

Topic 14

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT 1919-1924

The Khilafat movement was a very important event in the political history of India. The Muslims of India had a great regard for the Khilafat (Caliphate) which was held by the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) joined the **war** in favour of Germany. But Turkey and Germany lost the war and a pact commonly known as **Istanbul Accord** was concluded between the Allied Forces on 3rd November 1918. According to this Pact the territories of Turkey were to be divided among France, Greece and Britain. That resented Muslim a lot and khilafat movement began.

During the war the Indian Muslims were in a very awkward position, because they had a deep-rooted devotion to the caliphate. They had profound respect for this **holy** institution. Therefore, their support to the British Government was subject to the safeguard and protection of the holy places of Turkey and on the condition that Turkey will not to be deprived of its territories. But the British Government could not fulfil both of these promises. The **Treaty of Savers 1920** was imposed on Turkey and its territories were distributed among European countries. A wave of anger swept across the Muslim World and the Indian Muslims rose against the British Government. Muslim leaders like **Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar, Moulana Shoukat Ali** and others reacted against the British Government policy and were put behind the bars.

Thus, Muslims organized a mass movement, which came to be known as Khilafat Movement. The aims of this movement were

- (a) To protect the Holy place of Turkey
- (b) To restore the Territories of Turkey
- (c) To restore the Ottoman Empire.

Besides that **congress support** also remained very encouraging for Muslims to launch khilafat movement .In December 1919 both the Khilafat Committee and Congress held their meetings simultaneously at Amritsar and a delegation was prepared which was sent to England under the leadership of Maulana Mohammad Ali Johar to see the British Prime Minister and to explain the Indian point of view regarding the Khilafat. The delegation visited England in 1920. The leaders of the delegation addressed the House of Commons and saw the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George who paid no heed to the delegations demand. The delegation stayed at London for eight months and won many hearts and sympathies of people in Britain delivering speeches. However, the delegation returned to India unsuccessful in October 1920.

After the unsuccessful visit to England the leaders of Khilafat Movement realized the fact that British were not in the mood to help them. Therefore, they realized that a new strategy needed to be adopted. With this aim they decided to launch a movement of Non Co-operation. When the leaders of Khilafat movement announced the Non Co-operation Movement, the Congress extended its full support to the Khilafat Movement. The leaders of the two met at Amritsar and resolved to launch a country wide agitation under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi.

Khilafat conferences:

- **First Khilafat Conference:** November 1919 in Delhi.
- Main leaders were Maulana Mohammad Ali Johar, Moulana Shaukat Ali & Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Gandhi.
- Main aim was to persuade British to keep their promises about maintaining the Turkish Empire.
- Resolution was passed and everyone agreed in sending a delegation to Britain to make sure that the British were aware of Muslim strength of Muslims support for the Khalifa.
- Muslims also boycotted British goods besides Hindus and adopted a policy of non-cooperation with them.
- Gandhi was an advocate of policy of passive resistance. He gave this approach the name 'Satyagraha', meaning *"not meek submission to the will of evil door but the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant"*.
- Gandhi urged Muslims to joining Congress in seeking 'Swaraj' (self-rule) for India.
- **Second Khilafat Conference:** December 1919, Amritsar.
- It was decided that all three organizations (Muslim League, Congress & Khilafat people) would be working together to oppose plans to dismember the Turkish Empire.
- Maulana Muhammad Ali visited Britain & insisted the Britain not to punish Turkey but the Prime Minister Lloyd George said *"Austria has had justice; Germany has had justice-pretty terrible justice -why should Turkey escape?"*

Mehmed VI :

Mehmed VI (14 January 1861 – 16 May 1926) was the 36th and last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, reigning from 1918 to 1922. His father was Sultan Abdulmecid I .Mehmed was removed from the throne when the Ottoman sultanate was abolished in 1922.

The First World War was a disaster for the Ottoman Empire. British and allied forces had conquered **Baghdad, Damascus, and Jerusalem** during the war and most of the Empire was divided among the European allies. In April 1920 British were granted over Palestine .On 10 August 1920, Mehmed's representatives signed the Treaty of Sevres, which recognized the mandates and recognized Hejaz as an independent state.

Turkish nationalists rejected the settlement by Sultan. A new government, the Turkish Grand National Assembly, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) was formed on 23 April 1920, in Ankara . The new government denounced the rule of Mehmed VI and a temporary constitution was drafted. The Turkish Grand National Assembly also abolished the Sultanate on 1 November 1922, and Mehmed was expelled from Constantinople. He went into exile in Malta. Mehmed died on 16 May 1926 in Italy, and was buried at Damascus.

MUSTAFA KAMAL ATATURK:

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (19 May 1881 – 10 November 1938) was a Turkish army officer, reformist statesman, and the first President of Turkey. He is credited with being the founder of the Republic of Turkey. His surname, Ataturk (meaning "Father of the Turks"), was granted to him in 1934 and forbidden to any other person by the Turkish parliament.

Ataturk was a military officer during I WW. Ataturk then embarked upon a program of political, economic, and cultural reforms, seeking to transform the former Ottoman Empire into a modern and secular nation-state. Under his leadership, thousands of new schools were built, primary education was made free and compulsory, and women were given equal civil and political rights, while the burden of taxation on peasants was reduced. His government also carried out an extensive policy of Turkification. The principles of Ataturk's reforms, upon which modern Turkey was established, are referred to as Kemalism.

Expected Questions and Answers

- Question No. 1:** Was the migration of Afghanistan the most important reason behind the failure of A Khilafat Movement?
14 June 2000. Q. 3 c
- Question No. 2:** Explain the reasons for the establishment of the Khilafat Movement. 7 November 2001. Q.2 b
- Question No. 3:** Why was the Khilafat Movement founded? 7 June 2002, Q. 3 b
- Question No. 4:** Was the withdrawal of Gandhi's support from the Khilafat Movement the most important reason for its failure? Explain your answer. 14 November 2002. Q.2 c
- Question No. 5:** Why did the Khilafat Movement fail? 7 November 2003.Q.3 b
- Question No. 6:** Was the Chaura Chauri incident of 1922 the most important reason for the failure of the Khilafat movement? Give reasons for your answer. 14 June 2004 Q.2 c
- Question No. 7:** Was the Khilafat Movement founded because the Muslims feared the break up of Turkey after the 1st world war? Explain your answer. 14 June 2005 Q. 2 c
- Question No. 8:** Explain why the Khilafat movement has failed by 1924. 7 June 2006 Q.3 b
- Question No. 9:** Was the abolition of the institution of the caliphate in 1924 the main reason for the failure of the Khilafat Movement? Give reasons for answer. 14 November 2006 Q. 2 c
- Question No. 10:** The Khilafat movement failed by 1924 because of poor leadership .Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. 14 November 2008 Q. 2 c
- Question No.11:** Explain the reasons for the failure of the K.M. 7 June 2009 Q.4 b
- Question No.12:** Why was the Khilafat Movement founded? 7 June 2010 Q.2 b
- Question No.13:** Was the migration of Afghanistan the most important reason why the Khilafat Movement failed? Explain your answer. 14 Nov. 2010. Q. 3 c
- Question No.14:** A number of events that happened during the years of the Khilafat Movement led to its failure. During the years when the Movement was at its strongest, western dress and hair styles became less popular and the idea grew that disregard of the law of Islam by the British made India a dar-ul-harb(enemy territory). Thus thousands of Muslims set off on their hijrat.
Describe the hijrat. 4 Nov. 2011 Q.3 a
- Question No.15:** 'The Khilafat Movement failed by 1924 because Gandhi withdrew his support.' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. 14 June 2012 Q.2 c
- Question No.16:** The Khilafat Movement started because of the treatment of Turkey by the British after the First World War. Turkey was a Muslim country, and its ruler, the Sultan, was considered to be the Khalifa, the head of the worldwide Islamic community. When the British threatened to take territory away from the Khalifa, the Muslims of India were outraged and formed the Khilafat Movement to protect the Sultan and their religion. One of the events that took place during this Movement was the Chauri-Chaura incident.
Describe the Chauri-Chaura incident. 4 Nov. 2012 Q. 3 a
- Question No.17:** Why did the Khilafat Movement fail by 1924? 7 Nov. 2013 Q.3 b

Answer to question No. 9

The abolition of the institution of Caliphate by the Turks themselves remained the most important reason for the failure of Khilafat Movement. **Mustafa Kamal Atatürk**, the Turkish leader established a modern democratic government in Turkey with a properly elected parliament. In this set up the caliph & the seat of Caliphate had no place. The caliph was deposed & exiled in 1924. Muslims in India were perplexed & found their movement cut at its base. Muslims in India had nothing to fight for & the khilafat Movement ended in failure in 1924.

Besides that the movement got many other set backs on account of many reasons. In 1920 the congress also started **non-cooperation movement**. The congress joined hands with the khilafat movement because both were against the British. Khilafat movement got much strength from the support of the congress. Joint protest meetings & processions of Muslims & Hindus together became a common feature throughout the sub-continent. In 1922 a procession at **Chauri Chura** (a small town in eastern U.P) was in progress. The mob became violent & set a police station on fire in which 22 policemen were burnt alive. Mr. Gandhi suddenly called off the non-cooperation movement without consulting anyone & without taking the Muslims into confidence. The Muslims were greatly discouraged at the loss of Congress support. Khilafat Movement was weakened. Mr. Jinnah had opposed the non-cooperation movement saying that it would lead to violence, and the same happened. Mr. Jinnah resigned from the Congress in 1920.

The movement got other threats as well. The **Hijrat Movement** (1921), an off shoot of Khilafat Movement failed badly. Some ulemas had declared that India was Dar-al-Harb & it was better for Muslims to live in an independent Muslim country. Therefore some 18000 Muslims mostly from NWFP sold their belongings & sought asylum in Afghanistan. In the beginning the migrants were welcomed but soon later Afghan government refused to admit them. Many perished & others returned penniless & homeless.

Another tragic event was the **Moplah Uprising** which remained *responsible for the failure of Khilafat Movement. It also affected Hindu Muslim relationship*. In mid of August 1921, agrarian riots broke out in Nilambur. The Moplah peasants revolted against the Hindu landlord's oppressive policies, which are in alliance with the British. The Hindu landlords redistributed their lands and the Moplahs, who had been suffering, rose in revolt. A pitched battle between the British regiment and the Moplahs killed several Europeans. Four thousand Moplahs were killed in action and tens of thousands were injured. Then there was the notorious **Moplah Train Tragedy**. Around a hundred prisoners, confined in a closed and almost airtight goods van, were transported by rail. When the door was opened, 66 Moplahs were found suffocated to death and the remaining 34 were on the verge of collapse.

The British government also arrested the **leaders** of the Khilafat Movement on account of their anti-government speeches & the movement was deprived of their effective & strong leadership, both Hindu and Muslim leaders were imprisoned for several years. About 30000 workers all over India were put in jails. The movement slows down. The movement was **unrealistic** & was bound to fail. The caliphate & the people of Turkey had no interest in the politics of India. Therefore agitations & protests in India were to affect the events in turkey. Far sighted people like Mr. Jinnah & Allama Iqbal didn't support the movement.

But the most important reason for the failure of the Khilafat Movement was the abolition of the institution of Caliphate by the Turks themselves. Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, the Turkish leader established a modern democratic government in Turkey with a properly elected parliament. In this set up the caliph & the seat of Caliphate had no place. The caliph was deposed & exiled in 1924. Muslims in India had nothing to fight for & the khilafat Movement ended in failure in 1924. Therefore the abolition of the institution of caliphate in 1924 was the main reason for the failure of the khilafat Movement.