

In the name of God of life and wisdom

Ferdowsi



انجمن فرهنگی افراز

**Afraz Cultural Association**

*Afraz Cultural Association* is an Iranian non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 2001. By receiving its license from the *National Youth Organization of Iran*, *Afraz* began its activities and endeavors under the name of “IranZamin Cultural Association” or “AFRAZ” (AFRAZ stands for Iran-Zamin Cultural Association in Farsi), aiming to familiarize the youth with the Iranian culture and historical civilization as well as to honor the cultural values and to protect national and native culture of Iran. In 2015, the association was registered as a non-profit and non-governmental institution by the Tehran Provincial Government. United Nations Special Consultative Status was awarded to the *Afraz Cultural Association* in 2019 by applying to UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Furthermore the association updated its license to a National NGO by the Ministry of Interior of Iran in 2020. *Afraz Cultural Association* mainly has concentrated on activities in the fields of Iranian studies, Iranology, and the cultural and natural heritage protection. In addition, *Afraz Cultural Association* attempts to promote the Iranian national and native culture, art, literature and language, as well as to revive the ancient Persian ceremonies and festivals. It also focuses on social and cultural improvements, and raising public awareness of the rich roots of the history and civilization of Iran (Persia).

#### **Organizational Structure**

As per the constitution of the association there are three pillars: Annual general assembly, Board of Directors (BOD) and Inspector. All members will participate in annual general assembly of the association. The most

important decisions will be made in this meeting which includes determining general policy of the association, selecting the members of the board and the Inspector, reviewing and approving plans proposed by BOD, etc. BOD members will be selected for two years and Inspector for one year. Furthermore there is a consulting council constitutes of ex-secretaries, ex-inspectors and ex-members of the past steering committees of the association. The association pursues its objectives and goals by establishing workgroups aligned with the objectives of the association. Steering Committee of the association includes all BOD members and secretaries of the workgroups who are not a member of BOD. Steering Committee selects one of its members as the association’s secretary or General Manager of the association for two years. The association’s secretary is the highest-ranking official and is the association’s representative based on the delegated authorities. Present active workgroups of the associations are History, Art, Book Reading and Environment. According to the latest changes of the associations in 2020, the members of the steering committee are: Laila Rostami Shokooch (chairman of the BOD), Hamidreza Afshari (member of BOD and secretary of the association), Amirhomayoon Maktabi (member of BOD), Shermin Pezeshkan Jalili (member of BOD), Shahrouz Toosi (member of BOD), Sara Sadjadi Naeini (alternate director), Sahar Namvarkohan (secretary of book reading workgroup), Alireza Afshari (secretary of history workgroup), Taravat Eterazi (secretary of art workgroup), Anahita Zamani (secretary of environment workgroup). Atefeh Mousazadeh is also Inspector of the association.

**Ceremonies:** In accordance with its mission, *Afraz Cultural Association*, organized and held a number of the ancient Persian ceremonies in Tehran including national festivals. The most prominent ones are: *Esfandgan* (2004, the Hall of Student Organization), *Tirgan* (2004, the Hall of Student Organization), *Khordadgan* (2005, the Hall of the Tehran University of Medical Sciences), *Tirgan* and *Nowruz* (2006, Nezami Ganjavi Hall), *Nowruz* (2007, the Poursina Hall, the Tehran University of Medical Sciences), *Tirgan* (2007, the school of dentistry of the Tehran University of Medical Sciences), *Nowruz* (2008, the

Ferdowsi Hall of the University of Tehran), *Mehregan* (2008, the Ferdowsi Hall of the University of Tehran), *Nowruz* (2009, Saadabad Palace), *Mehregan* (2009, the hall of Khaghani district), *Esfandgan* (2010, University of Science and Culture), *Mehregan* (2010, Varshow hall), *Nowruz* (2011, the hall of Khaghani district), *Yalda* (2015, Iran Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism Organization), *Caharshanbe-Suri* (2017, Shahriar), *Tirgan Seminar* (2017, Iran Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism Organization and NGOs heritage network of Tehran), *Esfandgan* (2018, Ferdowsi Hall of House of Humanities Intellectuals), *Caharshanbe-Suri* (2018 and 2109, Shahriar) and *Tirgan Seminar* (2019, Ferdowsi Hall of House of Humanities Intellectuals).



Nowruz Ceremony in University of Tehran, 2008

**Monthly Meetings:** *Afraz Cultural Association* organized and held monthly meetings in the hall of Sarv Cultural Center (Tehran) from 2002 to 2005. The Titles and the speakers of some of them are: [a review on the] *History of Secession in Iran* by Hooshang Tale, *Cultural Iran* by Naser Takmil Homayoon, *the Necessity of creation of an Iranian union* by Davoud Hermidas Bavand, *Mehr Rite or Education in ancient Iran* by Noorbakhsh Rahimzadeh, *National Integrity* by Parviz Varjavand, *Science in Persian Literature* by Sarfaraz Ghazni, *Capabilities of the Farsi Language* by Hossein Vahidi, *A Look at the Contemporary History* by Anvar Khameei, *Iranian Festivals* by Tooran Shahriary, *How Shahnameh was Developed* by Freydoon Joneidi, *Seizing British Petroleum Company* by Abdolreza Hooshang Mahdavi, *Iran’s Occupation in August 1941* by Reza Kermani, *History of Iran’s Culture* by Abutaleb Mirabedini, *Liberation of*

*Azərbaycan (a province of Iran)* by Rahim Zafar, *National Identity* by Hooshang Goudarzi, *References of Iran's History* by Morteza Saghebfar, *What does Iran have to say?* By Mohammadali Eslami Nedooshan, *Eghbal Lahoori and Iran* by Mohammad Baghaei (Makan), *Saadi; the Second Ferdowsi* by Asghar Dadbeh, *Justice in Iran* by Mohammadreza Jalali Naeini, *Symbols in Shahnameh* by Mir Jaleddin Kazzazi, *Difficulties of Studying Iran's History* by Tooraj Daryaei, *Communicating of Iran's Culture via Farsi Language* by Mohammadali Sadjadieh, *Mehregan Festival* by Ardeshir Khorshidian, *Globalization Effect on Iranian Plateau* by Parviz Emamzadehfar, *Azerbaijan and Iranian Nationalism* by Kaveh Bayat, *Cultural Unity Integrity of Iranian and Armenian* by Ahmad Noorzadeh, and *Darolfonon and Amirkabir* by Ali Rahbar.



Sadeh Festival in Takht-e-Rostam, 2015

**Special Events:** A meeting with German Prof. Heidemarie Koch (2003) regarding her book named *Es kündet Dareios der König*; a series of meetings titled *A research on Shahnameh* conducted by Ghadamali Sarami; a course titled *Gnosticism in Shahnameh* conducted by Aligholi Mahmoudi Bakhtiari, during the course Amir Sadeghi delivered *Naghali* (narrating of important stories from Shahnameh); a series of meetings titled *A look at the Modern History* conducted by some individual speakers such as Naser Takmil Homayoon (Constitutional Revolution), Hosshang Tale (Nationalism), Adib Boromand (Nationalization of Oil Industry), Alireza Dolatshahi (the Roles of key persons in Constitutional Revolution), Fariborz Raeis Dana (Economical Context of Constitutional Revolution), Hassan Asghari (Parties and

Groups in Constitutional Revolution), Reza Raeisi Toosi (The impacts of the World economy and Major Governments' economies on Iran's rural economy), Hassan Amin (First, Second and Third National Parliament), Parviz Varjavand (the goals of Constitutional Revolution), Anvar Khameei (Iran's economy during the Constitutional Revolution), Hermidas Bavand (Russia and United Kingdom Involvements in the Constitutional Revolution), Manoochehr Yazdi (Social Movements during Reza Shah Reign) and Morteza Saghebfar (12 meetings titled *Governing Nature of Ancient Iran*). Recent important events managed by Afraz are: a commemoration seminar of Mohammadali Eslami Nedooshan (2015) in cooperation with *Iranian Artists Forum*, commemoration seminar of Yaghoub Azhand (2016) in cooperation with *Iranian Artists Forum*, commemoration seminar for Neẓām-Al-Molk Tousi (2018), the wise minister of Saljuq Sultans (11<sup>th</sup> century) in cooperation with *Ferdowsi University of Mashhad*, seminar of Constitutionalism: the Law Sovereignty Theory (2019) in *Ferdowsi Hall of House of Humanities Intellectuals* and a commemoration seminar of Mehdi Akhavan Sales (2019) in cooperation with *Iranian Artists Forum*. Cyrus the Great Scientific Conference was supposed to be held in Tehran on October, 2016 by Afraz Cultural Association in cooperation with some governmental and non-governmental entities. However Afraz was forced not to held the conference, papers were received and evaluated by referees panel, constitute of literature and history intellectuals. The conference proceeding edited by Alireza Afshari, was finally published as a book titled "Cyrus the Great" in 2020 by *Shourafarin Publications*. During last three years *Afraz Cultural Association* has conducted three rounds for designing Happy Cards of Iranian National Festivals included Nowruz, Tirgan, Mehregan, Yalda and Esfandgan for the first round in which Cyrus the Great day and Sade festival added to the second and third round respectively. All designs were evaluated by the referees committee and selected ones were published by the association.

**Cultural and Environmental Resistance Movements:** As by commissioning of *Sivand Dam* which is geographically close to *Pasargad* (the Tomb of Cyrus the

Great), and therefore, the corrosion acceleration would have happened due to the dam reservoir, some members of the *Afraz Cultural Association* decided to oppose the construction of the project. These efforts included but not limited to having meetings with authorities and experts, organizing related seminars and visiting the site which thereafter resulted in establishing the *Cultural and Natural Heritage's Watch*.

**Tours and Trips:** Different tours have been conducted in order to provide the opportunities for members to get more familiarized with historical places in Iran. These tours are but not limited to two-day tour to the *Sorem* historical hills (related to the Iron Age) and *Qom River*, four-day tours to Kermanshah Province (2003), Fars Province (2004) and Azarbaijan (2004). Visiting museums and galleries in accompany with the relevant experts was also one of the routine programs. National Festivals were Sometimes held as a tour such as *Sadeh Festival* as a two-day tour in Naein city in 2014, as a one-day tour visiting historical places around Tehran including *Iraj Castle* (located in Varamin), *Yazdgerd Castle* and *Takht-e-Rostam* (located in Shahriar) in 2015 and as a one-day tour visiting historical places of Kashan city in 2016 and *Tirgan Festival* as one-day tour in Sibān Valley (Kordan) in 2019.

**Other Activities:** Active workgroups have annual plans which have been executed under supervision of related secretaries such as reading *Shahnameh*, reading plays, books reading and executing entertainment and educational programs for *Khak-Sefid* bad parenting children. Other programs include publishing *Afraz Bulletin* (titled *Afraz Letter* and then *Soraye Afraz*), conducting training courses and workshops such as History of Ancient Iran, Art History, Photography and Cinema and concentrating efforts to officially registration of the national Iranian ceremonies and festivals.

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