

Reinterpreting the Concept of Caliphate through Gadamerian Hermeneutics Approach

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Abstract: The idea of the Caliphate has been an issue in Indonesia in recent years. We can witness that there is a movement which aims for replacing the concept of Indonesian government with the "Khilafah Islamiyah". There have been worries that this concept is narrowly interpreted and that is only for the purpose of political-power. If so, we fail to understand the meaning of the caliph in a larger landscape. Using Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, it is hoped that we can understand the meaning of the concept of caliphate to be more comprehensive. Understanding the text can not be separated from the tradition in which the interpreter is located. Thus, the interpreter needs to broaden his present horizon to reach the horizon of the text. The fusion of the horizon is to produce a new understanding. To understand the caliphate more fully, we must expand our horizon to reach the horizon of the text; the horizon of the Qur'an, the hadith, and the history of the concept of the caliphate. Technically, this paper uses literature study method. The results of this paper show that the concept of the caliph is a conceptual substance concerning humans who performs universal good deed on earth.

1 INTRODUCTION

The idea to the discourse of caliphate has become the trending issue in Indonesia in the last few years. At least, it is Islamic radical movement affiliated to ISIS in Indonesia that voices the idea (Sumandoyo, 2018). There is also HTI which also provokes the idea of caliphate in each of its campaign. They have been promoting to replace the ideology of Pancasila with the idea of caliphate (Hayati, 2017). According to *Deutsche Welle* report, there are also a number of people and high school and university students who have become the members or sympathizers of the caliphate movement in Indonesia that vocalizes the idea of caliphate as a substitute to the Republic of Indonesia. Their motivation varies. Some want to be back to the correct track of Islamic teaching. Some intend to strengthen the bond among Moslem brothers. Some are not satisfied with the present political system, etc.

The narrowed meaning or comprehension of only political power can be seen at the movement of Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia. Hizbut Tahrir is an Islamic political party with its mission of building

Islamic Caliphate (Hayati, 2017). To figure out how Hizbut Tahrir narrows the interpretation of Caliphate into only relations to issues of power politics, we can see the definition provided by Taqiyyudin al-Nabhani, the founder of Hizbut Tahrir:

"The Khaleefah is the man who represents the Ummah in the ruling and authority and in the implementation of the Ahkam Shari'ah (Divine Laws). Islam has decreed that the ruling and authority belong to the Ummah. It is she who appoints someone who runs that on her behalf, and Allah has made it obligatory upon the Ummah to execute all of the rules of Shar'a." (al-Nabhani, 1996).

In the view of the writer, the narrowed interpretation of the meaning of caliphate into only political issues or political power can create a lot of problems. Not only this narrowed interpretation can be used practically to obtain power by certain group of people, but it can also fundamentally lead us to failure to interpret the meaning of caliphate in a larger landscape. In contrast, caliphate brings many meanings depending on its function and context in Islamic discourse.

In al-Nabhani's definition above, a caliph is interpreted as a person representing Islamic people or Muslims to be the ruler who implements Islamic laws. Some problems then appear. Does the caliph only deal with the problems of power politics? Is it only Muslim who can be caliph or can anybody? What is a caliph? This writing means to answer those questions.

Using Hermeneutics Method of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the author tries to purify the interpretation of 'caliph' from a lot of text manipulation and distortion of certain ideological and political interest. To comprehend text using Hermeneutics Method of Hans-Georg Gadamer is closely related to two basic concepts; thus history of influence and fusion of horizons (Hardiman, 2015). In this case, Gadamer intend to state that text interpretation cannot be separated from the tradition or culture where the interpreter lives. Therefore, the interpreter should broaden his present horizon of thinking into the horizon of thinking the earliest text was written. The fusion of horizon of thinking of the interpreter and the text is to project a historical horizon which differs from the present horizon of the interpreter and the horizon of the earliest text, thus producing a new perspective.

To comprehend the idea of caliphate, we need to broaden our horizon into the horizon the text was written which was the way of thinking or horizon of the noble Quran, Hadith and the history of the concept of caliphate. This is in line with the basic principles of Hermeneutics Method of Hans-Georg Gadamer: The whole text is understood through parts of it, and new parts can be understood through the whole (Grondin, 2002). Then, we can fully understand the meaning of caliphate; it is not only the replacement of power, but it means conceptual substance about human who performs universal good deed on Earth.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The word 'caliph' in language means 'a person who replaces other and reign the position' (Ma'luuf, 1908). The word caliphate in Arabic is Khaleefah and it has three letters "kha", "la", and "fa". And the base word "khalafa" earlier means 'at the back' (Shihab, 2007). According to Quraish Shihab (2007), from this comprehension the word khaleefah is often defined as 'substitute'. However, this base word actually has several forms and meanings

depending on the context of use which is repeated 127 times in 12 words formation in noble Quran (Rahim, 2012).

Meanwhile the word "khaefah" in singular form is written twice in noble Quran, thus in Al-Baqarah verse 30 and in Sad verse 26. In its plural form, there are two words used (Risalati, 2008). The first word is "khalaiif" which is mentioned four times in Al-Anám verse 165, in Yunus verse 14 and 73 and Fatir verse 39. The second word, "khulafa", is mentioned three times in Al-A'raf verse 69 and 74 and Al-Naml verse 62. The different form of plural form of "khalifah" refers to the faith of the person (Rahim, 2012). On one hand, "khalaiif" is used to refer generally to human and specifically to those with faith. On the other hand, the word "khulafa" is used in the context of discussing the non-believers. However, Quraish Shihab explains a quite different matter. To him, the use of "khulafa" has a meaning of political power on managing a certain region while the use of word "khalaiif", for Shihab, is not included in the meaning of power politics (Shihab, 2005).

3 RESEARCH METHOD

The concept of Gadamer's Hermeneutics can be found in his popular masterpiece, *Truth and Method*. With this method he wants to state that the duty of Hermeneutics is philosophical duty that puts forward the importance of phenomenological description. This is clearly stated in his introduction: "*My real concern was and is philosophic: not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing.*" (Gadamer, 2006).

To comprehend the concept of Gadamer's Hermeneutics, we need first to comprehend the main principle in Gadamer's Hermeneutics. This principle questions the idea of comprehension. That is to comprehend the whole we have to comprehend the parts, and to comprehend those parts we have to comprehend wholly. In other words, to comprehend a text we cannot investigate partly of the whole meaning of the text as the meaning continues to change through time. So there is no single, universal and final interpretation; interpretation can develop. The relation of the two is *mutual*: the individual text elements change their meaning following the whole, it is the same as the change of the whole with its parts (Dobrosavljev, 2002). To put it simply, we can

see the parts and the whole influence each other like an unfinished circle.

So, in the circle of Gadamer's Hermeneutics, we find that there is effort to search for meaning in the relation between the parts and the whole to find coherence in order to comprehend text as a whole. The duty of readers according to Gadamer is to comprehend the text, thus what the text is (Grondin, 2002). When a reader reads the text, he does not only follow the claim of the writer, but more importantly, he also needs to comprehend the *subject matter* of the text.

To come into comprehension of *subject matter* of the text, Gadamer does not think that the meaning is solely defined by the interpreter. There is a role of prejudice, authority, pre-structure that help the interpreter into the text. The truth is not relative, neither it is defined by the interpreter's arbitrary because the interpreter himself follows the rules defined by his tradition (Hardiman, 2015; Dobrosavljev, 2002). Gadamer talks about the pre-structure of Hermeneutics which is tradition and authority of horizon where the subject is. The awareness of history is also essential in searching the meaning of the text because history is not only objective phenomenon isolated from us, but we are ourselves in the (Gadamer, 2006). Gadamer tries to dig deeper for the purpose of this comprehension for Hermeneutics, thus effective history which is a term related to our involvement in history in which we are the doers and are not beyond the history.

As for his awareness of effective history Gadamer points at the concept of *Horizontverschmelzung* or the fusion of horizons. We can say that horizons are actually prejudice that exist in tradition and the prejudice can be changed by other prejudice so that the horizon can develop. In other words, our interpreted horizon is defined by our own prejudice which develops through tradition where we live. As said by Hardiman (2015), there are two main characteristics of horizon pointed by Gadamer in his masterpiece *Truth and Methode*. First, horizon is not enclosed but open. Second, horizon is not static but dynamic. The past horizon is not over and we cannot leave it behind and present horizon is constantly forming enriching itself from past horizon.

Because the comprehension of horizon is not closed but dynamic, there is no clean horizon-based comprehension without effect or influence from different horizon. Gadamer places the process of comprehending as something moving in the horizon

(Kushidayati, 2014). It means the interpreter does not have opinion over history and tradition. Comprehending then is a process that involves voltage of different horizons or a fusion of horizons. The fusion of horizons is not assimilation of different kinds of horizons, but it is an intersection of horizons. The duty of interpretation is to project a historical horizon different from present horizon. Therefore, interpretation is not to reconstruct or represent the meaning of the past but fusion of tradition and present interpreter in such a way that a new interpretation is created (Regan, 2012). The focus of Gadamer is not on the writer but on interpreter and how he can understand the text (Rutt, 2006).

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At least there are three meanings of "khalifah" presented in many verses of noble Quran (Ma'shum, 2013). First, the meaning of "khalifah" refers to Adam which is a symbol of first human and that is why it can be said that human functions as God's guardian. Second, the meaning of "khalifah" refers to a substitute or successor. Third, the meaning of "khalifah" refers to the leader of nation.

4.1 Human as Caliph

In noble Quran, human has special place on this planet. Human is a caliph as written in Al-Baqarah verse 30:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." (Departement of Religion, 1971).

Like the interpretation presented by Quraish Shihab, this verse describes a dialogue between Allah and angels about His decision in planning the creation of human on Earth. The telling to angels about this decision was important because the angels will be given a lot of duties related to human. And the telling about the plan, was likely after the universe had been created and ready for human (Adam) to live in comfortably (Shihab, 2007). Hearing the plan, the angels asked the meaning of human

creation. The angels predicted that human would only destroy and make bloodshed on Earth. Perhaps, the angel's prediction was based on their experience before human was created when a different creature behaved. Or perhaps their prediction was based on assumption that God would create human, a non-angel kind, which means that human would be different from the angels who always praised the God. To respond the questions of the angels, the God only answered simply without justifying or blaming them because the God knows that there would be a creature among his creation who would behave such way as predicted by the angels. "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." (Shihab, 2007).

The history of human, according to noble Quran started with Adam. However, the word "khalifah" in that verse does not only refer to Adam only, but it does to the generations after him. This opinion is presented by great mufassir, Ibnu Jariir Ath-Thabary, who describes the meaning of khalifah in this perspective.

"...is a generation which some of them replace the others. And they are Adam's descendants who replace Adam, their father. Each generation replaces other generation." (Ath-Thabary, 1968).

With this perspective of Ibnu Jariir, therefore, all humans starting with Adam are caliphs. Furthermore, Ibnu Jariir then used the perspective or opinions of Ibnu Mas'uud and Ibnu Abbaas in explaining the duties of caliph on Earth.

"The caliph was Adam and others who occupy their position in obedience to God and implement law among God's creatures in fairness. Those who destroy and make bloodshed without rights are not the God's caliphs." (Ath-Thabary, 1968).

The opinion of Ibnu Jariir was then followed by great mufassirs after him, such as Ibnu Katsiir and Al-Qurthuby. To the writer, the opinion of Ibnu Jariir is likely to be correct. This due to the fact that since the verses related to caliph is associated with the duties of a caliph. This is particularly described in Fatir verse 39, Hud verse 61, and Al-Zariyat verse 56, which explain the position of human and his relation to God and environment (Rahim, 2012). On the other hand, human who has no faith to God and who does not prioritize obedience to God and

who only prioritize his desire is called "khalifun", not "khalifah". This is stated in Maryam verse 59:

"But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil -." (Departement of Religion, 1971).

With the description above, we can conclude that a "caliph" is human who takes turns to be God's guardian to keep power on Earth to execute God's provisions.

4.2 Caliph in the Definition of Political Power

Caliph, in general, is somewhat different in its meaning when compared to the meaning of leader of nation. Ath-Thabary, for instance, defines a caliph of leader of nation as "the highest leader (sultan/king) who replaces former leader to manage the government duties" (Ath-Thabary, 1968). Meanwhile, a caliph in its general description as discussed above is a human who in turns becomes God's guardian to keep power on Earth to execute God's provisions.

A caliph in its definition as the leader of nation and in its general definition has difference. The leader of nation is appointed and dismissed by a legitimate government. He also has rights and obligation to manage his government of an area and its people to aim for prosperity. How he achieves his goals very much depends on his governmental system. Meanwhile Islam does not give a definitive description what kind of governmental system Moslems should use (Rahim, 2012; and Ma'shum, 2013). In addition, a caliph in its definition of leader of nation is a profession which is considered completed when the period of its government finishes. Meanwhile in its general description a caliph does not take his position through legitimate or official appointment and he cannot be dismissed directly by anybody. Nevertheless, generally a caliph who does not perform his obligations may lose his caliphate at all and then is called as "khalifun" as described above.

The difference in obtaining his position, either in general definition or in definition of leader of nation can be referred to Al-Baqarah verse 30 and Sad verse 26. "[We said], "O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so..." (Departement of Religion, 1971). Quraish Shihab,

for instance, sees the use of singular form of caliph in Al-Baqarah verse 30 on God's plan to create Adam is a reasonable decision (Shihab, 1996). This is because at that time there had not been humans who socialized, and even the creation of Adam was just at the level of idea. The redaction used in noble Quran in Al-Baqarah verse 30 is "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority...". On the other hand, in David's case, the redaction used is plural and in past form, "[We said], "O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so...". This redaction signals that there was another party besides God in David's appointment as the leader or caliph. Therefore, it can be concluded that the appointment of human as caliph took place before human existed on Earth, thus in the level of idea. While the definition of a caliph as a leader in social life, it is expected that we involve others (Shihab, 1996).

Those verses also show the requirement of someone to be a caliph (Sudrajat, 2009). First, the caliph is someone who is given the power and authority. Second is the area of power and third is the relation between the caliph and his area of power and between the caliph and God. The caliphate of someone can be seen from how he interacts with the two above, his surrounding and God. As for the meaning of caliph as the leader of nation is a complex matter. On one hand, prophet Muhammad did not say any message about how governmental system should be or the process of leader appointment should be (Ma'shum, 2013). On the other hand, as presented by Abu Daud, he left a message that Muslims should have a leader.

"From Abi Sa'id al-Khudri, The Prophet (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "When three persons set out on a journey, they should appoint one of them as their leader." (Sajastani, 1994).

The history of meaning of caliph as leader of nation started after the death of Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad was not just religious leader but he was also the leader of nation. Madinah, which was the centre of government, was his territory. However, before his death, he did not leave any message about how the government should be or the appointment of new leader should be. That kind of leadership is left to the public. The fact that the Prophet Muhammad did not leave any message on governing the state created a number of interpretation. It was stipulated that he did not create

a comprehensive governmental system (Ma'shum, 2013).

Furthermore, before his death, Prophet Muhammad did not appoint his successor as the leader of Muslim. All his closest companions got together at Saqifah bani Sa'idah led by Abu Bakar to talk about several matters related to Muslims at that time. During the meeting at Saqifah, these companions had severe debate but then agreed to appoint Abu Bakar as the caliph, a successor of Prophet Muhammad and the leader of Islamic people (Ma'shum, 2013).

The problems accompanying the history of Islamic government was the way to appoint successor to the next government (Sudrajat, 2009). We have been able to observe the difference in the history of the government system itself. The government after the death of Prophet Muhammad. We can see, for example, the succession led by Khulafa al-Rasyidin, which was a republican system and it is popular today. This means that the succession is not necessarily based on descent or kinship. Another different governmental system was seen in the government after Khulafa al-Rasyidin, when the leader was appointed based on descent and kinship. This way of appointment can be seen at the leadership from Umayyah to Abbasiyyah, and to Turkey at the beginning of early 20th century. The other example is seen in Indonesia.

If we talk further about politics in Islam, we have to comprehend two terms that are directly related to politics in Islam. Although these two terms come from noble Quran, they are used by the two groups who in politics are against to one another, Sunni and Shia. The two terms are "khilafah" and "imamah".

"The word khilafah/caliphate in Arabic grammar is a verbal noun that requires active subject or doer called khalifah/a caliph." (Sudrajat, 2009). The word caliphate then refers to the actions carried out by the caliph. So, there is no caliphate without a caliph. Meanwhile literary and technically we can define the word khilafah/caliphate. Sudrajat (2009), following the opinion of Ganai, says that literary the word "khilafah/caliphate" means "succussion to the former government". Technically the word "khilafah/caliphate" can mean an Islamic government based on noble Quran and Hadith (Sudrajat, 2009).

Khilafah is an important concept in the thinking circle of Islamic politics and the establishment of Islamic state. The importance of the concept is

showed from the leadership of Prophet Muhammad, Khulafa al-Rasyidin, Umayyah, Abbasiyyah, to the last khilafah in Turkey at the 20th century, where Islam lived harmoniously with other religions. In Sunni group, it is important that khilafah/caliphate is consistent with Islamic law, báiat principle, shura and ahl al-hall wal-aqd. They also claim that the leader or caliph is the heir of Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, Shia promotes ismah, taqiyyah and walayah principles (Adam, 2001).

Basically, there was no difference between Sunni and Shia on the requirement to have only one leader in society. The difference was on who was the right person to be appointed. For Sunni, a caliph of Caliphate was temporary leadership and the right person to caliph should come from Quraysh tribe. Meanwhile, Shia added more criterion; the caliph should only be chosen from Ali's descendants. For Sunni, innocence or never wrong was one of the criteria that was only owned by Prophet Muhammad. Imamiyyah group and other sub-group in Shia believed in the principle that Imam/leader should be free from sins; then other characteristic than that of Prophet Muhammad applied. Furthermore, Sunni believed that the characteristic of appointment of a leader was different from that of prophecy while Imamiyyah of Sunni believed that the position of their twelve leaders is similar to that of Prophet Muhammad (Adam, 2001).

The other difference of leadership between Sunni and Shia can also be seen from the process of appointment even though both had the same criteria in selecting the qualifications of a leader (Adam, 2001). Sunni claimed that a caliph should be appointed through direct appointment or by the society. For them, the second was very important because then the authority of a caliph is legitimated through the process. Shia, on the hand, Shia accepted the first option in which Imam was appointed through direct appointment, but rejected the second option. This was due to, for them, the fact that Imam was not chosen by people as he was a holy person (Ma'shum, 2013). What's more, the two sects had selected the qualities needed for someone to be Imam/leader so that he can be elected. However, both agreed on similar qualifications for someone to be a caliph. The qualifications included free from physical handicap, knowledgeable in theology or state administration, courageous and dedicated to serve people based on noble Quran and Hadith.

To conclude the discussion above, at least we can define the word khalifah or caliph in two

interpretations. In a broader meaning, caliph refers to people in general. In a narrower meaning, it can mean a leader of nation or a leader of a society even though Islam does not specify a definitive Islamic political system. Even Prophet Muhammad did not leave any message about the procedure of selecting a leader and its method. A caliph as a leader of a nation can be traced back to the historical moments after the death of Prophet Muhammad in which we can see the plurality in the system and method of selecting a nation leader in leadership problems.

4.3 Caliph in Sufi Definition

As discussed before, searching for meaning of a caliph is closely related to the understanding of presence of human and his relation with God and the surroundings. In other words, we all are actually searching the meaning of our existence, human, on Earth; looking for the meaning of human. The search for the meaning of human continues to be done by human in many different ways. Science, for example, searches for the meaning of human through its focus of attention. Here we can say that science looks for the meaning partially. A sociologist only discusses the meaning of human in social dimension while biologist focuses on his anatomy.

The discourse of meaning of human is not solely discussed in science. On one hand, the religious explanation is also needed comprehend the meaning of human existence. Each religion has its own paradigm in seeing the meaning of human. So is Islam. Islam is for human and its teachings are discussing human.

Nevertheless, there are some people or group in Islam who are not satisfied in search of the meaning of human existence using Islamic law alone. The group here is Sufi. For them, the search of the meaning of human should be directed to the mystical experience of each individual (Mahmud, 2014). This mystical experience cannot be communicated. This is due to the fact that the mystical experience overlaps the ability of rational thinking to describe. That is why, someone who sticks to Islamic law cannot comprehend the mystical experience of a Sufi because they both have different parameters. Tasawwuf or sufism, just like other mysticism outside Islam, intends to have direct contact with God under consciousness.

The meaning of human as a caliph on Earth poses a higher position in Sufism. Ibnu Arabi, a

great Sufi, presents his opinion about the meaning of human as *Insan Kamil*, a 'perfect person'. What it means by *Insan Kamil* here is that each human has the light of Muhammad in himself. The light of Muhammad was the first creature of God and was the cause of universe formation or creation. This light moves from one generation to the next generation in different forms (Zwanzig, 2008; Yunus, 1995; Mahmud, 2013).

For Ibnu Arabi, human is the picture of God's description (Mahmud, 2014). Human is the place of *tajalli*, thus sighting or manifestation of a perfect God. For him, human is micro cosmos representing microcosms as described in God's characteristics (Zwanzig, 2008). For that reason, for him, human was descended as a caliph. However, the understanding of *Insan Kamil* is not obtained in an easy way. Sufi, for instance, has to go through a long spiritual process to obtain this absolute understanding. After gone through this spiritual process, Sufi can come into mortal and eternal condition. Here, the understanding of phenomenon is gone (mortal), and the Sufi realizes an intrinsic and eternal absolute form. (Asmaran, 1994).

To realize the Absolute Form is explored as condition in cosmological order. *Insan Kamil* can be an analogy God's representation where he keeps tight the principle of ontology and Metaphasis Barrier, which is partition of two matters that share different qualities; between God and universe. Through definition of human as *Insan Kamil* by Ibnu Arabi, the creation of human is seen as the way of God to 'find' Himself. Human, especially *Insan Kamil*, is the agent who is aware and active exploring and analysing the world, finding that God is attached to everything (Zwanzig, 2008).

“The Perfect Man—who denotes his Lord by his very essence in an a priori manner (min awal al-badiha)—and only the Perfect Man, is the Crown of the King... He gathers together nature (al-tab) and intellect (al-'aql), so within him are the grossest (akthaj) and subtlest (altaj) of compositions in respect of his nature, and within him is disengagement (al-tajarrud) from substrata (al-mawadd) and the faculties (al-quwa) that govern bodies... Through the Perfect Man the Divine Judgment (al-hukm al-ilahi) concerning reward and punishment in the world becomes manifest. Through him the order (al-nizam [i.e., of the universe]) is established and overthrown; in him God

decrees, determines, and judges.” (Ibn Arabi, 2002).

In the position between God and the world, *Insan Kamil* can find quality to connect the two. He can use his imagination to be in paradox of Barrier in consciousness. He understands that the world and its contents identical to, as well as different from, God. Through this comprehension it is possible for him to find a higher comprehension. This higher comprehension is due to individual position in the universe; perfectness comes from ontological and metaphysic position of the individual. (Zwanzig, 2008).

4.4 Reinterpreting the Concept of Caliph

The idea to the discourse of caliphate has become the trending issue in Indonesia in the last few years. We can witness that there is a movement which aims for replacing the concept of the ideology of Pancasila of Republic Indonesia with Islamic caliphate. The term of caliphate is questionable since the spreading discourse does not only post potential danger to be used for practical politics, and more importantly it can lead us to a failure to comprehend the concept of caliphate as a whole.

There has been urgency to reinterpret the meaning of the concept of caliphate. In this writing, the effort to interpret the meaning of caliphate derives from the observation of horizons or mindsets than form the concept of caliphate. These horizons are comprehension of verses of noble Quran, Hadith, the history of caliphate as well as the tradition in Islamic school of thoughts in Sunni, Shia and Sufi. These efforts aim for catching meanings of caliphates wholly and coherently where the meanings of parts are found in the whole and other way round.

As we have witnessed, the word caliph has several meanings. In noble Quran, the term *khalifah/caliph* has some forms and meanings depending on what context it is in. As we have discussed above, *khalifah/caliph*, generally can mean human that becomes God's guardian one after the other to hold power in the world to implement God's rules. On the other hand, we also understand the use of the word *khalifah* in a specific way which means a leader of nation or a leader of a society.

However, the criteria of the two meanings of caliph differs. In the general descriptions, human can

be called as a caliph/khalifah if he carries out the duties in relation to God and his environment. In this interpretation, there is nothing that can take his position as a caliph unless he does not perform or fail to carry out the duties. Then he is called "khalifun". On the other hand, the definition of khalifah as the leader of nation brings a lot of problems. This is understood because Islamic teaching does not have definite political system. Prophet Muhammad neither left any messages in regard to state administration. But Prophet Muhammad suggests that there should be a leader of the group even if we go out in a small group there should be a leader.

A khalifah/caliph as a leader of nation can be dismissed from his position. In contrast, this is still debatable in Islam. The reason for this is, as we witness, the difference in Sunni and Shia political perspectives. This leadership problem has become classical challenge in Islamic politics since the death of Prophet Muhammad. We can always find political system which is different in each tradition and period. For this reason, the writer questions the efforts done by the supporters of Islamic caliphate because they think as if there is a definitive caliphate system in Islamic teaching or former Islamic society. In fact it is in contrast; Islamic caliphate has different kinds of pluralism and forms and efforts to reduce the pluralism of caliphate forms are efforts to forget and deny the existence of tradition and Islamic history.

Furthermore, through Sufism we can understand the deeper meaning of human as a caliph. Human is media where God interacts with universe; thus, in human himself there are characteristics of God. The writer has never had any mystical experience as Sufi claims that he becomes part of God. However, the writer feels that the explanation of human in Sufism definition has a very deep meaning where God trusts the human existence as media of God to interact in the world.

To conclude, we have to put efforts to reinterpret the concept of caliphate that has been downgraded by people who think that this term only has political meaning of power ideology. We must realize that plural meanings of khalifah differs in each horizon of Islamic tradition. Khalifah indeed, in specific interpretation, can mean leader of nation or leader of a society. Caliphate as an expression of action of the caliph is then determined how the caliph acts. However, what needs to be realized is that the importance of leadership is to carry out the duties in relation to God and environment where the caliph is.

It is more than just power politics. Caliphate basically refers to conceptual substance of how human carries out good deed on Earth.

Through this new meaning, a person who is called a caliph is not just a state leader or a leader of a society. More than in the meaning of leadership, a caliph can be perceived as an ordinary human who performs universal good deed, thus becoming the blessings of the universe. A person who is called a caliph, as we have understood is a person who performs his duties in regards of God and his environment. In this case, the duty of a caliph is carrying out the universal good deed as specified in noble Quran: justice (as mentioned in Al-Maidah verse 8), tolerance (in Al-Kafirun verse 6), etc. So, the meaning of a caliph must not be downgraded as a leader of people, but university students, traders, cleaners or housewives can be categorized as caliph as long as they perform as a caliph, thus performing universal good deed as mentioned in noble Quran in relation to God and his environment.

5 CONCLUSION

In this writing, I elaborate Hermeneutics Method of Gadamer to reinterpret the concept of caliphate. Hermeneutics Method of Gadamer is ontology theory that assumes that the ability to comprehend is universal for human. The explanation of this method in phenomenologically descriptive explains that understanding text requires understanding of the parts and the whole of the text in order to reach the comprehension wholly. Furthermore, the interpreter does not try to reconstruct in such a way that he can reach the meaning presented by the writer but the comprehension itself is a creative action that involves the horizons of the reader and the writer. This means hermeneutics is a mediator that the comprehension appears after the reader is on the same boat as the text in his hermeneutics dialogue experience.

Through this platform of thinking, I intend to interpret the concept of caliphate that is defined narrowly and downgraded in only the problem of political ideology. A caliph or caliphate has its plural meanings in each horizon of Islamic tradition. Through even a broader comprehension, it is expected that the concept of caliph/caliphate can be comprehended as conceptual substance about human who performs the universal good deed in the world and is not comprehended as matter related to political power or certain political ideology.

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