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

This study evaluates the validity of the Hadith of Gharâniq in the context of various sanads (chains of narrators) that exist. While many sanads recognize the existence of this hadith, many scholars have categorically rejected it. Some of them reject it completely, while others only reject its attribution to the Prophet Muhammad, but recognize the expression "tilka al-gharânîq al-'ulâ wa inna shafâ'atahunna laturjâ" as a widely known expression among the people of the Jahiliyyah, especially the Quraysh. This study begins by explaining the historical background of Hadith Gharânîq, including its sources dating back to the Early Islamic period. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach is taken to analyze the various views of scholars related to Hadith Gharânîq. The diverse views of prominent scholars in Islamic history are investigated in an attempt to understand their reasoning in assessing the validity of this hadith. In this analysis, the historical, cultural, and social context factors that influence the understanding of the Hadith of Gharânîq are also considered. The results of this study will reveal the various arguments used by scholars to assess the validity of the Gharânîq Hadith and its implications in the context of tafsir literature. Based on the view of the majority of Hadith scholars who prioritize jarḥ (critical assessment) in cases of contradiction with ta'dîl (positive assessment), opinions that reject Gharâniq's account should be given more serious consideration than those that recognize the account. Nevertheless, historical evidence shows that the expression Gharâniq was widely recognized by the people of Jahiliyyah. Such an interpretation is possible if one wants to literally take the verses. The attribution of Gharâniq expressions to the Prophet Muhammad carries a high "risk" in terms of doctrinal implications, as it may trigger debates about his iṣmah (infallibility) and the authenticity of revelation in all Qur'ānic verses. Therefore, it is not surprising that contemporary Muslim thinkers, such as Muḥammad al-Ghazâli and Yusûf al-Qardâwi, categorize the recognition of the existence and validity of the Gharâniq account as the exclusion of historical data.

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

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengevaluasi validitas hadis Gharâniq dalam konteks berbagai sanad (rantai perawi) yang ada. Meskipun banyak sanad yang mengakui keberadaan hadis ini, banyak ulama yang menolaknya secara tegas. Sebagian dari mereka menolaknya secara mutlak, sementara yang lain hanya menolak penyandarannya kepada Nabi Muhammad, namun mengakui ungkapan "tilka al-gharânîq al-'ulâ wa

inna syafa'atahunna laturjâ" sebagai sebuah ungkapan yang dikenal luas di kalangan masyarakat Jahiliyah, khususnya kaum Quraisy. Penelitian ini dimulai dengan menjelaskan latar belakang sejarah Hadits Gharânîq, termasuk sumber-sumbernya yang berasal dari periode Islam Awal. Selanjutnya, pendekatan interdispliner dilakukan untuk menganalisis berbagai pandangan ulama terkait hadis gharîq. Berbagai pandangan para ulama terkemuka dalam sejarah Islam diselidiki dalam upaya untuk memahami alasan mereka dalam menilai keabsahan hadis ini. Dalam analisis ini, faktor sejarah, budaya, dan konteks sosial yang mempengaruhi pemahaman hadis gharîq juga dipertimbangkan. Hasil dari penelitian ini akan mengungkap berbagai argumen yang digunakan oleh para ulama untuk menilai kesahihan Hadis Gharîq dan implikasinya dalam konteks literatur tafsir. Berdasarkan pandangan mayoritas ulama hadis yang mengedepankan jarḥ (penilaian kritis) dalam kasus-kasus yang bertentangan dengan ta'dîl (penilaian positif), maka pendapat-pendapat yang menolak riwayat gharâniq harus lebih dipertimbangkan secara lebih serius dibandingkan dengan pendapat-pendapat yang mengakuinya. Namun demikian, bukti sejarah menunjukkan bahwa ungkapan Gharâniq dikenal luas oleh masyarakat Jahiliyah. Penafsiran seperti itu dimungkinkan jika seseorang ingin memahami ayat-ayat tersebut secara harfiah. Penyandaran ungkapan gharâniq kepada Nabi Muhammad memiliki "risiko" yang tinggi dalam hal implikasi doktrinal, karena dapat memicu perdebatan tentang kemaksuman dan keaslian wahyu dalam semua ayat Al-Qur'an. Oleh karena itu, tidak mengherankan jika para pemikir Muslim kontemporer, seperti Muḥammad al-Ghazâli dan Yusûf al-Qardâwi, mengkategorikan pengakuan terhadap eksistensi dan keabsahan riwayat Gharâniq sebagai pengabaian terhadap data historis.

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.[1] The difference is that, borrowing the term from Muḥammad 'Ajjâj al-Khâṭîb, al-Qur'ân is considered as *al-matluw* (recited) revelation, while al-Ḥadîth is the *ghayr al-matluw* (unrecited) revelation.[2] 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.[3] In addition, conflicts that have been occurring among schools in Muslim society have led to massive counterfeiting of ḥadîth.

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[1] Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law: The Qur'an, the Muwatta'and Madinan Amal* (Routledge, 2013).

[2] Muhammad Babul Ulum, "The Companions Redefining Criteria and Reconsidering 'Adâla Critique From Qur'an and Hadith," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 30, no. 2 (December 28, 2022): 105–23, https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v30i2.15450.

[3] Mohammad Gharaibeh, "Beyond Authenticity: Alternative Approaches to Hadith and Hadith Literature," in *Beyond Authenticity, Alternative Approaches to Hadith Narrations and Collections* (Brill, 2023), 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004529083_002.

In general, the study of ḥadîth includes the study or criticism on the *sanad* (the chain of *muḥaddiths* or transmitters) and the *matan* (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.[4] 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.[5] 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 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.[6] 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.[7] 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.[8] 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.[9]

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.[10] 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 issue of interpretation in the debate over the Hadith of Gharâniq highlights the complexity of seeking a correct understanding of this hadith. One of the arguments put forward by some scholars is that the expression "tilka al-gharânîq al-'ulâ wa inna

[4] Wahyudin Darmalaksana, Lamlam Pahala, and Endang Soetari, "Kontroversi Hadis Sebagai Sumber Hukum Islam," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 2, no. 2 (December 31, 2017): 245–58, https://doi.org/10.15575/jw.v2i2.1770.

[5] Alven Putra, "The Prophet's Household Problems and The Solving Method in Hadith," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 7 (2022).

[6] M. Quraish Shihab, *Membaca Sirah Nabi Muhammad: Dalam Sorotan Al-Quran dan Hadis-Hadis Shahih (Edisi Baru)* (Lentera Hati Group, 2018).

[7] Jean M. Kane and Salman Rushdie, "The Migrant Intellectual and the Body of History: Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children,'" *Contemporary Literature* 37, no. 1 (1996): 94–118, https://doi.org/10.2307/1208752.

[8] A Hussain, "Misunderstandings and Hurt: How Canadians Joined Worldwide Muslim Reactions to Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 1–32, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaar/70.1.1.

[9] John Horton, "The Satanic Verses Controversy: A Brief Introduction," in *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration*, ed. John Horton (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1993), 104–13, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-22887-4_7.

[10] Sa'id Nashîd, *Al-Hadâthah,Wa al-Qur'ân.* (Tunisia: al-Tanwîr, 2016).

shafâ'atahunna laturjâ" in the hadith may not have been an official statement of the Prophet Muhammad, but simply part of the language commonly used during the Jahiliyyah period.[11] This argument focuses on the cultural and linguistic context of Jahiliyyah, the period before Islam emerged. During this time, the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula had a variety of religious beliefs and practices, including the worship of idols and specific deities.[12] In their everyday language, there may be expressions or phrases that refer to these deities in general, without implying recognition of their truth or sanctity.

In this context, some scholars argue that the words contained in the Hadith of Gharâniq may simply reflect the colloquial usage of the Jahiliyyah period. Such is the research conducted by Benny Afwadzi "Hadith Criticism in the Perspective of Historians".[13] Stating that the Gharânîq story is believed to be true by Ibn Hajar because it has many lines and a basis. However, in Haykal's view, it is very clear that there are contradictions. This story contradicts the holiness of every prophet in conveying God's message. Haykal regrets the citation of this Gharânîq story by some historians and exegetes in the Muslim environment. In addition, there is research conducted by Nurun Najmatul Ulya, "A Study of Nicolai Sinai's Interpretation in An Interpretation of Surah Al-Najm (QS.53)."[14] States that verse gharaniq is not part of revelation. In other words, the expression could have been used to describe a way of speaking or communicating that was prevalent at that time, rather than as an official statement or religious teaching. Due to the importance of the Hadith of Gharâniq in understanding the early history of Islam and the concept of Prophet Muhammad's iṣmah (infallibility), further research is required. This includes a more in-depth evaluation of the various existing sanads, a more detailed analysis of the arguments given by scholars, and a more careful interpretation of the historical context of Jahiliyyah. In addition, this study also considers the doctrinal implications of attributing the expression Gharâniq to Prophet Muhammad. This could open a debate on the authenticity of revelation in the Qur'ān as a whole and present a serious challenge to the traditional view of Prophet Muhammad as an apostle protected from error. Therefore, this study has significant relevance to the understanding of Islam, the history of hadith literature, and the doctrinal implications that may arise as a result of the interpretation of the Gharâniq Hadith.

Method

This study begins by investigating the historical background of the Hadith of Gharânîq, which is one of the most controversial traditions in Islam. It describes a change in Prophet Muhammad's statement about the gods worshipped by the Quraysh in Mecca

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[11] Tabrani Tajuddin and Neny Muthiatul Awwaliyyah, "Hermenutika Yusuf Al-Qordawi Dalam Kitab Kaifa Nata'amal Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah Ma'alim Wa Dawabit," *AL-MUTSLA* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 29–43, https://doi.org/10.46870/jstain.v3i1.47.

[12] Zailani Zailani, "Metode Intertekstual Dalam Memahami Hadis Nabi," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 15, no. 2 (September 15, 2017): 298–313, https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v15i2.4018.

[13] Benny Afwadzi, "Kritik Hadis Dalam Perspektif Sejarawan," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 7, no. 1 (June 1, 2017): 50–75, https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2017.7.1.24-49.

[14] Nurun Najmatul Ulya, "Telaah Terhadap Interpretasi Nicolai Sinai Dalam An Interpretation of Surah Al-Najm (QS. 53)," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan al-Hadits* 14, no. 2 (2020): 179–204.

during the early days of Islam.[15] However, what makes this hadith controversial is that in some versions, Prophet Muhammad first seems to recognize the idols of Quraysh as legitimate objects of worship, but later corrects his statement and claims that this was a demonic influence. Due to its significance in the understanding of early Islamic history and the concept of Prophet Muhammad's iṣmah (infallibility), the validity of the Hadith of Gharânîq has been the subject of intense debate among Islamic scholars.[16]

To understand more deeply about this issue, this research takes an interdisciplinary approach that combines various disciplines. First, the research began with an in-depth historical data collection on the Hadith of Gharânîq and its historical context. This included investigating various sources dating back to the early Islamic period that recorded this hadith, including relevant hadith literature, tafsir, and historical accounts.[17] Then, the research enters the stage of analyzing the views of scholars related to Hadith Gharânîq. The diverse views of prominent scholars in Islamic history are the main focus. The research seeks to understand the reasons and methods they used in assessing the validity of this hadith.[18] Some scholars categorically reject the validity of this hadith while others may only reject its attribution to the Prophet Muhammad.

In the process of analysis, the research also considered the historical, cultural, and social context factors that influenced the understanding of the Hadith of Gharânîq. This involves an understanding of the Jahiliyyah culture, the Quraysh tribe's relationship with early Islam, and the controversies that may have arisen during the period. Finally, based on the analysis of historical data, scholarly views, and considerations of context, the research attempts to draw critical conclusions about the validity of the Hadith of Gharânîq. This involves evaluating the diverse arguments and trying to reach a deeper understanding of the role and significance of this hadith in Islamic history. Thus, an interdisciplinary approach is utilized to deconstruct the debate surrounding the Hadith of Gharânîq and provide a more comprehensive insight into this controversial topic.

The Story of al-Gharâniq: A Brief Description

The exploration of "al-Gharâniq" is closely tied to the interpretation and elucidation of the content within Surah al-Hâjj. This particular surah, the 22nd chapter of the Quran, holds a pivotal place in Islamic scripture and is regarded as one of profound significance. Within Surah al-Hâjj, verse 52 plays a central role, serving as the epicenter of the debate surrounding "al-Gharâniq."[19] Verse 52 in Surah al-Hâjj is a critical piece of the puzzle in understanding the controversy. The keywords "*tamannâ*" and "*umniyyatihî*"

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[15] Wael Abu-'Uksa, "Liberal Renewal of the Turath: Constructing the Egyptian Past in Sayyid al-Qimni's Works," in *Arab Liberal Thought after 1967: Old Dilemmas, New Perceptions*, ed. Meir Hatina and Christoph Schumann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), 101–17, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137551412_6.

[16] Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad Prophet for Our Time* (Mizan Pustaka, 2013).

[17] Eva Syarifah Wardah, "Metode Penelitian Sejarah," *Tsaqofah* 12, no. 2 (2014): 165–75, https://doi.org/10.32678/tsaqofah.v12i2.3512.

[18] Akif Khilmiyah, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Samudra Biru, 2016).

[19] Erasiah Erasiah, "Muhammad, A Biography Of The Prophet Karya Karen Armstrong," *Fikri : Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 75–88, https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v6i1.1518.

within this verse are of paramount importance, as they extend beyond their apparent meanings of reading or reciting verbally. These terms encapsulate a profound sense of hope and aspiration, emanating from the depths of one's heart. This nuanced interpretation reveals that the Prophet Muhammad harbored a hopeful aspiration for the success of his mission, which included the propagation of the message of Islam.[20]

However, a significant turning point occurs within the verse, marked by the phrase "alqâ al-shaiṭânu" (Satan's interference). It is at this juncture that the controversy surrounding "al-Gharâniq" arises. The interpretation of this phrase and its implications for the Prophet's revelations become a focal point of scholarly discussion. The parallel between "al-Gharâniq" and Surah al-Hâjj lies in the contextual understanding of hope and divine intervention. While Surah al-Hâjj discusses the Prophet's heartfelt yearning for the success of his mission, "al-Gharâniq" introduces a narrative where this hope appears momentarily compromised by external influences, often associated with Satan's interference. Hence, the elucidation of "al-Gharâniq" essentially augments the comprehension of this key verse within Surah al-Hâjj, offering insights into the challenges and complexities faced by the Prophet during his mission.

In essence, the detailed exploration of "al-Gharâniq" provides a lens through which scholars and theologians endeavor to grasp the intricate layers of meaning embedded within Surah al-Hâjj. It encourages a deeper examination of the Prophet's experiences and the divine revelations he received, shedding light on the nuances of hope, temptation, and divine protection that are central to the Islamic narrative.[21] "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.[22]

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

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[20] Muhammad Rusydi Mohamed, "Tafsir Bi Al-Ra'y: Kajian Terhadap Pemikiran Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ghazali Dalam Kitab Al-Mahawir al-Khamsah Li al-Qur'an al-Karim/Muhammad Rusydi Bin Mohamed" (PhD Thesis, University of Malaya, 2013), http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/id/eprint/5251.

[21] Armstrong, *Muhammad Prophet for Our Time*.

[22] Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Al-Usrah al-Muslimah Fi al-Alam al-Mu'ashir* (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'ashir, 2008).

argumentation) and *'aqliyyah* (logical argumentation).[23] 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.[24] 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:

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 'Ȧliyah. 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".[25] 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.[26]

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.[27] 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".[28] 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

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[23] Wahbah Al-Zuḥaylī, "Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr Fī al-'Aqīdah Wa al-Sharī 'ah Wa al-Manhaj," *Damsyiq: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu 'aṣir H* 1418 (1991).

[24] Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Asbabun Nuzul; Sebab Turunnya Ayat Al-Quran* (Gema Insani, 2008).

[25] Mohd Nazri bin Ahmad and Mohd Faizulamri bin Mohd Saad, "Kesan Riwayat Asbab Al-Nuzul Yang Da'if Dalam Tafsir Nurul Ihsan," *Jurnal Al-Turath; Vol* 1, no. 2 (2016), http://journalarticle.ukm.my/13550/1/17-24-2-PB.pdf.

[26] Shahab Ahmed, "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses," *Studia Islamica*, no. 87 (1998): 67–124, https://doi.org/10.2307/1595926.

[27] Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalânî, "Fath Al-Bârî Syarh Shahîh Bukhârî, Juz III," *Beirut: Dâr al-Ma 'rifah* 1379 (2003).

[28] Ahmad bin'Ali Hajar Al-asqalani, 'Abd 'Aziz bin'Abdullah Ibn Baz, and Hafiz Thana'Allah Zahidi, *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Syarah Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar al-fikr, 1993).

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.[29]

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 contrasts the understanding of ḥadîth between ḥadith experts and fiqh experts.[30]

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).[31] 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.

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalâni's recognition of the existence of the account of Gharâniq has led him to the interpretative efforts.[32] 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.[33]

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[29] Abu Khaer and Fatkhul Mubin, "Konsep Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an Vis A Vis Ayat-Ayat Setan Dalam Kajian 'Ulumul Qur'An," *Al Burhan: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Pengembangan Budaya Al-Qur'an* 22, no. 01 (August 14, 2022): 57–76, https://doi.org/10.53828/alburhan.v22i01.744.

[30] Sheikh Mohamed Al Ghazali and Muhammad al-Baqir, *Studi Kritis Atas Hadis Nabi Saw: Antara Pemahaman] Tekstual Dan Konstektual* (Mizan, 1991).

[31] Mufti Labib Jalaluddin, "Teori Naskh Dalam Pandangan William Montgomery Watt Dan Richard Bell," *Hermeneutika: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 13, no. 2 (2019), http://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Hermeneutik/article/view/6387.

[32] Al-asqalani, Baz, and Zahidi, *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Syarah Sahih Al-Bukhari*.

[33] Mohammad Alwi Amru Ghozali, "Menyoal Legalitas Tafsir (Telaah Kritis Konsep Al-Ashil Wa Al-Dakhil)," *Jurnal Tafsere* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2018), https://doi.org/10.24252/jt.v6i2.7214.

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.[34] 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.[35]

This verse, which is found in Surah al-Hâjj (22): 52, carries a profound implication that suggests the event surrounding "al-Gharâniq" can be understood as a normal manifestation of human experiences. When delving into the explanations provided by renowned scholars like al-Ṭabari, it becomes evident that there is a nuanced stance taken. Al-Ṭabari's interpretation does not outright deny the existence of the account of "Gharâniq," even though he refrains from explicitly attributing it to the Prophet

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[34] Muhammad Ibnu Jarir Al-Tabari and B. Garir, "Jami 'al-Bayan 'an Ta'Wil al-Qur'An," *Beirut: Dar al-Ma 'rifa Lil-Tiba 'a Wal Nashr*, 1978.

[35] Sayyed Isa Mustarhami, "The Myth of Gharaniq and the Orientalists' Exploitations," *The Qur'an from Orientalists Point of View* 4, no. 7 (March 18, 2010): 163–90.

Muhammad. In this context, it's crucial to recognize the complexity of al-Ṭabari's position.[36] His interpretation reflects a nuanced approach that seeks to navigate the intricacies of the "Gharâniq" narrative. While he refrains from directly assigning the account to the Prophet Muhammad, he does not dismiss its existence altogether. Instead, he appears to acknowledge the historical presence of the "Gharâniq" narrative in some form, even if he does not endorse it as part of the Prophet's authentic sayings.[37]

Al-Ṭabari's approach reflects a careful balance between preserving the integrity of the prophetic tradition and acknowledging the historical context in which the "Gharâniq" narrative emerged. It is indicative of the scholarly scrutiny and discernment applied to the Hadith literature, where distinguishing between authentic and less reliable narrations is a fundamental endeavor. In essence, the verse from Surah al-Hâjj and al-Ṭabari's interpretation together underscore the complexity of the "Gharâniq" debate. They suggest that the narrative surrounding "Gharâniq" should be approached with a degree of academic caution and that various scholars may adopt nuanced positions, neither wholesale acceptance nor complete rejection. This nuanced approach exemplifies the scholarly rigor applied to the study of Hadith and the nuanced perspectives within Islamic scholarship regarding the authenticity and implications of the "Gharâniq" account.

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.[38] The same issue can be found in *Fatḥ al-Qadîr[39]* by al-Syaukâni's exegesis book and also in *al-Nukat wa al-'Uyûn[40]* 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.[41] 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,

[36] واقعہ غرانیق :مفسرین اور اہلِ سیر کے نقطہٴ نگاہ کا تجزیاتی مطالعہ)مستشرقین کے اعتراضات کے Samina Sadia, "کے تناظر میں): The Incident of Gharaniq: An Analytical Study of the Views of Quranic Commentators and Seerah Writers (In the Context of Orientalists' Objections)," *Al-Wifaq* 5, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 99–110, https://doi.org/10.55603/alwifaq.v5i1.u6.

[37] Ilse Lichtenstadter, "A Note on the Gharaniq and Related Quranic Problems," *Isräel Oriental Studies*, 1975, 54–61.

[38] Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Al-Durr al-Manthûr Fi al-Tafsîr Bi al-Ma'thûr*, vol. ii (Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah, 1990).

[39] Muḥammad bin'Alî Al-Syaukânî, *Fatḥ Al-Qadîr al-Jâmi 'Baina Fannî al-Riwâyah Wa al-Dirâyah Min 'Ilm al-Tafsîr* (Beirut: Dâr al-Ma 'rifah, 2007).

[40] Abu Hasan Ali Mawardi, *Al-Nukat Wa al-'Uyûn*, vol. V (Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyah mu'assasat al-kutub al-thaqâfiyyah, n.d.).

[41] Ṣiddîq Ḥassan Khan, *Fatḥ Al-Bayân Fi Maqâṣid al-Qur'ân*, vol. VI (Beirut: Dâr al-fikr al-'Arabî, n.d.).

in Ṣafwat al-Tafâsîr, he didn't relate at all the interpretation of sûrah al-Ḥâjj (22): 53 to the account of Gharâniq.[42]

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.[43] 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. Thus, the redaction of Gharâniq (*tilka al-gharâniq 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

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[42] Muhammad Ali al-Ṣâbûnî, *Ṣafwat Al-Tafâsîr: Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*, vol. VII (Beirut: Dar al Fikr, 2001).

[43] Maḥmûd b. Umar al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Fâ'iq Fi Gharîb al-Hadîth*, vol. 1972 (Beirut: Dar al Fikr, n.d.).

"careless", but in this case, he was immediately corrected by Allah.[44] This statement was proposed in the context of the explanation of the existence of humanity in the Prophet.[45] 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.[46]

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.[47] 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

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[44] N. C. Madjid, "Argumen Untuk Keterbukaan, Moderasi, Dan Toleransi," *Dalam Mochtar Pabotinggi (Peny.). Islam Antara Visi, Tradisi, Dan Hegemoni Bukan-Muslim. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia*, 1986.
[45] Ahmed, "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses."
[46] Al-asqalani, Baz, and Zahidi, *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Syarah Sahih Al-Bukhari*.
[47] az-Zuhaili, *Al-Usrah al-Muslimah Fi al-Alam al-Mu'ashir*.

of Iran, giving order to hunt and kill him.[48] 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.[49] 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 common sense reasoning.[50]

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

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[48] Mohsen Hamli, "The Satanic Verses: The Rhetoric and the Dream," *Comunicare Interculturală Şi Literatură* 9, no. 1 (2010): 164–81.

[49] Seyed Adnan Eshkevari, Abdollah Hosseini, and Jafar Thalabi, "Manifestations of the Process of Sartre's Existentialism in the Character of the Protagonist of the Masri al-Gharaniq In the City of Aqeeqah Narrative for Example," *Quarterly of Arabic Language and Literature* 17, no. 3 (2021): 321–39.

[50] metatags generator, "HADIS SEBAGAI SUMBER HUKUM ISLAM (Studi Metode Komparasi-Konfrontatif Hadis-Al- Qur'an Perspektif Muhammad Al-Ghazali Dan Yusuf al-Qaradawi) | Ahkam: Jurnal Hukum Islam," accessed October 7, 2023, https://ejournal.uinsatu.ac.id/index.php/ahkam/article/view/391.

abolishing the rules in a law because of the Prophet's compromise attitude towards the demands of the environment.[51] 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 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 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.[52]

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

The comprehension of the account of Gharâniq finds its roots in the interpretation and comprehension of Surah al-Ḥâjj (22): 52, which offers valuable insight into the situation. In this verse, the keywords "*tamannâ*" and "*umniyyatihî*" carry a deeper meaning beyond mere reading or verbal expression; they also signify hope, emanating from the depths of the heart. Here, we discern that the Prophet Muhammad held a hopeful aspiration for the success of his preaching. However, the interference of Satan thwarted the realization of this hope, an obstacle that is described as "*alqâ al-shaiṭânu*".[53] Moreover, the expression found in the account of Gharâniq was one that resonated deeply among the people of Mecca. It was a phrase that they frequently recited while circumambulating the Ka'ba, a practice rooted in their pre-Islamic traditions. It is conceivable that shortly after the Prophet recited Surah al-Najm (53): 19-20, revealing

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[51] Mawardi, *Al-Nukat Wa al-'Uyûn*.

[52] A. Wintsink and Fu'âd Abd al-Bâqi, *Mu'jam al-Mufahras Li Alfâẓ al-Hadîth al-Nabawî* (Istanbul, Turkey: Dâr al-dakwah, 1987).

[53] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *Al-Mîzân Fi Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A 'lamî, 2002).

the names of their gods, the people collectively recited the familiar expression. This understanding aligns with the opinion that the term "al-shaitân" in Surah al-Ḥâjj (22): 53 refers to the human "Satan" or someone who engages in wrongful behavior.[54]

This form of comprehension represents a middle ground—a compromise. It acknowledges the existence of the Gharâniq account as a well-known and frequently used expression among the people but rejects it as something directly attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, it seeks to accommodate a range of opinions, allowing for a balanced consideration of both the arguments in favor of and against the authenticity of the account of Gharâniq. This nuanced approach to understanding the Gharâniq account embodies a middle ground, signifying a compromise that bridges the gap between opposing viewpoints. It effectively recognizes and acknowledges the historical reality that the Gharâniq account was indeed prevalent and widely used among the people of Mecca during the pre-Islamic era. This acknowledgment extends to the understanding that the expression held significant cultural and linguistic relevance for the community, particularly when they circumambulated the Ka'ba. However, the compromise lies in the recognition that this popular expression cannot be unequivocally attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. It draws a line between acknowledging the historical presence of the expression and attributing it directly to the Prophet as part of his divine revelations. This stance is rooted in a careful analysis of the available evidence and the consideration of the broader historical and cultural context in which the expression emerged.

By adopting this balanced approach, the study allows for the inclusion of diverse perspectives. It encourages a more inclusive and open-minded discourse regarding the Gharâniq account. Advocates both for and against the authenticity of the account can engage in a constructive dialogue, considering the historical, linguistic, and cultural dimensions while respecting the boundaries of scholarly rigor and critical analysis. In essence, this middle-ground interpretation strives to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between acknowledging cultural realities and upholding the integrity of the prophetic tradition within the broader framework of Islamic scholarship. The word "ghurnuq" held a prominent place in the lexicon of the people during the Jahiliyyah Era, often referred to as the "age of ignorance." Its significance extended beyond a mere linguistic term; it carried profound cultural and religious connotations. In the linguistic realm, "ghurnuq" denoted the image of white storks gracefully soaring high into the sky, evoking a sense of majesty and loftiness. However, its cultural and religious implications were far more profound.

During this era, the people of Mecca bestowed the name "ghurnuq" (the singular form of "gharâniq") upon their idols. They firmly believed that these idols served as intermediaries or messengers between themselves and the divine. It was their conviction that these idols possessed the unique ability to intercede on their behalf, acting as conduits for their worship to God. This intercession was seen as a means to attain divine rewards, forgiveness, and protection from harm. These deeply rooted beliefs were consistent with the essence of "ghurnuq" when examined from a linguistic perspective.

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[54] Al-Asqalânî, "Fath Al-Bârî Syarh Shahîh Bukhârî, Juz III."

Notably, these beliefs regarding "ghurnuq" were in sync with similar conceptions related to other idols of the time, such as "al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta" (al-Isfahânî, n.y.: 466). These names represented other deities they worshipped, reinforcing the interconnectedness of their religious practices and beliefs. It becomes evident that the word "ghurnuq" held a significant place in the religious and cultural milieu of the Jahiliyyah Era. The coherence of these beliefs regarding "ghurnuq" with other idolatrous conceptions of the time, such as "al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta," serves as a compelling testament to the complex tapestry of religious practices and beliefs prevalent during the Jahiliyyah Era. "Al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta" were names that represented distinct deities worshipped alongside other idols in the polytheistic pantheon of the pre-Islamic Arabian society.

"Al-'Uzzâ" was regarded as a powerful goddess, often associated with protection, might, and honor. "Al-'Lâta," on the other hand, symbolized the concept of nurturing and sustenance. These deities, like "ghurnuq," held a prominent place in the religious consciousness of the people of Mecca, reflecting the multifaceted nature of their religious beliefs. Each idol represented a specific aspect of life and was invoked for various purposes, including intercession and protection.

The convergence of these beliefs underscores the interconnectedness of their religious practices and the intricate web of deities they revered. It's important to note that this polytheistic system was deeply entrenched in the societal fabric of the time. The people of Mecca had a pantheon of deities, each of which played a distinct role in their lives, from safeguarding their interests to bestowing blessings and averting misfortunes. Within this religious and cultural milieu, the term "ghurnuq" held immense significance. It was not merely a casual or incidental term but an integral part of their religious vocabulary. The prevalence of "ghurnuq" and its association with idol worship underscores its deep-rooted cultural and religious importance. The people of Mecca invoked "ghurnuq" just as fervently as they did "al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta," revealing the extent to which these idols and their associated expressions were interwoven into their daily lives and rituals.

In summary, the alignment of beliefs surrounding "ghurnuq" with those associated with other prominent idols like "al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta" underscores the intricate nature of the polytheistic religious landscape during the Jahiliyyah Era. It illustrates the diversity of deities and expressions that held sway over the people's hearts and minds, providing a rich backdrop for understanding the complexities of pre-Islamic Arabian society and the subsequent transformation ushered in by the advent of Islam.

The cultural significance of "ghurnuq" extended far beyond mere linguistic curiosity; it was an indelible element within the religious practices and rituals of the people during the Jahiliyyah Era. Nowhere was this significance more evident than in the rites associated with the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the sacred sanctuary located in the heart of Mecca. During this era, the Ka'bah was encircled by the very idols, including "ghurnuq," that held a central place in the polytheistic faith of the Meccan community. The circumambulation, known as "tawaf," was a solemn and integral part of their religious customs. It symbolized an act of devotion, an expression of submission to the

divine, and a reaffirmation of their allegiance to the pantheon of idols surrounding the Ka'bah. As the pilgrims made their rounds, "ghurnuq" was invoked and revered in the same breath as other deities like "al-'Uzzâ" and "al-'Lâta."

This practice underscores the pivotal role of "ghurnuq" as a spiritual intermediary. It was believed that these idols, including "ghurnuq," possessed the power to intercede on behalf of the pilgrims, facilitating their connection with the divine realm. The circumambulation ritual became a tangible manifestation of this belief, highlighting the people's deep-seated conviction in the idol's ability to act as mediators and conduits for their prayers and supplications. "ghurnuq" was not just a static term or concept but a living part of their religious consciousness. It was invoked with reverence and devotion during the circumambulation, and its presence was keenly felt in the collective faith of the Meccan community. This dynamic relationship between the people and "ghurnuq" exemplified the profound religious importance that the term held within the context of the Jahiliyyah Era.

In conclusion, the cultural and religious significance of "ghurnuq" found its most poignant expression in the rituals and practices of the people during their circumambulation of the Ka'bah. It symbolized their unwavering belief in the idol's intercessory power and served as a tangible manifestation of their deeply ingrained belief system. The ritual underscored the role of idols, including "ghurnuq," as intermediaries between the people and the divine, emphasizing the profound religious importance that this term held within the cultural and spiritual tapestry of the Jahiliyyah Era.

Conclusion

This study found, controversy surrounding the account of Gharâniq hinges on a complex interplay of historical sources and scholarly perspectives. While there exists a considerable number of sanads (chains of transmitters) supporting its authenticity, a significant faction of experts staunchly rejects its acceptability. Some scholars go to the extent of outright denial, while others are more selective, questioning its attribution to the Prophet Muhammad while acknowledging the familiarity of the expression "*tilka al-gharânîq al-'ulâ wa inna* shafâ'atahunna *laturjâ*" among the people of the Jahiliyyah Era. This phrase carries deep historical resonance, firmly intertwined with the collective memory of the Quraish during that period. In the realm of Hadith scholarship, where critical assessment (jarḥ) and positive evaluation (ta'dîl) serve as guiding principles, the weight often tilts toward caution and skepticism in the face of contradictions. Thus, opinions denouncing the authenticity of the Gharâniq account are accorded significant consideration, with the historical evidence reinforcing the skepticism. A nuanced "compromise" emerges from this discourse, suggesting that while the expression of "gharâniq" undeniably existed as a well-known phrase among the people of the Jahiliyyah era, attributing it to the Prophet Muhammad, particularly as his speech when reciting Quranic verses, appears to lack a solid basis. This attribution, viewed as a form of dramatization, finds potential justification in a literal interpretation of the Quranic verses. However, the implications of such an attribution are profound and raise substantial doctrinal risks. It opens the door to debates surrounding the Prophet's infallibility (iṣmah) and the authenticity of the Quranic revelations as a whole. In light of these concerns,

contemporary Muslim thinkers like Muḥammad al-Ghazâli and Yusûf al-Qardâwi resolutely reject the recognition of the existence and validity of the Gharâniq account. Their stance is rooted in a more a priori perspective, which, in turn, leads them to disregard existing historical data. In conclusion, the discourse surrounding the Gharâniq account underscores the intricate balance between historical evidence and doctrinal implications. It suggests that while the phrase itself was known in the Jahiliyyah era, attributing it to the Prophet Muhammad poses substantial challenges that extend to broader theological debates within the Islamic tradition. The rejection of this attribution by contemporary Muslim thinkers reflects a cautious approach driven by concerns for doctrinal integrity and adherence to the principles of Islamic scholarship.

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