very much closed relation between religion and politics practically. This was the period where Aga Khan III became internationally known to the world due to his political services for Indian Muslims towards the independence of Pakistan. This was the phase where Ismaili leadership vigorously involved in subcontinent politics.

¹²¹ Ibid, 254.

CHAPTER 4

ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE ABOUT RELIGION AND POLITICS

(1957-2010)

4.1 RELIGION AND POLITICS: ISMAILI OUTLOOK

It is general perception of the world that present Ismailis spiritual leadership Aga Khan IV remains silent on the contemporary political issues of the world. In fact, he does address on these issues from time to time. As he is the Imam of his community and it is his responsibility to address the issues of the world.

4.1.1 AGA KHAN IV (NOOR MAWLANA SHAH KARIM-HUSSAINI)

Noor Mawlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazir Imam (Aga Khan IV) born in Geneva on December 13 1936.¹²² He became the 49th spiritual Imam of Shia Ismailis of the world on the 11th July 1957 after the demise of his Grandfather Aga Khan III. Ismailis consider their Imam as a direct descendant of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). Presently he is the only living Imam of any Muslim community around the world: Since his first day of Imamatus (11th July 1957) to till present (2010), he is leading his community and guiding them towards both spheres of life. It is in Shia Islam teachings; Imam has the responsibility of interpreting the faith. Imam endeavored to give protection to his community and make their life qualitative. He struggled towards the welfare of all the Muslims around the world especially focused towards the poorest part of the world.

¹²² Nikhat Ekbal, *Great Muslims of undivided India* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2009), 89.

4.1.2 CONTEMPORARY PERIOD (1957-2010)

The most exceptional characteristic of the Islamic globe in the most recent centuries has been the domination of the West; either this domination has been experienced by direct supremacy or indirect supremacy by means of political and economic pressure, in each case the extension of Western supremacy and pressure has caused varying level of distraction of native modes of existence. The Muslim terrains have not been inert holder of the surge of western civilization. In many Islamic countries, different segments of people adopted various range of means to respond them besides coping with the present needs of scientific and industrial advancement.

Very few erudite and insightful Muslims in Dar-al-Islam have thus devoted their potentials to finding an answer where by Muslim community could sort out their lives in such manner to cope with the demands of the modern life. Well-known amid these two Ismaili Muslim leaders, who are Imams of Ismailis: Aga Khan III (Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah who was 48th Imam of Ismailis (1877-1957) and present Ismaili Imam Aga Khan (IV) Shah Karim Al-Hussaini (b1936). With the efforts of these two Imams, the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims have developed into the greatest model of flourishing effort by a Muslim community to produce a new way of life and a new mode of association in accordance with the demands of modern surroundings. At the same moment they keep maintaining a sense of stability with their religious history. This process was started by Aga Khan III and has been completed under the guidance of Aga Khan IV.¹²³ Aga Khan III passed on 11th July 1957, by leaving behind his elected grandson Prince Karim as the 49th genetic Imam of the entire Shia

¹²³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ismailis contribution to Islamic culture* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 254-255.

Ismaili Muslims. In not as much of decade and a half of Aga Khan IV successive to the Imam, roughly the entire Africa got self-determination. In Asia major political transformations also took place.

The developmental course was disrupted by severe crisis: the non-indigenous inhabitants were exclusion from Burma; the emergence of Bangladesh as a result of Pakistan's 1971 civil war; in the vicious autocratic leadership of Idi Amin, the eviction of the whole Asian inhabitants from Uganda as well as evacuation of non-indigenous inhabitants from Mozambique for the reason that almost entire collapse of law and order continued till the period of country's liberty.¹²⁴

Right after the succession as 49th Imam of time, Ismailis spiritual leader, Aga Khan IV had to handle with manifold governments with the individual target. Since 1957, variation to transform had been its steady characteristic. New-fangled predicament took place: the upsurge of aggressive ethnic hostility, like in Tajikistan, after the downfall of Soviet Union, and the ongoing brutalization of Afghanistan. To settle down things imperative humanitarian dealings have had to be acquired including, as soon as compulsory, relocation of displaced inhabitants either within the area concerned or in North America or Europe.

It was due to these speedy transformations in the local and national situations where the Ismaili Muslims had been living globally since 1957 that Aga Khan IV stayed away from his individual association with worldwide agencies just like the United Nations as well as from practical political activities. He had put back his direct

¹²⁴ Ismaili Imam: contemporary period, *The Institute of Ismaili studies* (November 2009), http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=104393(accessed May 22,2011).

individual functions that were grasped in the earlier period by his grandfather (Aga Khan III) and his other family members by new associations among these organizations and the zenith entity of the Ismaili Imam.¹²⁵

In the guidance of present spiritual leadership of Ismailis, Aga Khan IV, the organization of Imamatus has stretched out ahead of their unusual geographical hub and scale of activities. The desire that strengthens them, and forms the social scruples of his community elucidated in his many statements by The Ismaili Imam of time (Aga Khan IV) who remains the static Muslim ethic of sympathy for the susceptible in society.

Present living Imam of Ismailis, Aga Khan IV has been truthful to maintain his hereditary practice by sustaining a diversity of educational grounds, working to make better interaction among the diverse Muslim communities, connecting Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as charging his community to believe and trust in God and be a fine citizen of whatsoever country they live in. He has explained Islam as a philosophical and spiritual belief which teaches sympathy, patience and the inherent self respect of individuals. Aga Khan IV's personal teachings stress on social obligations and intellectual inquest as the suitable way to resolve harms of modernity and faith.¹²⁶

Spiritual leader of Ismailis has concentrated himself towards the query of prospect of Muslim world more frequently and with superior compassion than may be

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Notable Muslims: Muslim builders of the world civilization and culture* (oneworld publication, 2006), 18.

current Muslim leadership. He has asked Muslims to be a resolute and make a strenuous effort to make their prosperous cultural base. He has also discovered those elements which can make cultural foundation very strong by accepting the Islamic idea of human fraternity, the need of nurturing Muslim intellectual leaders motivated by the Islamic inheritance and of sponsoring the improvement of Islamic art and architecture besides accepting the requirement for speed up of technological and economic expansion.

Beside this he has advised Muslims against the extremes of Western cupidity. He articulates the strong assurance that the elements essential for a Muslim rebirth are all to be originate in Islam and its inheritance. These standard principles were expressed by Aga Khan IV in the following words,

With the passage of time; the world is undergoing a lot of changes. A vast world has now become like a crowded island. These changes have given rise to many fundamental challenges which especially include the foreign fleet of cultural ships which have no map to sail.¹²⁷

Aga Khan asks whether Muslims have got enough understanding of their social setup in the times to come. The answer to this question is uncertain. There is no other solution except the Holy Quran and the final Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Muslim world mistakenly delaying the search for solution of this very problem as it is our belief that Islam is the final religion of Allah Almighty.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 257.

The Holy Quran is the last book of Allah Mighty and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is his final messenger.¹²⁸

4.2 HUAMN WELFARE POLITICS OF ISMAILIS: AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (AKDN)

Ismailis deem that the greatest kind of charity according to Islam is to assist those people who are not self-sufficient and try to make the self-sufficient in such a manner that people become masters of their own fate.¹²⁹ This is what Ismailis consider as affirmation to all Muslims and their faith lies in their strong developmental network AKDN.

The network focuses its policies towards the areas of health, education, architecture, disaster reduction, environment, microfinance, promotion of private-sector enterprise, revitalization of historic cities and rural development and that makes the individual to help themselves. The network of AKDN carries out its agenda without any discrimination of belief, gender and origin.¹³⁰ This network is operating in thirty five countries of the world such as

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, BosniaHerzegovina, BurkinaFaso, Canada, Congo(DR C), Côte d'ivoire , Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar,

¹²⁸ Ibid, 257.

¹²⁹ His Highness The Aga Khan, Interview by, António Marujo and Faranaz Keshavjee, Lisbon, Portugal. July 23, 2008. <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8861/> (accessed May 22, 2011).

¹³⁰ <http://www.akdn.org/default.asp>, Aga Khan Development Network (accessed March 13, 2011).

*Mali, Mozambique, Portugal, Pakistan, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, USA.*¹³¹

It has over 200 further organizations and institutions that make the structure of network. Its paid workers are about 70, 000 and unpaid or volunteers employers are 100,000.¹³²

4.2.1 SOCIO-POLITICAL STRATEGY UNDER AGA KHAN DEVELOPEMNT NETWORK

Ismailis as their strong institution of AKDN promotes cooperation among various countries that work under its institutional framework. AKDN is covering all the major aspects of life such as: health, education, architecture, economic development, historic cities, humanitarian assistance, rural development, music, planning and building development, microfinance, Culture and civil society.

For the practical development following various institutions are working under the umbrella of AKDN: Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) Aga Khan Award for Architecture, The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), Aga Khan health services (AKHS), The Aga Khan Historic Cities Program (AKHCP), Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, The Aga Khan Music Initiative

¹³¹ Countries where AKDN work, Aga Khan Development Network, <http://www.akdn.org/countries.asp> (accessed March 13, 2011).

¹³² His Highness the Aga Khan., "*Nouvel Economiste Philanthropic Entrepreneur of the Year Award*" (Acceptanceaddress,Paris,France,December17,2009),Nanowisdoms, <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9344/> (accessed March 22, 2011).

(AKMI), Aga Khan Planning and Building Services (AKPBS) and Rural Development as well.¹³³

4.2.1.1 EDUCATION

Education is the backbone of any nation and no any nation can deny its significance. As education is the basic tool towards the development of societal and economic advancement of nation. Therefore AKDN is also active in this field specially, and working on the wide range of educational programs from early childhood care to degrees in medication.

In the development of education, various institutions are working such as the Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan University, University of Central Asia, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Academies, These are the prominent educational institutions that are concerned in some type of training or education, whether it is by syllabus improvement, presentations of Islamic art or literacy agendas for workers of economic project corporations. AKES is presently working in more than 300 schools and higher educational programs which endow with qualitative pre-school, primary, secondary and higher secondary school services in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda and in Kyrgyz up to more than 54,000 students are getting facilitated.

AKES is also operating new schools in the regions of Madagascar and in Kyrgyzstan as well as studying the viability of services and amenities in the area of

¹³³ <http://www.akdn.org/default.asp>, Aga Khan Development Network (accessed May 11, 2011).

Mozambique also.¹³⁴ The programs of Early Childhood Development (ECD) that facilitates to decrease the economic as well as social inequality and gender differences that split societies and are responsible for elements of poverty and are preferable to expensive corrective measures. The ECD is also working with the collaboration of AKES. It focuses on young children's excellent beginning of life. They concentrate on the area of health, nourishment and safeguard from harm. The ECD programs facilitate students to correspond efficiently with others.¹³⁵

4.2.1.2 HEALTH

Health has supreme place in the national development of any nation. Consequently, in the area of health, AKDN is very much active by operating the institutions of Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), The Aga Khan Planning and Building Services (AKPBS), the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the Aga Khan University (AKU) works closely in the area of health issues on precise tasks. The institutions of AKHS facilitate health services by more than 325 health facilities that added also nine hospitals in central Asia, in East Africa and in South Asia.¹³⁶

4.2.1.3 CULTURE

It is the culture that unifies the nation towards nation-building as well as human development. To preserve the culture, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC)

¹³⁴ Focus Area Educational Activities, *Aga Khan Development Network*
<http://www.akdn.org/education.asp> (accessed May 11, 2011).

¹³⁵ Investing in early Childhood Development (April, 2009) *Aga Khan Development Network*
<http://www.akdn.org/Content/734/> (accessed April 26, 2011).

¹³⁶ Focus Area Health activates (2007) *Aga Khan Development Network*
<http://www.akdn.org/health.asp> (accessed May 05, 2011).

works with its focus on the cultural, social, physical and economic renaissance of Muslim communities around the world. It consists of the Aga Khan Historic Cities, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and the Aga Khan Music Initiative in central Asia, and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of technology and the on-line ArchNet.org. There is also unit of the Museums an Exhibitions unit that synchronizes the development of a number of museum and exhibition projects. This organization of Aga Khan Trust for culture was established in 1988 in Switzerland to enhance the welfare and projection of people in the developing countries of Africa and Asia.¹³⁷

The Aga Khan Historic Cities program (AKHCP) is also one of the cultural programs of AKDN that aims to advance the maintenance and salvage of buildings and public places in historic cities of the Muslim world.¹³⁸ Aga Khan Music Initiative (AKMI) is also the part of Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC). It was initially launched in 2000 in Central Asia to hold up the brilliant musicians and music trainers who are trying to preserve their heritage music in contemporary forms. Initially, The Music initiative began to start its work from Central Asia and soon after it extended from Middle East, South Asia and then to North Africa.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Aga Khan Trust For Culture, "*Aga Khan Development Network*
<http://www.akdn.org/aktc.asp?type=p>(accessed June 12, 2011).

¹³⁸ Aga Khan Trust for Culture Historic Cities Program" *Aga Khan Development Network*
<http://www.akdn.org/hcp/>(accessed (accessed June 12, 2011).

¹³⁹ Aga Khan Trust for Culture Aga Khan Music Initiative" *Aga Khan Development Network*
http://www.akdn.org/aktc_music.asp?type=p (accessed March 22, 2011).

4.2.1.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the area of economic development, the institution of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) is operating in the developing part of the world with more than ninety different project companies with more than 30, 000 people. The aim of this institution is to promote the entrepreneurship and the construction economically high-quality projects in the developing globe. In real sense, it focuses on such areas where there is lack of sufficient foreign direct investment.

AKFED has 50 years practical work history that played a sound role by making investments and operated companies in the regions of South Asia, Central Asia, and in African countries as well. AKFED also plays a greater role by making collaboration with local and worldwide development associates to generate and activate companionship that provides goods and services that are crucial for economic advancement. AKFED furthermore works with governments to facilitate the formation of enabling legal and fiscal formation that supports the expansion of the private sector.¹⁴⁰

4.2.1.5 MICROFINANCE

The institution of AKDN has presented various microfinance services through integrated advance programs and self-standing microfinance organizations under the Aga Khan Rural Support Programs (AKRSP) 45,000 village organizations are associated in this program. These programs facilitate to initiate business, create jobs,

¹⁴⁰ Aga Khan Fund for economic Development", *Aga Khan Development Network* <http://www.akdn.org/akfed.asp?type=p> (accessed March 28, 2011).

construction of homes and finance house enhancements, purchase seed and livestock and make higher education promising.¹⁴¹

4.2.1.6 AGA KHAN PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES (AKPBS)

The AKPBS aims to advance the built environment, especially housing design and construction natural hazard alleviation, village planning, environmental sanitation and water supplies.¹⁴² Under the platform of AKPBS, there are two developmental programs: the Building and Construction Improvement Program (BACIP) and Water and Sanitation Extension Program (WASEP) operating in Pakistan. Both these programs were seen as a Good practice Cases under the United Nations Development Group's (UNDG) Millennium Goals (MDG) in 2010.¹⁴³

4.2.1.7 RURAL DEVELOPEMNT

In the field of rural development, The Aga Khan Foundation is dedicated to minimize rural poverty, especially in resources-poor, despoiled environments. It focuses on a small number of programs of important range.¹⁴⁴ Aga Khan Foundation is very much active in the northern part of Pakistan as well as in African countries.

¹⁴¹ Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance" *Aga Khan Development Network* <http://www.akdn.org/akam.asp?type=p> (accessed April 08, 2011).

¹⁴² Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, *Aga Khan Development Network* <http://www.akdn.org/akpbs.asp> (accessed March 21, 2011).

¹⁴³ Press centre, *Aga Khan Development Network* , <http://www.akdn.org/Content/1001> (accessed March 23, 2011).

¹⁴⁴ Aga Khan Foundation Development in Rural Areas, *Aga Khan Development Network* http://www.akdn.org/rural_development/default.asp(accessed March 23, 2011).

4.3 ASSOCIATION OF ISMAILIS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ismailis have also kept great interaction with international organizations as well. Such as: with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations Organization (UNO) and European Union (EU).

4.3.1 ASSOCIATION OF ISMAILIS WITH UNITED NATIONS (UN)

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is the leading network of Ismailis Muslims and it became the first International non-governmental organization to join a major effort by five Central Asian Republics, the Russian Federation and the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) to combat a growing regional drug problem. AKDN is the first non-governmental institute to bond a chief attempt by the Russian Federation, the five major Central Asian Republics and the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDP) to fight against a rising regional drug quandary. It was in 1997 that AKDN and UNDCP signed collaboration agreement with UNDCP placing especially to the drug problem in Central Asia and South West and also in the East Africa.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Aga Khan Network and Russia Join Central Asian Republics and the United Nations to Combat Growing Drug Problem, *Ismaili web intro page*
<http://www.amaana.org/ISWEB/russia.htm> (accessed March, 22 2011).

4.3.2 COLLABORATION OF ISMAILIS WITH EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

European Union is the mainly union of twenty seven European states working in the field of socio- political and economical development. It is also involved towards maintaining peace. On 23rd January 2007 at Brussels, Belgium, President of European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso and Chairman of AKDN foundation, Prince Karim Aga Khan signed a Joint Declaration regarding the strengthening of civil society organizations, promotion of social enclosure and governance in the countries of South, West, Central Asia, Middle East countries and in Sub Saharan countries.

European Commission has granted totaling up to €153 million to AKDN since 1986 in the areas of rural and urban progress, livelihood, and infrastructure and in the area of education.¹⁴⁶ This joint declaration shows the interest of European Union towards the growing role of civil society as well as towards the urban and rural development. This collaboration of Ismailis with EU indicates that Ismailis have sound interaction with it.

4.3.3 INTERACTION OF ISMAILIS WITH NATO HEADQUARTERS

AKDN is one of the leading private development networks in the world and also it is one of the major private donor organizations working in Afghanistan. NATO (North American Treaty Organization) is also one of the main constituent of the international community's participation in Afghanistan, mainly in the areas of

¹⁴⁶ "Press centre" Aga Khan *Development Network* <http://www.akdn.org/Content/159> (accessed March, 26 2011).

reconstruction of Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan establishment in granting security as well as stability for the efficiency of governance.

Living Imam of Ismailis, Prince Karim Aga Khan who is also the chairman and head of the Aga Khan Development Network met Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at NATO headquarter on 22nd January 2007. They talked about the different approaches of speeding up to the betterment of Afghan government.¹⁴⁷ Such kind of interactions indicates that Ismailis are working not for their community only but for the welfare of all humanity regardless of their race, colour and gender.

4.4 ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE ABOUT RELIGION AND POLITICS:

REGIONAL ISSUES (1957-2010)

Ismailis have their concerns regarding the important regional issues which demand their strong solution on its proper time. They also keep their eyes on the regional development around them.

4.4.1 KASHMIR ISSUE

Kashmir issue is the bone of contention between India and Pakistan since the inception of Pakistan 14th August 1947 and this critical dispute has not yet resolved. On this critical issue, 49th spiritual leader of Ismailis, Aga Khan IV said that Kashmir issue desires to be set on time. His highness emphasized to deal such critical issue on

¹⁴⁷“Visit to NATO by the Aga Khan” , *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*
<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2007/01-january/e0122b.html> (accessed May 02, 2011).

time and not to tolerate expanding widely and into more dramatic situations otherwise it would be too late to address that.¹⁴⁸

Ismailis have very vivid concern about the Kashmir issue and say that it is a political issue and should be solved as soon as possible otherwise such critical issue will become hard to grip on its delay. If such issue not addressed on its time, it will take more time to sort it out.

4.4.2 ISMAILIS AND POLITICS OF PAKISTAN

Prince Karim has expressed his concerns regarding the major dilemmas of Pakistan that it has very enormous problems since its inception of 1947. Kashmir, a part which is situated in Pakistan still remains unresolved. Still, the administration of Islamabad has not yet dealt to exercise its powers in the north and in the north-west of Pakistan. The second grand crisis of Pakistan again goes back from its independence time of 1947. Pakistan movement was formed on the basis of some specific part of the inhabitants who were Muslims.

However religion was pluralistic in these areas; it means since the very beginning the religion had been the main factor for the cause of separation, although it was the religion which had united the Muslims at that time. Zia-ul Haq tried to make Pakistan a more radical Islamic state. Aga Khan IV said that Zia ul Haq endeavored to make Pakistan more Islamic as it was earlier, but Zia ul-Haq became totally

¹⁴⁸ Aga Khan, Interview by Judy Woodruff January 28, 2002, <http://edition.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/inside.politics/2002/02/04.html> (accessed July 22, 2011).

unsuccessful to respond to a critical question that what sort of Islam he had in his mind? Still no one has asked that question.

Consequently, Sunni and Shia adopted their own ways of approach and after this the issue of Afghanistan broke out in 1979. He further said before his death in 1988, Zia ul Haq confessed that he was wrong. Zia ul-Haq said to Aga Khan

*I think I made a mistake in trying to turn Pakistan into a more Muslim country, because it caused many more internal divisions than we expected.*¹⁴⁹

President Zia-ul Haq was the 6th president of Pakistan during the tenure of 5th July 1977 to 17th August 1988. In Zia's tenure, the process of Islamization was used as a political tool and Islamization was given as a new boost up. President Zia implemented the Islamic sphere of influence in social, political, legal and in economic sector. In nutshell, he implemented the specific version of Islam in Pakistani society. About President Zia ul-Haq, Aga Khan IV remarked that

*I had great respect for the man [President Zia]. He was deeply religious and honorable, but he was no theologian. By attempting to make Pakistan more Islamic than it was, he failed to answer a crucial question – what kind of Islam did he intend?*¹⁵⁰

Zia-ul-Haq was a military dictator and had huge opposition in Pakistan because of his Islamization policies. His Islamic policies made Pakistan as a centre of

¹⁴⁹ Aga Khan IV, Interview by Jean Jacques Lafaye, Paris, France. March, 02, 2010. <http://simerg.com/about/voices-%E2%80%9Cthe-power-of-wisdom%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-his-highness-the-aga-khan%E2%80%99s-interview-with-politique-internationale/> (accessed January 27, 2011).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

global Islamist movement.¹⁵¹ But as far as Aga Khan IV considers Zia-ul-Haq that he was an honest man and he had “special” relations with him and he could not forget his assistance during the establishment of the Aga Khan University at Karachi.¹⁵² World community of Ismailis deemed that President Zia ul Haq as an honorable man, although he was an intensely religious man but he became unaware of his Islamic policies that what kind of Islamic principles he wanted to implement.

Generally the elements and training of Talibanization and elements of extremism increased as elements of extremist used the slogan of Islam to gain their political motives. Aga Khan IV’s perception regarding president Zia shows that on one way he is admiring him by saying that Zia was an honest man but on the other side he presented the real picture of Zia-ul-Haq by saying that he did not understand to impose which kind of Islamic policies he is going to implement. It was his to his Islamization strategy Pakistan’s different school of thoughts divided internally.

4.4.3 ISMAILI VIEWS ON RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP OF IRAN

Iran has been the centre of Ismailis propagation during their period of Alamut. This is the one of reason that why Ismailis have strong affiliation with Iran. As their ancestors were from Iran as well. Ayatollah Khomeini was Iran’s religious and political leader, under whose leadership Iran became first world Islamic republic country. His ten years leadership in politics made him able to set up Iran as theocratic country. Aga Khan IV has his own perception about the Ayatollah Khomeini. He said that Khomeini is an Ayatollah; *“He is not Imam of the Twelevers Shias, whereas I am*

¹⁵¹Hussain Haqqani “The role of Islam in Pakistan’s Future”
www.twq.com/05winter/docs/05winter_haqqani.pdf(accessed May 22, 2011).

¹⁵² Ibid.

Imam of the Ismaili Seveners".¹⁵³ Aga Khan considers himself leader of diverse religious organization and a diverse religious community.

He further said that, even though they are very much close to each other, the place of Khomeini with regard to Shia Community of Iran is entirely different from His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan (IV). Ismailis view that when things come about the matter of political purposes, the community of Ismailis must perform according to their own conscience but when it comes to matter of faith then it is entirely a diverse matter.¹⁵⁴

4.4.4 ISMAILIS OPINION ABOUT AFGHAN ISSUES

Ismailis have their own opinion regarding the Afghan issue that has become a world focus. Ismailis believe that it was due to Soviet Union attacks on Afghanistan in 1979, leaders of the West considering to themselves as "*We won't drive the Russians out through direct intervention, and it would be better to mobilize the Pakistani*".¹⁵⁵

As a result Pakistan was mainly called as a radicalized element. As a consequence most fanatic groups went into Afghanistan; actually Afghanistan is not nation state. Where there are variety of racial and tribal groups and where religious thoughts closely join up. Then Islamist groups throng its crossways towards the whole region, as well as to Pakistan too. Pakistan became allay of west and paid it heavily in

¹⁵³ The Quiet Prince of Islam, <http://ismaili.net/intervue/790527.html> May 27, 1979(accessed March 21, 2011).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

that continuous war. In such critical circumstances military could settle down the things but could not.

At that time in Pakistan and in many other countries of Africa and in Asia, the army ruling usually assured liberty and constancy; substantial problems prohibited the government to develop into a flourishing democracy.¹⁵⁶ Effects of 1979 war of Afghanistan on Pakistan were much bitter. Pakistan became radicalized and many militant groups went to Afghanistan to favor Taliban type government and Pakistan became strong ally of the West against Soviet Union. Since the security situation of Afghanistan is not admirable; insecurity in Afghanistan is the major hurdle in its development.

Mainly, this insecurity is due to insurgent elements, drug trafficking as well as of elements of Talibanization. Present security situation of Afghanistan is extremely perturbing and getting disquieting day by day particularly in the South region. The AKDN's developmental programs are in the Kabul and in the Northern part of Afghanistan where the conditions are recovered although not much pleasing. AKDN can provide energy from Tajikistan and can also grant Civil Services.

AKDN strives to stay away from the menace that assured parts of Afghanistan would be resettled so rapidly than the others. If this progress goes beyond with the ethnic separation, Afghanistan has to face other problem. The foremost issue in Afghanistan is that, the people of Afghanistan lack the development in the every-day lives. The method of rebuilding is not appearing to be piercing. AKDN has not

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

achieved to bring a tradition of trust or hope to Afghanistan. Aga Khan said that he has learnt the innermost lesson by partially century of working in the upward areas of the world that the substitute of panic by trust or hope is almost certainly the main influential trampoline of development.¹⁵⁷

On the matter of set up of representative government and military organization even though the various major dilemmas of Afghanistan, His Highness Prince Karim articulated his ideas: With the years of efforts same like in Iraq, Afghanistan has not been able to generate local military force which would be sufficient enough to assure security. Western armed forces would have to stay for long period of time to the accomplishment of long lasting security in Afghanistan and in Iraq. In present circumstances, it is particularly difficult to make an efficient nation Afghan police force.

He deems that he has to forestall these political blazes and strive to kill them away political tools. Aga Khan further said that, through political tools it is very much possible to gain more outcomes, by gaining more achievement it will be possible to extricate solely apolitical, holy or religious thoughts as of the politico-theological mixture that teaches radical groups and movements.¹⁵⁸

Prince Amin brother of Aga Khan IV has also his own perspective regarding the political situation and future of Afghanistan. That is why he has repeatedly talked about the circumstances of Afghanistan's political constancy, protection, security,

¹⁵⁷ Aga Khan, Interview by Spiegel. December 10, 2006
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/spiegel-interview-with-aga-khan-islam-is-a-faith-of-reason-a-442180.html>(accessed April 29, 2011).

¹⁵⁸ Aga Khan IV, Interview by Jean Jacques Lafaye, op.cit.

rights of general public, expected democratic perform, lawful and administrative structure that need to sleek, well organized as well as neutral and effectual essentials to generate a facilitating atmosphere in Afghanistan. However he emphasized that only effective government will not be sufficient. Put down the state's political basis is a crucial stride for an ending atmosphere.

But still effectual government can take more time and will take activities of AKDN so far attributable to which Prince Amin talked preferably about two new sectors: function of civil society and the capability of private sector. He further stresses on public-private joint-venture in development; while giving some flourishing illustration of such developments from Egypt to Tajikistan and from Tajikistan to Afghanistan, he suggested at the end that there should be alliances on the basis of common interests relatively than geography.¹⁵⁹

Prince Karim has entirely different opinion from other Muslim leadership about the future of Afghanistan's political situation. He observes that the western Army should not leave the Afghanistan soon; it should stay for a long time in Afghanistan to maintain durable security as Afghanistan has failed to produce its own security forces. Brother of Prince Karim, Prince Amin suggest the plan of civil society and ability of Private sector for the working of effective political government of Afghanistan government can be successful if it works with the non-governmental

¹⁵⁹ Prince Amyn Aga Khan, "*The Enabling Environment Conference*" (Speech, Kabul, Afghanistan, 04 June, 2007), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/617/Speech-by-Prince-Amyn-Aga-Khan-at-the-Enabling-Environment-Conference-Kabul> (accessed April 22, 2011).

institutions. These statements and institutional activities of Ismailis are proof of Ismailis involvement in governmental activities.

4.4.5 ISMAILIS VIEWS ON IRAQ WAR SITUATION

On 20 March 2003, United States attacked Iraq with the assistance of its coalition partners United Kingdom and Australia. The lame justification to attack on Iraq was that it possessed weapons of mass destruction as well as to topple down the government of Saddam Hussain. The attack made the destruction of Iraq's whole society and it created problems of rebuilding. It also created an issue of power void. This armed action infuriated not only humanitarian disaster, however in addition it aggravated the main economic, tactical, and political and health ramification.

The war had far reaching impacts on the health of Iraqi people and it is facing severe problems of inadequacy of health facilities. The results of war were very so infuriate for Muslims. Spiritual leader of Ismailis Aga Khan IV has very much concerned about these problems of Iraq and he apprehended about Iraq situation. He shared his perspective about the present situation of Iraq and said that the assault on Iraq had great impact on the whole world just like nothing earlier than in the contemporary period. The attack had loosened each force in the Muslim World, as well as the associations between the Arabs and the outside of Arabians along with the link between the Shia and the Sunni.¹⁶⁰ He further said that the conflict of Iraq is so much dangerous in terms of its consequences which would be very hard to settle down the things, because this critical conflict has brought to many political,

¹⁶⁰ Aga Khan, Interview by Spiegel.op.cit.

theological and economic structures in Iraq (Arab Part of the World). Iraq is the image of a rift connecting the two Arab Muslim World, Shia Muslim world and Sunni Muslim world who are Wahabi Muslims and Shia Muslims.

The conflict of Iraq has raised many fundamental questions that would have to be sort out very carefully. This conflict has shattered the religious stability in that part of Arab World. The Sunnis are in minority but having their government, but in Syria the same case is contrary as in Syria the government is of Sunnis while Shia's are in majority. Prince Karim expressed his views on the installment of democracy in Iraq and in the Arab world after the war. He said that actually in Iraq democracy was never applied from very long time. It would be very difficult and will take more time to put the things in order by creating an acceptable system.

He said that the example of Afghanistan is very much clear in this regard. Beside this, one has to be preparing to recognize the results of democracy while implementing democracy in their country because such democracy necessarily takes time and stability to nourish itself. Democracy has failed in many countries.

Aga Khan suggests that, to run the democracy in third-world countries, it is important to reflect well, not only in terms of democratic process but also in terms of its effects by keeping in view the results of democracy. Iraq is well -educated country having a long tradition but in fact its approach is not pluralistic like Afghanistan. Pluralism must legitimize if democracy established over there and it is not an easy task to do. The main theme is a matter of successful democracy and it can only be established if it is run by competent leaders who are also proficient to know that how to run the governance.

Ismailis spiritual leadership further said that economic reconstruction will be need to run the new financial system which should be free of economy and which would be also helpful for better management of public resources. Iraq has best opportunity due to treasure of oil to have a very successful economy from its very beginning. But from political angel, Iraqis will have to make their own mind how to resettle the democratic process which best suits their country. This is happening in Afghanistan. Presently, it is as well the similar that Iran is looking.

From the political front, on the Arab Muslim and non Arabs Muslim world, cold war is our inheritance, which was forced on us, which was between Soviet Union and the United States. Non-aligned was not a success, which was the middle way. Under such circumstances, one must raise these questions (Aga Khan IV raised questions)

In this context one must ask what it is that we wish to see take place in a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. Will the United Nations accept the role of being the principle authority for reconstruction of Iraq? Is there a movement towards a temporary colonization by the English and Americans? Will elections in Iraq lead to a Shia Power? Would this Shia majority ally itself with Iran and with Yemen? Will there be more empathy between Arab Shias, than between the Shia and Sunni Arabs? ¹⁶¹

These questions are the fundamental questions. The nexus of an Iran-Iraq Arabian's and its alliances response on such restructure of Iran and Iraq. Under the

¹⁶¹ Karim Aga Khan, Interview by La Croix. April 07, 2003.
<http://ismaili.net/heritage/node/23841> (accessed June 02, 2011).

prism of such questions it is said that Iraq will go ahead for themselves. But the scenario of post- Taliban in Afghanistan shows that it would be difficult to the unification of country, where it is changing of regime and to come across such leader who will force to bring the change.¹⁶²

Aga Khan IV articulated his views regarding Iraq war (2003) that the outcomes of war are much hard that its political, theological and economic structure all these takes more time to settle down. Iraq war has created a religious imbalance in the Arab World because Iraq is a twin of fault line between Shia Muslim world and Sunni Muslim world. The process of democracy was never applied in Iraq so Iraq will take more and more time because Iraq does not move towards a pluralistic approach. Although the literacy rate of Iraq is admirable but in the sense of pluralism, Iraq is not successful as compared to Afghanistan. Iraq has treasury of oil due to which it can restart its economic reconstruction.

4.4.6 ISMAILI PERCEPTION OVER AFRICAN ISSUES

The importance of continent Africa can be guessed from this that after Asia it is the second largest continent of the world. Despite this, Africa has been ignored since ages; as a result many problems broke out like food crisis, famine crisis, civil wars and health issues, refugee's problems, human rights violations and many other environmental issues. Many African countries are involved in fighting internally and externally with their rivals. Its political context is also pathetic also. Ismailis have serious concern regarding the critical issue of Africa. They say that the present major

¹⁶² Ibid.

issues of Africa are intricate and intangible; it is the reason that old methods are frequently abortive. Aga Khan has said,

I'm not a politician, but what we are talking about again is every African having the right to aspire to a better quality of life. And that is the goal of good government: to improve the quality of life of the individual in society.¹⁶³

It is Ismailis concern about the quality of living life that AKDN is working in Uganda, Kenya, Mali, Zanjibar, Mozambique, and Tanzania. AKDN is working in these countries in the field of health, culture, economic development, rural development and in education.

4.5 ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

4.5.1 ISMAILIS VIEW ON JIHAD

On the matter of Holy war or Jihad, Ismailis have their own interpretation. They say that there is not any unanimous definition of Jihad among all the Muslims of the world. The word jihad is used regularly on many grounds. However, Jihad means a personal discipline. It means it is the exploration of personal development that means it is a personal endeavor in life. Ismailis called it as their first definition of Jihad. Second definition according to them is the war in opposition to non-believers. Yet another definition according to them is war against those people who assault on Muslims, those who discriminate against the Muslims anywhere in the world. Aga Khan IV believes that those who blown up themselves are not the followers of God

¹⁶³ Aga Khan, Interview by Alison Healy, Maynooth, Ireland. July 05 2008, <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8845/> Interviewer: Alison Healy(accessed March 22, 2011).

and are criminals. Islam is a religion of peace and pluralistic one that teaches tolerance.

4.5.2 ISMAILIS: ISLAM AND TERRORISM

Ismailis spiritual leadership says that *Islam and terror have not the slightest thing in common*. The religion of Islam does not preach the element of terrorism at all. As the other Abrahimic religions: Judaism and Christianity do not. Those people who personally bluster themselves are criminals and they cannot assert that they obey of God, all admires be to Allah. Islam is a religion that teaches tolerance, sympathy as well as peace. Anyone can barely use the word of terrorism to link with Islam as all the major problems are the products of unresolved political dilemmas.

The fact is that, religion has been used as an instrument as a political tool to gain their personal interest. However, the actual inconsistencies themselves have zilch to execute with the name of Islam. This is the main crux that needs to be understood to come out from troubles. Here Ismailis are blaming the West by saying that, it is liable to see the one- sided picture towards the terror issue. As West, Islam involves primarily in the acts of terror and violence around the world. Actually, majority of communities are totally blanked that there is not merely single "Islam".

The world of Islam is very much pluralistic , still if fundamental elements have been at job more than the previous few years that do not put up with multiplicity and who wish to strength others to share their outlook of Islam.¹⁶⁴ Question was

¹⁶⁴ Aga Khan, Interview by Peter Hahne, Essen, Germany. October 05, 2005.
<http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7558/> (accessed August 12, 2011).

being asked from Prince Karim how he reacts to the violent outpourings of certain political and religious leaders in the Middle East and to acts of terror carried out in the name of (Islam) religion. Aga Khan replied this question by saying that he studied at Harvard university as well as he has degree in history, he feel nervous whenever he perceives religion being charged to any human problem because they do not know how to resolve. Mostly the conflicts come up mainly from political front and from political problems. He emphasized that the major problems arise from political sphere and not from religious one. Religion is taken as a lame excuse and also uses an important mechanism which is manipulated by the political forces. As an illustration he said the present problems of the world are political problems and they are further manipulated from the religious angle also. Such kind of trend is not very much strange towards the Muslim countries. Such kind of issues are also in Christian world that have had the similar incidents, the example is of Northern Ireland.¹⁶⁵

Ismaili community says that the use of religion in a conflict diversely affects all faiths. For instances, in Northern Ireland, the conflict between Catholics in opposition to Protestants, in India where Hindus and Muslims fight against each other. In Afghanistan, Shia fights against Sunnis. Sadly, it is an element of religion; better yet, they are production of religion. Prince Karim Khan IV says that he would desire it if pluralism was appreciated, as an alternative way of fighting. Present Ismailis leadership emphasizes to overcome the conflict by binding the way of mediated solution.

¹⁶⁵ Aga Khan IV, Interview by Jean Jacques Lafaye, op.cit.

actions. However Islam does not favor for that kind of actions because it is a Faith of tranquility. Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. Religion had never been a cause of any conflict and until now it has not the reason of conflict but there are political unresolved issues that are the major reasons to breed terrorism.¹⁶⁷

4.5.3 ISMAILS: SCARF CONTROVERSY OF FRANCE

Wearing Islamic scarf in France became a hot issue since 1990. Lastly, they passed a bill in 2010 that banned to wear scarf in public. On the matter of wearing scarf, Prince Karim Aga Khan IV was interviewed by Paris Match in December 1994. He said that it is not possible to keep expectations from others to rule out who are themselves candidly connected to their religion. Individuals should not oblige themselves in an aggressive mode but should live peacefully with their own faith. When the changing of any individual's beliefs is taken a nasty act, why any individual shall change his belief only for the reason that beliefs consists of a free personal right? Multiculturalism entail due to the separation of religion and State before the emergence of something else.¹⁶⁸

Ismailis spiritual leadership does not support the ban on wearing of scarf in France. It is not ethical to ask people to leave their faith and live under their faith and the matter of changing faith is entirely baseless. It is all the result of multiculturalism that leads towards the separation of religion and state.

¹⁶⁷ Aga Khan, Interview by Spiegel. op.cit.

¹⁶⁸ Aga Khan, Interview by Caroline Pigozzi and Jean-Claude Deutsch.Paris, France.December 15, 1994. <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/850/>(accessed Feburary 12, 2011).

4.5.4 PERCEPTION OF ISMAILIS ON 9/11 INCIDENT

9/11 is a greatly influential period between the association of the West and Islam, and these were the measures that totally changed the political atmosphere of the Muslim globe. As a reaction to attacks on United States twin towers; it started its so far strategy of global war on terrorism and their strategy left far impact on domestic politics of the Muslim world. It was first time that Aga Khan IV spoke in Taxes city of United States with reference to the events of 9/11 on 23rd June 2002. He said that *“The acts of September 11th and all that is behind them are repugnant to the very spirit of Islam and to the beliefs and yearnings of the vast majority of Muslims around the world is beyond question”*.¹⁶⁹

The fact is that the incident of 9/11 has created many misperceptions about Islam; in this regard Aga Khan IV has taken more responsibility as aright say of moderate and contemporary or modern Islam from the time of 9/11 as a conduit among the excessive elements that are existing in the West and in Islam as well. He said that the most important thing to make a clear cut difference between what is faith of Islam and who are the people of Islam because both are totally different things. In the Muslim world there is a great existence of pluralism and it is necessary for West to admit of such plurality in the Muslim world.

There is a wide difference between Asian Islam, Arab Islam African Islam and also between the Central Asian Islam. Aga Khan says that, after the event of 9/11

¹⁶⁹ His Highness the Aga Khan., *“The Banquet hosted in Honour of Governor Perry”* (Speech Texas, USA , June 23, 2002) Aga Khan Development Network. <http://www.akdn.org/Content/667> (accessed June 25, 2011).

lot of people did not raise the questions that follow: First, is it the political force of the faith in Islamic world secondly, are the political forces a part of Islam or it carry the whole religion? Thirdly, what are the motives of those forces? The Western media misinterpreted the thing and portrayed it making it complex nature.

Prince Karim is loyally unbiased towards his politics; he said that terrorist attacks of 9/11 had created frustrations among Muslims over the entire world. He was not defensive against the terrorist's attacks that shook the whole world. He considers that United States speedily took the action against the terrorist attacks; consequently, more conflicts broke out in response of United States actions. He further said: The Islamic world is suffering from professional injustice. What are the reasons behind that? Moreover, why only Muslims are getting such unjust treatment?

The Western world has been gradually equitable. The Arab world has certainly perceived the Palestinian situation. Many people of the Islamic world consider it as profound injustice. Beside this, Kashmir issue is another example of brutality towards Muslims. There is also profound injustice. The case of Mindanao (Southern Philippines) is also an example of cruelty towards Muslims. There were isolated, abandoned and left aside from the development process. All this is found specific to the Islamic world. This is specific to ethnic, demographic and economic differences along with the unresolved political situations.¹⁷⁰

West has great option to get rid of terrorists from troubled areas, The best option is to give them economic developments and political changes which are very much

¹⁷⁰ Aga Khan, Interview by John Stackhouse & Patrick Martin, February 02, 2002. <http://ismaili.net/timeline/2002/20020202a.html> (accessed May 08, 2011).

instrumental than to take military stance or action, even in the Mindanao area where it was thinking to run the Al-Qaida network. Things drastically changed when the measures were taken in the sense of financial support, dialogues and through by communal help and such developments brought the community on the platform which focused their attention towards their shining future rather than to look backwards in hopelessness and such kind of backwardness in hopelessness is found in the Third world countries.¹⁷¹ Ismailis leadership say that they cannot blame the incident of 9/11 as the elucidation says that it came out of religion Islam, or it cannot be said that it came out from the background of Islamic faith, for the reason that there are various Christian traditions.¹⁷²

Ismaili Imam Aga Khan IV believes that bitter incident of 9/11 and its reactionary measures against the event are in fact the repulsive to the exceptionally fortitude of Islam and as a result the nostalgia and attitude of Muslims around the globe is beyond the shadow of the doubt. Here Prince Karim is criticizing the United States by saying that whatever is taking place around the world due to Muslims is the result of western injustice attitude and as well as hast reaction of United States by adopting their so called strategy of global war against terrorism. The unjust attitude of the West is limited only to Muslim countries. Here Ismailis are unanimous with other part streamline of society that West is responsible for all the uproar among Muslims for their unjust attitude towards the Muslim countries.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Aga Khan, Interview by Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation. Aleppo, Syria and Lebanon, November 08, 2001. [http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6073/\(accessed June 04, 2011\)](http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6073/(accessed June 04, 2011)).

4.5.5 ISMAILIS: IRAN'S NUCLEAR ISSUE

Iran's nuclear issue is one of the burning issues of the world. Western officials consider that Iran is scheduling to create nuclear armaments. While Iran's officials denied of the Western perception and state that its aspiration in rising nuclear program is for the purpose of generating electricity without plummeting into the oil deliver which it prefers to sell out of country.¹⁷³ Iran started to develop nuclear energy since 1950s. Iran became exposed to the world in 2002 and in 2003 regarding nuclear enrichment and the West started allegations against Iran that it has started nuclear enrichment beyond peaceful purpose. International inspectors revealed second uranium enrichment of Iran in September 2009, in city of Qom.¹⁷⁴ On the allegation of the West, Iran has asserted many times that its nuclear program is for peaceful purpose and many more times Iranian leadership has admitted that Iran will not halt its nuclear program because it is for peaceful purposes and would not stop at any cost.

Aga Khan IV told Iranians many years ago that Iran was such country which could even supply to the worldwide removal of nuclear energy for military use. Aga Khan IV said;

Your history is that of intellectual nations several thousand years old which has brought to Islam all the richness of its culture and its philosophical

¹⁷³Iran's nuclear program http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iran/nuclear_program/index.html (accessed May 19, 2011).

¹⁷⁴Greg Bruno, Iran's Nuclear Program <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-nuclear-program/p16811> (accessed May 17, 2011).

*thought. Keep following the path that is truly your own and the world will thank you for it*¹⁷⁵.

On the current developments in Iran, Aga Khan said that the direction of Iran was moving to very alarming not for other Shia nations but for the whole world. From Aga Khan's point of view the major cause of Iranian revolution emanated roots from the unfortunate mismanagement of its economy under the leadership of Shah of Iran. He said that, he knew all the Heads of States but regretted to say that Shah of Iran was worst among them whose understanding of economic issues was poor or he was advised poorly. His poor understandings unified the nation to stand against him. It was only Khomeini who came on time to change drastically. Aga Khan said that

*I am a Shia and when I heard his speeches I thought that no Shia on earth could remain unmoved by his preaching.*¹⁷⁶

On the question of Iranian's nuclear issue, Aga Khan said, Sunni world has more concern on Iran's nuclear program. If Tehran became successful to gain nuclear weapons, it would be easier for certain states to get bomb certainly from the Western assistance. It is very fearful environment and through the IAEA, the issue of Nuclear weapons can be sorted out with the cooperation of Iranian authorities.¹⁷⁷

Prince Karim Aga Khan's views regarding Iran are that Iran is a Shia country and he himself is Shia and he does not want to see the alarming situation of Iran due to nuclear program. He further gave his apprehension on nuclear issue by saying that,

¹⁷⁵ Aga Khan IV, interview by Jean Jacques Lafaye, op.cit.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

with the collaboration of Iranian establishment through IAEA, this problem can be well reformed. If Iran became successful to make bomb, it would be not difficult for Sunnis to get bomb from Western back because Sunni Muslims are more apprehensive regarding Iranian nuclear plan.

Aga Khan IV emphasized on Iranians to keep their traditional path of intellectual nation that served Islam to make it rich in its cultural and philosophical thought and if Iran keeps continuing this tradition, the world will be thankful to Iran.

4.5.6 ISMAILIS VIEWS ABOUT WESTERN LEADERS: SARKOZY AND OBAMA

Present Ismaili leadership, Aga Khan IV has his own point of view about president Sarkozy and president Obama that both presidents are from younger generation and before these presidents came into their presidency, it looked like that the key international matters were distressing a sort of paralysis. Luckily things changed. Each president is well determined and having enough confidence, each is well educated and possessing an intellectual ability due to which it can be said that *I am going to take a fresh look at this issue*. The leadership of both presidents has exposed their great tolerance or open mindedness due to which they can be trusted. But it does not mean that both presidents will resolve all the critical issues.¹⁷⁸

4.5.7 ISMAILI OPINION ON FUNDAMENTALISM

Primarily, fundamentalism is considered as a belittling approach and is matching with the elements of extremism as well as with its unconstructive links.

¹⁷⁸ Aga Khan IV, Interview by Jean Jacques Lafaye, op.cit.

Media exploited relate fundamentalism with Muslims, if anything goes wrong in any part of the world. Ismailis have their own concerns on the critical issue of fundamentalism by saying that if the sense of fundamentalism is taken as deterioration of society than he surely condemns it. It has become the habit of any irregular act of terrorism to link with the Muslim world which is a very hurting bewilderment. Muslims are living in more than thirty to forty countries and their number is up to 1 billion believers, who speak five hundred different languages and many more dialects. There is no such unification among Muslims over the interpretation and practice of their faith in the same way, it means one billion Muslims way of interpretation is different because few Muslims who became Muslims have Arabic language and are Muslims since the time of Holy Prophet while others became Muslims after the demise of three hundred years later.

As a matter of fact, West perception regarding Muslims is totally wrong, they evaluate that all Muslims are from one and only block. Muslims way of understanding is far better than the West because west colonized slims and ruled over Muslims for a number of years. The action of destabilizing is a fact, but is slightly compared to the mass Muslims majority. It is just like as *The IRA commits acts of terrorism in England; therefore, all Catholics are dangerous terrorists.*¹⁷⁹

But here people make it a trend to confuse religion of people and their political motives. Many fundamentalists have very clear-cut political motives; their some motives are specifically to conversion of people into their faith. In several cases,

¹⁷⁹ His Highness Aga Khan, Interview by, Caroline Pigozzi and Jean-Claude Deutsch.Paris op.cit.

it is very clear how West went so far to maintain their ideology by influencing over Soviet to expel the Soviet from Afghanistan, for this purpose, the West used Mujahidin and they have also utilized radicals (extremists) to contradict the danger of communism.

Ismailis consider that the western world should have kept a very obvious difference between the political motives and the religion of Islam. It cannot be rebuff from the ideological aggravation of the Jordanians, the Algerians which have made certain extremist movements but this should not blame or mark the reliability of all the overall Muslims of the World.¹⁸⁰

4.5.8 ISMAILI VIEW ON IMAGE OF ISLAM

Unfortunately, in the modern period the image of Islam is very much disgraceful around the world, while Islam is most peaceful religion of the world. Ismailis talk about the religion of Islam by saying that, there is a different basis of misapprehension in Islam, which is continual bewilderment regarding the survival and legitimacy of diverse community of the explanation inside Islam. In West no one perceives Christianity as a not having any distinguishing feature of monolith and so far it is the usually held opinion of Islamic people, whereas fact is totally diverse.

Since 1400 years of Muslim history and in cultures of Islamic civilization and in its arts and architecture, there is an observance of pluralism in Islam. In fact due to presence of pluralism in Islamic architectural prominence that has escorted several establishments regarding Islamic architectural tradition dominant to almost all others.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

It is very much important that we esteem and worth of that plurality; that we all perform in our command to have it fortify us in our will power, to assemble harmony in diversity, rather than divergence within constrictions.¹⁸¹

Regrettably, presently whatever the world assumes about Islam is the product of crisis reporting. The language of Shia and Sunni was initially used in the world's dictionary, for example, it was touching background of radical or revolutionary Iran. In the same way, Current media indication to Sharia, the conventional Islamic method of jurisprudence, are demonstrated by its appearance in Afghanistan.

Journalists have started to use the word Sharia although not many journalists are aware of its exact meaning. Not many of them comprehend like; majority of Muslims took the meaning of Sharia as an altering body or rules and regulations, theme to what Muslims entitle the Fiqh, the ability for evolving explanation. Not many journalists are consciences of the selective and reasonable purpose of the Sharia in the lawful (legal) system of such Islamic states which permit its function (application)? Besides, not many journalists are familiar that

Arabic translators of the Old Testament used the word shari'a to designate the Torah, underlining a shared perception of the Divine Law that governs the

¹⁸¹ His Highness the Aga Khan., "2001 Award Presentation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award For Architecture"(Speech, The Citadel Aleppo, Syria ,06 November 2001), Aga Khan Development Network. <http://www.akdn.org/Content/580/Award-Presentation-Ceremony-of-the-2001-Aga-Khan-Award-For-Architecture> (accessed June 22,2011).

*spiritual relationship between God and His believers? They are not knowledgeable enough to appreciate the shari'a's illuminating qualities in civil law?*¹⁸²

When the learning backdrops is very unproductive and while our pace of education is such that reporters and also the booklovers who are the product of crisis, crisis and crisis (His Highness gave importance here by using the word crisis three times) and consequently profound misapprehension would be its expected outcome. He said that he is not telling to journalists that they should be a specialist on Islam. However it would assist them seriously if they come to know how and at what time and where they require discovering further. Journalists should not overlook that they have an extensive instructive role, it means they have task to endow readers and audience with a framework or background within which to be aware of individual proceeding accurately.¹⁸³ Ismailis give the message to the world that religion Islam has the sense of pluralism for the last fourteen years and not from today but it is the western media that is using the name of Islam in an ambiguous map of Islam to all worlds. Ismailis condemn the journalists who are involved to make the image of Islam notorious around the world without having knowledge about Islam.

Aga Khan talks about the Islamic faith. He said, Islamic faith has one of the innermost rudiments the indivisible character of faith and world. Both are so profoundly entangled that it is impossible to think about their division. They comprise a "Way of Life." Therefore the duty and task of an Imam is to make the faith

¹⁸² His Highness the Aga Khan., "Commonwealth Press Union Conference"(Speech,Cape Town, South Africa 17 October 1996), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/979/Commonwealth-Press-Union-Conference-in-Cape-Town-South-Africa> (accessed June 02,2011).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

understandable to the community by interpreting. As well as to carry out by using his financial means to get the standard better and safety of their everyday lives.¹⁸⁴

4.5.9 ISMAILI PERCEPTION OVER MUSLIM SOCIETY

In history a great deal of Muslim society's strength was born from the belief of the leaders those were Imams, Mullahs and the Pirs. This characteristic among the leaders of the faith and the kingdom's scholar elite was a constant basis of power in cooperation to the faith and also to those people whose responsibility was to run the kingdom. Nowadays how many expectant Imams or Mullahs go into worldly universities and get degrees in worldly subject? Moreover, how many alumnae of universities, after finishing their studies, go round their lives to guide the congregates of the faithful? He said that he should not be misunderstood because he has neither censure Mullahs nor Pirs nor Imams and nor university graduates. He simply believes that in upcoming years it will be in society's concern to encompass a lot extensive policy which will be familiar between Muslim religious and Muslim worldly chiefs. Muslim religious heads should deeply know the secular inclinations, as well as the present invention of science and technology. In the same way, Muslims scholarly or secular leaders should also know about their Muslim history.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ His Highness the Aga Khan., "The Tutzing Evangelical Academy Upon Receiving the "Tolerance" Award"(Speech, Tutzing, Germany 20 May 2006), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/605/Tolerance-Award-from-the-Evangelical-Academy-of-Tutzing> (accessed June 09, 2011).

¹⁸⁵ His Highness the Aga Khan., "*University of Sind*"(Convocation address, Hyderabad Pakistan, February 06,1970.http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=101451(accessed June 12,2011).

4.5.10 ISMAILI VIEW ON MUSLIM NATION STATE

Thousands of research papers and hundreds of religious school of thoughts have been giving their own stance about the Muslim nation state. Ismailis have expressed their own views on what kind of Muslim Nation State should be? By initiating that, the majority of the Muslim globe was a single type or the other dominated by the determination of the west right after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. *England and France between them controlled most of the Middle East including Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, the whole of North Africa with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya; most of those parts of Africa south of the Sahara which had substantial Muslim population such as Nigeria, Senegal, Dahomey, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar; and finally most of those parts of Asia which were totally or substantially Muslim, including the Indian subcontinent, and Malaysia.*¹⁸⁶ Hence at the crack of dawn of the twentieth century, almost no Muslim part of the world was independent. This is understandable reality.

As a result, the idea of Muslim statehood was busted instantly and other kind of western concept took place as a substitute. The role of Muslims was null and void in the art of government. Even those people who had apprehensions themselves, had not such capacity to examine their thoughts alongside the bitter authenticity of power politics during the period of nineteenth and twentieth century. Therefore the Ismailis leadership advice is that there has been a very huge void in Muslim task in this ground and this void in turn irritated a profound lethargy towards the issues of Islamic statehood.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

In everyday lives very minor people get time to be anxious about community's troubles, and till the beginning of twentieth century, Muslim statehood troubles became completely latent.¹⁸⁷ During the previous 30 years, the large part of the Muslim world has recaptured its self-government, and presently is entirely under its own control of affairs. However the failure of organization of government in the most recent earlier period has been missing the today's Muslims in such state of affairs that either of extended the hereditary shapes of Western Government of implementing a practical or realistic approach, the outcomes of which are unfeasible to predict.

In most recent history if Muslim countries be in charge of their own fortunes for a long period of time, there is bit uncertainty that proper establishment would previously develop in a shape that would move toward provisions with present hi-technological and worldly age. So far, there merely has not been sufficient time.¹⁸⁸

4.5.11 ISLAM AND THE WEST: ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE

Since the very beginning, the relation between the west and Islam is not warm. The Muslim world has been related in many western countries as a fundamentalist element. The disputes among states are not created by religion. While Muslims consider west responsible for their grievances. Islamic world called west as their enemy and their colonizer since ages. West is so much anxious about the resurgence of Islam in many Muslim countries. West is quite ignorant of Islam that it is the adversary of west. Western media has depicted Islam as religion of extremism as well as militant Islam. Since the incident of 9/11 the ignorance of west has increased, even

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

in academia has the same ignorance towards the image of Islam. West considers Islam as a threat to their civilization

Spiritual leader of Ismailis expressed his view regarding the relation between the west and the Islamic world. He put across by saying that, the basic root cause of the critical relations between the west and the Islamic world is political rather than theological. Such issues can be dealt out as the political problems rather than getting tensed about the divergence opinion over the matter of religions. The derivation of present flashpoint is historically the political one. In the Middle East, the present situation is the product of the end of World War II, where Jewish people searched for their new homeland; similarly, the present situation of Kashmir is the product of decolonization process where British vacated the Indian subcontinent, which was at that time the United India. In recent times, the invasion of Russia over Afghanistan and the invasion over Iraq British and America have made the situation chaos. But the three Abrahamic religions cannot be blamed for these conflicts. Many problems have arisen on the coloring of interfaith conflict, but that progress is the result of its effect as compared to the causes of such disasters. Theological forces were less divergent but it is the political conflict which has certain role to flare up the theological forces in the Islamic world mainly.

In Islam there are very vivid separations within its own circle, more irritable and it is very difficult to address. Such divisions can be seen in relation between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims or between the different interpretation of Islam and such divisions are not from today but existing from the old centuries and which have been revitalized and are flared-up by political developments. There are also some

other divisions between the secular states and the theocratic states of the Islamic (Muslim) world, also between the ultra rich and ultra poor which are basically the product of present modern times in the sense of their range and its scale.

Basically there are three important observations which are very much critical; firstly that there is no any single Islamic world in the real sense, but there are many individual situations which demand for individual analysis to understand the situation. Secondly, the interpretation of faith of Islam has not any conflict with any Abrahimic Traditions. Third observation is that, each crisis has its roots which come across from its own political perspective. In such complex situation, the only way to bring sense of peace and order demands a great delicacy, tolerance, understanding and knowledge. Aga Khan IV said that presently it is very sad that none of these requirements are existing in any major players of the world. There is awkwardness but not delicacy, there is absence of tolerance, there is a great scarcity in understanding and there is also the gigantic space of knowledge.¹⁸⁹

Ismaili community reflects their apprehension about the ignorance of the West towards Islam. They deem that, between the Western and the Islamic world, there is a wide gap of unawareness and negative response and through education; a transformed effort can be made to the promotion of pluralism and tolerance at the same time by addressing acute political issues and also by addressing fraught poverty which has a very obvious role in raising extremism.

¹⁸⁹ His Highness the Aga Khan, "*Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme*" (Speech at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) 15 June 2007), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/145> (accessed May 28, 2011).

Aga Khan IV talked to Journalists in India (New Dehli) that the world is struggling with a divergence of ignorance. He said, it is not the matter of divergence but of civilizations, while there is a huge gap of understanding and due to lack of this understanding the capability to envisage, the ability to predict and also the ability to reflect becomes a great deal to handle. Ismailis refute the general perception of the world that the conflict between faiths is not the religious conflict but it is the conflict of political.

Conflicts of the world have vital role to promote extremism because conflicts were not handled and these conflicts allowed rankling due to which now the world is dealing with its consequences .Aga Khan said to sort out the political issues:

*Put those political issues on the front burner. Step on the accelerator just as hard as you can, know how to step on that accelerator, and deal with these issues. Don't let them pullulate decade after decade after decade,*¹⁹⁰

Ismailis present leadership articulated that, presently, the Muslim world is profoundly misunderstood by most. The West knows very little things about the diversity of Islam, the principles and religion of Islam which are the basic things to unite it, and also have deem knowledge about Islam's shining past throughout its brilliant history. The Muslim world is considered in West as violence of certain minorities than for the peacefulness of its faith, mainly in the North America and Europe.

¹⁹⁰ Prince Karim Aga Khan, Interview by Simon Denyer, New Dehli. September 22, 2009. <http://ismaili.net/heritage/node/24611>(accessed May 21,2011).

The Western culture calls Islam and the word Muslims as the symbol of anger and lawlessness. As a result of the Western attitude, the Muslim world has to obviously do such work which west would never think to be like that. This image is not merely entirely wrong but there are many influential reasons which cannot be ignored and that need to settle down by mutual understanding of Muslim world and the western world. Primarily there are two reasons of this attitude of west: firstly, the Eastern alliance destabilized it at financial, military and political front and the Muslim globe is itself one of two strains at geopolitical level in relation to the Western world and the Eastern Asian Tigers. There are many European Countries which are being impacted by a large number of Muslim minorities who are living in those European Countries.

The treasury of most fossil fuel is under the hand of Muslim world. Resurgence of Islam has emerged in Turkey which is the Muslim world and which is strategically very much important to the West. Many Muslim worlds have vivid nuclear aspiration. The Gulf War has shown whatever actions took place in the Muslim world, it certainly had impact on international security and also on its security. West should not take notice of either the development of Muslim central Asian Republic states or their interaction that rests on the future of Russia. Sub-Saharan Africa is mostly Muslim continent and it can't be ignored while it is need of time. The second reason which demands for Islamic world and the West that it should cooperate in terms of its mutual understanding because in the light of cold war, it is very that clear that hostility and brutality of all kind would be a disaster all over the world. Such kind of violence can be military; Para military and brutal or it can be organized and ordinary. Such kind of violence originate from suicide bombings to

ethnic cleansing to eliminate and marginalize a large sector of society, yet by industrialized states the same as this one.¹⁹¹

Prince Karim further added that in Western educational institutions especially in their humanities syllabus should frequently add the features of Muslims grand philosophers, classical writers of Islam, famous scientists, astronomers like Nasir Khusraw, Tusi, AlFarabi, Avicenna, and AL-Kindi. Such kind of lack of knowledge and gratitude of the civilizations of the Islamic world is a basic reason that highlights media stereotype, by focusing on politically unrest areas in the Muslim world and then called them as terrorist centre or the Islamic first.

Academic sincerity and superior knowledge are necessary if present unstable conditions are to be understood as heredity clashes rather than to being explicit to the Muslim world determined by racial and demographic difference, economic disparity and unsettled political issues.¹⁹² His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV has briefly articulated the reasons behind the bitter relation of the West and the Islamic world. He says that all the conflicts between the West and Islam are not based on religion but are political one; he conferred the illustration of Middle East, Kashmir, attack of Russia over Afghanistan and attack on Iraq by US and British.

¹⁹¹ His Highness the Aga Khan, "*Brown University*" (Baccalaureate Address, Providence, Rhode Island, USA May 26, 1996) http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=101409 (accessed June 24, 2011).

¹⁹² His Highness the Aga Khan, "*The Leadership and Diversity Conference*" (Address, Gatineau, Quebec-Canada 19 May 2004), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/238/Leadership-and-Diversity-Conference-Gatineau> (accessed April 11, 2011).

Many problems crop up due to the interfaith clash. Religious wings were not as much divergent but were made divergent in Islamic world by using the political conflict. Aga Khan IV says that there are three important key observations; first is that there is no such Islamic world that can be called as true Islamic world in its real sense. However there are numerous individual circumstances that require for individual scrutiny to comprehend the condition. Secondly, religion of Islam has no such divergence with any Abrahimic civilization.

Thirdly, each conflict's basic roots lie with its own political standpoint. To Aga Khan IV, give solution of such condition is only patience, sympathetic and comprehension, unfortunately, there is no such country that possesses such kind of quality. Western world is totally blind regarding the diversity of Islam and that is the reason the West calls Islam as a violent and lawless and angry religion. Actually, the matter of fact is that the West is entirely ignorant about the bright history of Islam. Aga Khan IV also held the western curricula responsible that lacks knowledge about great philosophers of Muslims.

4.5.12 RESOLVING POLITICAL PROBLEMS: ISMAILI VERSION

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV has given the solution to all problems relating to Islam. Ismailis leadership has scrutinized in the Western globe a profoundly way of human relations. The anchors of ethical conduct come out to have hauled to such profundity that they no extensive grasp solid the boat of life:

What was once wrong is now simply unconventional, and for the sake of individual freedom must be tolerated. What is tolerated soon becomes accepted.

*Contrarily, what was once right is now viewed as outdated, old fashioned and is often the target of ridicule.*¹⁹³

In the countenance of such shifting globe, Muslims are facing with a basic confront to understanding of time, bounded by a foreign flotilla of cultural as well as ideological vessels that have busted slack, His highness prince Karim believes that there is a vivid proof on the basis of which Muslim society can be make in future: The two most precious of Muslims sources are Quran and Allah's Prophet (PBUH) from where Muslims can get their problems resolved.¹⁹⁴

According to Prince Karim Aga Khan, The life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) carries it fundamental guideline for us to solve every problem. He is the best example of integrity, loyalty, honesty and generosity both of means and both of time. There is no parallel of his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick. His steadfastness in friendship, his humanity in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity and his wisdom to solve the most difficult issues are exemplary. These are the foundations which if understood and interpreted sincerely and correctly definitely enable us to develop a true modern and dynamic Islamic society in future.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Aga Khan, "International Seerat Conference, 'Life of the Prophet (SAS)'" (Presidential Address, Karachi March 12, 1976), <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1804/> (accessed July 10, 2011).

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Modernity and Tradition His Highness Aga Khan IV, Nanowisdom <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/> and Tradition His Highness Aga Khan IV, *Nanowisdom* <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/wp-content/uploads/documents/thematic-chart-14-modernity-tradition.pdf> (accessed July 10, 2011).

CHAPTER 5

A NEW PARADIGM OF ISMAILIS: RELIGION AND POLITICS

5.1 RELIGION AND POLITICS: ISMAILI MODEL

Ismaili views regarding the religion and politics are in lieu of Ismailis living 49th Imam Shah Karim Al- Hussaini Hazir Imam (Aga Khan IV). According to Ismailis, The responsibility of Imam in all version of Islam, either in Sunni or in Shia school of thought, is to interpret belief besides improving the living standard of life of his followers.¹⁹⁶ It signifies that Ismailis living Imam has sole authority to interpret spiritual and secular affairs to his community. Aga Khan IV deems that his personality is not the political one.

However politics do manipulate all the states where Ismailis live, it manipulates international institutes as well as worldwide financial systems; it manipulates the precedence of the western states and the developing states. It means Aga Khan considers that he is indirectly involved in politics but not directly.¹⁹⁷ Ismailis living Imam (Prince Karim) has always emphasized his community to maintain a balance between spiritual (religious life) and the temporal (dunya) life,

¹⁹⁶ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"the Nobel Institute on Democratic Development, Pluralism and Civil Society"* (Speech, Oslo, Norway April 07, 2005), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/599/Nobel-Institute-in-Oslo> (accessed June 25, 2011).

¹⁹⁷ Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation op.cit.

through which Ismailis can stay as a lively and healthy and direct towards the enlightenment as well as dignity.¹⁹⁸

Ismailis also believe that Islam does not separate religion and the world. For Muslims, division is not promising. Ismailis expect to live their faith each day and each time. Ismailis expect from the non-believers societies to recognize the principles of Islam. They further say when Islam does not separate religion from politics; the West should understand and accept that. Ismailis have faith that they always keep their faith live in their daily life.¹⁹⁹ Ismailis leadership emphasizes on the three important aspects of state: democracy, pluralism and civil society which have instrumental role in the sound government.

5.1.2 DEMOCRACY AS BEST POLITICAL PRACTICE: ISMAILI PERSPECTIVE

The world of Muslim history has been under the rule of authoritarian governments. Muslims have been facing the bitter experiences of military regimes and kings who had possessed the shaky authority, who were supported by their security and military forces. Such regimes exist in Middle Eastern countries. In present era, the wave for democracy and liberalization has become widely spread around the Middle East Countries. Indeed the major part of Muslim world actively started to participate in practical political participation to check the legitimacy of their running

¹⁹⁸ H.H Aga Khan IV Beacon of Inspiration, *Simerg*, <http://simerg.com/special-series-his-highness-the-aga-khan-iv/> (accessed June 17, 2011).

¹⁹⁹ His Highness The Aga Khan, Interview by ,António Marujo and Faranaz Keshavjee.op.cit.

governments. Such wave of democratic movement raised the extensive debates about the promotion of civil society and the prospects about the democracy.²⁰⁰

To cope with such issues, Ismailis Spiritual leader articulated his thoughts on the subject of democracy by saying that his democratic values do not date back to the French or Greek philosopher but goes back to 1400 years ago. He says that there are fundamental principles given in Islam. Throughout the Holy Prophet's years (PBUH), there was orderly counseling political practice, and Hazrat Ali who also put emphasis:

*No honor is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance and no support is more reliable than consultation.*²⁰¹

His highness says that people talk about failed states and he does not consider that states can fail; however democracies can fail. Islamic democracies are not alone where democracy fails. In fact even in South America, where UN conducted comprehensive scrutiny of democracy in 1958 where they found out that their 55% of population gave first choice to live in paternalistic dictatorship rather than to live under ineffective and corrupted democracies which do not look up their standard of living situations.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Jhon L. Esposito, *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public sphere in the Middle East and Europe* (Francois Jurgat & Rutgers university Press, 2003), 74.

²⁰¹ His Highness the Aga Khan, "Ismaili Community and its Contribution to the Commonwealth Royal Commonwealth Society" (Speech, Oxford, England, November 2, 1960), <http://www.amaana.org/agakhan/spnov60.htm> (accessed June 09, 2011).

²⁰² Ibid.

The reality is that democratic organizations have not survived up to their prospective. In developing and in the developed world, the guarantee of democracy has too frequently been dissatisfied. For numerous centuries, liberal people have contended that democracy was the solution to the social advancement. But now a day, that argument is in difference of opinion. In countries where Aga Khan IV himself is directly concerned, the 21st century has by now experienced slightest of half -dozen constitutional emergency. The gloom reality which is hard to refute is that almost forty percent of UN affiliate countries are currently classified not only as failed states but are called “failed democracies”.

He further said that in 21st century the innermost challenge is that heads as well as future leaders of the world have to renovate the democratic guarantee. The economy elegance which democratic or self-governing system are mainly possible to acquire, following, is that they are self –accurate. A method of public answerability still endows with paramount expectation for modification but without aggression. And that high quality only converts the whole idea.

Ismailis spiritual leadership says that his main contend is not to come across substitute to democracy, but to look more and superior ways to construct democracy work. In counter to those democratic challenges His highness Aga Khan IV formulated four suggestions to tackle the democratic dissatisfaction and to move forward towards the democratic expectations. His first remark was the requirement of better suppleness in defining the ways to democracy; second comment was the requirement of superior diversity in the establishment which could contribute in

democratic life; thirdly, he says that there is greater need to spread out the public / ability for democracy; and finally the greater requirement to fortify public honesty.²⁰³

Democratic application is intensely faulted in numerous places. One dilemma is simply unawareness of the diverse kinds of democracy. All this is because of lack of quality education in comparative government. Conducting a nationwide referendum on a fresh constitution is not merely giving assurance that the requirements of the constitution have been unstated, permit only validated, by popular approval. In addition, the political machinery of government that counting the formation and supporting, is about political parties which are frequently freehand and unmanageable and extensively unwrap to exploitation and deception. Nor is the performance of government efficient either by internal method or by the media.

Efficient democracy cannot be forced from the exterior or from the apex. The worth of democracy should be intensely felt in the each day of States' populace, as well as the countryside mainstream, if it is to be sustained and endorsed. Next to this backdrop, it would be shrewd, according to his highness, to get ourselves ready for a moment of difficulty as far as apprehensive democracy. He further said that we can anticipate a blend of achievements, malfunctions, and also enduring selection of governing provisions: absolute monarchies, parliamentary form of government,

²⁰³ His Highness the Aga Khan, "*The School of International and Public Affairs*" (Address, Columbia University: New York, USA, May 15, 2006), <http://www.akdn.org/Content/143/Graduation-Ceremony-at-the-School-of-International-and-Public-Affairs> (accessed on May 28, 2011).

constitutional monarchies, presidential form of government and many other forms of government such as federalism.²⁰⁴

The origin of democracy is not Eastern but of Western derivation. Still in the West, one has to confess that they are not unconcealed. According to Prince Karim there are few countries where there is existing safe and strapping democracy, such as in Switzerland, United States, Scandinavia and in Great Britain. He further said that democratic path of life is also suitable and possible to several States of Asia, Middle East and in many countries of Africa and such democratic way of life is also appropriate for the nascent independent states while it permits them to build up their character from the ancestry relatively having them read out from the zenith.

However, there is hold in to be firm complexities in laying democratic values into practically applying, it is vital that Western States do not need to be anxious if democracy falls for a while or moves into new structure in the beginning . He further said that it is important to keep in mind that the absolutely diverse situations where democracy is being endeavored, such as in the very less yearly earnings of the people, insufficient means of communications and also the low level of rate of literacy; these are the hindrance in the way of successful democratic life.

Another issue which is frequently ignored, but which is very much important in the sight of Aga Khan IV is that the well-grounded democracies have constructed more than the years and that demands, a entire sequence of check and balances on the supremacy or authority of the administrative government. Spiritual leadership of

²⁰⁴ His Highness the Aga Khan, "Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme".op.cit.

Ismailis said that it looks to him that in no way unfeasible, that his communities can buildup into marketable group with high caliber of its exceptional unity and its international associations will work out a strong and useful sway on government strategies, both in the basis of democracy and of economic development. As a great the Ismailis put forth in any political pressure at all, they have usually worked to prop up the government in power.

He further said that from the last 15 years it has come across around armed conflicts almost two third of them have taken place in the developing countries of the Africa and in Asia. In these continents more than 80% conflicts were the inner conflicts, which were full-scale civil conflicts or state-sanctioned hostility to minorities in the countries of Asia and Africa. Almost all such internal conflicts were expected as they were the peak of a steady worsening in pluralist, governance. There are various vivid cases where such kind of bitter experiences had to face in countries of Afghanistan, Uganda, Tajikistan and in Bangladesh and whose long-lasting effects were very severe on more than a generation.

Here His Highness Prince Karim raised question by saying that if such crackdowns were expected, than where was international community became ineffective to stop such breakdowns near the beginning to halt the worsening and shun the misery that resulted? Second question was whether there were ordinary reasons in the mainstream of such state of affairs which are inadequately familiar?²⁰⁵ For Aga Khan IV, it is key query that, what are the reasons and why these democracies are unsuccessful as well as what can the humanity of the world and

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

international associations do to maintain their capability and constancy. He exemplified few precise problems which he considers the causative of vulnerability of democracy. Firstly, in number of countries where AKDN is active, there is a lack of enormous capital to invest in secondary and tertiary education and where AKDN has decided to strap up huge capital to universal primary education.

Actually there is a flaw of policy makers of education during the era of early 1960s that they did not focus towards the secondary and tertiary education. That is why presently there is degradation of secondary and tertiary education due to the lack of enough capital. Actually, these tertiary and secondary students have to stand for future leaders. Second problem according to present Ismaili leader is to educate the developing countries about the governance at the levels of secondary and tertiary as Prince Karim says that governance is a science. If they do not educate, they will obviously divest their intelligentsia of intellectual foundation in the grave knowledge of how independent or democratic states run.

Aga Khan IV says that, in the coming decades it would be happening that a huge number of countries will be scheming of their new constitutions or they will be refining their existing constitutions and new regional alliance will come into existence. Various infantile democracies will generate new political organizations. But the question is who will go ahead, men or women? Actually as a matter of fact, education in governance is very much fragile and as a result the developing world has to bear persistently from inadequate support to assure moderate or liberal professions which are very much grave to democracy.

He further said that they are facing challenges as Aga Khan IV's experience, the journalism and profession of teaching are weakening to draw the rank of men and women who are very much crucial for moderate or liberal professions to create their estimated input towards democracy. That is why it is important to generate the human and institutional options to make and maintain young democracies. Presently, the developed world is uncertain to consign lengthy investment in the direction of education in support of democracy instead of mourning over the matter of failed states, the majority of developing globe will maintain to countenance miserable forecast for democracy.²⁰⁶

The worldwide depiction at the commencement of the 21st century presented a narrative of futile democracy in the, Latin America, the Muslim world, in Sub-Saharan Africa and in Eastern Europe. At present it is very much astonishing reality that almost forty percent of the UN associates States are futile democracies. The amassing of futile democracies is the utmost menace to the west and its ideals. It is necessary for West's own concern to confess for itself that democracy is as failed as with any new form of individual authority.

Aga Khan IV said that it is important query be posed in each and every national condition that if democracy is falling, why it so happens? Spiritual leader of Ismailis says that according to his understanding, democracy can fragile anywhere, at anytime, any country and in any state. It is patently obvious that in the west and in

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

other parts of the world that from the last fifty years it happens in these regions that elections and political parties only cannot create steady governments or capable leadership.

According to His Highness Prince Karim, there are basically three notions through which democracy can be stabilized and would be also fruitful for the Asian and African countries. Those three notions are meritocracy, civil society and pluralism. A latest UN review of democracy casing eighteen Latin American States have put more stress on the qualities of democracy in the progress of individual development; however it also cautions that sluggish per capita income and increasing disparity, in contact to civil rights and also income, are fabricating uncertainty, annoyance and civil disorder.

The UN report shows that century after century: the most important, day by day, apprehension of community anywhere in the world is to make their life as a qualitative one that is closely associated to their standards systems. The same UN report revolves in the direction of its solution and brought out the decisive information:

*An important relationship exists between citizens and organizations of civil society, which are major actors in the strengthening of democracy, in the development of pluralism.*²⁰⁷

It further says that democracy cannot work out properly in the absence of two prerequisites: civil society and pluralism. The hale and hearty civil society is

²⁰⁷ His Highness the Aga Khan, "The Leadership and Diversity Conference" op.cit.

vital fortification that endowed citizens with manifold strait through which they could work out efficiently equally with their civil rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It is the only civil society that can guarantee inaccessible rural areas and the marginalized urban deprived of a sensible view of humanitarian action, personal safety, parity, the absence of prejudice, and right of entry to opportunity.

Other prerequisite is pluralism which means people from varied surroundings and interest, coming jointly in association of unreliable kind and objectives, for diverse types and variety of creative look, that are precious and commendable of holdup by government and society as entire.²⁰⁸ These indicate that Ismaili faith strongly favors the democratic system of governance. They consider that the major flaw to understand the democracy is its various kinds and the most important thing is the lack of quality of education. Democracy not only failed in the in Muslim countries but it also failed in the Western countries.

His Highness Prince Karim has identified the key problems that are contributing as a weakness of democracy. There are the lacks of investment in many countries towards the sector of education especially in secondary and in tertiary education because it is the level of secondary and tertiary level that produces the sound leadership. Second major hurdle in the way of democracy is the absence of teaching about the governance as governance is a science in itself. In coming years, it is more prospects to change the constitution of many countries.

²⁰⁸Ibid.

For the countries of Asia and Africa, His Highness Aga Khan IV gave three great ideas that can be very much successful for the constancy of democracy: notion of pluralism, civil society and meritocracy. Even the United Nations (UN) has marked out in its report to implement the notion of pluralism and civil society which without the concept of democracy is not sustainable. Aga Khan IV has his own experiences by implementing AKDN's programs that is working greatly in the African and in Asian countries.

5.1.3 CIVIL SOCIETY: PRIORITY OF ISMAILIS

The concept of civil society was primarily used by A. Ferguson (1723-1816) in the era of 18th century however afterwards used by Hegel (1170-1831).²⁰⁹ Civil society means a set of private institutions, professional associations, citizen support organizations and religious groups, which help to raise voice in diverse sector of society as well as to develop community to participate in democracies.²¹⁰ Civil society is the associational and institutional appearance of society as well as of state. Citizens promote their ideas, their interests beliefs by organize themselves voluntarily.

Civil society has strong voice, as they deal with others regardless of their class, gender, religious and political belief.²¹¹ In modern times, civil society is not only involved in private institutions but it also engrosses in service transferring and in sponsorship actions; charitable associations, non-governmental institutions,

²⁰⁹ Amin Muhammad Villani, *"Modernization and social change (A Study of Ismaili community of Pakistan) 1947-2000"* (Ph.D.Diss., Hamdard University, 2003), 4.

²¹⁰ <http://www.civilsoc.org/whatisCS.htm> (accessed on July 26, 2011).

²¹¹ Egbert Harmsen, *Islam, civil society and social work: Muslim voluntary welfare associations* (Netherland: Amsterdam University press, 2008), 38-41.

professional foundations, social movements, activist systems. The main ordinary denominator through all these groups is that they are presented not to get profit but to find out to attain their purposes by means of non-violent or peaceful means.²¹²

Civil society knows how to work efficiently by means of soft power, through the channel of persuading and by negotiating; also by means of healthy contribution to policy expansion that has useful social results, by well-organized service delivery in areas where governmental resources or governmental plan makers become unable to deliver.²¹³ Civil society plays vital role by providing common civilian a way to take part in government, at the same time it verifies the power of more exclusively governmental organization, like the variety of sections that structure the federal bureaucracy.

By doing all this, civil society furthermore assists citizens to believe that they have their right to articulate in governmental activities or look forward to permit the people to communicate themselves or in granting an equilibrium to governmental power, the matter that non civil societies confer go up to violence may be handled. Civil society provides liberty to people tolerates with diverse points of view, permits an extensive set of chances for involving in social life; also there by bounding the propensity of government in the direction of totalitarianism and of disenfranchised

²¹² Helen James, *Civil society, Religion and Global Governance Paradigms of power and persuasion* (UK: Routledge, 2007), 3.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 4.

general public towards faction- conflicts and this is the central thought of Lockean custom of civil Society.²¹⁴

Many world renowned leadership and other Muslim intellectuals have also emphasized on the significance of allowing civil society such as President Khatmi of Iran, the Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim.²¹⁵ Civil Society has turned into a debate of the habits that Muslims have recognized that social living must be ordered, thus to defend the virtual autonomy of Islamic principles from the dictatorial propensities of governments. As a response, governments come up to situate for the set of organizations whose rightful domination on military services inside a specified terrain ought to be conceded in such manner that esteem the liberty of the religious circle.

The Iranian president Khatmi also calls for a better liberty of “civil society”. According to president Khatmi, civil society has a greater part for common people in debate of the strategies of an Islamic State. Khatmi’s this call for civil society will be very thriving and Khatmi’s this voice for civil society would be mean for or Islamic political thoughts as future time will decide.²¹⁶ His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV also emphasizes on the establishment of civil society. According to him, civil society means a set of organizations or institutions which are neither profitable nor governmental institutions; which are motorized by non public energies although planned to precede the civic good. They do effort in the areas of health, education, research and in science. They embrace proficient, marketable, toil, arts and national

²¹⁴ Sohail H. Hashmi, *Islamic Political Ethics Civil Society, pluralism, and Conflict* (Karachi: OUP, 2003) 3-4.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 4.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 32-33.

links, as well as others dedicated to communication, environment and the religion. Several are struggling to brawl social injustice and poverty. He frequently said that they have presumed that voluntary associations are excessively inadequate to provide enormous public function. For a few people, the idea of non-governmental organizations dedicated to community ambition look like an oxymoron.

However this cynical outlook is shifting. Civil society ought to outstanding position within fresh equation for communal advancement, harmonizing relatively than contending through government. Over and above similar object is accurate of the non-governmental business zone and the prospective for public-private joint venture. Private and civil organizations have exceptional abilities for stimulating advancement and yet they can make more flourishing society when government becomes paralyzed to run the administration.²¹⁷

Strapping civil society institutions can go forward the communal and economic arrangement as civil organizations have done this economic and social order in Kenya and in Bangladesh. Civil society is an intricate medium of power, however its impact can be huge, particularly in rural atmospheres, anywhere , for instance , the requirement for stronger primary and secondary schools is significant by evident. It has also erudite that effectual civil advancement engrosses an array of contributions and a diversity of allies together with universities.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme"* op.cit.

²¹⁸ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"Graduation Ceremony of the University of Alberta"* (Speech June 09, 2009) <http://www.akdn.org/Content/767/Speech-by-His-Highness-the-Aga-Khan-at-the-Graduation-Ceremony-of-the-University-of-Alberta> (accessed July 09, 2011).

Civil society in its nature is pluralistic one as it seeks to address for the numerous interest, not symbolized by the State. It also formulates a foremost input to human progress, chiefly when democratic institutions are fragile, or become fragile; at that time civil society can and frequently does take additional load to assist sustain upgrading in the excellence of life. Present Ismaili leadership considers that a dangerous part of any expansion plan should add prop up for civil society. He further said that he knows that Norway Government favors this plan and works vigorously with its own civil society institutions to construct competence in the rising world.²¹⁹

Even civil society can forecast new blueprints with fastidious compassion. The expansion of civil society can furthermore assist to meet up the confrontations of cultural diversity, benevolent diverse electorate's effectual ways to articulate as well as to defend their separate identities.²²⁰ Democracy is not possible only by governments. For most part of the world, the flourishing democracies are those democracies where civil society or nongovernmental institutions play an important role. Aga Khan said that in our concern with government, we cut down the crash of civil society, as well as the possible of productive NGO (Non Governmental organizations). Although it cannot be possible for us to afford that stance. To compete with the certainty of an intricate world will need a fortify group of civic organizations.²²¹

²¹⁹ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"The Nobel Institute on Democratic Development, Pluralism and Civil Society"* op.cit.

²²⁰ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme"* op.cit.

²²¹ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"The School of International and Public Affairs"* op.cit.

Under the platform of AKDN, it has worked on the strengthening of civil society institutions in many parts of the world such as: in *Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and in Mali.*²²² The strengthening of civil society which is nonprofit organization can be guessed from this, that they are not under the influence of government. Civil society uses the means of soft power to meet with citizens, desires by creating political awareness among them about the problems of their running government and due to which it makes the citizens able to participate in governmental activities.

Civil society has great advantage that it brings the priorities of common citizens on the solid platform and where it gives a great sound in policy making of the state. It leads the citizens towards the developmental process. What Aga Khan IV deems about civil society that, it works at the same time as democratic government become vulnerable. Presently, democracy cannot be successful only by administration without the critical role of civil society and now all developed and underdeveloped countries are accepting and favoring the notion and its work.

Even European Commission is providing funds to uphold the civil society. That is why the institution of AKDN has focused its civil society sector program in the poorest regions of the world: in African countries in the countries of Central Asia as well as in South Asia.

²²² http://www.akdn.org/civil_society_activities.asp(accessed July, 21, 2011).

5.1.4 PLURALISTIC VISION OF ISMAILIS

The notion of pluralism in Islam is not from today but from fourteen hundred years ago when Holy Prophet (PBUH) standard norms as Sunna for Muslims, this Sunna accept the notion of pluralism. It is then when newly created community migrated from Mecca city to Madina City from the further persecution from their adverse side, Holy Prophet (PBUH) issued a constitution to make the inter-communal relations. He said in that constitution *The Jews are a community along with the believers. To the Jews their religion and to the Muslims theirs*. This constitution clearly showed that numerous tribes will work together and will support each other mutually and with loyalty. Except those people will not given their rights who became unfaithful to community.²²³

Pluralism is considered in the sense of tolerance. To cope with the realities of modern life in a global social order that needs of tolerance which base on common understanding and respect base where the individuals have aptitude to agree to disagree.²²⁴

Syed Hossein Nasr of Islamic philosophy and John Hick of Christianity talks about religious pluralism. According to John Hick, Religious pluralism is an ideological logic and which the ultimate fortune of all religions is that without the element of pluralism religions will not come to unite and rejoice the tranquility among them by free of dogmatic disparity. While Syed Hossein Nasr considers that religious

²²³ Shireen T Hunter & Huma Malick, *Modernization, democracy and Islam* (USA: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 74.

²²⁴ Jhon L. Esposito, op.cit.

pluralism is just like a means of transportation by which the petrified characteristics of other civilizations can be understood.²²⁵

Spiritual leadership of Ismailis addressed at the Leadership and Diversity conference where he shared his ideas about Pluralism. He said that pluralism implies people from diverse backdrop and wellbeing, coming jointly in institutions of unreliable kinds and objectives, for diverse types and shapes of innovative appearance, which are precious and worthy of support by society and by the government as an entire.²²⁶

The uniqueness of pluralism as a method of thoughts in a world that is concurrently flattering further diversifies as well as more synergistic. Pluralism looks towards the world's multiplicity as sanctity rather than a trouble, concerning the encounter with the other as chances rather than as intimidations. Pluralism does not stand homogenization – refuting what is dissimilar to search external lodging. Towards the country, pluralism respects the position of human being individuality in structuring a healthier world.

Pluralism stands for integration what is exceptional in our human being civilizations with a deep intelligence of what attach us to all of human race. Aga Khan further says that , no one has control of aptitude or of the element of virtue , nor even any country, or any individual and nor any race. He says that if we follow the model of meritocracy in individual effort, subsequently its

²²⁵ Adnan Aslan, *Religious pluralism in Christian and Islamic philosophy* (Curzon Press: 1998), 115.

²²⁶ His Highness the Aga Khan, “*The Leadership and Diversity Conference*” op.cit.

mainly great shape or appearance will produce out of esteem for pluralism of human being; as a result we can tie together the extremely most excellent aid from wherever they may approach.²²⁷ But pluralist societies are not accident of history. They are the invention of enlightened education and continuous investment by governments and all of civil society in recognizing and celebrating the diversity of the world's peoples.

The prospect future world which would be the pluralistic one, such a world that appreciates, realizes and construct on the assortment. The denial of pluralism has a great part in the propagation of harsh clash, and to such a clash no continent has remained safe in the latest decades. However the pluralistic societies are the products of history but they are the result of enlightened or liberal education and incessant venture by governments and the entire civil society accepting as well as commemorating the multiplicity of world community.

Here Aga Khan raised question by asking that what has been done to holdup this input worth for society as well as for democracy in Africa and in the continent of Asia, to forestall disaster, rather than merely counter to it. The institution of AKDN planned to help out and generate several enduring institutional competence to deal with this grave matter by making an institution of Global centre of pluralism and they made it. The base of this institution is in (Ottawa) in Canada. It attempts to flourishing testimony in constructing as well as supporting pluralistic civil society. The work of this centre is with the joint

²²⁷ Ibid.

collaboration of Government and with academic circles as well as with the civil service. The motive of this centre is to promote legislation and strategy to fortify developing states' ability for increasing pluralism in all fields of contemporary life: such as in the field of justice, in the field of health and education, in art, in financial services, and in the media.²²⁸ A safe pluralistic society needs a group of peoples who are erudite and confident equally in the identity and profundity of their individual customs as well as in individuals of their neighbors.

Democracies should be educated if they have capability to keep communicate themselves expertly, and their voters are to attain well-versed estimation regarding the enormous matters at hazard. The utmost hurdle to pluralism and democracy is perhaps the lacuna in the common education of the inhabitants concerned.²²⁹

Ismailis believe that the future world would be pluralistic one which understands and realizes the disparity. However such kind of world ought to be based on a novel academic as well as spiritual parity and that it ought to be educated to perceive in pluralism, prospect for expansion in all parts of human effort. It has seen in history that the rejection of pluralism in any part of the world has created internal dissention, social and economic deterioration.²³⁰ Pluralism is set of instruments that make different interpretations of religion to unite. The differences among people on

²²⁸ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"The Nobel Institute on Democratic Development, Pluralism and Civil Society"*.op.cit.

²²⁹ His Highness the Aga Khan, *"The Leadership and Diversity Conference"*.op.cit.

²³⁰ Aga Khan Academy Kilindini Opening Ceremony (Mombasa, Kenya) 20 December 2003 [http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6848/\(accessed July 14, 2011\).](http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6848/(accessed July 14, 2011).)

the basis of their faith create distances and this distance is not a healthy sign for collaboration in world towards the betterment of good life for all. The differences on the basis of religions, nationality, and superior race: all these critical things are directed towards the inconsistency and uproar in the society.

Therefore to avoid these conflicts in society, the concept of pluralism is very much tolerable where people give respect to other people on the basis of shared respect and passion as well as by eradicating all kinds of arrogance and such arrogance can be eradicate by the sharing understanding about each other.²³¹ Ismailis are very much optimism about the notion of pluralism that it can succeed in the Islamic world. Their 49th spiritual leadership says that

*We need in the “Umma” to move away from the normative attitudes towards the acceptance of pluralism of the “Umma”, and that pluralism starts from the time of the Prophet himself and “Hadith” (Sayings of the Prophet Mohammad) as well as the Prophet’s historical footprints show that in the life time of the Prophet himself he knew that there would be pluralism in the interpretation of the faith.*²³²

His Highness Prince Karim deems that by ignoring the notion of pluralism, the future outcomes would be very dangerous. Pluralism has capability to create development in the society as well as it has certain role to alleviate poverty and conflict hindrance from society. The reason that AKDN has made Global centre of

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Luncheon announcing the merger of the Bellerive Foundation and Aga Khan Foundation (Geneva, Switzerland) incomplete 31 May 2006.<http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7716/>(accessed July 23, 2011).

pluralism in Canada is to produce the successful societies around the world to promote the notion of pluralism.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary era, issue of relationship between religion and politics reemerged in regional and international politics especially after the Iranian revolution in 1979. In this era followers of different religions adopted different perspective about religio-political base activities. The main focus of this research is Ismailis, who have adapted to a new and different strategy about relationship between religion and politics. Historically, the interaction between religion and politics has not been uniform among the Ismailis from the demise of Prophet (PBUH) in 632 to the 909 A.D. when Ismailis established their first ever empire.

During this period, Ismailis were persecuted by the Abbasid Caliph and in order to survive, Ismailis adopted the method of Taqqiya (period of concealment) also known as Dawr Satr. At the same time, while in Taqqiya their subversive religious activities ultimately gave them political strength which resulted in establishment of the Fatimid Empire. This Empire provided environment for close relationship between religion and politics under the leadership of an Ismaili Imam as chief of both spiritual and temporal aspects of their lives and this era lasted for 185 years. Primary reason for the decline of the Fatimid Empire was internal differences between Ismaili leadership, at this point, another split occurred whereby two different denominations known as Nizari Ismailis and Musta'lian Ismaili. Majority of Nizari (the main focus of this research) shifted from Egypt to Syria and Persia and once again established their political rule at Alamut in the Alburz Mountain (a mountainous part of Persia).

However, Alamut based Ismaili political rule was abolished by Hulagu Khan in 1256 A.D. Once again the Ismailis were uprooted and practiced Taqqiya to survive

till the Post Alamut period which is known as the survival period for the Ismaili history. Here Ismailis did not have any State because of the persecutions. It indicted that Ismailis practical political activity remained silent until the dawn of eighteenth century when new system started and known as leadership of Aga Khan in 1817. This method started a new change in the Ismaili strategy about religion and political activities. Aga Khan I's role as a Governor of Kirman in 1836 and then relocation to India along with many of his followers in 1841 initiated the start of progressive thought where religion and politics were concerned.

Both Aga Khan II and Aga Khan III were involved in politics within the subcontinent. However, Aga Khan III played a prominent role where politics was concerned. He served in the different portfolios: such as 1st President of the Muslim League (1907), President of the League of Nation (1937), The Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) and Round Table Conferences (1930-1931).

Although, Ismailis played an active role in the Pakistan movement, however, after the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, once again, they changed their strategy and continued their religious activities apart from politics. In post 1947 period, there are no apparent examples of Ismailis being involved in any political role, especially during the period of Aga Khan IV (1957 onward).

This dissertation is focused on the period of Aga Khan IV from 1957 to 2010. The crux of this dissertation was to investigate the present status of relationship between religion and politics during the period of their living Imam Aga Khan IV (1957-2010). During this period, Ismailis around the world do participate in the political process and governments of their respective countries, be it in Pakistan or in any other part of

the world. They are loyal to the countries they reside in. An Ismaili believes that, although religion and politics remained theoretically closely related with each other, the change of religio- political strategy practically occurred during the period of Aga Khan IV. During the period (1957-2010) Ismailis went through various challenges, one being discrimination, especially in Uganda, Africa, when Idi Amin expelled all Asians and revoked their citizenship. Thus their leadership tried to resolve their problems by using political influence.

New general strategy was based on welfare activities in health, rural development, social, cultural, institutional development, economic and educational developmental sector. It took place through different organizations such as, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) that operate in the poorest regions of the world such as, Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia, as well as, Western countries without keeping any discrimination of faith, gender and race. This is what the theory of constructivism's view regarding world politics that it is a social construction. This theory says that there are ideas, norms and institutions that shape state identity. It further says that there are agents that developed the international environment and this environment is effected by the interaction of agents and structure.

Ismailis have the same view regarding the international politics. Ismailis have their role model in the form of their living Imam and have the structure in the form of their international organization that is known as (AKDN). The institution of AKDN works under the guidance of Aga Khan IV. This is the result of their agent /actor and structure that Ismailis have shortened the distances around their world community by working in the field of health, education, and economics, as well as, in the social

sector. The identity, of Ismailis is their living Imam in the form of Aga Khan IV. The present status of Ismailis about religion and politics can be concluded under three pillars that are identified by their leadership; as supporting democracy, strengthen of civil society and promoting of the concept of pluralism and diversity.

Ismailis have a vivid vision that democracy can be strengthen by improving literacy rate through quality education. As education is the backbone to strapping the democratic pillar of government. Strong leadership comes out by acquiring qualitative education and such strong leadership leads the community ahead towards peace and progress.

Ismailis' second pillar of present strategy is to make the institution of civil society potent, as it's believed that civil society is a source of social and political awareness. It works when the democratic governments becomes unable to work in certain democratic environment. To strengthen the civil society, the Aga Khan's institutions are working around the world in different countries such as Tajikistan, Mali, Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, India, Kenya and Tanzania.

Their third pillar regarding politics is by promoting the notion of pluralism; by creating very successful institutions in the world. Actually these institutions are based on promoting tolerance, openness, and to be accepting of other faiths throughout the world. They have strong believe that the future world would be a pluralistic one as pluralism has the ability to make the societies strong. To strengthen the pluralistic vision, the current Aga Khan has established the Global Centre for Pluralism in Canada in 2006. The motive of this centre is to create successful societies in

developing and developed world, as well as, the element to promote democracy and enhancement of good governance.

However, the conventional meaning of political activities does not apply to activities of the Ismailis, as they are spread in several countries all over the world and are considered as minorities of these countries. So their numerical strength does not allow them to demand separate state for themselves. Ismailis have the tendency to lead their lives ethically within the framework of Islam. They relate religion with politics as per their own understanding based on the social activities for the betterment of the Muslim Ummah and even towards the entire human race. All the three visions of Aga Khan; democracy, pluralism and civil society vividly illustrates that the Ismailis do not alienate religion from politics and their vision is showing peaceful democratic vision of the state.

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