

Sara Maryam

You can cut all the flowers
but you cannot keep
spring from coming

OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. What does the adage signify?

1. The 'cutting of flowers' symbolizes the systemic oppression and hardships of life.
2. The 'spring' symbolizes movements and revolutions that emerge when a community is systemically oppressed.
3. This phrase means that societal change and renewal is inevitable.
4. Resilience in the face of hardships leads to societal change.

III. Why can one not keep spring from coming despite cutting all the flowers?

1. Societal growth, evolution and change

is inevitable. Society progresses as new ideologies emerge.

i- Hegel's theory of Dialectics, every thesis has an antithesis.

2. A new ideology and system emerges that questions the status quo.

i- Karl Marx theory of Communism challenged capitalism.

3. Education and literature teaches people about their rights, thereby liberating them.

i- Jane Austen's writings

III. How have individuals historically fought against systemic oppression to spark revolutions?

1. Rosa Parks triggered the civil rights movement by refusing to vacate her seat in a bus.

2. Nelson Mandela set on his long walk to freedom by standing up against racial segregation and systemic oppression in South Africa.

IV. How have societies renewed and changed despite adversity?

1. Metternich the doctor of revolutions

suppressed revolutions in Europe through different means. However, he did not succeed as Germany, France, Italy and Austria over time overthrew monarchy.

2. The victory of liberal democracy

after the fall of Soviet Union. The clash of ideologies between liberalism and communism led to a democratic liberal world order.

3. Throughout history, women have fought

for their rights such as right to vote, inheritance and reproductive rights. The

movement led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Wollstonecraft

gained these rights.

4. The Protestant Reformation

challenged the authority of the Church and its supremacy.

V. How in the contemporary world are nations fighting against oppression?

1. Israel - Hamas War: Israel's violation of human rights and the invincibility of Hamas.

VI. What can Pakistan learn from this adage?

1. The political elite and leaders should give people their democratic rights: the right to free and fair elections, freedom of speech, an independent media, and minority rights.

VII. Conclusion

The day a black woman refused to give up her seat on a bus was the day first day of spring for African-American people. After a long tiring day of work, when Rosa Parks was ordered to vacate her seat for a white man, she held her ground and chose to get arrested rather than comply with absurd segregation laws. The laws that required black people to be racially segregated in public, drawing a clear line between them. The laws that prohibited black and white children to mingle and always kept white children a degree above. The laws that cut freedoms of African-American people and stomped on their rights. Despite these laws, restrictions, and unfair treatment, spring came for black people living in America in the form of civil rights movement. How why can you not keep spring from coming despite cutting all the flowers? How do people and societies go against all odds to bring about change and revolutions? This essay will explore the above questions and ways in which societies have revolutionized. People have fought against monarchy, nations have stood up

against colonial movements, individuals like Nelson Mandela have single handedly walked their countries to freedom, and women have gone against all adversity to fight for their rights. Although many individuals and nations have faced hardships and adversity, spring came for them when they fought against all odds to bring revolutions.

The phrase 'you can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming' is symbolic for all the hardships and adversity people face and remain resilient despite them. This phrase signifies that societal change is inevitable no matter how much obstacles there are. At the end of the day, the sun sets and a new day begins. Winter ends and with it all the challenges end too and spring comes. This phrase is symbolic for societal change, renewal and revolution. Even if all freedoms and rights are taken away from people, even if they are chained to shackles, they will find a way to set themselves free. Men have historically fought against slavery

and monarchy to bring revolutions and to set themselves free. Thus, societal change and spring are inevitable no matter how many flowers are lost.

This essay will now explore the reasons due to which one cannot keep spring from coming despite cutting all the flowers. One of the main reasons is that societal growth and change is inevitable. Society progresses over time as new ideologies and concepts emerge. According to the **Dialectical philosophy by Hegel**, every thesis has an antithesis. When the status quo or established facts are challenged by an opposing idea, a new development emerges that changes society and life as we know it. This is how society progresses and change takes place. Thus, an established power and status quo is always under threat and is not eternal. Change comes when people fight against adversity.

Secondly, spring comes when new ideas and ideologies emerge. Whenever there is systemic oppression of a group,

of people, new ideologies emerge that shows people the way out. **Karl Marx** gave his theory of **Communism** when he witnessed labours being oppressed by the bourgeoisie. He urged people to break the shackles of slavery and to establish a system that is based on communal interests. Communism challenged capitalism and the system of wealth distribution it had created. The socialist revolutions in Russia and China were based on this ideology. Spring came for Russia and China as they rose against monarchs of the time despite hardships and obstacles.

Thirdly, spring comes for marginalized and systemically oppressed communities when they are liberated through education and literature. Education has the power to sow seeds of liberty in minds of young and the impressionable. Similarly, literature too holds the power to fight back through poetry and prose. Literature indirectly inculcates ideas in minds of the reader. For example, female writers have historically fought against oppression through their literary works. **Jane**

Austen through her works, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, inculcated in the minds of young women the idea of liberty. Women at the time were not given inheritance rights as property was passed on to the next male heir. Through literature, Austen raised voice against this issue. Similarly, **Allama Iqbal** used poetry and the power it beholds to fight against British colonialism. Thus, literature and education have the power to bring about spring for marginalized communities despite hurdles.

Having explored the reasons and ways through which people fight against adversity and spring comes for them, no matter how many flowers they lose, this essay will now analyze different cases in history where individuals fought against adversity. **Rosa**

Parks is one such prominent individual. She triggered a revolution by defying the established laws of the time. She refused to comply with the systemic segregation that required her to give up her seat to a white man. Her act of defiance led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the US. Her refusal

to vacate her seat led to the civil rights movement and to judicial decisions that put an end to racial segregation. Thus, even though the society and the system at the time provided no rights or freedoms to the African-American people, their defiance of the laws led to a social revolution.

Similarly, **Nelson Mandela** is another prominent figure that defied all odds for his **Long Walk to Freedom**.

South Africa too at the time faced systemic racial segregation and oppression. However, despite all adversity, prohibitions and laws, South Africa gained independence and ended this apartheid. Nelson Mandela rose to prominence through his speeches and his refusal to back down. He spent years in prison but did not give up on his struggle.

Eventually, he came out of prison and straight away walked into the power corridors taking the reins of a free nation. Thus, no matter how much hurdles and obstacles he faced, his resilience led him to freedom and spring came

for his nation.

Having explored the case studies of individuals and their resilience, this essay will further analyze the ways in which societies renewed and changed despite hurdles and obstacles. In Europe, after the **French revolution**, the whole continent showed disgust for monarchy and favoured constitutionalism and nationalism. The fire spread all across Europe quickly. In these times, **Metternich**, an Austrian diplomat became the doctor of revolutions as he established his Metternich system. In this system he suppressed revolutions throughout Europe, in France, Germany, Italy and Austria. He used different methods such as spying on political activists, banning student unions and curbing the rights of the people. However, despite all his efforts, decades later the system crumbled as Europe brought down monarchy in France, Italy and Austria. Thus, Metternich tried to cut all pathways to freedom to maintain the hold of monarchs, but he could not stop revolutions from coming.

Similarly, liberal democracy emerged as the sole victor after the fall of Soviet Union and ending of the war between capitalism and communism. Communism was the antithesis to capitalism and their synthesis was liberal democracy, the system that emerged from the clash of ideologies. During this clash, communism spread like wildfire to many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Communism brought with it the purging of opposition, economic decline because of communist practices, the collectivization of agriculture that brought famine and more such practices. Thus, according to **Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History and the Last Man'**, liberal democracy emerged as the sole victor. The color revolutions across Europe spread liberalism and democracy. Therefore, liberal rights and values came to the world like spring and brought with them prosperity.

Spring also came for women when they decided to stand up against systemic oppression. During the first wave of feminism,

women advocated for their right to vote. Before feminism women did not have suffrage rights, rights to inheritance, reproductive rights, right to work freely and legal protection against rape. Women such as **Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Mary Wollstone Craft** led this movement against all odds and adversity. They met with a lot of criticism as they were called racists and destroyer of family values but they remained steadfast in their vision.

The society at the time gave women no avenues to prosper and confined them to domestic space. These women went against the established norms to bring about societal change and development. Thus, due to their efforts spring came for generations to come as they gained many rights.

During the Protestant Revolution, the revolutionaries met with countless adversity from the Christian faith and the monarchy. Christianity had for years been supreme over all others even the monarch. The protestants led by **Martin Luther King**

went against this supremacy and challenged this system. They were in response incarcerated, their literature was burned and they were shunned for questioning the authority of the Church. Despite these circumstances, Martin Luther King led the way for revolution in religious realm by introducing protestantism. The protestant revolution was like spring to for people who had been oppressed and victimized by the exploitation of authority of the Christian Church.

This essay will now further explore the contemporary evidences of social movements against oppression and adversity. In the **Israel-Hamas** war, Hamas has been labelled as terrorist organization by the Western leaders and media. However, according to Palestinian account of history, they have been wronged and oppressed by Israel for decades. This oppression led to the rise of Hamas. Currently, Israel is waging a war against Hamas to destroy their infrastructure. They are killing innocent civilians and have imposed a blockade leading

to food crisis. Despite these human rights violations and cutting off all freedoms, Hamas has so far remained intact and have responded with resilience. Thus, no matter how many houses and tunnels Israel destroys, they will never be able to completely wipe off Hamas because every time they kill a civilian, they create more Hamas members. Spring will come for Gaza and Hamas will continue to fight for freedom.

The adage 'you can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming' has lessons for the world and for Pakistan. Pakistan has been struggling with democracy since its inception. The political elite have remained in control, they have marginalized people living at the peripheries, the minorities have been persecuted, the elections have been interfered with, and the people have not been able to use their general will. The leaders in Pakistan must learn that no matter how many freedoms and rights they take away, they will not be able to continue ruling.

Pakistan this way. A new wave is coming with the informed youth, more educated and liberated society that is demanding a functioning democracy in Pakistan. The spring will come to Pakistan one way or another no matter how many flowers are cut-off.

Consequently, the adage signifies that individuals and societies remain resilient despite adversity and hardships and this leads them to spring or revolutions. The word spring symbolizes revolutions that came in response to systemic oppression and violations of rights. Individuals and societies faced these obstacles and oppressors with resilience and courage. Societal changes, renewal and revolution become inevitable when one system or community challenges the status quo and triggers a movement. One by one they lose their petals and flowers so much so that at one point the struggle seems futile and hopelessness takes over. However, the ones that believe that spring will come and their flowers will bloom again are the ones ^{that} write history.