On Validity of the Gharânîq ʻHadîth’: Examining the Religious Reason of Exegesis Literatures

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Abstract
This study evaluates the validity of the Hadith of Gharânîq 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-ʻulâ 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 Gharânîq was widely recognized by the people of Jahiliyyah. Such an interpretation is possible if one wants to literally take the verses. The attribution of Gharânîq expressions to the Prophet Muhammad carries a high "risk" in terms of doctrinal implications, as it may trigger debates about his ʾismah (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 Gharânîq 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 Gharânîq 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-ʻulâ wa
Introduction

Al-Hadith has a very important position as the source of Islamic teachings after al-Qur'an. Both are believed to be God’s revelations. The difference is that, borrowing the term from Muḥammad ‘Ajjāj al-Khāṭīb, al-Qur’ān is considered as al-matluw (recited) revelation, while al-Hadith is the ghayr al-matluw (unrecited) revelation. This important position of al-Hadith has put the study of ḥadīth as urgent as the study of al-Qur’ān. In the study of ḥadīth, the problems arising are more complex because some hadiths have the zannī al-wurūd status, i.e. strongly presumed that ḥadīth came from the Prophet Muḥammad himslef. In addition, the new codification period began in the second century of Hijri with the so long and varied isnād (the chain of transmission) unlike al-Qur’ān. In addition, conflicts that have been occurring among schools in Muslim society have led to massive counterfeiting of ḥadīth.

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

1 Yasin Dutton, The Origins of Islamic Law: The Qur'an, the Muwatta' and Madinan Amal (Routledge, 2013).
In general, the study of hadith includes the study or criticism on the sanad (the chain of muhaddiths or transmitters) and the matan (the texts). Both are equally important because although the sanad of a hadith has been acceptable, the matn will not necessarily be acceptable, or vice versa. Thus, a review of the acceptability of hadith 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 hadith experts are often criticized by other hadith experts. For instance, the results of study on “ḥadīth” of al-Gharānīq conducted by some experts, like in view of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, it were considered acceptable.

However, lately hadith Islamic experts, such as Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Yusuf al-Qardāwī, and Quraish Shihab strongly rejected it. Even, they judged that hadith of al-Gharānīq 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-Gharānīq, Salman Rushdie has composed his novel with the title, Satanic Verses, that has insulted the Prophet. 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 Jahiliyya, including his praise through a similar utterance said in the story of al-Gharānīq. Such narration was considered as an obvious act of insulting to the Prophet, so the Spiritual leader of Iran, Āyātullāh Khomeini, has commended execution of Salman Rushdie.

Concerning surah al-Hājj (22): 52 that has been as a one of bases for the opinion on possibility of the Prophet in conducting a fallible thing, Sa’id Nashd 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. 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 Nashd’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 Gharānīq 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-gharānīq al-‘ulâ wa inna

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shafā’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. 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. 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". Stating that the Gharâniq 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 Gharâniq 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)." 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 ʾismah (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 Qurān 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 Gharâniq, 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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during the early days of Islam. 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 ismah (infallibility), the validity of the Hadith of Gharânîq has been the subject of intense debate among Islamic scholars.

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. 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. 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-Gharânîq: A Brief Description

The exploration of "al-Gharânîq" 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-Gharânîq." Verse 52 in Surah al-Hâjj is a critical piece of the puzzle in understanding the controversy. The keywords "tamannya" and "umniyyatihi"
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-shaiṭānu" (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 Muhammad (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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21 Armstrong, Muhammad Prophet for Our Time.

argumentation) and 'aqliyyah (logical argumentation).\textsuperscript{23} Meanwhile, in the al-Jalâlîn Exegesis, the account of Gharanîq is considered valid. In Lubâb al-Nuqûl, al-Suyûtî addresses various chains of ḥadîth al-Gharanîq.\textsuperscript{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 ṣâhih (a collection of ḥadîths) that when the Prophet Muḥammad was in Mecca, he recited the verses of sūrah al-Najm (53): 19 -20. Then the Satan through his utterance inserted the line:

Ibn Ḥajjar al-’Asqalâni thought that with a number of chains of the account, it indicated that the account of Gharanîq 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 ‘Âliyah. For that reason, Ibn Ḥajjar said to ignore the statement from Ibn al-‘Arabi and Qâdi ‘Iyâd that the account of Gharanîq was a groundless “lie”.\textsuperscript{25} However, Ibn Ḥajjar’s opinion acknowledging the acceptability of the account of Gharanîq 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 hujjah (proof or evidence). In fact, validity is not only related to accountability-acceptability but also related to the peak qualification of accountability and acceptability.\textsuperscript{26}

Ibn Ḥajjar al-’Asqalâni indeed tended to acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharanîq 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 Gharanîq was not a credible transmitter.\textsuperscript{27} Ibn Ḥajjar 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 Ḥajjar al-’Asqalâni, those who support the existence of the account of Gharanîq can be divided into two groups: the “extremist” and the “moderates”.\textsuperscript{28} The extremist faction sees the account of Gharanîq is real and is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad 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 Gharanîq but does not

\textsuperscript{24} Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, Ashabun Nuzul; Sebab Turunnnya Ayat Al-Quran (Gema Insani, 2008).
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-‘Asqalānī himself that from the point of view of the sanad, the account of Gharānīq 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-‘Asqalānī as a ḥadīth 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-Ghazālī contrasts the understanding of ḥadīth between ḥadīth experts and fiqh experts.\(^{30}\)

Some of the sanads (the chains of transmitters) of the account of Gharānīq are based on the Companion of Ibn ‘Abbās. 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 Gharānīq is a story of an event taking place in Mecca, while Ibn Abbās, who was the first transmitter of the generations of Companions, belonged to the junior Companions (min ṣīgḥār al-ṣahābah) that was prominent and grown-up in the Medina period. Why, then, was the account of Gharānīq not narrated by the first transmitter of the Companions? From this point of view, the validity of the account of Gharānīq should be questioned by its isnād (the chain of transmission).\(^{31}\) Meanwhile, concerning the tamannā (sūrah al-Ḥājj (22): 53) Ibn ‘Abbās, 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 Gharānīq to the Prophet, which is related to the account where Ibn ‘Abbās is considered as the first narrator.

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s recognition of the existence of the account of Gharānīq 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-Gharānīq” while reciting the verses of al-Qur’ān, 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-‘Asqalānī.\(^{33}\)
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 hadîths, 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’thîr (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’wil al-Qur’ân, commonly referred to as “the mother” of bi al-ma’thîr exegeses when interpreting surâh al-Hâjî (22): 52-53, al-Tabarî 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 surâh 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-Tabarî mentioned the background of surâh al-Hâjî (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 surâh al-Isrâ’ (17): 73.35

This verse, which is found in Surah al-Hâjî (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-Tabarî, it becomes evident that there is a nuanced stance taken. Al-Tabarî’s interpretation does not outright deny the existence of the account of "Gharâniq," even though he refrains from explicitly attributing it to the Prophet.

Muhammad. In this context, it's crucial to recognize the complexity of al-Ṭabarī’s position. His interpretation reflects a nuanced approach that seeks to navigate the intricacies of the "Gharāniq" 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 "Gharāniq" narrative in some form, even if he does not endorse it as part of the Prophet’s authentic sayings.

Al-Ṭabarī's approach reflects a careful balance between preserving the integrity of the prophetic tradition and acknowledging the historical context in which the "Gharāniq" 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-Hājj and al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation together underscore the complexity of the "Gharāniq" debate. They suggest that the narrative surrounding "Gharāniq" 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 "Gharāniq" account.

Meanwhile, al-Suyūṭī in his exegesis book entitled al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bi al-Ma’thūr provided an exposition indicating his approval of the existence of the account of Gharāniq. The same issue can be found in Fatḥ al-Qadīr by al-Syaukānī’s exegesis book and also in al-Nukat wa al-‘Uyūn by al-Māwardī’s exegesis book. Thus, it is clear that the existence of the account of Gharāniq has been supported by some exegesis experts. In contrast, Ṣādiq Ḥasan Khan in exegesis book, Fatḥ al-Bayān fī Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān, emphasized the invalidity of the account of Gharāniq. According to him, the story of Gharāniq was totally wrong. Similarly, Muḥammad Ali al-Ṣābūnī also rejected the validity of the account of Gharāniq. He argued that the account widely elaborated by exegesis experts was a “fictitious” story created by the Zindiq (the Atheists). In addition to counteracting those who acknowledge the validity of the account, al-Ṣābūnī’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,

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Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Volume 31, Nomor 2, Juli 2020
in Ṣafwat al-Tafāsīr, he didn’t relate at all the interpretation of sūrah al-Ḥājj (22): 53 to the account of Gharāniq.42

The different opinions among the exegesis experts have led to the polarization of understandings in addressing the existence of the story of Gharāniq. 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 Gharāniq 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 Gharāniq 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 Gharāniq are strengthening.

The term ghurnuq (the singular form of the word gharāniq) 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 shafā`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 Gharāniq can also be found in the book of Niḥāyah fi Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Āthār. Referring to the preface of the author, the redaction of ḥadīth or athar contained in this book are not based on the name of a particular transmitter who generally belongs to the ḥadīths of the Prophet. Thus, the redaction of Gharāniq (tilka al-gharāniq al-`ūlā...) is considered to be attributed to the Prophet. For that reason, Ibn al-Athīr can be regarded as an expert who recognizes the existence and validity of the account of Gharāniq attributed to the Prophet, regardless whether this is a conscious or unconscious utterance of the Prophet.

Mentioning the redaction of Gharāniq, Ibn al-Athīr also quotes the āthār of the Companions using the word ghurnuq. This indicates that the word ghurnuq (the singular form of the word gharāniq) had been popular in the era of al-Risālah (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 Gharāniq. Ibn Taimiyah, as quoted by Nurcholish Madjid, also mentioned about the account of Gharāniq. He said that as a human being, the Prophet could have done “wrong” and

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“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-Rûḥ 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 sūrah 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’ān as a whole. If the Prophet in conveying the revelations of al-Qur’ān 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 Gharâniq generally make a “compromise” effort related to the content of sūrah al-Ḥajj (22): 53-54. The Prophet pronounced the “verse” of Gharâniq, according al-Bâqilî, 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-Qurtubî’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 sūrah 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-Ghazâlî and Yusûf al-Qardâwî 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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46 Al-asqalani, Baz, and Zahidi, Fath Al-Bari Bi-Syarah Sahih Al-Bukhari.
of Iran, giving order to hunt and kill him. Normally, al-Ghazâlî also regretted the results of the study conducted by some experts, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalâni and al-Suyûṭî who acknowledged the validity of the account of Gharâniq. According to al-Qâḍâwî, the Sunnah (Hadîth) had to be understood within the framework of al-Qur’ân. Therefore, the account of Gharâniq (claimed as a hadîth) had to be rejected because it was clearly contrary to al-Qur’ân. The account of Gharâniq is judged as a fabricated ḥadîth (maudât), the lowest qualification of assessment. Hadîths considered to be fabricated, are in fact no longer valid to be considered as ḥadîth. The title of Ḥadîth here is only majâzî (figurative).

Muḥammad al-Ghazâlî’s opinion seems more scientifically and rationally acceptable. This is because if we acknowledge the existence of the account of Gharâniq as the voice 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-Ghazâlî’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-Ghazâlî also conducted rational reasoning (al-nazar al-‘aqli) 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.

Consonant with that opinion, Ahmad 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 indeed 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-hanîfiyyah al-samhah (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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abolishing the rules in a law because of the Prophet’s compromise attitude towards the demands of the environment.\textsuperscript{51} In carrying out the mission of \textit{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-Syaibâñi did not mention about the account in his book entitled \textit{Tamyîz al-Thayyib min al-Khabîs Fîmâ Yadûru Ainsatin al-Nâs min al-Hadîth}. 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 \textit{Mujam al-Mufahras li Alfâz al-Ḥadîth al-Nabawî} by Wintsink and Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bâqi but he did not find the account of Gharâniq. Therefore, it can be concluded that this account only exists outside Imâm Mâlik and Musnad Ahmad b. Ḥanbal’s \textit{al-Kutub al-Sittah, Musnad al-Dârimi}, and \textit{Mawatţa’}. 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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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 “\textit{tamannâ}” and “\textit{umniyyatih}” 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 “\textit{alqâ al-shaiţânu}”.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{51} Mawardi, \textit{Al-Nukat Wa al-‘Uyun}.
\textsuperscript{53} Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabaratabâ’i, \textit{Al-Miẓân Fi Tafsîr al-Qur’ân} (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-A ‘lamâ, 2002).

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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.

54 Al-Asqalânî, “Fath Al-Bûrî Syarî Shahîh Bukhârî, Juz III.”

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Notably, these beliefs regarding "ghurnuq" were in sync with similar conceptions related to other idols of the time, such as "al-‘Uzza" 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-‘Uzza" and "al-‘Lâta," serves as a compelling testament to the complex tapestry of religious practices and beliefs prevalent during the Jahiliyyah Era. "Al-‘Uzza" and "al-‘Lâta" were names that represented distinct deities worshipped alongside other idols in the polytheistic pantheon of the pre-Islamic Arabian society.

"Al-‘Uzza" 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-‘Uzza" 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-‘Uzza" 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-gharâniq al-'ulâ wa inna shafâ’atuhumma 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’ḍîl) 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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