

NEWSLETTER IQBAL ACADEMY (UK) AUTUM 2009

1. IQBAL DAY FUNCTION 2008

The Iqbal Academy (UK) and Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu Birmingham held a joint Iqbal Day at the University of Birmingham on 9th November 2008. The function was attended by a number of writers, poets, speakers and dignitaries from Birmingham and surrounding areas. Professor Saeed Durrani, Mr Abdullah Bawhab and Mr Khalid Syed from Peterborough spoke about the philosophy, poetry and religious thoughts expressed by Iqbal in his writings. A select poetry session was also held with Professor Mohsin Ehsan as the Guest of Honour. The function was followed by a dinner at a local restaurant.

The event was considered a successful occasion where Allamah Iqbal's message was effectively portrayed by the speakers and poets.

2. LECTURE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR DURRANI AT THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON

On 14TH November 2008, Professor Durrani was invited by the students of Imperial College, London, to deliver a lecture on Allamah's poetry, philosophy and his message for the youth. The lecture was attended by more than 100 students and dignitaries. The session lasted for an hour, and the students asked very searching questions. A dinner was also organised in honour of Professor Durrani.

3. TEA GIVEN BY THE LORD MAYOR OF BIRMINGHAM

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Chauhdri A Rashid, in the presence of the Lady Mayoress, invited members of the Iqbal Academy (UK), to his Parlour on 20th November 2008, for tea in order to show his appreciation for the work done by the Iqbal Academy to introduce and celebrate the Allamah's message.

At the request of Dr Durrani the Lord Mayor agreed to write to the Chair of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust suggesting the installation of a plaque commemorating Iqbal as a Poet of the East and honouring his contribution towards recognising the literary genius of Shakespeare, to whom he had written an Ode in homage. The Lord Mayor also expressed his willingness to become a patron of the Iqbal Academy (UK). Professor Durrani, on behalf of Iqbal Academy, thanked the Lord Mayor for his generosity and the memorabilia offered to members of the Academy's Management Committee as well as for his cheque for £300 towards the distribution of copies of SPOKEN URDU brought out by the Academy.

4. IQBAL ACADEMY'S DINNER ORGANISED IN HONOUR OF THE LORD MAYOR

On 20th February 2009, the Iqbal Academy (UK) organised a dinner in honour of Cllr. Chauhdri A. Rashid, Lord Mayor of Birmingham, and the Lady Mayoress. A number of prestigious guests were invited by the Academy. Dr Durrani presented the Lord Mayor with a shield. During his speech the Lord Mayor expressed his appreciation of Iqbal Academy's work and efforts in introducing the Allamah's work to the schools as well as the citizens of Birmingham.

5. SCHOOLS COMPETITION

On 1st May 2009 the Iqbal Academy UK held a competition for local school pupils on the life and work of Allamah Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). A letter had been sent to a large number of schools asking them to participate in the competition. The students were encouraged to write about Iqbal's message of self-awareness, dignity of Man and amity between nations with a special appeal to the youth of the world. The purpose behind the occasion was to disseminate Iqbal's message among the youth of Great Britain as well as to promote cultural awareness.

Cash prizes, Trophies and Certificates were awarded to students and teachers. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councillor Chauhdri A. Rashid distributed the prizes. A number of schoolteachers, parents and community representatives participated in the event, which was also supported by the SUFI Trust.

The participants thanked Iqbal Academy (UK) for organising such a prestigious and historical event. Dinner was served for the participants at the end of the function.

6. MEETING WITH THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

On Friday 5th June 2009, representatives of the Iqbal Academy (UK) led by its Chairman, Professor Saeed Durrani, and accompanied by Councillor Chauhdri A Rashid, Deputy Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Deputy Lady Mayoress, Mr Murawat Hussain, Dr Jagjit Singh Taunque and Dr Zahoor Chaudhary, visited Stratford upon Avon and called on Dr Diana Owen, Director of the Birthplace Trust, and her colleagues. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the installation of an Iqbal plaque within the buildings or gardens of Shakespeare's birthplace.

Dr Owen and her colleagues offered a very warm welcome to the delegation.. At the meeting, historical writings of Shakespeare and other contemporary writers were exhibited to the representatives of the Academy. A tour of the main building and Shakespeare's house and gardens was also organised, which was much appreciated by the Academy delegates.

The representatives of the Trust showed great enthusiasm and willingness to displaying and exhibiting the Allamah's poem dedicated to Shakespeare, which had been translated into English by Professor Saeed Durrani. Various proposals and ideas were discussed about the type of display, which would be suitable for the renowned gallery, historical house or the gardens. Suggestions were also made to include proposals from the school pupils in Birmingham and/or Pakistan about the type of plaque to be displayed. The ceremony of installing the plaque could be coordinated with the Shakespeare's birthday celebrations in April 2010.

Allamah Iqbal's poem on Shakespeare, translated by Professor Durrani, was read out by Dr Paul Edmondson of the Trust. The contents of the Allamah's poem and his homage were very much praised and appreciated by the members of the Trust. The

thoughts expressed in the poem were considered as an inspiring description of Shakespeare's wisdom, philosophy of life and his knowledge of the Secrets of Life. At the end of the meeting, Professor Durrani presented an illustrated biography of Allamah Iqbal in English to Dr Diana Owen as the Director of the Trust, which was agreed to be displayed in the library.