From the SelectedWorks of Mr. Shams uz Zaman

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A Change in the Offing (Pakistan Observer)

Shams uz Zaman, Mr.
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Pakistan today suffers from such variety of issues never witnessed before in the history. The creation of Pakistan movement was a dream which inspired millions of Muslims to have a homeland of their own where they could live in peace under their glorious Islamic tradition. The idea was initially propagated by Sir Muhammad Iqbal which quickly started resonating amongst the Muslims of Indo-subcontinent. Iqbal had also envisioned of reviving the religion which had just been relegated to a theological dogma under the influence of western colonialism.

Iqbal also aimed at establishing an Islamic revival intuition (Dar ul Islam Trust Institute) where Muslim scholars were to seek contemporary knowledge besides learning religion on non-sectarian basis. His idea was enthusiastically supported by the eminent scholars of that time like Chaudary Niaz Ali, Abul-Ala Mawdudi, Syed Sulaman Nadwi, Abdul Majid Daryabaadi and Muhammad Asad etc. Unfortunately Iqbal died before even the project could actually become a reality. Opportunity for a monumental change was thus lost due to disunity and lack of organization which never allowed the project to proceed ahead.

The movement for Pakistan however, didn’t lose its momentum under the able and charismatic leadership of Jinnah who unfortunately had very few sincere friends. Most of the people joining the league were opportunistic who had joined the movement only to seek for a high position and status in the new state. This trend was also indicated by the then religious scholars who on the basis opposed the creation of Pakistan fearing that not only the state would not be able to achieve its purpose but would also disillusion the masses from the ideological foundations of the state. It took 60 years for the Pakistani ruling elite to prove the validity of this viewpoint.

The socio-economic problems coupled with the repetitive power sharing formula between military and civilian governments without any real change have indeed turned Pakistan for the deprived masses, into a “dream gone sour”, who still wait for a messiah (or Allah as Christina Lamb puts it). The huge crowds who showed up for some impressive gatherings believed the new faces to be their long awaited messiah.
This clearly indicates that people can gather under the banner of any new face who promises for a change. However, thinking of a change through the existing politico-economic cartels, who have established a powerful grip on to the system, is an illusion which will never materialize. This is not the view point shared by those who live in secure premises. Be these the elite politicians, TV anchors getting handsome salaries, senior government officials enjoying perks and privileges, academia or the foreign funded NGO executives, they all are bracing for a change through the smooth democratic process which they know in their heart will never come even after decades or even centuries. This is the reason that despite a vibrant judiciary not a single person from the elite class has ever been punished on any crime or charge ranging from corruption to murder.

But this system suits all those who are so doggedly clinging to the power corridors through well secure jobs and networks and will consequently never leave it at any cost. For elite, the change must be just of the faces which keeps bandwagoning them with the tide of the time. Thus they argue that the system must continue no matter even if people die mercilessly or start selling their organs and even children just to get few pieces of bread. The rapid march of deprived masses back to the Stone Age marks the End of the World.

The massive gatherings since last year or so, bracing for a change within the contemporary politico-economic framework would fail without doubt. But some change would eventually have to come to Pakistan as the current trajectory indicates that either we are heading towards an economic meltdown or a bloody and massive uprising. Such a change might not have leadership or destination either.

— The writer is an MPhil research fellow at NDU.

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