

Khilafat movement

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



The Caliphate is an Islamic system of governance in which the state rules under Islamic law. Caliph literally means " successor" or " representative" and emphasizes religious authority for the head of state. It was adopted as a title by the Umayyad Caliphs and then by the Abbasid Caliphs, as well as by the Fatimid Caliphs of North Africa, the Almohad Caliphs of North Africa and Spain and the Ottoman Dynasty. Most historical Muslim rulers were sultans or amirs, and gave token obedience to a caliph who often had very little real authority.

Moreover, the Muslim clergy, the ulema and the various Sufi orders, exercised more religious influence than the Caliph. In the Turkish Ottoman Empire though, the emperor himself was the Caliph. [edit] Ottoman Caliphate Main article: Ottoman Caliphate Ottoman emperor Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) had launched his Pan-Islamic program in a bid to protect the Ottoman empire from Western attack and dismemberment, and to crush the Westernizing democratic opposition in Turkey. He sent an emissary, Jamaluddin Afghani, to India in the late 19th century.

The cause of the Ottoman monarch evoked religious passion and sympathy amongst Indian Muslims. Being a Caliph, the Ottoman emperor was the supreme religious and political leader of all Sunni Muslims across the world (although this authority was titular in practice). A large number of Muslim religious leaders began working to spread awareness and develop Muslim participation on behalf of the Caliphate. Muslim religious leader Maulana Mehmud Hasan attempted to organise a national war of independence against the British with support from the Ottoman Empire.

He was overthrown by a secretive nationalist group called the 'Young Turks.' Abdulhamid was succeeded by his brother Mehmed VI (1844-1918) but real power lay with the nationalists. [edit] Partitioning Further information:

Partitioning of the Ottoman Empire See also: Occupation of Istanbul and Turkish War of Independence The Ottoman empire, having sided with the Central Powers during World War I, suffered a major military defeat. The Treaty of Versailles (1919) reduced its territorial extent and diminished its political influence but the victorious European powers promised to protect the Ottoman emperor's status as the Caliph.

However, under the Treaty of Sevres (1920), territories such as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt severed from the empire. Within Turkey, a pro-Western nationalist movement arose, Turkish national movement. During the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1924) led by one of the Turkish revolutionaries, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, abolished the Treaty of Sevres with the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). Pursuant to Ataturk's Reforms, the Republic of Turkey abolished the position of Caliphate in 1924 and transferred its powers within Turkey to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. [edit]

Khilafat in South Asia

Although political activities and popular outcry on behalf of the caliphate emerged across the Muslim world, the most prominent activities took place in India. A prominent Muslim cleric and journalist, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jouhar had spent four years in prison for preaching resistance to the British and support for the caliphate. At the onset of the Turkish war of

independence, Muslim religious leaders feared for the caliphate, which the European powers were reluctant to protect.

Ali and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali joined with other Muslim leaders such as Sheikh Shaukat Ali Siddiqui, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Raees-UI-Muhajireen Barrister Jan Muhammad Junejo, Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Hakim Ajmal Khan to form the All India Khilafat Committee. The organization was based in Lucknow, India at Hathe Shaukat Ali, the compound of Landlord Shaukat Ali Siddiqui. They aimed to build political unity amongst Muslims and use their influence to protect the caliphate. In 1920, they published the Khilafat Manifesto, which called upon the British to protect the caliphate and for Indian Muslims to unite and hold the British accountable for this purpose.

In 1920 an alliance was made between Khilafat leaders and the Indian National Congress, the largest political party in India and of the nationalist movement. Congress leader Mohandas Gandhi and the Khilafat leaders promised to work and fight together for the causes of Khilafat and Swaraj. Seeking to increase pressure on the British, the Khilafatists became a major part of the Non-cooperation movement — a nationwide campaign of mass, peaceful civil disobedience.

The support of the Khilafatists helped Gandhi and the Congress ensure Hindu-Muslim unity during the struggle. Khilafat leaders such as Dr. Ansari, Maulana Azad and Hakim Ajmal Khan also grew personally close to Gandhi. These leaders founded the Jamia Millia Islamia in 1920 to promote independent education and social rejuvenation for Muslims. The non-

cooperation campaign was at first successful. Massive protests, strikes and acts of civil disobedience spread across India. Hindus and Muslims collectively offered resistance, which was largely peaceful.

Gandhi, the Ali brothers and others were imprisoned by the British. However, the Congress-Khilafat alliance began withering soon. The Khilafat campaign had been opposed by other political parties such as the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. Many Hindu religious and political leaders identified the Khilafat cause as Islamic fundamentalism based on a pan-Islamic agenda. [edit] Collapse In wake of these disturbances, the Ali brothers began distancing themselves from Gandhi and the Congress.

The Ali brothers criticised Gandhi's commitment to non-violence and severed their ties with them after he suspended all non-cooperation movement after the killing of 23 policemen at Chauri Chaura in 1922. Although holding talks with the British and continuing their activities, the Khilafat struggle weakened as Muslims were divided between working for the Congress, the Khilafat cause and the Muslim League. The final blow came with the victory of Mustafa Kemal's forces, who overthrew the Ottoman rule to establish a pro-Western, secular republic in independent Turkey.

The Khilafat leadership fragmented on different political lines. Leaders such as Dr. Ansari, Maulana Azad and Hakim Ajmal Khan remained strong supporters of Gandhi and the Congress. The Ali brothers joined the Muslim League. They would play a major role in the growth of the League's popular appeal and the subsequent Pakistan movement. There was, however, a Caliphate Conference in Jerusalem in 1931 following Turkey's abolition of the

Khilafat, to determine what should be done about the caliphate. [2] [edit]

Legacy

The Khilafat struggle evokes controversy and strong opinions. It is regarded as a political agitation based on a pan-Islamic, fundamentalist platform and being largely indifferent to the cause of Indian independence. Critics of the Khilafat see its alliance with the Congress as a marriage of convenience. Proponents of the Khilafat see it as a major milestone in improving Hindu-Muslim relations, while advocates of Pakistan and Muslim separatism see it as a major step towards establishing the separate Muslim state.

The Ali brothers are regarded as founding-fathers of Pakistan, while Azad, Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan are widely celebrated as national heroes in India. The cause of establishing an Islamic State by reviving the caliphate system has been adopted by organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-e-Islami umbrella groups in South Asia, founded in 1941 by Maulana Maududi, Hizb ut Tahrir, as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.