



ALIGARH MUSLIM
UNIVERSITY

AMU CELEBRATES SIR SYED DAY; SPEAKERS CALL FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY; KP GROUP CHAIRMAN FARUK G. PATEL ANNOUNCES TO ESTABLISH A KP EXCELLENCE CENTRE AT AMU WITH A DONATION OF RS 5 CRORE

ALIGARH, October 17: Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) celebrated the 209th birth anniversary of its founder, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, on Saturday with a commemorative meeting that brought together distinguished judicial, defence, academic and business leaders, alumni, faculty members and students to reflect on his enduring educational vision and its relevance to contemporary India.

The meeting, held at Gulistan-e-Syed, was presided over by AMU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon. Justice Augustine George Masih, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, graced as the Chief Guest, while Justice Satya Veer Singh of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad and Rear Admiral S. M. Urooj Athar, Principal of the Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala, Kerala, were the Guests of Honour. Dr. Faruk G. Patel, Chairman and Managing Director of KP Group, Gujarat, was the Special Guest.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Justice Augustine George Masih drew parallels between Sir Syed's perseverance and the challenges faced by young people today, urging students to learn not only how to succeed but also how to deal with failure. Recalling the story of how Sir Syed turned opposition into an opportunity while building his educational movement, he said setbacks could become stepping stones to achievement when met with courage, patience and determination.

Justice Masih highlighted Sir Syed's commitment to reading, scientific inquiry, reason and open-mindedness, noting that a community that did not read and think could not progress. He encouraged students to cultivate the habit of deep reading rather than relying on superficial engagement with digital content, observing that books expanded knowledge, improved expression and nurtured empathy. He also underscored Sir Syed's vision of communal harmony, recalling his belief in the shared destiny of Hindus and Muslims and describing AMU's diverse campus as a living example of people from different regions and backgrounds learning and growing together.

Recalling his own association with AMU, Justice Masih said the university had taught him lessons in respect, dialogue, friendship and responsibility that went beyond the classroom. He praised Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon, the first woman to lead the university, for carrying forward Sir Syed's vision with purpose and confidence. Calling upon students to look beyond personal achievement, he asked them to consider what they would build for future generations, stressing that the most meaningful tribute to Sir Syed would be to continue creating opportunities for those who would come after them.

Guest of Honour Justice Satya Veer Singh recalled his close personal association with Aligarh and the Maulana Azad Library, where he spent long hours preparing for his career despite having studied at D.S. College. He said the library's welcoming atmosphere, the cooperation of its staff and the sense of fraternity among students had left an indelible impression on him. He described AMU as a place where knowledge transcended barriers of caste, religion and economic background, expressing the hope that this inclusive spirit would continue to guide the university.

Drawing a parallel between Sir Syed's efforts to make scientific and historical knowledge accessible through translation and contemporary initiatives to make judicial decisions available in Indian languages, Justice Singh said knowledge and justice acquired their fullest meaning when they reached the people for whom they were intended. He emphasised the transformative role of education in empowering young people from poor and marginalised backgrounds, enabling them to assert their rights and participate in society with confidence. He also highlighted the importance of women's education, substantive equality and constitutional justice, urging AMU to continue extending opportunities to students from disadvantaged sections of society.

Guest of Honour Rear Admiral S. M. Urooj Athar described AMU as more than a university, calling it a mission founded on Sir Syed's determination to rebuild confidence, character and intellectual capacity through education. Reflecting on the aftermath of 1857, he observed that Sir Syed had responded to a period of despair not by dwelling on blame but by asking what needed to be done to rebuild society. Education, he said, became the means through which people could reclaim their confidence and participate in shaping their future.

Rear Admiral Athar proposed developing Aligarh into a true university town, with AMU's academic expertise contributing more directly to the social and economic development of the region. He envisaged agricultural scientists helping farmers adopt sustainable practices, management experts supporting traditional industries and small businesses, medical professionals extending preventive healthcare to neighbouring communities, and engineers assisting in renewable energy, water management and technological innovation. Research, he said, should be assessed by the problems it solved and the lives it improved, rather than by publications alone.

Calling upon faculty members to strengthen research collaborations, industry partnerships and public engagement, he urged students to remain curious, question assumptions and use their education in the service of society. He encouraged them to contribute through small but meaningful acts, observing that the greatest tribute to Sir Syed would be to transform knowledge into service, education into character and privilege into responsibility.

Special Guest Dr. Faruk G. Patel, Chairman and Managing Director of KP Group, Gujarat, recalled that he had been inspired to visit AMU after hearing Prime Minister Narendra Modi describe it as a "Mini India" in 2020. Paying tribute to Sir Syed's extraordinary vision, he said the educational legacy established by the founder continued to benefit generations and would remain relevant in the years to come.

Sharing his personal journey, Dr. Patel spoke of his humble beginnings. Having started his business in 1994, he said his journey demonstrated how perseverance and sustained effort could transform circumstances. He encouraged students to make full use of the educational opportunities available to them and pursue their ambitions with determination.

Dr. Patel, whose group has been active in renewable energy for nearly two decades, expressed his willingness to share its experience in solar and wind energy, green hydrogen and battery energy storage systems with AMU. He announced an initiative to establish a KP Excellence Centre at the university with an initial corpus of about ₹5 crore. Dr. Patel said he would be happy to contribute to the university's development and support the national aspiration of making India a developed country by 2047.

In her presidential address, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon described Sir Syed as a transformative thinker whose relevance extended far beyond his role as the university's founder. His enduring contribution, she said, lay in enabling a community to move from being a passive witness to history to becoming an active participant in shaping it. She called upon Aligarhians to carry his legacy forward by combining intellectual openness, scientific reasoning and moral responsibility.

Highlighting the changing landscape of education, Prof. Khatoon stressed the need to embrace artificial intelligence and emerging technologies while safeguarding independent thinking and sound judgement. Education, she said, must go beyond degrees and the acquisition of information to develop critical thinking, practical skills, character and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. She urged teachers to help students assess evidence, question assumptions and explore the limits of their imagination.

The Vice-Chancellor took pride in AMU's academic standing and research achievements, referring to its presence among the world's top 800 universities in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, its fifth position among Indian universities in the US News & World Report rankings, its position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework and its A+ accreditation. She also highlighted the recognition of 46 AMU scientists among the world's top 2 per cent of researchers, along with the university's contributions to healthcare, innovation, online education and institutional mentoring.

Prof. Khatoon said these accomplishments reflected the collective efforts of faculty members, researchers, students, staff and alumni, while placing upon them the responsibility to build on the progress achieved. She urged students to uphold discipline, intellectual independence and humility, and to approach the forthcoming student elections responsibly. Emphasising the importance of physical and mental well-being, she encouraged them to build meaningful lives beyond social media and to seek support whenever necessary.

Calling upon alumni to become active ambassadors of their alma mater, she asked them to connect students with wider opportunities and contribute to the university's continued development. As AMU approaches the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Prof. Khatoon said its future would be shaped not by its history alone, but by the questions its students asked, the knowledge they created, the character they demonstrated and the service they rendered to society.

The meeting also featured addresses by students Aisha Jamal and Abu Daud, and faculty members Prof. Azra Musavi and Prof. Mohd. Ali Jauhar, who reflected on Sir Syed's legacy and the continuing relevance of his educational mission. The recipients of the Sir Syed Awards (International and National), Prof. Hossein Nasr, Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University, and Prof. M.A. Khan, representing Khaja Education Society, Gulbarga, Karnataka, also addressed the gathering.

The Sir Syed Excellence Award International was conferred upon Prof. Hossein Nasr, Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University, USA, while the Sir Syed Excellence Award National was presented to Khaja Bandanawaz Educational Society, Gulbarga, Karnataka, in recognition of their respective contributions.

The All-India Sir Syed Essay Writing Competition prizes were also presented to the winners in English, Urdu and Hindi. In English, Maliha Iqbal of AMU secured first position, followed by Apurva Dutta of Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi, in second place, and Rajshree Mishra of the University of Allahabad in third. In Hindi, Salwa Fatma of Women's College, AMU, secured first position, followed by Musharraf Parwez of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and Subhana Rihan of Women's Polytechnic, AMU. In Urdu, Mohammad Faizur Raza of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, won first prize, followed by Munawwar Ali, a PhD scholar in Urdu at AMU, and Sabi Ji, a PhD scholar in Urdu at AMU. The competition centred on the theme "Technology and Ethics in the 21st Century: Sir Syed's Perspective".

AMU Registrar Prof. Aasim Zafar delivered the welcome address, while Prof. M. Athar Ansari, Dean Students' Welfare, concluded the programme with the vote of thanks. Dr Shariq Aqeel and Dr Faiza Abbasi conducted the programme.

The day's observances began with Quran Khwani at the University Mosque at 6 am, followed by chadarposhi at Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's mausoleum. An exhibition of Sir Syed's writings and books was inaugurated at Sir Syed House at 9:30 am, along with a book launch ceremony, before the commemorative meeting began at Gulistan-e-Syed. On the occasion, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon, in the presence of Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Mohsin Khan and Registrar Prof. Aasim Zafar, released ten books at the Sir Syed Academy. The publications included *Sir Syed's Tafsir ul Quran* (two volumes); *Sir Syed Ki Mutalati Sawaneh* by Dr. Asad Faisal Farooqui; *Aligarh College aur Sheeraz* by Prof. Arshad Masood Hashmi; *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan – Charitam* by Prof. Sarika Varshney; special issues of *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* and *Fikr-o-Nazar*; *Aligarh: The City That Outlasted Empires* by Atif Syed; *Mutalaya-e-Hayat-e-Javed Ke Ek Sau Pachees Saal* (edited by Dr. Shams Badayuni); *Sir Syed Ki Kahani, Ashaar Ki Zabani* by Mazhar Saeed; *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (edited by Dr. M. Firoz Khan and Dr. Shagufta Niyaz); and *Sir Syed: Rawadari aur Aman ke Alambardar* (edited by Dr. Rahat Abrar). The publications reflect diverse perspectives on Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's life, thought, literary legacy and enduring contribution to education and society.

The programme concluded with the University Tarana and the National Anthem, bringing the university community together in a renewed commitment to Sir Syed's ideals of education, reason, social progress and service to humanity.

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The highlight of the programme was an announcement by KP Group chairman and managing director Faruk G Patel, who pledged an initial corpus of Rs 5 crore to establish a KP Excellence Centre at AMU. He also offered to share the firm's expertise in solar and wind energy, green hydrogen and battery energy-storage

systems with the university.

Addressing the gathering, Patel recalled his entrepreneurial journey, which began in 1994, and encouraged students to pursue their ambitions with determination. He said he had been inspired to visit AMU after [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) described it as "Mini India" in 2020.

Supreme Court judge Justice Augustine George Masih, the chief guest at the commemorative meeting held at the university's Gulistan-e-Syed park, urged students to learn from failure and turn setbacks into opportunities. He stressed the importance of reading, scientific inquiry and open-mindedness, and cautioned students against relying on superficial engagement with digital content.

Justice Masih also highlighted Sir Syed's vision of communal harmony and described AMU's diverse campus as an example of people from different backgrounds learning together.

He urged students to look beyond personal achievements and create opportunities for future generations.

Allahabad high court judge Justice Satya Veer Singh, the guest of honour, recalled his association with Aligarh's Maulana Azad Library and emphasised the role of education in promoting equality and empowering disadvantaged communities. He also stressed the importance of women's education and access to justice.

Rear Admiral SM Urooj Athar, principal of Indian Naval Academy, called for stronger collaboration between AMU and industry to address regional challenges. He suggested that the university's expertise in agriculture, healthcare, renewable energy and technology be used to support local communities and businesses.

AMU vice-chancellor Prof Naima Khatoon, who presided over the meeting, called upon students to uphold Sir Syed's legacy by combining scientific reasoning, intellectual independence and moral responsibility. She stressed the need to embrace artificial intelligence and emerging technologies without compromising critical thinking and sound judgement.

The university also conferred the Sir Syed Excellence Award (International) on Prof Hossein Nasr of George Washington University and the national award on Khaja Bandanawaz Educational Society, Gulbarga, Karnataka.

AMU Celebrates Sir Syed Day; Speakers Call for Education and Social Responsibility; KP Group Chairman Faruk G. Patel Announces to Establish A KP Excellence Centre at AMU With a Donation of Rs 5 Crore

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Recalling his own association with AMU, Justice Masih said the university had taught him lessons in respect, dialogue, friendship and responsibility that went beyond the classroom. He praised Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon, the first woman to lead the university, for carrying forward Sir Syed's vision with purpose and confidence. Calling upon students to look beyond personal achievement, he asked them to consider what they would build for future generations, stressing that the most meaningful tribute to Sir Syed would be to continue creating opportunities for those who would come after them.

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AMU Celebrates Sir Syed Day; KP Group Announces Rs 5 Crore for Excellence Centre



Aligarh Muslim University celebrates Sir Syed Day with KP Excellence Centre.

Supreme Court Judge Justice Augustine George Masih, other dignitaries highlight education, scientific inquiry, communal harmony and social responsibility

India Tomorrow

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The highlight of the celebration was an announcement by Dr. Faruk G. Patel, Chairman and Managing Director of KP Group, Gujarat, to establish a KP Excellence Centre at AMU with an initial corpus of ₹5 crore. The proposed centre is expected to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration in renewable energy and emerging technologies.

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Addressing the gathering, Justice Masih urged students to draw inspiration from Sir Syed's perseverance, intellectual courage and commitment to education. He emphasised that success depended not only on the ability to achieve goals but also on the capacity to confront setbacks with patience and determination.



Recalling Sir Syed's efforts to establish an educational movement despite strong opposition, Justice Masih said challenges could become opportunities for growth. He stressed the importance of reading, scientific inquiry, reason and open-mindedness, observing that intellectual progress required a sustained engagement with knowledge rather than superficial consumption of digital content.

He also underscored Sir Syed's commitment to communal harmony, highlighting the shared destiny of Hindus and Muslims and describing AMU's diverse campus as an example of people from different regions and backgrounds learning and growing together.

Reflecting on his own association with AMU, Justice Masih said the university had taught him lessons in respect, dialogue, friendship and responsibility beyond the classroom. He praised Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon, the first woman to lead the university, for carrying forward Sir Syed's vision. He urged students to look beyond individual success and consider what they could contribute to future generations.

Justice Satya Veer Singh recalled spending long hours at AMU's Maulana Azad Library while preparing for his career, despite having studied at D.S. College. He said the library's welcoming environment, supportive staff and spirit of fraternity had left a lasting impression on him.

Describing AMU as an institution where knowledge transcended barriers of caste, religion and economic background, Justice Singh emphasised the transformative role of education in empowering young people, particularly those from disadvantaged communities.

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Reflecting on the aftermath of 1857, he said Sir Syed had responded to a period of despair by focusing on the practical question of how society could rebuild itself. Education, he observed, became the means of restoring confidence and enabling people to shape their future.

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He urged faculty members to strengthen research collaborations, industry partnerships and public engagement, stressing that research should be evaluated not only by publications but also by the problems it solves and the lives it improves. Students, he said, should remain curious, question assumptions and put their education to the service of society.

KP Group announces ₹5 crore for excellence centre

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Faruk G. Patel recalled being inspired to visit AMU after Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the university as a "Mini India" in 2020. He paid tribute to Sir Syed's educational vision and said its legacy continued to benefit generations.

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He also expressed his willingness to contribute to AMU's development and support India's aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Vice-Chancellor calls for education rooted in reason and responsibility

In her presidential address, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoon described Sir Syed as a transformative thinker whose significance extended far beyond founding the university. His enduring contribution, she said, lay in enabling a community to move from being a passive witness to history to becoming an active participant in shaping it.

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Sir Syed Excellence Awards presented

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The All-India Sir Syed Essay Writing Competition awards were also presented to winners in English, Hindi and Urdu. The theme of the competition was "Technology and Ethics in the 21st Century: Sir Syed's Perspective".

In English, Maliha Iqbal of AMU secured first position, followed by Apurva Dutta of Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi, in second place, and Rajshree Mishra of the University of Allahabad in third.

In Hindi, Salwa Fatma of Women's College, AMU, won first prize, followed by Musharraf Parwez of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and Subhana Rihan of Women's Polytechnic, AMU.

In Urdu, Mohammad Faizur Raza of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, secured first position, followed by Munawwar Ali and Sabi Ji, both PhD scholars in Urdu at AMU.

AMU Registrar Prof. Aasim Zafar delivered the welcome address, while Prof. M. Athar Ansari, Dean of Students' Welfare, proposed the vote of thanks. Dr. Shariq Aqeel and Dr. Faiza Abbasi conducted the programme.

Books released, celebrations begin with Quran Khwani

The day's observances began with Quran Khwani at the University Mosque at 6 am, followed by chadarposhi at Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's mausoleum. An exhibition of Sir Syed's writings and books was inaugurated at Sir Syed House at 9:30 am, alongside a book launch ceremony, before the commemorative meeting at Gulistan-e-Syed.

On the occasion, Prof. Naima Khatoon, in the presence of Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Mohsin Khan and Registrar Prof. Aasim Zafar, released 10 books at the Sir Syed Academy.

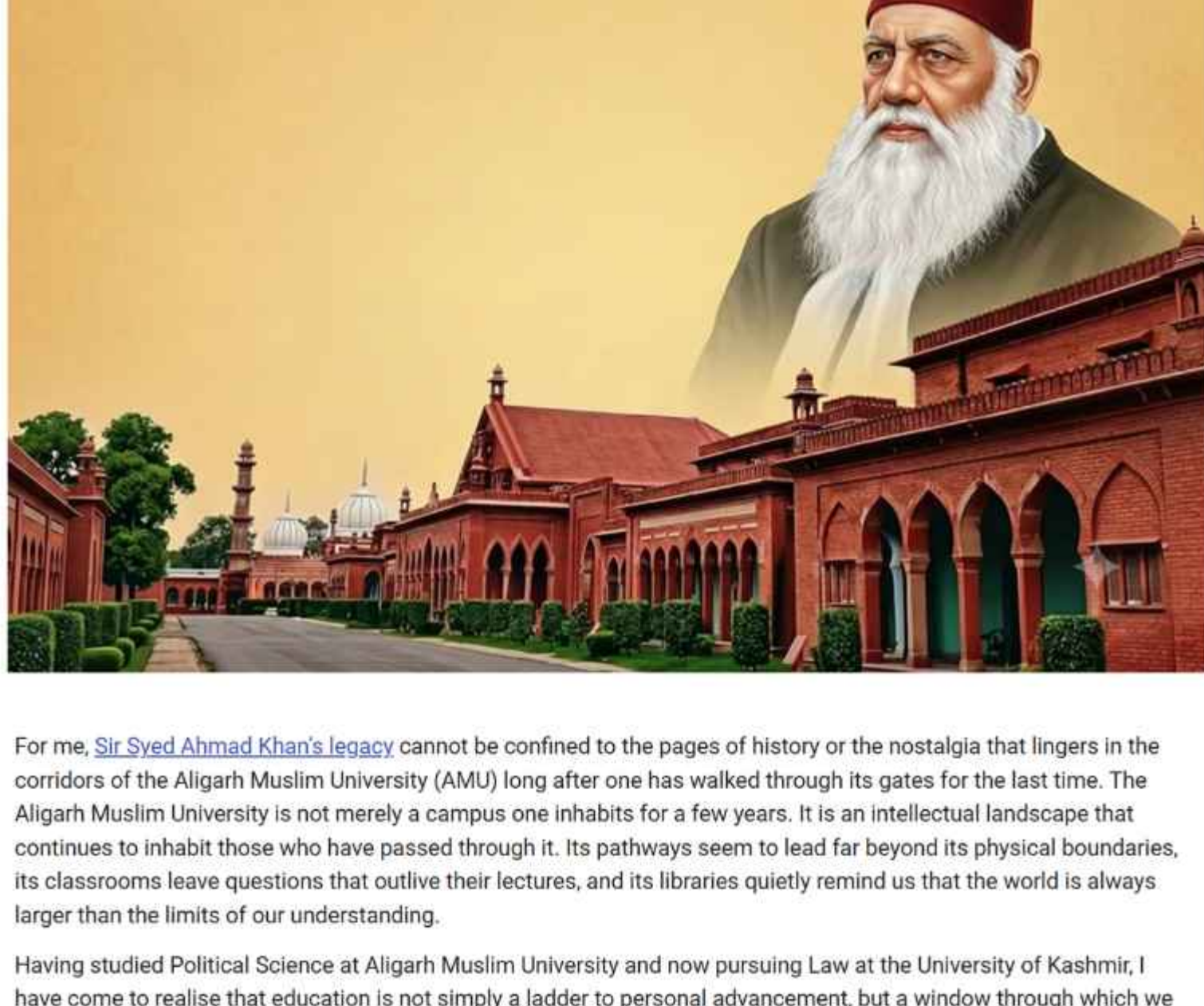
The publications included Sir Syed's *Tafsir ul Quran* in two volumes; *Sir Syed Ki Mutalati Sawaneh* by Dr. Asad Faisal Farooqui; *Aligarh College aur Sheeraz* by Prof. Arshad Masood Hashmi; *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan – Charitam* by Prof. Sarika Varshney; special issues of *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* and *Fikr-o-Nazar*; *Aligarh: The City That Outlasted Empires* by Atif Syed; *Mutalaya-e-Hayat-e-Javed Ke Ek Sau Pachees Saal*, edited by Dr. Shams Badayuni; *Sir Syed Ki Kahani*, *Ashaar Ki Zabani* by Mazhar Saeed; *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, edited by Dr. M. Firoz Khan and Dr. Shagufta Niyaz; and *Sir Syed: Rawadari aur Aman ke Alambardar*, edited by Dr. Rahat Abrar.

The books explore Sir Syed's life, intellectual and literary contributions, educational philosophy and enduring influence on society.

The programme concluded with the University Tarana and the National Anthem, bringing the university community together in a renewed commitment to Sir Syed's ideals of education, reason, social progress and service to humanity.

Taking Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's legacy beyond the AMU Campus

If Sir Syed's example teaches us anything, it is that educational reform must begin with a clear understanding of the obstacles that prevent individuals and communities from participating fully in intellectual and social life.



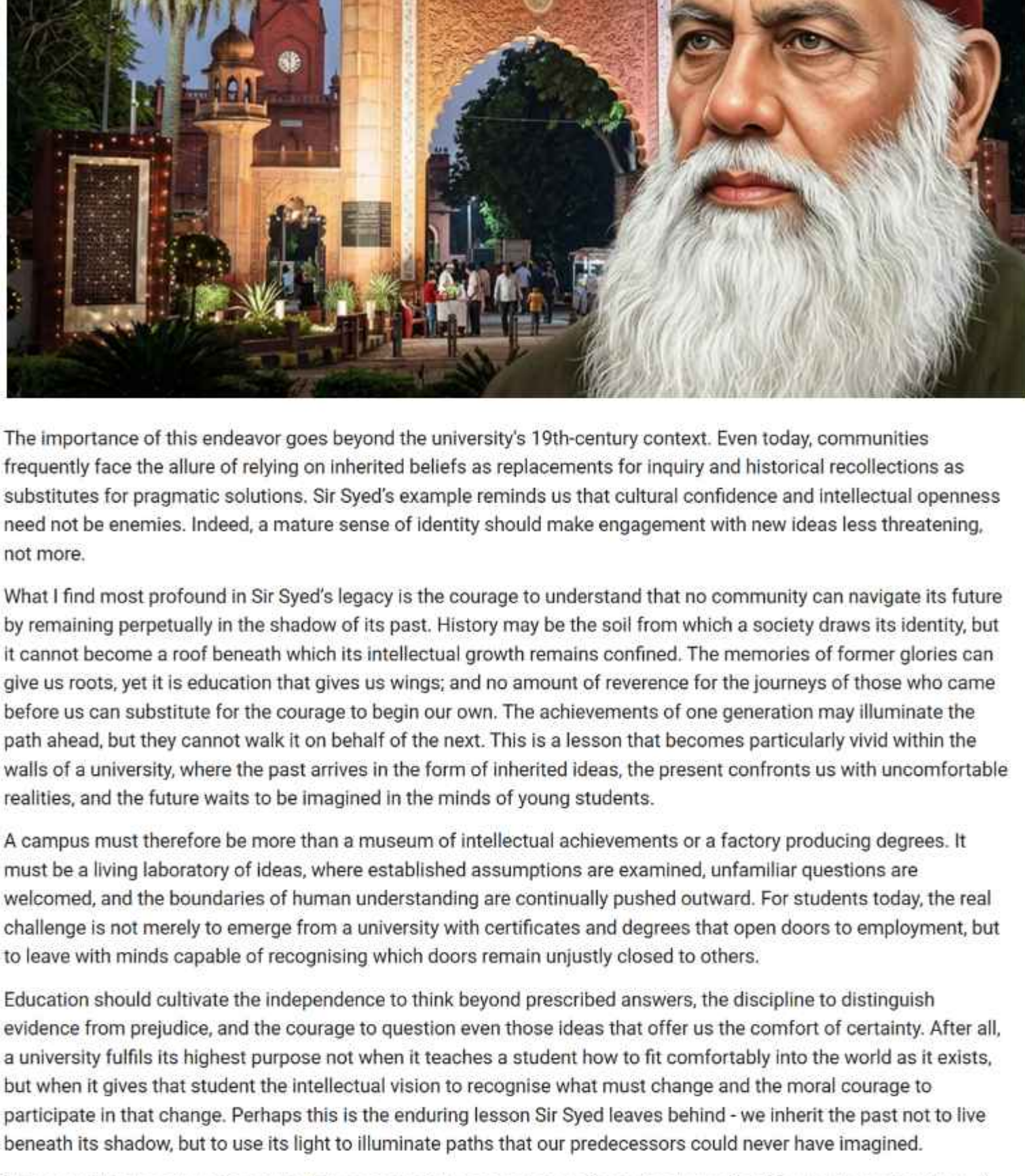
For me, [Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's legacy](#) cannot be confined to the pages of history or the nostalgia that lingers in the corridors of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) long after one has walked through its gates for the last time. The Aligarh Muslim University is not merely a campus one inhabits for a few years. It is an intellectual landscape that continues to inhabit those who have passed through it. Its pathways seem to lead far beyond its physical boundaries, its classrooms leave questions that outlive their lectures, and its libraries quietly remind us that the world is always larger than the limits of our understanding.

Having studied Political Science at Aligarh Muslim University and now pursuing Law at the University of Kashmir, I have come to realise that education is not simply a ladder to personal advancement, but a window through which we learn to see the world in its uncomfortable complexity. Political Science taught me to look beyond the imposing architecture of power and examine the foundations upon which it rests — who commands, who participates, whose voices find an echo in the chambers of authority, and whose silence is mistaken for consent. Law, in turn, has brought me face to face with the delicate bridge between the promises enshrined in the Constitution and the realities encountered by ordinary citizens, a bridge that justice must continually strive to strengthen.

Somewhere between the lecture halls of the Aligarh Muslim University and the classrooms of Kashmir, between the study of political power and the pursuit of legal justice, I have begun to understand education as a journey from merely observing the world to questioning it, and from questioning it to accepting the responsibility of changing it.

Perhaps this is where my journey converges with [Sir Syed's vision](#) in the conviction that a university must be more than a collection of buildings, that its true architecture lies in the minds it awakens, and that its greatest legacy is not the number of students who pass through its gates, but the courage with which they carry its light into a world still struggling to distinguish knowledge from prejudice, authority from justice, and the comfort of inherited beliefs from the necessity of intellectual growth.

The Aligarh Muslim University holds a unique position in this intellectual journey because its foundational vision arose from the understanding that past challenges could not be overcome merely through nostalgia. [Sir Syed](#) recognized that a community unable to confidently adapt to evolving intellectual and political landscapes risked becoming sidelined in the emerging world. In response, he aimed to use education as a means of revitalization. This required him to address skepticism, challenge intellectual laziness, and convince people that learning from diverse traditions does not necessitate the abandonment of their own identity.



The importance of this endeavor goes beyond the university's 19th-century context. Even today, communities frequently face the allure of relying on inherited beliefs as replacements for inquiry and historical recollections as substitutes for pragmatic solutions. Sir Syed's example reminds us that cultural confidence and intellectual openness need not be enemies. Indeed, a mature sense of identity should make engagement with new ideas less threatening, not more.

What I find most profound in Sir Syed's legacy is the courage to understand that no community can navigate its future by remaining perpetually in the shadow of its past. History may be the soil from which a society draws its identity, but it cannot become a roof beneath which its intellectual growth remains confined. The memories of former glories can give us roots, yet it is education that gives us wings; and no amount of reverence for the journeys of those who came before us can substitute for the courage to begin our own. The achievements of one generation may illuminate the path ahead, but they cannot walk it on behalf of the next. This is a lesson that becomes particularly vivid within the walls of a university, where the past arrives in the form of inherited ideas, the present confronts us with uncomfortable realities, and the future waits to be imagined in the minds of young students.

A campus must therefore be more than a museum of intellectual achievements or a factory producing degrees. It must be a living laboratory of ideas, where established assumptions are examined, unfamiliar questions are welcomed, and the boundaries of human understanding are continually pushed outward. For students today, the real challenge is not merely to emerge from a university with certificates and degrees that open doors to employment, but to leave with minds capable of recognising which doors remain unjustly closed to others.

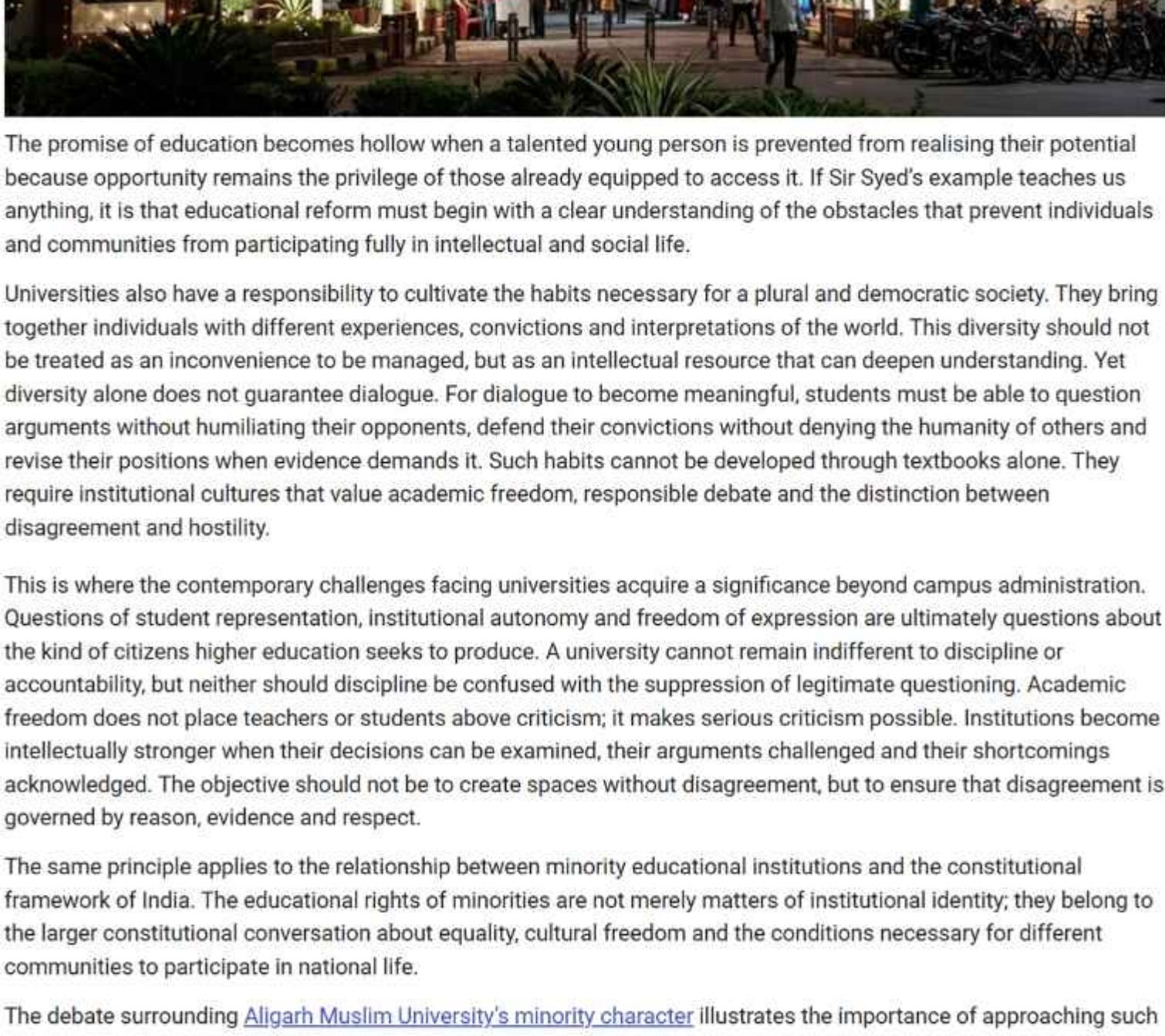
Education should cultivate the independence to think beyond prescribed answers, the discipline to distinguish evidence from prejudice, and the courage to question even those ideas that offer us the comfort of certainty. After all, a university fulfils its highest purpose not when it teaches a student how to fit comfortably into the world as it exists, but when it gives that student the intellectual vision to recognise what must change and the moral courage to participate in that change. Perhaps this is the enduring lesson Sir Syed leaves behind - we inherit the past not to live beneath its shadow, but to use its light to illuminate paths that our predecessors could never have imagined.

This conviction has become particularly meaningful to me as I move from the study of politics to the study of law. A constitution may promise equality, liberty and dignity, but the existence of these promises does not automatically ensure their realisation. Their meaning depends on institutions, public awareness, access to justice and the willingness of citizens to defend the rights of others, including those with whom they disagree. Law, therefore, cannot be understood only as a collection of statutory provisions and judicial decisions.

At its most consequential, it is also a way of examining the relationship between authority and accountability, between individual rights and collective interests, and between the ideals a society proclaims and the conditions in which its people actually live. Education becomes meaningful when it enables us to recognise these distinctions and gives us the intellectual honesty to examine them without prejudice.

This is also why [Sir Syed's educational mission](#) remains relevant to contemporary India. A country aspiring to become a knowledge-driven society cannot measure educational progress exclusively through enrolment figures, examination results, university rankings or the number of degrees awarded each year. These indicators matter, but they reveal only part of the picture. We must also ask whether students are learning to distinguish evidence from assertion, whether classrooms encourage reasoned disagreement, whether research receives the support it requires and whether young people from disadvantaged backgrounds possess a genuine opportunity to participate in higher education. Access to a university is not the same as equality of opportunity within it. A student may enter an institution and still struggle with financial insecurity, inadequate schooling, a lack of academic guidance or the social pressures that make continuing an education difficult.

For this reason, the [unfinished task of educational reform](#) lies as much in the conditions surrounding learning as in the curriculum itself. Scholarships must reach those who need them; public institutions must remain accessible and academically rigorous; teachers must be supported in their work; and universities must create environments in which students can develop without being reduced to their economic circumstances or social backgrounds.



The promise of education becomes hollow when a talented young person is prevented from realising their potential because opportunity remains the privilege of those already equipped to access it. If Sir Syed's example teaches us anything, it is that educational reform must begin with a clear understanding of the obstacles that prevent individuals and communities from participating fully in intellectual and social life.

Universities also have a responsibility to cultivate the habits necessary for a plural and democratic society. They bring together individuals with different experiences, convictions and interpretations of the world. This diversity should not be treated as an inconvenience to be managed, but as an intellectual resource that can deepen understanding. Yet diversity alone does not guarantee dialogue. For dialogue to become meaningful, students must be able to question arguments without humiliating their opponents, defend their convictions without denying the humanity of others and revise their positions when evidence demands it. Such habits cannot be developed through textbooks alone. They require institutional cultures that value academic freedom, responsible debate and the distinction between disagreement and hostility.

This is where the contemporary challenges facing universities acquire a significance beyond campus administration. Questions of student representation, institutional autonomy and freedom of expression are ultimately questions about the kind of citizens higher education seeks to produce. A university cannot remain indifferent to discipline or accountability, but neither should discipline be confused with the suppression of legitimate questioning. Academic freedom does not place teachers or students above criticism; it makes serious criticism possible. Institutions become intellectually stronger when their decisions can be examined, their arguments challenged and their shortcomings acknowledged. The objective should not be to create spaces without disagreement, but to ensure that disagreement is governed by reason, evidence and respect.

The same principle applies to the relationship between minority educational institutions and the constitutional framework of India. The educational rights of minorities are not merely matters of institutional identity; they belong to the larger constitutional conversation about equality, cultural freedom and the conditions necessary for different communities to participate in national life.

The debate surrounding [Aligarh Muslim University's minority character](#) illustrates the importance of approaching such questions with legal precision and intellectual seriousness. The Supreme Court's November 2024 judgment revisited the legal principles governing the determination of minority character and left the institution's status to be assessed under the principles laid down by the Court. The significance of this discussion extends beyond Aligarh. It invites a broader reflection on how a constitutional democracy can uphold minority educational rights while sustaining academic standards, institutional accountability and a shared commitment to public education.

For me, this relationship between education and constitutional responsibility is especially important. Studying law has reinforced the understanding that rights are meaningful not merely because they are written into legal texts, but because institutions and citizens take responsibility for their protection. The constitutional promise of justice requires more than the existence of courts and statutes; it also requires an informed public capable of recognising injustice and understanding the remedies available against it. In this sense, education and the rule of law are deeply connected. Education helps citizens understand their rights, while constitutional guarantees create conditions in which learning, expression and participation can be protected. Neither can fully realise its potential when separated from the other.

There is, moreover, a danger in reducing education to economic advancement alone. Employment is an essential concern, particularly for young people whose families depend on their ability to become financially secure. Universities must take the relationship between education and employment seriously. Yet education loses something fundamental if its only purpose is to make individuals economically productive.

A society also needs people capable of questioning misinformation, understanding public policy, recognising discrimination, engaging with scientific developments and thinking critically about the consequences of political decisions. These capacities are not luxuries reserved for a privileged minority. They are essential to the functioning of a democratic society.

The challenge has become more complex in an age shaped by Digital Media and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Information is increasingly available, but the ability to evaluate it remains unevenly distributed. The rapid circulation of unverified claims can weaken public reasoning, while algorithmic systems can influence what people encounter and how they interpret events. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers important opportunities for learning and research, yet it also raises questions about academic integrity, unequal access, privacy and the development of independent judgment. The response cannot be an indiscriminate rejection of technological change. Nor should innovation be accepted without scrutiny. The task of education is to equip students to use new tools intelligently, examine their limitations and retain responsibility for the conclusions they reach.

Seen in this light, Sir Syed's emphasis on modern education should not be interpreted as an instruction to imitate the intellectual priorities of another age. It should instead encourage us to preserve the spirit of inquiry that made his educational project significant. The knowledge required today differs in many respects from the knowledge available in the nineteenth century, but the need for intellectual courage remains. Every generation must learn how to engage with the developments of its own time without surrendering the capacity for independent judgment.

My association with the Aligarh Muslim University has therefore left me with a question that extends beyond personal achievement: what responsibilities do we inherit from the institutions that educate us? If education has enabled us to understand society more critically, it should also make us more attentive to those excluded from its opportunities. If it has introduced us to the language of rights, it should deepen our concern for those whose rights remain insecure. If it has given us the confidence to think independently, it should also give us the courage to examine our own prejudices. And if it has helped us advance in our chosen professions, it should remind us that professional success and social responsibility need not be opposing ambitions.

I do not believe that honouring [Sir Syed](#) requires us to agree with every position he adopted or to treat his historical choices as beyond criticism. Such an approach would reduce a reformer to a monument and his ideas to a ritual. A more meaningful engagement recognises the circumstances in which he worked, examines the limitations of his approach and asks what his intellectual example can teach us today. Respect for a thinker is not measured by our unwillingness to question him; it is measured by our willingness to take his central concerns seriously enough to continue the conversation.

One may leave the Aligarh Muslim University geographically, pursue another discipline or begin an entirely different chapter of life. Yet, the real measure of the university's influence lies in whether the education received there continues to shape one's conscience. Its legacy is carried forward whenever a student chooses evidence over prejudice, whenever a graduate uses knowledge in the service of others, and whenever an institution protects the freedom necessary for serious intellectual work.

Perhaps, then, the most meaningful way to remember Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is to understand his educational mission as an unfinished responsibility rather than a completed historical achievement. The task is not simply to preserve the institution he helped establish, but to sustain the larger conviction that education can widen opportunity, strengthen democratic life and enable societies to confront their shortcomings with honesty and reason. The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) gave generations of students a place from where to imagine different futures. Our responsibility is to ensure that this promise remains available to those who have yet to arrive.

For me, this is what it means to carry the Aligarh Muslim University beyond its campus: to allow the education it gave me, to inform not only what I seek to become, but also what I believe a society ought to be. If Sir Syed's legacy is to remain alive, it must continue to produce minds that are curious, citizens who are conscious of their responsibilities and institutions willing to place knowledge above complacency. The ultimate tribute to him is not that we remember his name every year, but that we continue to practise the intellectual courage his educational vision demanded.

[The writer, Basit Nabi Haroo, is an AMU alumnus, who completed MA Political Science from the Aligarh Muslim University, and is currently pursuing LLB from Kashmir University in Srinagar. The above article is published to mark the Sir Syed Day observed on October 17 every year.]

AMU में बोले एडमिरल उरूल अथर, छात्र अपनी ऊर्जा शिकायतों में नहीं, नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाएं - amu sir saiyyad day admiral urul athar indian naval academy



Aligarh Muslim University, Rear Admiral Urooj Athar, Indian Naval Academy

रियर एडमिरल एसएम उरूल अथर ने एएमयू छात्रों से अपनी ऊर्जा नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाने का आह्वान किया। उन्होंने शिक्षा को चरित्र निर्माण का माध्यम बताते हुए छात्रों को समाज की समस्याओं के समाधान में योगदान देने पर जोर दिया।

AMU में बोले एडमिरल उरूल अथर, छात्र अपनी ऊर्जा शिकायतों में नहीं, नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाएं रियर एडमिरल एसएम उरूल अथर ने एएमयू छात्रों से अपनी ऊर्जा नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाने का आह्वान किया। उन्होंने इंडियन नेवल एकेडमी, एझिमाला के प्रिंसिपल रियर एडमिरल एसएम उरूल अथर ने अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम विश्वविद्यालय के विद्यार्थियों से अपनी ऊर्जा शिकायत करने के बजाय नवाचार, रचनात्मकता और समाजसेवा में लगाने का आह्वान किया। उन्होंने कहा कि युवा ऊर्जा देश के सबसे मूल्यवान संसाधनों में से एक है। विद्यार्थियों को जहां भी अवसर मिले, उन्हें समाज की समस्याओं का समाधान तलाशना चाहिए। एएमयू की पहचान विद्यार्थियों की ऊंची आवाज से नहीं, बल्कि उनके विचारों और काम के प्रभाव से होनी चाहिए। सर सैयद दिवस समारोह में सम्मानित अतिथि के रूप में संबोधित करते हुए एडमिरल अथर ने कहा कि सर सैयद अहमद खान ने शिक्षा को केवल रोजगार का साधन नहीं, बल्कि आत्मविश्वास, चरित्र निर्माण और भविष्य को आकार देने का माध्यम माना था। एएमयू एक विश्वविद्यालय से बढ़कर मिशन है। यहां से पढ़कर निकलने वाले विद्यार्थियों को अपनी शिक्षा के साथ समाज के प्रति जिम्मेदारी का भी एहसास होना चाहिए। विद्यार्थियों को संदेश देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि अलीगढ़ से निकलने के बाद भी एएमयू की सीख को अपने जीवन में बनाए रखें। किसी ऐसे बच्चे को पढ़ाएं जो पढ़ाई में पीछे रह गया हो। किसी बुजुर्ग को फोन या इंटरनेट के माध्यम से सरकारी सेवाओं तक पहुंचने में मदद करें। किसी जरूरतमंद विद्यार्थी को छात्रवृत्ति दिलाने में सहयोग करें। अपने आसपास की छोटी-छोटी समस्याओं को पहचानकर उनके समाधान के लिए प्रयास करें। उन्होंने कहा कि छोटे काम भी समाज में बड़ा बदलाव ला सकते हैं। एडमिरल अथर ने शिक्षकों से भी विद्यार्थियों के सामने उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करने और शोध को समाज की जरूरतों से जोड़ने की अपील की। उन्होंने कहा कि जल सुरक्षा, सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य, बेरोजगारी, तकनीक, जलवायु परिवर्तन और सतत विकास जैसी चुनौतियों पर शोध का लाभ आम लोगों तक पहुंचना चाहिए। हर शोध के साथ यह सवाल जुड़ा होना चाहिए कि उससे किसकी समस्या दूर होगी और किसके जीवन में सुधार आएगा। ज्ञान तभी सार्थक है, जब वह प्रयोगशालाओं और कक्षाओं से निकलकर लोगों के जीवन में बदलाव लाए। एडमिरल अथर ने अलीगढ़ को एक सच्चे विश्वविद्यालय नगर के रूप में विकसित करने का विचार भी रखा। उन्होंने कहा कि एएमयू के कृषि वैज्ञानिक किसानों के साथ मिलकर टिकाऊ खेती पर काम करें, प्रबंधन विशेषज्ञ स्थानीय उद्योगों को आधुनिक बनाने में मदद करें, चिकित्सा विशेषज्ञ आसपास के समुदायों तक निवारक स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं पहुंचाएं और इंजीनियर स्थानीय समस्याओं के समाधान में तकनीक का उपयोग करें। इससे विश्वविद्यालय के ज्ञान का लाभ अलीगढ़ और आसपास के गांवों को भी मिल सकेगा। उन्होंने एएमयू के तराने की पंक्ति 'जो अब्र यहां से उठेगा, वो सारे जहां पर बरसेगा' का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि इस ज्ञानरूपी बादल की वर्षा सबसे पहले आसपास के गांवों, किसानों, युवाओं, कारीगरों और जरूरतमंद परिवारों तक पहुंचनी चाहिए। एडमिरल अथर ने कहा कि सर सैयद ने विपरीत परिस्थितियों में निराश होने के बजाय शिक्षा के माध्यम से समाज को आगे बढ़ाने का रास्ता चुना। उनकी विरासत केवल इमारतों तक सीमित नहीं, बल्कि एक जीवंत परंपरा है। सर सैयद को सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि तभी होगी, जब शिक्षा से चरित्र निर्माण हो, विशेषाधिकार जिम्मेदारी में बदले और विश्वविद्यालय अपने आसपास के समाज के लिए भी काम करे।

AMU में बोले एडमिरल उरूल अथर, छात्र अपनी ऊर्जा शिकायतों में नहीं, नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाएं रियर एडमिरल एसएम उरूल अथर ने एएमयू छात्रों से अपनी ऊर्जा नवाचार और समाजसेवा में लगाने का आह्वान किया। उन्होंने इंडियन नेवल एकेडमी, एझिमाला के प्रिंसिपल रियर एडमिरल एसएम उरूल अथर ने अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम विश्वविद्यालय के विद्यार्थियों से अपनी ऊर्जा शिकायत करने के बजाय नवाचार, रचनात्मकता और समाजसेवा में लगाने का आह्वान किया। उन्होंने कहा कि युवा ऊर्जा देश के सबसे मूल्यवान संसाधनों में से एक है। विद्यार्थियों को जहां भी अवसर मिले, उन्हें समाज की समस्याओं का समाधान तलाशना चाहिए। एएमयू की पहचान विद्यार्थियों की ऊंची आवाज से नहीं, बल्कि उनके विचारों और काम के प्रभाव से होनी चाहिए। सर सैयद दिवस समारोह में सम्मानित अतिथि के रूप में संबोधित करते हुए एडमिरल अथर ने कहा कि सर सैयद अहमद खान ने शिक्षा को केवल रोजगार का साधन नहीं, बल्कि आत्मविश्वास, चरित्र निर्माण और भविष्य को आकार देने का माध्यम माना था। एएमयू एक विश्वविद्यालय से बढ़कर मिशन है। यहां से पढ़कर निकलने वाले विद्यार्थियों को अपनी शिक्षा के साथ समाज के प्रति जिम्मेदारी का भी एहसास होना चाहिए। विद्यार्थियों को संदेश देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि अलीगढ़ से निकलने के बाद भी एएमयू की सीख को अपने जीवन में बनाए रखें। किसी ऐसे बच्चे को पढ़ाएं जो पढ़ाई में पीछे रह गया हो। किसी बुजुर्ग को फोन या इंटरनेट के माध्यम से सरकारी सेवाओं तक पहुंचने में मदद करें। किसी जरूरतमंद विद्यार्थी को छात्रवृत्ति दिलाने में सहयोग करें। अपने आसपास की छोटी-छोटी समस्याओं को पहचानकर उनके समाधान के लिए प्रयास करें। उन्होंने कहा कि छोटे काम भी समाज में बड़ा बदलाव ला सकते हैं। एडमिरल अथर ने शिक्षकों से भी विद्यार्थियों के सामने उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करने और शोध को समाज की जरूरतों से जोड़ने की अपील की। उन्होंने कहा कि जल सुरक्षा, सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य, बेरोजगारी, तकनीक, जलवायु परिवर्तन और सतत विकास जैसी चुनौतियों पर शोध का लाभ आम लोगों तक पहुंचना चाहिए। हर शोध के साथ यह सवाल जुड़ा होना चाहिए कि उससे किसकी समस्या दूर होगी और किसके जीवन में सुधार आएगा। ज्ञान तभी सार्थक है, जब वह प्रयोगशालाओं और कक्षाओं से निकलकर लोगों के जीवन में बदलाव लाए। एडमिरल अथर ने अलीगढ़ को एक सच्चे विश्वविद्यालय नगर के रूप में विकसित करने का विचार भी रखा। उन्होंने कहा कि एएमयू के कृषि वैज्ञानिक किसानों के साथ मिलकर टिकाऊ खेती पर काम करें, प्रबंधन विशेषज्ञ स्थानीय उद्योगों को आधुनिक बनाने में मदद करें, चिकित्सा विशेषज्ञ आसपास के समुदायों तक निवारक स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं पहुंचाएं और इंजीनियर स्थानीय समस्याओं के समाधान में तकनीक का उपयोग करें। इससे विश्वविद्यालय के ज्ञान का लाभ अलीगढ़ और आसपास के गांवों को भी मिल सकेगा। उन्होंने एएमयू के तराने की पंक्ति 'जो अब्र यहां से उठेगा, वो सारे जहां पर बरसेगा' का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि इस ज्ञानरूपी बादल की वर्षा सबसे पहले आसपास के गांवों, किसानों, युवाओं, कारीगरों और जरूरतमंद परिवारों तक पहुंचनी चाहिए। एडमिरल अथर ने कहा कि सर सैयद ने विपरीत परिस्थितियों में निराश होने के बजाय शिक्षा के माध्यम से समाज को आगे बढ़ाने का रास्ता चुना। उनकी विरासत केवल इमारतों तक सीमित नहीं, बल्कि एक जीवंत परंपरा है। सर सैयद को सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि तभी होगी, जब शिक्षा से चरित्र निर्माण हो, विशेषाधिकार जिम्मेदारी में बदले और विश्वविद्यालय अपने आसपास के समाज के लिए भी काम करे।