

THE ISMAILI CONSTITUTION

Its importance in Today's World

October 2006

Introduction

It is now some twenty years since Mawlana Hazar Imam ordained the Ismaili Constitution for the Jamat worldwide. The Constitution is a single unified paramount constitution which applies to all Ismaili Muslims wherever domiciled or resident and superseded constitutions applicable to Ismailis in different countries. The Jamats in individual countries, however, have their own Rules and Regulations by virtue of the Constitution which makes detailed provisions for their governance and their institutions. The object of this presentation is to indicate the fundamental basis both of the Constitution and the Councils and institutions which were established under it, and to discuss what is the Constitution and its importance in today's world, particularly for the Ismaili Community. It is also necessary to understand the context in which the Councils and institutions under the Constitution have been established and how they are expected to function and the duties and responsibilities of those appointed by Mawlana Hazar Imam to their respective Councils and institutions.

The Preamble to the Constitution

The Preamble to the Constitution is a categoric reassertion of the fundamentals of the tenets of our Tariqah and a reaffirmation of the power and authority of the Imam of the Time in matters of governance of the Jamat. This is the source and the very basis of the cohesion and identity of our Jamat as Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

The Preamble sets out the essence of our belief as Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims who affirm the *Shahadah* and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the last and final Prophet of Allah, and that Islam, as revealed in the Holy Quran, is the final message of Allah to mankind, and is universal and eternal. The Preamble states the authority of the Imam in the Ismaili Tariqah and that allegiance to the Imam unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood. It further states that from the time of Hazrat Ali (A.S.), the Imams have given rules of conduct and constitutions in conformity with the Islamic concepts of unity, brotherhood, justice, tolerance and goodwill. Accordingly, Hazar Imam ordained the Constitution for Ismailis worldwide in order to better secure for Ismaili Muslims their peace and unity, and religious and social welfare.

Message from Mawlana Hazar Imam

In his message to the Jamat on December 10, 1986 Hazar Imam spoke of his intention to ordain a new Ismaili Constitution on the thirteenth of December which would be applicable throughout the world, linking all members of the Jamat wherever they are to the Imam. He emphasized that in providing the new Constitutional structure, he had taken account of recent significant developments such as the increasingly international dimension of the Jamat's settlement, and especially his aspiration for the Jamat to play an even more active part than in the past in the mainstream of life in the societies in which it lives.

Mawlana Hazar Imam said that it was his belief that the Ismaili Constitution will provide a strong institutional and organizational framework through which the Jamat will be able to contribute to the harmonious development of the *Ummah* and of the societies in which the Jamat lives. It was his hope that the institutions operating directly under the Ismaili Constitution as well as the four Apex Institutions will build meaningful linkages so that together they and their respective as well as mutual programmes may have a significant impact on the development of the Jamat in the years to come.

Hazar Imam finally expressed the hope that the Ismaili Constitution will become an enabling document for all spiritual children for an active role in institution building, for creative application of their abilities, for personal development, and for intellectual and spiritual satisfaction. He concluded that he was confident that the Ismaili Constitution will give a stronger integrated identity to the Jamat worldwide and that in abiding by it in letter and spirit, the Jamat will achieve greater peace, unity, happiness, security and well-being.

Hazar Imam thus explained in his own words the institutional structure of the Constitution and his hopes and aspirations for the Jamat for the future that in abiding by the Constitution in letter and in spirit – as he said – the Jamat will achieve greater unity, happiness, security and well-being.

This then is the origin, the basis and the framework for the institutions provided by the Imam under the Ismaili Constitution.

Explanatory Synopsis

In the explanatory synopsis which was given to the Jamat at the time Mawlana Hazar Imam ordained the Constitution, it was stated that the new Constitution is a single unified paramount Constitution which will apply to all Ismailis wherever they are domiciled or resident. This was in itself a development of fundamental importance to

the Jamat. No longer would the Jamat be governed by separate constitutions but by one unified document conferred by Mawlana Hazar Imam on all Ismailis worldwide. The Jamat in individual countries have their own rules and regulations by virtue of this Constitution which made detailed provision for their governance and their institutions.

A summary of some of the significant features of the Constitution and Council and institutions established by it and a summary of the Rules and Regulations for Pakistan indicating the principal bodies established in Pakistan and how they will work are summarised in the Explanatory Synopsis.

The establishment of institutions under the Ismaili Constitution must be seen in the light of Islam and the Ismaili Constitution and Hazar Imam's desire for the Jamat to live their worldly lives in accordance with the dictates of Islam and the ethics of Islam which is the basis of the practice of our Tariqah and of the Ismaili Constitution. Hazar Imam himself has observed that the Constitution was a genuine statement of the continuity of the essence of the concept of Islam, that is, that there was a Tariqah in Islam which refused to look on Islam as a stopped force; that there was a continuum of a people within a faith, who lived within a discipline and within an ethic of the faith and who lived and worked in a point in time against the background of the Islamic world but always remaining within the parameters of their faith.

Islam and the ethics of the faith

These parameters have once again been emphasized by Mawlana Hazar Imam during his last visit to Pakistan in October 2000. Hazar Imam then made extensive significant *Farmans* with *Hidayat* for the Jamat. Repeatedly he emphasized the essence of Islam and the ethics of Islam and that the Jamat should live within this framework. For example:

- Remember that Islam is a faith of peace. It is a faith of harmony. It is a faith of brotherhood. So practise these principles in everyday life.
- Islam is a faith of peace. It is faith of generosity. It is a faith of caring. And it is important, therefore, that in your attitudes of everyday of life, you should carry with you the ethic of Islam.
- But remember that within this context of change, the ethics and the principles and the practice of our faith do not change. And, therefore, be regular in the practice of your faith. Live by the ethics of your faith, do not indulge in undesirable activities, and build a solid ethical context in which you and your families can move ahead and work and develop.

- The essence is that you belong to a world Jamat, recognizing one hereditary Imam of the Time and that the ethics of our brotherhood, the ethics of our faith, are that which must sustain you and encourage you and guide you. So be regular in the practice of your faith and apply the ethics of our faith between yourselves, around the world.
- Bring into your lives, every day, the ethical principles of our faith: generosity, brotherhood, humility, the appropriate use of education. Live the ethics of your faith.
- If you disagree, seek to come together, not around a solution where one person wins and the other loses but ask yourselves: what is in the best interest of the Jamat? That is the best solution. If it is in a family, what is in best interest of all members of the family?

These are words – pearls of wisdom – which need deep thought and reflection. It is our duty to live within the ethics of Islam and our faith with full knowledge of our history. Hazar Imam emphasized this again in his *Farman* in Karachi when he said:

"Understanding the ethics of one's faith, the history of one's Tariqah, the principles on which the Tariqah functions, what it upholds, are very, very important to the future of the Jamat."

Understanding the history of our Tariqah and the principles on which it functions

The Preamble to the Ismaili Constitution

In most documents, the preamble is an introduction and generally sets out the objectives for which the document has been framed. The Preamble of the Ismaili Constitution however is very, very significant and this can be understood from Hazar Imam's own words, quoted above from the *Farman* in Karachi.

The principles on which our Tariqah functions and the history of our Tariqah

Every word in the Preamble, therefore, deserves careful and repeated study, as it clearly summarises the foundation of our Tariqah and principles on which it functions.

The Preamble states:

- The Ismaili adherence to the *Shahadah* and the *Tawhid* therein.
- That the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAS) is the last and final prophet of Allah.

- Islam as revealed in the Holy Quran is the final message of Allah to mankind and is universal and eternal.
- The Holy Prophet (SAS) through the divine revelation from Allah prescribed rules governing spiritual and temporal matters.

This then is a categorical assertion of our identity and belief as Muslims.

The Preamble then goes on to state the essentials of Shia doctrine:

- That the Holy Prophet (SAS) designated and appointed Hazrat Ali (AS) to be the first Imam.
- That Hazrat Ali (AS) would continue the *Tawil* and *Talim* of Allah's final message to guide the murids.
- That the Holy Prophet (SAS) proclaimed that the Imam should continue by heredity through Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Bibi Fatima (AS).
- That succession to Imam is by way of *Nass*, it being the absolute prerogative of the Imam of the time to appoint his successor from amongst any of his male descendants whether they be sons or remoter issue.

Having established the basis of the hereditary Imam and how it will continue, the Preamble then specifies the authority of the Imam in the Ismaili Tariqah:

- That the authority of the Imam is testified by *Bayah* by the murid to the Imam which is the act of acceptance by the murid of the permanent spiritual bond between the Imam and the murid.
- That this allegiance unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood.

Having clearly established the universality of brotherhood united by allegiance to the Imam by *Bayah* of the murid, the Preamble then leads on to the role of the Imam in giving the Constitution to the Jamat and the purpose for which the Constitution is given, including references to historical tradition:

- From the time of the Imam of Hazrat Ali (AS), the Imams of the Ismaili Muslims, in accordance with the needs of the time, have given rules of conduct and constitutions.

- These have been in conformity with the Islamic concepts of unity, brotherhood, justice, tolerance and goodwill.
- Historically and in accordance with Ismaili tradition, the Imam of the Time is concerned with spiritual advancement as well as improvement of the quality of life of his murids.
- The Imam's *Talim* lights the murid's path to spiritual enlightenment and vision.
- In temporal matters, the Imam guides the murids and motivates them to develop their potential.

Thereafter follows the categorical declaration that Mawlana Hazar Imam Shah Karim Al Hussaini, in direct lineal descent from the Holy Prophet (SAS) through Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Bibi Fatima (AS) is the Forty-Ninth Imam of the Ismaili Muslims.

This leaves absolutely no scope for ambiguity regarding the principles of our Tariqah and the continuity of the Imamatus to the present day.

The authority of the Imam by virtue of his office is thereafter set out in the following terms:

- In accordance with the faith and belief of the Ismaili Muslims the Imam enjoys full authority of governance over and in respect of all religious and Jamati matters of the Ismaili Muslims.
- Accordingly, it is the desire of Mawlana Hazar Imam to give this universal Constitution in supercession of the constitutions applicable in different countries.

This universal Ismaili Constitution is given:

- In order better to secure their peace, unity, religious and social welfare;
- To foster fruitful collaboration between different peoples;
- To optimise the use of resources; and
- To enable Ismaili Muslims to make a valid and meaningful contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of the Ummah and the societies in which they live.

The emphasis on a universal Constitution, applicable to all Ismaili Muslims worldwide, is a major significant step forward to emphasize the unity and frontierless brotherhood of the Jamat. And the purposes for which such a universal Constitution has been given by Mawlana Hazar Imam are again clearly underlined – see for example the reference to improvement of the quality of life of the Ummah, and the societies in which they live.

THEREFORE, in exercise of the authority vested in him as Hazar Imam, Shah Karim Al-Hussaini was pleased to ordain the Constitution for Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, wherever they may be.

This was done and authenticated with his signature and the seal of the Imam on December 13, 1986.

Comment

This categorical declaration of the foundation and the essentials of our Tariqah and the principles on which it is based were clearly proclaimed, signed and published as long ago as twenty years in 1986.

The Ismaili Jamat throughout the world was thus made aware of the new Constitution. In respect of all religious and Jamati matters of Ismaili Muslims, and in order to optimise the use of resources and to enable Ismaili Muslims to make a valid and meaningful contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of the Ummah and the societies in which they live, various institutions have been established under the Constitution by the Imam. Appointments to such institutions are made by the Imam. The methodology for such appointments and the term of office of the appointees are laid down in great detail in the Rules and Regulations made under the Constitution by Hazar Imam. The duties and responsibilities and the authority of the various institutions are also clearly set out.

This then constitutes the framework of good governance for the Jamat.

Message to the Ummah and the World

So far as the Ummah and the wider world is concerned, Hazar Imam within the last few years has clearly, widely and publicly proclaimed the Ismaili Imamate, the principles of faith in our Tariqah, its origins and fundamentals, its legitimacy and continuity and its affinity to other Tariqahs in Islam. He has also indicated the role of the Ismaili Imamate and the importance of the activities that reflect the social conscience of Islam.

Message to the International Islamic Conference, Jordan

In a very important message to the International Islamic Conference held in Amman, Jordan in July, 2005, attended by the heads of major fiqhs in Islam and eminent scholars of Islam, Mawlana Hazar Imam referred to a statement made by him in a keynote address at a gathering of eminent scholars from 48 countries, who attended the Seerat Conference in Karachi on March 12, 1976. He stated:

“In my presidential address, I appealed to our ulama not to delay the search for the answers to the issues of a rapidly evolving modernity which Muslims of the world face because we have the knowledge that Islam is Allah’s final message to mankind, the Holy Quran His final Book, and Muhammad, may peace be upon him, His last and final Prophet.

These are the fundamental principles of faith enshrined in the Shahada and the Tawhid therein, which bind the Ummah in an eternal bond of unity. With other Muslims, they are continuously reaffirmed by the Shia Ismaili Muslims of whom 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 Fatima-az-Zahra, our beloved Prophet’s daughter.”

“Our historic adherence is to the Jafari Madhhab and other Madhahib of close affinity, and it continues, under the leadership of the hereditary Ismaili Imam of the time. This adherence is in harmony also with our acceptance of Sufi principles of personal search and balance between the zahir and the spirit or the intellect which the zahir signifies.

In keeping with our historic tradition of ever abiding commitment to Muslim unity, we reaffirm our respect for the historical interpretation of Islam by our brother Muslims as an equally earnest endeavour to practise the faith in Allah and emulate the example of our Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, which illuminates Muslim lives and which, Inshallah, will elevate all Muslim souls.”

Speech to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

In a speech delivered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on May 5, 2003 at the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Hazar Imam stated:

“I have been involved in the field of development for nearly four decades. This engagement has been grounded in my responsibilities as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Community, and Islam’s message of the fundamental unity of “din and dunia”, of spirit and of life. Throughout its long history, the Ismaili Imamatus has emphasized the importance of activities that reflect the social conscience of

Islam, that contribute to the well being of Allah’s greatest creation - mankind, and the responsibility which Islam places on the fortunate and the strong to assist those less fortunate.”

The Marion Boyd Report, Canada

The essentials of our Tariqah and the authority and hereditary succession of Mawlana Hazar Imam has been recognised and reproduced in an official government publication, namely, the Report of Dr. Marion Boyd, a former Attorney General of Ontario, Canada (December 2004) who was specially commissioned to consider dispute resolution in family law of Muslims in Canada according to their applicable personal law. The following paragraph clearly sets this out:

“Unlike the Sunni Muslims, who hold that each individual is responsible for his or her own interpretation of the will of Allah, the Shia recognize the authority of hereditary Imams:

The essence of Shiism lies in the desire to search for the true meaning of the revelation in order to understand the purpose of human existence and its destiny. This true, spiritual meaning can never be fettered by the bounds of time, place or the letter of its form. It is to be comprehended through the guidance of the Imam of the time, who is the inheritor of the Prophet’s authority, and the trustee of his legacy. A principal function of the Imam is to enable the believers to go beyond the apparent or outward form of the revelation in search of its spirituality and intellect. The Shia thus place obedience to the Imams after that to God and the Prophet by virtue of the command in the Quran for Muslims to obey those vested with authority.

The Ismailis recognize the authority and the hereditary succession of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, the 49th Imam in a direct lineal descent from the Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law Ali. He leads Ismailis settled throughout twenty-five countries in both the developing world and the industrialized world.”

Moving on to consider how the Imamatus and its institutions contribute to the Ummah and the societies in which they live, it is helpful to reproduce and reflect on the following extracts of recent speeches made by Hazar Imam:

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

At Tashkent, on May 5, 2003:

“From the perspective of forty years of work, and the experience of the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, institutional development stands out as critically important to broad-based sustainable change. By institutional development, I mean the strengthening and refocusing of existing institutions, as well as the creation of new institutions and policies to support them. Because this process takes time, it is also urgent. Institutional development is essential to respond to emergent needs, new opportunities, and persistent gaps if change is to measure up to the standards of being positive, significant, long lasting, sustainable and having a genuinely measurable impact. No country to my knowledge can achieve stable continuous growth if its civil society is constrained by inherent institutional instability.”

“Pluralism, the recognition of people of diverse backgrounds and interests, organizations of different types and projects, different kinds and forms of creative expression, are all valuable and therefore deserving of recognition and support by government and society as a whole. Without support for pluralism, civil society does not function. Pluralism is also essential for peace, a statement that is unfortunately documented by armed conflict in contexts of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences on almost every continent at this time.”

The Leadership and Diversity Conference, Quebec, Canada

At Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, on May 19, 2004:

“My interest in these themes of development and governance arises from my role as the hereditary spiritual leader-Imam-of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim community. Culturally very diverse, the Ismailis are spread across the globe, mostly as a minority, in more than twenty-five countries, in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in Canada, the USA and Western Europe. Since succeeding to this office as the 49th Imam in 1957, I have been concerned with the development of the Ismailis and the broader societies in which they live. The engagement of the Imamatus in development is guided by Islamic ethics, which bridge faith and society. It is on this premise that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. This network of agencies, known as the AKDN, has long been active in many areas of Asia and Africa to improve the quality of life of all who live there. These areas are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world.

The first is a healthy, civil society. It is an essential bulwark that provides citizens with multiple channels through which to exercise effectively both their rights and duties of citizenship. Even at a very basic level, only a strong civil society can assure isolated rural populations, and the marginalized urban poor of a reasonable prospect of humane treatment, personal security, equity, the absence of discrimination, and access to opportunity.

The second precondition is pluralism. Pluralism means peoples of diverse backgrounds and interests, coming together in organization of varying types and goals, for different kinds and forms of creative expression, which are valuable and deserving of support by government and society as a whole.

This micro experiment with grass roots democracy, civil society and pluralism has also underlined for everyone involved the enormous importance of competence and advancement by merit. Inherent in the notion of merit is the idea of equality of access to opportunities. Citizens who possess potential, whatever the community to which they belong, can only realize their potential if they have access to good education, good health and prospects to advance through enterprise. Without this equity, merit does not develop.

A secure pluralistic society requires communities that are educated and confident both in the identity and depth of their own traditions and in those of their neighbours.”

The Marion Boyd Report, Canada

The Marion Boyd Report, September 2004 (already referred to above) cites with approval the institutions established by Hazar Imam under the Ismaili Constitution, with particular reference to our Conciliation and Arbitration Boards. Indeed, it reproduces our Rules for Conciliation and the Rules for Arbitration in force in Canada as Annexures to the Report, with very favourable comments on them and the work of our CABS. The Report states:

“Under the leadership of Aga Khan IV, thus, the institutions of the Imamatus have expanded far beyond their original geographical core and scope of activities. Many new humanitarian, social, cultural and economic development institutions have been founded reflecting, and responding to, the changing global situation and the present complexity of the development processes which call for an integral multi-programmatic approach to issues of development. With their own mandates in their respective spheres, these institutions, therefore, work together within the overarching framework of the AKDN [Aga Khan Development Network], so that their different pursuits interact and reinforce each other. An autonomous initiative under the leadership of the Ismaili Imamatus, their main

source of support is the Ismaili community with its tradition of philanthropy, voluntary service and self-reliance, and the material underwriting of the hereditary Imam and Imamat resources.

By tradition, the hereditary Imam - spiritual leader - of the time ordains a constitution for the social governance of the community and its relationship to other communities. This constitution is periodically revised in light of changing needs and circumstances. ... The constitution ordained in 1986 established a well-defined institutional framework for the Ismaili community through which to address, for example, the health, education, economic and social welfare aspects, as well as the religious aspects, of the daily lives of Ismailis. This institutional framework includes a dispute resolution system. ... The Constitution established National Conciliation and Arbitration Boards for each of the jurisdictions specified in the Constitution.”

The Evora University Symposium, Portugal on February 12, 2006 on
“Cosmopolitan Society, Human Safety and Rights in Plural and Peaceful Societies”

In his speech, Hazar Imam said:

“Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. The ethics of the Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community well being.

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live -- as minorities -- in more than twenty-five countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe - including Portugal -- and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the Aga Khan Development Network - working with a wide array of partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin.

In discussing cultural diversity, let me also mention our recent partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for the Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives - and where - in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes immigration as a positive development.”

“The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity - there are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.

In the ethical realm - as in the educational realm - one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling - which should be such a positive force -- can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness. All of the world's great religions warn against this excess - yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves - rather than recognizing their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility - a recognition that strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals, that climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. It means recognizing our own creaturehood - and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment - and the ethical framework that goes with it -- will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious intuitions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion - then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape - with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.”

Speech in Hyderabad, India

Very recently, on September 22, 2006, in a speech in Hyderabad, India, at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Hazar Imam emphasized the historical precedents of the role of the Ismaili Imamat in establishing educational institutions and its continuing tradition to this day. The establishment of such institutions was for the pursuit of knowledge and with a view to increasing effective leadership with a capacity for intellectual humility which welcomes pluralistic exchange. He said:

“It was just about a century ago that my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan, began to build a network of educational institutions in places where the Ismaili community had settled. This network would eventually include some 300 schools - 200 of which my grandfather opened personally.

In addition, he was the founding figure of Aligarh University, and I have continued that tradition through the establishment of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

The tradition I am describing, however, goes back much further than one hundred years. For it was some one thousand years ago that my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam - Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For well over a millennium, the pursuit of knowledge has been a central element in our tradition.

Specialized expertise, pragmatic temperament, mental resourcefulness - these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership - along with a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of view points and welcomes pluralistic exchange.”

Summing-up Comment

Having reviewed the Preamble to the Constitution in detail and having considered some extracts of recent speeches of Hazar Imam on public occasions, it is clear that our Tariqah and the work which is being done by the Imam and its institutions is receiving wider and wider public awareness and public acceptance. It is, therefore, time for us once again to read and re-read and ponder over every word in the Preamble. Only then we will begin to comprehend some part of Hazar Imam's work and vision for the Jamat.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE CONSTITUTION

Leaders International Forum

There is a constitutional body to be known as “His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Leaders' International Forum”. It is directly under the authority of Mawlana Hazar Imam and consists of a Chairman (who may or may not be the President of a National Council), other persons appointed from amongst the Presidents of National Councils and such other persons as Mawlana Hazar Imam may appoint from time to time. It is, however, not a council with executive functions, but a permanent consultative body which, when directed by Mawlana Hazar Imam, will make recommendations on matters referred to it.

Councils

The principal Council in every country is the National Council for that country. 14 such Councils were established by the Constitution. Other Jamats around the world which do

not have a Council of their own are placed under the jurisdiction of an appropriate National Council. Each National Council consists of a President and a Vice-President and, as ex-officio members, the Presidents of Regional Councils and Chairmen of Central Institutions or members having responsibility for specific disciplines. In addition there are a number of members without portfolio. The term of office of all members is three years. Mawlana Hazar Imam, of course, has full authority to reappoint or remove any members in accordance with our usual tradition and practice and this comment applies to all appointments under the Constitution. The term “President” will apply only to heads of Councils. Other heads of institutions such as the Tariqah and Religious Education Board, Grants and Review Board and the Conciliation and Arbitration Board will be known as “Chairman”. All National Councils report directly to Mawlana Hazar Imam.

Apex Institutions

Imamat institutions established by Mawlana Hazar Imam namely the Aga Khan Foundation, the Aga Khan University, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture have been included in the Constitution for the first time to provide for co-ordination of their activities with those of purely Jamati institutions, so that not only Ismailis, but the Muslim Ummah and humanity at large may benefit from their programmes.

Central Institutions

For the furtherance of the aims and objects of the Councils and also for contributing toward the implementation of certain programmes sponsored by the Apex Institutions Mawlana Hazar Imam has established Central Institutions for the provision of services in education, health, economic and social welfare, housing, youth development, sports and cultural advancement. Details as to the number and type of Central Institutions are contained in the Rules and Regulations of each country.

The Tariqah and Religious Education Board

The Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board has been established, with the aims and objects of provision of religious education, training of teachers of religion and waezeen, and research, and for performance of such functions in accordance with the Ismaili Tariqah as Mawlana Hazar Imam may direct. There are such Boards wherever there is a National Council. Each Tariqah and Religious Education Board consists of a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, and ex-officio and other members all of whom are appointed by Mawlana Hazar Imam for a term of three years. It is important to note that the Tariqah and Religious Education Board in each country is a major institution of the Jamat with a direct line of reporting to Mawlana Hazar Imam to emphasize the key role of religious education and rites and practices in our Tariqah.

Grants and Review Board

The Grants and Review Board has been established so as better to reflect its new role in the constitutional framework. The Board's aims and objects are to ensure compliance with proper standards of financial discipline and accountability, and cost and management effectiveness of all Councils, Central Institutions, Tariqah and Religious Education Boards, and other institutions which receive financial support from Mawlana Hazar Imam or the Jamat. Each Grants and Review Board consists of a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, and other members appointed by Mawlana Hazar Imam to hold office for three years, and report directly to Mawlana Hazar Imam. Initially 11 Grants and Review Boards were appointed.

Conciliation and Arbitration Board

Mawlana Hazar Imam has established a Conciliation and Arbitration Board in some countries where National Councils have been established. The Chairman and members of the Conciliation and Arbitration Board are directly appointed by Mawlana Hazar Imam. The object is that disputes and difference between members of the Jamat should be resolved by mediation, conciliation and arbitration within the Jamat itself, with fairness, speed, and confidentially and without excessive cost. The establishment of a formal Board consisting of members appointed by Mawlana Hazar Imam should inspire confidence and encourage its greater use for resolution of disputes. To assist resolution of problems with an international dimension, and provide for appeals from National Boards, Mawlana Hazar Imam has also established an International Conciliation and Arbitration Board to which appeals will lie in suitable cases and whose decisions will be final and reported to Mawlana Hazar Imam.

The essential purpose of establishment of the CAB system is set out clearly in Mawlana Hazar Imam's message of July 7, 1987 appointing the members of the first ICAB. wherein he stated:

"Since many a decade it is an admirable tradition of the Jamat that as far as possible, when differences of opinion or disputes arise between members, they should be resolved by a process of mediation, conciliation and arbitration within the Jamat itself. This is clearly preferable than to enter into the unhappy and costly process of official and often public litigation. To strengthen and enhance our tradition, provision has been made under the Ismaili Constitution that henceforth there should be an International Conciliation and Arbitration Board. This body will hear appeals from the National Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, and will, it is hoped, also assist in the resolution of problems that have an international dimension. The Board, Insha'Allah, will act with fairness, speed and confidentiality and without excessive cost."

Mawlana Hazar Imam reiterated this in his message of December 6, 1993 at the time of making new appointments to ICAB, when he said:

"I have reviewed with much interest and satisfaction the developments and activities of the Boards over the last six years, and am happy that these Boards have been rendering excellent service to an ever increasing number of spiritual children. The Boards have resolved a very significant number of cases at the regional, national and international levels. They have endeavoured strongly to fulfill their mandate of providing my spiritual children quick, effective and relatively inexpensive resolution of disputes"

"I emphasize again that the Jamat's interest is not best served by resorting to often damaging and fruitless litigation at great cost, and that it is preferable to bring their differences and disputes to our Conciliation and Arbitration Boards in accordance with the tradition of our Jamat, so that these may be resolved rapidly and cheaply."

SUMMARY OF THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

The Constitution provides that the Jamat in individual countries would have their own Rules and Regulations, which would make detailed provision for their governance and for their institutions. The Rules and Regulations for Pakistan were promulgated on 11th July 1987, when the Constitution came into effect in Pakistan.

The following is a brief summary of the overall structure of institutions in Pakistan as described in the Rules and Regulations.

The Council Structure

Pakistan continues to have a three tier Council system, with Local Councils, and Regional Councils and a National Council.

The premier Council in Pakistan is "His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Council for Pakistan". This Council has a President and a Vice President (in fact two Vice-Presidents since 2000). Each Regional and Local Council has a President and an Honorary Secretary. However, the heads of other Bodies, including the Tariqah and Religious Education Board and the Central Institutions are designated "Chairmen", so as to distinguish them from the heads of Councils.

Functions, Powers and Duties of the National Council

The functions, powers and duties of the National Council are to perform and do all acts and things to achieve the aims and objects of the Councils as set out in the Constitution. It has such authority and discretion as are necessary for the purpose of carrying out and furthering such aims and objects. In particular the National Council has the following specific functions, powers and duties, among others:

Policy Making:

- to act as the principal policy planning body of the Jamat.

National Objectives and Strategies:

- to prepare annually objectives and corresponding strategies for the fulfillment of such objectives together with consolidated capital and operating budgets in respect of all Councils.

Supervision and Management:

- to supervise all Councils and all organizations and committees registered with it;
- to review regularly the working of all Regional Councils;
- to appoint committees, which may be composed of persons who are not members of the Council, and to delegate to such committees such of its functions, powers and duties as it considers necessary;
- to prepare such forms or registers as may be necessary for the proper discharge of its functions, powers and duties including the preparation of forms and registers for the registration of births, engagements, marriages, divorces and deaths;

Co-ordination:

- to optimize the use of resources and for such purpose to co-ordinate the Central Institutions and the Tariqah and Religious Education Board in attaining their respective annual objectives and corresponding strategies and the implementation of their respective programmes;

Audit:

- to co-operate with the Grants and Review Board to enable it properly to assess compliance by the National Council and all organisations and committees

operating under the National Council with proper standards of financial discipline, accountability and cost and management effectiveness;

Disciplinary Action:

- to refer any matter requiring disciplinary action to the National Conciliation and Arbitration Board or any Regional Conciliation and Arbitration Board as it may determine;

Titles of Honour:

- when directed by Mawlana Hazar Imam to submit recommendations for the conferment of Titles of Honour;

Visit of Mawlana Hazar Imam:

- to act as the principal body for organizing and co-ordinating visits of Mawlana Hazar Imam to its area of jurisdiction;

Amendments to the Rules and Regulations:

- to make recommendations to Mawlana Hazar Imam for any amendment to these Rules and Regulations;

General:

- to deal with all matters that may be assigned or entrusted to it by Mawlana Hazar Imam and to deal with all matters which have not been specifically assigned to any other organisation or committee.

Executive Committee

The National Council has an Executive Committee to be chaired by the President, and including amongst its members the Vice President and the Chairmen of all Central Institutions as well as the Chairman of the Tariqah and Religious Education Board.

The Executive Committee is empowered to exercise the powers and discharge the functions and duties of the National Council as shall be delegated to it by the National Council. However, the Executive Committee is also competent to deal with all matters within the responsibility of the National Council which require urgent attention.

The Executive Committee is required at each regular meeting of the National Council to submit a report of all its activities and decisions taken since the preceding regular meeting.

President of the National Council

- The President of the National Council has such functions and authority as are specified in respect of the Chairman of a Constitutional body under the Rules and Regulations.
- He is in charge of and responsible for the safe custody of all correspondence, files and records of the National Council.
- The President chairs meetings of the National Council and brings before each meeting all relevant papers, motions and proposals of business to be transacted at such meeting and ensures that a correct record of its meetings is maintained in the minute books of the Council.

Functions, Powers and Duties of the Regional Councils:

- The functions, powers and duties of each Regional Council are to implement in its area of jurisdiction such policies as may be determined by the National Council, and subject to such policies and any directions received from the National Council, to perform and do all acts and things to achieve the aims and objects of the Councils as set out in the Constitution. Each Regional Council has such power, authority and discretion as are necessary for the purpose of carrying out and furthering such aims and objects.

Policy Making:

- to act as the regional policy planning body of the Jamat;

Regional Objectives and Strategies:

- to prepare annually proposals for regional objectives and corresponding strategies for the fulfillment of such objectives together with consolidated capital and operating budgets in respect of all Councils under its jurisdiction;

Supervision and Management:

- to supervise within its area of jurisdiction all Local Councils and all organisations and committees registered with it;
- to review regularly the working of Local Councils;

- to appoint Committees, which may be composed of persons who are not members of the Council, and, for a specified time and for a specified purpose, to delegate to such committees such of its functions, powers and duties as it considers necessary;

Co-ordination:

- to optimize the use of resources and for such purpose to co-ordinate the Regional Boards of the Central Institutions and the Regional Board of the Tariqah and Religious Education Board in attaining their respective annual objectives and corresponding strategies and the implementation of their respective programmes;

Audit:

- to co-operate with the Grants and Review Board to enable it properly to assess compliance by the Regional Council and all organisations and committees operating under the Regional Council with proper standards of financial discipline, accountability and cost and management effectiveness;

Functions, Powers and Duties of the Local Councils:

- The functions, powers and duties of each Local Council are to implement in its area of jurisdiction such policies as may be determined by the Regional Council having jurisdiction over it, and, subject to such policies and any directions received from the Regional Council, to perform and do all acts and things to achieve the aims and objects of the Councils as set out in the Constitution. Each Local Council has such power, authority and discretion as are necessary for the purpose of carrying out and furthering such aims and objects;

THE CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS

Mawlana Hazar Imam has caused the following Central Institutions to be established in Pakistan:

- Aga Khan Economic Planning Board;
- Aga Khan Education Service
- Aga Khan Health Service
- Aga Khan Planning & Building Service
- Aga Khan Social Welfare Board.
- Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board .

Aga Khan Economic Planning Board

The authorised objectives and current policies of the Aga Khan Economic Planning Board are:

- to keep the economic status of the Jamat under review;
- to improve the economic well-being of the Jamat by identifying and, through such media as exhibitions, seminars, lectures and workshops, guiding members of the Jamat to industries, businesses, professions or employment in viable sectors of the national economy;
- assisting members of the Jamat to obtain advice or assistance in connection with their industries, businesses, professions, or employment;
- promoting the formation of mutual assistance entities including (without limitation) co-operative societies;
- encouraging, fostering and cultivating the practice of regular saving and capital growth within the Jamat;
- encouraging, fostering and cultivating the spirit of entrepreneurship within the Jamat;
- to liaise and co-operate with the Apex Institutions and with other institutions and programmes having similar aims and objects;
- with the prior approval of the National Council, to establish regional and local boards or branches in different areas of Pakistan;

Aga Khan Education Service:

The authorised objectives of the Aga Khan Education Service are set out in its Memorandum of Association and these together with its current policies are:

- to devise and implement strategies for improving standards of education and academic achievement of children and adults by:
 - establishing, promoting and operating educational institutions and developing the requisite manpower;
 - conceptualizing, establishing, organizing, promoting and operating specific programmes for such purposes;
 - organizing courses, seminars and study groups;
 - offering bursaries, scholarships and grants;
 - offering career counselling and establishing aptitude testing units;
- to liaise and co-operate with the Apex Institutions and with other institutions and programmes having similar aims and objects;
- to establish regional and local boards or branches in different areas of Pakistan and to advise the National Council thereof.

Aga Khan Health Service:

The authorized objectives of the Aga Khan Health Service are set out in its Memorandum of Association and these together with its current policies are:

- to devise and implement strategies for improving health services and standards of health, hygiene and sanitation by (without limitation):
 - establishing, promoting and operating health institutions and developing the requisite manpower;
 - conceptualizing, establishing, organising, supporting and operating programmes promoting primary health care and other projects for the prevention, treatment, and elimination of diseases and sicknesses of all kinds;
 - offering bursaries, scholarships and grants for the pursuit of studies in hospital administration or in the health sciences;
- to liaise and co-operate with the Apex Institutions and with other institutions and programmes having similar aims and objects;
- to establish regional and local boards or branches in different areas of Pakistan and to advise the National Council thereof;

Aga Khan Building & Planning Service:

The authorized objectives and current policies of the Aga Khan Building and Planning Service are as follows:

- to devise and implement strategies for improving the availability and quality of housing by :
 - suggesting improvements to the financial concepts upon which housing co-operatives, societies and associations of the Jamat are predicated;
 - promoting the development of new housing and encouraging owner occupation;
 - promoting modern techniques of construction management and project control for economic and efficient building;
 - suggesting architectural plans and improvements in plans submitted by members of the Jamat;
 - encouraging the adoption of the highest standards of hygiene and sanitation as a means of improving the quality of habitat;
 - encouraging the adoption of modern developments in pollution control and energy conservation;

- to liaise and co-operate with the Apex Institutions and with other institutions and programmes having similar aims and objects;
- with the prior approval of the National Council, to establish regional and local boards or branches in different areas of Pakistan.

Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board:

The authorized objectives and current policies of the Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board are:

- to foster a spirit of goodwill, friendship and brotherhood by, for example:
 - promoting and encouraging recreational activities such as film shows, outings, art and craft exhibitions, cultural activities, scouting, summer camps and amateur sporting activities;
 - encouraging participation in local, national and international sporting competitions;
 - encouraging and creating an awareness of culture, tradition and heritage amongst the youth of the Jamat;
 - encouraging responsible citizenship and participation in civic activities; and
 - cultivating leadership qualities amongst the youth of the Jamat.

Aga Khan Social Welfare Board:

The authorized objectives and current policies of the Aga Khan Social Welfare Board are:

- to review the position of those members of the Jamat who require assistance in marriage or marriage counselling or who are handicapped, elderly or needy or who suffer from some other hardship, difficulty or crisis and to devise and implement strategies for the improvement of their quality of life and (without limitation):
 - acting as a source of advice, help and assistance;
 - organizing activities to develop a spirit of companionship;
 - cultivating an awareness within the Jamat of its obligations towards them;
 - to liaise and co-operate with the Apex Institutions and with other institutions and programmes having similar aims and objects;
 - with the prior approval of the National Council to establish regional and local boards or branches in different areas of Pakistan.

In addition, the National Council has portfolio members responsible for:

- (a) Communications and Publications;
- (b) Legal Matters; and
- (c) Women's Activities.

Their duties and functions are set out in the Guidelines.

The Central Institutions

In addition to Central Institutions for Economic Planning, Education, Health and Building & Planning, there have been established two further Central Institutions – the Aga Khan Social Welfare Board and the Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board. The objectives and current policies of the Social Welfare Board include reviewing the position of members of the Jamat who require assistance in marriage or marriage counselling, or who are handicapped, elderly or needy, or who suffer from some other hardship, difficulty or crisis, and to devise and implement strategies for the improvement of their quality of life. The Youth and Sports Board's principal aim is to facilitate and encourage development of youth and sports and to contribute towards implementation of programmes sponsored by one or more Apex Institutions.

The Tariqah and Religious Education Board

Parallel to the Council structure, the Tariqah and Religious Education Board is represented at the National, Regional and Local level. The Chairman of the Tariqah and Religious Education Board at each level, in his personal capacity, is also a member of his parallel Council.

The Grants and Review Board

The Grants and Review Board for Pakistan is responsible to ensure compliance with proper standards of financial discipline, accountability and cost and management effectiveness by all institutions which receive financial support from Mawlana Hazar Imam or the Jamat. Under the National Board, there are Regional Boards.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Board

The Constitution has established a major new organisation – the Conciliation and Arbitration Board. There is a National Board and also Regional Boards, which seek to resolve disputes between members of the Jamat with fairness, speed, confidentiality and without excessive cost, so that, in accordance with the tradition of the Jamat, disputes are resolved by mediation conciliation and arbitration within the Jamat itself. If there

are any appeals from the National Board, they will lie to the International Conciliation and Arbitration Board, whose reports are submitted to Mawlana Hazar Imam.

Appointments and term of office

The Rules and Regulations make detailed provision for the procedure for appointments. There is a consultative process, which results in recommendations to Mawlana Hazar Imam, and applies in respect of all appointments to all Councils and institutions of the Jamat.

The term of office of all appointees is three years, and, unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is not expected that a person will serve in the same position for more than two terms. This should provide an opportunity for participation to a greater number of members of the Jamat, and encourage voluntary service to the Imam and the Jamat, which is the tradition of Ismailis.

General

The rules for registration of organisations of the Jamat have been simplified and made uniform. Any entity or body of persons which seeks to function within the Jamat, or which seeks the use of facilities of the Jamat, will need to be registered with the National Council, if its activities are nationwide, or with the relevant Regional or Local Council depending on the area of its operation.

There is a provision that no funds may be collected from the Jamat without first obtaining the permission of the National Council. Any Body or individual which is granted permission will be required to render an account, and the Grants and Review Board is empowered to carry out an audit and submit its report to the National Council, and the Local Council in whose jurisdiction the funds are raised. Such provisions are for the security and benefit of the Jamat, so that it is clearly demonstrated to all, that funds raised have been used exclusively for the purpose for which permission was granted.

Guidelines:

In addition to the Constitution and the Rules and Regulations which are formal documents available to Jamat and to the public if necessary, Mawlana Hazar Imam has approved certain Guidelines. The Guidelines are not a public document, their purpose being to assist in the implementation of the Constitution and Rules and Regulations by establishing certain conventions and procedures. They are nevertheless very important for internal governance in the Jamat, and are of particular relevance for reference by senior National Council members and institution heads. They are available with the

National Councils and other institutions on a need to know basis. They deal with topics such as linkages between institutions, correct nomenclature and correct use of stationery to be used by Councils and institutions of the Jamat, rules of procedure applicable to betrothal and marriage ceremonies, precedence in Jamatkhana, social precedence at functions organized at the National Council and Regional and Local Council jurisdictions, announcement in Jamatkhana, use of visiting cards and similar matters.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ISMAILI CONSTITUTION

By a Constitutional Instrument ordained by Mawlana Hazar Imam on July 11, 1998, certain important amendments were made in the Ismaili Constitution. They are summarised below:

Aga Khan Development Network

Reference to AKDN has been introduced. AKDN is defined as organisations designated by Mawlana Hazar Imam as such. Article 6.4 of the Constitution states:

"The Aga Khan Development Network is a framework of institutions and agencies founded by Mawlana Hazar Imam to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action, bringing together under one coherent aegis, institutions and programmes whose combined mandate is to improve living conditions and opportunity and to help relieve society of ignorance, disease and deprivation. In each territory in which they operate, institutions and agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network pursue programmes for the common good of all peoples, regardless of their origin, gender or religion. The collective focus of the institutions and agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network is the creative application of the ethics of Islamic tradition to the circumstances of humanity."

AKDN Representative

This is defined as a person appointed as such by Mawlana Hazar Imam. Under Article 6.6 Mawlana Hazar Imam may appoint representatives of AKDN in such territories as Mawlana Hazar Imam may determine.

Mawlana Hazar Imam's Personal Representative

Provision has been made for Mawlana Hazar Imam to appoint a Personal Representative. Article 16.1 addresses the Prerogatives of Hazar Imam which include the Imam's Crest, the Personal Standard, the power to enter into treaties and the appointment of Personal Representatives. Article 16.1(d) provides that such Personal

Representatives will have such accreditation and guidelines as may be conferred by Mawlana Hazar Imam and hold office for such period as Hazar Imam may determine.

Focus Humanitarian Assistance

This is defined as an incorporated agency formed by a Council and four specific agencies are named, namely Focus Canada, Focus Europe, Focus Pakistan and Focus USA. This is in furtherance of the Council's responsibility to provide humanitarian emergency assistance in the event of disasters causing sickness, injury, starvation, homelessness, dislocation or other suffering and to take appropriate anticipatory and mitigating measures in respect of such disasters.

Institute of Ismaili Studies

This is defined as an academic institution founded by Mawlana Hazar Imam. The Ninth Schedule provides:

"THE INSTITUTE OF ISMAILI STUDIES, founded by Mawlana Hazar Imam, aims to promote scholarship and learning on Islam, with emphasis on Shiism in general and its Ismaili Tariqah in particular and a better understanding of their relationship with other faiths and societies. Its programmes, informed by the full range of diversity within Islam, explore the relationship of religious ideas to broader dimensions of society and culture, paying particular attention to issues of ethics in modern life. It also encourages an interdisciplinary approach to materials of Islamic history and thought. In pursuit of its objectives, the Institute collaborates with other institutions of learning."

Territorial Councils

Provision has been made for a new type of Council which is not by reference to a "nation" but rather to a geographical area. One new territorial Council has been established, namely the Council for the European Union.

New National Council and Darkhanas

A new National Council has been established for Uganda as well as certain national institutions within Uganda, i.e. ITREB, GRB and NCAB. Uganda will also have a Darkhana at the address given in the Sixth Schedule.

General Comment:

The rapid expansion of the Imam's activities, and their overall integration for maximum effect and benefit had led to more and more emphasis being placed by

Mawlana Hazar Imam on the Aga Khan Development Network. Indeed, AKDN now serves as an "umbrella" organization for all such activities. The National Council in Pakistan and the Constitutional bodies specified in the Constitution are represented by the President on the AKDN Committee, Pakistan, along with the heads of the Apex Institutions operating in Pakistan. It is thus intended to meet the emerging challenges of the day.

Concluding comment:

I hope the above overview of the Ismaili Constitution has given some understanding of the basis of the Constitution which is anchored in Islam and the ethics of our Tariqah. There are, however, two additional significant characteristics of our Jamati system which must always be kept in mind.

The first is that all appointments at all levels of our institutions – Regional, National and International – are made by Mawlana Hazar Imam. This alone should establish the integrity and credibility of our institutions and should inspire members of the Jamat to put their trust in decisions by our Councils and Boards.

The second significant characteristic is that all members of all institutions serve in a voluntary capacity. It is worth recalling Hazar Imam's message when the new Constitution was introduced:

"The progress achieved by our institutions to date is due, in a significant measure, to the support they have received from the Jamath's voluntary workers. This voluntary service is one of our most ancient and noble traditions and it is my particular desire that this tradition be cherished, maintained and reinforced. At the same time, I believe that by the very nature of life, there is a continuing need for professionalisation and enlightened leadership at all levels in all our activities. To meet this need, it has been my concern over the past many years to ensure that leadership potential within the Jamath be properly identified, fostered and encouraged to come forward to serve. It is my constant and intense wish that the professional talent within the Jamath be harnessed and that the voluntary workers as well as those who are remunerated within our institutions should provide mutual reinforcement and support. It is, therefore, my hope that the Ismaili Constitution will become an enabling document for all my spiritual children for an active role in institution building, for creative application of their abilities, for personal development and for intellectual and spiritual satisfaction."

The Imam of the Time has given us a fully enabling environment to live our lives within the faith in accordance with our traditions, and within the history of the Islamic order.

In the words of the Preamble to the Ismaili Constitution from the time of the Imamate of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) the Imams of the Ismaili Muslims have given rules of conduct and constitutions in conformity with the Islamic concepts of unity, brotherhood, justice, tolerance and goodwill. This is done in order better to secure our peace and unity, religious and social welfare, and to enable us to make a valid and meaningful contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of the Ummah and the societies in which we live.

Let us pray that we may be worthy of the Imam's vision and guidance by ordering our lives within the ethics of our faith and within the Constitutional structures ordained for us in the Ismaili Constitution.

Karachi : Pakistan
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Brief C.V. of Mr. Mahomed J. Jaffer

Mr. Mahomed J. Jaffer graduated with the Degrees of B.A. (Mod) Dublin and LL.B. Dublin. He is a Barrister-at-Law and an enrolled Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Court of Sindh. He was for 28 years senior partner of Orr, Dignam & Co., Advocates, a leading firm in Pakistan and is now Counsel and Consultant to the Firm.

Mr. Jaffer is the author of “Arbitration in Pakistan” published in the Yearbook of International Commercial Arbitration and has also contributed articles on Islamic Banking in Pakistan, and corporate law related topics to the International Financial Law Review and International Construction Law Review. He has lectured and contributed papers on the Pakistan Companies Ordinance 1984, the Law of Arbitration and Legal Aspects of Foreign Investment in Pakistan, as well as on the Code of Corporate Governance.

Mr. Jaffer is an Alternate Member of the ICC International Court of Arbitration, Paris, representing Pakistan. He is a Member of the UNCTAD Board of Advisors of internationally recognised experts in the field of dispute settlement. Mr. Jaffer has made several presentations on the Ismaili Constitution and related topics at the invitation of the Ismaili National Council for Pakistan and ITREB for Pakistan.

Mr. Jaffer was a member of the Owner’s Representative Board which supervised the construction and commissioning of the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan University Hospital; he was a member of the Constitution Review Committee which submitted proposals to Mawlana Hazar Imam for the Ismaili Constitution ordained in 1986; he was the first Chairman of the Shia Imami Ismaili International Conciliation and Arbitration Board; and for two terms he was Chairman of the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan Branch. He was conferred the title of Vazir by Mawlana Hazar Imam in the Silver Jubilee Honours.

In April 2006, Mawlana Hazar Imam, as Patron-in-Chief of the Aga Khan Hospital and Medical College Foundation, appointed him President of the Foundation.