

**SPEECH GIVEN BY**  
**Frank Islam**  
**At**  
**SHIBLI COLLEGE**

Shah Azfar Faizan, members of faculty, students, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I want to express my warm appreciation for your generous welcome. I am honored and thrilled and excited to be here. I am proud to be addressing these distinguished gatherings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my cousin Shah Azfar Faizan for giving me an opportunity to address you today on the subject "Your role and responsibilities in creating the next generations". It is our responsibility to secure the future we all share. Let me briefly outline what I want to talk to you today. I will start with few words about your Principal, and then about this city, and then about this college, and few words about education and its importance. Then I will share some ideas about your role and responsibility to create next generations and then I will conclude my remarks.

Let me say few words about your Principal, Shah Azfar Faizan. I admire his leadership and his vision and his optimism. He is passionate, committed, and determined to make Shibli College the best learning center. He wants to make this college a beacon of success and a college of tomorrow. He is leading this college thoughtfully, responsibly, and respectfully. He needs your hand, your help and your voice in shaping the future of this college. He has created an environment that welcomes talents, that nourishes talents, that admire talents, and that rewards talents. The hope and dream of next generation rest upon his shoulder. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder with him for the ideals that we share and the vision and values that we cherish.

A lot of thing brings us together. I am talking to future leaders of India. All of us are bound by a shared love of Shibli College. I want to thank you for all you do for this remarkable institution. This is the city where it all began for me. I was born not too far from this place. I am proud to be standing here, and looking at you today, I have never felt so blessed.

We are divided by distance but united by history and heritage and our faith. I still cherish the fond memory of Azamgarh. I have always been proud to be part of Shah Family that has done so much to help build a strong family. Our family believes that investing in our youth today will ensure a better future for all of us.

I never lost my love of Azamgarh and Shibli College. I relish my heritage. This city has been my home and will remain my home. This city remains an inseparable and an indispensable part of my life, my story, and my journey. I still cherish the fond memories of Azamgrah. This city stands as a shining symbol of equality, dignity, decency, inclusiveness, tolerance, and respect. These are the qualities and values that all of us can proudly and truly embrace.

My ancestors are buried beneath this beloved city. I am standing on a ground where many of my ancestors stood. Each piece of this place tells the story of our past. My ancestors remain a constant source of inspiration to our family. They instilled in us the importance of education, decency, honesty, courtesy, and commitment to values. Our family will always cherish their vision, their values and their commitment.

Long years ago my father went to this college. This college provided my father hope, opportunity, and strength and has taught him the dignity of hard work. My family and I will always be grateful and indebted to this college. He was fond of this college. My father admired the enduring quality and splendid beauty of this institution. My father had intelligence and matchless grace. My family will remember him with love. We will carry on his legacy of leadership, integrity, character, and judgment. He laid the foundation for our family to flourish. There is not a day that passes by that I do not mourn the passing of my parents. They were the best and the brightest.

Shibli College is a true treasure. I care deeply and love this remarkable institution. No turning of the seasons can diminish the greatness of this great college. This college stands as a symbol of knowledge, progress, and center of learning and serves as a beacon for the entire world. This college has helped shape the lives of many generations. This college has inspired and influenced many generations. This college has provided hope, dream, and future for many generations. I have always held Shibli College in high esteem. I congratulate Shibli College for its continued success in honoring the legacy of its founder, Shibli Nomani, and remembering his commitment to the principles upon which this college was founded- service to humanity. Shibli Nomani was an ordinary man with an extraordinary talent. He was man ahead of his time. He shaped our future. He embraced the future and he was never frightened of the future. He was a true voice of Shibli College. He remained focused on the brighter horizon even when he endured storm and even when he suffered and struggled during his dark days. He shaped our history and he shaped our destiny. His principles have guided us during the time of calm or crisis. All of us owe a sense of gratitude to him because he made impossible as possible and he made unacceptable as acceptable and he made irrelevant as relevant.

This college has many alumni around the world. While their stories are diverse; a common thread is that they have made a difference in lives, communities, and professions. All of you should be thankful for the opportunity to attend and graduate from this college.

I want to share my personal journey from humble beginnings to success.

I crossed the ocean to go to America. My own remarkable success story from Azamgarh to Aligarh to America should resonate well with millions of people across the globe. It reaffirms the notion that if you aim high and if you work hard you should be able to pursue your dream. I inspired my employees by setting examples. I learned from my failures. I had clear vision and goals. I believe through hard work and sacrifice each of you can pursue your own individual dreams. For you no dream should be too far out of reach. Success has taught me how to move forward, but failure has taught me to never go backwards. I want to tell my story to others because it is my sincere hope that you find inspiration in my story so that you can achieve greater success in your life.

## **Why Education Matters**

Before I say few words about Education, let me briefly touch upon extremism. Despite India's expanding economy and the fruits of rising wealth, the opportunity for economic and social mobility have largely by passed Muslims and low caste. The rise of extremism and terrorism are surmounting and overbearing. Unfortunately Extremism forces take away strengths of our faith and they have become an impediment to stability, security, development, peace, and prosperity. We should not allow religion to become the trigger for terrorism and extremism. Please join me in this journey so that we can together close the door of despair and darkness and disappointment and open the door of prosperity and upward mobility. Please join me in this journey so that we can together break the barrier and boundary of biases and bigotry. We have to eradicate the barrier which divides us. We need to end the discrimination based on religion. There is no place for religion injustice. People need to respect human dignity. People should be treated according to their talents not their background and belief. Let us become the voices for those who are voiceless and let us extend our hand to help those who are helpless. All of us will do well to remember that no country, no religion, no culture and no civilization have monopoly on wisdom.

Now let me say few words on Education.

Education is a powerful equalizer opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty. You should develop a culture that reinforces the values and importance of education. Lack of access to education creates a vicious cycle that crushes a person's hope for improvement. The greatest gift you can give is the gift of education .Education is the key ingredient of success. Education empowers people and enhances the dignity and self- respect of a human being. It plays a pivotal role in creating jobs and building prosperity, and it is a powerful engine of innovation and entrepreneurship. Education is the best investment you can make to build your future. Education can also be an important component to foster positive change and social values.

We need to make education more affordable and accessible. We must close the gap between wealthy and the low income. We need education system that emphasizes in developing leadership skills. We need to support educational opportunities for every one because no matter who you are or what you are interested in, a good education becomes a solid foundation on which to build your life's goals.

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN CREATING NEXT GENERATIONS**

It is your responsibility to work towards the development of next generations. You have to build a bold vision and clear commitment to create today's student for tomorrow's job. It is your responsibility to serve the public and community. Your role is to increase awareness of new generations. Your character and talent will contribute the direction and success of this college. It is your responsibility to inspire others by setting examples.

I would like to share with you some thoughts and some ideas for the path forward. Following can provide a framework in building successful career trajectory for the next generations:

- a. You need to develop and fund scholarship programs at the primary and secondary level. Remember students have always been our best hope. By investing in scholarship is ways to keeping hope alive.
- b. You need to develop training and skills centers for students. This will create a new generation of students with skills to excel. It will also prepare them with various competitive exams. I would like to see training center for teachers as well.
- c. You need to develop youth mentoring programs
- d. You need to put emphasis on education of girls and we should encourage women to be part of job market.
- e. You need to become more politically involved to make sure your voices are heard.

### **In closing**

You can create future for next generations by reinforcing the importance and the values of education. Each and everyone of you has a right to pursue your dreams, but the dream must belong to all who are willing to get educated, work hard and pursue their life goals. I must stress that key word here is “opportunity” not guarantee. As long as you protect opportunities, you will prevail.

All of us will do well to remember all things are possible when we work together, when we learn from one another, when we listen to each other and when we set aside our differences to work for shared goals. Remember everything is possible if we have the desire, drive and discipline. Remember any thing and everything is possible, when we sacrifice together and when we struggle together. What is so unique and distinctive and important about this college are its teachers and students. They believe in their ability and the ability of their children to get ahead. They are strong, vibrant, responsible and resilient, and you are a community of dreamers and doers. Therefore I am confident that if all of you work together to provide hope and opportunities, I can say your best days will be ahead of you not behind you.

All of you have a role and responsibility to shape your fate and future. Future is not an accident but future is built on planning. Remember the future is promised to those who create it – not to those who live in the past. I believe it is imperative for all of you to take a more proactive and prominent role in the quest for Shibli College future. You have to recognize that this is a continuous journey. That journey began, and is sustained by the contributions of you as an individual. Remember as long as you believe in yourselves the future will always be yours. As we approach the dawn of this new decade and the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, let us weave into the fabric of our society a sense of hope, a sense of positive energy and a sense that we all are in this together. If we come together we will endure and thrive. Let us never forget the values that our community shares; the belief that with education and hard work and with sacrifice we can give our children a better life. Let us dedicate ourselves to draw upon the values, ingenuity,

decency, dignity, and spirit that have always defined the greatness of this college. Your future is promising as your proud past.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak to you today. Thank you for your time and your commitment to make a difference in the lives of others. I wish all of you continued success in the future.

Let us fulfill Shibli Nomani's vision and his mission. Let us carry the torch handed to us by Shibli Nomani. Let us work together to ensure that his dream shall never die and his cause will endure.

If you need a copy of my speech please visit my website [www.frankislam.com](http://www.frankislam.com)

Thank you and God bless you.