THE CONCEPT OF AL-RASIKHUNA FI AL-‘ILM
A PERSPECTIVE OF AL-‘ALLAMAH AL-TABATABA’I IN
THE BOOK OF AL-MIZAN

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Abstract: Allah reveals the Quran as a guidance to those who are pious and those who are not. In Quran, there are some verses that can be easily comprehended, also known as muhkam verses. There are also quite cryptic verses known as mutasyabih. The interpretation of the Quran often be divise, and divided into two groups. The first group derives and uses the mutasyabih verses of the Quran as a reason to spread deception and finding its takwil (original meaning) due to their heart prefers to the misguidance. The second group is them, whom they are the experts and is known as al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm. They interpret the verses of the Quran, both muhkam and mutasyabih, based on the opinion that all is coming from Allah. Understanding of the Quran making them more faithful, and therefore called as ulul albab. The term al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in Quran and hadith does not refer to a certain group or person. Hence, the interpretation of al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm by the ulama depends on their mahzab.

Keywords: al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm; Ta’wil; Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i

I. INTRODUCTION

Ta’wil is an art of interpretations of words, and all God’s spellings within the Quran. It is one of the important insight in Islamic knowledge, especially ulum al-Quran. That is why most ulama cannot distinct between ta’wil and tafsir.1

Ta’wil nowadays has become a must. The advance of scientific research today is too responsible. When it comes to a dissent in interpreting a textual context, takwil is the answer to resolve.2 Ta’wil can also be used to discard one aspect from an ambiguous context to help us picking more convincing meaning,3 it is also help us debunking the mutasyabihat verses.4

Although ta’wil is a reference to the contextual problem, ulama is disunited about who has the right to express ta’wil towards Quran, especially mutasyabih. One of the argument that emerged is the different between wau (و) in Ali-‘Imran/3: 7

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1 M. Quraish Shihab, Membumikan al-Qur’an (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2010), p. 554.
2 M. Quraish Shihab, Membumikan al-Qur’an, h. 252.
4 Al-Qur’an as a fundamental of Islamic values consisted of muhkam and mutasyabih verses. See Ali-‘Imran/3: 7
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whether is waw ‘athaf (conjunction) or waw isti’naf (words prior to the first sentence).\(^5\)

These dissidents often sparks accusations among others, and these accusations tends to aim those who respect ‘ta’wil. Take syiah, for example, they are branded as a misleading groups that renders in a different way as most muslim do. They have a conviction that the one who is entitled to al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm is the Prophet Muhammad alone, and was inherited to ma’sum imam ahl al-bait, so the unexpected people from the outside can be diminished.\(^6\) However, this is not an objective accusation to a specific syiah clerics. Instead, it is a general accusation to all syiah followers.

One of the notorious syiah cleric is Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i, he was a great Isna ‘asyarah cleric who was born in the village of Shadabad, near from the city of Tabriz in 29 Dhulhijjah 1321 H/16 March 1904.\(^7\) Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i is a famous Mufassir, he has his own way to decrypt verses of Quran. although Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i loves to study the ‘aqliyah such as math and philosphy, everytime he interpreted the meaning of the Quran, he referred the other verses that related to the verses he wanted to discuss, then he referred to other sources to decrypt it.\(^8\) We can see his mgnum opus work in al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran consisted of 21 editions.

II. RESEARCH RESULT

A. The nature of al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in the book of al-Mizan

As it has been mentioned before, the sentence of al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in Ali-‘Imran/3: 7 issued a different perspective among Ulama. Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i not only discuss about al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm, but also he mentioned who is the al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm.

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\text{"He is The One Who has revealed to you ‘O Prophet’ the Book, of which some verses are precise, they are the foundation of the Book while others are elusive. Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking 'to spread doubt through thier false interpretations, but none grasps their full meaning except Allah. As for those well-grounded in knowledge, they say ‘We believe in this Quran, it is all from our Lord.” But none will be mindful of this except people of Reason."}^{9}\]


\(^{8}\) Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabataba’i, Mengungkap Rahasia al-Qur’an, p. 25.

\(^{9}\) Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya, p. 50.
According to Al-‘Allamah Al-Tabataba’i, the word *al-rasikhuna* (أَنْشَدَ الْشَّيْاَثِ) from the verse above is derived from *rasakha* (رسخ) or *asyaddu al-sabat* (أشد الشياط). It means strong grip, fixed, and determined. When it combines the words *al-rasikhuna* (الراسخون) and *al-‘ilm* (العلم), they transcend into *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm*, becoming a difference between those who don’t have strong hearts and always gone astray.

فَأَم ا ال ذِينَ فِِ ق ُلُوبِِِمْ زَيْغٌ ف َي َت بِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِت ْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تََْوِيلِهِ

Meaning:
“Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking ‘to spread doubt through thier false interpretations.’”

Al-zayg (الزْيْغ) mentioned here is deviated from straight path. This targets the people who is taking the wrong way following the *mutasyabihat* to spread misinformations while looking for its righteousness from it. What we can discuss here is that they follow the *mutasyabihat* verses (فَيَتَبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ) without any basic faith nor referring to the other *muhkam* or clear verses. The meaning of *ibtiga’ al-fitnah* (ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ) is spreading fake news in order to misguide people from the verses of Allah, and eventually lost from the religion.

The merging between *al-rasikhuna* (الراسخون) and *al-‘ilm* (العلم) also become a proof that their insight about Quran does not derive from doubtfulness, so when the *muhkamat* verses need to be interpreted, there will be no hardship to them. Moreover, when they meet *mutasyabihat* verses, they will render the verses based on the faith of Allah and put aside the doubtfulness, then practice them according to the *muhkamat* verses.

They proved their accountability when they said “We believe in Quran, it is all (muhkamat and mutasyabihat) from our Lord.”

Eventually, they rewarded blessing from Allah at the end of the verse:

مَا يَذَكُّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْلَّبَابِ

Meaning:
“But none will be mindful of this except people of Reason.”

*Al-tazakkur* means switching to other argumentations to extract a conclusion. *al-albab* (الأَلْبَابِ) here has meaning pure insight. Allah praised them due to their way of thinking in the end of the verse, and granted them with an honour as *ulul al-bab*.

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13 Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, juz 3, p. 34
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The letter wau (و) in the phrase wa al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm (وَالر اسِخُونَ فِِ الْعِلْمِ) above, according to al-‘Allamah al-Tabataba’i in his book, is an isti’na, or an expression to start new sentence. In other words, ta’wil is limited to Allah only, and al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm is excluded.\(^\text{15}\)

Based on the explanations above, according to al-‘Allamah al-Tabataba’i, the phrase of (وَالر اسِخُونَ فِِ الْعِلْمِ) above is a sign from Allah about steadfastness of faith, good behavior, straight heart, and thinking smart when they face Quran interpretations. Al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm aims to praise and to introduce good character compared to those who gone astray. It is an argumentation that they understand the ta’wil, in which Allah is only for.\(^\text{16}\)

B. The entity of al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in the book of al-Mizan

Al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in Quran Ali-Imran/3: 7 according to al-Allamah al-Tabataba’i aims to show the integrity of the faith, good behavior, straight heart, and thinking smart when they face Quran interpretations, not as an excuse to include them as people who acknowledge ta’wil as many ulama consider so.

The limitation, however, is absolute. There are proofs in Quran that explain that not only does Allah who is allowed to knows about ta’wil. In Quran, there are verses about absolute limitation, but is also qualified by other verses. For example, all metaphysical being on earth and heaven is known only by Allah, but there are also certain groups of people who is gifted a knowledge about metaphysical being. Allah mentioned it in Quran al-Jin/72: 26-27:\(^\text{17}\)

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\text{عَالُِِ الْغَيْبِ فَلََ يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا}
\text{إِلَّ  مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِن هُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ ب َيِْْ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا}
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**Meaning:**

“He is the Knowen of the unseen, disclosing none to anyone, except messengers of His choice. Then He appoints angel-guards before and behind them.”\(^\text{18}\)

The verses above show us that apart from Allah, there are some people who is gifted to see the unseen. They are His messengers.\(^\text{19}\) To them, metaphysics that contains truthful spiritual cannot be spoken in any certain ways. The best thing to do to express it is making them a warning that they are exist, and that we have to do good deeds. It will then be revealed before us someday in the hereafter.\(^\text{20}\)

Back to ta’wil, al-Allamah al-Tabataba’i in his book quoted a verse as an argument that ta’wil is not limited to Allah only, but also applied to al-mutaharrun. Allah stated in Quran al-Waqiah/56: 77-79:

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\(^{15}\) Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 32

\(^{16}\) Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 60

\(^{17}\) Kamal al-Haidari, Usul al-Tafsir wa al-Ta’wil, juz 2, p. 75

\(^{18}\) Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya, p. 573

\(^{19}\) Al-‘Allamah al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 60

\(^{20}\) Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 62
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meaning:

"That this is truly a noble Quran, in a well-preserved Record. Touched by none except the purified angels."^{21}

The sentence *kitabin makanunin* (كتاب مكنون) mentioned above is *ummu al-kitab* (أم الكتاب) in Quran al-Ra’d/13: 39

meaning:

"Allah eliminates and confirms what He wills, and with Him is the Master of Records."^{22}

Undeniably, the verses explain that Quran is only touched by those who are selected by Allah, and that the Quran is well-preserved. They touch Quran only for knowledge purpose. They honoured *al-mutahharun* due to their pure heart given by Allah, the One Who purifies. This is proved when Allah mentioned *al-thaharah* in Quran, it always refers to Himself, as it is mentioned in al-Ahzab/33: 33 and al-Maidah/5: 6

meaning:

"Allah only intends to keep the cause of evil from you and purify you completely, O Ahl al-Bait."^{23}

"It is not Allah’s will to burden you, but to purify you and complete His favour upon you, so perhaps you will be grateful."^{24}

Based on both verses above, the word *thaharah* is attached to only Allah. Therefore, a pure heart is a heart that is strong grip on faith and absolute knowledge, has no doubtfull between what is right and what is wrong. This is what *al-rasikhuna fi al-’ilm* meant to be. They are not given a deep knowledge about Quran unless they are certain to their cognition without any stains in their heart. From here, we can understand that the *al-mutahharun* are those who have been purified, including *al-rasikhuna fi al-’ilm*.^{25}

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^{21} Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 537

^{22} Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 254

^{23} Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 422

^{24} Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 108

^{25} Al-'Allamah al-Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, juz 3, p. 64
C. The urgency of al-Rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in the book of al-Mizan

There are reasons behind al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm in the Quran Ali-'Imran/3: 7. It is the answer of all misguided ta’wil from zaig al-qalb group towards Quran, especially that of the mutasyabih. Al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm tackling the lies and ta’wil brought by zaig al-qalb if they meet these conditions:

1. Ta’wil must be brought about with deep and perfect knowledge instruments, also known as asyaddu al-sabat (أأشد الثبات). These instruments given by the al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm towards mutasyabih will tends to be muhkam, and free from negative interpretations by outsiders.

2. The understanding about ta’wil must be founded by the pureness of heart. In his book, Allamah al-Tabataba’i quoted a verse mentioning that ta’wil must be based on the pureness of the heart, not only the capability on knowledge. Allah stated in al-Waqi’ah/56: 77-79

إِن هُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيٌّ
فِِ كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ
لََّ يَََسُّهُ إِلَّ  الْمُطَه رُونَ

Meaning:
“That this is truly a noble Quran. in a well-preserved Record. Touched by none except the purified angels.”

The word ‘touched’ (المس) from the verses above is a word that is often used in studying specific subject. The sentence (كتاب مكون) here means ummu al-kitab (أم الكتاب), the same that is mentioned in al-Ra’d/13: 39

يََْحُو اللَّ ُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَاب

Meaning:
“Allah eliminates and confirms what He wills, and with Him is the Master of Records.”

Undeniably, the verses explain that Quran is only touched by those who are selected by Allah, and that the Quran is well-preserved. They touch Quran only for knowledge purpose. They honoured al-mutaharun due to their pure heart given by Allah, the One Who purifies. This is proved when Allah mentioned al-thaharah in Quran, it always refers to Himself, as it is mentioned in al-Ahzab/33: 33 and al-Maidah/5: 6

إِنَّ َا يُرِيدُ اللَّ ُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّسُولَأمَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهًَِ

Meaning:
“Allah only intends to keep the cause of evil from you and purify you completely, O Ahl al-Bait.”

26 Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 33
27 Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 63
28 Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya, p. 537
29 Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba’i, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, juz 3, p. 63
30 Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya, p. 254
31 Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya, p. 422
Based on both verses above, the word *thaharah* is attached to only Allah. Therefore, a pure heart is a heart that is strong grip on faith and absolute knowledge, has no doubtfull between what is right and what is wrong. This is what *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* meant to be. They are not given a deep knowledge about Quran unless they are certain to their cognition without any stains in their heart. From here, we can understand that the *al-mutahharun* are those who have been purified, including *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm*.

They can understand *ta’wil* due to their pure heart given by Allah. This second condition is also agreed by Quraish Shihab in his book Tafsir al-Misbah. He reiterates that ulama not only can they understand about *ta’wil* from *mutasyabih* verses by knowledge, but also from the purity of the heart.

3. *Ta’wil* is applied to tackle misinformations about religion sourced from *zaig al-qalb* group. The misinformations are spread by that group in order to lead people far away from Allah, and eventually to make them abandoning their own religion. One of the lies is when they insult Maryam (Mary) and her son Isa (Jesus) in Quran al-Nisa/4: 156

وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِِِمْ عَلَى مَرْيََ بُهْتَانًً عَظِيمًا

*Meaning:*

“And for their denial and outrageous accusation against Mary”.

The verse above stated that *zaig al-qalb* accused the Mary had committed adultery. Their wrong accusation was then answered by Allah throughout the speaking of baby Jesus.

*Meaning:*

“Jesus declared, “I am truly a servant of Allah. He has destined me to be given the Scripture and to be a prophet.”*

The statement of Jesus tells us that Jesus mother, Mary, was a pure straight lady, as a prophet supposedly be born from a pure woman. Not only do they insult Mary, but also they said that they are the one who killed and crucified Jesus. But their accusations was answered by Allah in Quran.

4. *Ta’wil* must based on *ahsan al-qaul*, or the best wordings. It means the verses must be referred from *muḥkam*. Quran is messages from Allah, nothing is better than that. Therefore, *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* must deliver
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*ta’wil* based on the explanations of Allah, particularly the *muhkam* verses.
The lies coming from *zaig al-qalb* group will never stop and always in the same patterns. However, their lies is answered by Allah within the Quran.
That is what *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* have to do in order to avoid the lies from *zaig al-qalb* group.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanations above about *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm*, we can conclude that:

*First*, the verses of *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* in Quran aims to to show the integrity of the faith, good behavior, straight heart, and thinking smart when they face Quran interpretations.

*Second*, *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* upon *ta’wil* refers to al-Waqi’ah/56: 77-79. The verses become the argumentations that they are given permission by Allah to practice *ta’wil* for Quran verses. Not only because of their credibility, but also a pure heart gifted from Allah to them.

*Third*, the urgency of *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* is to answer all the slanders and misguided *ta’wil* from the *zaig al-qalb* group, especially *mutasyabih* verses. To do so, *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* must meet four conditions; 1) bring about the *ta’wil* with deep knowledge instrument, 2) the understanding of the *ta’wil* must based on purity of the heart, 3) *ta’wil* is conducted to prevent all the misinformations and slanders done by *zaig al-qalb* group, 4) *ta’wil* must be based on *ahsan al-qaul* or the best wordings. It refers to the *muhkam* verses.

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