

The Taliban Movement and the Opportunity to Establish the Khilafah (Caliphate)

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(Translated)

Yousuf Arsalan - Afghanistan

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This worldly life is like a pool of loss, from which only those who know how to seize opportunities will be saved. For this reason, the Day of Resurrection is called the “Day of Regret,” because many people have drowned in worldly loss, and failed to take advantage of the precious opportunities afforded to them in their lives. They easily squandered the golden moments Allah (swt) provided for the revival and glory of the Ummah. Conversely, the foremost in goodness will enjoy a lofty status in the Hereafter, because their most prominent characteristic was seizing opportunities and investing them at the right time.

Opportunities are like passing clouds that quickly disappear from view, or like a swift gazelle that is difficult to catch. The believer must be like a vigilant hunter, constantly seeking to seize opportunities, and carefully anticipating them. Hence, Allah (swt) places before us, in our individual and societal lives, precious opportunities from time to time, to atone for our sins, elevate our spiritual status, or attain the nasr (victory) and guidance of Allah (swt). How beautiful is the phrase, “Your Lord grants breaths of fresh air during your lifetime, so expose yourself to them. Perhaps a breath of it will reach you and you will never be miserable after that.”

We are an Ummah described by Allah (swt) as the best ummah brought forth for humanity, to lead humanity according to the laws of Islam and guide it to the truth. Allah (swt) has honoured us with Islam, provided that we adhere to it and fulfil our Bayah (pledge of allegiance) to one Khaleefah (caliph), for the complete implementation this universal Risaalah message. Allah (swt) has given us this great opportunity to live in this world, to be part of the Ummah of al-Mustafa (saw), to shoulder this noble mission, and to strive to fulfil it.

However, today we live in an era in which the Islamic Ummah lives without a Khaleefah, in a state of disunity and fragmentation. Since the abolition of the Uthmani Khilafah (Ottoman Caliphate) in 1924 CE, the Ummah has had several opportunities to establish a Khilafah. Political and military groups claiming to adhere to Islam have come to power over these past hundred years. However, once they attained power, they deviated from the application of Islam, like all other rulers. They hid behind arguments such as interest, benefit, reality, or ability, and strayed from the Risaalah message, submitting to the secular world order. In the end, they either fell, or the flame of Islam was extinguished in their hearts.

These groups, each time they came to power, failed to learn from the past and easily missed divinely granted opportunities.

Amidst this, and over the past century, special opportunities arose for Afghans to champion their Iman, and work toward establishing the Khilafah. Below, we briefly review three major opportunities in Afghanistan’s modern history in which Afghans could have taken steps toward establishing the Khilafah but failed to take advantage of them.

Although Afghanistan remained for centuries outside the formal rule of the Khilafah, a positive relationship has always existed between this land and the Caliphate. While the Ottoman Caliphate, known as the “sick man of Europe,” was grappling with multiple crises, Afghanistan was under the influence of the British Empire. Sultan Abdul Hamid II, with great insight and effort, attempted to rescue the Khilafah from this fate, but ultimately found himself

alone. He issued a general call for Jihad, calling on all Muslims worldwide to preserve the nucleus of the Khilafah.

Under these circumstances, Afghanistan refrained from taking any action, citing political and geographical excuses. Strangely, today's Afghan rulers repeat the same justifications. Interestingly, the Indian Subcontinent was also under British control and geographically farther from the lands of the nucleus of the Khilafah. However, the Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent did not stand idly by. They established the Tehreek-e-Khilafat (Khilafah Movement) and took significant steps, both financially and personally, in support of the Ottoman Caliphate.

When World War I broke out, the Uthmani Khilafah (Ottoman Caliphate) decided to enter the war for its survival and joined the German side. In 1915, a joint Ottoman-German mission arrived in Kabul, with the aim of convincing Ameer Habibullah Khan to declare Jihad against Britain and Tsarist Russia. However, he refrained from taking action, as he was under British influence and control. Although Ameer Habibullah Khan, like today's rulers, offered excuses such as geographical location and inability, the real reason behind his decision was his desire to maintain Britain's favour. In fact, Britain had promised him financial aid of 60 million rupees in exchange for adopting a policy of neutrality, but of course it did not fulfil this promise.

At that time, Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent were pinning their hopes on the Afghans, and groups of them migrated to Afghanistan, hoping that the Afghans would support them and declare Jihad against Britain. On the other hand, the Muslims in Afghanistan, contrary to the orders of Ameer Habibullah Khan, were inclined to support the Ottoman Caliphate and the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent. They viewed Britain's intervention in the World War as an opportune moment to pursue independence.

However, to curb Islamic sentiment among the people and prevent any uprising, Habeebullah Khan turned to the ulema of the court, using their influence to calm the people. The ulema prepared a circular entitled "Obedience to the Ameer" and distributed it in masajid and military barracks, urging people to adhere to the Ameer's policies and support him.

A mission from the Indian Subcontinent, led by Ubaidullah Sindhi, arrived in Kabul, where they settled with the aim of igniting the flame of hope for Jihad and Islamic unity. When Amanullah Khan assumed power and Afghanistan's war of independence against Britain began, the immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent played an active role and contributed significantly to the struggle.

After the defeat of Britain and the independence of Afghanistan, new hope was kindled in the hearts of Muslims around the world. At that time, the only independent Islamic lands remaining were Afghanistan and the Uthmani Khilafah. As Afghanistan was able to defeat Britain, which had occupied most of the Islamic lands and contributed to the collapse of the Uthmani Khilafah, Muslims' interest in Afghanistan increased and their hopes for it as a source of Islamic revival grew.

This was the first historical opportunity for the Afghans to establish a Khilafah. Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent hoped that the Afghan Jihad would continue, and that the Muslim army would move toward occupied India. They even asked Amanullah Khan to assume leadership of the Muslims, and undertake the task of reviving the Islamic Ummah and achieving its unity.

However, the Muslim immigrants were once again disappointed, as they were unaware that Amanullah Khan had been raised in a "constitutional" school and intended to follow Mustafa Kemal's policies. Nonetheless, Amanullah Khan was reluctant to outrightly reject the people's demands, especially as demands within Afghanistan for the declaration of the Khilafah grew.

At the Loya Jirga Baghman held in 1924, the abolition of the Khilafah and Afghanistan's relationship with the new Turkey were among the main topics of discussion. The ulema and

Amanullah Khan devoted a full day to discussing the Khilafah (Caliphate), but without reaching a conclusion. The discussion continued into the second day. During these two days, the ulema described the abolition of the Khilafah as a painful event and emphasized that the appointment of a Khaleefah was a Shariah obligation. Some ulema also asked Amanullah Khan to declare himself Khaleefah of the Muslims.

Mulla Turkestani, in a brief statement on the importance of the Khilafah, said, "Islamic ulema of every kind and position consider the Humayunite worthy and deserving of the Caliphate, and you must accept this lofty position." However, Amanullah Khan, with his mentality and orientation, sought to establish a nationalistic state, and he was inclined to engage with the major world powers, including Britain, against whom he waged war.

Amanullah Khan diplomatically rejected this request, offering excuses such as the unrealistic nature of the request, the inability, and even the futility of the Khilafah. In response to Mulla Turkestani, Amanullah said, "I, considering your statements and those of others, cannot bear this heavy burden, which I see as being fraught with endless obstacles, and I do not accept the division of the world of Islam. As I have stated, we must discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the existence or absence of the Khilafah. After that, the determination of its stance lies solely with the ulema of Islam."

The Islamists who have come to power thus far, who consider themselves intellectually and politically at odds with the approach of Mustafa Kemal, Reza Shah, Amanullah Khan, Sharif Husayn, and other secularists and nationalists, have not, in fact, demonstrated much difference from them. They have pursued largely similar policies.

Amanullah Khan's secular, nationalistic, pragmatic, and economically oriented policies disappointed Muslims, just as these same policies continue to frustrate Muslims today under leaders who claim to be Islamic.

The mission that had sought refuge in Afghanistan from the Indian Subcontinent gradually lost hope and was eventually forced to leave Afghanistan and migrate elsewhere. This disappointment increased particularly when Amanullah Khan signed peace treaties with Britain in Kabul and Rawalpindi, pledging that Afghanistan would not pose a threat to Britain. He also expressed his desire to establish political and economic relations with Britain, which further frustrated Muslims in India and other Islamic countries.

This opportunity was lost, but when the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan, the Afghan people rose up with unparalleled courage, declared Jihad against it, and confronted it steadfastly. With the help of Allah (swt) and the sacrifices of the people, victory was achieved, and the mujahideen gained a strong state equipped with advanced military equipment. Once again, the hopes of Muslims worldwide turned to Afghanistan.

The mujahideen, immigrants from various Islamic countries who fought alongside the Afghans, hoped that one day Afghanistan would become a centre of political power and a Khilafah, liberating Muslim countries from the grip of oppressive rulers.

Delegations from Islamic groups arrived in Afghanistan to seize this historic opportunity to establish the Khilafah. Arab and non-Arab jihadist groups were filled with hope, especially since some Afghan mujahideen believed that the Khilafah was the only Islamic system.

The mujahideen believed that "the Khilafah is a beacon of light around which Muslims flock like butterflies."

However, the Afghan mujahideen resorted to forming a nation-state and became immersed in the sedition of power. Internal disputes and struggles for influence led them to deviate from the main path, leading to their own destruction.

As a result, not only were the Afghan Muslim immigrants and mujahideen disappointed, but many returned home, while others migrated to other lands.

This was the second time the Afghans had missed a major historic opportunity to establish the Khilafah, after the fall of another empire.

This time, we are the generation witnessing the defeat of NATO and the emergence of the third divinely granted opportunity to establish the Second Khilafah Rashidah in Afghanistan and the region. The defeat of America and NATO in this land has created new hope for Muslims worldwide that Afghanistan may be able to seize this golden opportunity and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Significantly, this divine opportunity came under exceptional circumstances. On the one hand, NATO was defeated in Afghanistan, and on the other, the West was deeply preoccupied with the war in Ukraine, and the policy of containing China.

This situation represents an exceptional opportunity for Muslims in Afghanistan to take advantage of these circumstances and take a historic step toward establishing the Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate), taking advantage of their enemies' preoccupation with their own conflicts.

Now, the affliction of Muslims intensifies due to the war on Gaza, and calls are made from all over the Muslim World for the Mujahideen in Afghanistan to rise to the aid of their brothers and sisters. So a pivotal question arises, will the rulers of Afghanistan be able to seize this historic opportunity, or will they do as their predecessors did and join the ranks of those who are biting their fingers in regret?

History is a book full of lessons. Amanullah Khan, who squandered this divinely granted opportunity and chose to fulfil his covenant with Britain instead of fulfilling his pact with Allah (swt), could not have imagined that an unknown figure like Ameer Habibullah Kalakani could undermine his rule.

Isn't the fate of the Afghan mujahideen who fought against the Soviets and then took refuge in the nation-state, only to sink into worldly love, clear before our eyes?

Now, will the rulers who came to power in Afghanistan, Syria, and other Muslim countries, under the banner of Islam, continue to present the same arguments as the enemies of Islam, justifying their un-Islamic policies, even though they see the consequences for their predecessors?

Now, in this third historical opportunity, Hizb ut Tahrir clearly calls upon the rulers of Afghanistan to establish the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate.) However, what will their response be?

Will we again see a flight from divine opportunities, or will this time be a true response to the call of history and duty?

The door of opportunity remains open, and Muslims around the world, especially the Mujahideen immigrants who fought side by side with the Afghans, have always hoped for this day when the Deen of Allah (swt) will be glorified, the oppressed will be victorious, and the Khilafah will be established, unifying the dispersed parts of the Ummah and restoring its glory.

Happiness lies in the fact that this door is still open. The opportunity for today's mujahideen is to become ansaar of today, through their granting of nussrah (armed support) to Hizb ut Tahrir. However, this door will not remain open forever. Whoever has a door of goodness, opened for them, must rise up immediately and take advantage of it, because they do not know when it will close. If they do not, they will be among the regretful on the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, we warn the Ummah and its leaders against negligence and wasting these great opportunities, as Allah Almighty says, ﴿وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“And warn them O Prophet of the Day of Regret, when all matters will be settled, while they are engrossed in heedlessness and disbelief.” [TMQ Surah Maryam:39]. The opportunity is before us, but we must realize that this door will not remain open forever, and those who hesitate today will regret it tomorrow.