



Part I

Linguistic Inimitability

Chapter One

Qur'an: Whose Speech is It?

1/1 The Basic Issue:

When each one of us embarks with this mission, which Allah (*SWT*) and the Prophet (*SAWS*) charged us with, to call anyone to Islam, whether he is atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, or secular, we address each one with the language he understands and according to his intellect and knowledge. After we reveal to him some of the luminous aspects of Islam, the splendor of its book, the reasonableness of its law¹, the greatness of its Prophet (*SAWS*), and the goodness of its *ummah*, the first thing comes to his mind, if he listens to you, is to ask you or ask himself, “What proves that this right guidance and the good wordings you relate to it, meaning the Qur’an, are the wordings of Allah, according to your belief, and that it is revealed to your Prophet Muhammad (*SAWS*), and that it is not the wordings he himself composed and declared to his people?”

Hence, we answer the inquirer with the same answer the Prophet (*SAWS*) stated to the polytheists when they asked for a sign that the discourse, which they appreciated its eminence and sublimity, is really Allah’s wordings. They asked for a sign and an evidence, so the sign and the evidence were the Qur’an itself.

¹ Shari`ah = the ethical and moral code based on the Qur'an and sunnah.



Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And does it not suffice them that We have sent down upon you the Book (that is) recited to them? Surely in that is indeed a mercy and reminding to a people who believe.”** (TMQ, ٢٩:٥١).

For the one who listens with his heart and contemplates with his mind:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Will they then not contemplate the Qur'an? Or are there locks upon (their) hearts?”** (TMQ, ٤٧:٢٤).

Then Allah (SWT) challenges them if they can come up with a discourse like it:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Or even do they say, “He talked it foolishly?” No indeed, (but) they do not believe. Then let them come up with a discourse like this, in case they are sincere.”** (TMQ, ٥٢: ٣٣-٣٤).

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Say, “Indeed in case humankind and the jinn gathered together to come up with the like of this Qur'an, they would not come up with its like, even if they were backers of one another.””** (TMQ, ١٧:٨٨).

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Or (even) do they say, “He has fabricated it!” Say, “Then come up with ten *surahs*[†] the like of it, fabricated; and invoke whomever you are able, apart from Allah, in case you are sincere.””** (TMQ, ١١:١٣).

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Or (even) do they say, “He has fabricated it”? Say, “Then come up with a surah like it and call on whom you can call apart from Allah, in case you are sincere.”** (TMQ, ١٠:٣٨).

It happened that they admitted their impotence, then resigned to the right call, and embraced Islam in troops, except arrogant obstinate persons, or errant ones who deafened their ears and defused their minds, or pontiffs

[†] A chapter; the Qur'an is comprised of ١١٤ surahs.

and monks, who feared from losing their money and authority. Polytheists realized by their linguistic intuition, at the first glance, that the Qur'an is not the speech of human beings; for they were skilled with the human beings' speech since they were eloquent persons. They were not just in awe by the eloquence of the Qur'an and the purity of its style, for it is extremely pure and eloquent. Additionally, they were not merely delighted by listening to it or appreciating its pleasantness, since nothing is more pleasant and delighting to be heard than it. Faith does not emerge out of admiration or delight, but out of certitude. Moreover, they do not exceed providing a person with temporary satisfaction and entertainment, which wipe out soon. They realized with their linguistic intuition that the style of the Qur'an and the context of its discourse inform about its heavenly source. For instance, Allah (*SWT*) declares about Himself using the first person pronouns like "We" or "We will show them". This style is repeated successively throughout the Qur'an according to the situation and the position suitable for the Majesty of the Speaker. Additionally, Allah (*SWT*) addresses the Prophet (*SAWS*) directly several times, using the vocative article like "O you Prophet", "say", or other styles. Thus, the style and context of discourse in the Qur'an prove that it is not the Prophet's speech, but it is conveyed to him from an external source. It addresses him (*SAWS*) as well as all mankind from heaven. Neither the Prophet (*SAWS*) nor anyone else, whoever he is, has anything to do with the Qur'an.

With this right logic of figuring out the source of the Qur'an from its essence, style, and context of discourse, as we will explain in this message, many people embraced Islam. Not only Arab nations, but also non-Arab nations embraced Islam in troops when they gradually realized that the Qur'an cannot be from anyone, but Allah (*SWT*). Both the Arabs who tasted the excellence of its language as well as the foreigners who know nothing about it equally realized so.

۱/۲ The Method of Deduction

Let us now explain in detail how the style of the Qur'anic discourse was an introduction and a proof of the belief that the Qur'an is the words of Allah, The Lord of the worlds, either through examining its Arabic text or through what is deduced from its meaning in other languages.



Suppose that someone has found a book with no cover or an old anonymous document. If he tries to identify its author and verify its origin, he will review it to deduce such information from its context, subject, the proceeding of its discourse, and its style. Moreover, he may compare it against equivalent writings of ancestors and contemporaries, so that he may discover who wrote that book and to whom it addresses, in addition to the occasion, the place, and the time of its composition. The style of the author is a mirror reflecting his identity, rank, knowledge, and qualities. In fact, fingerprints and hereditary codes reveal and determine the identity of each human being. Likewise, style informs about its owner, so that it becomes difficult for anyone else to imitate other person's style. It is impossible for a writer to ascribe to himself the position of another writer, fabricating speeches and discourses and attributing it to him without being exposed by the readers. It requires nothing from the reader except a little bit of insight, without delving into the secrets of linguistic expressions, or penetrating deeply into the linguistic psychoanalysis. Consider then how it would be in fabricating the speech and the discourse of Allah, The Omnipotent, The Creator of mankind, The All-Knowing.

Let us start together tackling the text of the Qur'an by a similar method without the need to use a great deal of linguistic tools, cosmic and historical knowledge, and without wading into its interpretation, analyzing its eloquence, the miraculous nature of its style, and the details of its subjects. Let us verify and then prove that the Qur'an itself, with its context, style, and the proceeding of its discourse resolves that the narrator of this text is an external source independent from the attainment of the Prophet (*SAWS*) as well as all the addressed human beings. Hence, we postulate that such good wordings, from A to Z, originated from the niche of The Creator, The All-Knowing, The One, The Everlasting Sovereign (*SWT*).

/ Directing Speech in the Qur'an

Any vigilant reader of the Qur'an will easily notice the continuous change and variation in its style of speech. Speech styles in the Qur'an change according to the context, the intended meaning, the intended effect, and the nature of the addressees.

Speech Styles in the Qur'an

١. Speech from Allah (*SWT*) in the form of the speaker/addresser:

a. Using the personal pronouns, “I” and the royal “We”:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “We, Ever We, created them, and We have upheld their frames; and when We (so) decide, We will exchange their likes, an (easy) exchange” (TMQ, ٧٦:٢٨).

“Fully inform My bondmen that I, Ever I, am The Ever-Forgiving, The Ever-Merciful, And that My torment is the (most) painful torment” (TMQ, ١٥:٤٩-٥٠).

“Surely We, Ever We, have been sending down the Remembrance, and surely We are indeed Preservers of it” (TMQ, ١٥:٩).

b. Using the possessive pronouns, “My” and the royal “Our”:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “And in no way is Our Command anything except one (Word), as the twinkling of the eye. (Literally: the power of beholding)” (TMQ, ٥٤:٥٠). “And when My bondmen ask you concerning Me, then, surely I am near; I answer the invocation of the invoker when he invokes Me; so let them respond (to) Me, and let them believe in Me, so that possibly they would respond right-mindedly” (TMQ, ٢:١٨٦).

٢. Speech from Allah (*SWT*) in the form of the absentee:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “He (is The One) Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth that He may make it topmost over all religion, though the associators (Those who associate others with Allah) hate (that)...” (TMQ, ٩:٣٣).

٣. Speech from Allah (*SWT*) directed to Prophet Muhammad (*SAWS*):

a. Using “O you”:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “O you Prophet, surely We



have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good tidings, and a constant warner; And a Caller to by His permission, and as an enlightening luminary” (TMQ, ٣٣:٤٥-٤٦).

b. Using “Say”:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “Say, “Surely my prayer, and my rites, and my living, and my dying are for Allah, The Lord of the worlds” (TMQ, ٦:١٦٢).

c. Using the ٢nd person singular, “You”:

Allah says what can be translated as, “So, you did not kill them, but Allah killed them; and in no way did you (i.e., the prophet) throw when you threw, but Allah threw, and that He might try the believers by a fair trial from Himself. Surely Allah is Ever-Hearing, Ever-Knowing” (TMQ, ٨:١٧).

d. Using the possessive, “Your”:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “In no way has your Lord disregarded you, and in no way has He disfavored you” (TMQ, ٩٣:٣).

٤. Speech directed to specific audience:

a. To the believers:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, and do not betray your deposits and you know that” (TMQ, ٨:٢٧).

b. To the People of the Scripture^٧:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “O population of the Book, (Or: Family of the Book, i.e., the Jews and Christians) why do you

^٧ Those who believe in the “Torah” or the “Gospel”.

confound The Truth with the untruth and keep back the Truth, and you know (that)?” (TMQ, ٣:٧١).

c. To the Israelites:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**O Seeds (Or: sons) of Israel) remember My favor wherewith I favored you, and fulfill My covenant (and) I will fulfil your covenant, and do have awe of Me (only)**” (TMQ, ٣:٤٠).

d. To all mankind:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**O you mankind, surely We created you of a male and a female, and We have made you races and tribes that you may get mutually acquainted. Surely the most honorable among you in the Providence of Allah are the most pious; surely Allah is Ever-Knowing, Ever-Cognizant**” (TMQ, ٣٩:١٣).

e. To the humans and the jinn:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**O company of the jinn and humankind, in case you are able to penetrate through the regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate (them)! You will not penetrate except with an all-binding authority**” (TMQ, ٥٥:٣٣).

٥. Speech of the Prophets:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And as Ibrahîm said, “Lord! Make this a secure land, and provide its population with (various) products, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day**” (TMQ, ٢:١٢٦).

٦. Speech of other people:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And Firaawn (Pharaoh) said, “O you chiefs, in no way do I know that you have a god other than me**” (TMQ, ٣٣:٣٨).

٧. Speech of other creatures:



Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “Till, when they came up to the Valley of Ants, an ant said, “O you ants, enter your dwellings so that Sulayman and his hosts would not definitely crush you, (while) they are not aware” (TMQ, ٢٧:١٨).

٨. General speech using ٣rd person pronouns throughout the rest of the Qur'an:

a. Relating incidents and Qur'anic stories:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “So, when they went with him, they agreed (Literally: and they agreed) together to set him down in the unseen (bottom) of the pit; and We revealed to him, “Indeed you will definitely (fully) inform them of this, their command, (Or: their affair) and they are not aware” (TMQ, ١٢:١٥).

b. Describing different characters and deeds:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and (the ones) who are with him are strict against the steadfast disbelievers, constantly merciful among themselves. You see them constantly bowing themselves, (and) constantly prostrating themselves, seeking Grace from Allah and all-blessed Satisfaction. Their mark is on their faces, (being) the trace of prostration...” (TMQ, ٣٨:٢٩).

“And when you see them, you admire their figures; and in case they speak, you hear their speech as if they were propped-up timbers. They reckon every shout is against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. Allah assail them! However are they diverged (from the Truth)!” (TMQ, ٦٣:٤).

“And who is more unjust than he who, being reminded of the signs of his Lord, (yet) veers away from them and forgets what his (two) hands have forwarded? Surely We have made lids on their hearts so that they do not comprehend it, and in their ears an obstruction. And

in case you call them to guidance, (then), they will never be guided at all” (TMQ, ١٨:٥٧).

c. Mentioning facts of life and the hereafter:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Wealth and sons are the adornment of the present life; and the enduring deeds of righteousness are more charitable in the Providence of your Lord for requital, and more charitable in aspiration”** (TMQ, ١٦:٤٦).

“An enactment of Allah with the ones who passed away earlier; and you will never find any alteration to an enactment of Allah” (TMQ, ٢٢:٦٢).

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of charity will see it, And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it” (TMQ, ٩٩:٧-٨).

d. Passing juristic laws:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And the male thief and the female thief: then cut (off) the hands of both, as a recompense for what they (both) have earned, as a torture from Allah; and Allah is Ever-Mighty, Ever-Wise”** (TMQ, ٥:٣٨).

e. Referring to certain notions and concepts:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And He has cast in the earth anchorages (i.e., mountains) so that it should not reel with you...”** (TMQ, ١٦:١٥).

/ Purpose of Using Various Speech Styles in the Qur’an

As was mentioned previously, speech styles in the Qur’an do not vary or change haphazardly. On the contrary, this variation occurs in precision according to the context, the intended meaning, the situation, the topic and the addressees, with what befits the Sublimity of Lordship of Allah (*SWT*) and suits the state and degree of the addressee/addressees.

١. Direct speech from Allah (*SWT*) using the pronouns, “I”, the royal “We”, “My” and the royal “Our”:



a. Referring to Allah's blessings upon His creations:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And indeed We have already honored the Seeds (Or: sons) of Adam and carried them on land and sea, (Literally: in the land the sea) and provided them of the good (things), and graced them over many of whom We created with marked graciousness**” (TMQ, ١٧:٧٠).

b. Referring to a decisive command:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And We decreed for Seeds (Or: Sons) of Israel) in the Book: “Indeed you will definitely corrupt in the earth twice, and indeed you will definitely (become) exalted a great exaltation”** (TMQ, ١٧:٤).

c. Referring to a firm judgment:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**On that account We prescribed for the Seeds (Or: sons) of Israel) that whoever kills a self - other than for (killing another) self or (Literally: nor) for corruption in the earth - then it will be as if he had killed mankind altogether; and whoever gives life to it, (i.e., a self) then it will be as if he had given life to mankind altogether...**” (TMQ, ٥:٣٢).

d. Referring to a powerful promise:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**Surely We indeed vindicate Our Messengers and the ones who have believed in the present life (Literally: lowly life, i.e., the life of this world) and upon the Day when the (noble) Witnesses rise up ...**” (TMQ, ٤٠:٥١).

e. Referring to a foreboding admonition:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And when We will to cause a town to perish, We command its (people) luxurious (life), then they committed immorality therein; so the Word came true against it, (and) then We destroyed it an utter destruction**” (TMQ, ١٧:١٦).

f. Referring to Allah's absolute power in creation and resurrection:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “Surely We, Ever We, give life and make to die, and to Us is the Destiny” (TMQ, ۵۰:۴۳).

۲. Speech from Allah (*SWT*) referring to Himself while using the ۳rd person pronoun “He”, which is usually used in reference to His ۹۹ Most Beautiful Names and in reminding us of His blessings and our duties towards Him:

Allah says what can be translated as, “Allah. There is no god except He, The Ever-Living, The Superb Upright Sustainer. Slumber does not overtake Him, nor sleep; to Him (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is there that intercedes for His Providence except by His Permission? He knows whatever is in front of them (Literally: between their hands) and whatever is behind them, and they do not encompass anything of His Knowledge except whatever He has decided. His Chair embraces the heavens and the earth; the preserving of them (Literally: them both) does not tire Him; and He is The Ever-Exalted, The Ever-Magnificent” (TMQ, ۲:۲۵۵).

“The All-Merciful, He taught the Qur’an, He created man, He has taught him distinct (Literally: evident (demonstration) (speech))” (TMQ, ۵۵:۱-۴).

“He is Allah, (other than Whom) there is no god except He. He is The Knower of the Unseen and the Witnessed. He is The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful” (TMQ, ۵۹:۲۲).

“Surely Allah has purchased from the believers their selves and their riches for (the reward) that the Garden will be theirs; they fight in the way of Allah; so they kill, and are killed...” (TMQ, ۹:۱۱۱).

“And He has brought you of all you asked Him; and in case you number the favor (s) of Allah, you (cannot) enumerate them. Surely man is indeed constantly unjust, most disbelieving” (TMQ, ۱۴:۳۴).

“Surely We, Ever We, have been sending down the Remembrance, and surely We are indeed Preservers of it” (TMQ, ۱۵:۹).

“If We had sent down this Qur’an upon a mountain, indeed you



would have seen it submissive, sundered apart out of apprehension of Allah; and those similitudes We strike for mankind, that possibly they would meditate” (TMQ, ٥٩:٢١).

Notice in the above ayahs^٤ - and in many others – that when Allah (*SWT*) refers to His attributes, blessings and the wonders of His omnipotence, He never says “I am so and so” or “I did so and so”. This is because using “I” particularly in such contexts usually diminishes the value of the speaker. On the contrary, using “He” - or the royal “We” - maintains the distance in status and grandeur between Allah and His creation, as indeed befits the Sublimity of His Lordship. If you attempt to turn all the pronouns in the above ayahs into the first person “I”, you will realize what I mean here.

٢. Speech from Allah (*SWT*) addressing the Prophet (*SAWS*):

Direct speech to the Prophet (*SAWS*):

a. Reminding him (*SAWS*) of Allah’s blessings and omnipotence:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “O you Prophet, why do you prohibit what Allah has made lawful to you, seeking the complete satisfaction of your spouses? And Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.” (TMQ, ٦٦:١).

“Do you (i.e., the Prophet) not know that Allah has the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that in no way do you (i.e., the believers) have, apart from Allah, either a constant patron or a constant vindicator” (TMQ, ٢:١٠٧).

b. Reminding him (*SAWS*) of the unseen and the hereafter:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “And who is more unjust than he who has fabricated against Allah a lie, or has said, “To me it has been revealed” and nothing has been revealed to him, and who has said, “I will send down the like of what Allah has sent down.” And if you could see, as the unjust (people) are in the perplexities of death and the Angels are stretching out their hands. “Get yourselves out! Today you are recompensed with the torment of degradation for what you were saying against Allah other than the truth, and you used to wax proud against His signs” (TMQ, ٦:٩٣).

^٤ Ayahs: Plural form of “ayah” [a verse in the Qur’an].

c. Determining the Prophet's (SAWS) role:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “O you Prophet, surely We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good tidings, and a constant warner ...” (TMQ, ۳۳:۴-۵).

d. Supporting and encouraging him (SAWS):

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “In no way has your Lord disregarded you, and in no way has He disfavored you, And indeed the Hereafter will be more charitable (i.e., better) for you than the First (i.e., the present life), And indeed your Lord will eventually give you so that you will be satisfied” (TMQ, ۹۳:۳-۵).

e. Honoring him (SAWS):

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “How then will it be when We cause to come from every nation a witness and cause you to come as a witness against these?” (TMQ, ۴:۴۱).

f. Reminding him (SAWS) of Allah's blessings upon him.

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as: “Have We not expanded your breast for you, and laid aside from you your encumbrance which weighed down your side from you your encumbrance which weighed down your back, and did We not raise for you your remembrance?” (TMQ, ۹۴:۱-۴).

g. Giving the Prophet (SAWS) a personal command:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “O you Prophet, why do you prohibit what Allah has made lawful to you, seeking the complete satisfaction of your spouses? And Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful” (TMQ, ۶۶:۱).

h. Giving a command to all the believers through him (SAWS):

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “O you Prophet, when you divorce women, then divorce them at their (fixed) spell, and enumerate the (fixed) spell, and be pious to Allah, your Lord. Do not send (Literally: drive) them out of their houses, nor should they go out, except (when) they come up with a demonstrably evident obscenity...” (TMQ, ۶۵:۱).

i. Answering the queries of the believers through him (SAWS):

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, “They ask you what (things) they should expend, Say, “Whatever charity you expend is for parents and nearest kin, and orphans, and the indigent, and the



wayfarer; and whatever charity you perform, then surely Allah is Ever-Knowing of it” (TMQ, ٢:٢١٥).

j. Recording certain incidents or reminding him (*SAWS*) of them:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And (remember) as you went forth early from your family to locate the believers in their positions (Literally: seats) for fighting; (The reference is to the Battle of 'Uhud) and Allah is Ever-Hearing, Ever-Knowing**” (TMQ, ٢:١٢١).

k. Divulging the perversity of the disbelievers and their deception:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**And the Jews will never be satisfied with you, neither will the Nasara (i.e., the Christians) till you (closely) follow their creed. Say, “Surely the guidance of Allah is the Guidance.” And indeed in case you ever (closely) follow their prejudices, after the (share of) knowledge that has come to you, in no way will you have from Allah either a constant Patron or a ready Vindicator**” (TMQ, ٢:١٢٠).

l. Refuting the falsehoods of the disbelievers:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**They indeed have already disbelieved who say, “Surely Allah, He is the Masîh, son of Maryam.” (The Missiah son of Mary) Say, “Who then (can) avail (Literally: possess) anything against Allah in case He wills to cause the Masîh son of Maryam to perish, and his mother, and whoever is in the earth altogether? And to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He creates whatever He decides. And Allah is Ever-Determiner over everything**” (TMQ, ٥:١٧).

m. Guiding us through him (*SAWS*) how to deal with the disbelievers:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**So, whoever argues with you concerning him, (Or: it, i.e., the truth) even after (such) knowledge as has come to you, then say, “Come! We should call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves**

and yourselves; thereafter we should imprecate, (and) so lay (Literally: make) the curse of Allah on the liars” (TMQ, ٣:٦١).

n. Forbidding certain behavior:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “**Do not definitely extend forth your eyes to what We have given pairs of them to enjoy; and be not grieved for them, and lower your wing to the believers**” (TMQ, ١٥:٨٨).

From the previous ayahs, and as was explained in the second chapter “The Messenger and The Revelation”, it is clear that the Prophet (*SAWS*) – regarding the Qur’anic Revelation - is no more than a receiver and a messenger who delivers whatever is revealed to him honestly to the people. He (*SAWS*) is in no way related to the formulation of the Qur’an, and this can be perceived from the kind of speech addressed to him (*SAWS*).

٤. Indeed, there are many other speech styles used in the Qur’an, but they are not our concern in this chapter. For example, there are speeches of narrative nature, references to Qur’anic stories, incidents, facts, miracles, maxims, juristic laws, promises, admonitions, etc.

/ Shifting between Speech Styles in the Qur’an

The Qur’an is different from any regular speech due to its continuous variation and change in style in addressing, which is based upon the context varying from one ayah to to the next, or even within the same ayah. This is known as ‘style shift’ in the Qur’an.

Style shift is one of the strongest kinds of literary eloquence. It also attracts the reader’s attention successfully, and happens to be one of the strongest - if not in fact the strongest – proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an.

Style shift in the Qur’an are of different types; we are mainly concerned here with only five:

١. Shifting from the absentee to the speaker:



Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “And when the Saying befalls them, We will bring out for them from the earth a beast that will speak to them that mankind had no certitude in Our signs” (TMQ, ٢٧:٨٢).

“And the ones who emigrated in (the cause of) Allah even after they were done an injustice, indeed We will definitely locate them in the present life (Literally: the lowly life, i.e., the life of this world) a fair (location), and indeed the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if they did (only) know” (TMQ, ١٦:٤١).

“Whoever is willing (to gain) the tillage of Hereafter, We will give him increase in his tillage; and whoever is willing to (gain) the tillage of the present (life), (Literally: the lowly “life”, i.e., the life of this world) We will bring him of it, and in no way will he have in the Hereafter any assignment.” (TMQ, ٤٢:٢٠).

٢. Shifting from the speaker to the absentee:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “And thus We have sent it down supremely evident signs, and for that Allah guides whomever He wills” (TMQ, ٢٢:١٦).

“Then We took each one for his guilty (deed); so of them was he on whom We sent (a squall of) gravel and (some) whom the Shout took (away), and of them was he who was caved in (into) the earth, and some We drowned. And in no way, indeed, did Allah do (any) injustice to them, but they did injustice to themselves” (TMQ, ٢٩:٤٠).

٣. Shifting from the speaker to addressing the Prophet (*SAWS*):

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “We know best whatever they say; and in no way are you a potentate over them. So remind by the Qur'an him who fears (My) threat” (TMQ, ٥٠:٤٥).

“And (this is) a Qur'an; We have distinctly separated (its *ayahs*) that you may read it to man-kind staidly, (Or: at intervals) and We have

been sending it down successively (i.e., by successive revelation on different occasions)” (TMQ, ۱۷:۱۰۶).

۴. Shifting from addressing the Prophet (*SAWS*) to the speaker:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “And among them are they who listen to you, and We set (Literally: make) upon their hearts lids, (so) they do not comprehend it...” (TMQ, ۶:۲۵).

“Repel the odious (act) with that which is fairest. We, Ever We, know best whatever they describe” (TMQ, ۲۳:۹۶).

۵. Shifting from the absentee to addressing the Prophet (*SAWS*):

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, “So Supremely Exalted be Allah, The True King! And do not hasten with the Qur’an before its revelation is accomplished to you, and say, “Lord! Increase me in knowledge” (TMQ, ۲۰:۱۱۴).

“And the ones who have disbelieved have said, “If only the Qur’an had been sent down upon him as one complete whole.” Thus, that We may make firm your heart-sight thereby, and We have recited it in a (distinct) recitation” (TMQ, ۲۵:۳۲).

All the above ayahs are examples of many others in the Qur’an. The Qur’an uses this style shift method in its every single page, if not within every few ayahs of the same page. Such method is a perfect proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an. Moreover, it provides the Qur’anic language with the vividness needed to attract the reader. There is no question about this since Allah (*SWT*), The Creator of the whole *uniyah*, is The One Who made it.

In conclusion, the Qur’an cannot be a speech of mankind. Therefore, any careful and analytical reader of the Qur’an cannot but submit to the following conclusions regarding the source of the Qur’an:

۱. It is completely independent from the Prophet (*SAWS*), who was only a receiver of the Qur’anic revelations and a messenger to the people.



٢. It is independent from all mankind, who are all nothing but addressees.
٣. It comes from The Sublime, Who always uses the kind of speech that befits His Sublimity and Glory.
٤. It comes from The Ever-Wise, The All-Knowing, Who knows the nature and the state of the addressees (i.e. His creations), and knows the kind of speech that influences them and thus guides them to the right path.

With some reflection and careful attention to how the Qur'anic speech styles change and shift from one context to another, any reader of the Qur'an easily becomes certain that the Qur'an is the words of Allah (*SWT*) to all mankind, without any kind of human interference or distortion. No human can ever come up with a speech as eloquent as that of the Qur'an.

The entire Qur'an is miraculous in all its aspects. However, the speech style adopted in the Qur'an is considered one of its most dominant miracles, since no human can overcome his limited intellectual and emotional capabilities to try address mankind in such an eloquent speech that influences in such a magnificent way. This is an existing challenge for mankind until the Day of Judgment.

To become certain that the Qur'an is the words of Allah (*SWT*), the reader does not need to be professional in the Arabic grammar or the science of eloquence. I believe that even the non-Arabs who read the translated Qur'an – only if translated accurately – will easily perceive that the Addresser in the Qur'an is far beyond all mankind.

Perhaps this realization was the main motive that made the first generations of Arabs in the early Islamic period embrace this religion, upon listening to just a few ayahs of the Qur'an. Through their innate language skills and intuition, they realized that those words could never be that of a human and that they exceed mankind's limited disposition and innate literacy. It is not, however, simply a matter of astonishment at the glory of the Qur'anic text. It is rather the light of faith that grew deeper in their hearts and led them to certainty, which made them defy

the whole world and work hard for *Jannah* (paradise) without even having seen it.

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