

"The Fast Man"

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Shaho and his Trainers

Photo Nemam

livelihood as a Kurd. Taking away his legs was not going to stop this man, it has only made him stronger and more ambitious. His wheelchair would have been a sign of oppression, a constant reminder to him that something of him a part of him had been taking away, but for this man it is not so. His wheelchair is a tool which allowed him to win two of the most famous national competitions in Iran; the 15 and 22-kilometre Marathon Race. His wheelchair gave him the opportunity to enter into the London Marathon in 2005, to become a member the British Wheelchair Racing Association, and to participate in events as a Kurdish National with the Kurdish flag. I am certain that his wheelchair will be the tool which will make him a national and world champion.

Set Principles

During our interview he said "I am not a Peshmarga or a politician, but I am a sportsman. I will defend and serve Kurdistan by participating in events as a Kurd, that way I can inform people of who we are and where we come from. I want the world to recognise us as nation; yes we do not have a country but we do have a name and I want them all to know that we were oppressed". Shaho told me his aim of taking part in competitions was not to win them but to represent Kurdistan by participating as a Kurd. His intensive training paid off when he was able to participate in the London Marathon for the first time this year. His struggle to achieve this goal has been one of financial hardship, emotional strain as well as physical exhaustion. Shaho had to train even harder than other competitors because of his lack of experience in Marathons. He said "during one of my sessions I went around the track 105 times and when I finished my hands were bruised, cut and bleeding but I had to improve".

Biography

Shaho Qadir was born on the 21st of February 1975 in one of the neighbouring villages of Halabja. On the 16.03.1988 at the age of 13 he lost both his legs from the gruesome attacks carried out under the regime of Saddam Hussein in the town of Halabja. This horrific atrocity became the Kurdish Holocaust and was the genocide of 5000 people. Shaho amongst the many victims of Halabja was sent to Iran for treatment. In Iran he turned this unfortunate life changing experience into perseverance. He was determinate to prove that Saddam Hussein, his followers and his regime were unable to destroy his

Training

Shaho has been advised by the Police on a number of occasions during his nightly sessions of training as the Police were concerned for his health and safety. In his attempt to describe his reason behind his actions he said "during the day I can not train outdoors because there is traffic and people. However, at night everything slows and quietens down and I can go as fast as I like. It is true it is dangerous but I have to do it for Kurdistan". This is one of the reasons that Shaho has been nicknamed "the fast man". He has developed from an amateur to someone who beats the fastest and best men on his training team.

Shaho's training has caused him a lot of trouble. The police have not been his only problem, as a few months ago he was doing his routine session from Archway, to Tower Bridge, then to London Bridge, to Victoria, and from South London to Archway again. On his way back, still training, he ended up on the motorway, Shaho said "I got scared, I was thinking if I don't make it back how will I lift the Kurdish flag".



Shahae Salar Raouf Faraj

Extra activities and involvements

Apart from his deep love for his country, his sheer determination and incredible will to reach his goals, his wonderful sense of humour, Shaho trains disabled children and assists them in taking part in 3-5 kilometre marathons. He also cares for Mr Aziz Ahmad, a Kurdish blind elderly gentleman, attends every funeral which takes place in London and takes part in Kurdish community events.

This man has achieved all of this because he has been fully committed to his cause, he never forgets why he is working so hard. When I asked him what keeps him so motivated and disciplined he replied "Kurdistan". Shaho said "the Kurdish flag has not been seen and our flag is unknown", then he lifted the sleeves of his shirt and showed me the two tattoos on his arms, both of the Kurdish Flag, one on his biceps and the second on his wrist. He said "I am committed because I am doing this for Kurdistan and the Kurds. This is another way of telling people about who we are. So many people have asked me "Where are you from? What is that on your arm? Where is Kurdistan? Who are the Kurds? All these questions have answers and all these answers need to be heard".

Gymnastics

In addition to all the things this man does in his life, he also takes part in gymnastics as the first disabled Kurd. As a keen sportsman he demonstrated his flexibility and strength during our interview. He got on the floor and lifted his body upwards with his hand, until he was completely vertical, standing on his hands, then roamed around the room with such ease it made walking on legs look like a joke.

Shaho is always wanting to challenge himself and better himself. In this brief demonstration of his gymnastic capabilities, he explained the technicalities of what he had showed me. He said I close my hands as though I am preparing to box; with my hands clenched together the mass area is less on my hands which applies more pressure to my arms, I do not want to spread my hands out and lift my body up because that is much easier. I found his short sample of gymnastics very entertaining and was marvelled at the sight.



Shaho after his victory in the Marathon Photos Nemam

CAN SHAHO BE OUR FUTURE OLYMPIC CHAMPION?

Shaho is very passionate about sports and even more so for his Homeland. The hunger to succeed with this fiery sprit will enable him to make Kurdistan known to the world. To all those who know him and all those who do not, I say this man is full of talent and a future champion. We should have great hopes for him.

