



Research Paper

## The Inimitable Symphony in the Holy Book Quran

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### ABSTRACT

*The Quran is different from sermons, odes, letters, or other literary works. The style of narration is not organized according to specific topics. It is composed in such a way that the content of repeating words and events passed well.*

*Moreover, some verses can be read in detail. Long and short verses can often be read together to create a beautiful voice stream. Some words can be spoken with fewer consonants. Thus, the Qur'an sounds even more beautiful, and the flow of speech is more sonorous. Some lines are repeated again and again. Thus, we can understand that the Quran was written with a definite purpose. Replays are presented in a variety of shapes and styles. Thus, the reader gets the maximum enjoyment from reading the Quran, and at the same time, the text underlines and highlights the most important aspects of the narrative.*

*The melody and the rhythmic harmony of the verses, words, and expressions of the Holy Quran and its inspiring implications on the understanding of the meanings of this celestial book can be considered as one of the amazing aspects of the Holy Quran's style which has been less discussed in respect to the other spectacular aspects of the Holy Quran.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Onomatopoeia, Vowel Harmony, Assonance, Phonoaesthetic aspect. stylistics;*

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The Holy Book Quran is unique in the sense that its language is characterized by its engrossing and captivating style of narration. The style of the Quran is not like any of the existing literary genres of Arabic eloquence. The Quran is different from sermons, odes, letters, or other literary works. The style of narration is not organized according to specific topics. It is composed in such a way that the content of repeating words and events passed well. This fact does not prevent the fact that the *suras* and verses are perfectly linked. *Surah* considerably differs from one another in their duration. Each *sura* has its structure and method of narration in the beginning, middle, and end. Verses also vary along its length. This allows to train the breath of reading in different ways, and also provides additional beauty of the phonoaesthetic perception of the Holy Book. Moreover, some verses can be read in detail. Long and short verses can often be read together to create a beautiful voice stream. Some words can be spoken with fewer consonants. Thus, the Qur'an sounds even more beautiful, and the flow of speech is more sonorous. Some lines are repeated again and again. Thus, we can understand that the Quran was written with a definite purpose. Replays are presented in a variety of shapes and styles. Thus, the reader gets the maximum enjoyment from reading the Quran, and at the same time, the text underlines and highlights the most important aspects of the narrative.

The Quran can find a large number of linguistic methods. They are used to emphasize the main idea and present it in a more understandable way possible. The meaning of some verses superimposed on the meaning of other verses. This cannot be found in any of the literary works. Moreover, the used artistic techniques do not prevent the transfer point. The Quran is known to have its style that distinguishes the Quran from Arabic discourse.

The paper attempts to analyse the micro and macro level phonoaesthetic style of narration in the Quran which contributes to a better understanding of the meaning transmitted.

### The Rhythmic Harmony:

The melody and the rhythmic harmony of the verses, words, and expressions of the Holy Quran and its inspiring implications on the understanding of the meanings of this celestial book can be considered as one of the amazing aspects of the Holy Quran's style which has been less discussed in respect to the other spectacular aspects of the Holy Quran.

The rhythm and tune of the words are not only in harmony with the meaning and intent of the verses, but also help create an atmosphere of sanctity, purity, passion, enthusiasm, and lure in the human soul, such that having been caught in the clutches of the Qur'an, the soul inevitably becomes intoxicated in traversing the path (sayrawsuluk) within the celestial ambience of the verses. The rhythm that lies in the words of the Qur'an produces a heart-warming melody and a heart-rendering cry that excites the soul and infatuates it with the Qur'an. The beauty that lies in the resonance of the Qur'an stirs the hearts of all who hear it, including those who are not Arabs. While listening to the uplifting tone of the Qur'an, the first thing that attracts a person is the novel audible structure and style. In this structure, the punctuation and pauses have been adorned in such a way that it affects the soul of the listener. This impressive effect starts with the proper pronunciation of the characters and words, and continues when an expressive tune is adhered to; the climax of it is achieved when it is recited in a sombre ambience according to the particular tone along with its precise high and low pitches. The fluency of the words and expression, the eloquence and miraculous precision in the selection of these words, and the harmony the Qur'an displays in relation to its content and context, arouses a tornado in the human soul and takes him out of the state of sluggishness and sleep. It is no wonder that in the traditions found within the school of the Ahl al-bayt ('a), reciting the Qur'an in its Arabic tone (lahn-e-'arabi) has been emphasised. As an example, the Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Everything has a decor, and the decor of the Qur'an is its beautiful recital." (Kulayni, p. 420.) He also said, "Adorn the Qur'an with your pleasant recitals." (Majlisi, p. 90.) It is no surprise, then that the Arabs called the Qur'an magic:

فَقَالَ إِنَّهُ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ

Saying, 'It is nothing but magic handed down.' (Quran 74:24).

The sounds and the rhymes of the holy Quran's phrases and words are spoken by voices which come to the ears as a The Quranic phones, phonetic cadence, sounds and the melody of the Holy Quran makes up for a special sound which is heard through the arrangement of the letters and words in the holy Quran depending on the type of the vowels, accent, type of the letters and the adjectives and their prepositions, redundancy, merging, assimilation, omission and so forth when reading or chanting the Holy Quran with a loud voice. This melodious system is wonderfully in a very precise relationship with the semantics and the goals intended by the verses and the *Surahs* in the Holy Quran, and this is regarded as one of the expressive marvels of the Holy Quran.

1. Firstly, by melody here, we intend to mean the pectoral harmonic composition of the Holy Quran and this is entirely different from what is heard in a poem composed by a versatile poet that is because in tuneful poetry or prose the melody has been cast upon from outside and it is a product of the partitioning of the speech to equal parts, applying rhyme schemes, the meter of couplets and cadence; but the holy Quran is not poetry, not prose and not a rhythmic context rather it possesses its own unique and special features.

2. Secondly, the issue of being magnificent and fabulous from every aspect does not end in the verses and the phrases therein; rather, it is visible in the words and lexicons.

3. Thirdly, the semantic relationship between the words sounds and the holy Quran verses is different from what is referred to as interjections in the Arabic language.

4. fourth the Quran's semantic cadence harmony effects do not depend on any sort on the two variables of the chanter or the reader's accent and voice and the language with which the listener is supposed to understand, to put it differently, the intrinsic melody of the holy Quran is free from who reads it and what language the listener speaks with, the lexicon is conveyed either way.

Of course, it should not be bearing the idea that the reader or the reciter needs not to observe the principles of reading and chanting properly. In this manner, the Qur'an is neither the harsh speech of the Bedouins nor the soft speech of the urban dwellers; rather it is contains the firmness of the first and the delicateness of the second. It is as if there is a blending of both languages and the result is an intermingling of the two dialects.

Indeed, the Qur'an has both novelty and beauty and this combination is like a shell which contains valuable pearls and precious gems within itself. So if the beauty of the crust does not prevent you from seeing the buried treasure held within, and if its novelty does not become a curtain between you and the hidden secrets that lie beyond it, and if you remove the crust from the pith and separate the shell from the pearl, and if you reach the order and adornment of its words in the splendour of its meaning ... it is then that a more wonderful and magnificent essence will manifest itself to you and you will find the clarity in its meaning.

This melody has come about as a result of a particular structure, the harmony between the letters in a word, and the concordance between the words in a section. It is from this perspective, that the Qur'an has both the special characteristics of prose and the particularities of poetry, with this distinguishing factor, that the meaning and expression of the Qur'an has been freed from the restrictions and limitations of rhyme, while at the same time, containing within it both prose and poetry.

During the recitation of the Qur'an, the inner rhythm can be completely perceived. This rhythm, displays itself more within the short chapters—where the “spacing”<sup>18</sup> is closer together, and in general, within its illustrations and sketches—and less so within the long chapters.

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2018) in his *New Horizons in Qur'anic Linguistics* identifies the following linguistic factors that contribute to the inner rhythm of the Holy Book Quran.

1. Assimilation
2. Assonance
3. Vowel points and pronunciation
4. Onomatopoeia

#### Assimilation:

Speech is not a series of separate, individual fragments. Therefore, movement of our vocal organs is influenced by the sounds preceding and following the current sound being articulated. Assimilation is the term used to define the process when a sound changes some of its properties to be more similar to those nearby. There are two types of assimilation: Regressive and progressive. Regressive, also referred to as “right-to-left” assimilation, refers to when a sound becomes more like a subsequent sound. It is sometimes called anticipatory assimilation, as the changing sound anticipates the following sound in some manner. Progressive Assimilation, also referred to as “left-to-right” assimilation, is when a sound becomes more like the sound that was just pronounced before it or the one that lingers from the sound just articulated. It is also called perseverative assimilation, as the sound advances, or moves forward, onto the next sound in a word. Hussein Abdul-Raof (2018) cites examples to show the relevance of Assimilation in The Quran

1. *man yartadidminkuman dīnih* – Whoever of you reverts from his religion, Q2:217
2. *man yartaddaminkuman dīnih* – Whoever of you reverts from his religion, Q5:54

He claims that these structurally identical constructions are stylistically distinct due to the phonetic process of assimilation in sentence (2), in which the final voiced alveolar stop sound /d/ in the verb (*yartadda* – to revert) has been deleted. In sentence (1), however, the non-assimilated verb form (*yartadid* – to revert) has been employed where a final /d/ sound is added. The reason for this stylistic shift from an assimilated form (*yartadda*) to a non-assimilated form (*yartadid*) is attributed to different modes of reading (*qirā'āt*) the Qur'anic text by Qur'an reciters (*qurrā'*). He further elaborates that the verb form in sentence (a) represents the dialect of Ḥijāz which includes Makkah and the neighbouring areas and has been a mode of reading adopted by Ibn cĀmir, Nāfic, the reciters of Iraq, Syria and Madīnah. However, the assimilated verb form in sentence (b) represents the dialect of the tribe of Tamīm.

#### Assonance

Assonance, or “vowel rhyme,” is the repetition of vowel sounds across a line of text or poetry. The words have to be near enough to each other that the similar vowel sounds are noticeable. Usually, but not always, the recurring vowel sounds will be in the middle of words that start and end with different consonants. For example, “I’m reminded to line the lid of my eye” contains many long “I” sounds, some at the start of words, some in the middle and some containing the word entirely. Each use still contributes to the assonant effect. The etymology of assonance is the Latin “*assonare*,” meaning “to sound.” Today’s definition of assonance has been in use since the 1800s. The major aim of assonance is to achieve rhyme and cadence through word-final sounds of words which occur sentence-finally. This, however, should not be at the expense of meaning, that is, the major objective of any speech act is to deliver a meaningful message.

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2018) believes that Assonance in Qur'anic discourse has an illocutionary force on the reader/hearer, has a psychological function of spiritual relaxation, and is achieved through one of the following linguistic mechanisms:

He claims that at the end of a sentence, we find a word placed sentence-finally to achieve assonance, as in (*qālū āmannā birabbi al-cālamīn. rabbi mūsā wahārūn* – They said: ‘We have believed in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron’, Q26:47–48) where the noun (*hārūn*) is placed at the end of the sentence to rhyme with the previous sentence which ends with (*al-cālamīn*). Thus, we have /īn/ + /ūn/. However, in Q20:70, the noun (*mūsā*) is placed at the end of the sentence in order to rhyme with the previous sentence, which also ends with the same rhyme of a long vowel /ā/. This is: (... *ḥaithuatā ... birabbihārūn wamūsā* – ... wherever he is ... in the Lord of Aaron and Moses, Q20:69–70).

#### Onomatopoeia

The word onomatopoeia comes from the combination of two Greek words, *onoma* meaning “name” and *poiein* meaning “to make,” so onomatopoeia literally means “to make a name (or sound).” That is to say that the word means nothing more than the sound it makes. The word being, for example, is simply a sound effect, but one that is very useful in making writing or storytelling more expressive and vivid. Many onomatopoeic

words can be verbs as well as nouns. Slap, for instance, is not only the sound that is made by skin hitting skin but also the action of hitting someone (usually on the face) with an open hand. Rustle is the sound of something dry, like paper, brushing together, but it can also indicate the action of someone moving papers around and causing them to brush together, thus making this noise. The concept of onomatopoeia can be difficult to understand without examples. Examples give the chance to see and sound out actual words.

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2018) elaborates the notion of onomatopoeia with the following examples *innabaṭṭasharabbikalashadīd* – Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe, Q85:12 where the word (baṭṭsha – vengeance) is chosen for its inherent sounds, the velarised alveolar stop /t/ and the palato-alveolar fricative /sh/, in order to highlight phonetically God's mighty power. The synonym (*cadhāb* – punishment) cannot deliver this rhetorical task. The sound effect of onomatopoeia also applies to other words such as (*al-ṭāmmah* – the greatest overwhelming calamity) in Q79:34 and (*al-qāricah* – the striking calamity) in Q101:1. In fact,

Q114, as a whole sūrah, is marked by onomatopoeic effect through the employment of the voiceless alveolar fricative sound /s/ which delivers the perlocutionary effect of Satan's whisper (*waswasat al-shaiṭān*) in people's ears → (*fawaswasalahumā al-shaiṭānu* – Satan whispered to both of them, Q7:20).

#### Vowel points and pronunciation

We are concerned with vowel points (or case endings – ḥarakāt al-I Crāb) in terms of the different pronunciations of Qur'anic words. In Arabic, there are three major vowel points which affect the pronunciation of some Qur'anic words:

- I. the short vowel /u/ called (*ḍammah*): This designates the nominative case (ḥālat al-rafc) or (al-marfūc),
- II. the short vowel /a/ called (*fathah*): This designates the accusative case (ḥālat al-naṣb) or (al-manṣūb), and
- III. the short vowel /i/ called (*kasrah*): This designates the genitive case (ḥālat al-jarr) or (al-majrūr).

Vowel points are related to the modes of reading (al-qirā'āt), which are a major phonetic aspect of Qur'anic discourse and which represent a diversity in the pronunciation of Qur'anic words. Let us consider the following examples:

1 *allāhukhalaqakulladābbatin min mā'* – God has created every living creature from water, Q24:45 where the noun (allāhu – God) is the subject with the short vowel /u/, the verb (khalaqa – to create) has three short vowels /a/ as a past tense verb, and the expression (kulladābbatin – every living creature) appears with the short vowel /a/ for (kulla) as the object noun. According to this mode of reading, the subject (allāhu) is in the nominative case and acts as the muḥtadā', while (khalaqakulladābbatin – created every living creature) is the predicate (khabar) of the subject (muḥtadā'). This kind of pronunciation is based on the past tense verb (khalaqa), whose pragmatic function is to designate a lasting state of affairs (al-khalq – the state of creation all the time).

However, the second way of pronunciation below is less common:

{*allāhukhālīqukullidābbatin min mā'*} – God has created every living creature from water. where the original verb (*khalaqa*) has undergone three phonological changes:

- I. the short vowel /a/ is lengthened to become /ā/,
- II. the second short vowel /a/ is changed to /i/, and
- III. the last short vowel /a/ becomes /u/.

These phonological changes are undertaken to produce an active participle noun (khālīqu – creator). This new mode of reading is based on the word (khālīqu), whose pragmatic function is to designate continuity of the act of creation since the noun (active participle) is more able to achieve this semantic function than the verb (khalaqa). However, the first pronunciation with a past tense verb (khalaqa) with three short vowels /a/ is phonetically easier than the second pronunciation where the long vowel /ā/ is used in (khālīqu).

The examples cited by suggest that the Arabic language has many words for a single meaning, but yet the Holy book Qur'an selects and arranges the words to portray the intended meaning in addition to create sounds to conform to the image, scene and message the book conveys. This is not only done by selecting the right words but also arranging them in a specific way to develop sounds and rhythms. Just by touching upon a few simple examples it can be seen why Pickthall was led to believe that the Qur'an had an "inimitable symphony".

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