

Lessons for the Ummah on the Centenary Anniversary of the Indian Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) to protect the Khilafah

One of the greatest calamities to befall the Ummah is the destruction of the Khilafah (Caliphate) on 3rd March, 1924 (Rajab, 1342 Hijri). This was the day when the Sharia of Allah (swt), the rulings of the Qur'an ceased to be implemented in society. This was the day when the Muslim Ummah lost its shield and was exposed to the colonialist disbelieving wolves to devour it. The destruction of the mighty Khilafah sent shock waves across the Muslim world. Muslims could not imagine a world without the Khilafah, a world devoid of the laws of Allah (swt), a world in which Islam would be reduced to the dictates of Secularism and Democracy. This dark day in history saw voices being raised against the abandonment of the Khilafah, the most prominent among them being the Khilafat Movement of the Indian Subcontinent. This movement was started by the Ali brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Maulana Shaukat Ali in the year 1919 who sensed the British plan to destroy the Uthmani Khilafah. In this article, we aim to derive lessons for the Ummah from this noble movement.

I. OBLIGATION OF THE KHILAFAH

The Khilafah has been central to Islam. Muslims in their 1400 history of Islam have always understood the Khilafah to be one of the fundamental obligations of Islam without which Islam would be reduced to a set of religious rituals and rites. Muslim scholars of the Indian subcontinent have always considered the institution of the Khilafah as a fundamental obligation. One of such prominent scholars was Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (1703-1762 CE) who was revered by Muslims from various schools of thought. One of the famous works of Shah Waliullah (rah) was *Izalat al-Khafa'an Khilafat al-Khulfa* (ازالة الخفاء عن خلافة الخلفاء) where he discusses in depth regarding the centrality of Khilafah in Islam and its institutions. In this book, he defines Khilafah as *“the general authority to undertake the establishment of Religion through the revival of religious sciences, the establishment of the pillars of Islam, the organisation of jihad and its related functions of maintenance of armies, financing the soldiers, and allocation of their rightful portions from the spoils of war, administration of justice, enforcement of hudud, elimination of injustice, and enjoining good and forbidding evil, to be exercised on behalf of the Prophet (peace be upon him)”*[1]

The scholarly legacy of Shah Waliullah was inherited by the founders and prominent members of the Khilafat Movement. He was accepted as legitimate authority in Islamic sciences by Deobandis, Sufis, Salafis and political reformers and thinkers like Maulana Mawdudi.

II. BROTHERHOOD IN ISLAM

The current Westphalian nation state model changed the allegiance and loyalty of citizens to their country. However, Islam transcends such nationalistic boundaries and bases allegiance on the concept and idea of Islam. It is best described in the words of our beloved Prophet (saw).

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *«مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ، وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحَمَى»* ***“The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.”*** [Bukhari, Muslim]

At a time when Muslims are smitten by the rotten idea of Nationalism, the Khilafat Movement was representative of the global united Muslim brotherhood under a single ruler i.e. the Khalifah. An attack on the Muslims in Delhi was no different from an attack on the Muslims of Turkey and both these scenarios resulted in the same response. And when Rasoolullah (saw) considered the Muslim Ummah as one body, how can there be different responses for similar pains in the hands and the legs. World War 1 resulted in heavy

casualties in the Uthmani Khilafah. The voices from India supporting their Muslim brethren is the reflection of the true understanding of the Islamic Brotherhood.

When the news of the Shareef of Makkah revolting against the Uthmani Khilafah reached India, the Ali Brothers refused to believe it thinking that this was false news and it was insulting to Islam to even entertain such a possibility [4]. The All-India Khilafat Committee declared in one of its meetings that Indian Muslim soldiers should refuse to serve the British government in any war with Turkey citing that it was haram for a Muslim to take up arms against his brother. [5]

III. ESTABLISHING AN UNCOMPROMISING ISLAMIC IDENTITY

India was part of the Khilafah until the British colonized it in 1857, the aftermath of which saw the rebellion of the Muslims against the British. This period also saw the rise of Indian nationalism to oust the British. One of the prominent Indian nationalist movements was the Indian National Congress (INC) founded in 1885. Though both these struggles were against the British, it should be noted that the Muslims had a much more noble cause to fight and oust the British i.e., the continuation of India as Dar-ul-Islam and as a province of the Khilafah. Muslims stood steadfast in holding this identity of Islam without any compromise. The INC joined and supported the cause of the Khilafah believing that this was the only way to gather the support of the Muslims to align with their nationalist movement.

Muslims while working with the Hindus in the struggle against the British never compromised the identity of Islam and Islamic concepts. As for the cooperation with the Hindus, this was made clear in a fatwa that it was permissible to have political alliances and friendly relations with non-Muslims who were not hostile to Islam, yet stressed the point that the leadership of an infidel (kaafir) over Muslims is never permitted [6].

IV. MUSLIMS UNITING FOR THE CAUSE OF KHILAFAH

Muslims from various schools of thought became part of the Khilafat Movement. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from the Zahiri (literalist) school of thought worked together with Usuli Ulema in the struggle to maintain and protect the Khilafah. They set aside their differences and worked for the definitive issue of the protection and implementation of the laws of Allah (swt) which is possible only with the existence of the Khilafah. A notable scholar from the Deobandi school of thought was Maulana Mahmood Hasan who endorsed and participated in the movement after his return from Malta prison in 1920.

Another prominent member was Maulana Abdul Bari from the famous Firangi Mahal Madrasa. Maulana Abdul Bari was from the Qadiri and Chishti order of Sufi thought. Abdul Bari was very active in raising funds for Turkey in 1911 along with his Madrasa students in Uttar Pradesh. He came into contact with the Ali Brothers during this activity and he later became an active member of the Khilafat Movement [7]. The Khilafat Movement also saw participation from Shia scholars like Amir Ali. Keeping aside their valid theological differences, they united with the Sunnis to save the Uthmani Khilafah to which they had already pledged allegiance. The Khilafat Movement became a widespread movement in the Indian Subcontinent, spreading in almost all the states. An active member of the Khilafat movement was Ali Musliyar in Kerala.

V. POLITICS IS AN INSEPARABLE PART OF DEEN

One of the disastrous influences of Secularism on Muslims is the alienation of the concept of Politics in Islam. However, this was not the case in the history of Indian Muslim Scholarship, the effects of which are seen in the Khilafat Movement. Politics is an inseparable part of the Deen as mentioned in the hadith. The Prophet (saw) said: «كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ، كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي، وَسَيَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْتُمُونَ. قَالُوا فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا قَالَ فُوا بِنَبِيِّهِ» *The Israelis used to be ruled and guided by prophets: Whenever a prophet died, another would take over his place. There will be no prophet after me, but there will be Caliphs who will increase in number.* The

people asked, "O Allah's Messenger (saw)! What do you order us (to do)?" He said, "Obey the one who will be given the pledge of allegiance first. Fulfil their (i.e. the Caliphs) rights, for Allah will ask them about (any shortcoming) in ruling those Allah has put under their guardianship." [Bukhari]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his famous Urdu magazine, Al-Hilal, writes that the Muslim who wishes to separate religion and politics is an apostate who works silently [2]. Mufti Kafayatullah, a student of Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan during a speech before the Muslim League, said "*True Muslims had never considered religion and politics as separate entities.*" [3]

VI. SACRIFICES FOR THE KHILAFAH

Remembering the famous Urdu quote of Bi Amman, the mother of the Ali Brothers "*Boli Amma Muhammad Ali Ki Jaan Baita Khilafat Pay De Do*" (The mother of Muhammad Ali said "My Son! Give your life for the Khilafah"). She, herself, used to give speeches supporting the cause of Islam. Once when she was arrested and imprisoned, she said: "My sons! Hold fast to Islam with all your might. Never mind even if your life is sacrificed in the cause of Islam." Her blessed children lived for her words; they were at the forefront for the vital issue of Islam i.e., the protection of the Khilafah. May Allah (swt) bless Bi Amman and her righteous children, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali! Ameen!

Another prominent example is Maulana Mahmood al-Hasan who tried to gather his students for Jihad in order to protect the Uthmani Khilafah, famously known as the Silk Letter Movement. In this process, he was imprisoned by the British when he travelled to Makkah owing to the treachery of Shareef Hussain. He was imprisoned in Malta prison for 3 years where he underwent one of the worst tortures. During his funeral wash, people were shocked to find that there was neither fat nor flesh around his waist. During his imprisonment in Malta, a red-hot rod was applied to his waist and was said to him "Mahmud al-Hasan! Deliver a fatwa in favour of the British". When his pain subsided and he regained his senses, he would say "O British! I am Bilal's heir, my skin may melt away but I shall never deliver a fatwa in favour of the British."

VII. THE DANGER OF THE LACK OF POLITICAL AWARENESS

The Khilafat Committee collected funds and sent them to the Ankara government in Turkey in 1921 headed by the traitor Mustafa Kemal. Only after his open abolishment of the institution of the Khilafah, the members of the Khilafat Movement came to know about his treachery. The traitor, Mustafa Kemal, was influenced by the ideas of the Young Turk Movement and the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P) which was based on Secular, Liberal and Nationalistic ideas. He collaborated with the British to wreck the Uthmani Khilafah from within and establish a Democratic state based on a nationalistic identity.

Mustafa Kemal established a parallel government in Ankara in 1921 and tried to establish a public opinion against the Khalifa claiming that he was a British agent. He projected himself as the saviour of the Muslims and an enemy of the British. But he was in fact an enemy of Islam and Muslims who represented the kufr ideas of Turkish Nationalism and Secular Liberalism [8].

Political awareness protects the Ummah from the plans of the Kuffar and helps it to identify the enemies of Islam and Muslims. Political awareness is a necessity of Islam established from the principle "ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به، فهو واجب" i.e. "That which is necessary to accomplish an obligation, is an obligation."

CONCLUSION

Muslims are ever indebted to this noble movement which attempted to save the Khilafah. There are indeed great lessons for the Ummah from this sincere and noble struggle to save Islam. We are obliged to ponder upon this struggle of our great Ulema of the Indian

Subcontinent and strive to re-establish the second Khilafah Rashida bi-idhinillah in the Muslim world and take the Ummah to its rightful place to lead Humankind out from the Darkness of Democracy and Secularism to the justice of Islam. Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ﴾ **“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you.”** [Al Baqara:143] Dear Brothers! Hizb ut Tahrir has been continuing this struggle for the past six decades to resume the Islamic way of life through the re-establishment of the second rightly guided Khilafah. We tread the clear path defined through the Ijtihad of our first Ameer Shaykh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani and we have not altered or compromised on this path. This caravan started by Shaykh Taqiuddin has progressed and has shaken the thrones of the tyrants in the Muslim world. The members of this party have suffered some of the worst tortures and punishments in the dark dungeons of these tyrants. But these tortures only strengthened the resolve of its members to continue the work to re-establish Islam. Rasoolullah (saw) said: «أفضل الجهاد كلمة حق عند سلطان جائر» **“The best Jihad is the word of Justice in front of the oppressive Sultan”** (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, ibn Maja)

Dear Brothers! Almost a century has passed without the rule of Allah (saw) on earth. The Ummah has been orphaned and it has been devoured like how a pack of wolves devour its prey. The treacherous agent rulers of the Muslim world have abandoned the Ummah. The criminal acts of oppression against this noble Ummah only increases day by day. Do we not remember the hadith of Rasoolullah (saw), «إنما الإمام جنة يقاتل من ورائه ويتقى به» **“Only the Imam (the Khaleefah) is a shield behind whom you fight and you protect yourselves”?**

Oh Muslims! The time-limit for the appointment of the Khaleefah i.e., 3 days have passed long ago, post which all Muslims would be sinful. The obligation of the Bay’ah to the Khaleefah who will implement the Sharia of Allah (saw) has been mentioned in the hadith «مَنْ خَلَعَ يَدًا مِنْ طَاعَةِ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا حُجَّةَ لَهُ وَمَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً» **“Whoever removes his hand from obedience (to the ruler) will meet Allah with no proof for himself, and whoever dies without the pledge of allegiance (to the ruler) upon his neck dies a death of jahiliyya”** (Muslim).

O’ Noble Ummah of Muhammad (saw)! The return of the Second Khilafah Rashidah is near! The Prophecy of Rasoolullah (saw) is nearing its fulfilment! So, Rush to the Khair and be part of this noble struggle and fulfil your obligation of establishing the Khilafah!

«ثُمَّ تَكُونُ خِلَافَةً عَلَىٰ مِنْهَاجِ النَّبُوءَةِ»

“...then there will be Khilafah upon the Prophetic method”

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