17. A manifestation of the principle of the "free gift" as espoused by Mauss (1967).
18. Mujahir, *Islam*, p. 99.
19. Zekye Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

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The Nizari Ismaili Muslim Community in North America: Background and Development

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North American society has increasingly become the subject of detailed study by those interested in examining its various ethnic and religious minority groups. As yet, very little significant research in the humanities has been focused on immigrant Muslim minorities attempting to develop and maintain their religious values and identity in a secular North American environment. This chapter studies the development of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims in North America and the ways in which they are seeking to cultivate a community defined by their religious heritage.

The Shīʿa-Ismaili Legacy

Though at present the Nizari Ismailis constitute a small minority within the wider umma of Islam, they have played a significant role at various points in Muslim history and made an important contribution to its intellectual and cultural life. After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in 632 C.E.,* the Muslim umma evolved a variety of groupings exemplifying different understandings of the

* Christian Era

primal message of Islam, and of how this message, based on the Qur'ān and the example of the Prophet, could best be fulfilled or realized in the practical life and organization of the umma. The Ismailis are one such group. Their roots go back to the foundational period of Islam, when, after the death of the Prophet, a group of Muslims gave loyalty to the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali. They believed that before his death, the Prophet had specifically designated Ali as his successor. This group of Muslims, generally referred to as Shī'a, also believed that the succession was to continue in the Prophet's family, through the offspring of Ali and his wife Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. The function of the imām (as the successors came to be called) was to ensure that the Qur'ānic message was preserved and interpreted to the followers in accordance with changing times and circumstances. The imām, according to Shi'ite belief, was endowed by God with a special knowledge and capacity to enable him to carry out these tasks. In addition, the imām, while caring for the spiritual well-being of the community, was also to be continuously concerned with its safety and material progress. The Shī'a developed the practice of *taqiya* or pious dissimulation to guard against persecution.

In the course of Shī'a history a number of splits took place over the issue of succession to the position of imām. After the death of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq in 765 C.E., a body of followers gave allegiance to his son Ismail and came to be called Ismailis; those who accepted a younger son as heir are known as Ithna Ashari and today form the largest group of the Shī'a. The Ismailis themselves later split into two further groups, the Mustali Ismailis and the Nizari Ismailis. This chapter discusses the Nizari Ismailis, who at present give allegiance to H.H. Aga Khan IV, Shah Karim, the 49th imām, whom they believe to be the successor and direct descendant of the Prophet and Ali. There are Ithna Ashari Shī'a and Mustali Ismaili communities in North America as well, but their history and development is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, to avoid a cumbersome repetition of the term "Nizari Ismaili" in what follows, I have merely used Ismaili, trusting to the reader to bear in mind that it is the Nizari Ismaili who are under discussion.

With this background in mind, we can now study the specific Ismaili experience in North America. Because they are still in a state of transition and development, this chapter is only a preliminary study of what promises to be a fascinating and complex field of inquiry.

The preliminary field work for the study was done in 1975 and 1976 during my tenure as Killam Fellow at Dalhousie University. Since then I have had occasion to do additional work during the summer of 1978. I am grateful to the various officers in the U.S. and Canada of the National and Regional Councils and the Associations for their co-operation and for making available data on the community's history and development.

The Home Country Experience

The 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda, which included a large number of Ismailis, and the subsequent settlement of about 6,000 of the refugees in Canada and the U.S., drew the first large-scale attention to the presence of an Ismaili community in North America. However, immigration had started some time before that. The present community consists of immigrants from many parts of the world. The largest number is from the East African countries of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, the Malagasy Republic, and Mozambique. Others have come from Zaire (formerly part of Belgian Congo), Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Burma, Central Asia, and more recently from other already established centres in the West, such as Great Britain. The majority of all Ismailis in North America trace their origins back to those parts of the Indian subcontinent, primarily Sind, Punjab, Gujarat, and Cutch, where their ancestors were converted to Islam and Ismailism from the 12th century onward. It is this stock of Indo-Muslim Ismailis that migrated to the East African coast in growing numbers during the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. Since it would be helpful in understanding the present community in North America to grasp something of the essential home-experience of these migrants, I have chosen to dwell on the East African experience as a case study of the background and traditions these migrants brought with them.

The earliest Indian Ismaili immigrants to East Africa were at-

tracted by the prospect of a better material life and the opportunity to participate in the opening up of the East African hinterland. They were primarily traders and entrepreneurs who also sought to escape the restricted economic conditions in parts of British India in the late 19th century. The imām of the time, Hasan Ali Shah, Aga Khan I (d. 1881), had moved his seat from Iran to British India in 1843 in the face of adverse political conditions in Iran. The imām also induced his followers living in economically disadvantaged parts of British India to emigrate. Thus by the end of the 19th century, there were at least a thousand Ismaili families in Zanzibar alone. Successive migrants helped the community grow, and when most of them moved into the interior, they helped greatly in opening up the hinterland to trade and greater contact with the coast and the Indian Ocean. At its height in the 1960s the community in East Africa numbered over 50,000.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Ismaili history in East Africa was the total transformation of its material and social life effected by Aga Khan II, Sultan Muhammad Shah, who was imām from 1885 to 1957, at three complementary levels.

In cultural and social life, the imām's policy de-emphasized the Indian social and cultural habits of the immigrants. He explained, "They [the Ismailis] arrived there with Asiatic habits and Asiatic patterns of existence, but they encountered a society in process of development which is, if anything, Euro-African. To have retained an Asiatic outlook in matters of language, habit, and clothing would have been for them a complication and in society an archaic dead weight for the Africa of the future."[1]

In educational and economic life, the commercial and entrepreneurial talents of the immigrants were harnessed to create communal institutions that would provide many Ismailis with the opportunity for modern education, housing, and material and economic sufficiency, if not wealth.

In religious life, the imām's guidance was focused on strengthening the centre of spiritual life among the Ismailis, the jamat khana, literally "house of assembly," which served as a place both for prayer and worship and for congregational activities related to all aspects of Ismaili life. Owing to persecution and other adverse conditions in the Indian subcontinent over a large period of their history, the Indian Ismailis had adopted elements of traditional Indian culture and practices from the communities in which they found themselves. The imām was able gradually to eliminate such traits and to bring community practice and custom into conformity with that of other Muslims in East Africa, thus creating a unified framework of practice and observance in the jamat khana. The Ismailis, however, maintained the exclusivity of their specific *tariqa* or way of practising Islamic observances. That is, at the level of religious life the community remained exclusive, but particular efforts were made to establish a common purpose with indigenous Muslim groups. The imām established and funded an East African Muslim Welfare Society in 1945 to promote educational and economic development among indigenous Muslims. The society built both mosques and schools and offered scholarships for advanced study to African Muslims.

At the time of Imām Sultan Muhammad's death in 1957 a strong corporate community, linked by several administrative structures to the imām, had been established. Ismailis received the benefits of the growing educational and economic institutions established in the community, and most centres in East Africa had at least one jamat khana. Though the majority were still traders and business people, a variety of professionals manned newly established health, educational, and economic institutions. Most Ismailis spoke the local African languages, communicated with each other in Gujarati or Sindhi, and were learning to master the administrative language of East Africa – English.

The overall process of change had not been without its problems. Particularly in its earlier phase, the imām's authority and policies had been challenged. Dissension, however, did not take root, and the community at large remained faithful to the imām and his policies.

The new imām, Karim Aga Khan IV, assumed leadership at a time when most of Africa had already entered an era of change. During the early 1960s three independent East African nations emerged – Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. In pre-independence East Africa both imāms guided their followers to identify their aspirations with those of the newly emerging nations and to seek to become full nationals at the time of independence. But the Ismailis, as indeed other Asian groups in East Africa, were perceived in some

national circles as an economically privileged group, generally unintegrated into the mainstream of new African society. Asians found themselves in a dilemma. As civil servants, traders, and entrepreneurs under British or French rule they had acted as a middle group between the colonizer and the colonized. With independence and increasing nationalization they were called upon to revise and adapt their roles to the changing situation. A combination of fear, insecurity, and the pressures of a changed situation led a large number of these Asians to leave East Africa. At this early stage in the 1960s, however, most Ismailis stayed and applied for citizenship in the new nations. This attempt to make a constructive transition was fraught with problems, some of which the Ismailis could not control.

In summary then, the period of the 1960s marks a major shift in several spheres of Ismaili life in East Africa. Though the strong religious and spiritual base continued, there were major changes in the economic and political context to which the community had to respond. One response was to intensify the educational effort, so that younger Ismailis, through higher education, would be better prepared to meet the needs of a more competitive, modernizing national trend. A second response of the community sought to develop a broader economic base in conjuction with the new national governments by establishing Industrial Promotion Services, whose function was to assist Ismaili business men to establish industries in East Africa with government and non-government participation. These services came to be established in all three new East African countries, as well as in other areas of the world where Ismailis were involved in trade, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Through the 1960s and the early part of the 1970s the Ismaili community in East Africa experienced tremendous economic growth. This was in part a reflection of the growth experienced by the countries themselves. The level of educational attainment also grew so that the Ismailis constituted the largest among Asian groups at the three East African universities by the end of the 1960s. The overall pattern of development, however, was not the same in all three countries; political and economic development gradually diverged as each sought to establish differing priorities and strategies for growth. The economic and education growth in the Ismaili community had created a greater international and global awareness within it. This in turn caused both business and professional Ismaili people to look beyond East Africa, and precipitated the first emigrations to North America, but it took a drastic political event in Uganda to move large numbers to emigrate. It might be useful here to take a general look at the major influences that motivated emigration to western countries.

The first influence was obviously political change. Some Ismailis were unable to make the psychological transition of accepting independent African rule. A small number, retaining their status as British subjects, migrated to Great Britain and eventually to North America. A second influence was the limitation of economic and professional opportunity. As greater pressure was put on non-citizens to allow "Africanization" in trade and commerce, some of those who lost their jobs or businesses left. Another small number migrated because they had developed professional competencies in areas where they were in unequal competition with local African citizens or were without opportunities to practise their professions. In Tanzania, for example, the redressing of economic and social balance through the practice of *Ujamaa* or African socialism, reduced the opportunity both for entrepreneurship and for advanced education. Thus by 1970 the combination of economic and political factors had induced a small number of Ismailis to leave East Africa for Europe and North America, but it must be emphasized that until then, a majority in the community had chosen to stay. The ambiguities and tensions of being a minority, in new nations that were seeking to modernize themselves and trying to create a unified society, still remained. In 1972 in Uganda these tensions exploded and led to the expulsion of all Asians from that country.

Later events in the country revealed this particular episode as the action of a megalomaniac and irrational dictator, but at the time Idi Amin so cleverly played upon the feelings of hostility towards the Asian population that he was hailed as a hero for his action in some African countries and elsewhere. The impact on the Asian population, including the Ismailis, citizens and non-citizens alike, was devastating. In a space of less than six months they were refugees seeking new homes in India, Pakistan, Great Britain, Europe, and North America. The international effort to find homes for the

refugees was co-ordinated through the UN High Commission for Refugees. A few Ismailis went to India and Pakistan; however, a larger number sought homes in the West. Several thousand Ismailis made their homes in Canada and the United States, and joined with the several hundreds already in North America to develop what by the end of the 1970s had become a new centre of Ismaili settlement in the world.

The Ismaili Community in North America

The first Ismaili families to migrate to North America arrived in Canada in the 1950s from Pakistan. Through the fifties and the early sixties only a handful of families came here to make a permanent home for themselves. This early group consisted of professionals and their families: engineers, lawyers, doctors, and teachers who for the most part were the only ones who could find admittance as immigrants to Canada or the United States. Most lived in isolated centres, including, interestingly enough, the Queen Charlotte Islands off British Columbia. Communal life as such was unknown.

In the latter part of the sixties the number of both permanent residents and students increased, so that small groups of Ismailis emerged in cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Occasionally, these families would get together to say their prayers and commemorate religious festivals among themselves, as well as with other Muslims. The families came from various countries, Pakistan, India, East Africa, the Republic of Malagasy, and South Africa. The new groups ultimately constituted a significant international Ismaili presence in North America. Their professional backgrounds and education prepared them to communicate in English or French, though they spoke differing mother languages. By 1968 the groups in Vancouver and Toronto each had organized themselves into a jamat and met once a week in either a rented hall or a residence for prayers and communal activities. Beyond this loosely structured jamat there was no other form of organization. Daily religious practice, as I was able to determine, was carried on individually or within a family; ties were maintained with Ismailis in the home countries, but by and large the groups expected to remain a fairly small, isolated community in North America. The total Ismaili population of North America probably numbered around 600 until after the Ugandan expulsion took place in 1972, when the number rose drastically. The majority were Ugandan Ismailis who had been directly accepted as immigrants into Canada and the U.S. in October 1972; others subsequently joined families or migrated from the several refugee camps in Europe that had been set up in 1972 and 1973 to house those who had been rendered "stateless" by the sitution in Uganda.

The events in Uganda also triggered migration from Tanzania. A few Tanzanian Ismailis had been among those already resident in Canada or the United States before 1972. Partly as a result of the impact of the Ugandan expulsion and partly because there was a feeling that henceforth North America was likely to become a major settlement of Ismailis, a significant number left Tanzania. A slightly lesser number also left Kenya, though the Ismaili community there did not face problems of economic shrinkage or lack of educational opportunity as in Tanzania. At about the same time, political events in Zaire and the Malagasy Republic induced the Ismailis there to leave for North America. Because most of the Ismailis in these two countries were business people functioning in French, they chose to make their homes in Quebec. By 1975 this steady influx of Ismailis, refugees and others, had swelled the community to 10,000 strong. It was increasingly necessary if this growing community was to be organized, that new institutions be developed for them. This task was accomplished between 1975 and 1978 when the present imām visited the community in Canada. During these four years, the number of Ismailis migrating to North America continued to increase. Existing centres also acted as an attraction for those from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Burma who wished to leave their home countries but dreaded the prospect of being isolated from other Ismailis.

A rough estimate indicates that the current Ismaili population in North America is about 25,000, approximately 20,000 Ismailis in Canada and 5,000 in the United States. More than half those in Canada live in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces; metropolitan Toronto accounts for over 70 percent of these, with Montreal, Kitchener, and Ottawa as other centres. However, Ismailis are to be found in at least 45 other cities and towns across eastern Canada. In western Canada, the greater Vancouver area accounts for the largest

number, with Edmonton and Calgary as other important centres. But in both eastern and western Canada some Ismailis are to be found in most major cities. In the United States, Ismailis are scattered in small groups in about 22 states from Spartanburg, South Carolina, to San Diego, California. The major centres are in the New York City area, in Greater Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, and Houston.

For a community still in a state of transition, it is difficult to be specific about socio-economic activity, but some general trends can be discerned. Those who came as refugees included both business and professional persons. Most business people had lost their capital and arrived with nothing to invest; many professionals found jobs hard to get at a time of economic recession; those who were unskilled or unable to speak either English or French (primarily elderly persons) were at the most serious disadvantage. For those who were not refugees, the situation was a little better. Some had capital to invest or start small businesses, others found their professional qualifications in demand and already had jobs prior to emigration. The overall economic situation of the community has improved greatly since 1972. Like most other immigrant groups with a commercial or entrepreneurial background, the Ismailis have fared well in adapting to a highly competitive business context. Some 10 to 15 percent are now engaged in business that they own solely or in partnership. The most common business ventures are general retail stores, laundry and dry-cleaning operations, import and export agencies, restaurants and catering, and increasingly, motel and hotel ownership, as well as real estate. Ismaili Business Information Centres established in Vancouver and Toronto render a professional consulting service in capital investment to Ismaili businessmen. These centres have worked with major Canadian banks to obtain financing for new business ventures. No centres have been required for the economic activity of the professionals in the medical, legal, business, and industrial fields. Moreover, some professionals who came here as teachers or civil servants have retrained themselves in more profitable fields such as computer programming and business administration. Those who came without professional or vocational qualifications are employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Overall then, a variety of economic situations exist among the first

major generation of Ismailis living in North America.

It must also be noted that over half the current Ismailis are of school or university age. There is a tremendous emphasis on acquiring education and this is reflected in the number of Ismailis, male and female, currently receiving higher education. At a rough estimate approximately one thousand young Ismailis are studying in universities or colleges across Canada and the United States. The bias seems to be towards professional faculties such as Accounting, Business and Commerce, Engineering Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Nursing. There is no corresponding trend to acquire a technical education or trade skills. The Aga Khan Aid Fund for Higher Education has been an important source of financing for some of these students.

As the social characteristics of the new migrants vary with their countries of origin, it would be helpful to outline certain general characteristics here. Most African Ismailis had already been exposed to western culture and had as part of their experience adopted Euro-African modes of social life. For them the transition to North American living did not represent a major adjustment. In modes of dress, language, and to a certain extent, lifestyle, African Ismailis and in particular the younger generation were already prepared to face life in new lands. For some of the older generation the transition was not as easy. The different climate, especially in Canada, lack of familiarity with the pace of city life and its exigencies, and the transition to a more self-reliant home life (without the domestic servants available to them in Africa), created stress in the process of adjustment. The existence of a wide variety of Asian ethnic groups in North America was helpful in terms of the availability of ethnic foods and other items, since most African Ismailis had retained some of their traditional Indian or Pakistani eating habits. For Ismailis from the Indian subcontinent, the difficulties of the initial period of social transition would to a large degree be similar to those faced by other South Asian Muslims. Social adaptation is a long-term process and one must await the collection of more data over a longer period of time to be able to evaluate this process satisfactorily.

The demographic and social characteristics cited above provide the background for a study of the development of institutions within

the community to reinforce specifically its religious and corporate identity. Among these institutions the two key ones, referred to in the East African case, continue in the North American context to form the focal points of community development and identity. They are the jamat khana and the administrative structure embodied in the Councils.

The Jamat Khana

All specifically religious activity in Shi'ite Ismailism is centred around the jamat khana. It serves much the same purpose as a traditional mosque among other Muslims, but in addition is also the place for religious observances specific to the Ismaili tariqa of Islam. Early in their history, the Ismaili immigrants had no jamat khana. When the local groups increased in number, informal centres were formed, as gathering places for prayer. These may loosely be termed the first jamat khana(s). As with other Muslims, it is not incumbent for Ismailis to pray in a mosque or in congregation, except on Fridays. In East Africa and elsewhere, however, the jamat khana had become a vital gathering place for daily congregational prayers in the morning and evenings. Thus for the early migrants, one important element in the reinforcement of their religious identity was missing. In time, as numbers increased in larger cities, school halls, or similar locations were rented so that at least once a week there could be a congregational prayer. When the large influx of Ismailis took place after 1972 only a small number of such jamat khana(s) existed in any organized capacity.

Since 1972 however jamat khana(s) have been established in each growing centre, so that at present most places where Ismailis are settled have at least one meeting place. In larger centres such as Vancouver and Toronto there are several jamat khana(s), as many as 10 in the case of Metropolitan Toronto, where the Ismailis number over 5,000. Most of them are open every morning and evening to allow for daily prayers. Like other Shi'a, the Ismailis combine some of the daily prayers. In most Ismaili centres in Africa and Asia these were said at three standard times – dawn, sunset, and evening, and this practice has continued in North America.

Statistics for attendance are hard to pinpoint, but on the average

the congregation is larger on Fridays and weekends and on important commemorative occasions such as Eid Moulid (of the Prophet, Ali and the present imām), and on Imāmat Day, which commemorates the day of accession to the imāmat by the present imām. On some of these occasions the community may hire a hall or other larger facility and meet in one place. The jamat khana also serves as a place for those who wish to participate in very early morning *dhikr*, the practice of personal meditation which is an important part of Ismaili religious observance. This takes place usually in the hour preceding the recitation of the dawn prayer. The practice is not *fard* (obligatory), and hence only those who choose to do so visit the jamat khana at that time.

The jamat khana also acts as a focal point for social activity which may be linked to religious observance. An interesting illustration is the practice, continued since Indo-Muslim times, of bringing food items to the jamat khana. These are auctioned off and distributed among members of the congregation. The origin of this practice probably goes back to early *Sufi* organizations and their tradition of hospitality (from which, it has been suggested, the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, adapted the open-kitchen system). In North America this practice serves the students and single people well since they would otherwise not have easy access to traditional food. In addition the jamat khana also serves as a centre for other rituals specific to Shī'a Ismailism, such as payment of zakāt, *khums*, and *ṣadqa*. All of these are traditionally submitted to the imām in trust for the community, support of community institutions, and needy individuals. Activities in the jamat khana are co-ordinated by individuals called Mukhi and Kamadia and their female counterparts. (Among Ismailis, women and children participate as actively as men in religious practices.) These officials act as overseers of the place and maintain cleanliness, order, and decorum for the proper observance of religious practice.

So far most places that function as jamat khana(s) in North America have served as centres during the period of transition. New construction of jamat khana(s) is planned, and the first North American one to be built incorporating Islamic architectural values is scheduled for construction in Burnaby, British Columbia.

* No! see "Khoja Case" & "Hasanali Case".

The Ismaili Councils and Associations

A major feature of organization of Ismaili communities in Africa and Asia was a system of councils created to serve the various centres and to provide an efficient means for relating the guidance and policies of the imām to the followers. This system has now been extended to North America, and an overall framework links all centres in Europe, Canada, and the United States. The breakdown of the organizations is as follows:

1. A Supreme Council for Europe, Canada, and the United States of America that provides guidance and effects general policy, under direction from the imām. The members are drawn from the three areas.
2. Three representative National Councils for Europe, Canada, and the United States, responsible specifically for the community in each area, oversee all other national organizations and make recommendations to the Supreme Council and the imām.
3. Regional Councils for eastern and western United States in New York and Los Angeles, and for eastern and western Canada in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Their jurisdiction extends to regional institutions and their work is related to the policies determined at the National Council level.
4. District Councils, in most major district centres such as Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Kitchener, Miami, Chicago, and Houston.

In addition to the above Councils there are other organizations such as grants councils in each of the North American countries to provide for financial assistance to the needy, students, and those refugees who are still in the process of establishing themselves.

The councils thus act as extensions of the imām's authority and function primarily to provide a means of implementing and continuing development in the material life and organization of the community. Their sphere of influence extends to social, educational, health, economic, and cultural activities. The task of preserving and cultivating the specifically religious traditions is assigned to national Ismaili associations, which function on more or less the same pattern as the traditional *da'wa* institution of earlier Ismaili history. In

concept and organization, however, they have adapted to the newe circumstances by realigning religious curricula and teaching mode For this purpose, the associations train honorary teachers, fro among university students and others who are willing to comm time, who run classes for children and adults in the jamat khan after the daily prayers are over.

During the period of settlement, the jamat khana, the council and the associations have played a critical role in helping the m grants to adapt to their new lands. By providing traditional ancho ing points and serving as a focus of religious and social identity, the have succeeded in retaining to a large extent the concept of a define and well-organized religious community. In due course the Nort American Ismailis hope to have a formal constitution, as in othe parts of the Ismaili world, to consolidate more fully the institution that have developed.

Concluding Remarks

In summing up this preliminary survey of the background and d velopment of Ismailis in North America, several general points nee to be considered, which may help to throw some light on the Mu lim experience and the immigration experience of specific ethnic religious groups in general. In the Ismaili case, much of the exper ence is rooted in past history as well as present circumstances. Th makes it necessary to take into account the specifically Isma understanding of Islam and the role played by a living imām in the material and spiritual life. Their experience in Africa and As represents an attempt to order the totality of life in accordance wi their traditional values. The crux of the experience is the creation a society which, while providing the best of all possible materi conditions, can also act as a context in which to practise the faith. times of crisis or political and social change, this may not always easy and it remains to be seen if the Ismailis can successfully effe their vision in North America. There are obvious underlying te sions that have not been treated in any great detail in this chapt Some of these have to do with whether there will be continuo acceptance of the imām's authority and guidance and of the stru tures created by the community. The East African experience

vealed a tendency to adapt well, though often in isolation from other Muslim and Asian groups. Can the North American community play an important role in conjunction with other Muslim groups, or will it remain exclusive? Certainly if the activities of their imām in the field of Islamic Architecture and Education are any indication, then the community here can do much to contribute to the total Muslim effort.

At the level of general immigration experience in North America, the Ismailis have faced almost the same set of problems encountered by other non-white minorities in a western society. The fact that they were in some cases better prepared for the task has not prevented problems in obtaining facilities for jamat khana(s) in certain areas because of racial prejudice or, on rare occasions, acts of violence against individual members because of their race. To this extent any successful adaptation and integration into the mainstream of society will depend on various factors such as the proper implementation of multi-cultural policies in Canada or affirmative action procedures in the U.S., the attitude of major elements in the host societies towards increasing pluralization in North America, and finally the effort made by immigrant groups to contribute their specific talents and values in a North American context.

The first decade of Ismaili history in North America has certainly been eventful. The next promises to be even more so, since the present Ismailis have now established permanent roots in the two countries, adopted Canadian or American citizenship, and been visited by the imām, whose increasing contacts with civil and religious leaders and institutions in North America indicate a continuing effort to consolidate the Ismaili Muslim presence on this continent.

Note

1. Aga Khan II, Sultan Muhammad Shah, *Memoirs* (London: 1954), p. 30.