

What Can Eritreans Learn from Senator Romney's Political Courage?

Can you imagine a world without courage, especially people without political courage? As a citizen of the United States, I watched most of the Donald Trump impeachment hearings attentively. Although I am dismayed by the 52 Republican Senators who voted against their consciousness and the truth in front of them, I am proud of Senator Mitt Romney for taking a stand at odds with his party and standing for the truth as well as the rule of law. He was true to himself and his self-interests did not supersede his conviction. Senator Romney said, ***"I swore an oath before God to exercise impartial justice. I am profoundly religious. My faith is at the heart of who I am."*** It has been reported and I also believe that the 52 Senators that found Donald Trump "not guilty" know that Donald Trump is guilty as charged. Although they tried to find excuses and sought cover, they cannot legitimize their vote and hide their partisan tribalism. They feared Trump and his supporters more than their God, inner beliefs and role in history. They lacked the courage to stand for the truth out of fear of party alienation and losing of their Senate seat in future elections. Didn't they swear an oath to be an impartial jury and stand for the truth regardless of party? Isn't this the same oath taken by Senator Romney, Senator Doug Jones of Alabama and others?

While I consider myself an Independent - being socially conservative and economically liberal, I vote based on issues, I have casted my vote for Democratic nominees for President in the past. Now, if Senator Romney chooses to run for President, I will vote for him in a heartbeat. Because of his political courage to do the right thing, in line with his God and inner beliefs - no matter the cost. He proved to me that I can trust him with my life and the lives of others to make the right decisions when difficult challenges arise for the sake of the country and people. He, with a candidate like Senator Doug Jones as his running mate, would restore my faith in the leadership of this country. Doug Jones as a democrat from a Republican dominated state, voted his conscience knowing full well that his decision might cost him his seat in his coming election. I have faith in the citizens of Utah and Alabama in respecting and rewarding these two courageous senators instead of being emotionally blinded by partisan politics.

As for the other 52 Republican Senators, they will be remembered in history as people who dishonored their oath of office and constitutional duty in order to stay in power by aligning themselves with an immoral, lawless and dishonest President who has diminished the respect of the Presidency and who sees himself as an emperor and above the law. Who do you think will sleep well, the 52 Senators or Senator Romney? Whose kids do you think are proud of their father's actions during this critical decision making? History will not be nice to the 52 Senators and to President Trump. He will go in history to be known as the worst US president ever to come to power. He is the X-rated

president who behaves contrary to what we teach to our children - to be ethical, morally sound citizens in what to do and follow. He is a president who rules by fear and intimidation, who envies and imitates other immoral dictators.

It is mind-boggling for anyone to support this president and for him to have the support of about 42% of the US population, especially white men. You can only support him by selling off your soul and conscience. He exploits the tensions of ethnicities by speaking in racially tainted code to get his racially inclined political support of white racism and nationalism. He is here to abolish Obama's great legacy and to appease those that are racially threatened by inclusiveness and diversity. It is ironic that Mr. Trump is the beneficiary of the great economic foundation that the Obama administration put in place. My God, there are still good men such as Mr. Romney and Mr. Jones that speak the truth and that stand against the powerful, regardless of the repercussions and in spite of self-interests.

Let's now transition and see courage in the Eritrean political context.

To me, courage is to stand for principle and the truth in which you believe in, regardless of what your friends, colleagues, and the greater mass says. It is to not giving-in to the fear of repercussions and isolation. I recognize there were many courageous Eritreans who passed and many principled individuals that still exist who stand for the truth when the pressure to not do so is high and who put their country and people first before their self-interests. I commend and admire those Eritreans who stand for democracy and justice and who warned, recognized and have opposed the dictatorial behavior of Isayas Afewerki since 1973 ("Menkae Movement"). I honor those who are still struggling for justice in the Diaspora, that haven't visited Eritrea since its independence by standing for the interest of the oppressed people in Eritrea. After Eritrean independence, Bitwedded Abraha, the G-15, Abune Antonios, Haji Mussa, Berhane Abrehe, Colonel Wedi-Ali and his group are prime examples of courageous people, to mention a few. There are courageous men and women who are political prisoners of conscience who have not seen the light of the day and are still vanishing in prison under the dictatorial regime of Eritrea.

Although Eritrean Independence is an outcome of courage and bravery, the current situation in Eritrea can be explained by the absence of it. Standing for the truth and for what you believe in was absent in most of the people. For fear of repercussions or self-interest, we are the reason for the existence of dictatorship, and we have nourished it to the level where it is now. It is my hope that there are still a few courageous individuals left within Eritrean and inside the Isaias Administration that are capable and waiting for the opportune time to take the courageous action to save their beloved

country from losing its sovereignty and save their people from agony under the inhumane and reckless dictatorial regime. We need many Mitt Romneys who are still associating with the regime to say enough is enough once and for all. History can be re-written, and it is not too late for many to finally take the stand before history is written on them. We also need to read and understand history in that history doesn't fare well to those that side with dictatorial governments against the will of the people. One must look back on how his or her actions will be told in history. Every person's reputation is on the line every time the individual take action or decide to sit aside in matters that impact public welfare. We all need to stand with the people of Eritrea by standing against the dictatorial regime of Isayas Afewerki. Especially those with Eritrean origin who enjoy the freedom in our naturalized countries and exercise western democracy. We should be the fore-front fighters for freedom and justice. What we can learn from Senator Romney is to do the right thing so that our children can be proud, to build a brighter future for the generations after us, and that we can sleep well knowing that we are on the side of truth and in line with what our God inspires us to do.

I commend and thank Senator Mitt Romney and Senator Doug Jones for reminding us that there are still people who have a conscience and who side with the truth regardless of the repercussions. It is my full hope that the people of Utah and Alabama respect these individuals for their courage and self-less decision to stand to power and wrong doers. I also like to acknowledge the marvelous job that Senator Adam Schiff did during the whole hearing process. Although President like to treat him as a villain, Mr. Schiff will certainly be remembered in history as a great public servant and excellent lawyer who fought hard for justice and the rule of law. His last statement to the Republican Senators was ***"Is there any one among you he will say, Enough"***? Mr. Romney answered his call and history will remember these great men for their courage while not to do so were more convenient. I hope we Eritreans and Eritrean origin learn from these great men's courage and take the stand against the dictatorial regime in Eritrea. We need to think about the legacy that we leave behind. Eritrean sovereignty is the outcome of sacrifice, bravery and courage. We shouldn't be also the generation that will be remembered in history as the people that lacked courage to do the right thing when the country and people are in great danger.

May God Bless those courageous selfless people who stand for the truth and justice!

Sincerely,

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