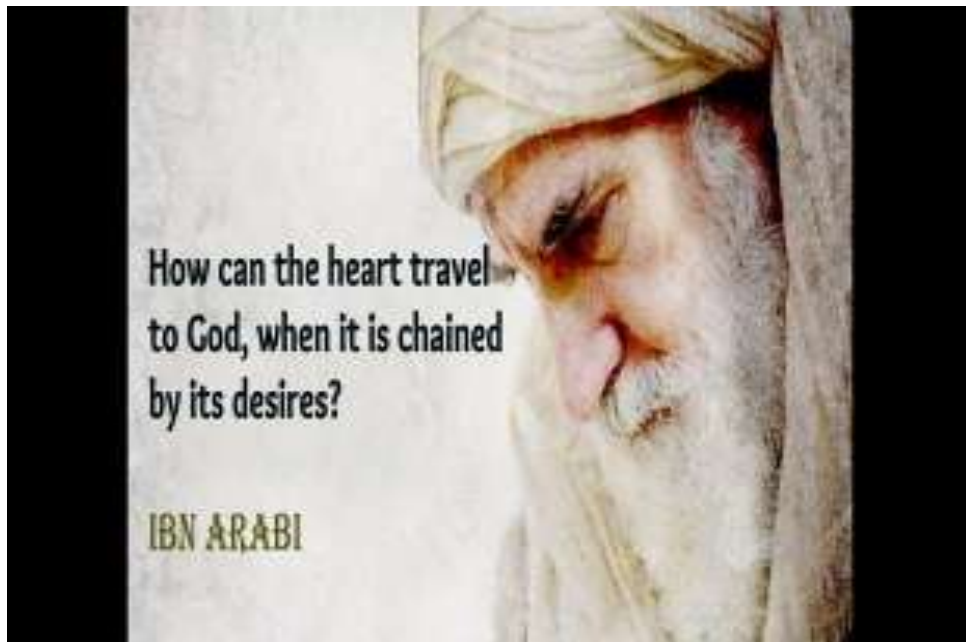




The Wisdom of Man Becoming a Caliph

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It is stated in some verses that man is the caliph of Allah. Some of these verses are as follows:

"When your Lord said to His angels, "I will create a caliph on earth." The angels said, "Will you create someone who will cause corruption and shed blood, while

we glorify You with praise?" Allah said to the angels, "I know what you do not know." (Al-Baqarah, 2/30)

"Indeed, We have made you a caliph on earth. So judge between people with truth and do not follow desires, lest they lead you astray from the path of Allah. Those who stray from the path of Allah will have a severe punishment, because they forget the Day of Reckoning." (Sad, 38/26)

"It is He who made you caliphs on earth and raised some of you above others in ranks, that He might test you in what He has given you. Surely your Lord is swift in punishment, and He is Forgiving, Merciful." (An'am, 6/165)

The word caliph is derived from the root "half", which means "behind" and is the opposite of the word "before". It is also used in the Quran as "halāif" and "hulāfa" in plural.

The word caliph has been used in the Arabic language as both *ism-i fail* and *ism-i mef'ul*. As *ism-i fail*, it means "substitute", and as *ism-i mef'ul*, it means "replaced".

When the caliphate was given to Hz. Adam (as), it also included knowledge and prophethood. According to the above verses, Allah Almighty says, "I will appoint a caliph on earth and appoint a representative in the realm of the world." However, it is not said that He will create a prophet, a scholar or a servant. Allah Almighty also used the same expression for Hz. David (as) and said, "O David! We have indeed made you a caliph on earth." He did not use the words prophet, messenger or scholar. Because all of them are already within the caliphate.

The concept of caliphate has been interpreted in various ways by Islamic scholars. Here, we will discuss the concept of caliphate by giving place to the views of Sufis such as Ibn Arabi and Najmeddin-i Daye as interpreted by the people of Sufism.

Perfection of Existence

The existence of the universe is a perfect structure. The imperfections observed in existence are actually due to the perfection of existence. If there were no imperfection in existence, its perfection would also be imperfect. Allah Almighty has definitely not left anything out. In fact, He has given the right of creation to even imperfection. This is the perfection of the universe.

“Your Lord is the One Who gives to everything its creation (its right) and then guides it to the right path.” (Taha, 20/50)

For Allah, there is a perfection worthy of Him. For man, there is a perfection that only man can accept. Whoever falls short of this perfection among people, the deficiency in the world is due to their deficiency. Because man also falls within the scope of the world.

Not every person can accept perfection. Therefore, the person who remains outside of those who cannot accept perfection is perfect. Accordingly, the perfect person accepts perfection. Every perfect person has a degree of his own. The perfect person is perfect. Nothing is lacking in him. This is true according to the Quran. Our Prophet (pbuh) has the following hadith on this subject: *“Many are perfect among men. And among women, there are Maryam and Asiya. And the superiority of Aisha over other women is like the superiority of the tirid over the other dishes.”*

The perfection of divinity has been manifested in the sharia. This perfection cannot be demonstrated with rational evidence. In order to see the perfection and excellence that befits Allah Almighty, the sharia has brought both proofs of purification and imitation. Thus, the minds have been amazed. This is the divine perfection and excellence.

Allah Almighty is too sublime for the mind, senses and imagination to comprehend. He is unique in perfection. No one but Him knows this. His works can only be observed. But He Himself cannot be encompassed by knowledge and no one can see Him exactly. Allah Almighty is only the intended purpose. He is praised for His Sublime Rank. He is worshipped as both a transcendent and a figurative deity. This is divine perfection.

In this regard, Necmeddin-i Dâye says the following in his book, “Tasawwuf Yolu” (Path of Sufism):

“The fortunate person with insight observes the signs of Allah, which are the results of His actions, in the mirror of his own soul, through the light of Allah’s saying, *“We will show them Our signs on the horizons and in their own souls”* (Fussilat, 41/53). He knows that this body, which is like a small world that was created after not existing before, was made by God. He understands that the soul is the vicegerent that acts in place of God. He sees that the body will not

remain in its place when the soul ceases to have control over it, but will fall and be destroyed. He knows with certainty that the world, which is the great world, must have a creator and maker, and that many states and works come into being as a result of its actions because it is in a work. Such a fine art shows that without the control of a being who has perfect power and is sovereign, the beings cannot exist and cannot continue their existence. When the owner of power ceases to have control over them, they are destroyed and none of them are created. This is the station where the truth of *“He who knows himself knows his Lord”* is revealed. Here, the secret of *“And in your souls! Will you not see?”* (Adh-Dhariyat, 51/21) is also revealed.”

According to Hazrat Necmeddin-i Daye, the world is a lodge and there are two types of people in this lodge. Some of them have turned their faces to the afterlife and the service of God and are people who are served. The sheikh of this lodge is Allah Almighty. He has ordered the world to serve these people in the best way possible, “O world! Be a servant to the one who serves me! Make the one who serves you a servant to you!” Other people are worldly seekers who are in the position of servants. All these people, from sultans to market vendors, are assigned a service in the lodge of the world so that this group, which is the essence of creation, can be occupied with the true servitude. Allah Almighty has said, *“I created the jinn and mankind only to serve Me”* (Adh-Dhariyat, 51/56). The meaning of this verse is as follows: The reason why every being, man and jinn, is assigned and worked for a job is so that sincere servants who are free from worldly love, desires and the deception of Satan can be occupied with religious education and worshipping Allah. For this reason, it is stated as follows: *“But they were commanded to worship Allah alone, devoting religion to Him alone”* (Bayyine, 98/5). The fact that the servants in the lodge do the work of these special servants also helps them to get closer to Allah. These servants also receive their share of the divine blessings that reach the special servants from Allah Almighty.

The Caliphate of Man

Man is the perfection of the universe, the universe becomes perfect only with man. Man is not perfect with the universe. People are divided into two groups. Some people do not accept perfection and excellence. However, they are the

sum of the universe. They are a small sum that has been extracted from the big universe. The other group of people accept perfection. According to the aptitude of this person, Allah Almighty manifests His perfection and all His names in that person. This group of people Allah has made His caliphs and has dressed them in the robe of wonder.

Thereupon, the angels looked at the formation of his body and that is when they expressed what they said about man. Because the realities that Allah has placed in his body contradict each other. Later, when Allah Almighty informed the angels how and why He created him and what characteristics He gave him, the angels were astonished and that is when they said:

“The angels said, ‘O Lord, You are the Most High, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are indeed the Knower, the Wise.’” (Baqarah, 2/32)

When the angels heard the name of the caliph, they looked at him and saw the darkness of the soul and fled from this darkness. They did not know that the knowledge of life was hidden in this darkness. The sparks of the fire of love emerge with the stone of the heart and the iron of the word of monotheism. Although the silk of spirituality is thinner and more expensive, it is impossible for it to resist these sparks. Here, this burnt, black-faced human soul must constantly try to catch these sparks with its heart and soul. *“Man has taken it upon himself, indeed he is unjust and ignorant”* (Ahzab, 33/72). It must take on the role of host of this strange fire and ensure that it resides in the visible world. According to the verse, *“So remember Me, that I may remember you”* (Baqarah, 2/152), nothing but human attributes can provide this. If this food were not to come, even for a moment, with the secret of *“They forgot Allah, so Allah forgot them”* (At-Tawbah, 9/67), this unseen guest cannot stay here.

In the beginning, the spiritual world existed as a whole, it was not divided into parts. There was the unseen world, but there was no world of witnessing. When the soul joined this world, when it was properly cared for and trained, it passed through the universal and particular worlds and became the caliph of God in the unseen and witnessing worlds. There was no power and tool in the world of spirits to be a caliph of God’s divinity. It possessed this tool and power in this world and reached the perfection of the rank of vicegerency.

Ibn Arabi says the following on this subject in his book Futuhat-i Mekkiyya:

“Allah Almighty gave man the knowledge of the divine names by which the angels could not glorify and sanctify Allah. For this reason, Allah gave the caliphate capacity in this world to the descendants of Adam and those who resemble him. No one else was given this characteristic. Therefore, the perfection of man is achieved through the ability which is formed by this special manifestation. Man was appeared by the names of God Almighty and the equivalents of those names. God Almighty has also informed man about how to use those names. Thus, God Almighty becomes manifest with the manifestation of the man whom He wants to make His caliph.

This situation is called truth and justice regarding the caliphate. For this reason, Allah Almighty said to Hz. David (pbuh): *“Indeed, We have made you a caliph on earth. So judge between people with truth. Do not follow desires, lest they lead you astray from the path of God. Because, those who deviate from the path will have a severe punishment for them because they forgot the Day of Judgment.”* (Sad, 38/26)

A person is removed from this caliphate by following his desires and passions. However, a man is a perfect fit for this caliphate. The caliphate is suitable for him.”

Caliphate is the power of ruling (dominance) given to man by Allah in this world. If a person wishes, he can execute his judgment, or if he wishes, he can surrender this power to Allah and leave the authority between his servants to Allah. However, if a divine command comes, he does what is necessary. For example, as it was the case with Hz. David, in this case, there is no way to reject Allah’s command.

Here, what is forbidden, is “the desires.” For example, the case of Hz. Osman is like this. Hz. Osman did not take off his caliphate dress until the moment he was killed. Because he knew what belonged to Allah Almighty in him. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had forbidden him to take off the robe of caliphate. Whoever receives a divine command regarding ruling must appear with it. That person is always supported by Allah. But whoever does not receive such a divine command has a choice. He may appear with it if he wishes or not and remains hidden with Allah. It is better to abandon manifestation in this way.

The saints join the prophets especially with caliphate. They do not join them with prophethood and messengership. Because the door of prophethood and

messaging, that is, prophethood, has now been closed. There is judgment for the messenger. If he wants to appoint someone as his successor, there is judgment for him as well. If this successor is a prophet, then his way of ruling is according to the law of the prophet he succeeded. If this successor is not a prophet, then his way of ruling is according to the law of his time by the command of Allah, which is the law of his time. Because only by ruling can justice and injustice be attributed.

The secret of man being a caliph is that he is the manifestation of both his own and Allah's essence and attributes. In fact, man is a mirror of the essence and attributes of God. When the mirror is clean, he is manifested with every attribute that manifests from God. During this manifestation, every attribute that appears in the mirror is realized not by the mirror but by the influence of the person who manifests it. Since the mirror is pure, it cannot do anything but accept the image that is manifested in it.

Caliphate is a Test for Man

The ability to rule the universe was not given to man just because he is human. This ability was given to man with a Divine power. Because only the attribute of God can rule in the universe, no one else can. Therefore, this power is a kind of test for man. This power is not a measure of honor for man. If this power had been given to him as a measure of honor, then this power would have been realized with him in the hereafter. We understand this from the warning in the following verse: *"...and do not follow your desires..."* (Sad, 38/26).

Man is warned against following his desires and passions. This is a kind of test for him. Allah Almighty has given the quality of caliphate only to the people of Allah in this world. On the other hand He has given the power of ruling to both the good ones and the bad ones. However, Allah Almighty has ordered us to listen to them and obey them. Allah Almighty has said: *"If they are unjust, it is for you and against them."* This is a state of being tested.

As Ibn Arabi said, when the people of Allah look at the rulings of Allah Almighty in the world, they see their reality as only a test, an opportunity, a poverty, a humiliation, a need and a misery. He sees that the universe is eternally qualified to prostrate to Allah. However, not all of the people prostrate to Allah, only some

of them. In the face of this situation, man fears to be among those who deserve Allah's punishment.

The people of Allah see that the universe was created with the nature of worshipping Allah. Therefore, the people of Allah also see that they need Allah and worship Him. When a person knows the commands and prohibitions of his Lord and fulfills his duty of servitude, he recognizes his own self. When he recognizes his own self, he recognizes his Lord. When he recognizes his Lord, he serves his Lord in the way He commands.

Obedying Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions is only applicable to humans and jinn. This duty of servitude, which occurs in two ways, is not applicable to angels. Because they only do what they are commanded. The realities of the creation of angels give them this quality. This issue is stated in the following verses:

"If they are arrogant, then let them know that the angels next to their Lord glorify Him day and night and never become weary." (Fussilat, 41/38)

"To Him belong all that is in the heavens and the earth. Those who are with Him do not hesitate to worship Him, nor do they weary. They glorify Allah day and night, and never become weary." (The Prophets, 21/19,20)

Man is the epitom of all the realities in the universe. A person who possesses these characteristics must gather in himself the worship of the entire universe. If he does not do it, he will not have known himself in terms of the truths he contains. These truths are essential servitude. The recognition of one's own self is the observation of all these truths it contains. In this case, there is no question of disobeying any command of his Lord. When a person says "Subhanallah" with his whole being, the things the whole world says and the prayer beads he makes are woven into the essence of that person's being like an embroidery frame. Thus, this person becomes the language of the whole world. In other words, if anything in the world stops worshipping its Lord, that Wise servant replaces that thing with this characteristic and fills the empty space it leaves. If we assume that the whole world, except for humans, is heedless of worshipping Allah for a moment, even for the blink of an eye, the Wise person we defined above replaces the world for that moment and fulfills its duty. Thus, he acts as the regent of the world. However, it is unthinkable that the world would be heedless of worshipping Allah for a moment. Because the people of heedlessness are only

the world of jinn and humans. When heedlessness covers everywhere in the world of jinn and humans and none of them remember Allah, then the apocalypse will come. Because the world stands on its feet with man. This is the reality of man knowing his own self.

If knowledge and prophethood are found together with the power of sultanate and property, the power and influence of each of them will increase by uniting. However, this is a test for the owners of sultanate and property. Sultanate and power are a great means to get close to Allah and to become the caliph of His Sultanate. For this reason, sultans have become the shadow of Allah. The shadow of something becomes the caliph of that thing. However, in reality, being the caliph and shadow only occurs as long as they possess the attributes of caliphate. For this reason, being the shadow of Allah has been explained as follows: "The oppressed take refuge in him", that is, he becomes the refuge of all oppressed. Thus, no oppressor's oppression and torment can reach them. But how can a sultan who commits oppression and torment himself be the shadow of Allah? Can such a person be given the caliphate?

Accordingly, in order for a sultan to earn the right to be the caliph of Allah, he must obey the commands of Allah, avoid obeying the desires of his desires and passions, protect his people by taking them under the protection and shelter of his sultanate, and fulfill the duty of servitude during his reign. In this case, this person becomes the epitom of all beings. The secret of "*I will surely establish a caliph on earth*" (Al-Baqarah, 2/30) is the secret of caliphate, which is intended by creation. However, if the sultan resorts to oppression and torment and opposes the commands of Allah by following his desires, he will incur the wrath of Allah. He becomes the devil of his time and eternal damnation becomes obligatory for him, as it is stated, "*The curse of Allah Almighty is upon the oppressors*" (Araf, 7/44).

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