

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



August 13, 2015

## The Faculty to Wonder

Throughout most part of human history, contemplation has been treated as a crime. Same has been the reaction to being inquisitive. It seems as if contemplation and inquisitiveness are considered against the social setup. However, there have always been few people who have never understood this view or they have intentionally ignored it. They are the same who have a fire of restlessness and curiosity in their hearts, which keeps on burning and compelling such people to show the same to the world. Such people, in fact, keep on doubting different phenomena and things. Doubt, indeed, is the quality of mind that comes out of human curiosity to understand the universe around. Therefore, it is one of most important characteristics of the mind and there are only few who have been blessed by it. The people who doubt are never satisfied of what they already know and they keep on finding for more so as to satisfy their minds, but the search goes on forever. Such people will never let the blind beliefs dominate their minds and they never let them to pollute their conscious endeavors. They, as a matter of fact, believe that such beliefs create misunderstandings in the mind and hatred in the hearts. Those who have blind beliefs are actually deprived of the awareness of the life. They are the ones who themselves have locked their minds and do not know that their minds are locked and the keys are with themselves. Nothing is able to change such people as they are not open to any view or any discussion. Even education cannot change such people. If such people even go to educational institutions, there is no chance that they would improve as they take with themselves their dogmatic beliefs. They have already decided everything for themselves and made final decisions. For them, it would be better even not to go the institutions, as they have already filled their minds and there is no empty space to learn new ideas or concepts. Education must support in understanding new things and when there is not such a chance, there is no need of education as well. It is also important to note that the type of education the educational institutions are disseminating in our society is also debatable. The educational institutions have become the factories, where robots are generated who, themselves, cannot think anything, but act as per the commands that are fed into them. There is no room for doubt and questions in our educational institutes. Those who commit the crime of asking too many questions are punished in the severest manner. Such institutions can only produce students who get education to negate education, and unfortunately such people are the most suitable for our society and most educated for our so-called education scholars. However, they are those puppets who play in the act based on education but themselves do not know the purpose of their act. This is really weird that our youth is being kept away from better and thought-generating education system. The endeavors are being made to keep the young and capable minds away from the food that can nourish them and make them discover the world, universe and their mysteries. True education can even reduce hatred in the hearts of the youngsters and teach them the lessons of love and brotherhood for the fellow beings. In fact, there are certain people who strive to keep such education away from youngsters because they know that it would generate so many views and perspectives which can even unveil the realities that they want to keep hidden. We should teach our youngster not to emphasize on a single perspective and try to learn how to live with different ideas and thoughts. They need to know that others can differ from what they think and what they feel and they need to realize that others can be right as well. They even need to go deeper and assume that there are many ideas that have not been thought yet and with open minds they can have the opportunity to discover such thoughts. They also require understanding that whatever has already been thought for them can be wrong; this way they can come to know about the mistakes in the history and know the real truth. Unfortunately, in our society the blind beliefs and careless claims have been given free hand. However, it has to be comprehended that the moment a person lets blind belief enter his mind, the next moment the possibilities of having better understanding and gaining knowledge run away from him. And, this phenomenon is totally against the requisites of education. Our youth have to be emancipated from following the forced beliefs. They have to be given the freedom of free thinking. Only those youngsters have the right of getting education who understand that they can doubt and challenge what is already known and who want to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong through their own minds. The educational institutions must first of all develop an attitude of learning, which requires a questioning nature. They should not be the places where the students are spoon fed. It has to be understood that if the educational institutions are able to generate an attitude of learning the rest will follow itself. Then the teachers do not have to force or punish the students to learn; they will learn themselves as they would be thirsty to do so.

# The Fate of Afghanistan's Peace Process

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

With the recent developments in Taliban's leadership and the deadly attacks targeting Kabul, the prospect of Afghanistan's peace process is facing an uncertain future. The new leadership of the Taliban has officially denounced the peace overtures shown from the militant group in recent months. In the meantime, the militants have mounted deadly attacks in capital Kabul, leaving hundreds of civilians and military personnel dead and injured. The denouncement of the peace process comes while the Taliban are believed to be fragmented over succession of the group's new leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. On the other hand, the recent bombings in Kabul and angry reactions of the Afghan government officials have raised questions over the prospect of the two countries' cooperation over the Afghan peace process. With the adverse situation for the peace process, the question now is that what is lying ahead for Afghanistan's peace process and how Afghanistan and Pakistan will be able to overcome the distrusts revive mutual cooperation over the peace efforts and develop relations for the long run? The recent denouncement of peace efforts by the new Taliban leader was a serious blow to the peace process and the Afghan government and Pakistan's efforts to kick-start talks with the Taliban. The new Taliban leader labeled the process as 'propaganda of the enemy', stressing the group would continue jihad until sharia system is established in Afghanistan. This comes at a time when the two countries had managed to bring the Taliban on table of negotiations for the first time, which was seen as a remarkable achievement for Afghanistan's peace efforts. However, the events regarding Mullah Omar's death and selection of a new leader for the Taliban came as unexpected developments which were potentially unfavorable and destructive for the peace process. The Taliban's denouncement of the peace process is quite understandable given the internal politics of the Taliban and the unstable stance of the new leader of the Taliban. The Taliban's hostile move to the peace process and the group's quick move to wage a new round of deadly bombings in Afghanistan are interpreted in many ways. However, there is a consensus that the attacks are aimed at strengthening the shaky stance of the new Taliban leader. The new leader of the Taliban showed a U-turn in its stance on the peace process so to avoid the accusations of the opposition figures of the Taliban that Akhtar Mansoor is supporting peace talks with the enemy. On the other hand, the Taliban mounted the group's deadly attacks against the government of Afghanistan to prove the group is united and still powerful in the insurgency against the Afghan government. The attacks were seen as an apparent move to strengthen the stance of the new leader of the Taliban and his control on the militants at a time of disputes over the leadership of the group. The recent attacks in Kabul, which were unprecedented in scale in last two years, shocked Afghans and angered the government of Afghanistan. Afghan leaders' criticisms to the safe havens of the insurgents once

again highlighted the difficult partnership between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan over the peace efforts in Afghanistan. However, it seems Pakistan chose not to worsen the relations between the two countries that have seen remarkable improvements by reacting to the recent comments of the Afghan officials. The attacks once again exposed the vulnerabilities of the Afghanistan-Pakistan long-term partnership and cooperation over the peace process. It also made clear that unless the leaders of the two countries manage to develop sustainable relations based on robust cooperation on security and economic matters, the partnership between the two countries could be undermined at any time by unexpected security events. The question hovering is how the two countries will manage to continue a long-term cooperation over the Afghan peace process and bringing peace in both the countries. The Afghan president Ashraf Ghani has stressed that Afghanistan remains committed to the peace process despite the spike of militant attacks in recent weeks. The Pakistani government has condemned the recent attacks and stressed that the Afghan peace process is not derailed. This shows both sides see themselves in inevitable cooperation for bringing peace in Afghanistan and fight the militancy in both countries. However, the Achilles heel of the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan is that the mutual cooperation could collapse at any time amidst evolving security developments. Despite considerable improvements at times in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, there has never been a stable trend of development of mutual relations for a longer term. To overcome this, the two countries will need to begin a genuine cooperation over peace in Afghanistan. For this, Pakistani will need to prove its honesty over the Afghan peace efforts and marginalize the elements and circles in the country's powerful military that are accused by the Afghan government of actively supporting the militant groups. Any ambiguous policy from Islamabad towards the war in Afghanistan and the ongoing peace process would doom the mutual cooperation for peace into failure. The Pakistani government needs to have a clearly defined policy over Afghanistan and back up its declared policy by concrete actions. There is unprecedented consensus in both countries over development of relations and mutual cooperation over the peace process in Afghanistan to end the long-lasting conflict. The two countries need to agree on a plan of action over the peace process. Both the countries cannot afford undermined relations and failed cooperation over the peace process in Afghanistan any more. Whether the Afghan Taliban is going to be a united or fragmented group, the Afghan government will need to embark on peace talks with all or parts of the militant group to break the momentum of the insurgency. Peace talks with the Taliban are going to be an indispensable option. The Afghan government needs to keep up military pressures on the insurgency to force them into a negotiated settlement. Pakistan is going to have a role in ending the Afghan conflict. The two countries should reach a common ground for ending the conflict through a sustainable and long-term partnership.

*Abdul Ahad Bahrami is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at [ahad.bahrami@gmail.com](mailto:ahad.bahrami@gmail.com)*

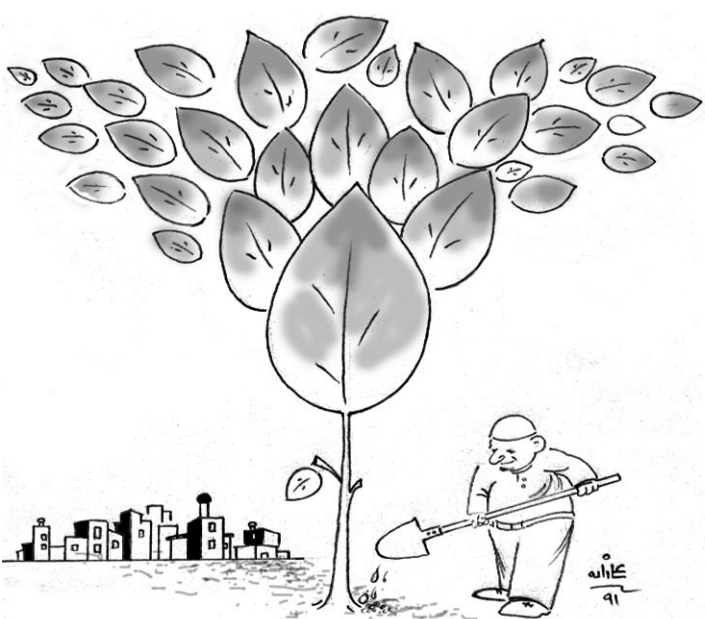
## Mullah Mansoor's Legitimacy is Under Question

By Hujjatullah Zia

Rendering legitimacy to the Taliban's newly designated leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor seems a highly controversial issue amongst the Taliban. Mullah Omar's family, including his brother Mullah Abdul Manan and his son Yaqub, denies the legitimacy of Mansoor's leadership. Similarly, a number of warring faction pledge allegiance to the self-styled "Islamic State" group, mainly in Afghanistan. However, Taliban officials claim that Omar's family does not carry much weight but the Taliban's Council - that has elected Mansoor as Omar's successor - plays the key role. The question remains that: was Mullah Omar's regime based on legitimacy? Political pundits introduce many sources for a legitimate government. In the past, theocratic system stemmed divine legitimacy based on divine legislation - religious messengers acquired the legitimacy of their government from the same source. However, the historical kings claimed the very legitimacy and introduced themselves "caliph" or "emir". To put it succinctly, the kings ruled the masses under the aegis of religious sharia. Furthermore, they also used to appoint their progeny before passing away - their regime handed over from their first generation to the next and the masses got used to this trend. Anyone who dared raise their eyebrows would be beheaded on the spot. The second basis for legitimacy is a leader's charismatic character - especially spiritual charisma. A charismatic personality will rule the hearts and minds of the masses rather than imposing themselves despotically. The masses, smoldering with a deep sense of affection and emotion, will devote their lives wholeheartedly. In other words, their theosophical feelings will outweigh the philosophical arguments, therefore, they will pledge allegiance to such a leader with great pride. Although, this type of legitimacy is also tinged with religious ideology and puissant beliefs, nonetheless it is justifiable. However in modern age, states are supposed to originate legitimacy from the law - mainly the democratic states. Constitutionally, elections must be held and each qualified citizen, including women, will have to be entitled with suffrage. Since democracy has no place in the Taliban's regime, they still force themselves with the words of "caliph" or "emir" - which once used to be deemed sacred. In another term, the Taliban officials operate under sacred terms and mask their sinister face with religious sharia. They attribute their legitimacy to divine legislation; however their practices are against the instructions and ethical codes defined by the legislation. So, they interpret them in their own political interests and make use of them in their advantages.

Besides announcing "Islamic Emirate" and claiming divine legitimacy, the Taliban's deceased leader Mullah Omar was a charismatic leader. His jihad against the former Union of Soviet and his war against the US-led NATO forces made the radical groups hold him in high esteem and pledge allegiance to him. As a result, a large group of the militants did not even see him in their whole life, but sacrificed their lives on his way and under his edicts. To put it succinctly, Mullah Omar's charisma for his followers was beyond doubt. Now, the question is about Mullah Mansoor? I believe that Mansoor can be everything but a charismatic personality. Those militants who pledge allegiance to the IS group will never stop doing so even if Mansoor issues fatwa against them. And with the disclosure of the Omar's death, a larger number of the militants seem to show tendency towards Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi - the leader of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Hence, Mullah Mansoor stays a number of the Taliban's de facto leader. Carter Malkasian, the author of 'War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier' writes about the Taliban's deceased leader Mullah Omar as, "Omar was a major figure in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In my years in Afghanistan as a civilian adviser to the U.S. military, I learned that this rarely seen and poorly educated man had won the respect of many Afghans. One well-known former member of the Taliban described Omar as a 'true mullah, a true Pashtun and a true Afghan.'" He further quotes Kandahar's infamous police chief and no friend of the Taliban Abdul Raziq as, "All Taliban obey Mullah Omar. The Taliban will not simply start fighting each other. They are one. This is their advantage over the government." The IS group poses threat to the Taliban's legitimacy in Afghanistan and compel any new Taliban leader to take a hard line, lest Taliban fighters think him weak and change allegiances. The upshot is that any new leader would be unlikely to agree to a peace deal in the near term and militancy will continue unabated - this will also put a negative impact on Afghanistan's security as we suffer the bulk of terrorism in recent days. Thus, it should be noted that the IS makes advantages of the Taliban's internal conflict. Both, Taliban's conflict and IS's exploitation of it will compound insecurity in Afghanistan. To avoid rhetoric, Mullah Mansoor's legitimacy as Omar's successor is under question. His succession has splintered the militants and it was a hard blow to the Taliban. Although he attempts to win a unanimous agreement via showing hard indication to peace talk as "enemy's propaganda" or making heavy inroads in Afghanistan, nonetheless he will fail to gain legitimacy by foolhardiness. So, a number of the Taliban, including Mullah Manan and Yaqub, deem Mansoor as a de facto leader.

*Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at [zia\\_hujjat@yahoo.com](mailto:zia_hujjat@yahoo.com)*



**Daily Outlook**  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaper

**Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa**  
**Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari**  
**Email: [outlookafghanistan@gmail.com](mailto:outlookafghanistan@gmail.com)**  
**Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019**  
**[www.outlookafghanistan.net](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net)**

**افغانستان**  
The Daily Afghanistan

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.