

Diamond Jubilee “Deedars” for Ismaili Muslims

Deedars - Meaning & Significance

Ismaili Muslims around the world are celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness, Prince Karim Aga Khan, who is their Hazar Imam¹⁵. He succeeded as Imam on 11 July 1957 and therefore, His Diamond Jubilee year, was inaugurated on 11 July 2017.

His Highness the Aga Khan will be travelling to many countries for his religious Diamond Jubilee Deedars to give blessings, and guidance to Ismaili Muslims (Ismailis). They are His spiritual children¹². Before and during these visits, Ismailis will come together in special congregations, and pray for blessings to see & receive guidance from their Hazar Imam, as well as, to express their love, obedience, allegiances, and devotion to Hazar Imam ¹⁵. The next Diamond Jubilee Deedar visit is to Canada later this month.

These religious visits are generally, called “Deedars”. Deedar, literally means to see (vision). His Highness the Aga Khan (Hazar Imam), will be going to see his spiritual children, and so they will be seeing him. Hence the use of the word Deedar. Seeing their Imam is a physical Deedar, also called an exoteric or Zahiri Deedar. This is a part of a religious Journey of enlightenment and experiencing the light (Noor) of Hazar Imam. ¹¹ The journey to spiritual enlightenment includes the following.

A Zahiri or exoteric Deedar, A Batini³ or esoteric Deedar, and A Noorani⁵ or spiritual Deedar. They are all parts of Deedar, to seek and receive Imams blessings of divine enlightenment which originate and manifest from the Noor of Allah ⁵ to the Individual who is blessed.

Deedar is a blessing which is given. It is not a right which one can demand or take. Seeing the Imam physically, is a deedar, but that does not mean that one has, or will receive the blessings of Deedar (enlightenment). Imams have given guidance of what must be done for this blessing. That includes following guidance, prayers, and seeking forgiveness. Without doing what Hazar Imam and Imams have asked and said, there should be no expectation of enlightenment beyond seeing the physical form of the Imam.

In this regard Allah has said in the Quran “And if ye call them to the guidance, they hear not; and you (Muhammad) see them looking toward you, but they see not.” (Quran 7:198).

Like the Quran, Deedar and Imams guidance, also have a deeper and an inner meaning, progression, levels, and significance. That is called the Tawil³ (Allegorical interpretation) and the Batin⁴ (inner meaning). Deedar is also the ultimate purpose of knowing yourself and of receiving the blessings and of experiencing spiritual enlightenment. This is the Noorani Deedar (from the Noor⁵ of Imam ¹⁵ & Allah).

Deedars are religious occasions for prayers, and they are a part of a religious journey and of transcendence from the material to understanding and experiencing the spiritual. That includes recognition of yourself, your soul, and most importantly of Hazar Imam, beyond the physical forms.

Prophet Mohammed has said that if you know yourself, you will know Allah, & to Allah we (our soul) will return⁶. That means knowing your mind and body and also your soul, which is the only part of you, which is eternal. That knowledge and enlightenment comes through Deedar, which comes through prayers and following the guidance of those rooted in knowledge and who have divinely ordained authority. That for Ismailis today is Hazar Imam, and includes the guidance from their Imams, Prophet Mohammed and the Quran (Allah).

Allah has also said our souls were all made from one soul and are eternal. Our soul is from Allah, and is a part of the unity of Tawhid, and oneness,¹⁰ of Allah ⁵ to whom our souls will return

Physical Deedar, of seeing Hazar Imam can be whenever and where ever you see Hazar Imam. Including seeing Imam driving past in a car. This was confirmed in one of his guidance by Imam Sultan Mohammed Shah in 1945.

During these Deedars visits, Hazar Imam comes not only to give his physical deedar (sight). During Deedar, in addition to general congregational blessings¹², Imam can spiritually bless any Individual or individuals his Batini and Noorani Deedars or both. These are individual to the person. These manifest spiritually and so there are thousands at any Deedar. Only those who receive will know.

An esoteric or a Batini Deedar is the enlightenment of the inner, and allegorical understanding. That is the light or enlightenment of and in also Imams guidance's, ⁸ (called Farman's). Recognition of Hazar Imam, is also through knowing yourself (your Batin, and your Soul). Therefore reading, understanding, seeking and following Farmans are a critical part to the blessings of Deedar.

If you are individually and spiritually blessed by Hazar Imam during an exoteric physical deedar, you can also receive the esoteric and spiritual light and experience including the recognition of your soul and or of Imams Noor (light). This is always from Hazar Imam to an individual spiritual child or children individually.

When prayers for Deedar of any individual are blessed (granted). There is simultaneously, a manifestation of spiritual enlightenment (Deedar), to that individual. This originates from the divine Light, which is the Noor of Allah ⁵. This Deedar is a manifestation of divine enlightenment, from and through the soul.

Deedars of Imam, are also called a Padramni, Mulakat, Darshan, and Darbar. During Deedar, Imam also performs various religious rites and ceremonies, in addition to giving blessings, and guidance's (Farmans). The guidance given by Imam are temporal, religious, and also spiritual. (called Zahiri, batini and Noorani). They are all inclusive and foundational parts of the Ismaili faith & interpretation. In Islam there is no separation between the worldly, the religious, or the spiritual. They are one and a part of the oneness and Tawhid of Allah.

What is a Padhramni - A Padramni means the coming of, and the physical presence of Imam E Zaman during Deedar. Therefore, Padramni of Imam is also a Deedar

What is a Mulakat - A Mulakat literally means a meeting. Mulakat with Imam includes seeing Imam. Therefore, it is a Deedar. A Mulakat is mainly when Imam meets community appointees for guidance and blessings. Mulakat can be in a separate room in the Deedar prayer hall. Also for example at the Global Head Quarters of the Imam in Aiglemont, a sperate Mulakat hall is used for Imam giving Mulakats, with related rites, following meetings with the Jamats constitutional appointees (Leaders). Presidents returning from Aiglemont bring back, and share these blessings, and guidance etc, with the Jamats.

Occasionally Imam has referred to a Deedar to the whole Jamat (congregation) as a Mulakat. Therefore, a Mulakat, is also a religious occasion for blessings of Deedar and Guidance from the Imam. In this regard Hazar Imam said the following regarding that Mulakat, during that Deedar

“I have decided today's Mulakat should be in the form of a Darbar, A Darbar is an occasion of special rejoicing and today is an occasion of special rejoicing for the Jamat and for the Imam and for the Imam's family. And I would like for those of you who have come from outside that when you return home, you convey to your Jamat, My affection, My love, My blessings, My thoughts, and My prayers, because all My Jamat worldwide is particularly in My heart and thoughts today.”

What is a Darshan - Darshan is now rarely used for Deedars. It is from a Sanskrit word Darsana. Similar to Deedar, this means to see (or vision). In Hindu religions, Darshan is a part of their worship (Puja), to be blessed and to see and experience the Light (vision) of God. Similarly, for Ismailis Darshan is the blessing of and seeing the light (Noor) or Deedar of Imam.

Darshan is explained in Ismaili Ginans. These are devotional prayers, of and from guidance (Farmans), from Imams. Hindus also have such devotional prayers, as do other faiths, like for example Hymns for Christians. There are many traditional, cultural and religious similarities of Ismailis from the India and the Ismailis who are from the Indian, Khoja traditions.

An example of a Ginan regarding Darshan.

Ejee japee-e teno jaa(m)p alakh chhe aape jee

I pure chhe man ddaanee haam darshan aapejee

English translation

Recite and remember your (Imam) who represents the unknowable and indescribable (Imam). (Seeking by repeated recitation),

may the Lord (Imam), fulfil the desires of your mind and bestows his light upon you (noor, Deedar enlightenment, knowledge).

There are many more. Imams have said that Ginans are Farmans ¹ and ². They must be read and understood. A few more excerpts are quoted in the references below ²

What is a Darbar - A Darbar is when Imam declares that a Deedar, is also a Darbar. Imam has explained a Darbar as follows. This was during a religious Deedar. Therefore, a Darbar is not a Deedar, but it is an additional part of a Deedar for rejoicing. This is what Hazar Imam said regarding a Darbar.

"Today I want you to share in My happiness. And this is why I decided that today should be an occasion of Darbar. A Darbar is an occasion of special happiness, of special meaning, and I want My Jamat at the beginning of this Farman, to know how very happy I have been during this visit to the United Kingdom. And that is why I made the decision that today should be a Darbar, a day of special happiness, special rejoicing, for you and for Me. "London, UK August 14th, 1994.

In the last 2 Diamond Jubilee Deedars Hazar Imam in the 2 Farmans did not declare these Deedars as Darbars. Therefore, they were Deedars but not also Darbars. This is significant to understand.

Deedar visits by Imam, are religious visits and usually held in a dedicated religious, Deedar prayer hall. This is mainly because the regular daily prayer hall cannot accommodate the increased number of worshipers (pilgrims), who come for prayers, blessings, and guidance, on "all" matters from their Imam. This is what Hazar Imam has said in this regard

"For hundreds of years, My spiritual children have been guided by the Rope of Imamat. You have looked to the Imam of the Age for advice and help in all matters and through your Imam's immense love and affection for His spiritual children, His Noor has indicated to you where and in which direction you must turn, so as to obtain spiritual and worldly satisfaction (Aga Khan 1964).

The rope of Imamat is the oneness of Allah Imamat and Imams, ¹⁰, and the continuity of guidance from Imam, as well as, the continuity of the interpretation of the Quran, which started with Prophet Mohammed and has continued by Imams. His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th Imam of Ismailis. Noor ⁵ here refers to Allah & His Light ⁵

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light

upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things” (Quran Sura Noor 24:35)

This verse, of the Quran is recited in the presence of Imam, at Deedars of Hazar Imam. The Noor (Light), and the continuity of divinely ordained authority of Ismaili Imams originate from Allah in the Quran, & from Prophet Mohammed. The following is what Allah has said in this regard.

“Obey Allah and the Messenger (Prophet), and those in divine authority amongst you. (4:59).

The title of His Highness the Aga Khan for Ismailis includes “Noor”. The title used by Ismailis is, Noor Mawlana, Shah Karim Al Husseini, Hazar Imam” Noor refers to the Light and divinely ordained authority given by Allah in the Quran and to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). There are also references to and guidance of the Light and Deedar, in the Ismaili religious Ginans ^{1 & 11}

Central to Ismaili Muslim faith, are prayers, for Deedar, and the continuity of Guidance from Hazar Imam. Prayers are expected to be answered (Blessed and granted), provided first, the Guidance (Farmans), of the Imams and Hazar Imam are followed. Secondly, prayers in accordance with the guidance from Imams are practiced. The Daily prayers and worship by Ismailis include the seeking of guidance, forgiveness, purification, blessing and Deedar from and through Hazar Imam.

The most significant part of the Imam’s visit is firstly to prepare for seeing Hazar Imam & to seek His blessings and ask for forgiveness. Secondly to see and be blessed by Hazar Imam physically while Hazar Imam walks around blessing all who are present. This includes any who he passes on the way to the prayer hall and back. This is done with immense love and deepest of affection. Thirdly Hazar Imam will give his guidance with blessing to all who are present and Hazar Imam always asks, and expect those present to take these blessings and guidance’s back, and share them with their families and Jamats (Ismailis) where they live.¹² Imam also performs a number of religious rites, and ceremonies. These are also a significant part of the process of seeking and receiving blessings of Deedar (Spiritual enlightenment)

If and when, blessings of Deedar are granted by the Imam to an individual. There is a simultaneous manifestation of divine enlightenment, which originates from

the Noor of Allah, through the Noor of Ali, which is the same one Noor, as the Noor of Hazar Imam⁷. Deedar (enlightenment), manifests from the spiritual and spiritually to those whose prayers have been blessed (granted). Manifestation of the blessings of Divine Enlightenment are not limited in nature, time, place, scope or in any way whatsoever.

Seeing Hazar Imam physically is a special religious moment and an opportunity to pray and seek blessings his Noor (Light). A Prayer is recited when seeing Hazar Imam “May the praise and blessings of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammed and his progeny (Allaahumma salli 'ala Mohammedin wa ale Muhammad)

The “progeny” is Hazar Imam (Imam of the time⁰, in the Ismaili Muslim interpretation and faith. To see Hazar Imam, even a glimpse, anywhere, be it accidentally, are important religious moments of and for prayers and blessing. An individual may at that time or later, be rewarded also with blessings of Deedar (enlightenment).

The ultimate religious aim and blessing for every Ismaili Muslim, is to be blessed with and receive Deedar. That is to receive spiritual enlightenment, which lights the way for that individual, to knowing yourself, and therefore to know God, and thus enabling the right choices in your life in this world and for the next. This blessing of seeing the light (Noor), can be given by and through the Imam’s Noor, while in the physical presence of the Imam, or when worshiping (praying), at a Deedar prayer halls, or outside, or in a Jamat Khanna (Prayer hall), or anywhere else and at any time and place chosen by the Noor of the Imam and Allah.

Regarding knowing yourself and knowing God, Prophet Mohammed said, “Whosoever knows himself knows his Lord.” (Al Hadith) “And verily, to Our Lord we indeed are to return Quran 43:14

Knowing yourself, is knowing your body, mind, and also most important your soul which is eternal, and which will return to Allah⁹

In order to recognise the blessings of a deedar, an Individual first needs the “eyes” of knowledge & recognition of Hazar Imam. That knowledge and wisdom or enlightenment is acquired through prayers and by following the guidance given by Imams (These are collectively called Farmans⁸)

Allah says, that there are believers who see Prophet Mohammed only as an ordinary man, and they listen, but do not hear His guidance⁹. They do not know who Prophet Mohammed is beyond his physical form. Meaning to them he is an ordinary man.

“And if ye (Muslims) call them to the guidance, they hear not; and thou (Muhammad) seest them looking toward thee, but they see not.” (Quran 7:198).

Seeing Hazar Imam physically at any time is an exoteric deedar, a blessing and an honour. Most importantly, it is a time for prayers. However, meeting or seeing Imam many times & during Deedar, or getting congregational general blessings¹², does not mean an individual has or will receive the blessing of individual spiritual enlightenment (Deedar), from the Noor of Imam. An Individual may be blessed with the enlightenment (deedar), once or twice in their life time. Imams and Hazar Imam has said unequivocally that when anyone receives the individual spiritual blessing or deedar (the light), they will be certain and they will be in not doubt whatsoever that they have received the blessings of Deedar. And that It will not be anything like they have seen or experienced materially in their lives.

Hazar Imam and Imams have also assured Ismailis very clearly and categorically that If you do not experience Deedar, it does not mean you have failed or that you should stop. There is no failure. Hazar Imams has added that your success is in your duty to keep making the effort by following guidance, praying, seeking forgiveness and Deedar. Then you must leave the rest and the outcome to the Noor of Hazar Imam. And also, you must desire the outcomes, whatever the outcomes may be.

Allah in the Quran, Prophet Mohammed and Imams have all assured all followers that they are spiritually with everyone all the time. Allah is closer to us than our Jugular vein. There is nothing Allah does not know, cannot do, or undo. In this regard Allah has said in the Holy Quran

“And We have created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein” Quran 50 16

Prophet PBUH has also said “And when I love him (Believer), I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks. If he asks me, I will surely give to him, and if

he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely protect him" (Fath al-Bari, 11.34041, hadith 6502);

At the first Diamond Jubilee Deedar on 11 July 2017, the following "religious" submissions (supplications and prayers) were made to Imam in his presence. These include obedience, forgiveness, allegiance, devotion, love, gratitude and, the seeking of blessings & contained Guidance (through, Farmans ⁸ & Deedar).

- Mawla¹⁵ we submit to you our unreserved spiritual allegiance
- We pledge our absolute loyalty
- We submit ourselves to you as our Imam, Pir and Mursheed to lead us on the path of Surat al mustaqeem (right path)
- We submit all our love devotion and dedication to you
- We submit our allegiance to you as the bearer of true authority
- We pledge our unreserved and unconditional support for all your endeavours
- We pledge our total support in your work in the cause of Islam, our faith, peace, compassion and human dignity
- We submit our humble gratitude for your constant care, protection, guidance, and inspiration
- We pray for the safety security good health and long life for all who are near and dear to you
- We pray that we be blessed with your Imammat for ever more
- Ya Mawla we pray you accept our humble pledges & submissions
"Amen

Alhamdulillah and Shukr Mawla (All Praise is due to Allah and Imam e zaman)

By Maheub Chatur

4 November 2017

m@chatur.co.uk

References - Bibliography

1. Few Gnan verses re Deedar

Satveni Moti by Syed Nar Muhammad Shah, it is said:

Murshid diwa hai joog-ma, jo aan dikhave ser-re;

e baatt bahot rariyamani, jiya(n) chorasi nahi(n) fer-re.

Translation:

In this world the Imam is the Light who enlightens the Spiritual Path;
the Way is most wonderful on which there is no failure.

Pir Sadr al-Din emphasizes the same idea in the following verse:

Nish andhari Gur chand-roora huwa;

Jot ahe Gur deevo, ho jire bhai.

Translation:

In the dark night of ignorance, the Imam spreads the Light of Guidance
like a moon; Indeed, O brother! The Imam is the Bright Lamp.

2. Gnanans re Light (Darshan - Noor of Imam)

ejee darshan deeyo moraa naath, daasee chhu(n) tereedarshan
deeyoejee daasee teree moulaa, tere dar ubheearaj kare chhe joddee
haath daasee chhu(n) teree darshan dee-o moraa naath

Translation

Oh, my lord (Noor of Imam),

bless me with your light (spiritual enlightenment I am your devotee.

your devotee is standing at your door and

is supplicating to you earnestly

with both my hands joined in prayer

I am seeking your light (Deedar)

by sayyed imaam shah

Eji, Aash Karine Ya Ali* hun tere dar ubhi,

Kar jodine em mangu Ya Shah;

Dejo deedar tusi mahavar datar Shah,
Hama tere charane lagu.

Translation

*With hope oh my Imam (Noor of Imam Ali), I am standing at your door
I am supplicating and praying, oh my Imam
For You to Bless me with your Deedar, (Light) oh my Imam
I am prostrating before you in submission*

Nar nakala(n)k keree vaat koik jaanne re - by sayyed fatehalee

- 3 Tawil means Interpretation or allegorical interpretation. The term occurs in Quran 3:5–7 in the context of distinguishing between those verses of the Quran that are precise in meaning (muhkamat) and those that are ambiguous (mutashabihat). Subsequent verses assert, according to one reading, that “only God and those well grounded in knowledge” know the interpretation of the ambiguous parts of the text, whereas according to another, more popular reading, only God knows the interpretation or hidden meaning of those parts. Historically, from the seventh century on, scholars were divided into those who rejected interpretation in any guise or form and those who were willing to apply the discursive methods of reading the text in varying degrees. The former or literalist group included such scholars as Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), and Ahmad ibn Hazm (d. 1086); the latter included such liberal scholars as Hasan al-Basri (d. 728), the Mutazili theologians, and the philosophers in general. The most enthusiastic advocate of allegorical interpretation in the twelfth century was the great Aristotelian philosopher and Maliki judge Ibn Rushd (Averroës) (d. 1198). oxford Islamic studies

tawil - The elucidation of the inner or esoteric meaning, batin, from the literal wording or apparent meaning of a text, ritual or religious prescription (Institute of Ismaili studies UK)

- 4 Batin means Inner, interior, inward, hidden, secret. In Shii, Ismaili, and Sufi thought, the Quran is held to contain two aspects: an outer or apparent meaning (zahir) and an inner or secret meaning, often allegorical or

symbolic (batin). While the apparent meanings of the Quran are accessed through the traditional discipline of tafsir or exegesis, the batin is made known only through the hermeneutical process known as tawil (interpretation). The notion of secret meanings underlying the Quranic verses is connected to the notion of God as al-Batin, the Hidden One (Quran 57:3), whose absolutely nonmanifest Being underpins the created realm. The Ismailis were also known as the Batinis, presumably on account of their predilection for esoteric interpretations of the divine revelation. oxford Islamic studies

Batin

The inner or esoteric meaning of a sacred text, ritual or religious prescription, often contrasted with zahir. See also batini ta'wil and Batiniyyah .

Batini tawil. - Symbolic exegesis of the Qur'an based on the claim that there is an inner (batini) meaning behind the external (zahiri) text. By extension, it can be applied to other scriptures, as well as to rituals and the whole of nature. The theory and practice of this hermeneutical method was elaborated by Ismaili thinkers such as Ja'far b. Mansur al-Yaman (d. 2nd half 10th century), al-Qadi al-Nu'man (d. 974) and Nasir Khusraw (d. ca. 1088). As a result, Ismailis were, sometimes pejoratively, termed batinis (esotericists). According to the authors mentioned above, while the revelation (tanzil) was delivered by the prophet to all people, the knowledge of its ta'wil rests with the imam, the sole authoritative source of interpretation, and they considered that this ta'wil should not be disclosed to the masses, lest it is misunderstood. (institute of Ismaili studies)

- 5 Noor – Nur - “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things” (Quran Sura Noor 24:35)

Lit. 'light,' a term used for God, defined as light in the Qur'an in the so-called verse of light (ayat al-nur) Q 24:35: 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth...'). In Shi 'ism, the term is taken to mean the light that is believed to have emanated through Adam, via Muhammad into the family of 'Ali and his successors, the Imams. (Institute of Ismaili studies UK)

- 6 "Whosoever knows himself knows his Lord." Surah 43 Verse 14: "And verily, to Our Lord we indeed are to return! "(Prophet Mohammed - al Hadith)
- 7 "For hundreds of years, My spiritual children have been guided by the Rope of Imamat. You have looked to the Imam of the Age for advice and help in all matters and through your Imam's immense love and affection for His spiritual children, His Noor has indicated to you where and in which direction you must turn, so as to obtain spiritual and worldly satisfaction (Aga Khan Guidance in 1964).
- 8 Farman - Any pronouncement, direction, order or ruling made or given by Mawlana Hazar Imam. (Aga Khan in the Ismaili constitution , which is also a Farman ordained by His Highness the Aga Khan)
- 9 A believer who sincerely submits to the Imam's guidance may potentially attain the knowledge of self. The tradition attributed to both the Prophet and Imam Ali: 'He who knows himself, knows his Lord', conveys the essence of this relationship between the Imam and his follower." "The Ismaili Imamat" by Institute of Ismaili Studies
- 10 Soul – oneness and unity of Souls – Tawhid - "O mankind reverence your Lord, who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath scattered countless men and women."4:1

"Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul, whoever works evil, it is against his own soul." --41:46

"On the day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil." -3:30

"Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds." 74:38

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour unto you:”, 3.103 and “How can ye disbelieve, when it is ye unto whom Allah's revelations are recited, and His messenger is in your midst? He who holdeth fast to Allah, he indeed is guided unto a right path. 3:101

- 11 Allah has said in the Quran that believers are to send their prayers for blessings and purification through the Prophet and Allah will forgive and purify. This divinely ordained authority was passed on to, the first Ismaili Imam Hazrat Ali. Imams are spiritual inheritors. Ismailis send their prayers as directed by Allah and Prophet Mohammed. The following are the related verses of the Quran regarding this. And the verses where Prophet says Prophet will appoint a light (who was Hazrat Ali and Imams.0. Also, what Imam said in a Farman about his Noor (light). He said this also in the Ismaili constitution ¹⁴

Ask for forgiveness through Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) “And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allah. And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful” Quran 4.64

Pray for them “Take alms of their wealth, wherewith thou mayst purify them and mayst make them grow, and pray for them. Lo! thy prayer is an assuagement for them. Allah is Hearer, Knower”. Quran 9.103

Re appointment of Light (Imam). “O ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah and put faith in His messenger. He will give you twofold of His mercy and will appoint for you a light wherein ye shall walk, and will forgive you. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful - Quran 57:28

“For hundreds of years, My spiritual children have been guided by the Rope of Imamat. You have looked to the Imam of the Age for advice and help in all matters and through your Imam's immense love and affection for His spiritual children, His Noor has indicated to you where and in which direction you must turn, so as to obtain spiritual and worldly satisfaction (Aga Khan 1964).

12 Excerpts of Guidance and General blessings “I would like My spiritual children who have come from outside the United Kingdom, when you return home, take My blessings, My love, My affection to your families and your Jamats. And tell them that on this occasion of rejoicing, because this is an occasion of rejoicing, they are in our thoughts and in our prayers.

“. there are 63 countries represented here this afternoon. I would have to go back to school and learn My geography all over again. But apart from the fact that I would have to go back to school, I think the principles on which we live, the ethics we abide by, they know no frontiers. They know no frontiers in geography, they know no frontiers in language, they know no frontiers amongst brothers and sisters of our Jamat. And they are the premises wherever you live, the ethics of our faith the way we live with our faith and in our world, is an essential part of the life of every Murid...

I will finish this Farman by saying that, Inshallah, when you come together and you enjoy the rest of the day, I will be participating with you in My heart and My thoughts, My love and My affection. And I give to each one of you individually, individually, as if I had put My hand on your shoulders, each one of you individually, My warmest and My most affectionate loving blessings for you and for your families and for your Jamat, for the fulfilment of your wishes, for good health, for long life, for strength on Sirat al-Mustaqeem and particularly for Mushkil Asaan. August 2008 (Kalame Imam e Zaman)

To each and every one of you again, I give My warmest, best, best, best blessings for your happiness, for your unity in your Jamats, for success in your worldly lives, for success in your spiritual lives, for strength on Sirat al-Mustaqeem, for success in Batini life. That is very, very important. Attend regularly Jamatkhana. Even outside the time of prayer, call the name of Allah or the name of the Imams on the Tasbih. But don't let your faith be absent from your everyday lives. Don't let that occur. This is very important. It is important today and it is important tomorrow. And it is important in the years ahead. March 1997 (Kalame Imam e Zaman)

“So, I say this to you today, in this Farman, to this Jamat and to the jamat worldwide. I make these wishes for their future “ ...”You can overload the

Ugandan telephone system to convey my message to your families”. His Highness the Aga Khan 10 Oct 2017

“I begin this Farman by giving to each one of you and your families and your Jamat, whether they are present or elsewhere in the world, my best and my most affectionate loving blessings...I would ask that you tell your family that on this occasion I am thinking of them, also I am thinking of the Jamat worldwide. I send my blessings to the Jamat worldwide and I give special blessings today to you and your families for happiness, long life, success in dini matters, and success in worldly matters.” His Highness the Aga Khan 12 October 2017

- 13 “For hundreds of years, My spiritual children have been guided by the Rope of Imamat. You have looked to the Imam of the Age for advice and help in all matters and through your Imam's immense love and affection for His spiritual children, His Noor has indicated to you where and in which direction you must turn, so as to obtain spiritual and worldly satisfaction (Aga Khan 1964).

“O ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah and put faith in His messenger. He will give you twofold of His mercy and will appoint for you a light wherein ye shall walk, and will forgive you. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful - Quran 57:28

- 14 Imam

Aga Khan “I am the 49th hereditary Imam in direct lineal descent from the first Shia Imam, Hazrat ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib through his marriage to Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, our beloved Prophet’s daughter.

Imam Shah Karim al-Husayni Aga Khan IV, (Letter to International Islamic Conference, Amman, July 2005,

In accordance with Shia doctrine, tradition, and interpretation of history, the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) designated and appointed his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Mawlana Ali Amiru-I-Mu'minin (Alayhi-s-salam), to be the first Imam to continue the Ta'wil and Ta'lim of Allah's final message and to guide the murids, and proclaimed that the Imamat should continue by heredity through Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.) and his daughter Hazrat Bibi

Fatimat-az-Zahra, Khatun-i-Jannat Alayha-s-salam). (His Highness the Aga Khan – Ismaili constitution)

Institute of Ismaili studies - In general usage, a leader of prayers or religious leader. The Shi'ī* restrict the term to their spiritual leaders descended from 'Ali b. Abi Talib and the Prophet's daughter, Fatima.

(*Shia schools of thought and interpretation of Islam. In the context of this article the reference is to Imams of Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, also known as Ismaili Muslims)

Imama

An abstract noun from the term Imam referring to the institution of hereditary spiritual leadership in Shi 'ī Islam.

Imamah

An abstract noun from the term Imam referring to the institution of hereditary spiritual leadership in Shi'ī Islam.

Imamat

An abstract noun from the term Imam referring to the institution of hereditary spiritual leadership in Shi 'ī Islam.

Imamate

An abstract noun from the term Imam referring to the institution of hereditary spiritual leadership in Shi'ī Islam. (Institute of Ismaili studies UK)

- 15 “Mawla” for Ismailis means the Ismaili Imam. There are many others names of Imam used in Ismaili prayers, traditions, ginans, rites and practices such as, Mursheed, Pir, Mushkil Kusha, Sat Gur, Shah, Hazar Imam, Khudavand, Bapa, Yali Bapa, Sat Gur, Mawla, Sami, Noor Mawlana, Ya Shah, Ya Ali, Shahebul Zaman, Dhani Salamat Datar, Awal, Akhir, Zahir, Batin, Noorun Allah Noor. Ya Hahul Kayum, Hai Zinda, & Kayam Paya, Ya Rahman, & Rahim.