



Dr. Alnoor Abdullah

M.D. FRCPC, FACC, FACP, FACC
BOARD CERTIFIED (ABIM) Int. Med.,
Cardiology, Interventional Cardiology
[linkedin.com/in/alnoor-abdulla-88279b17](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alnoor-abdulla-88279b17)
Vancouver Canada



Tribute to His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV (1936-2025).

On February 4, 2025 the world heard the sad news of the peaceful passing of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the Spiritual Leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community, in Lisbon, Portugal, surrounded by his family.

His heritage stems from Prophet Muhammed (SAS), whose daughter Fatima was married to Hazarat Ali, who was appointed as the 1st Imam of the Shia Muslims after the death of The Prophet (Nass). Shah Karim al Hussaini, in that hereditary tradition (Nass) was the 49th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Nizari Muslims. In that role he was not only the Spiritual Leader of his community but also had the responsibility to care for their secular well-being and quality of life.

It is in that secular role that the World got to know him as he went about transforming his community over the almost 68 years of Imamate (11th July 1957 – 4th Feb 2025). When he inherited the role of Imam from his grandfather Shah Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III, the community was spread across more than 25 countries, almost all of them in the developing world.

His grandfather The Aga Khan III during his Imamate (to date the longest Imamate of all the Shia Ismaili Imams) had begun the work of Institution building in the fields of Education, Health and Economics. The Aga Khan III, Shah Sultan Mohammed Shah was an international statesman. He had been the President of the League of Nations (precursor to the UNO) and one of the founders and first President of the All-India Muslim League, which succeeded to create the state of Pakistan under the Leadership of Quaid-e- Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Amongst his many accomplishments, The Aga Khan III spearheaded the funding and establishment of the Aligarh University in India. He funded the purchase of Gwadar city from the Sultanate of Oman and presented it to the Government of Pakistan. Today Gwadar is integral to Pakistan's economy.

As such Shah Karim Aga Khan IV had large shoes to fill. He started off by continuing the work of Institution building and social development in Education and Health. Over the next 6 decades he brought the community out of poverty, improved their Education and Health status, set up strong, sustainable Institutions to support them, guided the migration of few millions to the West, where the community has flourished professionally, economically and becoming strong civic minded contributing citizens and leaders in the countries they have settled.

His undeniable global legacy is that, along that journey he improved the lives of millions around the world, amongst whom his followers lived, without any restriction based on their religion, race, gender, political affiliation or any other societal divisions. His tireless humanitarian work in poverty alleviation and significantly improving the quality of life of the people in need, in areas of Asia and Africa has been unapparelled and highly admired and recognized. He brought professionalism, meritocracy and pride within his institutions and gave dignity and hope to millions who were fortunate to be touched by his compassion and caring.

He was the originator of the concept of not only accepting diversity, but highlighting how that diversity was a positive asset and not a reason to sow division among humanity borne from a single Universal Soul. From his international pulpit, he guided his community and the world towards the principles of pluralistic, peaceful coexistence within societies and countries.

The other legacy he leaves behind, which is still a work in progress, is showing the true face of Islam to the West and getting the West to understand the Islamic faith, the contributions to the world that the Islamic civilizations made in areas of culture, architecture, science, algebra, astronomy, medicine, governance and multiple other areas. He was a product of both the East and the West and was a bridge between them and brought mutual respect to both worlds. The awards, titles, degrees, and many other accolades he has received come from all parts of the world and all cultures. It is said by one Canadian leader that, “when The Aga Khan spoke the World listened.”

He was a universally accepted World Leader with no geographical, cultural, racial or religious boundaries. He will forever live in the hearts of millions around the world; whose religious leader he was NOT and who did not even know of him in 1957. Over the 68 years he transformed his small minority Shia Muslim community of over 15 million living mainly in Asia and Africa to a vibrant, upwardly mobile, better educated and with improved health and economic facilities. Many members in his community became very highly educated, holding leadership roles in essentially all walks of life, not only in the developing world but also, very much so, in the West. Along the way with his compassion and sustainable programs for all those in need, he won their respect, hearts and minds. The recognition and admiration he got on the world stage for his efforts to bring peace, improved understanding of Islam, being the bridge between the East and the West, has been universal.

His Imamate, his Aga Khan title, his legacy and work will continue uninterrupted – which is now all being passed on to his successor, his eldest son Prince Rahim Aga Khan. To the community he is now the 50th hereditary Imam - Mawlana Hazar Imam Shah Rahim al Hussaini. To the world he is now His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V

As an individual member of the Shia Ismaili community, I grew up in a rural town in central Tanzania, where we had rudimentary running water taps, no electricity till I was 8 years old to now living for 52 years in North America. My biggest satisfaction is not just my career, multiple post graduate degrees or positions I have held, etc. but that; in any setting what so ever, social, educational, institutional, political or with anybody of any social – economic group -- I am humbly proud (if there is anything like that?), to raise my head and to say where I come from and that I belong to the Shia Ismaili Muslim faith and that; The Aga Khan is our Leader.