

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 divide, 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, bith *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 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 (وَالرَّسُخُونَ فِي) وَالرَّسُخُونَ فِي

¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2010), p. 554.

² M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, h. 252.

³ Author team, *Mukaddimah al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 2008), h. 25. Penjelasan tentang makna *ta'wil* di atas juga diungkapkan oleh Manna' al-Qattan, *Mabahis fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Qahirah: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000), p. 318.

⁴ Alquran as a fundamental of Islamic values consisted of *muhkam* and *mutasyabih* verses. See Ali-'Imran/3: 7

العلم) 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 differnt 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*.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ.

Meaning:

*“He is The One Who has revealed to you ‘O Prophet’ the Book, of which some verses are precises, 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

⁵ Sayyid Kamal al-Haidari, *Uṣūl al-Tafsir wa al-Ta'wil: Muqaranah Manhajiyah baina Ara' al-Tabataba'i wa Abraz al-Mufassirin*, Juz. 2 (Iran: Dar Faraqid li al-Tab'ah wa al-Nasyr, 2006), p. 71.

⁶ Nasaruddin Umar, “Konstruksi Ta'wil dalam Tafsir Sufi&Syi'ah”. *Jurnal Studi al-Qur'an*. Vol. II, No. 1, 2007, p. 46

⁷ Hamid Algar, “Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i: Philosopher, Exegete, and Gnostic,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5 April 2006, p. 2.

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* (الراسخون) from the verse above is derived from *rasakha* (رَسَخَ) or *asyaddu al-sabat* (أَشَدُّ الثَّبَاتِ), 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.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ.

Meaning:

"Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking 'to spread doubt through their false interpretations.'"¹⁰

Al-zayg (الزَيْغ) 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 (فَيَتَّبِعُونَ 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.¹¹

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.¹²

They proved their accountability when they said "We believe in Quran, it is all (*muhkamat* and *mutasyabihat*) from our Lord."¹³

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

مَا يَدَّكَرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Meaning:

"But none will be mindful of this except people of Reason."¹⁴

Al-tazakkur means switching to other argumentations to extract a conclusion. *al-albab* (الألباب) 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*.

¹⁰ Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 50.

¹¹ Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, juz 3, p. 26

¹² Al-'Allamah al-Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, juz 3, p. 33.

¹³ Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, juz 3, p. 34

¹⁴ Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 50.

The letter *wau* (و) in the phrase *wa al-rasikhuna fi al-'ilm* (وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ) above, according to al-'Allamah al-Tabataba'i in his book, is an *isti'naf*, 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.¹⁵

Based on the explanations above, according to al-'Allamah al-Tabataba'i, the phrase of (وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي 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.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 prooves 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: 26-27:¹⁷

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا. إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

Meaning:

*“He is the Knower of the unseen, disclosing none to anyone, except messengers of His choice. Then He appoints angel-guards before and behind them.”*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.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.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:

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

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ. فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ. لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

Meaning:

“That this is truly a noble Quran. in a well-preserved Record. Touched by none except the purified angels.”²¹

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

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

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-mutaharrun* 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

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Meaning:

“Allah only intends to keep the cause of evil from you and purify you completely, O Ahl al-Bait”.²³

مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Meaning:

“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

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* (أشد الثبات).²⁶ 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.²⁷ Allah stated in al-Waqi'ah/56: 77-79

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ. فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ. لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

Meaning:

*"That this is truly a noble Quran. in a well-preserved Record. Touched by none except the purified angels."*²⁸

The word 'touched' (المس) from the verses above is a word that is often used in studying sepcific subject.²⁹ The sentence (كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ) here means *ummu al-kitab* (أم الكتاب), the same that is mentioned in al-Ra'd/13: 39

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Meaning:

*"Allah eliminates and confirms what He wills, and with Him is the Master of Records."*³⁰

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-mutaharrun* 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

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Meaning:

*"Allah only intends to keep the cause of evil from you and purify you completely, O Ahl al-Bait."*³¹

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

مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Meaning:

“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.”³²

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*.³³ 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.³⁴

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

وَبُكِّرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا

Meaning:

“And for their denial and outrageous accusation against Mary”.³⁵

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.³⁶ He said, as written in Maryam/19: 30

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا

Meaning:

“Jesus declared, “I am truly a servant of Allah. He has destined me to be given the Scripture and to be a prophet.”³⁷

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 *muhkam*. Quran is messages from Allah, nothing is better than that. Therefore, *al-rasikhuna fi al-‘ilm* must deliver

³² Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 108

³³ Al-‘Allamah al-Tabataba‘i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, juz 3, p. 64

³⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, juz 2, p. 14

³⁵ Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 103

³⁶ Muhammad Husain al-Tabataba‘i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, juz 3, p. 134

³⁷ Ministry of Religion republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 307

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 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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