

The Role of Khaksars in Freedom Movement (1931-1940)



Muhammad Ali	Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. mali@kust.edu.pk
Muhammad Asim	MS Scholar, Pakistan Studies, Islamia College University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. asimbs2019@gmail.com
Shafi Ullah	BS Hons, Pakistan Studies, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. ullahshafi32@gmail.com

Abstract: *Inayat Ullah Khan, best known as the 'Allama Mashriqi' was a religious reformer, political activist and above all a revolutionary leader, who stood up against the colonial powers by initiated the Khaksars Movement in Indo-Pak Sub-Continent in 1931 with the distinctive notion of revolutionary politics that captivated the hearts of millions of South Asian Muslims. Mashriqi's influence was dramatic enough at the heights of his strength to over shadow far more well-remembered events in the great drama of Muslims identity creation in South Asia. It was Al-Mashriqi and his Khaksars who made the headlines for observers at that time, who had no idea where history would lead in the coming years. Scores of the Allama's followers were shot dead by the police after intentionally defying curfew orders in Lahore's Old City, in a defying movement of Colonial brutality, which was less than a mile away where the Muslim League delegates were gathered for the landmark annual session at Minto Park. Hence, the role of Khaksars is undeniable in the freedom movement.*

Keywords: *Allama Mashriqi, Khaksars, Freedom Movement.*

Introduction

The Khaksar Tehrik was basically a social movement established by Allama Mashriqi at Lahore on 25th August, 1931 for the plight and poor conditions of the crowds in India, to free India from the foreign rule and to establish a Hindu-Muslim government in India. Primarily, the membership of the Khaksar Movement was open to everyone without any fee irrespective of the religion, race and caste or social status etc. But, their stress was on the brotherhood of mankind and being inclusive for all the people (Syed, 2022).

Early Life and Education of Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Mashriqi:

Allama Mashriqi was born on 25th Aug: 1888, in

Amritsar in the family of Atta Mohammad Khan. Allama had four Wives, i.e. Zubaida Begum, Jannat Bibi, Saeeda Begum and Basharat Begum. Basharat Begum is still alive. Inayat Ullah Khan received his early education at home, after which he was admitted in 6th class at B.N Public School in 1897. Soon after, he was considered as one of the best student and awarded a scholarship. He passed the middle standard examination in 1900 standing 1st in the district. He also won certificates of proficiency in Mathematics, Persian and Arabic. After passing Intermediate, he was shifted to Lahore for further studies and in 1906; he passed his B.A examination from the Forman Christian College (Kundi, 1989).

Similarly, he passed his M.A (Mathematics) from the Punjab University at an age of only 20 years by securing 1st position in the province and toppling all the previous records. On the occasion, even his professor, S.N. Das Gupta says about him that; 'I never seen such a wise person like him in Mathematics in the whole Punjab'. The Daily Tribune, lauded his performance by saying that; 'will anyone say that the Muslims do not know Mathematics'

Similarly, the Governor of Punjab hosted a party in his honour and he received felicitations from all parts of the country through telegrams and letters. However, he travels to England for further study and enrolls at Cambridge University's Christ Church College, where he stays for roughly five years (1907-1912). The Cambridge Daily News termed him as; 'the best all round Indian student ever at Cambridge' and thought to be the 1st man to take honours in four different triposes (final exam in Cambridge University) (Kundi, 1989).

Career:

After finishing his studies at Cambridge, he returned home. So, he was presented a post of a minister in Indian State at a high salary of R.S = 1000/, but he declined the proposal to assign himself for some academic work. Therefore, he has preferred education as his profession. In this respect, he had applied for a professorship to the Secretary Board of Education, White Hall, London in October, 1911. So, in 1913, when the Islamia Collegiate School was established, he joined as a Vice Principal of the School and in the same year he was also appointed as a Vice Principal of Islamia College, Peshawar. He served at Islamia College for about four years (1913-1917). Later on, he was promoted to the Principal post, but worked on that post for only 06 months. (History Pak.Com, 2012)

Besides this, he also worked as a Principal of Training College, Peshawar, Government High School, Peshawar, Inspector Schools and Registrar NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Later on, he was also offered the ambassadorship of Afghanistan at the age of 32 years, but he declined it too. He was the first person who included Theology, i.e. 'teaching of the Holy

Quran' in the curriculum of government schools in NWFP, despite strong opposition of the government. He also wrote one of the famous book, '*Tazkirah*' in which he describes the deprivation and insensitivity of the Muslims and the planning of the British aspirations to awaken Muslims of the world. So, he started thinking about their resistance, turning his attention away from all other things and spent all the wealth of his knowledge on his dream work (Pakistan Zindabad, 2009).

Similarly, in 1913, he published another book, 'Isharaat' on the reforms and Muslims regenerations all over the world. Actually, it is an attempt to initiate the process and give practical shape to his concept of the Quranic Program by launching the Khaksar Movement at Lahore, on 25th August, 1931. In 1931, Allama decided to bring out a Khaksar Paper from Lahore under the name of 'Islah', which played a key role in introducing the Khaksar Movement throughout the country. In 1937, the NWFP government paved away restrictions on the Khaksar Movement. So, Allama warned the government to lift all the limitations by 15th Oct: 1937, then the Khaksars would be forced to break them. Therefore, the NWFP administration lifts all the constraints on 2nd Aug: 1937, Allama called it a unique victory (Pakistan Zindabad, 2009).

In the World War-II, Allama offered services of the 50,000 Khaksars to the British government, for providing an opportunity to the Muslims for gaining military training. At the same time, Allama published an exciting Article entitled, 'The majority or the blood', in which he describes that; 'India belongs to the Indians. The Nation that will offer a greatest sacrifice for the sake of defense of the country, will have the right to rule it in future. So, the Muslims are abler to offer sacrifices of life. Therefore, they have the right to rule India in future'. Similarly, in 1945, Allama published a Constitution, entitled; 'The Constitution of Free India', which is generally known as Khaksars Constitution. Actually, it is an answer to the British Challenge, providing that he is not only a soldier, but a statesman and as well as a good Constitutionalist. (Kundi, 1989)

Nobel Prize Nomination:

In 1924, he wrote a Book, '*Tazkirah*' (a scientific interpretation on the Holy Quran), which was tabled for the Nobel Prize. He wrote this book in the age of 36 years. But, when the Nobel Prize Committee asked him to transform the book into any major European language, he denied to do so. As, he reflected it to be an insult to the millions of Urdu speakers. (Nasim Yousaf, 2016)

Allama's Works: Allama Mashriqi was a renowned scholar. His works are as:

- ✓ A letter to the International Community of Scientists and a treatise, '*Hadithul Quran*'.
- ✓ Book of two volumes on the Holy Prophet (PBUH), entitled as '*Takmilah*'.
- ✓ *Tazkirah*.
- ✓ *Isharaat*.
- ✓ *Qaul-e-Faisal*.
- ✓ *Hareem-e-Ghaib*.
- ✓ *Armughan-e-Hakeem*.
- ✓ *Dah-al-Bab*.
- ✓ *Kitab-e-Misir (The Egypt Address)*

After leading a very eventful life, Allama died of cancer on 27th August, 1963 in 75 years of age at Albert Victor Hospital (Mayo Hospital) and was buried in a corner of his house at Ichhra, Lahore (Sumbal, 2021).

Khaksar Movement:

After serving 17 years in the education sector, Allama Mashriqi launched a movement, known as Khaksar Movement at Lahore on 25th August, 1931, which starts with about 90 Khaksars and reach its peak to flourish within no time. It was basically a volunteer movement and most of its supporters were from middle class of the society. Initially, Khaksar Movement was a Social Movement based in Lahore, Punjab and British India with the ambition of releasing India from the rule of British Domain, to lift the common people, to recover the vanished glory of Muslims and to create a Hindu-Muslim government in

India. That's why; affiliation of the Movement was open to everybody and had no membership fee irrespective of the person's religion, race, and caste or social prestige.

Therefore, the stress was on the brotherhood of mankind and being all-encompassing for all the people. The Khaksar Movement had five million uninformed Khaksars along with countless supporters and sympathizers. Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Untouchables and Christians of the NWFP witnessed with their own eyes that one order of Khaksar-e-Azam 'Allama Mashriqi' sets in motion five million Khaksar soldiers. To give a sense of the massive size of organization, Tehrik's Army was bigger than the current armies of USA, China, India, Pakistan and many other countries.

The Tehrik also had thousands of offices in all around India and around the world. The Khaksars were required to bear their own expenses and devote time to the cause. This helped to develop the spirit of self-reliance and encouraged the Khaksars to spend their own money for the national cause. Similarly, the publication of 'Al-Islah' gave a fresh energy to the movement by dissemination to Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Yemen and some other nations of Europe as well. So, the five million Khaksars shook the pillars of British Rule in India (CSS Forum, 2023).

Purpose of the Khaksars Movement:

Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Mashriqi felt the need to launch a movement to safeguards the Muslims interests to discipline them and to prepare them to fight for their rights especially, in the Sub-Continent. So, for this purpose he started the famous Khaksars Movement at Lahore on 25th August, 1931.

Aims & Objectives of the Khaksar Movement:

Every movement or party is formed for the attainment of certain aims & objectives. So, every effort is made to achieve such objectives. In the same manner, Khaksar Movement was also founded for some definite objectives, which are as follows:

The main objective of Khaksar Movement was the nationwide unity, discipline, strength, renaissance of Islam, the restoration of past brilliance, Jihad, Sacrifice, purification of soul and the service of mankind etc. Following 24 principles and 14 points makes objectives of the Khaksar Movement, which are discussed as follows one by one (Amalendu De, 2009).

24 Principles of the Khaksar Movement:

- A khaksar should not have any hostility with any Muslim.
- He should exercise tolerance towards neighbouring powers.
- He should create soldierly qualities in himself.
- He should implicitly obey his salar's instructions.
- He should always be prepared to make any sacrifices, including that of his wife and children in the name of Allah and Islam.
- He should adopt the habit of punctuality.
- He should have no fear, except the fear of Almighty Allah and his Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- He should think about collective domination of Islam on earth.
- He should create spiritual powers and kill devilish and lustful desires.
- He should serve the mankind without expecting any reward.
- He should say his five time prayers.
- He should not discriminate between the human beings on the basis of caste and colour by standing side by side with them.
- He should do Parade and March like a soldier daily.
- He should not be lazy and careless in his habits.
- He should keep the Spade with himself

as his weapon, considering it the Sunnah.

- He should wear khaki uniform and a red badge, signifying brotherhood.
- He should exchange military salute when he meets other Khaksars.
- He should buy his provisions preferably from the Khaksar dealers.
- He should not argue with another Muslim about his religious beliefs.
- He should carry on his efforts to bring all sections of Muslims together.
- He should observe silence.
- He should be a man of action and deed but not of words.
- He should not discuss with other Muslims his political beliefs.
- He should invite all the Muslims to join the congregation of the Movement. (Kundi, 1989)

14 Points of the Khaksar Movement:

- We, the Khaksars wish to crush all communal feelings and religious prejudices of the human race and create in the line of divine command a system based on equality, tolerance and brotherhood, in which all Nations may lead a life full of justice, piety and peace.
- Islam of the 1st Century is the true Islam and a Khaksar soldier should so mould his conduct and creed as to make them consonant with the actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- The theocratic way chalked out by the present day Mullah is wrong. The Khaksar soldier has taken up arms to bring an end to this theocracy and re-establish the system introduced by the Holy Prophet (PBUH).
- There was no class of Maulvis in the 1st Century of Islam. Therefore, the Khaksars are endeavouring to replace it

by the Imams (an organized group, which may provide the Nation with the rule of 'Shariat').

- A Khaksar does not trifle with any sect of the Muslims community. He considers freedom of sect is the right of every Muslim. That's why; he stands for unanimity of action among different groups.
- A Khaksar soldier reflects it the religious right of every Muslim to act in accordance with every injunction of the Quran and Sunnah and is prepared to make every loss to preclude the regime that time from exercising political or legal restrictions in this respect.
- A Khaksar respects the religious and social sentiments of Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews and even the untouchables. He also respect their cultures, ways of life, traditions and believes that the secret of Islamic State in India which lasts for about thousand years lays in this conduct.
- A Khaksar considers it as the first duty of his organization to defend the rights of every citizen internally and externally.
- A goal of the Khaksar soldier is to gain supremacy and collective political domination of the community in the world.
- A Khaksar aims at creating a single 'Bait-ul-Mall' and is against separate and different 'Bait-ul-Malls'. For this purpose, he is always prepared to give any sacrifice. The objective this 'Bait-ul-Mal' is only to collect money for the next several years.
- A Khaksar considers that; he can prosper in the world through his pious treatment and nondiscriminatory performance with everyone. These qualities of character more or less are found in every religious block.
- A Khaksar consider it his duty to help in

the expansion of trade of his fellow Khaksars by improving their economic conditions in this way. For this, he is always prepared to give any sacrifice. It is his firm belief that, one who does not work hard can't be a source of strength and success of the movement.

- We, Khaksars are the deadly enemies of impious, opportunists, traitors, paid agents, anti-nation editors in the newspapers, propagandists, communal mischief-mongers belonging to any group, sect, organization and religion. We stand to avenge upon such people and are prepared to pay any price for it (Kassam, 2018).

Organizational Structure of the Khaksar Movement:

The nature of Khaksar organization is a semi-military organization, which aims at strong discipline, military training and social service. While, Khaksars are classified into the following categories:

1. **Mujahid:** Mujahid is a person who attends the daily proceedings of 'Mohallah Jamaat' regularly and punctually.
2. **Mahfuz:** Mahfuz is a person who obtains certificate after receiving three months training. On the basis of which, he is on five months provisional leave to attend every general gathering, emergency gathering and every camp for a week without an excuse.
3. **Quaid:** Quaid is a true Muslim, whose evenings are occupied by his profession, but has practical sympathy with the Movement and is prepared to turn up without any excuse on order at the time of need.
4. **Muavin:** Is a true Muslim, who is unable to join the daily activities of movement due to some genuine reason, but is all the time ready to help and co-operate with the movement.
5. **Janbaz:** Is a person, who signs a pledge

with his blood and agrees to lay down his life when called upon to do so.

6. **Pakbaz:** Is a person, who not only takes the prescribed Khaksar oath, but is ready to donate all his belongings for the movement (Raza, 2015).

Conditions of Joining the Movement:

There are four conditions of joining the Khaksar Movement, which are as follows:

1. For Mujahideen, Mahfuzeen, Pakbaz and Janbaz the age limit was considered to be (18-40) years. While, Quaideen and Muavineen were exempted from any restriction of the age.
2. Belief on the Almighty Allah.
3. Belief on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last messenger and prophet of Allah.
4. Belief on the Dooms Day.

In addition to this, each Khaksar has to give the following undertaking that: I, Mr. so and so, do solemnly declare that, I shall offer my life for the domination of Islam, shall show willing submission to the 'Salar', shall abide by the principles of the Movement, and if shall deviate from my solemn pledge, I may be condemned to a hell. In addition, Non-Muslims are permitted to join the Movement if they acknowledged 'Tawhid', 'Al-Akhirah' and 'principles of the Movement'. (Yousaf, 2011)

Program of the Movement:

The Idara-e-Aalia Centre of the Movement presents the following programs for the Khaksars;

- Daily routine drill.
- Juma prayer.
- Weekly congregation and action.

Dress of the Khaksars:

Every Khaksar and Salar without any distinction wears khaki trouser or shalwar kamiz as his uniform. While, as a mark of distinction Khaksars have to wear a badge of Hilal on the right arm bearing, i.e. crescent and a star having the word 'Akhuwat' (fraternity) under the

crescent and a star. (CSS Forum, 2018)

Symbol of the Organization:

The official symbol of Khaksar Organization is the Belcha (Spade) due to its religious significance, i.e. 'Battle of Ditch'. Moreover, Allama praises the Belcha's utility in the following manners:

- Belcha is the symbol of labour, which is a dominant class in the world.
- It made England a ruler (super power) over the nations, because it was used in the coal and iron mines etc.
- It is also a symbol of power, because it reflects equality and manly power.
- It shatters the arrogance, which caused the down-fall of Muslims.
- Using Belcha for a public service is an act of worship in a real sense.
- It increases the martial discipline and glory of Muslims ten-fold.

Misuse of the Belcha:

Misuse of Belcha is strictly forbidden in the Khaksar Organization. Anyone who misuse it, would be expelled from the organization.

Flag of the Khaksar Organization:

Flag of the Khaksar Organization is of red colour, which is a sign of sacrifice. There are four opposite stripes on it also, which shows rays of the light of Islam to be spread around the world. Also, there is crescent and a star on the flag, which denotes that the celestial beings and the mortals, who inhabit the earth, are all equal.

Khaksars Literature:

The Khaksar literature was published in a magazine. In 1934, Allama decided to bring out a Khaksar journal from Lahore under the name of 'Al-Islah'.

Titles & Medals:

The Khaksar Organization is a martial organization. So, like other armed forces, its soldiers are also decorated with titles and medals for valour, gallantry and bravery. Following are the medals of Khaksar organization, which were

given to soldiers on different occasions of performances.

➤ **Nishan-e-Hurriyat:**

This medal is awarded to someone having the highest and exemplar performance.

➤ **Nishan-e-Sadaqat:**

This medal is awarded to a person having extreme honesty and sincerity towards the organization.

➤ **Nishan-e-Sahebiat:**

This is an honoured medal in the form of a flag, which is awarded to a person having outstanding performance. (Kundi, 1989)

Failures and Achievements of the Khaksar Movement:

After knowing all about the august sacrifices and popularity of the Khaksars Movement, it would be pertinent to ask, why did the movement fail after all.

❖ **Failures:**

Some of these causes of failure are as:

- One of the main causes of its failure was the Allama's prejudiced attitude against the Ulema and the Maulvis. Because, he used a very derogatory language against them in his writings by judging all the Ulema and Maulvis with a single yard stick. Therefore, in response the Ulema and Maulvis reacted and started to run him and his movement down in public speeches. As a result of which, the movement fails, which is a great loss?
- During the World War-II when the movement published its treatise, 'Aksareyat ya Khoon' it became clear that, it is not only a religious and social organization, but also a political one. So, the British Government had apprehensions about it and also other political parties look upon them with suspicion because of rivalry, which ultimately caused failure of the movement.
- The movement was banned as an

unlawful organization after its bloody encounter with the police on 19th March, 1940, which pushed them into the background and they had to subordinate their ambitious goal of Muslims domination over the whole of India, to that of the attainment of Pakistan only.

- The abortive attempt Rafiq Sabir on the life of Quaid-e-Azam contributed in no small measure to bedeviling the movement, because it outraged the sentiments of Muslims in general and the Muslim League in particular. Although, the court had not indicted the movement of involvement in the incident, but the public was very much dis-illusioned and in a response Justice Habib Ullah Khan and Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang said good bye to the Khaksar Movement.
- Lack of harmony in the thoughts of Allama and Quaid-e-Azam also contributed to its failure.
- The Britishers used much repressive measures to kill the movement.
- Another cause is the hostility of Anglophile Muslim leaders.
- The allotment of different ranks was also one of the causes of decline because of jealousy and disobeying orders of their seniors.
- The movement and its objectives were rebellion in the present state of affairs in India (Yousaf, 2023)

❖ **Achievements:**

It is true that the movement could not achieve the goal for which it was started. But, still it attained some achievements, which are as follows:

- The incident of 19th March, 1940 at Lahore created a firm determination in Muslims of the Sub-Continent to attain a separate motherland for their own in order to protect their rights and interests. Three days after the 19th March incident, a resolution was passed in a meeting of

the Muslim League at Lahore, which later came to be known as ‘Pakistan Resolution’ and as such this incident proved as an impetus for the Pakistan Resolution.

- In the incident of 19th March, khaksars give a message by opposing Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in the Punjab, because Sikandar Hayat did not want the Muslim League to gained ground in the Punjab.
- The movement made Khaksars to serve the people without any obligation or reward, which in turn inculcated the spirit of sacrifice among the Muslims.
- The movement presents two sects of Muslims, i.e. ‘Shias and Sunnis’ from shedding each other’s blood in senseless riots in Lucknow.
- The movement inculcated, values of discipline and order by organizing a section of the Muslim nation militarily, for which they would be highly appreciated and applauded (Chawla, 2018)

Conclusion:

The Khaksar Movement was a well-organized and disciplined organization and its role in the Independence Movement is as of All India Muslim League. Because, its military uniform and soldierly discipline had a great attraction for the Muslims, which was particularly very popular among the youth. Social sector and Ghalba-e-Islam (ascendancy of Islam) were its mottoes. Khaksars had their parades in the city streets and helped all those who needed help. It helped against the bigotry and narrow minded sectarianism of the so-called priestly class and infused a spirit of ‘Jihad’ in minds of the Muslim youth. It dominated the political and social scene of thirty’s and in a short span of time it surpassed the all other similar organizations in popularity.

But, since the very inception of the movement, the British government looked upon it with suspicion and distrust, because they were fully aware of the capabilities of its leader ‘Allama Mashriqi’ who had long been in the government

service with them. Allama was not only a Scholar and a scientist of high repute, but also a religious Scholar whose authority was acknowledged all over the Muslim world. Therefore, the British government was apprehensive that, a movement sponsored by such a man could not stay as merely religious and harmless. So, the British government adopted measures to suppress the movement from the very beginning.

All sorts of restrictions were imposed on Khaksars in NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Punjab, but they emerged as a strong force towards the end of 1939. Thus, (1931-1939) was the success period of the movement, because during this period many demands of the movement was accepted by the governments of NWFP, Punjab and UP. Seeing the growing popularity of movement, Non-Muslim communities got scares of it. Therefore, they organized their respective communities on similar military lines and the government looked upon these developments as a threat to the peace and tranquility of the country. But, Allama gave an assurance that the Khaksar Movement was a non-political and non-communal organization. Despite these assurances, the British government could not tolerate the activities of Khaksars.

So, the British government started a regular vilification campaign against the movement and every effort was made to crush the movement at the hands of Chief Ministers of the respective provinces. Consequently, the Khaksars came into clash with the government on 19th March, 1940. A khaksar contingent was fired upon, killing and injuring a large number of them, which shattered the movement and it began to fail.

After 1940s, successors of the Allama, ‘Barrister Mian Ahmad Shah and Bashir Ahmad Siddiqui’ tried their best to run the movement, but in vain. Because, the Muslim League had now gained much popularity throughout the country and emerged as the sole representative party of all the Muslims of the Sub-Continent. From the above discussion it is concluded that; the Khaksars if appropriately co-ordinated in the blustery days of March, 1940s, it could ascertain

very remarkable in the most vital years of Pakistan Movement.

For example, if they stood by the Muslim League after 1940s tirelessly, Muslims cause in the Sub-Continent would have promoted the most, because if the Muslim League has been backed by the disciplined military force of Khaksars, then the British government and Congress could not have dared to impose a wrong partition of the Sub-Continent on Quaid-e-Azam. But, due to the lack of patience of Allama Mashriqi, chaotic political optimism, antagonism towards some quarters and absence of appropriate atmosphere for a standby leadership, the Khaksars Movement fails to achieve his goals.

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