**Eritrea-A Living Example of Her Martyrs**

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If one is to ask, what do Eritrean martyrs believe are their biggest achievements and, what is the picture of future-Eritrea they like to see, what would it be? How is it best to honor their life and their legacy?  Regardless of the answers, these are the kinds of questions that every Eritrean must ask every day, in their honor.

In a funeral service, a preacher once described the human life as; a bouquet of flowers. These flowers are cut from a plant for beautification, to express feelings in good and sad times, for smell and so on… We nurture them, we put them in vases with water, give them food and the right temperature just to keep them flowering as long as possible. However, the truth is that these flowers are dead the minute they were cut from the rooted plant. We are just buying long enough-time until they dry to ultimately decompose or dust-away...

He proceeded: the human life is the same. We are dead the minute we are born. The only thing eternal about us is our souls. We are flesh, bone and blood. After we die we will be buried to decompose just like the flower. We can become wealthy, own big-homes, cars, jewelry and a have a material rich lifestyle. We can be famous, popular and posses the wherewithal to get our-ways anytime anywhere. We can feel powerful because we are in a position of authority. But what we forget is that we are humans. We don’t know what could happen the next second let alone the next day. That is what we forget. We forget that we are in this world on borrowed time. We need to understand and believe that our eternal life is…Therefore, let us pray for the living and continued…

There is not-much to disagree about what the preacher said unless, one is-not a believer. The question is, can the above apply to Eritrean martyrs? The plain answer is no! I believe that our martyrs cannot be seen like the average human for many reasons. Firstly, the word “dead” does not apply to them because they are alive since their life has given life to millions. Secondly, it is because they seeded life of a nation based on their principles and values.

In Eritrea, a nation they freed from the barbaric rules of colonizers; one can walk, drive, ride or swim anywhere and certainly feel their breath. One can witness reminders of how they lived and passed. A drive from Asmara to Keren will reveal many reminders of their legacy. The city of Massawa is a living memorial, Fenkil. In short, Eritrea as a whole stands as a living memorial of these brave souls. Everywhere in Eritrea, there are reminders of the life they lived and their sacrifices.

This was displayed during the last Martyrs-Day commemoration in Nakfa in a glaring fashion. A moving musical drama was conducted live on the actual location that many fought and perished. These are tunnels and fortifications that saw the most defining war in the history of Eritrea-being used as a stage where the true life stories were told in a drama. The music, the drama that accompanied it, and the way the stories were told jerked the tears and emotions of all that witnessed the event. But more gripping was the stories of bravery and selflessness.

The drama was about one group of fighters that knew have no time to dig graves once the intense battles started so they dug graves ahead of the battles. But, as they dug the graves; it was amusing to see them fight and argue about how long, wide and deep they want their individual graves to be. There was one martyr that argued and fought to dig his grave in accordance with his specification saying that it was-not large enough, wide enough and deep enough for him. And ironically he ended up being buried in that very grave that he dug with his own hands. These are true stories. There is no place on earth where one can witness a live drama; where the honored are exhumed to be reburied with the honor they deserve while the whole country led by President Isaias Afewerki bared witness. Through the stories we were able to share their life for a moment. It was real. It was a reminder that Eritrea is a stage that could reveal many untold stories no matter where you go.

To face martyrdom, to sacrifice self in order to save others and, committing self before all was a hallmark of these brave men and women. They knew why they were giving life. They knew that their sacrifices would mean life to the nation they desperately want to see- free. In their wisdom, they also saw that giving life alone will not fulfill their dreams and aspirations. So they coupled it with a foundation; a principled approach to life and governance; justice, equal justice, social justice and a just approach to life. They saw life that is independent of fear. Life that is based on relying on self; life that inspired and aspired to do; life based on determination to finish everything they started; life that didn’t know the word quit; and ultimately life that knows nothing but victory. They lived for victory by and for the masses. They created traditions based on their values. They established a work-ethic that is second to none unseen anywhere in Africa ever. They did it in good spirit, with joy, laughter, music and dancing. They did it while embracing each other and their people. They did it in the spirit of service with strong belief in unity and with loyalty to the nation each other. They did it respecting religion, region, culture, and traditional ways of life and gender equality. And with utmost brilliance, smarts and vision.

In short, they left the perfect template for the future of Eritrea. They left plenty of examples for Eritreans to emulate and draw strength from. They left Eritrea with the greatest examples and meaning of courage, perseverance and selflessness. They are the true role models of every Eritrean. They were strong, stealthy and yet, walked-soft with a humble spirit and patience that appears to defy logic-at-times. They epitomized the optimal nature of human decency. And through it all never lost sight of what is important. They empowered the mass and gave those underserved and underprivileged a will and a way out. They always saw the future far-ahead and never wavered until they realized their objectives. They never sacrificed the future for immediate gratification or political expediency. They remained true to their core principles no matter what.

The question then becomes; were these angels a reflection of the people of Eritrea? Of course they are; they are part and parcel. Thence, is the current Eritrea a reflection of these brave souls? Is Eritrea living by the standards they established? Are we fighting and keeping the legacy as hard as we could and should? The answers require deep reflection. It begs for each and every one of us to search for the meaning and implications deep from within. It calls on all to aspire and strive for greater achievements in their honor.

These questions are important in light of the fact of Eritrea’s short history as a free nation has been full of intrigues, turns and twists. The challenges Eritrea keeps facing would have brought down any society or nation as it does in Africa everywhere. And what makes Eritrea’s perseverance endearing is the fact that those who want to bring Eritrea down, the mighty, have brought all their might and yet, the people of Eritrea stood firm as one and won all the challenges. However, that doesn’t mean that the enemies are going to stop or be deterred. They will continue because they have perceived that Eritrea’s fundamental approach to life to be a threat to their ways. Therefore Eritreans need to raise the level of their fight to a higher level.

**The Enemies**

Who are the enemies of Eritrea? Moving forward it is crucial to define the enemies. Even if we can safely say that Eritrea has no enemies with one exception; our independent approach to life has in effect created enemies. International powers that are used to pillage and plunder Africa’s wealth have perceived Eritrea as a threat. As the saying goes, there are no permanent friends or enemies; just permanent interests. These powers are after their geopolitical and economic interests. However, they are deadly and will use all the power at their disposal in pursuit of their interests. When it comes to Eritrea, they have brought all their tactics including their kitchen sink and failed. So they have resorted to using Africans as a strategy to pass punitive measures designed to decapitate Eritrea and suffocate it. The first sanction the US passed on Xmas Eve was called an “African initiative.” This round, they used their puppet regime in Addis to push yet another measure based on lies. This is the lowest this international body has stooped thus far. They used a genocidal tyrant that is in violation of international laws, a criminal that committed heinous crimes against humanity as a principal author of the language, tone, content and punitive action-plan against a nation that he is at war with, Eritrea.

The Somali Monitoring Group they tasked to pursue the punitive measure against Eritrea is not a legal body and it doesn’t have a legal process to stand. It is not a court of law where the plaintiff, the defendant and witnesses stand in front a of the judge to litigate; it is not an investigative body that has the ability to conduct its own investigation and present evidences; it is not an elected body beholden to any constituency; it is PR tool whose directives come from the State Department designed to legitimize illegal UN actions on nations that have no representation or voice. It is a dangerous international precedent concocted by the previous US administration. The question is why the UN/US allowed Ethiopia to author the allegations using a regional group with mechanisms that could infringe on American rights.

The simple answer is because they have become desperate in their inability to bring Eritrea down to the level of their alms recipient client states and, because they know that the principal enemy of the people of Eritrea is the Weyane clique. The minority clique is the number one enemy of the government and people of Eritrea. It is in a perpetual conflict-mode looking to destroy Eritrea and nullify the existence of Eritrea as a nation. It is an existential question. These are the dirtiest group people one can have as an enemy. They are vile, jealous and dangerous.

The people of Eritrea fought the traditional enemies of developing countries extremely hard and climbed the hill. And when they started to launch their life successfully; the clique is going berserk and targeted what they believe will propel Eritrea. They targeted individuals in the Diaspora that love their country; targeted resources they believed will be the future life-line of the people; targeted the new mining sector and remittances families receive from Eritreans in the Diaspora. However, the best example of how indecent, disloyal and vile the TPLF clique is when they targeted money’s Eritreans send to the families of fallen heroes. These are families of Eritreans that fought alongside the clique in good spirits and helped them to power. It is difficult to imagine that we actually saw these people as friends at one moment in our history. It is unsettling to know there are jealous humans scheming day and night to bring their neighbor down. After all the thousands of lives lost, after the thousands Eritreans they deported; these people are showing the world one more time that they will never be satisfied until the blood of every Eritrean runs dry.

The West/US knows this and, they also know their errand boys in Addis are the best agents that they could use to bring Eritrea to the level of the clique. They know and understand the clique suffers from deep inferiority-complex when it comes to Eritreans. They know that the TPLF want to see Eritreans beg like them. Hence, they are using Weyane as stick against Eritrea.

The TPLF clan have-been at this for a long time albeit unsuccessfully. They understand the mentality and ingenuity of the Eritrean people. They know they cannot stop Eritrea so they are having nightmares in every turn. And it is showing. Every day they wake up they are witnessing Eritrea transforming. The glitter of gold is clouding their brains; the thought of potash is making them crazy; the airlines and the united joy of Eritreans are just killing them alive. They just simply do not know what to do with the daily joyful transformation of Eritrea while they are free falling into the dark holes of hell.

As the saying goes, misery loves company. Hence, the TPLF has hired agents that call themselves Eritreans to help it. And collectively, their dances have become more pronounced than ever. These people are as bad as or worse than Weyane clique. They are hypocrites that claim to fight injustice while true injustices are perpetrated against the people of Eritrea. They claim to be for religious tolerance while inciting hate and instability in churches in the Diaspora. They are lying in the name of God to elders, using fear tactics to garner support and terrorizing those who just arrived with their livelihood. Their crimes are too long to detail.

The average Eritrean understands this well and have been fighting the scourge for a long time. However, as the recent scramble to strangulate Eritrea using sanctions showed; Eritrea’s struggles to control her future and destiny is being put to the test. After decades of hard work, after the thousands of lives that we paid; after all the limbs; after all the destruction of property; after Eritrea reached a turning point and started to unearth her riches, we are being told you do not have the right to exist. Just because the people of Eritrea chose patience and the prevalence of the rule of law; the rights of Eritreans are being trampled. They are undermining the rights of Eritreans while supporting a rogue regime occupying sovereign Eritrean territories in violation of international laws.

**Conclusion**

This is truly a transitional moment in the history of Eritrea. We are at a turning point and they are doing all they can to thwart it. The people and leaders have done their level best to cleanse the dirt and start anew based on the foundations the martyrs established. The result could be summed by the 20th independence celebrations and festival that highlighted the united joy of Eritrea.

This begs the question, are we the dead flowers just blossoming for show, beauty and smell? Or are we the plant that was seeded by our martyrs to flourish for generations? What the enemies are trying to do is clear and they will not stop. They will continue to play their dirty games. Are we helpless? Do we have what it takes to stand and uphold the legacies of our martyrs? Do we have a fight in every of us?

Eritrea is standing and flourishing today for one reason; united approach to life. We need to use all our resources, know how, efforts, education, hard work and everything else we can to transition Eritrea into the country the martyrs envisioned. We have come a long way to be stopped by anyone. This is a crucial test and it will take a great deal to muzzle the dogs of injustices. So let’s make sure they rut in the dustbin of history. Now is not the time to let our guards down or be complacent.

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