When i look around at this wonderful party i am filled with love and hope as we celebrate aishah and mariam as they begin this new chapter in each of their lives. I am honoured that there are so many amazing people gathered here today to celebrate something so exciting.

As a parent it seems impossible that my babies are adults. Still, when i come home from work and walk in the front door i put on my game face, half expecting my daughters to pounce, ready to battle, play and wrestle. But you have both grown up, and while your childhood is over, I am so happy that you will both always be important in my life, and that you will always be my girls.

I am now that parent who sees other parents with young kids and I cant help but to stop them and tell them to appreciate and enjoy each moment. As you grew up it was sometimes hard to let go, to accept that there came a time that you didnt want to roughhouse anymore, or when it came time to volunteer at the marathon you didnt want your number painted on your faces, despite liking having your faces painted when you were little. As parents sometimes we want to keep you little forever and enjoy you just a little longer.

Some things stay consistent, even as you get older. Both of my girls have always been competitive when it comes to sports, whether its football, soccer, shooting some hoops, skiing or snowboarding. Watching you compete in sports and academics, playing soccer and football and everything in between always made me proud.

We had so many epic soccer moments. One game had Nani and Nana jumping out of their seats because Aishah defied all odds against a better team single handedly winning the game as goalie. Coaching soccer was a journey and we lost every game the first season and people would laugh when we came out on the field but as the years passed we became the team to beat and our years of soccer culminated in a triumph over the number one team in the league for years. That game was won with a mind blowing save in a shootout. Aishah saved the last shot against a girl who towered over her in height sending us in another victory. That was the final championship game.

Of course playing soccer in the winter meant playing indoor games and we battled on those fields too. Mariam and Aishah were an unbeatable pair. One game ill never forget where Aishah crossed the ball while being elbowed to the ground by another girl that was bigger than her. Only to be received by Mariam where she now had to maneuver around the next best player. With some fancy footwork she scored the game winning goal with her left foot strike with seconds to spare.

Over the years my daughters and I have bonded through struggles, hardships, and laughter. We took on both our successes and our failures together. We took care of each other when we were sick, and during the building of new relationships, and the collapse of old ones. Our hearts and our bond as a family can never be broken.

I thank Allah for giving me Fatma and Uncle Godfrey, who have stood by my side throughout this journey of parenthood. I dont know where Id be without them. I look at all three of my children and I see so much of Fatma in them. I am so proud that they share her drive, integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity, and how she leads our children by example. She’s worked to expose you all to as many experiences as possible so you can learn and grow and become the wonderful people that you are today. Ill never forget the times when Fatma opened the doors to our home whenever our friends or family needed a place to stay. We had my Half sister suddenly live with us for almost a year. I hadent seen her since she was a baby because I was separated from our mom. We knew nothing about her accept that she was a troubled teen high school drop out. Another time was with a new muslim girl who had nowhere to go. Again Fatma had her live with us for 8 months. And the last time was when we had another troubled teen live with us for about 8 months. We squeezed in our condo to make space so that he could have a safe place to live. All the while teaching our girls what it meant to the compassionate young women you are today.

We have been through so many adventures over the years and theres son much more to come. Like the year we went to the Dominican and had a week of excursions and adventures while we each took a turn with the stomach bug. Scaring the staff by throwing up in the bushes. Or the year we went to Jamaica and Yusuf turned into a fish and never left the ocean. Thanks to Fatmas travel privileges we have explored Trinidad searching for the best doubles in town or driving up mountains on the edge of cliffs while Fatma screaming in the passenger seat and swimming in the ocean under torrential rain. Renting private homes with pools and of course we cant forget the trails and lakes and cliffs right here at home.

Aishah you always set such a strong example for your younger siblings. You are hard working, meticulous, and organized. Its no wonder they both look up to you. You’re so much like your mom with your dedication and drive. Poor Mariam learned very early on that if you were studying there wasnt a moment to spare. Even when indisposed she would run into the bathroom hoping shed get a minute only to catch you with your textbooks on your lap.

Your desire for perfection and ambition as well as your dedication and loyalty to family are sergeant qualities that will bring the best out of mohamed and your new family to come. When we make decisions in the house we can only pretend we are in charge. Everyone asks Aishah permission first. If Aishah says no….well lets just leave it at that.

Mariam. The three of you would fight about who shares their dessert with mom because they new she would give you more if she knew you enjoyed it. Since she was a small child shed always share her last bite of food or her last sip. Mariam embodies that generosity. She is humble, kind, and giving in a way that is rare to find. Just dont cross her. She has her limits. You are happy to share your artistic gifts with others, applying henna designs on people at events, and eventually getting hired for this skill to do weddings at the young age of 16. You always root for the little and you expect the best standard of behaviour from the people in your life.

There once was a time when I worried about them finding husbands, particularly as someone who didnt grow up in a muslim family or muslim environment. I prayed, asked for guidance, and put trust in Allah, but as a parent I still worried. Keeping the girls busy with activities and growth as well as how selective they were with their friends and social engagements rarely gave them the opportunity to meet people that were marriage material. All this combined with Aishah and her sargent qualities and Mariam with her rare talent of strong will to have an 8 hr stand off at the age of 6 about cleaning her room, i couldnt see how this was going to happen.

Today I am here here now welcoming two more great human beings into our family. Mohamed and Abdullah. My mind is at ease knowing that my two beautiful girls will be taken care of and i feel truly blessed.

The goal of a parent is the most difficult thing to do. We raise our children to be independent and not to need us. When youre successful at this we loose the things we love the most. Ive learned so much over the last couple years. Its not all negative emotions. Its such an honour to have these two gentlemen with their unique qualities that mirror and also contrast our daughters. Its a rare gift that a parent can feel at ease with the men that their daughters choose. Im blessed to have that twice. Its so reassuring to be able to give our daughters to men that we know will be dedicated to them and love them as we have. I thank Allah for this gift of comfort.