**Interstellar (adjective):** situated or occurring between the stars; conducted, or existing between two or more stars

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**18th Anniversary of STAR**

**Executive Director's Message on the 18th Anniversary of Star Educational Society**

Dearest Starians,

On 28th August, Star Educational Society marked its 18th birthday! As the academy celebrates its 18th anniversary of uninterrupted service to the community, let me salute and congratulate you all for this wonderful shared journey.

Since its inception in 1998, Star Educational Society has operated based on the belief that education is the key to solving our many social ills. Initially, Star started by providing our students with training in English language so they can gain access to science and technology. But through the years, Star has expanded its services which now include a K-8 school and an institute of foreign languages, and a center for computer software instruction. Star launched its operations with 36 students but today the academy has grown dramatically both in size and its operations. Over 5000 students are studying in its branches in Kabul and Daikundi. Star has affiliation with tens of other institutions in Kabul, Herat, Mazar and Bamiyan, where Star alumni are selflessly serving students. Majority of the local language centers in the west of Kabul are now run by Star alumni, who were inspired by Star’s services and now are entrepreneurs employing tens of staff and serving hundreds to thousands of students. Similarly, Star has played an important role in fulfilling the job needs in the public and private sector, and equipping its students with the language skills necessary to seek more advanced degrees abroad.

Above all, Star has tried to instill a sense of obligation in students to pursue learning. At Star, teachers and students value learning, and stand for the rights to education of every Afghan, man and woman. Undoubtedly, learning is knowing and knowledge sets human beings free. With an army of students who have firm faith in the importance of learning, Star plays a role in giving rise to a generation of Afghans who say no to human rights abuse, discrimination, prejudice, nepotism and corruption.

Nothing Star has achieved or aims to achieve would be possible without the continued support and trust of our community, faculty, staff and students, parents and friends. Let me once again salute and congratulate you for the 18 years of collective effort to make a difference in our society. Kind regards,

Mustafa Hussaini
General Manager
Star Educational Society

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**Quote of the Week**

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but rather the lighting of a fire.”

- W.B. Yeats

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**Where we go and Afghanistan goes where?**

As we know, these days Afghanistan is confronted with many troubling issues and its fate is unknown. Neither politicians nor policy... *Page 2*

**An Afghan Refugee's Memory**

My journey from Austria as an Afghan refugee was a life-changing one. Throughout my few years there, I came to... *Page 3*

**Ronaldo: Griezmann deserved UEFA Best Player award**

Antoine Griezmann deserved to be named UEFA’s Best Player in Europe, according to Cristiano Ronaldo.... *Page 5*

**Philosophical Musings of Mahmud Khalili**

If we were to think about all the problems of Afghan and Afghanistan, we would be very... *Page 6*
In a casual conversation with my father about his school days, my father shared a few pearls of wisdom that I think are worth sharing with you.

During the days of my father’s youth about 40 years ago, there was only one school, a primary one, in his village, Angori, which is located in Jaghori district of Ghazni province. Most students would not be able to continue after primary school. Others had to move to Kabul to enroll in middle and high schools. Choices were limited and life was difficult for either group. The few from his village who did not go to Kabul mostly ended up going to Iran in search of jobs. His brothers, elder and younger ones, his cousins and friends went to Iran. They insisted that my father make the trip with them. In addition to employment opportunities, it was thought of as an advanced country, with better standard and quality of life. Some even compared it to European countries, only to find out later that the traffickers had lied about many things in Iran.

Life for those who chose to go to Kabul to continue studying was not easy either. Many young people who went to Kabul had to rely on themselves. Similarly, my father’s parents and siblings could not afford to pay for his education and living expenses in Kabul.

My father’s father said, “I don’t want to convince you to go to Iran nor to continue your school and I cannot support you if you continue studying.” So he had to find money for his needs himself. Despite the challenges that he anticipated, he was determined to go to Kabul.

When in Kabul, he tried to enroll at Habibia High School. He had heard a lot about Habibia High School. Though at the time there were few schools, but Habibia was the best. The time he entered Habibia High School, he immediately fell in love with the campus. He saw big and beautiful buildings, and tall green trees and a huge playground. He was happy that his dream was about to become a reality.

But unfortunately when he went to the school office for registration, he was refused admission. “All the classes are full,” said the headmaster. It was still winter and the school year had not started so he thought it was impossible that there was no room for an additional student. He was very disappointed but he still went to the office to request admission several more times, but all in vain. The last time, one of the registration officers said, “My son, go and pursue your own job.” He basically meant Hazara people were meant to work as Jawalai, a derogatory Dari term for someone who works as a porter in a market. And it made him very sad but more determined.

He did not want to believe that there was no hope. But one day while walking out of the school, he met a Hazara guy, Sayed Reza, who asked my father what he was doing there. My father told him the reason and about his desperate attempt to convince the school officials to let him in. Sayed Reza was the naughtiest student at the school with a reputation for violence. Everyone was scared of him, even the teachers and headmaster. He led a gang of school boys in the school. As a result, no one could refuse his requests. But he was also very kind.

Sayed Reza promised to help my father. They went to the administrative office together. “Why don’t you enroll my cousin to the school?” he asked the headmaster. He lied about my father being his cousin. The headmaster told them that there was no room for more students. Reza said there was room in his class. “Bring your attendance sheet,” he asked Reza. Reza brought the attendance sheet, and the headmaster wrote my father’s name in the sheet. My father was thus enrolled in his school thanks to the help from Sayed Reza. My father said, “I wish my enrollment did not have to happen this way, but this is the way it happened.” Sayed Reza and my father became good friends ever after.

Many young people who did not have luck or the situation ended up in bad or no schools at all.

But getting admission was only one of the problems my father faced. He had no money to buy food or pay rent. So he had to work part time and on Fridays. He had to live with several other people, most of them daily laborers, in a single room to minimize rent. Sometimes, he would need to borrow money from his friends, and borrow loaves of bread from a bakery. When his roommates were having their dinner or breakfast, mostly he would leave the room so that he did not make them feel uncomfortable. He would take his loaf of bread and a glass of water out of the room. That was his usual daily meal. “As you can imagine, studying was difficult in such circumstances. Despite all such hardships, I managed to study and graduate from my school,” said my father, with a proud smile on his face.

He continued, “My son, you have a much easier life than I did. Getting an education is much easier for you today than it was for me back then. I advise that you should never give up when facing difficulties. Seek knowledge and education, and you will never regret.” This he told me was the key to success in life.

In my father’s words echoing in my head, I try to make the best out of every opportunity I get in life. I revere his story in my head ever and over again when I need inspiration or feel low in motivation. With a much more comfortable life and many more opportunities, I know I have no excuse to fail at school or in life.

Where we go and Afghanistan goes where?

We believe what they believe. We choose what they choose; we don’t have choices. We have many, many problems and it seems that nobody cares, neither the government nor the people. Because of this situation, our fate is unknown. We cannot predict even our near future, even tomorrow. Will we be alive or dead? The country’s situation is bad these days and I think it’s getting worse. Disagreement between president Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, the executive director is the most serious issue that has led to such dangerous conditions for our country and on its people. If they don’t solve the disagreements between them soon I think the country will find itself in another war, a civil war that could even worsen the current situation. We all know the great dangers of war, having experienced war for so many years. We understand how painful and harmful war is. We experienced and felt the pain of war under the Taliban’s rule. We all know the great dangers of war, having experienced war for so many years. We understand how painful and harmful war is. We experienced and felt the pain of war under the Taliban’s rule.

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Conclusion

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An Afghan Refugee’s Memory

My journey from Austria as an Afghan refugee was a life changing one. Throughout my few years there, I came to realize that the people of Austria worked honestly because they had no reason to worry about explosions or eruptions, suicide attacks or blasts, no reason to worry about genocide. The security that Austrians took for granted were foreign to me. I also acknowledged the way that Austrians spoke to each other with their best behavior and intentions. They forged strong relationships, kept themselves busy, shared their knowledge with each other and always carried out beneficial deeds for one another.

I rented a room in a building with other refugees from all around the world. I was the only Afghan. I looked outside my window and noticed it was a sunny day. The beauty of nature and the fresh weather of spring that surrounded the outside world was breathtaking. I needed to get out of my room, I felt so lonely and isolated in there. I needed to go out so that I could avoid being homesick, but I had no clear plans on where to go. Exploring and sightseeing usually kept me busy during the holidays, it was the best way to make use of my time. Exploration was a means of broadening my horizons and my ability to understand others; a deeper understanding of human nature all around him and he began crossing the road. He sympathetically looked at the parrots, mumbled to himself, sighed deeply and turned his head. He looked as if he wanted to say something but instead silently left me. I contemplated the look I was given but I could not fully understand it.

As I returned to my room, I noticed an Austrian man with large eyes, a head full of soft brown hair, a sweet mouth, and big shoes standing across the street. He was wearing a harsh black suit which contrasted against the vibrant colors of nature all around him and he began crossing the road. He sympathetically looked at the parrots, mumbled to himself, sighed deeply and turned his head. He looked as if he wanted to say something but instead silently left me. I contemplated the look I was given but I could not fully understand it.

As we neared the prison, I began thinking of my original purpose of travelling to Austria, to meet my uncle and aunt, to be relaxed and away from the attacks and genocide that plagued my country. I imagined meeting my uncle and aunt for the first time in 15 years with a broad smile. I imagined that their hospitality would make me forget the trials and tribulations that was my reality. But unfortunately, I was never able to meet them face to face, instead I was met with the faces of the unwavering police who were unsympathetic to refugees and I was ultimately deported back to Afghanistan.

As I returned from my room, I stopped for a second to appreciate everything around me, the gardens, the pasture, the grassland, the valleys and the deserts were cloaked in this lively and luscious green. I immediately noticed a hill close to where I was and decided to climb it. This hill was located in one of the more remote locations of Austria. I wanted to do something that would keep me busy so I decided to go hunting, something I rarely did.

I managed to capture around ten parrots during my hunt. Unfortunately, two of them died in the process but the eight that I saved were put into cages. I intended to keep them as colorful companions in my room.

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I began to walk inside my room but before I could get very far, I heard a loud knocking on the garage door of the building I was staying in. I looked outside the window and observed a police car parked outside with two Austrian soldiers by my door. I wasn’t quite sure what they were doing at my house but I invited them in. The moment we took our seats in the hallway, I was bombarded with questions. “What is your name? Where are you from?”

As soon as they realized I was an Afghan refugee, their questions became harsher and I was humiliated, “What do you do here? How can you disturb these innocent birds? How often do you annoy God’s innocent creatures? How many people have you killed in your country? Do you have something by the name of sympathy in your country?” the soldiers asked.

I responded to some of the questions but the one that I really affected me was, “How many people have you killed in your country?” I apologized and revealed my sorrow, but nothing was acceptable to them.

They continued with their ignominy, “If you are able to bother such nice-looking, innocent birds with colorful feathers, and imitations of human sounds, how should we believe that you are not guilty of killing the innocent people in Afghanistan? I am sure that you killed a lot of people in your motherland. If one of God’s beautiful creatures is uncomfortable in your presence, there is no doubt that killing and teasing the people in your country is as easy as killing a fly. This action proves that not only are you a killer, attacker, and disturber of the peace but all other Afghan refugees are the same.”

After accusing me of such hatred and crime, they freed the parrots. One of the parrots looked up to the sky and looked as if he was full of regret, thinking to himself, “Please forgive us God for not being able to rescue the rest of the parrots that already died before we arrived here.”

They roughly closed my hands with handcuffs, kicked me into the police car and started driving. I shouted loudly for help, I even told the driver to take the car to the bus station, but they ignored my pleas. They continued driving until we reached the next bus stop.

After a little, I heard a sound from the policeman who was sitting beside the one driving. “I would stop struggling if I were you. Please be quiet, do not shout, relax. Know that only Afghanistan is your home. Pass on this message to other Afghan refugees who want to come here, especially the younger generation who are not be able to do anything illegal as they do in Afghanistan.”

As they drove down the road, they complained about the negative actions of Afghan refugees in Austria. One of them uttered, “The inhumane actions of Afghan refugees clarifies that for them it does not matter whether they live in their motherland or anywhere else in the world. Human life on the Earth is full of pleasures and sorrows, ups and downs, strengths and weaknesses, health and illness but for Afghans, everyone is the same with no difference.”

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About the Author: Mohammad Zaki Zaki is a Star alumnus and was an instructor at Star’s Daikondi branch until he returned to continue his studies at Kabul University.
Afghan President: Convincing Actions of Pakistan

The Government Leaders do not have the authority to answer people’s votes for more personal desires.

Civil Society is concerned about the current situation, they would get interminable curse as heritage. They add that political crises affected people sacrificed their dears to keep their promises, new values and humanity, they will get inable curse as heritage. They also added based on governmental reliable information source that says attacking on organizers of terrorist event Kabul, in the absence of excruciating events it is something to be done in 24 hours. This source adds, "Afghanistan is not satisfied with Pakistan’s actions against terrorism, if Pakistan honestly wants to help the peace process in Afghanistan, it must eliminate Taliban and Haqqani network. There should not be good and bad Taliban policy and Pakistan should implement and comply the quadrilateral agreements."

Invaders reporting and getting orders during attack

Meanwhile, some students of AIOU, who were present throughout the attack at the scene, say that the attackers were talking to their commanders and killing the people. On the other hand, reliable security sources say that the attack was during the attack and were ordered not to pity even on the wounded people. These Taliban sources say that the attackers were targeted to command the females. Presidential palace announced that the presence of American military and Rahel Sharif to seriously act against the persons who orchestrated this attack.

Additionally, Pakistan should provide the results of investigations with Afghanistan.

Meanwhile evening, first a vehicle replete with explosive materials was blasted near the entrance of American University of Afghanistan and following that, two invaders entered the campus of the university and began firing on warders and security guards which lasted for almost ten hours. While no insurgent group claimed the responsibility for this terrorist attack, Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer of National Unity government related the attack to Taliban, Abdullah Abdullah condemning the attack said, ”An act of uncooperative organizations and universities has ignorantly nature and shows anti-science and anti-human behavior against Afghan and its people with the support and cooperation of international community try to exist. It is not important for international organizations, but Taliban destory these organizations for the publication and distribution of their name and anti-Islamic thoughts.”

Terrorist attacks and genocide by Afghan Taliban seek the same and common goals. They want to destroy all the symbols of contemporary civilization and found the Taliban Seigniory in the region. It was hard to differentiate them and Taliban regime also made an independent organization and their territory in Pakistan changed to a safe shelter for Taliban. Therefore, some efforts between Afghanistan and Pakistan is that Taliban does not attack on cities and people in Pakistan.

However, Pakistani generals, who have trained both groups of Taliban, hallucinate and consider Afghan Taliban as their ally but Pakistani Taliban as their enemies. They concentrate on the points, the two Taliban groups have in common but they do not want to accept the reality that both groups of Taliban follow the same ideology and have ideological and genealogical tradition and they are never seen fighting against each other.

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Twitter campaign draws attention to plight of Afghanistan's persecuted Hazaras

Source: https://www.theguardian.com

On 23 July, two men joined the crowd of thousands of Afghanistan’s Hazaras marching in protest through the streets of Kabul. They were suicide vests under the guise of being a peaceful demonstration. However, in response to the Afghan government’s decision to divert a promised power transmission line from Bamiyan - a Hazara enclave, where it would have brought jobs, economic growth and, most fundamentally, electricity - to another area of the country further north. But the demonstration, and the power line’s diversion, was aimed too at a broader discrimination Hazaras say they suffer in Afghanistan.

The two men wearing suicide vests at the demonstration – Islamic State militants – detonated their devices as the protest reached Deh Mazang square. More than 80 protestors were killed – recent reports reached 97 – and more than 230 injured, say at least 80 protestors were killed – recent reports say at least 97 – and more than 230 injured, in the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital in 15 years. Isis’s media agency Amaq confirmed the Hazara religious and ethnic minority were specifically targeted, saying the attack was aimed at the “Shia gathering”.

To mark the 40th day since the attack, on Thursday the Hazaras’ “enlightening” movement will launch a Twitter campaign to bring to global attention what they describe as “systematic discrimination against the Hazaras”. From 3pm Thursday in Kabul, thousands of Hazaras in Afghanistan will launch an online campaign under the hashtag #Justice4Hazaras to commemorate those who lost their lives in the tragedy and also to demand justice, equality and better services for the Hazaras. Simultaneously, commemorations are being held in Kabul and around the world. The online campaign has been in planning for more than a month. Protest organisations have held workshops in Kabul and around the world, and posted videos online to help the unfamiliar use Twitter and Facebook to broadcast their message.

Dawood Naji, one of the organisers of Kabul protest who travelled to Australia to speak at memorial events organised by Hazara community, told the Guardian: “The enlightening movement is about systematic discrimination. Every Hazara around the world can relate with this movement because they have experienced discrimination.

Those who lost their lives in Kabul experience it, others experience it when they apply for a job, when they sit an exam, or request a service or security.”

But a migration agent in Australia, who asked not to be identified for fear of impacting her Hazara clients, said the Australian government has played down the worldwide Hazara protest movement and not acknowledged the attacks in Kabul were targeted at Hazaras because of the ramification for Hazara claims for refugee status in Australia. An estimated 10,000 Hazaras have already settled in Australia.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the agent said, rejects refugee claims on the grounds Kabul is safe for Hazaras to be returned to and views the recent attacks on Hazara in Kabul as “rare” incidents “likely to be considered a one-off”. The department had said the same thing in relation to the December 2011 bomb attacks in Kabul which killed over 20 people, mostly Hazaras.

Professor William Maley of the Australian National University, who is currently in Kabul, argues the government’s position on the safety of Hazaras in Afghanistan is “completely unsustainable”.

A report on Hazaras in Afghanistan, published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in February this year, said “no part of the country can be considered free from conflict-related violence” but that “the threat of conflict-related violence faced by Hazaras is similar to that faced by members of other ethnic groups”.

The persecution of Hazaras was most overt under the rule of the Taliban, but in the decade-and-a-half since, violence has continued, public beheadings of Hazara men, women and children based on their ethnicity are common, as are reports of Hazara being ordered off buses on country roads or out of their homes at gunpoint by militia and murderers. Hazaras say, most fundamentally, they are not safe in their own country.

The Hazaras say they are no longer safe on the streets of Kabul to protest, that the Afghan government can’t provide security, and authorities have actively moved to crush their protest movement.

On Monday, when the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani travelled to Lamiyani to rename the local airport after a Hazara leader killed by the Taliban, a group of Hazaras took the opportunity to gather in the heart of the city to protest their treatment by the government.

But Afghan security dispersed the protest by rounding up, beating and arresting about 30 protestors. They were detained for 24 hours. The security forces assaulted four journalists and broke cameras to stop them filming the protest, according to a Human Rights Watch report of the incident.

“The political situation in the country is fragile, and the situation for Hazaras extremely dangerous,” Maley told the Guardian.

“If (Jami) was able to strike targets in the heart of the Afghan capital, where the presence of Afghan security forces is relatively strong, it puts on display a commitment to attack on the basis of religious identity, plainly engaging one of the basis of refugee status under the refugee conventions; and it highlights particular dangers for Hazaras.”

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Over 100 female Afghan army cadets complete education in Turkey

Source: Khaama Press

Over 100 female Afghan army cadets completed their education in Turkey and returned to Afghanistan today.

Gen. Habib ur Rehman Afzal, deputy defense minister in strategic relations, said 109 female army cadets completed a 3 month course in Turkey and returned home after graduation.

He was speaking during a ceremony to mark the graduation of the female army cadets, and said the role of women in army is vital and the 109 female officers will start serving with the army in specific posts.

Gen. Afzal further added that the defense ministry has allocated 10 percent of the posts in the army to women and girls.

According to defense officials, currently around 1,500 women and girls are serving in different posts with the ministry of defense which includes security and administrative jobs.

This comes as over 500 female police cadets completed their education in Turkey and returned home after graduation.

Ronaldo: Griezmann deserved UEFA Best Player award

Source: Goal.com

Antoine Griezmann deserved to be named UEFA’s Best Player in Europe, according to Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo picked up the gong after leading his country to their first-ever European Championship title and winning the Champions League with Real Madrid.

The Portugal captain got the better of France star Griezmann in both finals before trumping the 25-year-old at the award ceremony in Monaco on Thursday, but believes his Atletico Madrid rival would have been a worthy winner.

“As I said on the stage, he (Griezmann) deserved to win this trophy,” Ronaldo told the media after collecting his prize. “He lost two finals so it was unlucky for him but I think he’s a fantastic player; he’s a good boy, he’s my neighbour - he lives next to me - and he deserved it.

“But he will win for sure one day - I hope so.”

Ronaldo, who has scored 32 goals for Madrid in 2016, is also hoping to collect his fourth Ballon d’Or but refused to take all the credit without thanking his teammates.

“I hope to win the Ballon d’Or but let me enjoy first this trophy, it’s amazing, I wish to win tonight and I’m so proud, I have to thank you to my team mates - Real Madrid and national - because they helped me a lot to win these trophies.”
Philosophical Musings of Mahmud Khalili

If we were to think about all the problems of Afghans and Afghanistan, we would be very depressed. When I wrote my first published book, I believed that I only needed to write about my poor, war torn country. However much we write about Afghanistan, it is not enough to get people of the world to understand how important it is to bring peace to this land and how badly the people of Afghanistan yearn for the day when Afghanistan no longer has war.

As the eldest son of Masood Khalili, an Afghan diplomat, I grew up in a very political environment with my father being involved in the war against the Soviets and then in the war against the Taliban. Ever since I was a little kid, my family always discussed different topics related to Afghanistan in order for us to know more about our country. My father always told us that the only thing that survives is what we learn and what we write. I kept this in mind.

When I was 16 years old I decided to write on a variety of topics such as religions, politics, sport, society, and history. It was to express myself through writing. Just like the different topics at the dinner table, I decided to write on a variety of topics related to Afghanistan. You will find eighteen chapters in my book called Afghanistan Decoded. Articles range from topics like religions, politics, sports, development, failure of the government to bring peace and even the Huja or meditation room of my grandfather. All eighteen chapters are subjects that are near and dear to my heart because they are about the problems that Afghans face on a daily basis from corruption, inadequate and irresponsible leadership, unemployment, insecurity, death, sickness and negative interference of neighbors in Afghanistan’s internal politics.

Over the years, I have given many newspaper and magazine interviews on the situation in Afghanistan, as well as two nationally televised interviews on Indian news networks. I have talked to diplomats, journalists, writers, actors, generals, and so many more interesting people about the current situation in Afghanistan at the time.

I never had the stomach to write about my poor, war torn country. I am the first person to admit that I do not know how we can fix the problems of this our country, but it is our responsibility to try and analyze what mistakes have been made and are currently being made in order to make a better future for ourselves. I am positive that the second edition of Afghanistan Decoded will be much better with even more interesting topics and I hope that people will wait for the second edition after reading this one. We are the future of our country.

Let each one of us try our best in our own fields to bring awareness and change and, in that way, we will make a better future for our beloved country.

Candle Lighting: A Symbol of Nonviolence Against Darkness and Injustice

Written by: Nazim Fekrat, an Afghan blogger who has also worked as a freelance journalist and a photographer. He is the two-time award winner from Reporters Without Borders (RWB) and Information Safety and Freedom.


The candle lighting is important specially at the night of 40th anniversary of those who perished in a fight for their basic rights, and those who wished to bring changes in their country, we light candles and remember them and their memories. By lighting candles, let the perpetrators and criminals, and those who blamed the victims understand that they perished our brothers and sisters, developed but our own selves. All of us must strive to bring Afghanistan back to the way it was, such as fighting against the new culture of corruption that has become commonplace in the government and all other walks of life in Afghanistan.

Let’s all rise against injustice, and raise our voice against systematic discriminations, and with such a simple symbolic, yet powerful gesture, we send a powerful message to the evildoers that a simple act of lighting candles and remembering them and their memories can light candles and burn their darkened hearts in order conquer them. Let’s all stand firm and steadfast in our/our ways and stand together. Candle lighting is a powerful tool to fight the evil, the inner heart of the devil that is doomed to darkness. With candle lighting, we all go to war against evil, which Afghan government is a perfect archetype of all malevolences and hostilities against its citizens. It is evil because its policy is against general good, against peace and prosperity; and its evil because it benefits at the cost of its citizens. Let’s all stand up against evildoers and devils until they fear us and flee from us. At this point, we can light candles and burn their darkened hearts in order conquer them.

Let’s all rise against injustice, and raise our voice against systematic discriminations, and with such a simple symbolic, yet powerful gesture, we send a powerful message to the evildoers that a simple act of lighting candles and remembering them and their memories can light candles and burn their darkened hearts in order conquer them.
Many women died during childbirth, many more children never got the chance to become adults. The ills that are today cured by taking one of those tablets you people keep in the fridge, have killed so many people in my lifetime. One evening someone would complain of a stomach ache, the next morning they would be dead, and by that afternoon, he would be buried in Paas-e-Gardo. People did not know better. All medications in access were herbs found in the mountains around us. Sometimes the rich families travelled to villages days away and brought with them a doctor on the back of a donkey. He instantly became the main attraction in the village. I remember people used the same injection for many people in many villages, and was kept with a trusted person. Only the hooshyaar knew what went into it.

Your father was away. He was too busy with politics and the war. He barely had any time for his own children. At noon on one day you became very ill. You turned pale, began throwing up and it looked like you were going to pass out. We had already lost your brother before you. It alarmed us all. We sent for your maternal grandfather. He was unwell, and could not show up with his donkey to take you to the clinic in Tameer. I did not know better. I picked you up in my arms, headed out, headed up for the pass, and began running towards Tameer. You could not hold your head, and it swayed from side to side. I kept running ahead, crossed the pass, ran down the hill, into the little valley and all the way to Gardon-e-Kosha. I must have run for an hour, before your ill grandfather on donkey-back caught up with me. I put you on the animal and from there we rushed you to Sima Samar.

*hooshyaar = Clever / The widely recognised clever person in the village

Moral: It takes a village to raise a child.

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William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939) is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature as the first Irishman so honoured for what the Nobel Committee described as “inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation”. Yeats is considered to be one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize; such works include The Tower (1928) and The Windying Stair and Other Poems (1933).

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When You Are Old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;  

How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;  

And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.
Would you please introduce yourself?
I am Zahra Sultani, a former student of Star Educational Society from where I graduated in 2009. I am currently a student of Tilburg University. I am studying Global Management of Social Issues, basically the social sciences. I graduated from Rokhsana High School in Afghanistan. While I was a student, I also studied English at Star. After that I decided to study short term programs that were taught in English, like Project Management and Business Administration. I wanted to improve my English because one of my wishes was to study abroad. This goal might have been because of my experiencing new cultures and receiving a quality education as well as learning English.

What is your idea about social science?
From an academic perspective, I would say that it is good to study Social Science broadly. Like those who study psychology and sociology and even something about politics, they know about the nature of society, how people interact and what problems people encounter. It is learning how people are trying to overcome those challenges and problems and how they react when they face those problems. Also, we are facing a lot of problems all over the world. One of them is climate change; some countries are gathering to solve this most serious problem since it has such an impact upon our future. Of course, social science also deals with issues like poverty, war, human rights and civil war in African and Asian countries. Still, they are facing a lot of problems and challenges. Although some of the countries don’t face these problems, most Asian and African countries face these challenges and problems. Nowadays we can see that most of the people are focusing on economics, and public policy; most of the students are interested in these fields. They are focusing on improving the economy and they are ignoring a very basic and important part of society which is to evaluate people as to how they interact, what problems they are facing, and how to solve these problems in order to improve the economy and the political situation.

How do you evaluate Afghan society?
Our society needs more awareness because of the civil war. Most people think that they

An educated mother can motivate her children to have a better education and life because these are the children who will create the future of Afghanistan. If we can’t make a big change in Afghanistan, at least let’s help them make positive changes in the future.

There are many factors that can help us deal with these problems. Teachers in the universities can persuade students to study sociology or social science. It is very important for the young generation to know how to educate themselves about the society and societal traits and how to improve their society. They should know how to increase social awareness in other people. I don’t mean that every individual should study social science, but it should be noted that the internet can be a good source for those who want to promote their social awareness.

How did you find the educational standards abroad?
I think when comparing the quality of education here in Asian countries and Afghanistan with European countries, there are more facilities for students. In universities abroad, we have libraries, we have labs, we have practical work. When we study the theories then we practically work on them. We are working on projects because we have the facilities. We can apply the knowledge that we learned in a practical setting while dealing with people and social issues. Practical studies encourage the students to be ready for what they will face in real life.

I also believe that in social science we have to do more research. I think in European countries it is easier to enter the society and do research because people participate in research more willingly and provide us more accurate information about the society and the problems in the society. However, it differs in Afghanistan because we are facing a lot of challenges and problems existing in the society and they can deal with social challenges. Of course, as a citizen of Afghanistan, I would try my best to encourage other friends to study and get educated in any field in which they are interested. I also encourage students to seek scholarships and study abroad. I am hopeful that the number of students studying abroad will continually increase. Not only is it about what they learn about bettering their own lives, but it is also about what they learn from other societies.

What does your message to the young generation?
My message to them is that they have to get educated in whatever field they are interested. At least they will understand how to read and write and how to educate their children. If in the future they are asked any question about their past life, they will at least be able to describe their past. As a result, an educated person can motivate her children to have a better education and life because these are the children who will create the future of Afghanistan. If we can’t make a big change in Afghanistan, at least let’s help them make positive changes in the future. I am very happy that the children studying at school, even if they can’t get into university they are still striving for a better future for themselves and our country.