On Validity of the Gharânîq 'Ḥadîth':
Examining the Religious Reason of Exegesis Literatures

Mahmud Arif,[1] Mohammad Kurjum[2]

[1]*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Yogyakarta,*
[2]*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Jln. A.Yani Surabaya*
E-mail: [1]*marifnurch@yahoo.co.id,* [2]*mkurjum@uinsby.ac.Id*

Abstract

It is interesting to re-discuss the controversy about something claimed as a prophetic tradition (al-Hadîth), especially when it is related to its explanatory-doctrinal function to al-Qur'ân and to its implication for essential Islamic doctrines. The account of Gharâniq claimed by some experts as a prophetic tradition is one of the models of old cases, but it remains to produce a religious discourse colored with pros and cons. Some experts believe in the existence and validity of the account of Gharâniq, some others reject it partly or with "notes", and the others reject it totally. This article tries to analyze critically the account of Gharâniq by exploring literatures on exegesis and traditions in order to discuss and treat this topic more proportionally.

Keywords: *Gharânîq Story; Satanic Verses; Qur'anic Interpretation; Doctrinal Implication; Purity of Islam*

Abstrak

Menarik untuk membahas kembali kontroversi mengenai sesuatu yang diklaim sebagai hadis kenabian (al-Hadîth), terutama jika dikaitkan dengan fungsi penjelas-doktrinalnya terhadap al-Qur'ân dan implikasinya terhadap doktrin-doktrin esensial Islam. Kisah Gharâniq yang diklaim oleh sebagian ahli sebagai hadis profetik merupakan salah satu model kasus lama, namun tetap melahirkan wacana keagamaan yang diwarnai pro dan kontra. Sebagian ahli meyakini keberadaan dan keabsahan kisah Gharâniq, sebagian lagi menolak sebagian atau dengan "catatan", dan sebagian lagi menolak total. Artikel ini mencoba menganalisis secara kritis kisah Gharâniq dengan menggali literatur tafsir dan hadis untuk membahas dan mengupas topik ini secara lebih proporsional.

Kata Kunci: *Kisah Gharânîq; Ayat Setan; Tafsir Al-Qur'an; Implikasi Doktrinal; Kemurnian Islam*

Introduction

Al-Ḥadîth has a very important position as the source of Islamic teachings after al-Qur'ân. Both are believed to be God's revelations. The difference is that, borrowing the term from Muḥammad 'Ajjâj al-Khâṭib, al-Qur'ân is considered as *al-matluw* (recited) revelation, while al-Ḥadîth is the *ghayr al-matluw* (unrecited) revelation ('Ajjâj al-Khâṭib, 1989: 34). This important position of al-Ḥadîth has put the study of ḥadîth as urgent as the study of al-Qur'ân. In the study of ḥadîth, the problems arising are more complex because some hadîths have the *ẓannî al-wurûd* status, i.e. strongly presumed that ḥadîth came from the Prophet Muḥammad himself. In addition, the new codification period began in the second century of Hijri with the so long and varied *isnâd* (the chain

of transmission) unlike al-Qur'ân. In addition, conflicts that have been occurring among schools in Muslim society have led to massive counterfeiting of ḥadîth.

In general, the study of ḥadîth includes the study or criticism on the *sanad* (the chain of *muḥaddiths* or transmitters) and the *matn* (the texts). Both are equally important because although the *sanad* of a ḥadîth has been acceptable, the *matn* will not necessarily be acceptable, or vice versa. Thus, a review of the acceptability of ḥadîth by former *ulamas* (Islamic experts), especially those concerning with basic doctrines, is still deemed necessary. This is because the results of their studies have not finished yet. Therefore, the results of the studies developed by some ḥadîth experts are often criticized by other ḥadîth experts (Mustarhami, *quran-journal.com*). For instance, the results of study on "ḥadîth" of al-Gharâniq conducted by some experts, like in view of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalânî, it were considered acceptable.

However, lately ḥadîth Islamic experts, such as Muḥammad al-Ghazâlî, Yusûf al-Qarḍâwî, and Quraish Shihab (2012: 369) strongly rejected it. Even, they judged that ḥadîth of al-Gharâniq was a form of a huge lie blown by certain groups to tarnish the purity of Islamic teachings. What feared by them is reasonable enough. Getting inspiration from the story of al-Gharâniq, Salman Rushdie has composed his novel with the title, *Satanic Verses*, that has insulted the Prophet (Mujiburrahman, 2008: 113-15). He has narrated imaginatively the figure of Prophet Muḥammad as a usual man that has done many great efforts to compromise and accommodate desires of the leaders of Jahiliya, including his praise through a similar utterance said in the story of al-Gharâniq (Rushdie, 2007: 86). Such narration was considered as an obvious act of insulting to the Prophet, so the Spiritual leader of Iran, Āyâtullâah Khomeini, has commended execution of Salman Rushdie.

Concerning surah al-Hâjj (22): 52 that has been as a one of bases for the opinion on possibility of the Prophet in conducting a fallible thing, Sa' îd Nashîd stated a very strange conviction. He assumed that the Prophet was not free from any wrong or fallibility as indicated by such Qur' anic verse (Nashîd, 2016: 45). According to him, the satan could infiltrate into the revealed verses to disturb before correction and abrogation from Allah. Of course, such Rushdie's and Nashîd's opinions have obviously fundamental implication to our perception about Islamic teaching and the prophetic duties of Muḥammad.

The Story of al-Gharâniq: A Brief Description

The elaboration of al-Gharâniq is generally related to the explanation of the content of sûrah al-Hâjj (22): 52- 53,

> "And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke [or recited], Satan threw into it [some misunderstanding]. But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in; then Allah makes precise His verses. And Allah is Knowing and Wise. [That is] so He may make what Satan throws in a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart. And indeed, the wrongdoers are in extreme dissension".

It is narrated that when the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was among the polytheists of the Quraysh, he recited sûrah al-Najm (53): 19-20,

"So have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza? And Manat, the third - the other one?"

Unconsciously, the Satan inserted the line: *Tilka al-Gharânîq al-' Ulâ wa Inna Shafâ' atahunna Laturjâ* (They are beautiful, high-ranking birds, and their intercession is anticipated). Then there was an impression that the sentence was part of the revelation of God, and many polytheists were full of joy because their Gods were recognized and praised (al-Zuḥaili, 1991, vol. XVII: 247).

Some of the existing exegesis books, especially those circulating among the Sunnis, can be divided into two types, namely exegeses that recognize the validity of the account of Gharâniq, and those that deny it. For example, Wahbah al-Zuḥailî in the book of al-Munîr's Exegesis states his rejection both in the way of *naqliyyah* (dogmatic argumentation) and *'aqliyyah* (logical argumentation). Meanwhile, in the al-Jalâlain Exegesis, the account of Gharâniq is considered valid. In Lubâb al-Nuqûl, al-Suyûṭî addresses various chains of ḥadîth al-Gharâniq. Basically, he tended to stand with the opinion receiving the account. He said, "Ibn Abî Ḥâtim, Ibn Jarîr, and Ibn Munzir reported from the chain of Sa'îd b. Jubair with the *sanad ṣaḥîḥ* (a collection of ḥadîths) that when the Prophet Muḥammad was in Mecca, he recited the verses of sûrah al-Najm (53): 19 -20. Then the Satan through his utterance inserted the line:

After finished reciting sûrah al-Najm, the Prophet Muḥammad prostrated and was followed by the polytheists because they felt that their Gods have gained recognition and been praised by the verses earlier. Thus, there was sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 52-53 (al-Suyûṭî, n.y., vol. II: 3). In addition to this chain, al-Suyûṭî also mentioned the chain of al-Bazzâr and Ibn Mirdawaih originating from Sa'îd b. Jubair from Ibn Abbâs. Al-Suyûṭî said that this chain was the only *sanad* that was *muttaṣil* (continued). In this *sanad* (the chain of transmitters), there was a transmitter named Umayyah b. Khâlid regarded as a transmitter with *thiqah* (integrity) and who was famous (al-Âthîr, 1970: 139). Al-Bukhâri with the chain ending in Ibn Abbâs, in which there were transmitters, such as al-Wâqidî and Ibn Mirdawaih through the chain of al-'Ŭfi from Ibn Abbâs, narrated the same thing.

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni thought that with a number of chains of the account, it indicated that the account of Gharâniq was reliable, especially with the existence of two acceptable chains although they did not follow (*mursal*) from Ibn Jarir through the *sanad* of al-Zuhri from Abî Bakar b. Abdurrahmân b. Ḥârîth b. Hishâm, and Dâwud b. Hind from Abî 'Åliyah (al-Suyûṭî, vol. II: 3-4; al-'Asqalânî, vol. VIII: 439). For that reason, Ibn Ḥajar said to ignore the statement from Ibn al-'Arabi and Qâdi 'Iyâḍ that the account of Gharâniq was a groundless "lie". However, Ibn Ḥajar's opinion acknowledging the acceptability of the account of Gharâniq does not necessarily mean the recognition of the validity. The acceptability here is related to the accountability and acceptability of the account to be used as *ḥujjah* (proof or evidence). In fact, validity is not only related to accountability-acceptability but also related to the peak qualification of accountability and acceptability.

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni indeed tended to acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharâniq but with a critical note. He proposed a critical assessment of the account. He said that al-Kilbî as one of the transmitters in the *sanad* of the account of Gharâniq was not a credible transmitter (al-'Asqalânî, vol.VIII: 439). Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni put this opinion in the context of elaborating the pros and cons with their respective argumentation. As most of the attitudes of ḥadîth experts, al-'Asqalâni strongly appreciated an account supported by the *sanad* before conducting the reasoning within the framework of that narration.

Based on the description of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni, those who support the existence of the account of Gharâniq can be divided into two groups: the "extremist" and the "moderates". The extremist faction sees the account of Gharâniq is real and is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad as he spoke it. Nevertheless, he said it unconsciously or even consciously to assail the polytheists (Javanese: *nglulu* or a form of sarcasm). On the contrary, the moderate faction acknowledges the existence of the account of Gharâniq but does not attribute it to the Prophet Muḥammad because it was not his speech. It was the voice of the Satan that resembled the voice of the Prophet (*Ibid.*: 439-40).

It was admitted by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni himself that from the point of view of the *sanad*, the account of Gharâniq had many weaknesses. There was no continuity of the *sanad*, some of them are weak, and so on. However, if the various existing chains of the account had been compiled as a whole, it would have been an acceptable account. Here, al-'Asqalâni as a ḥadîth expert looks like more concerned about the *sanad* issue and less concerned about the doctrinal implications of the account. For this reason, it seems that Muḥammad al-Ghazâli (1996) contrasts the understanding of ḥadîth between ḥadith experts and fiqh experts.

Some of the *sanads* (the chains of transmitters) of the account of Gharâniq are based on the Companion of Ibn 'Abbâs. The rest chains of the account do not have the first transmitter from the generations of the Companions. If there is an attribution to the Prophet it means that there has been a leap. The story of Gharâniq is a story of an event taking place in Mecca, while Ibn Abbâs, who was the first transmitter of the generations of Companions, belonged to the junior Companions (*min ṣighâr al-ṣahâbah*) that was prominent and grown-up in the Medina period. Why, then, was the account of Gharâniq not narrated by the first transmitter of the Companions? From this point of view, the validity of the account of Gharâniq should be questioned by its *isnâd* (the chain of transmission). Meanwhile, concerning the *tamannâ* (sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 53) Ibn 'Abbâs, claimed to be the first transmitter, interpreted it as the hope of the heart (the whisper of the heart), not the spoken word. This kind of interpretation clearly does not support the attribution of the account of Gharâniq to the Prophet, which is related to the account where Ibn 'Abbâs is considered as the first narrator. Is this not a "contradiction" and an "oddity"?

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni's recognition of the existence of the account of Gharâniq has led him to the interpretative efforts (al-'Asqalâni, vol.VIII: 34). This is a shift from the literal meaning of the verses that the Prophet consciously uttered the words '*tilka al-Gharâniq*' while reciting the verses of al-Qur'ân, or unconsciously, which is clearly

contrary to the principle of monotheism. He mentioned various interpretations. For example, the Prophet uttered these words when he was sleepy and unconscious. Then it was corrected by God. The Prophet pronounced it with the intent of assailing the polytheists. The one who pronounced it was the Satan with a voice that resembled the voice of the Prophet. This last takwil seems to be preferred by al-'Asqalâni.

If the account of Gharâniq is judged 'internally and cumulatively' (i.e. combining several similar accounts), the conclusion will generally recognize the acceptability of this account. However, if it is judged 'externally and holistically' (i.e. relating this account with other ḥadîths, al-Qur'ân, and the rationality of Islamic teachings), it will generate a conclusion that rejects the acceptability of the account. The rejection may not only mean that it is weak but is also considered to be false. This assumption must be completely contrary to the assumptions of those who accept it.

There is a " vague" impression in the attitude of those who acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharâniq. This vagueness can be seen from their tendency to leave the literal sense, while usually, the patterns of *bi al-riwâyah* (based on accounts) are in line with literalism. However, in the case of Gharâniq, the problem seems to be different. They feel as if there are double psychological problems. On the one hand, there will be a psychological burden if they do not accept the account of Gharâniq supported by the *sanad* (the chain of transmission). On the other hand, if they receive it, there will also be a similar burden because they must leave the literal meaning of the verses.

The Story of Gharâniq in Exegeses and Ḥadîths

The elaboration of the account of Gharâniq can be found both in ḥadîths and exegeses. The emergence of the diverse perspectives on this account, from those who agree to those who strongly reject it, makes this account full of polemics. In classic *bi al-ma'thûr* (based on accounts) exegeses, the existence of this account is generally acknowledged. It refers to the fact that such exegeses are very "appreciative" of every account supported by the *sanads* and make it a starting point in explaining the content of a verse. The reasoning used to interpret is generally not to criticize the existence of an account but rather to elaborate it.

In the book of *Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Ta'wîl al-Qur'ân*, commonly referred to as "the mother" of *bi al-ma'thûr exegeses* when interpreting sûrah al-Hâjj (22): 52-53, al-Ṭabarî said that the Prophet in his meeting with the polytheists of the Quraysh had once wished not to have a revelation which is uncomfortable for them (al-Ṭabarî, 1992, vol. IX: 174-75). Then there was sûrah al-Najm which is inserted by the "verse" of Gharâniq that seemed to be an expression of a compromised tendency of the Prophet against his people. In the other part, al-Ṭabarî mentioned the background of sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 52-53. That was when the Prophet recited the revelation, the Satan inserted the Gharâniq through his speech. This incident greatly struck the heart of the Prophet so that he was very sad. To comfort his heart, Allah sent down sûrah al-Isrâ'(17): 73,

> "And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We revealed to you in order to [make] you invent about Us something else; and then they would have taken you as a friend".

This verse implies that the event was normal as a manifestation of humanity. If al-Ṭabari's explanations are examined, it appears that he did not deny the existence of the account of Gharâniq although he did not explicitly attribute it to the Prophet.

Meanwhile, al-Suyûṭi in his exegesis book entitled *al-Durr al-Manthûr fi al-Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr* provided an exposition indicating his approval of the existence of the account of Gharâniq (al-Suyûṭî, 1990, vol. II: 661-64). The same issue can be found in *Fatḥ al-Qadîr* by al-Syaukâni's exegesis book (al-Syaukâni, vol.III: 463-464) and also in *al-Nukat wa al-'Uyûn* by al-Mâwardi's exegesis book. Thus, it is clear that the existence of the account of Gharâniq has been supported by some exegesis experts. In contrast, Ṣiddîq Ḥasan Khan in exegesis book, *Fatḥ al-Bayân fi Maqâṣid al-Qur'ân*, emphasized the invalidity of the account of Gharâniq. According to him, the story of Gharâniq was totally wrong (Ḥassan Khan, vol.VI: 245). Similarly, Muḥammad Ali al-Ṣâbûni also rejected the validity of the account of Gharâniq. He argued that the account widely elaborated by exegesis experts was a "fictitious" story created by the Zindiq (the Atheits). In addition to counteracting those who acknowledge the validity of the account, al-Ṣâbûni's critical commentary is also intended to make people aware of many "strange" thoughts that have sneaked in and tied to the source of Islamic teachings. In line with this, in Ṣafwat al-Tafâsir, he didn't relate at all the interpretation of sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 53 to the account of Gharâniq (al-Ṣâbûnî, 2001, vol. II: 269-70).

The different opinions among the exegesis experts have led to the polarization of understandings in addressing the existence of the story of Gharâniq. Regardless of whether the account is valid or not, the polarization of understandings has varied conceptual implications. At the same time, it is also an indicator of the diversity of perspectives and the paradigms of interpretation used. While the opinions that acknowledge the validity of the account of Gharâniq have been much blown up by the Orientalists and have been made as a weapon to insult Islam, those rejecting the validity gain more sympathy and support. This shows that the change in the cultural atmosphere is very influential in shifting the perspectives of the experts. When the recognition of the validity of the account of Gharâniq has not raised the fundamental excess and has not been made by the " outsiders" to strike Islam, the opinions acknowledging the validity are dominant. Nevertheless, after the situation changes new perspectives arise, the opinions rejecting the validity of the account of Gharâniq are strengthening.

The term *ghurnuq* (the singular form of the word *gharâniq*) has existed in the Arabic vocabularies since the Jahiliyyah era (the age of ignorance) meaning white birds flying high into the sky. *Ghurnuq* was the name for idols worshiped by the unbelievers of the Jahili. They called their idols *ghurnuq* because there was a belief that the idols worshipped would be able to give *shafâ'ah* (intercession to get reward and forgiveness and to ward them off from harm) like birds (al-Zamakhsyari, 1972, vol.III: 65; al-Jauzî, 1985, vol. II: 155). This means that the word *ghurnuq* has been attached much to their collective memory and theological concept.

The redaction of Gharâniq can also be found in the book of *Nihâyah fi Gharîb al-Ḥadîth wa al-Åthâr*. Referring to the preface of the author, the redaction of ḥadîth or *athar* contained in this book are not based on the name of a particular transmitter who generally

belongs to the ḥadîths of the Prophet (Ibn Athîr, 1979, vol.III: 348-364). Thus, the redaction of Gharâniq (*tilka al-gharânîq al-'ûlâ…*) is considered to be attributed to the Prophet. For that reason, Ibn al-Athîr can be regarded as an expert who recognizes the existence and validity of the account of Gharâniq attributed to the Prophet, regardless whether this is a conscious or unconscious utterance of the Prophet.

Mentioning the redaction of Gharâniq, Ibn al-Athir also quotes the *âthâr* of the Companions using the word *ghurnuq*. This indicates that the word *ghurnuq* (the singular form of the word *gharâniq*) had been popular in the era of *al-Risâlah* (messages communicated from Allah to the humans) of the Prophet. At least, this fact can indirectly serve as reinforcement for the existence and validity of the account of Gharâniq. Ibn Taimiyah, as quoted by Nurcholish Madjid, also mentioned about the account of Gharâniq. He said that as a human being, the Prophet could have done 'wrong' and 'careless', but in this case, he was immediately corrected by Allah (Madjid, 1986: 132). This statement was proposed in the context of the explanation of the existence of humanity in the Prophet (Shahab Ahmed, 1988: 67-124). Hence, the act of worshiping him, let alone considering him as God, is wrong. His humanity side has given 'psychological' and 'sociological' nuances to the sacred text. Thus, the Prophet as the recipient of revelations is not like an empty 'bottle', but rather a thinker who at the peak of his reflection with a high level of spirituality is able to receive the whispers of God brought by the *al-Rûh al-Amîn* (the spirit of faith and truth), *Jibrîl* (Gabriel).

Pros and Cons about the Account of Gharâniq

The polemics on the account of Gharâniq and its relation to sûrah al-Ḥajj (22): 52-53 has emerged among scholars since a long time ago. This is reasonable considering the existence of the account has fundamental implications for the construction of Islamic teachings. Many people deem the validity of the account of Gharâniq can tarnish the *iṣmah* of the Prophet (that the Prophet was protected), which, in turn, can also tarnish the revelation status of al-Qur'ân as a whole. If the Prophet in conveying the revelations of al-Qur'ân could have mixed them with the whispers of the Satan, would there have been guarantees for other matters? If in carrying out his duties, the Prophet had not been protected from slips, he might have been "careless" in doing other activities. Those who acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharaniq generally make a "compromise" effort related to the content of sûrah al-Ḥajj (22): 53-54. The Prophet pronounced the "verse" of Gharâniq, according al-Bâqilâni, actually to mock (*taubîkhî*) the polytheists. According to other opinions the "verse" of Gharâniq was pronounced by the Prophet when he was sleepy, which was then immediately corrected by God (al-'Asqalânî, vol.VIII: 438).

Wahbah al-Zuḥaili judging the account of Gharâniq as a lie, by citing al-Qurṭubi's exegesis, stated that the one who pronounced the "verse" of Gharâniq was the Satan himself using a voice similar to the voice of the Prophet. When the Prophet made a pause (*saktah*) in reading sûrah al-Najm (53): 19-20, the Satan imitated his voice and recited the "verse" of Gharâniq so that the polytheists of the Quraish assumed that the Prophet recited it as a revelation from Allah (al-Zuḥailî, 1991, vol. XVII: 249). This kind of

opinion on one side acknowledges the existence of the account of Gharâniq. On the other hand, it rejects the account when it is attributed to the Prophet.

Contrary to that opinion, Muḥammad al-Ghazâli and Yusûf al-Qarḍâwi firmly rejected the existence of the account of Gharâniq. They thought that the recognition of the validity of this account was a chance that could be used by the opponents to strike Islam. In fact, the account of Gharâniq has inspired Salman Rushdie to entitle his novel with "Satanic Verses". This novel has caused Ayatullâh Khomeini, the Spiritual Leader of Iran, giving order to hunt and kill him. Normally, al-Ghazâli also regretted the results of the study conducted by some experts, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni and al-Suyûṭi who acknowledged the validity of the account of Gharâniq. According to al-Qarḍâwi, the *Sunnah* (Ḥadîth) had to be understood within the framework of al-Qur'ân. Therefore, the account of Gharâniq (claimed as a ḥadîth) had to be rejected because it was clearly contrary to al-Qur'ân. The account of Gharâniq is judged as a fabricated ḥadîth (*mauḍû'*), the lowest qualification of assessment. Hadîths considered to be fabricated, are in fact no longer valid to be considered as ḥadîth. The title of Hadith here is only *majâzî* (figurative).

Muḥammad al-Ghazâli's opinion seems more scientifically and rationally acceptable. This is because if we acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharâniq as the voive of the Satan that resembled the voice of the Prophet, how can we explain it scientifically-rationally? Moreover, if we acknowledge the account (the "verse") of Gharâniq as the utterance of the Prophet coming from the whisper of the Satan and out of his conscious control, it will be even more impossible. Al-Ghazâli's above can be categorized as an opinion that strongly refuses it. For him, there was no tolerance for the recognition of the existence of the account since this would only lead to negative excesses. It seems that in addition to cross-checking with al-Qur'ân and the Sunnah, al-Ghazâli also conducted rational reasoning (*al-naẓar al-'aqlî*) in assessing the account of Gharâniq. The content in the text of the account of Gharâniq (claimed by some scholars as a ḥadîth) was deemed contrary to the results of commonsense reasoning. This pattern of assessment, as stated by Musfir Ghurmullâh al-Damîni, is a standard pattern in the criticism of the text of ḥadîths (Ghurmullâh, 1984; al-Idlîbî, 1983: 304).

Consonant with that opinion, Aḥmad Ḥasan considered the account of Gharâniq to be a part of artificial stories attributed to the Prophet as a manifestation of his compromised desire for the aspirations of the polytheists in order to succeed in developing the mission of *al-Risâlah* (conveying messages) (A. Hasan, 1984: 57-58). He is indded acknowledged to have a strong desire to compromise. However, it is impossible if he sacrificed the basic teachings he carried. On the other hand, if the "verse" of Gharâniq is the realization of his compromise attitude, it means that he compromised on aqidah. Then how could this be done? His "compromise" is merely a strategy for the success of his *da'wah* (preaching). Thus, compromise is only an instrument to achieve his goal. It is impossible for him to compromise, if he sacrifices the essence of his teaching. Such a compromise strategy of the Prophet is commonly known as *al-ḥanîfiyyah al-samḥah* (the straight and easy monotheism).

Aḥmad Ḥasan judged that the attribution of the account of Gharâniq to the Prophet was a form of his compromise tendency that was "dramatized" by a particular group. It

is similar to the case of *naskh* (abrogation) which is understood as the process of abolishing the rules in a law because of the Prophet's compromise attitude towards the demands of the environment. In carrying out the mission of *al-Risalâh*, the Prophet is neither in a "vacuum" nor a heavenly "robot" that is totally unfamiliar with the demands of his people. The Prophet is like "Hermes" (one of the gods in Greek mythology) whose task is to convey messages from God to be understood by his people without distorting the messages.

The writer's exploration of some literatures, especially related to hadths, has found out that many do not contain the account of Gharâniq. Abdurrahmân bin Ali al-Syaibâni (1988) did not mention about the account in his book entitled *Tamyîz al-Thayyib min al-Khabîs Fimâ Yadûru Alsinati al-Nâs min al-Ḥadîth*. This means that the account was not recorded by him, or it was recorded but not included because he judged it not as the ḥadîth of the Prophet (something based on him). The writer has also tracked *Mujam al-Mufahras li Alfâẓi al-Ḥadîth al-Nabawî* by Wintsink and Fuâd 'Abd al-Bâqî (1987), but he did not find the account of Gharâniq. Therefore, it can be concluded that this account only exists outside Imâm Mâlik and Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's *al-Kutub al-Sittah, Musnad al-Dârimi,* and *Muwaṭṭa'*. In fact, these books are considered as a parameter of the books of ḥadîth. That is the books whose contents have been widely recognized to be valid.

At least, if the authoritative ḥadîths does not mention the account of Gharâniq, we need to be "suspicious" of the existence of this account. It may be true that the account of Gharâniq exists as recorded in some literatures, but it is not attributed to the Prophet because if it is attributed to the Prophet, why do the standard literatures not mention it? Is the account of Gharâniq not close to the interpretation of the verses of al-Qur'ân, but why is it not quoted in *mu'tabarah* (recognized; legitimate) literatures? The proofs of whether the account (story) of Gharâniq exists or not can only be based on written evidences, while *mu'tabarah* written documents do not record it. This means that the existence and validity statuses of the account are questionable.

Critical Analyses: Towards the Common Ground

Understanding the account of Gharâniq can be allocated in the context of interpretation and understanding of sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 52. In this verse, the keywords "tamannâ" and "umniyyatihî" do not only mean: reading or reading verbally, but they also mean hoping or the hope from the heart. That means the Prophet had a hope for the success of his preaching, but the Satan hindered the realization of that hope (*alqâ al-shaiṭânu*) (al-Ṭabaṭaba'î, 1991, vol.XIV: 393). Furthermore, an expression as found in the account of Gharâniq was the one that were popular among the people of Mecca, and they often recited it while rounding the Ka'ba (Hasan, 1984: 222). It was possible that soon after the Prophet recited sûrah al-Najm (53): 19-20 telling the names of their gods, they recited together the expression/ utterance familiar to them. Such an understanding is based on the opinion saying that what is meant by the word *al-shaiṭân* in sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 53 is the Satan among humans (a human who behaves badly) (al-'Asqalânî, vol. VIII: 440; al-Andalûsî, 1993, vol.VI: 352). This kind of understanding is a compromise

because it recognizes the existence of the account of Gharâniq as a popular utterance and rejects it as something attributed to the Prophet. Therefore, it can accomodate various opinions, both the pros and cons, proportionally.

As mentioned above, the word *ghurnuq* had been widely known by the people in the Jahiliyyah Era (the age of ignorance). This word means white storks flying high into the sky. They called their idols *ghurnuq* (the singular form of *gharâniq*) because they believed that the idols were the intermediaries/messengers of their worship to God and the ones that could give *shafâ'ah* (intercession to get reward and forgiveness and to ward them off from harm). Such beliefs are in line with the meaning of *ghurnuq* from the perspective of language and are synchronous with the meaning of *al-'Uzzâ* and *al-'Lâta* (al-Isfahânî, n.y.: 466), the names of idols they worship. It indicates that the word *ghurnuq* had already been well known in the Jahiliyyah era. This word was even included in their (the people in the Jahiliyyah Era) rituals while rounding the Ka'bah which was surrounded by idols.

Conclusion

The acceptance of the account of Gharâniq rests on so many existing *sanads* (the chain of transmitters). Nevertheless, many experts strongly reject the acceptability of this account. Some experts reject it totally, and some others only reject its attribution to the Prophet Muḥammad but recognize the expression: *tilka al-gharânîq al-'ulâ wa inna shafâ'atahunna laturjâ* as being well known to the people in the Jahiliyyah Era. That is an expression strongly attached to the memory of the Quraish at that time. Based on the opinions of the majority of Hadith experts, if there is a contradiction between the *jarḥ* (critical assessment) and *ta'dîl* (positive assessment), the *jarḥ* should be prioritized.[30] The opinions denouncing the account of Gharâniq are worthy of consideration more than the ones recognizing it. However, the historical evidences suggest that the expression of *gharâniq* had been widely known to the people in the Jahiliyah era. Thus, "the compromising" conclusion that can be proposed is that the expression of *gharâniq* did exist as a popular expression, but the attribution to the Prophet (as his speech) when he recited the verses of the Qur'an is a groundless form of dramatization. Such a dramatization is indeed possible by the literal meaning of the verses.

The attribution of the expression of *gharâniq* to the Prophet Muhammad Saw has raised a high "risk" of doctrinal implication because it will open the chance for the disagreement on his *iṣmah* (being protected). It will lead to a debate on the originality of the revelation in the verses of the Qur'an as a whole. For that reason, it is reasonable that contemporary Muslim thinkers, such as Muḥammad al-Ghazâli and Yusûf al-Qardâwi firmly reject the recognition of the existence and validity of the account of Gharâniq. They seem a priori to this account, so it looks like it is easy for them to ignore or neglect the existing historical data.

References

Hasan, A. (1994). *Pintu Ijtihad Sebelum Tertutup*. trans. Agah Garnadi, Pustaka, Bandung, Indonesia.

al-'Asqalâni, Ibn Ḥajar. (n.y.) *Fatḥ al-Bârî*, vol. VIII, al-Maktabah al-salafiyyah, Kairo, Mesir.

al-Andalûsî, Abû Ḥayyân. (1993). *Tafsîr al-Baḥr al-Muḥîṭ*. vol. VI, Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Ghazâli, Muḥammad. (1996). *Studi Kritis atas Hadis Nabi*, trans. Muhammad Bagir, Mizan, Bandung, Indonesia.

al-Idlibi, Ṣalaḥuddin b. Ahmad. 1983. *Manhaj Naqd al-Matn.* Dar al-afaq al-jadidah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Iṣfahâni, al-Râghib. (n.y.) *Mu'jam Mufradâti Alfâẓ al-Qur'ân.* Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Jauzî, Ibn. (1985). *Gharîbi al-Hadîth.* vol. II., Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Khâṭib, Muḥammad 'Ajjâj. (1989). *Uṣûl al-Ḥadîth: Ulûmuhû wa Muṣṭalaḥuhû.* Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Mâwardî, Abu Ḥasan Ali. (n.y.). *al-Nukat wa al-'Uyûn*. vol. V., Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah mu'assasat al-kutub al-thaqâfiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Ṣâbûnî, Ali. (2001). *Ṣafwat al-Tafâsîr: Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*. vol. II, Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Suyûṭî, Jalâluddin. (1990). *al-Durr al-Manthûr fi al-Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr*. vol. II., Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Suyûṭî, Jalâluddin. (n.y.). *Lubab al-Nuqûl fi Asbâb al-Nuzûl ,* vol. II, al-Ma'arif, Bandung, Indoensia.

al-Shaibâni, Abdurrahmân b. Ali. (1988). *Tamyîz al-Thayyib min al-Khabîs Fimâ Yadûru Alsinati al-Nâs min al-Ḥadîth.* Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Shaukâni, Muḥammad. (n.y.). *Fatḥ al-Qadîr.* vol. III, Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Ṭabari, Ibn Jarîr. (1992). *Jami' al-Bayân fi Ta'wîl al-Qur'ân*. vol. IX, Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Ṭabâtaba'i, Ḥusein. (1991). *Tafsîr al-Mîzân*, vol. XIV., Mu'assasat al-'ilmî, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Zamakhshari, Maḥmûd b. 'Umar. (1972). *al-Fâ'iq fi Gharîb al-Hadîth*. vol. III, Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

al-Zuḥailî, Wahbah. (1991). *al-Tafsîr al-Munîr*. vol. XVII, Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ghurmullâh, Musfir. (1984). *Maqâyis Naqdi Mutûn al-Sunnah.* n.p., Riyâḍ, Saudi Arabia.

Ḥassan Khan, Ṣiddîq. (n.y.). *Fatḥ al-Bayân*. vol. VI, Dâr al-fikr al-'arabî, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ibn Athîr, 'Izzuddin. (1970). *Usd al-Ghâyah fî Ma'rifat al-Saḥâbat*. vol. I, Kitâb al-sha'b, Kairo, Mesir.

Ibn Athîr, 'Izzuddin. 1979. *al-Nihâyah fi Gharîb al-Hadîth wa al-Athar*. vol. III, Dâr al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

Madjid, Nurcholish. (1986). "Argumen untuk Keterbukaan, Moderasi dan Toleransi: Berapa Pokok Pandangan Ibnu Taimiyah" in *Islam Antara Visi, Tradisi dan Hegemoni Bukan Muslim,* Mochtar Pabottinggi (editor), Yayasan Obor Indonesia. Jakarta, Indonesia.

Mujiburrahman. (2008). *Mengindonesiakan Islam, Representasi dan Ideologi*. Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Mustarhami, Sayyed Isa. (2018). "The myth of Gharaniq and the orientalists' exploitations". *the Journal of Qur'an from the Orientalists Point of View*, quran-journal.com, downloaded at 6/6/2018.

Sa'id Nashîd. (2016). *al-Hadâthah,wa al-Qur'ân*. al-Tanwîr, Tunisia.

Shahab, Ahmed. (1998). "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic verses". *Studia Islamica* Number 87.

Shihab, M. Quraish. (2012). *Membaca Sirah Nabi Muhammad Saw dalam Sorotan al-Qur'an dan Hadits-Hadits Shahih*. Lentera Hati, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Wintsink, A. and Fu'âd Abd al-Bâqi. (1987). *Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfâẓ al-Hadîth al-Nabawî*. Dâr al-dakwah, Istambul, Turkey.