Introduction & Scope

Ismailimail Blog began as an individual initiative to reverberate the good news of activities in the Ismaili Community across the globe and to help gather the news under one platform for easy search and reference.

The story materials are broader encompassing news about the Imamat, as well as news and achievements of Imamat Institutions and community members. In addition, there is material from a cultural perspective. Of particular focus has been Jamati engagement in civil society where ever the Jamat may be. The Blog mitigates risk by only posting vetted externally published materials, always providing references. Materials are vetted for risk to individuals, community, and by extension the Imamat institutions and the Imamat itself. The Blog allows for comments using a moderated feedback methodology, and does not allow debates or discussion forums. Being a Blog, it introduces the concept of tags, such that material can be viewed in a thematic way. The Blog intermixes with news items, existing materials from the IIS and the AKDN, such as the introduction to the community, the ethical framework, and other such articles.

Given the broad community of Blog on the Internet, Ismailimail materials have also been introduced to other Blogs, and have been picked up on occasion. Given the mix of Jamati, Imamat, cultural and institutional news, it is able to introduce new target audiences to work of the institutions, and the ethics of the community.

With the multitude of events happening and news thereof, with regard to the Imamat, the Imamat Institutions and the community, Ismailimail is pleased to introduce a monthly Ismailimail newsletter which summarizes the stories of the month. The stories/articles of the month have been categorized by topic for easy reference and each article has been provided with appropriate links/URL so you can easily click on them to visit the site for complete story.

Thank You.

Ismaili Mail Blog
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com
Architecture

During February, we featured a few more of our Ismaili Jamatkhanas and Centers at the Blog, courtesy of ArchNet and its contributors. The Chicago Ismaili Center, which was the recipient of the Chicago Association of Realtors' Good Neighborhood Award for Most Outstanding Community Center, The Ismaili Center in London, and The Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center in Houston, both of which are beautiful architectural efforts. The pictures of the Nairobi Jamatkhana in Kenya, and the old and new East Garden Jamatkhana in Pakistan, probably bring back a lot of fond memories for some of us now residing in the West.

ArchNet is an international On line community developed at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning and the University of Texas at Austin, School of Architecture, in close cooperation with, and with the full support of The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is a private, non-denominational, international development agency with programmes dedicated to the improvement of built environments in societies where Muslims have a significant presence. ArchNet provides an extensive, high-quality, globally accessible, intellectual resource focused on architecture and planning issues and includes restoration, conservation, housing, landscape, urban planning, and related concerns. By providing the largest and most comprehensive digital library on the architecture of the Muslim world, ArchNet aims to foster interaction, collaboration, and debate around these resources. The image holdings of the ArchNet Digital Library have passed the 50,000 benchmark, and are increasing every day! Accompanied by 3,850 scholarly articles and files. The images illustrate 5,200 historic and contemporary buildings and urban projects in ninety-eight countries around the world.

Besides the pictures of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centers, the collection at ArchNet Digital Library also includes images of The Aga Khan Academy, Nairobi, The Aga Khan University Hospital at Nairobi, The Aga Khan Library Building Tanzania, The Aga Khan Hospital Dar es Salaam and The Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa.

Ismaili Mail Blog
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com

Newsletter – February 2007
The Aga Khan Foundation Network is busy rebuilding the Babar Garden. It was built in beginning of the 16th century by founder of the Mughal dynasty Zahiruddin Mohammad Babar, but the garden has suffered severe damages during the civil wars.

The Delegation of The Ismaili Imamat is a secular facility proposed in the City of Ottawa to establish a formal and symbolic presence for His Highness the Aga Khan and his institutions in Canada. It will house meeting rooms, exhibition areas, a lecture theater, resource center, and private apartments. The building as a whole will be an interplay of visual clarity and opacity, overlaid with various degrees of translucency. Like the natural beauty of a rock crystal that is a true wonder to the human eye, it is hoped that the Delegation building will be a source of optimism, fascination, and enlightenment.

Education

Dr. Willie Edwards, assistant professor of teacher education, took a trip to Karachi, Pakistan Dec. 2-14. The trip was organized to help teach educational curricula to the faculty at Aga Khan University. Edwards compared Karachi to New York City. It's a lot more cosmopolitan than other areas in that region," Edwards said. He also said he didn't see any of the extremist fundamentalism that a lot of Americans think goes on in Pakistan. Edwards' trip to Pakistan was made possible by the sponsorship of International Reading Association.

It was fun and exciting for the boys and girls of Uganda Aga Khan Primary School who graduated on February 15, 2007. A total of 101 pupils, 58 primary seven and 43 year six of the year 2006 graduated. Also during the function, pupils who had performed well in the Primary Leaving Examinations were awarded certificates and Oxford English dictionaries for excellent performance. The headmistress, Aga Khan school, Ms Juliet Sseruwagi added that she was happy the pupils were leaving as disciplined, responsible, independent, sportsmen and women, with a spirit to share and work as a team, musicians and computer literates. "We believe and hope that when they join secondary school they will continue to let the Aga Khan candle burn brightly," she said.
University of Central Asia is an International Initiative for Education and Development in Central Asia. The University was created to offer an internationally recognized standard of higher education in Central Asia and create knowledgeable, skilled and creative graduates who will contribute leadership, ideas and innovations to the transitioning economies and communities of the region. UCA was founded in 2000 by the governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, and His Highness the Aga Khan. It is the world's first internationally chartered institution of higher education. The International Treaty and Charter establishing this secular and private University was signed by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Presidents of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, ratified by the respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. The Presidents are the Patrons and His Highness the Aga Khan is the Founding Patron and Chancellor of UCA. UCA will have three campuses of equal size and stature in each of the founding countries.

The International Academic Partnership promotes global education and student-centered teaching at participating schools. The program focuses on professional development for teachers and curricular innovation at all affiliated institutions. Since its founding in 1993, the IAP has linked schools in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America to create a living laboratory for the study of issues related to developing nations and to provide a forum for the dissemination of methods of cooperative teaching and learning. The Partnership seeks to advance the quality of education as an essential building block of civil societies that are peaceful and just. Founded jointly in 1993 by Aga Khan Education Services, with more than 300 K–12 schools worldwide, and Phillips Academy, Andover, in the United States, the IAP now includes two additional partners: the Institute for Educational Development at Aga Khan University in Pakistan, and the Schule Schloss Salem in Germany.

A seminar was held under the aegis of the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development's (AKU-IED) to mark the opening of the National Research Symposium on the status of teachers, at the Aga Khan unit Karimabad. Experts stressed that teachers were faced with a critical situation as they were largely being ignored by society, which, in turn, was affecting the state of education in the country in an adverse manner.

At the opening session, Dr Muhammad Memon, Director, AKU-IED, highlighted that priority has been given to teachers' professional development but very little effort was made to
research into their status and its implications for policy. Firoz Rasul, AKU President, and the chief guest on the occasion, said that civil society and the government need to recognize the role of teachers from broader social and economic perspectives, which will enhance teachers' self-esteem and sense of professionalism.

Teachers' status would be seen from three main dimensions. The first one will be the knowledge dimension where presentations and discussions would take account of research on issues related to teachers' knowledge and competency and their implications for low teacher status. The second dimension will be the socio-cultural dimension in which research and situation analysis of societal perceptions of teaching and teachers and their implications for the status of teachers will be taken into account. The last dimension, the economic dimension, would be based on research and situation analysis pertaining to the teachers' financial status and its implications for teachers' status in the society.

**Yahia Bazia**, an alumnus of the IIS Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH), and originally from Afghanistan, has been appointed by The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO as their representative at The Afghan Ministry of Education. As the UNESCO-IIEP National Coordinator, Yahia will assist in supervising the formulation and implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Education in Afghanistan.

On Feb 8, **Microsoft** granted Rs six crore to its four NGO partners in India for expanding the current network of 500 Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs) across the country. The grant under the company's Unlimited Potential program (Project Jyoti in India) aims at enabling IT access to underserved communities in the rural and semi-urban India. The four beneficiaries - Aga Khan Foundation (India), Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation and Udyan Care have received Rs 1.46 crore, Rs 1.26 crore, Rs 2.88 crore and Rs 40 lakh respectively. These organisations will utilise the funds to set up additional centres in states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and South India to deliver free or highly subsidised IT education to the people.

**Health**

**Dr Nuzhat Faruqui**, Instructor of Urology at the Aga Khan University presented a lecture on common urological problems in females. The lecture discussed the common problems, indicators, types of incontinence, factors associated with bladder control problems, myths, treatment strategies, behavior modifications that help control and prevent the disease, need of surgery and the pathophysiology associated with the disease.
The shorter the gap between your children, the less their mental development, says Aga Khan University study. A recent study into the intellectual development of children in Karachi has discovered three important things: If you have your children quickly one after another their mental development, especially of the younger ones, is less than if you space your children out. The intellectual development of children benefits greatly from a joint family system in which many aunts, uncles and grandparents are available for daily interaction. However, the more children you have, the less their intellectual development is. The study appeared as an article titled 'The role of family configuration in early childhood intellectual development in the context of an extended family system in Pakistan' in the Journal of Postgraduate Medicine this January.

The "Fifth Annual charity Walk" organized by the Cerebral Palsy Foundation in aid of their impaired children on Sunday February 11th 2007, was a tremendous success, thanks to our caring school children from all walks of life. Leading the pack were enthusiastic and well-disciplined students from the Aga Khan Academy and their parents under the "Command" of their Headmaster Mr. Wilkins. Meanwhile, the Aga Khan Community participated in cleaning up of Mombasa for IAAF Championship. Preparations to make Mombasa "Spick and Span" to greet the thousands of athletes and visitors from all over the world pouring into Mombasa for the 2007 IAAF World Cross Country Championships on March 24 are gaining momentum with help from Coast tourist industry and supporters.

Sarah Sarai - First African woman allowed to perform nursing duties at The Aga Khan Hospital In the late '30s and early '40s, Sarai worked in hospitals in far-flung corners of East Africa including Msambweni, deep in the South Coast; the Native Civil Hospital Makadara, (now Coast General Hospital), Mombasa; Kilifi (where she learnt perfect Kiswahili); and Mulago in Uganda (where she learnt Luganda). She encouraged women to free themselves from traditional practices that affected their reproductive health and self-esteem. In Nairobi, she was the first African woman allowed to perform nursing duties at His Highness The Aga Khan Hospital (then a clinic) and the European Base Hospital (currently State House Road Girls School).

Pakistan and Germany signed an agreement of cooperation comprising financial assistance of Euro 3.0million and soft loan of Euro 4.5 million for provision of health facilities in the Northern Areas. Similarly Euro 3 million grant will be passed on to the NGOs including Aga Khan Health Services (Euro 2 million), Pakistan Family Planning Health Services (Euro 0.5 million) and Marie Adelaide Foundation (Euro 0.5 million).

Books & Ismaili Authors

Ismaili Mail Blog
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com

Newsletter – February 2007
Featured at the blog are books, some of which have been authored by Ismaili Authors. "Beyond the Cayenne Wall" is a collection of stories by award-winning Ismaili author, Shaila Abdullah, about Pakistani women struggling to find their individualities despite the barriers imposed by society. Born in Karachi and living in America for the past 11 years allows the author of Beyond The Cayenne Walls an unusual vantage point of the two cultures that are so distinctly different. But Abdullah wants to make it clear that her book isn't an attack on culture or religion, but about the unjust laws and political agendas that silence Pakistani women.

From the fifteen year old Ismaili phenomenon, Sophia Babai, who had always had a fondness for fairytales, comes the hypnotic tale of Anima, in the book "Just Like A Fairy Tale".

The Invisible Way is the ancient religious practice that forms the basis for all organized religions, yet transcends all borders and barriers of religious dogma. In this amazing and insightful book, Anil Giga, an Ismaili author, shows readers, step by step, how to strip away the illusions of the physical universe and the preconceived notions that so often deceive people and cause endless suffering. By learning the secrets of the Invisible Way, readers can change their lives, access the wisdom of the spiritual leaders of the world and discover a new dimension of love, inner peace and understanding.

Jim Davis has authored a book on Ismailism, "A short intro to the faith of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims and their practices today".

The Institute of Ismaili Studies' latest publication comprises a collection of papers on the poetry and mystical ideas of the celebrated Persian poet, Farid al-Din 'Attar. Edited by Dr Leonarad Lewisohn and Professor Christopher Shackle and entitled "Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight", this publication provides in English, an overview of 'Attar's monumental contributions to Persian literature and a gateway to his literary and poetic genius.
Also from the IIS, is Henry Corbin's *Temple and Contemplation*, beautifully translated by Philip Sherrard, it was one of his final, densest and most personally revealing and impassioned writings. It is made up of five Eranos lectures (whose specific annual themes usually explain the particular titles and emphases of each of these works), most of them delivered near the end of his life, which Prof. Corbin brought together and which were eventually published posthumously (in 1980) under this richly evocative title.

Ismailis in the News

**One of the most popular** categories at the blog is "Ismailis in the news". Under this category, we have recognized achievements of our Ismaili brothers and sisters from various parts of the world.

We begin with *The Board of Directors for the Pakistan Center for Philanthropy*, who have also served in various other capacities within the Imamat Institutions.

**Azim Premji** and his team at Wipro who won the prestigious Dale Carnegie Global Leadership Award for 2007.

"On Faith" panelist **Eboo Patel** who is founder and executive director of the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based international nonprofit working to make the forces of interfaith cooperation stronger than the forces of religious extremism.

**Naushin Lalani**, who has been selected as one of the Top Ten Finalist to represent British Columbia for the Miss Universe Canada 2007 Pageant to be held in Montreal, Canada in March, 2007.

**Zabeen Hirji** who has been appointed as Chief Human Resources Officer at the Royal Bank of Canada.

Ismaili Mail Blog

http://ismailimail.wordpress.com
**Gulgee**, the famous and celebrated artist of Pakistan and the subcontinent, life has been a journey in more than one sense for him, giving him thrill and bliss that are both sensuous and ethereal. He has been to many places and done things that are varied and glorious. At the age of 79, though the visits have become fewer, he remains as zestful a traveler in the realm of the intellect and the senses as he was when the journey began quite early in life.

**Mahmood, Nasim and Aliya** participated in Hike4Life 06, a fund-raising event by Focus Humanitarian Assistance. They spent 10 grueling days of long journeys, lots of rain and 6 days of intense hiking in the Isalo National Park in Madagascar.

**Hanif Lalani** was appointed Group Finance Director at British Telcom in February 2005 and joined both the Board and the Operating Committee.

Gov. Rick Perry announced the reappointment of **Munir Lalani** of Wichita Falls to the Midwestern State University Board of Regents. This term will expire February 25, 2010.

**Shaf Keshavjee** is a pioneering Ismaili transplant surgeon from Toronto. He is the director of the hospital's lung-transplant program at the Toronto General Hospital.

**Yasmin Alibhai-Brown**, writer and journalist, is one of the foremost voices against racism, gender bias and nationalism today, and the only non-white political columnist in a mainstream newspaper, The Independent for the last nine years.

**Nizar Verjee**, a Board Member of African Medical and Research Foundation British/Kenyan, Dental Surgeon. Currently he is Chairman of the Nairobi Hospice Board. Currently Chair, AMREF Board Human Resource Committee. Appointed to the AMREF International Board on 5th October, 2001.

**Azim Keshavjee**, the creator of Comfortably Numb – Canada's Pink Floyd Show, is songwriter, performer, multi-instrumentalist lead vocals, all guitars (acoustic, electric), mandolin, sitar, tabla, piano/keyboards, drums, bass. Azim defies classification as a person, and as a musician. The British-born, mostly Canadian-raised, multi-instrumentalist saw his life change before his eyes, and his path laid out before him in one simple moment...watching Jimi Hendrix perform musical magic on BBC in the late 60's.
State of West Virginia honored Rashida Khakoo, who began her medical career at Uganda's only medical school, has been honored with her second West Virginia civil rights award in as many months. She was one of 14 West Virginia civil rights leaders who received the Governor's Civil Rights Day Award from Gov. Joe Manchin. Khakoo joined the infectious disease section at West Virginia University in 1976 and is now its chief. In January, Khakoo was awarded the 2007 "Living the Dream" Sharing of Self Award from the West Virginia Martin Luther King. Jr. Holiday Commission.

Tenzin Khangsar, staff director to Mr. Kenney, in an interview said that Secretary of State Kenney has hired four staffers. Besides Mr. Khangsar, the three other political aides to Mr. Kenney include Chris Champion, senior policy adviser for Canadian identity; Neil Desai, senior policy adviser for multiculturalism and Alykhan Velshi, senior special assistant for foreign policy and parliamentary affairs. "We're living multiculturalism in our team." He pointed out in the interview that Mr. Champion is of Christian faith, Mr. Desai is of Hindu faith, Mr. Velshi is of Muslim faith and himself of Buddhist faith.

Empowerment of Women

The Aga Khan Rural Support Program Chitral arranged a study and experimental tour for representatives of different local support organizations from Chitral. The government has initiated an ambitious programme for the socio-economic empowerment of women for alleviation of poverty and access to credit enabling them to achieve self-reliance in the informal sector and attain sustainable development. The fund has been set up through a number of commercial banks including Khushali and First Women Bank and Aga Khan Rural Support Program to provide simultaneously skill, employment and income to nearly 23,000 rural women and benefiting over 74,000 households.

Supported by Aga Khan Foundation, Utah Valley State College and the Kyrgyz National Center for Development of Mountain Regions hosted a major international conference, "Women of the Mountains," to address issues facing women in mountainous world regions. "The purpose of the conference is to examine issues critical to women and children in developing mountain nations," said Rusty Butler, UVSC Associate VP of international affairs and co-organizer for the conference. "Conditions in these regions often provide a breeding ground for ills that disproportionately impact women and their offspring." The conference was inspired when the United Nations deemed 2002 International Year of the Mountains and a passed a U.N. General Assembly resolution calling for sustainable development in poor, mountainous regions.
Art – Music – Spirituality

Central Asian Iranian Recordings Compete For 49th World Music Grammy nominee this year for "Best Traditional World Music Album" is a project that documents attempts by Tajik and Uzbek musicians to revive "shashmaqam" - a style of court music that flourished centuries ago in Central Asia. The album is called "Invisible Face Of The Beloved: Classical Music of the Tajiks and Uzbeks." It is part of a project by the Agha Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia that has been distributed by the Smithsonian Folkways label.

AKU press release mentioned Abida Parveen, internationally acclaimed singer of Pakistan - known for sufi renditions, will be the guest speaker at the Aga Khan University on Wednesday, and has been invited under its special lecture series and will make her presentation on "Spiritualism". "I was born to sing Sufiana kalam" said Abida Parveen. "Music is something that I feel very deeply. I am also classically trained and that is why I enjoy all forms of music. But I do believe that no colour is darker than the colour of Sufi music and no intoxication is stronger. It is as if I was born to sing this." Abida Parveen shares her spiritual search for the Absolute.

She began her lecture by stating that spiritualism had no theory, it was a direct connection that Man (and woman) shared with his (or her) Creator. "It's a direct dialling relationship. Spiritualism is a light that Allah put in man's heart at the time of his creation," she explained, saying that the warmth of that flame was inexplicable except for the person who felt it in his heart or that force which had put it there in the first place.

She said that humility was the weapon with which one could defeat the ego. "When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ascended to the point of Meraj, Allah gifted him with this..."
supplication, which has been transmitted to us through the processes of nubuyat and then wilayat." Quoting Hazrat Ali (RA), she said that any practice of worship that made one proud of oneself was not worth it. "Pride and spiritualism cannot go together, what does go hand in hand though is spiritualism and supplication because surrender is the core of it all." Abida Parveen combined recitation of poetry and song rendition with detailed explanation of sufi concepts to deliver one of her rare lectures, leading to a standing ovation by an enthralled audience.

She was addressing a packed auditorium on the topic of "Spiritualism" under Aga Khan University's Special Lecture Series. She presented poetry and anecdotes to explain sufi traditions in the light of her own experiences. She shared in detail her understanding of the sufi poetry which she usually sings, and revealed to the audience spiritual ecstasy which is the driving force behind her spirited performances. She explained to the audience that spirituality lies within a person who only needs to delve deeper into himself to find his connection to God.

Dr Sajeda and Mohsin Meghji's Art Blog
http://www.rainydaygallery.blogspot.com/
Indian Cuisine

Another popular category is our Indian Cuisine. These women have shared age-old recipes that have survived generations and migrations. Visit their Blogs or read their cook books for recipes that will surely tempt you into trying out their delicious recipes.

Chachis Kitchen: This blog contains our family recipes; mainly it is Ismaili (Khoja) cuisine, our family lived in Uganda for 3 generations so we have a marked East African (Swahili, Lugandi) Influence in our cooking AND in our language!! (Kutchi / Cutchi / Gujarati)

Pinky Lilani, the "Food Guru" - So popular are her Spice Magic seminars, which include motivational demonstrations on the preparation of a selection of Indian delicacies, that Lilani has earned the sobriquet Food Guru. In a poll conducted by the Good Housekeeping magazine, she was voted as one of the 100 most busy women in Britain. Visit her website at: http://www.spicemagic.com/index.html

Noorbanu Nimji is the author of "A Spicy Touch Cookbooks". You can visit Noorbanu's website at: http://www.aspicytouch.com/
Devotion of Hunzkuts

Karimabad served under its old name Baltit as capital of the principality of Hunza. It was renamed in honour of Karim Aga Khan, the highly revered spiritual leader of the Ismailis. The Hunzkuts, as the local people are called, are his followers. Aga Khan schools, hospitals, training institutes, and community halls abound. In fact, the presence of the Aga Khan is felt everywhere.

Google captures love for Imam from the people of Karimabad Hunza. Click on each picture to view at Google Maps.

Find: Al-Karim Walli via Ismailism Yahoo Listserv.

Quotes of Aga Khan IV

From Nasser Hadi Velshi’s Blog

"Indeed, one strength of Islam has always lain in its belief that creation is not static but continuous, that through scientific and other endeavors, God has opened and continues to open new windows for us to see the marvels of His creation. [Speech 16 March 1983]
Timeless sayings of Aga Khan III

Quote from a letter written by Our 48th Imam to a friend in 1952 under the title: "What have we forgotten in Islam?": *Islam is fundamentally in its very nature a natural religion.* Throughout the Quran God's signs (Ayats) are referred to as the natural phenomenon, the law and order of the universe, the exactitudes and consequences of the relations between natural phenomenon in cause and effect.

Aga Khan IV - Press/Media Images
Pictures Album - via Ismailisoul Picasa Album collection
Images copyright to getty images.

February 2 - Paris, France: H.H. Aga Khan attends the opening ceremony of the conference on global ecological governance at the Elysee Palace in Paris. Quebec Premier Jean Charest is seated next to Him. Four seats to the left of the Aga Khan is Prince Albert of Monaco.

Ismaili Mail Blog
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com
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Mausoleum of Agakhan III

The stylized image of a Felucca in front of the Aga Khan Tomb in Aswan.

Article – Thesis – Miscellaneous

What Really Went Wrong? – A Shi'i Perspective By Jalaledin Ebrahim, M.A. It was July 11, 1957 when a young 20 year old Iranian citizen of Arab, Persian and English ancestry, then still a student at Harvard University, became invested with the authority of 'Imamah' over a far flung community of over 12 million Muslims. A direct descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him) through the line of the Prophet's cousin, Ali, and his daughter Fatima, His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th Imam of an obscure (to the Western media and in many parts of the Muslim world) sect of Islam that traces its roots to the Fatimid caliphate and the leaders of the Nizari community.

From the Institute of Ismaili Studies: Lifelong Learning Articles - Ceramics by Dr Fahmida Suleman  Around the year 1135 CE, a merchant from Aden wrote the following letter to his counterpart in Egypt: "Please buy me six painted platters, made in Misr [Old Cairo]. They should be of middle size, neither very large nor very small; and twenty regular bowls and forty small ones. All should be painted, and their figures and colours should be different." The history of ceramic production in the medieval Muslim world, from the period of the Umayyads in the seventh century CE to the Ottomans and Safavids in the seventeenth century CE, attests to the superior creativity and experimentation of Muslim potters, demonstrated through their innovations in shape and design, clay recipes, glazes, and techniques of decoration.

Ismaili Mail Blog  Newsletter – February 2007  
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com
The news that a Chitrali, **Mr. Waqar Ahmad**, student of pre eng: the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Karachi, will represent Pakistan in Mexico in the International Science Exhibition, **is a very big one.** It is not only a matter of pride for Mr. Waqar and his parents but all the Chitrals feel it their collective award and salute their brilliant child.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Heritage Minister Bev Oda have been committed since October to give $30-million to the new **Aga Khan Global Centre for Pluralism**. This project will transform an Ottawa heritage building into a non-denominational, non-profit conference centre, classrooms, theatre and exhibition hall, dedicated to fostering Canadian-style pluralism in developing countries.

**Intricate decorative tilework** found in medieval architecture across the Islamic world appears to exhibit advanced decagonal quasicrystal geometry - a concept discovered by Western mathematicians and physicists only in the 1970s and 1980s. If so, medieval Islamic application of this geometry would predate Western mastery by at least half a millennium. The finding, by Peter J. Lu at Harvard University and Paul J. Steinhardt at Princeton University, will be published this week in the journal Science. "We can't say for sure what it means," says Lu, a graduate student in physics at Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. "It could be proof of a major role of mathematics in medieval Islamic art or it could have been just a way for artisans to construct their art more easily. It would be incredible if it were all coincidence, though. At the very least, it shows us a culture that we often don't credit enough was far more advanced than we ever thought before." Breathtakingly elaborate geometric tiling is a distinctive feature of medieval Islamic architecture throughout the Middle East and Central Asia.

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**Thank You from Ismaili Mail Blog:** I would like to thank all who have been visiting this blog since its inception just a few months ago. With your interest in the Ismaili Muslim Community, we have reached a milestone by hitting more then hundred thousand page views in just few short months. This blog started out as a personal but humble initiative to categorize Imamat and Ismaili Community news and activities from around the world, but all of you came and showed your interest in the project, and for this I am humbly honored, and wish to say Thank You. Credit for the contents of this Blog goes out to various individuals who have shared many stories since late October 2006. I would not have been able to post 500 plus current news and stories without your help. Once again, thank you everyone.

Ismaili Mail Blog

[http://ismailimail.wordpress.com](http://ismailimail.wordpress.com)