# *Khilafat Day in Sind on 17 October 1919*

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In the beginning of the twentieth century the British policy towards Muslim states, especially Turkey continued to add to the anxieties of the Muslims of the sub-continent. In 1907 Britain signed a convention with Russia namely Anglo-Russian agreement. In 1911 Italy attacked Tripoli and war broke out between Italy and Tripoli.[1] In October 1912 the Balkan also declared war with Turkey. These developments soon attracted the attention of the Muslims of India who were deeply perturbed. They sent a medical mission and collected huge sums of money to remit to Turkey. Zafar Ali Khan went to Turkey and handed over the collected money. In 1913 the Indian Muslims formed an association called *Khuddam-ul-Ka'aba* at Lucknow.[2]

In 1914 the World War I began and Turkey was in the alliance against Britain. The Indian army was sent to fight for Britain against Turkey. As the Indian army contained a great number of Muslims in its rank, the situation was indeed grave. But old habit of loyalty asserted itself. Confidence in the British sense of fairness overcame Muslims' suspicions and misgivings. In consequence, Muslims of the sub-continent took their full share in the war effort. Turkey was defeated in World War I and now the Allies were openly dismembering the Ottoman Empire. The Muslims were also horrified to think that the holy places would come under the Christian influence. Justification was sought for supporting Turkey through insisting upon the religious character of the Khilafat. The Muslims were beginning to take rose-coloured view of the future of Turkey. In consequence, they decided to celebrate the Khilafat Day on 17th October 1919 throughout the sub-continent.[3]

The Khilafat Day was celebrated in Sind in a manner befitting the solemn occasion. Hindus and Muslims all joined without any distinction of creed and caste. Prayers for the continuance and

protection of the Ottoman Khilafat-ul Muslimin were offered all over the province; even most of the small villages took an active part. Public meetings were held at almost all the important centres. Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Hala Old, Sukkur, Larkana, Amort, Shikarpur, Taluka Garhi Yasin, and other places observed the Khilafat Day. Ladies meetings were held at Hyderabad and Sukkur.[4]

Reports from all these places showed that fasting was observed both by men and women. Hindus also observed Upvas (fasting). In some places where meetings were held, refreshment had been provided for those Hindus who had observed fasts. A brief summary of the proceedings and resolutions which were passed at different places under presidency of different persons are given below.

The Khilafat Day, Friday, 17th October 1919, was suitably observed in Karachi. Hindus and Muslims fasted the whole day. After the Friday prayers, special prayers were offered in every mosque for the continuance and permanence of the temporal power of the Khalifa. The meeting was presided over by Seth Haji Abdullah Haroon, President of the Sind Provincial Khilafat Committe, in Khalikdina Hall at 7-30 P.M. Thousands of Hindus and Mussalmans were present and the Hall was packed to its full capacity. The proceedings opened with recitation from the Holy Quran which was done by Hafiz Khan Mohammad Sahib. Then Seth Haji Abdullah Haroon read his thoughtful address in Urdu and threw light on the problems regarding the Khilafat and Khalifa, on the satisfactory solution of which, the learned president thought the future peace and progress of the world dwelt on the promises hitherto made by responsible British Ministers on the fulfilment of which, he said, the Muslims had every right to insist. Then a poem was sung by Munshi Abdul Ghani in a melodious tone. This poem brought home to the Muslim mind the extent of the present Islamic decline as a result of the contemplated dismemberment of the Khalifa's dominions. The following resolutions were passed :—

> "That this public meeting of the Mussalmans of Karachi held under the auspices of Sind Provincial Khilafat Committee, after prayers for the continuance and permanence of the temporal power of the Khilafat-ul-Muslimin, approves and adopts the proceedings of the All India Muslim Con-

ference held at Lucknow on the 2nd Sept: 1919 and expresses its greatest anxiety over the threatened dismemberment of Turkey and removal of the holy places of Islam from the Khalifa's control, and trusts that British Ministers will secure fulfilment of the pledge of the Right Hon'ble Lloyd George, given on behalf of the British Empire regarding Turkey, for otherwise there will inevitably be created an unheaval among the Muslims threatening alike the peace and progress of the world in general, and giving rise to strong and deep rooted discontentment within the British Empire in particular.[5]

This resolution was supported by Mr. Abdul Rehman Bar-at-Law, Maulvi Mohammad Sidique and Mr. Ali Mohammad.

The second resolution ran as under :—

"With a view to safeguard the integrity of the Turkish Empire and maintain the Ottoman Khilafat's necessary control over the holy places of Islam, by means of carrying an effective propaganda in England and elsewhere, including the proposed organ of the Muslim opinion in London, this public meeting of the Mussalmans resolves that a fund for the proposed object be started and appeals be made to all brethren-in-faith and their sympathisers to make liberal contributions towards the same."

The third and the last resolution authorised the president "to forward copies of the first resolution by wire to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India, His Excellency the Viceroy, H.H. Aga Khan and the Hon'ble Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Bhurgri."[6]

A vote of thanks to the president was moved by Mohammad Khan and *Seth Tayab Ali Ali Bhai,[7] and thus terminated the splendid meeting, the memory of which will ever be cherished in the minds of all and which will be remembered in the history of the sub-continent.

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*Mr. Tayab Ali was a businessman. He was born at Karachi in 1875 and died at the age of 90 on 13th March, 1964. He participated in the Khilafat Movement and attended several conferences.

The Khilafat Day was celebrated at Hyderabad with great enthusiasm. On the mere announcement of Maulana Abdul Bari, Mussalmans had voluntarily stopped business. Maulana Taj Mohammad came down to preside and was welcomed by Hindus and Mussalmans. At the Friday prayers, special prayers were offered in the mosques for the safety of Khilafat, Turkey and Jazeeratul Arab. In Sadar, the whole mosque was overcrowded. In the afternoon a long procession of several thousand Mussalmans on foot passed through the main bazar. Never before in the history of Hyderabad had such a long procession been taken out[8] Then public meeting was held at Holmstead Hall. The proceedings started with the recitation from the holy Quran by *Maulana Hafiz Asadullah Sahib.[9] Then Mian Mohammad Hashim, editor of the "Kachkol" read a poem for the occasion. Then †Noor Mohammad Shaikh[10] spoke on behalf of the convener of the meeting and explained the purpose of the gathering. Then president Taj Mohammad Amroti delivered his speech and stressed the importance of the Khilafat and the necessity for the integrity and independence of Turkey.[11]

Then Abdul Jabbar, a lawyer read his speech and proposed the following resolutions :—

> "That the spiritual supremacy and the status of the Khalifa-i-Muslimin are inseparably bound up with his complete political independence and therefore any scheme that aims at his removal from the seat of the Khilafat or from political independence would be considered by the entire Muslim world as a direct encroachment upon their faith and violation of the pledges given to Mussalmans by chief spokesmen the British empire."

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*Maulana Asadullah Sahib was born on 30th November 1864 at Matyari village. He enrolled himself as a student in Deoband to learn Sindhi and Arabic. When Khilafat Movement started in Sind, he participated in it and attended several conferences.

†Sheikh Noor Mohammad was a doctor. He was born at Hyderabad. He passed his Matriculation examination from Hyderabad and passed M.B.,B.S. from Bombay. At the time of Khilafat Movement he participated in it and also migrated from Sind to Afghanistan.

Simultaneously, an appeal was made to the Government not to disregard the doctrine of the Jazeeratul Arab in the following words :-

> "That the time has come when Mussalmans respectfully demand that the British Government should fulfil promises made to the Muslim world with regard to Turkey and holy places, and to uphold the principles for which the Allies fought as those promises and principles were in no small measure instrumental in increasing the enthusiastic support in men and money, which the Mussalmans gave to the British in the hour of their need."[12]

Mr. Sheikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi delivered a beautiful speech which made both Muslims and Hindus weep and moved a resolution on Greek atrocities in Asia Minor.

Another resolution was passed in connection with the anti-Khilafat propaganda in Sind, in which an appeal was made to the Governor, that a committee be appointed to enquire into the astonishing revelations made by the press and remove the fears of Muslims in Sind, regarding the intention of the Government in this connection.[13]

Then Sheikh Noor Mohammad traced the history of the movement and showed how it had been started and during which the Ulema of Sind had unanimously held the Sultan to be the rightful Khalifa. He drew attention to the statements of Maulvis of Sind and how their signatures had been obtained for a pamphlet which was written by Maulvi Faizul-Karim. He drew attention to the articles of the "Al-Haq" and "Sind Muslim" and showed that this movement had all the characteristics of the political propaganda. Mian Mohammad Ismail Sahibzada of the Peer of Jhando made an appeal to the Governor of Bombay to hold an enquiry into this affair. A committee was appointed to form a Khilafat committee and the meeting was dispersed.[14]

The meeting was a great success and the people were most orderly throughout. The most important feature of the Khilafat Day was the Mussalman Ladies meeting. Never before had a meeting of Mussalman Ladies taken place in Sind.

A meeting of the Muslims was held on 17 Oct: 1919 at Larkana under the presidency of Mr. Ghulam Ali at the local Eidgah. Mr.

Jan Mohammed Junejo, Pir Turab Ali Shah, Pirzada Abdul Ghaffar, Bar-at-Law and many others participated. In this meeting Moulvi Mohammad Aqil read the Khutba and then the following resolution was unanimously passed :—

> "The Mohammadans of the town and district Larkana in mass meeting assembled at Eidgah to support All India Muslim Conference Larkana which was held on 20th Sept: 1919 and requested the Government that integrity, dignity and prestige of the Ottoman Khalifa and safety of the holy places shall be preserved for the Mohammadans of the world".

A telegram was sent on Friday to the Viceroy to graciously accept and convey the above resolution.[15]

A mass meeting of the Muslims of Radhan was held on the same day under the presidency of Syed Hafiz Misri Shah and passed the resolution on the integrity of the Turkish Empire and the maintenance of the Khilafat of the Sultan of Turkey. The copies of the resolution were sent to the Sind Provincial Khilafat Committee Karachi for transmission to the Government.

Another general meeting was held under the presidency of Mohammad Hashim Baloch, Zamindar, near the Jamrao Canal, Taluka Mirpur Khas.[16]

A meeting was held at Sukkur on the same day near Mir Masum Shah Minar under the presidency of Maulvi Abdul Khaliq Morai. This meeting was well attended both by Hindus and Muslims. Before the holding of the meeting refreshments were provided in an adjacent bungalow. In this meeting Mr. Taj Mohammad moved a resolution against the dismemberment of Turkey and Khilafat. It was seconded by Moulvi Din Mohammad Wafai and supported by Mr. Virumal, editor "Sindhi" and Moolchand Pessumal who all read their speeches to avoid the risk of being misreported. During the course of the proceedings an old woman appeared and brought a message that Pardha Nashin ladies of the town had assembled and passed resolution against the dismemberment of Turkey and Khilafat and they desired the organisers of the meeting to send the resolution passed by them on their behalf to the Prime Minister and the Viceroy.[17]

The Khilafat Day was observed at Rohri by holding a meeting at Jamia Masjid to protest against the threatened dismemberment of Turkey. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Kazi presided and Kazi Abdul Razzak moved the resolution against the dismemberment of Turkey which was seconded by Ali Bux and supported by Mr. Hirasang. After the special prayers, the resolution was passed.[18]

The Khilafat Day was observed in other places of Sind where public meetings were held under the presidentship of different persons as village Razi Mohammad Araf, Pir of Jhandho, Bakrani Road (District Larkana), Goth Shah Qulipur (Taluka Garhi-Yasin), Goth Thai (Taluka Garhi Yasin), Goth Ruk, Goth Garhi Budhal (Taluka Shikarpur and Taluka Garhi Yasin).

Reports from all these meetings and resolutions which we have given above show that there was no Hartal on Khilafat Day but almost all the Muslims and Hindus observed fasts and joined without any distinction of caste and religion. It also shows how keenly the people of Sind were concerned about the designs for dismembering the Khilafat and Turkey.

## Footnotes


1. T. W. Arnold: *The Caliphate*, pp. 191-196.
2. *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1962, Vol. III, Part I, Chapter V.
3. Rahim, M. A., Chughtai, Zaman, W. Hamid, A.: *A Short History of Pakistan*, edited by I. H. Qureshi, Karachi, 1967, p. 181.
4. *Contemporary Pamphlet*, approx. dated 17th Oct. 1919, p. 39.
5. *Contemporary Pamphlet*, approx. dated 17th October 1919, pp. 13-24.
6. *Daily Gazette*, 18th October 1919.
7. G. M. Syed: *Janab Guzariam Jan Seen*, 1967, pp. 216-219.
8. *Contemporary Pamphlet*, approx. dated 17th October 1919, pp. 25-26.
9. G. M. Syed; *Janab Guzariam Jan Seen*, pp. 174-175.

10. G. M. Syed : *Janab Guzartam Jan Seen*, p. 178.
11. *Contemporary Pamphlet*, approx. dated 17th October 1919, pp. 25–28.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid, pp. 23–32.
14. Ibid.
15. *Daily Gazette*, 31st October 1919.
16. *Contemporary Pamphlet*, pp. 34–35.
17. *Daily Gazette*, 21st October 1919.
18. *Daily Gazette*, 27th October 1919.