

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire faced dismemberment. Under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, the Muslims of South Asia launched the historic Khilafat Movement to try and save it. Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi linked the issue of Swaraj with the Khilafat issue to associate Hindus with the movement. The ensuing movement was the first countrywide popular movement.

The Muslims of India had a strong feeling of identity with the world community of Islam. They had seen the decline in the political fortunes of Islam as the European powers conquered the Muslim lands one after the other.

The general impression among the Muslims of India was that the western powers were waging a war against Islam throughout the world in order to rob it of all its power and influence. The Ottoman Empire was the only Muslim power that had maintained a semblance of authority and the Muslims of India wanted to save the Islamic political power from extinction.

Muhammad Ali argued that for Muslims to accept mandates over Iraq, Syria and Palestine would amount to a total disregard of the wishes of the Holy Prophet (S. A. W.). Thus the Muslims of India launched the Tehrik-i-Khilafat. The objectives were as follows:

- To maintain the Turkish Caliphate.
- To protect the holy places of the Muslims.
- To maintain the unity of the Ottoman Empire.

There was absolute unanimity among the Indian Muslims. Though separated from Turkey by thousands of miles, they were determined to fight Turkey's battle from India.

Many events happened during the struggle of the movement in which one was the arrest of the Ali brothers in September 1921 which gave a severe blow to the Khilafat Movement. Gandhi, who was using this movement to accelerate India's advance towards Swaraj, also withdrew his support for the Muslim cause in the aftermath of the Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922.

In 1924, Turks under Mustafa Kamal were consolidating their position in Turkey. They announced an end to the Khilafat. It was a great blow to Indian Khilafatists who had been campaigning on behalf of Turkey and Khilafat.

Although the Khilafat Movement failed to achieve its declared objectives, it carried political awakening to large masses of Muslims. It was during the Khilafat days that representatives of Indian Muslims came into contact with eminent personages from other Muslim countries to save the semblance of unity in the world of Islam.

The Khilafat Movement was an asset for the struggle of Pakistan. It made clear to the Indian Muslims to trust neither the British nor the Hindus, but to look to their own strengths for self-preservation.