

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak to you tonight. I am honored and delighted to be here. I want to sincerely thank Dr. Hasan. Thank you Dr. Hasan for your service to the Aligarh Alumni Association. This is a noble cause. People like you inspire all of us. We should all do our part to serve our community, to strengthen our families, to educate our children, and to become role models for future generations. It's our children that are the hope of tomorrow.

As you know, I went to school at Aligarh. I am an Aligarh Alumnus. I loved my time there. My stay at Aligarh has had a profound effect on me. It was an exciting time of my life. I must admit, sometimes it was chaotic. But, nevertheless, it was filled with charm, cheers, changes, and challenges. My stay at Aligarh was inspiring and the memories endearing. It provided me with the basic building blocks to be a successful entrepreneur, to assume responsibility and to be a leader. My education at Aligarh prepared me to be a better person. It prepared me to have a dream of a great future. It gave me strength, discipline, courage and the determination to succeed. The thought of Aligarh has never faded away from my memory. In fact, the thought is still as fresh in my mind as it was long years ago. For me, it has been a remarkable journey from the dusty streets of Aligarh to the rocky shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

The first part of my talk today is: What are the key ingredients of a successful businessman and a successful entrepreneur? The key ingredients of success are: education, leadership, taking risks, and being focused. The key ingredients of being an entrepreneur are desire, drive, dreams, dedication, devotion and determination. To me, one of the most important ingredients is focus. If you focus like laser, you can drill a hole in a diamond. If you do not focus, it will be like the sun that dissipates its vast energy by shining light in all directions. Focus is power. It creates a powerful perception in the minds of the customer. A powerful focus is effective in the long term, not in the short term. It does not happen overnight. You have to have patience. It takes a long time to turn around the corporate battleship. Focus has been extremely important in our success at my company QSS. In twelve years, we have been able to develop QSS from just my dreams and aspirations into a highly successful \$300 million federal government high-technology firm. Good things come to those who are willing to take risks and who are willing to sacrifice. Before I go on to my next topic, I would like to talk about two other very important things that I have learned in building QSS: First, a business management consultant once said "If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be **'meetings'**." Early on I learned that, while you have to have meetings, keep them short and on-topic. Too many long meetings will get in the way of getting things accomplished.

The second other important thing I learned is probably best related using a story about Albert Einstein. "While lecturing extensively in the United States, Einstein was always accompanied by his faithful chauffeur Harry, who would listen to each of these lectures from the back row. After Einstein had finished a lecture, Harry said: 'Professor Einstein, I have heard your lecture on Relativity so many times that I believe that I would be able to deliver it to perfection myself.' 'Very well' replied Einstein. 'You can deliver the next lecture as me – I will take your place as the chauffeur.' Harry delivered the lecture to perfection, without a word out of place - while Einstein sat in the back row playing 'chauffeur', and enjoying a nap for a change. Just as Harry was descending from the podium, however, one of the research assistants intercepted him, and began to ask him a very complex question on Relativity. Harry replied to the assistant 'The answer to this question is very simple. In fact, it is so simple that I am going to let my chauffeur answer it'.

I would suggest that Harry certainly knew when to delegate. And, I learned how to delegate too – you can not build a successful company by yourself.

Next, I would like to talk about Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and education. The supreme interest of Sir Syed's life was education. He wanted to create a scientific temperament among the Muslims of India and to make the Western knowledge of science available to them. He championed the cause of modern education. His work gave rise to a new generation of Muslim intellectuals, professionals, and the Aligarh movement to secure the political future of Muslims in India. I was inspired by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's vision of education and his vision of improving socioeconomic conditions of Muslims in India and his quest to build an institution of higher education. Two of his quotes still resonate with me – and seem to be true even today:

"Acquisition of knowledge of science and technology is the only solution for the problems of the Muslims."

"I will not ask you for my salvation. But please take pity of your children. Do something for them (send them to school), lest you should have to repent."

Sir Syed's legacy still lives in bright lights and dark shadows. Those shadows are still everywhere. The Aligarh Muslim University was founded by Sir Syed. AMU was initiated over a hundred thirty years ago as a movement for the renaissance of India's Muslim community. For over 130 years the Muslims of India have

nurtured Aligarh Muslim University with their sweat, blood and aspirations. It has produced many great freedom fighters and builders of a modern India, as well as renowned scholars, artists, scientists, and engineers. We should do what we can to ensure that Aligarh Muslim University will remain a premier center of knowledge – and will continue to shine its bright lights into those dark shadows.

Finally, I would like to address why I believe that a technology-oriented, English-based education is ever more important today. Global economic trends continue toward a rapid growth of knowledge-based services – resulting in increasingly economic dependent nations. The key to future competitiveness will be information and knowledge. A great transition in thought and action was needed to move the world from an agricultural-based economy to a manufacturing- and industrial-based economy. I believe that an even greater transition is required to take the next step to a global, highly inter-dependent knowledge-based economy. As discussed in the World Bank's Millennium Development Goals: "Education is central to development. It empowers people and strengthens nations. It is a powerful "equalizer" opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty. In an increasingly complex, knowledge dependent world, higher levels of education must be the first priority." I believe that education is the answer to a wide range of problems and opportunities.

Today Muslims in India lag behind in all walks of life. The main reason for their sorry status is their backwardness in modern education. Only the vision of Sir Syed can help the Muslims to come out from their current situation. We should realize the great importance of Sir Syed's message and strongly endorse the spirit behind Aligarh Muslim University. Let us expand and propagate the Aligarh movement and let us fulfill his dream of education and entrepreneurship.

Thank you once again for inviting me. I will close my talk with what Mr. Nehru said in his speech at the dawn of India's freedom – "We should be brave enough and wise enough to grasp the opportunity and accept the challenge of the future. It means the ending of ignorance and inequality of the opportunity. Our ambition should be to wipe out every tear from every eye. We should build the noble mansion where all of our children can dwell, where all of our children can prosper and where all of our children can have a bright future. It is the future that beckons to us. Let us do our part to ensure that Sir Syed's dream never dies. Let us fulfill his vision and his mission. Let us keep his memory alive.

Thank you.