

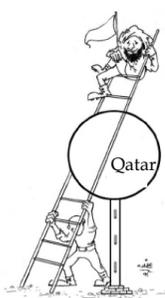
In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



February 23, 2015

Can Taliban Transform if Peace Talks Succeed?

Afghans have been longing for eternal peace for decades. After years of infighting that have claimed awful toll, most Afghans appear to be supportive of a peace process. Formerly, a poll conducted by State Department confirmed this stance. The poll found that 66 percent of Afghans would be acquiescent to amnesty for insurgents if it paved the way for a peace deal. The newly installed government in Kabul affirms security the top most precedence. Nonetheless, the peace dream of Afghans can't materialize as multiple factors hinder the way to this triumph. The in-depth trust deficit found between disgruntled factions, served a dominant factor restraining this settlement. Taliban never relied on Kabul government to be the sole authority that should be talked, to chalk out the future course of action. Purposeful negotiations render the sole political solution to put an end to this predicament, pleading a trustworthy guarantor serve the purpose. Pakistan can play a significant role, narrowing down the understanding gap by mediating talks between the two factions; government and Taliban. Reportedly, Pakistan enjoys good ties with Afghan Taliban, who disbanded their ties with Pakistani faction of Taliban. It is said that China is taking interests in Afghan peace drive, offering to facilitate talks between the insurgent group and the Afghan government. Reportedly, Taliban representatives had presented negotiating positions, given the constitution is amended; some desired ministries are spared and the most prior being their names gotten removed from international sanctions list and amnesty to prosecution. Undoubtedly China, the emerging power in the world in general and Asia in particular is striving hard to play its part in ending the conflicts in Asia that likely serves its own interest as well. The development to achieve the former goal is hastened, with China coming forth to mediate the peace talks. Previously newly-elected Afghan President Ashraf Ghani paid a visit to China transferring great deal of confidence to his Chinese counterpart. Since then China demonstrates in-depth interest in pushing forth the Afghan peace development preceding US's president announcement of ending the war in Afghanistan. Apparently China seems to be eager to fill up the security vacuum subsequent to US's partial or complete draw down. Significantly, what drew China close to Afghanistan are its deep lying relations and interests in the aforesaid country. China, the most developed country in Asia with heavy investments in Afghanistan wants its investments secured from the disgruntled elements. In order to reach this motive, Pakistan's imperative role can't be ruled out. Pakistan's vital interests are buried deep in the heart of this piece of land. Pakistan can't withstand troubled western border. Consequently, Pakistan plays foundational part in making all the development shape up. There are vital developments witnessed echoing even in constitutional avenues of US and elsewhere. It should be to no one's surprise that US tempts not to call Taliban terrorists from now onwards, given, formerly the White House issued statement, reiterating that the Taliban were not a terrorist outfit while Al-Qaeda is. The distinction carved underlines the US's deep rooted global interests that are endangered by later than former. Broadly speaking it seems to be a sub plan of another master plan where Taliban are given space to join back the political domain and disband militancy. This development is confirmed by relevant ministries; affirming Afghan government and Taliban negotiating to arrive at a common strategy to end the conflict. The government stance seems clear exercising willingness to sit across negotiating table with the Taliban given they pledge to abide for the country's constitution and preservation of the achievements made since 2001, disband militancy and simply turn into law abiding citizens. Following the successive developments, Afghan Taliban and the government are about to devise a roadmap to finalize peace talk. The Pakistani army and diplomatic officials in their former visit to Afghanistan had declared that Afghan Taliban have signaled their willingness to initiate peace talks. According to report that surfaced the venue is still undecided. It's a good omen that broad based reconciliation between Afghan government and Taliban could bring true the "peace" dream of ordinary masses of this piece of land. Reconciliation leading to installment of peace is the ultimate necessity every Afghan longs for over decades. In order to look at the feasibility of restoration of the stalled peace process, and its durability we have to consider some ground realities in consideration. Taliban and Afghan government has been in state of war for over decade that have resulted in devastative causalities and irreparable harms to war torn country. Even if talks were to be used as a last resort to install peace then some serious breakthrough must have worked out that could soothe the insurgents to an agreeable demand prior to sitting. The most significant are the demonstration of shift instilled in Taliban's resolve to disband militancy, dissociate Al-Qaeda and surrender to constitution of the country. This move practically seems achievable but difficult given that Taliban deem to having upper hand in the fight, never surrender to government's demands instead dreams of ousting Kabul government. In spite of differences, let's put our hands together for the success and fruitful finalization of negotiations. But, there are some hard born queries to be sought out prior to making any deal. Should Taliban be given amnesty after they executed mass massacre of innocent people? Can Taliban get themselves adjusted with democracy as they are inculcated dictatorial setup? Will Taliban surrender to equal rights for women?



Promoting Religious Sensitivity!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

His mere entry into the room was good enough to catch the attention of all. He was accompanied by a strong and usually disgusting smell of a scent, which is mostly used without considering the tastes and sensitivity of others. He was wearing a typical white dress which was neat and tidy. His turban was neatly worn and he held a string of beads in his hand and his one finger was busy in rolling down the beads one after the other. His second hand was busy in gently rubbing his beard which glowed in the light. He had tried all his best to give a message that he was a true Muslim who strictly followed the teachings of Islam and it was evident from his appearance and action. When he saw that people were impressed of him, he gave that gentle smile which comes on one's face when he sees others being impressed and defeated. His appearance had at once impressed the others and now he was feeling that proud which occupies one's mind and behavior when he impresses the others. When he sat down after shaking hands with the people in the room, he was still showing his proud by slowly rubbing his beard. Later on, when he started talking, he tried his best to use more and more Arabic words in his speech. It all looked really impressive but to me it came a bit artificial when the man was overwhelmed by the desire of appearing important and winning the attention and appreciation of others by showing himself distinct and important. This is one of the numerous scenes which shows the number of people who try to gain importance and attention by using religion and they are increasing day by day and such behaviors are creating a lot many complex problems to the minds and thoughts of others, especially Non-Muslims who refer to us to see the true picture of Islam and instead we try to show the picture of religion that pleases us and makes us feel more important. In my childhood, I visited a number of religious scholars with my elders and they were the true pictures of humility and perfect behavior but one never felt their behaviors to be artificial. They talked less, showed their importance even less and emphasized on treating others nicely and serving the needy, both by their sayings and act. They were truly educated and had great respect for all those who had knowledge of any kind, be it religious or scientific. But with the passage of time, illiteracy and ignorance vanished away a lot many good things from our society and now there are those who don't have time to study books and discover the true teachings of Islam, rather they believe that only by changing the external appearance, they would be able to enter the realm of Islam and would be benefitted from its unlimited blessings. This limited but dangerous approach has established an easy way for all those who wanted any source or medium to satisfy their needs of showing their importance and this disease is spreading rampantly. This thinking approach is accompanied by a number of similar factors and as you might agree, this approach is found only in the illiterate and limited-knowledge societies of the world. Their first emphasis is to change the dress and make it 'Islamic'. I have looked upon a number of books but failed to find any statement or order that should describe the 'Islamic dress'. There are present only criteria that how much of the body should be covered and the dress should not be sex-provoking (as it happens in some cases). Except this, there is not present any obligation that one should wear the dress of any specific area or culture. With these criteria, dresses like pants, shirts, jeans and other things (which are usually termed to be 'Non-Islamic' by them) are all allowed to be worn by a Muslim. In the same way, when we show strictness in the dress of women, it attributes more to our cultural and traditional backgrounds instead of Islamic orders. Then they

have given the wrong concept of prayers. Prayers were meant to link the follower with his creator but now it is meant to gain more importance among the fellow-beings and even if we understand the true spirit of prayers or not or if we perform it with its conditions or not, we must offer the prayers so as to avoid the criticism by others and it is the reason why, our prayers are not giving the results that were promised of them and instead of offering prayers five times a day, both our hearts and minds are left unchanged and unaffected. Same is the case with Awraad (or continuous repetition of the names of Allah) as they were meant to change the condition of our minds and hearts and refine our souls but unfortunately, it has become a source of continuously cramming or redundantly repeating some names, which doesn't affect our inner world of soul and heart. When we talked of external appearance, beard is also very important. In Turkey, one who is having a beard is considered very pious and honest and he is trusted by all and people, who can rise to such degrees of religious piety and social honesty, keep the beard while it is exactly the opposite in our society. We keep beard without understanding its accompanying responsibility and with this beard, we tell lies, abuse others, cheat others and do all the bad works and defame the beard and Islam. It is the reason why, in majority of the countries of the world, a person with a beard is considered 'dangerous' and this image has been developed by us, not by the Non-Muslims. Another attribute of this ignorant mindset is emotionality and sentimentality. They would talk about impossible things, narrate the bombastic stories from past and force others to do things which may have no link with rationality and sound thinking. Of course, this habit is never alone and is accompanied by baseless, empty and exaggerated claims of spreading Islam or making similar achievements and as we see, such claims have never taken a practical shape. It is the reason why, I laugh on all those who boast that they will destroy the West or United States because the complete GDP of their country doesn't equal the annual revenue of an American multinational business organization. The biggest problem in this regard is the zeal to correct others without correcting themselves. They would always think of changing the people (of course, external change would suffice for them), and then they would like to change all the people in the world. This claim appears to be so stupid when they have not succeeded in changing themselves and they dream of changing the billions of people who are far better than them in many regards. And their dangerous impact comes in form of hatred and bloodshed because when others don't imitate them, they openly propagate hatred against them and in extreme cases; this has resulted in sectarian bloodshed and violence. Increasing violence in Islamic countries between Sunnis and Shias and this and that, stem back to the same stupid management of the religious issues. Such a fundamental and extremist approach can also be held responsible for increasing militancy and religious violence in the countries of our region. When we come to the solution side of this problem, true education seems to be the only solution. Be it religious or scientific, the more we study, more we enlighten our minds and discover the true teachings for humanity, kindness, love and humility which are only antidotes of this venom. In the end, I extend my hearties apologies for all those who are following Islam with sincerity. I respect them and laud them for their efforts but mentioning above factors was also important as they have degraded the true shape and teachings of Islam and their true followers.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. he can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com

Government Should Protect Citizens' Natural Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

Proponents of divine natural law contend that law must be made to conform to the commands they believe were laid down or inspired by God, or some other deity, who governs according to principles of compassion, truth, and justice. These naturalists assert that the legitimacy of any enacted human law must be measured by its consonance with divine principles of right and wrong. Such principles can be found in various religious texts, Islamic sources, church doctrine and the decisions of ecclesiastical courts and councils. Human laws that are inconsistent with divine principles of morality, naturalists maintain, are invalid and should neither be enforced nor obeyed. Before the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, Europe was divided into two competing jurisdictions — secular and religious. The emperors, kings, and queens of Europe governed the secular jurisdiction, and the pope presided over the religious jurisdiction. The idea that monarchs ruled by "divine right" allowed the secular jurisdiction to acquire some of the authority of religious jurisdiction. Moreover, the notion that a "higher law" transcends the rules enacted by human institutions and that government is bound by this law, also known as the Rule of Law, fermented during the struggle between the secular and religious powers in Europe before the American Revolution. For example, Henry de Bracton, an English judge and scholar from the thirteenth century, wrote that a court's allegiance to the law and to God is above its allegiance to any ruler or lawmaker. The influence of divine natural law pervaded the colonial period of U.S. law. In 1690 English philosopher John Locke wrote that all people are born with the inherent rights to life, liberty, and estate. These rights are not unlimited, Locke said, and may only be appropriated according to the fair share earned by the labor of each person. Gluttony and waste of individual liberty are not permitted, Locke argued. In the Declaration of Independence of American, Thomas Jefferson, borrowing from Locke, wrote that "all men are created equal ... and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights ... [including] life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson identified the freedom of thought as one of the inalienable rights when he said, "Almighty God has created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint." the U.S. Supreme Court recognized the importance of the divine influence in early U.S. law, stating that the "right to pursue happiness is placed by the Declaration of Independence among the inalienable rights of man, not by the grace of emperors or kings, or by the force of legislative or constitutional enactments, but by the Creator." The school of natural law known as secular natural law replaces the

divine laws with the physical, biological, and behavioral laws of nature as understood by human reason. This school theorizes about the uniform and fixed rules of nature, particularly human nature, to identify moral and ethical norms. Influenced by the rational empiricism of the seventeenth-and eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers who stressed the importance of observation and experiment in arriving at reliable and demonstrable truths, secular natural law elevates the capacity of the human intellect over the spiritual authority of religion. Many secular natural law theorists base their philosophy upon hypotheses about human behavior in the state of nature, a primitive stage in human evolution before the creation of governmental institutions and other complex societal organizations. In the state of nature, John Locke wrote, human beings live according to three principles — liberty, equality, and self-preservation. Because no government exists in the state of nature to offer police protection or regulate the distribution of goods and benefits, each individual has a right to self-preservation that he or she may exercise on equal footing with everyone else. This right includes the liberties to enjoy a peaceful life, accumulate wealth and property, and otherwise satisfy personal needs and desires consistent with the coterminous liberties of others. Anyone who deprives another person of his or her rights in the state of nature, Locke argued, violates the principle of equality. Ultimately, Locke wrote, the state of nature proves unsatisfying. Human liberty is neither equally fulfilled nor protected. Because individuals possess the liberty to delineate the limits of their own personal needs and desires in the state of nature, greed, narcissism, and self-interest eventually rise to the surface, causing irrational and excessive behavior and placing human safety at risk. Thus, Locke concluded, the law of nature leads people to establish a government that is empowered to protect life, liberty, and property. Lockean natural law prohibits the government from taking "life, liberty, or property without due process of law." The concept of "due process" has been a continuing source of natural law in constitutional jurisprudence. If Lockean natural law involves theorizing about the scope of human liberty in the state of nature, constitutional natural law involves theorizing about the scope of liberty protected by the Due Process Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. In short, man is born with natural rights, especially the rights to life, liberty and property, and the government is supposed to protect his rights. After all, the natural rights are not absolute and government can take them with "due process of law." For instance, a criminal who is sentenced to death by law, should be punished. But the gist is that government is tasked with protecting the citizens and their rights.

Hujjat Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

Chairman / Editor in Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa

Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: mail@outlookafghanistan.com, outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Omeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan

Sub Office: Shora Road, Street 10, District 6, Kartey 3, Kabul, Afghanistan

