

An acquaintance with an active cultural foundation

The efforts of the Toos Foundation is to preserve and promote the traditional culture of Iran

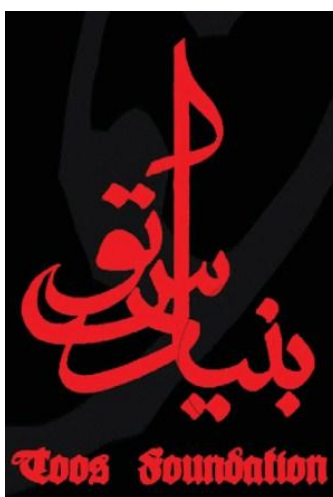
What steps has the Toos foundation taken and what are its aims?

The Toos foundation is a well known organization among the Iranian communities in the United Kingdom, and many other European countries, its sole purpose is to expand and introduce the arts and culture of Iran. The Toos Foundation so far alongside with its other cultural activities, has presented several cultural events all of which have received a warm welcome by the Iranian communities. The most outstanding point about this foundation is that they conduct all their activities without any financial help from the government or any other private organizations; furthermore, they sell no tickets for their celebration events and all entries are free for all.

The Toos foundation, during the past three years of its establishment has presented three valuable



events to promote and introduce the culture and



literature of Iran. Throughout these events there were the famous singers such as Sattar, 'Aref, Jamshid Sheybani, and Nima Kian the Iranian professional dancer and the blessed memory Turaj Negahban present. The founder of the Toos Foundation is Mrs. Jamileh Kharrazi, whose good name is well known among the Iranian communities.

Jamileh Kharrazi has founded the Toos Foundation out of her personal financial resources and such efforts and hard works are worthy of praise.

To familiarize the readers with the celebration event which took place on Sunday the 26th of April, in the commemoration of Dāvūd Pīrnā with the presence of many famous singers and artists, we have conducted an interview with Mrs. Jamileh Kharrazi, details of which are as follows:

Q- Mrs. Kharrazi, the step you have taken towards such important task is admirable, especially, when most of the artists and men of letters are outside Iran, with no access to the necessary facilities to promote their arts and culture. Foundations such as the Toos Foundation can guide and support them towards the expansion of the arts and culture of Iran. First, tell us about yourself, and your decision about establishing such foundation.

A- Exactly for the reasons you previously mentioned- unfortunately, those organizations that have the financial strength to support these causes are more focused on the individual rewards and self promoting tasks

rather than the arts and culture of their country.

Some humanitarian and educational foundations whose aims are also to promote such tasks, sadly, lack the financial strength needed and therefore, by wasting time and presenting worthless events try to make a few pennies in order to keep their associates happy. However, such acts, not only serve little purpose, they rather harm the original intentions. Thus, the existence and establishment of a foundation such as the Toos Foundation deems vital and necessary.

Q-In general, what are the aims of this foundation? And do you think such aims have been fulfilled?

A-Every single page of the “epic of the kings” by Firdawsi was sold in public auctions during the past few years for many thousands of pounds, this was not because of the writings or the meanings, it was rather because, they were parts of the original books written by the author. The foreigners have put such valuable collections to the auction and it is a wonder that most of the buyers were those rich Iranians who could realize the value of those pages.

This is just one example, how can we pay no

attention to other subjects such as the literature, art, culture, medicine, astrology, mathematics, architecture, and so on... leaving them in the plundering and curled hands of time?

Our aim is to act as a reminder of some corners of the history of various Persian arts, knowing that it would take years to come even close to such tasks; because, Iran is the land of artists and poets. The reception we have had from the people has been tremendous, e-mails and postcards kept coming long after the end of every event and that alone is the sign of appreciation for the efforts we make. At the beginning, we were only a few; however, today we are a large family, which is working hard without having any financial expectations or rewards.

Q-Is the Toos Foundation active only in the United Kingdom, or do you work in other countries too?

A-Yes, I have had other activities during the past twenty odd years; however, under the Toos Foundation I have only been active in the United Kingdom.

Q- Where is the source of the Toos Foundation’s financial support? Do you receive

aids from any British charity organizations?

A-The source of the Toos finances are all private. Usually, in this family anyone who has a talent or ability provides them without hesitation. Therefore, this is the result of unity in thoughts, beliefs, and commitments. We have never asked for any help from British charity organizations or other sources. The day we will not be able to continue will be the day that the size of this family expands to the same number as the number of Iranians in exile and even then, we will all continue for ourselves.

Q-It seems the centre of focus for the Toos Foundation has so far been celebrations and events. Are you also active in the area of publishing books and poetry collections?

A-The Toos Foundation made its initial effort to publish CDs and poetry collections of the famous Iranian poetess Mrs. Lu'bat Vālā. However, at the night of Mr. Nima Kian there were no books available to publish.

Q-What Iranian organizations usually associate with the Toos Foundation?

A-Unfortunately, even a heart as big as mine

sometimes aches due to a breeze or the flying of a butterfly and this question of yours was the same pain I just mentioned.

Sadly, contrary to our suggestions and continues contacts, not only they will not work with us, they rather consider us a pain to their affairs, and they very rarely come to see our programs and events. However, I thank the press, for they have never hesitated to assist

us and have always been kind to us, supporting our cause.

Q-Are you aware that the Iranian community lacks a cultural society, where they can gather and exchange literary and cultural ideas? Have you ever decided to establish such a centre?

A-I am well aware and very sad that no such literary centre exists in

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the United Kingdom. However, we have been trying to find a solution for years now. It is with great regret that I must say we have attended a few gatherings for such discussions. I was laughed at and because contrary to their intentions, I had no financial gains in mind, we did not get anywhere.

It must have been made clear by now that the only thing this foundation does not have in mind is financial returns and profits. We are all individuals, in love with our literature and culture and naturally, to continue such great task a unity is

needed and I alone would not be able to undertake such huge steps. We are open to all organizations for association and aid, but unfortunately, no one has yet stepped forward.

Q-Although it has been almost three decades that the Iranian society have existed amongst the British; however, there still many Britons who know very little about our culture and traditions. Do you have any programs in line to introduce such information to them?

A-This is exactly our intention. We have always tried to educate

the western societies about our history and culture. Therefore, the cost for entering these programs must be cheap and the quality must be fit for the pride of Iran and the Iranians.

We have specifically made sure to concentrate on one particular art and artist. When Shahidi sings “Those intoxicated looks of yours” today, he is alive and they are plenty of intoxicated eyes around, perhaps for you and I it is too late, but for the young who still have a heart filled with love and excitement there is still time.