

Understanding the Meaning of *Khalifah fil ardhi* in the Quran and Implications on Education

M Rahmat* and Fahrudin

Department of General Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi 229, Bandung 40154, Indonesia

*munawarraahmat.pai@upi.edu

Abstract. What is the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* in the Quran? Who is he? Does he refer to humans in general or a particular human since holds the highest religious office? The Tafseer cleric interprets the *khalifah fil ardhi* as human in general, while the Sufi cleric interprets it as God's representative on earth. Likewise, other terms relating to this term in verse 30-34 verses of QS 2/Al-Baqarah are interpreted differently by them. The study aimed to understand the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* and other terms associated with it in the Qur'an and its implications for education. The research method is the simplified Tafsir *Maudhu'i*, i.e. "Thematic Digital Quran". This method seeks to understand the meaning of religion by taking messages of verses that have the same term and other terms associated with it. Based on "Thematic Digital Quran" the study found, the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* is Apostle, not human in general. When commanded to prostrate to the Apostle, all angels are willing to prostrate while the devil reluctant to prostrate because of arrogance. This finding contains pedagogical implications that the main meaning of faith to His angels is to emulate the angels who are willing to obey the Apostle, not to imitate the devil who refused to prostrate because of arrogance.

1. Introduction

What is the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* in the Quran? Who is the *khalifah fil ardhi*? Does the *khalifah fil ardhi* refer to man in general or to a particular human being who holds the highest religious office? Tafseer and Sufi cleric differ on the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi*. Tafseer cleric tend to interpret *khalifah fil ardhi* as human in general [1, 2]. Human intent, here is Prophet Adam and his grandchildren as earth's controllers, administrative God on earth [3-5]. It mentions, among them, there are Prophets, Apostles, Guardians, Shiddiqin (people who witness the truth), pious people, and worshipers; while Sufi cleric interpret that term as God's representative on earth [6].

The meaning of this Caliph more narrowed by the Islamism as *Daulah Islamiyah* (Islamic Government), whereas they live in a plural state of the Republic of Indonesia [7]. These Islamism, borrowing Arkoun's terms, have made the Quran inscribed (not the Qur'an from the Prophet's oral) to a closed political state ideology, by contradicting believers/Moslems versus infidel/apostates, when it should be open because of the *ijtihadiah* nature. In the historical context, *Daulah Islamiyah* is actually very varied [8]. This concept (*Daulah Islamiyah*) should be distinguished from the Divine Daula (God's Government). The prophet Adam in the historical reality is a caliph who submits to the Divine Shari'ah. This divine sovereignty continues until the following Prophets: Noah, Abraham, Dawud, Sulayman, Isa, until Mohammed. That is what the majority of Muslims believe, where they



have built what is called the divine deity [9]. Even Moslem educators, such as Qutb formulate the goal of Islamic education in order to become a servant of Allah and His Chalif on the earth [10]. The purpose of education, man as a servant of God who is given the task of worshiping Him and doing well as God has done well to them [11]. As for His Chalif on earth because humans are given the power and responsibility to prosper from the earth in accordance of the will of Allah which has been declared at the beginning of human creation.

The question is whether the meaning of the *khalifah fil ardhi* so precise? Likewise, other terms relating to the term of *khalifah fil ardhi* in verse 30-34 of QS 2/Al-Baqarah, such as the meaning of *al-asma`a kullaha* (the names to all things) in the phrase " And He taught Adam *al-asma`a kullaha*; and the meaning of *usjudu* in the phrase *usjudu li adama fasajadu illa iblis* ("Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis.) Interpreted differently by Tafseer and Sufi cleric. What is the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* and other terms related to it based on the method/approach of "Thematic Digital Quran"? The study aims to understand the meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* and other terms associated with it in the Qur'an based on the method/approach of "Thematic Digital Quran" and its implications for education.

2. Methods

The Quran is understood by the Tafseer cleric by using two methods, *bil-ma`tsur* or *bil-manqul* and *bil-ro`yi*. The commentary on *bil-ma`tsur* is the Prophet's explanation of a religious term in the Qur'an. This interpretation is the most correct. However, unfortunately very little. The Tafseer cleric then expanded the tafsir *bil-ma`tsur Shahabi* (the Prophet's companions explanation). The *bil-manqul* interpretation as a method of interpretation by taking references to the Qur'an, the hadith, and quotes of *Shahabi* and *Tabi`in* (disciples of the Prophet's Companions) [12, 13]. But the *Shahabi* and *Tabi`in* keep doing *ijtihad* (explaining The Quran with reason). They are *ijtihad* as compulsion because the Prophet has died. But tafsir *bil-ma`tsur Shahabi* contains weakness [14]. Four weaknesses of this interpretation: first, there are many narrations inserted by Jews and Christians with the aim of corrupting Islam; second, found infiltration by streams that are considered distorted; thirdly, the mixing of true stories with the weak; and fourthly, there are many unanswered reports of *Isra`iliyat* (Jews and Christians). Finally, the Tafseer cleric developed the *bil-ro`yi* tafseer by making mutually agreed rules [13, 15]. This method of interpretation can only be implemented by the Tafseer cleric. This study uses the method/approach of "Thematic Digital Quran," a kind of *maudhu`i* (thematic) method developed by Al-Qarafi [16]. Although this method is easier but still tight. Al-Qarafi sets out three standards for interpreting religious terms in the Qur'an, namely that the meaning for a term must be: (1) in accordance with the linguistic sense of the community tradition from the time of the Prophet Muhammad; (2) in accordance with the language semantics; and (3) seeking to find meaning that is believed to be in accordance with God's will. For general students, this difficulty can be overcome by using The Translation of The Quran in Digital Quran version 3.1. [17]. As for the terms that need to use the method/approach of "Thematic Digital Quran" these are primarily religious subjects (issues of faith and worship). The steps of implementation of this method/approach as follows:

- Click the Digital Quran version 3.1 folder [18]
- Click the LOVE file (green color)
- Find the desired terms, can Arabic or Indonesian (Latin alphabet). For example, the term *khalifah*. How, click search (Arabic), then write the *khalifah* by clicking the letters kho (خ), lam (ل), ya (ي), fa (ف), and ta marbutah (ة). You will appear on screen (below) term *khalifah* (2 = ف ي خ ل ة; clicks also translation of The Quran by: Click search (Ind/Eng), then type *khalifah*, it will appear on screen (under) term *khalifah* = 5 items. The term *khalifah* (as well as other terms) in Indonesia is more because it is a direct translation of the term of *khalifah*, as well as its derivatives (*khola`if* and *istakhlafa*).
- To summarize the meaning to a term to remember: (1) The Qur'an is a straightforward religious book, "the guidance of entering the Last Day safely and happily, not speaking to the world; and

(2) it is sometimes necessary to review the preceding verses or later; and sometimes also needs to be examined also other terms that can further reinforce the meaning of a term.

3. Results and Discussion

The term *khalifah* with all its seriates consists of 6 verses. With the help of the implementation table of the method/ approach of "Thematic Digital Quran," the term *khalifah fil ardhi* has the following meaning. We recommend that the text of the Qur'anic verse and its translation be all cited. However, for general students may be cited translation only.

Table 1. The meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* based on "Thematic Digital Quran" method/approach

No.	QS ... verse ...	Translate the Quran	Message paragraph	Tentative conclusions
1	2:30	Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Lord delivered His plan to the angels, who will always make "one" <i>Khalifah fil ardhi</i>; 2. Angels raised objections to why the caliph is from among humans; 3. The reason, people always make damage and spill blood; 4. The angel suggested that the caliph (one) from among the angels, God knew what angels do not know. 	<i>Khalifah fil ardhi</i> has a high position. This position is only worthy of being carried by people who always praise God and sanctify Him; Not worthy of being carried by people who like to make damage and sprinkle blood. Therefore, the angels objected to why God would call his caliph a human being. It should be an angel. However, God asserts. He knew what the angels do not know. God has made man his choice as Caliph on earth.
2	6:165	It is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God has made the <i>Khalifah fil ardhi</i>. 2. God elevates some degree of man over the other half; as for the purpose of a test of faith. 	
3	7:129	They said: "We have had (nothing but) trouble, both before and after thou camest to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth; that so He may try you by your deeds."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Followers of the Prophet Moses felt the suffering of the oppressed Pharaoh either before or after the coming of Prophet Moses. 2. The prophet Moses prayed "May Allah destroys your enemies" 	To remove the suffering of his people Moses prayed "May Allah destroys your enemies and makes you Caliph on earth."

			and makes you <i>khalifah fil ardhi.</i> "	
4	27:62	Or, Who listens to the (soul) distressed when it calls on Him, and Who relieves its suffering, and makes you (mankind) inheritors of the earth? (Can there be another god besides Allah? Little it is that ye heed!	1. Allah is the one who permits the prayer and the removal of distress 2. Allah is also the one who makes someone as <i>khalifah fil ardhi</i>	Allah is the one who makes a person as the Caliph on earth, as Allah prefers the prayer of those who pray to Him.
5	35:39	He it is That has made you inheritors in the earth: if, then, any do reject (Allah), their rejection (works) against themselves: their rejection but adds to the odium for the Unbelievers in the sight of their Lord: their rejection but adds to (their own) undoing.	1. Allah has made the Caliphs on earth. 2. The heathen is the one who harms himself.	Allah has made the Caliphs on earth. As for those who disbelieve (reject His caliph) then their disbelief only adds to the wrath of God.
6	38:26	O David! We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth: so judge thou between men in truth (and justice): Nor follow thou the lusts (of thy heart), for they will mislead thee from the Path of Allah: for those who wander astray from the Path of Allah, is a Penalty Grievous, for that they forget the Day of Account.	1. God made the Prophet David as <i>khalifah fil ardhi</i> 2. The Prophet David was commanded by God to make a just decision 3. Prophet David is forbidden to follow the passions, for it will lead him astray from the way of Allah.	Prophet David as <i>khalifah fil ardhi</i>

From 6 verses about the term *khalifah fil ardhi* in the above table, the most obvious and detailed verse explaining the meaning to this term is QS 2/Al-Baqarah verses 30-34. These verses describe three interrelated terms, namely the *khalifah fil ardhi*, angels, and iblis (demons). The meaning of *khalifah fil ardhi* becomes clear and gambling by examining the term's angels and demons. Verse 30 is clear: (1) God will always appoint a person as His Chalif from the human race; (2) the angels argue the character of the *khalifah fil ardhi* should always celebrate praising God and sanctifying Him; (3) the angels watch, not predict (because this verse uses continuous tenses), that human nature is bad. Thus the Prophet Adam was not the first man but the first Prophet/Apostle. From verse 30 and the following verses will be found the most appropriate meaning for the *khalifah fil ardhi* is Apostle; (4) the angels propose that one of them be made *khalifah fil ardhi*, because angels have a good character; and (5) the Lord asserts that He knows what the angels do not know. This sentence implies: (a) it is true that the character of the *khalifah fil ardhi* should be good. However, not quite well, the *khalifah fil ardhi* must master the science of religion as *shirothol mustaqim* (straight path), as described in verses 31-34; (b) *khalifah fil ardhi* in the sense of Apostle must be adhered to and imitated by humans, jinns, and angels. Man can be seen by angels, jinn, and humans (so that his commandments and his example can be understood and seen by angels, jinns, and humans); while angels can only be seen by angels again, cannot be seen by man; and (c) because the angel has a good character in the future there is one of the angels whom God made the Apostle, the Messenger to raise a man to be the Prophet and the

Apostle, the angel Gabriel. Thus the *khalifah fil ardhi* interpreted by human in general, as the views of some commentators [1, 2], especially interpreted Daulah Islamiyah, as the Islamism view is not appropriate [7-9].

Verse 31 explains, Prophet Adam (as the first Chalif/Apostle) was taught by God *al-asma`a kullaha* (true religious knowledge). The commentators quote Ibn Abbas and Ibn Mas'ud on the meaning of *al-asma`a kullaha*, i.e the names for all things, both large and small. Ibn Abbas added that Allah taught Adam the names to all things, including the names of the containers and whips, to the large bowls and tools for milking, among others in Tafsir Ibn Mas'ud [3], Tafsir Ibn Kathir [5], Tafsir Ath-Thabari [19], and Tafsir *Fi Zhilalil Quran* [20]. The meaning of *al-asma`a kullaha* is the names of Allah and the science of the Caliphate, which Allah taught by inspiration either gradually or simultaneously [21]. Humans have a number of potentials and make it happen in real life. It is an endless process, an unending miracle [2]. If it is associated with the altitude of the *khalifah fil ardhi* in verse 30, the explanation of Al-Maraghi is more correct. However, it must be associated with the duties of the Caliphate in the apostolic sense, not the Caliphate in the sense of a world leader. That is, Prophet Adam (also the Prophets and Apostles after him) is always taught *al-asma`a kullaha*, the science of the straight path to God. The accuracy of this meaning with regard to the angels is apparently not knowing *al-asma`a kullaha* this (verses 32-33). The 34th verse, the angels are commanded to bow to Adam (Prophet Adam as Caliph, not Adam as human). Of course, the more proper meaning of prostration is prostration in the sense of obedience, not prostration in the sense of worship. That is, the angels are commanded to obey the Apostle. All angels bows down. However, the devil refuses to prostrate because he is arrogant and feels better (than *khalifah fil ardhi*/Apostle). There are four other verses similar to QS 2/Al-Baqarah verse 34, namely QS 7/Al-A`raf verse 11, QS 17/Al-Isra verse 61, QS 18/Al-Kahfi verse 50, and QS 20/Thaha verse 116 [18].

4. Conclusions

From the study of the term *khalifah fil ardhi* associated with the angelic and devil terms in QS 2/Al-Baqarah verses 30-34 and other verses it can be concluded that *khalifah fil ardhi* is Apostle, not human in general. When ordered to prostrate to *khalifah fil ardhi* all angels willing to prostrate. The meaning of prostration here is not worship but obeys the Apostle. The devil refuses to prostrate. He is arrogant and feels better than *khalifah fil ardhi*/Apostle. QS 2/Al-Baqarah verses 30-34 contains pedagogical implications regarding the need to imitate the angels who are willing to prostrate to the Apostle. Believers need to learn from the submissive attitude of the angels towards the Apostle. Whatever God commanded through His messengers the angels always obeyed never denied or reluctantly. Angels always worship God, praise God, and perform duties. They never get bored in worshiping God and do immoral. It is these attitudes that the faithful need to imitate.

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