It takes two to tango. In part 1 of my article, I focused mostly on the opposition. Now, I present my reflections regarding the call for a paradigm shift targeted primarily to the government. I also touch on a paradigm shift for all, because we all need it.

**It is Morning in Ethiopia – Make it Real**

The peaceful power transfer from the old generation to the new generation, unlike any time in the past, ushered in our first morning ever in Ethiopia. The architect, late PM Meles Zenawi, has taken his seat in history on this matter without contention. The new PM, Hailemariam Desalegn, has been given unprecedented political capital unlike any other leader of Ethiopia.

Now that it is morning in Ethiopia, what is the new Prime Minister going to do with it? The opportunity presented to you demands a paradigm shift that is fitting to the new game changer event in Ethiopia. To squander the political capital given to you by acting in the same ways as those who had not been given such a gift would be a far more distressing mistake than any of the mistakes of past rulers of Ethiopia from the beginning of time.

You are positioned to start afresh, and your party should take advantage of this instead of wasting the opportunity to unite the country. A new morning demands a new beginning. You have a great opportunity to mobilize the nation as never before. The silent majority that has been waiting four decades for a better day is tired of waiting, but it is still willing to give you a chance if you just make a gesture by treating the peaceful opposition fairly. You have a great moment to harness the great optimism in the air for the development of Ethiopia, if you just embrace the blessings extended to you.

Bring good news to our land by granting amnesty to all political prisoners with a commitment to non-violent struggle as a breath of fresh air and good will. Limit the prosecution of crimes of treason and terrorism to real offenders and not as an excuse to silence freedom of speech. To this end, make the trial of the crime of treason and terrorism transparent and just; ideally, televise the court proceedings.

Let democracy ring in peace. Empower the peaceful opposition through fairness in genuine ways as you battle against the militant opposition. By doing this, you are marginalizing the militant opposition and forcing them to join the peaceful struggle. That is a good thing for Ethiopia. Your integrity on this matter is the single most important factor to galvanize the people as one to move Ethiopia forward.

For ages, it has been known that Ethiopian politics is like an electric line that you don’t touch. If you touch it, it will kill you. As a result, only a few people who are literally willing to risk their lives have dominated Ethiopian politics. When those few people win
and take power, they feel entitled to be in power for the price they were willing to pay. The silent majority stands by the sideline and watch the costly drama without end.

The new morning in Ethiopia should signify that this journey of madness has stopped today. Today, it should no longer be necessary to risk one’s very life to engage in politics. The political struggle should be peaceful and safe so that all Ethiopians from all walks of life can take part in the political dialogue freely. In the 21st century, one should be free to think differently. The government should take the responsibility to break this millennial curse and encourage all the people to participate and truly engage in Ethiopian politics without fear and intimidation.

The government claimed that it had garnered 99.6% of the seats in parliament. But, the government’s handling of human and democratic rights shows that the government is still acting out of insecurity rather than out of confidence. That puts the truthfulness of the claim in question. Why not trust the people who voted for you and open the political space wide open for the opposition? As long as the constitutional mandates are honored, why not let the opposition function uninhibited? Why not make access to the media outlets free, equal and fair to all?

It would be unfair to leave your success untold. Economists may debate the virtues of your effort in economic development; but to the necked eye, there is evidence of economic growth, social development and infrastructure development that have been unseen in the land in our long history. Your grand desire to move Ethiopia from a poor to a middle-income country in the short time frame of a decade is inspiring. Your pioneering act to transfer power from one to another in a civilized and a peaceful manner is encouraging.

You are poised to be a history maker not only in the eyes of Ethiopia but also in the eyes of Africa and the world. One thing is blocking you from assuming your destiny. That is, the meager state of human and democratic rights compared to what should have been at this time of your tenure as the governing body. Unless you take action to expand human and democratic rights with much vigor and honesty in par with your commitment to the economy, you will be just another wannabe with the true identity of dictatorship that sets itself up for an inevitable fall.

**The Blessings of the Ethiopian Spirit – Make it Count**

THE ETHIOPIAN HEART: The government and the opposition need to accept the fact that both have good hearts for Ethiopia. That is what it means to be Ethiopian – to have a good heart. Both want to make Ethiopia rise and shine. Don’t look each other through your glasses of what happened in the past. Take off your glasses that distort the true colors of the heart of the other. There is a need to be known as you truly are on both sides of the political spectrum. That is, you both have truly good hearts for the beloved Ethiopia.
THE ETHIOPIAN MIND: The government and the opposition need to accept the fact that their respective ideas as to how to govern Ethiopia are not by themselves right or wrong. True, conflict arises when your ideas and programs to reach the common goal of a bright Ethiopia are divergent. That is human and understandable. There will always be a debate as to how to take Ethiopia from poverty to prosperity, or how to go about forming a more perfect united Ethiopia or any other policy for that matter. Again, accept that there are no right or wrong ideas but rather alternatives that compete to be the best ideas for Ethiopia. And it is the people who decide whose idea is good for the country through the ballot. That is the beauty of democracy at work.

THE ETHIOPIAN SPIRIT: The government and the opposition need to accept the fact that they both have the Ethiopian spirit – the “I can do” spirit of Ethiopians. This is that feeling of being proud to be Ethiopian. The Ethiopian spirit is what makes the distance runners win time and time again; what transpired the Ethiopians at the time of King Lalibela build the wonder Lalibela churches out of a single rock; and what enabled the Ethiopians at the time of King Minelik defeat back colonization against all odds to the amazement of the world.

However, the Ethiopian spirit has never been harnessed in our political culture for good use. Dynamite can turn to either of two ways depending on how we use it: harness it to build roads or misuse it to kill people. So it is with the Ethiopian spirit. The only tool to harness the blessings of the Ethiopian spirit is democracy. Democracy is not a luxury that Ethiopia can live without. It is an absolute necessity.

Take away democracy, and the Ethiopian spirit turns the government into a dictatorial regime that forces its ideas as an absolute on the people by the power of the gun. In response to this, the Ethiopian spirit makes the militant opposition force its ideas as an absolute on the people by the power of the gun. This drama has to stop, and democracy needs to be our avenue to reap the blessings of the Ethiopian spirit.

The Ethiopian spirit has not gotten its chance to shine in its beauty to its fullest capacity. It has been hijacked in the realm of politics for lack of democracy in the land. At the present time, history has given the government a chance to reinvent Ethiopian politics for the better. You have the potential to make everything new in Ethiopia. You would do that not alone, but by working together with the opposition in developing our democratic culture. Hear destiny calling – and let the Ethiopian spirit soar in democracy to do amazing things by putting Ethiopia on the map of the developed and civilized nations sooner rather than later. This is truly possible – isn’t that so obvious? So what are you waiting?

Impossible Mission – Make it Happen

It will not be easy. Our past has a firm grip on each of us, causing us not to trust each other. Things have been said that should not have been said. Things have been done that should not have been done. From everyone’s perspective, the situation is cruel and it fuels anger and hatred toward each other. What is our hope? We are smart and know how
to lecture each other about civility, but our wounded hearts prevent us not to walk the talk. It is time to try something different and voice a hope of healing.

How can we break the ice and usher in a new era of optimism and dynamics that leads to better opportunities for all of us? Who is the one that is going to make the first move? I am afraid that our leaders in both camps may not listen to common sense. Therefore, I humbly take my case to the great and loving people of Ethiopia with great reverence. Let the people break the standoff between the government and the opposition. Let’s show that at the end of the day, we all love Ethiopia and we are all family. And we believe that we are one big, intelligent family that is able to find ways to make our democracy work in peaceful ways.

Imagine this. History tells us to march to the White House at Washington DC, but how about deploying the power of love to petition directly to the new government for the new beginning? Imagine sending a postcard to the new PM Hailemariam Desalegn carrying the hope of your aspiration to embrace the new morning. He needs more than time to do the right thing; he also needs to hear the voice of the people loud and unmistakably clear.

You want him to know that you wish him the best. You petition that all political prisoners be freed in a spirit of good will. You state that the PM can make the morning in Ethiopia real by being genuinely committed to the democratization process. Would you dare for once not to be pro-opposition, pro-government, or silent majority but just to be a concerned Ethiopian who dares to overwhelm hostility with love?

Would you stand up and let your voice be heard first hand? Would you reach for the stars in your dream to bring about a new Ethiopia – the village of love? Many suffer and die for Ethiopia; would you choose to be part of impossible mission for a price of the cup of coffee? Believe and see the power of love. You tried everything else for the last 21 years; why not also give a chance for a simple act of kindness? I beg you to reach deep down inside yourself and let the innocence within you believe so that it reasons together with the decency that is in all humanity.

Here is the postal address:

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In conclusion, it is worth repeating: time will tell, between the government and the opposition, who will assume the higher moral ground and lead Ethiopia into democracy and prosperity instead of being mired in the status quo. This is an independent voice of truth in love. So help us Almighty.

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