

Phonetic Harmony in Al-Rafi'i's Book "the Miracle of Prophetic Eloquence"

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ABSTRACT

This study explores phonetic harmony in Al-Rafi'i's book "The Miracle of Prophetic Eloquence," where he argues that the miraculous nature of the Qur'an lies in its unique composition, which blends the harmony of letters, words, and sentences. The research highlights that each letter in the Qur'an has a phonetic role that contributes to its distinctive rhythm, and the arrangement of words achieves a musical coherence that impacts the listener. Al-Rafi'i also emphasizes that even unfamiliar terms in the Qur'an are placed within contexts that create a unique phonetic beauty. The study concludes that phonetic harmony is one aspect of Qur'anic inimitability, as the Qur'an's composition makes its recitation both pleasurable and impactful, beyond human ability to replicate precisely.

Keywords: (Sound, Al-Rafi'i, Harmony, Miracle)

INTRODUCTION

According to Al-Rafi'i (d. 623 AH – 1356 AD), **phonetic composition** represents a key aspect of the **miraculous nature** of the Qur'an. This study aims to analyze the structure of this composition and identify **the source of its inimitability**. Al-Rafi'i, a distinguished scholar and literary critic, is considered **one of the most remarkable Arab and Muslim intellectuals** of the modern era. His extensive contributions to **literary and critical studies** have significantly advanced the discourse on **Qur'anic inimitability**.

The nature of our study required us to divide it into several sections. In the **first section**, we addressed the term **"linguistic sound."** The **second section** was titled **"Sound and Its Harmony."** The **third section** was named **"The Concept of Composition According to Al-Rafi'i."** In the **fourth section**, we discussed **"The Harmony of Letters and Their Sounds."** The **fifth section** focused on **"The Harmony of Words and Their Sounds,"** while the **sixth section** explored **"Phonetic Harmony Between Sentences and Their Words."** We concluded our research with a **summary** in which we highlighted the most significant findings of the study.

Section One – The Term "Linguistic Sound":

Linguistic Definition of Sound:

The word "sound" (in Arabic) refers to a tone or a ring, and its plural is **aswāt**. According to Ibn Al-Sikkīt (d. 244 AH / 802 AD), "sound" is defined as the audible output produced by humans or other beings. He also explains that "al-sā'it" refers to someone who cries out or shouts, while a **"siyyit"** man possesses a loud or powerful voice¹. Every type of song is a kind of sound². The sound is linked to its dimensions, its resources, and determined by its intention. Ibn Faris said: "Sound is a term for everything that settles in the listener's ear, and it is said: This is the sound of Zaid³. Sound: the source of something, it produces a sound, and it is called "saa'it" (one who makes sound), and it is "sawwat" (the act of making sound), and it is perceivable. There is no disagreement among the wise about the

¹ Ibn Manzoor, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry: (Saut).

² Al-Khalil, *Kitab al-Ain*, entry: (Saut).

³ Ibn Faris, *Maqayis al-Lugha*, entry: (Saut).

existence of what is imperceptible. It is an attribute that is not a body nor a characteristic of a body. The evidence for this is that it is perceived by the sense of hearing.¹

The term "sound" terminologically:

Ibn Sina sees that sound is: "the oscillation of air and its forceful and rapid movement from any cause². Sound consists of tangible vibrations in air waves that originate from the source of the sound and oscillate from its point of origin. The majority of these vibrations settle in the hearing, and according to the degree of their oscillation, they convey meanings: joy, sadness, prohibition, command, news, creation, echo, music, or something else. This explains the neural interaction in the brain or its translation through the available sensory mechanisms in the brain's various functions.

According to Ibn Jinni (d. 392 AH), as we mentioned: "Sound is a phenomenon that emerges with the breath, extending until it encounters segments in the throat, mouth, and lips, which bend it from its extension and prolongation. Each segment is called a letter, and the resonance of letters differs according to the variation of their segments³. Notably, this definition focuses on the linguistic features of sound specifically, rather than any other aspect. It particularly addresses the segments of sound that bend it from extension and prolongation. This bending pause is called a "segment" in a precise technical form. The definition distinguishes the acoustic quality of each phoneme in the language, depending on the variation of sound segments. Thus, each letter has its distinct resonance, and each resonance corresponds to a unique sound⁴. It is worth mentioning here that language is defined as: "The sounds by which every person expresses their intentions."⁵

Based on Ibn Jinni's definition of sound as language, the study of the phonetic phenomena of the Arabic letters, particularly in the Qur'an, follows. This is because the Qur'an serves as the field of research. The focus is on aspects such as the articulation points, classes, categories, and rules of the sounds, as well as their causes, signs, and characteristics in various states of voice like voicing and whispering, strength and softness, and their distinctive features in terms of clarity and silence, whether in stillness or movement. These elements are analyzed and compared with contemporary phonetic perspectives, drawing on examples from the Qur'an to illustrate the theoretical concepts.

It is generally agreed that breath is the origin of sound, which follows it, and that breath flows from the lungs to the outside of the mouth through the lips or nostrils, resulting in the production of linguistic sounds. Based on this, we conclude that sound is conditioned by several factors, which are:

1. The presence of air, or breath, which is considered the origin and represents the event, with sound being dependent on it.
2. The presence of a path that the sound, with its extension and prolongation, follows.
3. The presence of segments, or points of interruption, in terms of extension and prolongation.

Modern scholars have confirmed that every audible sound requires the following:

1. A vibrating body to produce oscillations.
2. A medium to transmit these oscillations.
3. A body to receive these oscillations⁶.

Section two: Sound and Its Harmony

Language, in general, is a collection of sounds by which every people express themselves and their thoughts⁷. If one observes our speech closely, it is found to be a collection of sentences that express various meanings. Each group of

¹ Al-Razi, *Mukhtar al-Sihah*, entry: (Saut).

² Ibn Sina, *Asbab Huduth al-Huruf*, p. 7.

³ Ibn Jinni, *Sir'at Sina'at al-I'raab*, 1/6.

⁴ Muhammad Hussein Al-Sagheer, *Al-Sawt Al-Lughawi Fi Al-Quran*, p. 15.

⁵ Ibn Jinni, *Al-Khasa'is*, 1/33.

⁶ Ibrahim Sharaf, Abdelkader Sennous, *Al-Mustalah al-Sawti fi Mu'jam al-Sihah*, pp. 33-35.

⁷ Ibn Jinni, *Al-Khasa'is*, 1/33.

words form sentences, and each word consists of a collection of sounds, namely: letters and vowels. Therefore, words are made up of sounds, words form sentences, sentences form paragraphs, and paragraphs form a text.

The source of linguistic sound in humans is a system called the vocal apparatus. This system is not solely responsible for producing language sounds; it also serves other functions. For example, the teeth produce sounds, cut food, and chew it, while the tongue is a very important organ in sound production. It moves food in the mouth, tastes it, and pushes it toward the throat. As for the lips, they are an important outlet for sounds.

The Arabic language's ability to express anything, whether material or immaterial, is limitless. Furthermore, its ability to articulate the precise names of different sounds comes from its capacity to distinguish between sounds, recognize their sources, types, and names.¹

It is evident that the substance of sound is a manifestation of psychological emotion. This emotion, by its nature, is the cause of the variation in sound, whether it results in elongation, nasalization, softness, or intensity. It is also influenced by the different movements that occur in its disturbance and sequence, in proportions that correspond to the depths of the emotions within the soul². Scholars and thinkers have competed in uncovering the aspects of Qur'anic miracles. Some focused on its language, style, and way of formulation, while others examined the method of its arrangement after it was revealed in stages over the years of the blessed Prophethood. Some turned to the laws and rulings within it, which have proven to be suitable and valid for all times and places across generations. Others focused on the glimpses of knowledge and the signs of various sciences contained in it, some of which were discovered later, while others point to horizons still unknown to scientists and researchers. Additionally, some focused on its vastness in fulfilling the needs of humanity through complete guidance, its policies for good and reform on all levels. Hundreds of books, research papers, and works have emerged, addressing different aspects of the Qur'anic miracle, whether in terms of eloquence, legislation, ethics, science, social issues, and more.³

Mustafa Sadik Al-Rafii believes that speech naturally consists of three components: sounds, which are the letters; words, which are made up of letters; and sentences, which are formed from words. He also asserts that the secret of the Qur'anic miracle in its structure encompasses all these elements, with each component contributing to the miraculous style that defines it. Therefore, it is essential to discuss all three aspects when describing its characteristics.⁴

His view on the miracle of the Qur'an is discussed after he examines the concept of miraculousness as understood by scholars. He says: "As for what we have concluded regarding the miracle of the Qur'an, based on our research, the Qur'an is a miracle in the sense understood from the term 'miracle' in its general meaning. The Qur'an is miraculous in its history, unlike other books, miraculous in its human impact, and miraculous in its truths. These are broad aspects that do not contradict human nature in any way; they remain as long as they exist. Our approach is to demonstrate its miracle in itself, as it is an Arabic speech, because we are writing in this direction of literary history, not in the realm of interpretation and explanation⁵. For Al-Rafii, the structure (nathm) is the focal point of the miracle he emphasizes, as it represents the essence of beauty and majesty in the Qur'an. He also addresses the topic of structure with explanation and analysis, making it the central idea around which his book *I'jaz al-Quran* revolves.

Section Three: The Idea of Structure (Nathm) in Al-Rafii's Study

Al-Rafii acknowledges that he was not the first to introduce the idea of structure (nathm) in the Qur'anic miracle, yet he was keen to address this concept from his own perspective, as he truly understood and appreciated it. He states: "Speech, by its nature, consists of three components: sounds, which are made up of letters; words, which consist of letters; and sentences, which are formed from words. We have seen that the secret of the Qur'anic miracle in its structure encompasses all these components, where a miraculous method emerged from all of them. Therefore, in describing its characteristics, we must discuss all three aspects together⁶. He also believes that "every eloquent person

¹ Al-Thaalibi, *Fiqh al-Lugha wa Sirr al-Arabiyya*, 1/146-147

² Al-Rafii, *I'jaz al-Quran wal-Balagha al-Nabawiyya*, p. 149.

³ Abdullah Abu Saud, *Al-I'jaz al-Sawti fi al-Quran al-Kareem*.

<https://www.eajaz.org/index.php/component/content/article/65-Seventh-Issue/533-Voice-miracles-in-the-Holy-Quran>

⁴ Al-Rafii, *I'jaz al-Quran wal-Balagha al-Nabawiyya*, p. 145.

⁵ Same source, p. 109.

⁶ Al-Rafii, *I'jaz al-Quran wal-Balagha al-Nabawiyya*, p. 145.

knows what eloquence is and how it works, except for the feeling of inability to achieve it and being unable to reach it. These qualities are attributes of the structure of the Qur'an and the way it is composed. We are now speaking about the secret of the miracle upon which this method is based, and which distinguishes that structure; it is a secret we do not claim to fully reveal, extract, or organize its causes. Rather, our effort is to hint at it from one angle and point out some of its characteristics from another. This Qur'an is the soul of Arabic life, and it is to the language what the divine spirit is to human faculties, ensuring the immortality of its effects.¹

Al-Rafii's perspective on structure begins with the letters and their sounds, and the meaning that these letters themselves convey. He then moves from the structure of the letters to words and their letters, and further to sentences and their words. Through this progression, he reaches an understanding of the uniqueness of the syntactical arrangements in the entire structure of the Qur'an. The research will explore these aspects in more detail.

Section Four: The Harmony of Letters and Their Sounds

Al-Rafii began his explanation by studying this structure, starting with the letters and their sounds. This is because the letters, with the sounds they produce, form the primary material for linguistic construction. He then explains that the arrangement of these letters within their words captured the minds of the Arabs. When the Qur'an was recited to them, they heard its letters in the words, and its words in the sentences as beautiful linguistic melodies, as if their harmony and suitability formed a single piece, and its recitation was its signature and rhythm. They did not fully understand this meaning and realized that it was something beyond their capacity. This became evident in their failure, as even those who opposed it—like Musaylimah—resorted to fabricating what he thought was a musical structure or a part of it. It seemed he had realized that the first shock to the Arab soul was in the rhythm of the words and the resonance of the letters, which could only be found in the weight of poetry or oratory, but in no other form of speech².

Al-Rafii calls for taking any piece of eloquent prose created by the Arabs and reciting it in the manner of Qur'anic recitation, adhering to the rules of reading and methods of performance. In this case, one must feel the great difference between one form of arrangement and another. One must also feel the significant deficiency in the speech of eloquent speakers and its degradation compared to the level of the Qur'an. Moreover, attempting to recite or improve the speech of the eloquent diminishes its beauty and charm. This is a consideration for the miraculous musical arrangement of the Qur'an, something no one else can truly replicate in the same way. The arrangement of its letters, considering their sounds, exits, and how some of them naturally complement each other—whether in soft or loud sounds, intensity or gentleness, or in the processes of emphatic or delicate articulation—reveals the extraordinary nature of its structure³.

Indeed, the beautiful sound enhances the beauty of the Qur'an because it avoids any linguistic imperfection that would arise if the causes of proper performance were not met in the sounds of the letters and their articulations. The completeness of this collection of causes lies in the clarity of the sound, the variety of its tone, and the proper alignment of its rhythm on each letter.⁴

Then, al-Rafii believes that the pauses at the end of the Qur'anic verses are a complete representation of the endings found in musical phrases. These pauses align with their verses in an astonishing harmony that matches the type of sound and the way it is directed, with no parallel in this marvel. Most often, these pauses end with the letters 'n' and 'm,' which are the natural letters in music itself, or with elongation, which is also natural in the Qur'an. If the verse does not end with one of these, such as when it ends with a consonantal stop, it serves to continue the sound of the sentence and segment its words, fitting the tone of the speech in a way that is most appropriate and suitable for its place. This is usually found in shorter phrases and only with a strong letter that leads to a quivering or hissing sound or similar, which are other forms of musical structure.⁵

¹ The same source, 145.

² Al-Rafii, *The Miracle of Prophetic Eloquence*, 148.

Salah al-Din Abdel Tawab, *Al-Rafii and the Issue of the Miracle in the Qur'an*.

<https://www.aljamaa.net/ar/2007/01/18>

³ Al-Rafii, *The Miracle in Prophetic Eloquence*, 148.

⁴ Al-Rafii, *The Same Source*, 150.

⁵ Al-Rafii, *The Miracle of the Qur'an and Prophetic Eloquence*, 150.

This way of attraction in language, and its natural effect on every soul, is seen by al-Rafii as resembling the voice of the Qur'an's miracle, which speaks to all souls—those who understand it and those who do not. The Qur'an is unique among all speech in that it does not grow stale with frequent repetition and prolonged recitation; it never becomes tiresome. Every time you engage with it correctly, without disrupting its delivery, you find it fresh, vivid, new, and beautiful, and your soul experiences renewed energy and heightened sensitivity. This is a quality that exists equally for both the highly sensitive soul that appreciates the letters and the way they are arranged and for the ignorant reader who only hears the letters and distinguishes them by the clarity of their tones, to the extent that the purity of their sensitivity allows. Had the Qur'an descended in any other form, it would have been just a kind of eloquent speech, something one might strive to imitate or replicate. However, it is unique in this miraculous way, with its words consisting of letters that, if one were omitted, replaced, or if an additional letter were inserted, would result in an evident flaw or weakness in the balance of the rhythm, the harmony of the tone, and in the auditory perception and taste of the language.¹

Perhaps al-Rafii, with this statement, is the first to raise the idea of the miracle of the Qur'an through the rhythmic sound of the precise and harmonious arrangement of the verses, which is a miracle stemming from the exact cohesion and consistency between the letters in their words, the words in their sentences, and the sentences in their structures in a way that has no parallel or equal.²

Al-Rafii concludes his statement by saying that the letters and their sounds are one of the secrets of the Qur'anic miracle, a secret that no one denies.

The words of the Qur'an are beautiful and light on the soul, smooth, and the reader does not tire of reciting them, nor do they become monotonous with repetition. The listener finds comfort in them, and their soul is at ease by listening to the recitation after recitation. "The most amazing thing about this sensation, which is embodied in the words of the Qur'an, is that it does not overwhelm the soul or drain its energy. Instead, it is economical in every type of influence on it; it does not cause distress or discomfort, nor does it make the soul weary. It always seeks more than it needs in relaxation, listening to it, interacting with it, and being led by it. It enhances it with its pleasure and gently nurtures it through its styles and methods of organization and expression. Even the most eloquent words ever spoken by eloquent people cannot gather the soul's energy in the same way; it would exhaust her and burden her, and she would be afflicted with satiety and poor endurance³. The enjoyment and impact are only realized when the words are employed within their context.⁴

Section five: Harmony of Words and Letters

Al-Rafii begins by defining the word, saying: "A word, in its true sense, is a sound of the soul; because it carries a piece of meaning and is specifically related to it in a way that is appropriate, as the soul has observed it from the original placement when the word was separated in this structure⁵. He then refers to the idea of the phonetic rhythm of the letters and the meanings and connotations they convey, which have a powerful effect on the human soul. He says: "Since the foundation of the Quran's structure is to consider the letters with their sounds, movements, and their positions in terms of meaning, it is impossible for any construction to include what would justify the judgment of an extra word, a disturbed letter, or something akin to redundancy or objection, or what might be called a pause or rest, as one might find in the styles of eloquent speakers.⁶" Thus, al-Rafii elevates and sanctifies the Quran from the styles of eloquent speakers, in addition to its miraculous secret through the phonetic structures of the letters.

Then he discusses the relationship between the word and its meaning through sound harmony, saying: **"Indeed, the same meaning can be expressed by different words, but none of them can substitute for the other in its place if eloquence is required. This is because each word has a sound that may suit its position in the speech, the nature of the meaning it conveys, and the purpose of the sentence. Alternatively, it may differ and be more appropriate in another form."**⁷ We notice that Al-Rafi'i emphasizes the

¹ Same source, 150

² Al-Rafii and the Issue of Quranic Miracles, online research.

³ Al-Rafii, The Miraculous Nature of Prophetic Eloquence, 154.

⁴ Ahmad Yasouf, The Aesthetics of the Quranic Word, 26.

⁵ Al-Rafii, Same source, 153.

⁶ Al-Rafi'i, *The Same Source*, p. 155.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

importance of the position of each word used in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an places the appropriate word in its suitable context, in addition to the sound harmony between the letters of each word and its position.

Every word in the Holy Qur'an is specific to its place and inseparable from it, and it cannot be changed or replaced under any circumstances, even with the closest words in meaning and form. Each Qur'anic word possesses a beauty that invites us to reflect on and appreciate it from various angles—sounds and rhythms, meanings and radiations. Every meaning carries its own shades and connotations. "We cannot fully enumerate the aspects of the beauty of Qur'anic words, but we present examples to the best of our ability, without reaching the ultimate limit. We merely aim and approximate, though making a true comparison is beyond our capacity, as the masters of eloquence have preceded us in attempting it.¹

Then Al-Rafi'i moves on to the practical application, saying: If you carefully examine the words of the Qur'an in their composition, you will observe that their morphological and linguistic movements function within the structure and arrangement just like the letters themselves in their role of eloquence—each movement preparing and supporting the other. You will find them consistently harmonized with the sounds of the letters, aligned with them in a musical arrangement. Even when a movement may inherently feel heavy or cumbersome for any reason, making it neither pleasant nor easy to articulate—and although it might seem to be the weakest link between the letter and its movement—when it is used in the Qur'an, you will discover a remarkable transformation. The sounds of the preceding letters and movements pave a smooth path on the tongue and surround it with layers of musical resonance. As a result, when it is pronounced, it becomes the sweetest and most delicate sound, perfectly suited to its position, and is the most fitting and captivating movement for that place². An example of this is the word "al-nuzur," the plural of "nazir" (meaning "warner"). In this word, the "damma" is heavy due to its occurrence on both the "nun" and the "dhal" together, in addition to the harshness of these letters and their prominence in speech, especially when it appears at the end of a sentence. All of this reveals and clarifies the source of the heaviness in the word. However, in the Qur'an, it appears differently, and its natural heaviness is removed in the verse: "And indeed, We warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warnings."³Rafa'i says: "Consider this structure and taste the placement of the letters, and let the movements of the sounds flow through your ear with pleasure. Observe the positions of the slight hesitation in the 'd' of 'laqad' and the 't' of 'batshatna,' and the consecutive open vowels from the 't' to the 'w' in 'tamarrawo,' with the separation by the elongation, as if it is a weighting to counterbalance the lightness of the consecutive open vowels when they are tested on the tongue. This is done to make the heavy 'damma' lighter afterward, ensuring that this 'damma' finds its proper place. Then, turn your attention to the 'r' in 'tamarrawo,' as it comes to reinforce the 'r' in 'nuzur,' so when the tongue reaches this letter, it is just as if it is returning to a similar sound, neither stiff nor harsh nor distant. Then, marvel at the nasal sound that precedes the 't' in 'anzarhum' and in the 'm,' and the other nasal sound that precedes the 'dhal' in 'nuzur'⁴. Despite the commonly heavy structure associated with this word, it is used in the Qur'an in a beautiful and precise manner, pleasing to the ears with its delightful composition and melodious tone. This is a unique method of structuring that the Qur'an exclusively possesses. He believes that although such constructions can appear in the works of eloquent speakers, they cannot compose them in the same way as the Qur'an does, nor can such words appear in their speech, even if the same words with their letters and meanings are present. "For in the Qur'an, these words appear in an impossible construction, making them recognizable. Thus, they rise to a higher level of linguistic or rhetorical significance, moving from ordinary usage to the realm of understanding, and by their miraculous structure, they become a higher intellectual level in the language⁵. The meaning is that the Quran is miraculous in the way it arranges the letters within words. No one can bring words like their words because the phonetic harmony between the letters is miraculous.

Then, he gives another example to illustrate the way phonetic harmony of the letters within words works. This phonetic harmony is organized and precise, making the Quran unique in its composition. In the Quran, there are words that are longer in terms of the number of letters and syllables, which would normally be burdensome due to their structure. However, in the Quran, these words, with their organized arrangement, emerge in a hidden manner. They become some of the sweetest, most eloquent, and lightest words in terms of structure. He shows how the

¹ Muhammad Abu Zahra, *The Greatest Miracle: The Qur'an*, p. 79.

² The same source, 156.

³ Surah Al-Qamar, 36.

⁴ Al-Rafii, "The Miracle in Prophetic Eloquence," 157.

⁵ The same source, 156.

repetition of letters and the variety of vowel sounds create a remarkable arrangement. One example is the verse: "And He will make you successors upon the earth."¹

It is a single word consisting of ten letters, and its sweetness comes from the variety of letter articulations and the arrangement of its vowel sounds. In pronunciation, it becomes as if it were four words, as it is uttered in four syllables². This harmony between the letters makes the structure of the Quran miraculous, creating a sweetness in the sound that captivates the listener's mind. Similarly, in the verse: "And Allah will suffice you against them."³ It is a word of nine letters, consisting of three syllables. The letters "yaa" and "kaaf" are repeated, with the elongation (mad) placed between the two "kaafs," which is the secret of eloquence in the entire word⁴. The phonetic harmony between the elongation (mad) and the letters enhances the sweetness and beauty of the word. This happens in compound words that, when stripped of additional elements, return to their basic three-letter or four-letter roots. As for words with five-letter roots, there is nothing like this in the Quran because such words do not lend themselves to the same kind of sweetness, except for names of non-Arab origin, such as Ibrahim, Ismail, Talut, Jalut, and similar ones. Even in these cases, the elongation (mad) is used, making the word sound as though it were two words.⁵

In the Quran, there is a strange word that has never been used in any speech except in its specific position here. It is the word "ḍīzā" (meaning unjust or biased) in the verse: {That is an unjust division.}⁶. Despite this, its beauty in the arrangement of the speech is one of the strangest and most remarkable forms of beauty. If you turn the language around, nothing other than this word would have suited this topic. The surah from which it comes, Surah An-Najm, is entirely articulated with the letter "ya" (which sounds like a short "a"), and the word came as a conclusion to one of the sections. Moreover, it appears in the context of criticizing the Arabs, as it refers to the idols and their claim regarding the division of children, where they made angels and idols the daughters of God while burying their own daughters alive. Allah said: {Do you prefer the male over the female? That is indeed an unfair division⁷} The strangeness of the word was the most fitting for the oddity of this unjust division, which the Quran rejected from them. The entire sentence seemed to depict, through its pronunciation, denial in the first part and mockery in the second. This representation was the most eloquent form of rhetoric, especially in the strange word that perfectly fits its place as a separator and describes the mocker's situation in denial. It combined the strangeness of the denial with its verbal oddity. If one were to marvel at anything, it would be the arrangement of this strange word and its harmony with what preceded it, as it consists of two contrasting sounds—one very heavy and the other light. It followed two sounds in "then" and "division," one being light and sharp, and the other heavy and expansive, creating what seemed to be a sonic response, akin to musical punctuation⁸.

Despite the presence of these strange words in the Quran, all its words are on an equal level of miraculousness, grandeur, and majesty, alongside smoothness, sweetness, lightness, and beauty. This is because "the Quran is meticulous in its choice of words, using each one where it perfectly conveys its meaning with exceptional precision, to the point where one could almost believe that this particular word was created for this specific place and no other. Therefore, we do not find redundancy in the Quran; instead, every word brings forth a new meaning. The words in it are forceful in the context of threat and warning, gentle and sweet in the context of encouragement and moral guidance, and calm and graceful in the context of legislation and elaboration."⁹

Then he moves on to discuss the words that are thought to be superfluous in the Qur'an, as grammarians might say, mentioning that there are such letters. For example, in the verse: *"So by the mercy of Allah, you [O Muhammad] were lenient with them"*¹⁰ And His saying: *"But when the bearer of good news came, he cast it over his face, and he returned seeing"*¹¹ Grammmarians say that the words "Maa" in the first verse and "En" in the second are extra, meaning

¹ Surah Al-A'raf, 129.

² Al-Rafi'i, The Previous Source, 158.

³ Surah Al-Baqarah, 137.

⁴ Al-Rafi'i, The Miraculous Nature in Prophetic Eloquence, 158.

⁵ The Same Source, 158.

⁶ Surah An-Najm, 22.

⁷ Surah An-Najm, 21-22.

⁸ Al-Rafai, *The Miracle in Prophetic Eloquence*, 158.

⁹ Abdul Azim Al-Mut'ani, *The Characteristics of Qur'anic Expression and Its Rhetorical Features*, 1/245.

¹⁰ Surah Al-Imran, 159.

¹¹ Surah Yusuf, 96.

they do not affect the grammatical structure. However, al-Rafa'i believes that this addition contributes an element of imagery, and if it were removed, much of its beauty and impact would be lost. The purpose of the first verse is to depict the gentleness of the Prophet (PBUH) towards his people, which is mercy from Allah. The addition of "*Maa*" serves as a verbal description that reinforces and magnifies the meaning of gentleness. Moreover, the tone of its pronunciation conveys a sense of empathy and care, which is expressed more effectively in the eloquence of the context¹. We notice his attention to the phonetic harmony and its significant role in showcasing the resonance that generates empathy and care, revealing the meaning in the best possible way.

The second one refers to "depicting the separation between the coming of the messenger with Joseph's shirt and his arrival, symbolizing the long-awaited reunion between Joseph and his father, peace be upon them. This separation is portrayed with anxiety and restlessness, emphasized by the pleasure of his arrival and stability, captured by the nasal sound (ghunnah) of the final consonant in the word."² The phonetic harmony that results from the nasal sound and the pause enhances the blessed verse, making it more beautiful and impactful on the soul.

We conclude from all of this that Al-Rafii highlighted the importance of the Quranic word itself due to its precise letter structure on one hand, and its role in conveying the overall meaning on the other hand through the phonetic harmony between the letters that creates cohesion and rhythm. One of the most important aspects he addressed in this analysis is the emotional impact of Quranic words. Even those that may seem strange, their beauty is only enhanced by their placement, and their strangeness becomes beautiful because it reinforces the meaning they are meant to convey. It is as if the arrangement of its letters carries a sensory meaning, and similarly, the arrangement of its sounds carries an emotional meaning in the soul.³

Section sex: Acoustic harmony between sentences and their words

Al-Rafii begins his discussion by defining the sentence. According to him, the sentence "is the outward form of speech, and it is the psychological image of natural composition. Through it, the human translates this created material in nature into meanings that are visualized or described within the self. The soul sees and feels this visualized material, while the speaker, who aims it for his speech purpose, may not actually see it, but through the words, it is as if he is seeing it."⁴

Al-Rafii then discusses the levels of composition and reaches the level of composition in the Qur'an. He speaks about it in terms of the effect it has on the soul, which is caused by its miraculous method. He explains that its miraculous nature arises from "the way its composition organizes the causes of its miracle, from the sound in the letter to the letter in the word, to the word in the sentence"⁵. The way the words are arranged in the Qur'an is miraculous because of the hidden harmony between them. "The words of this holy book, however, you turn them, however, you contemplate them, and wherever you encounter them from their sources or origins, and from whichever direction they match, you will not find anything other than the present delight, the evident sweetness, and the harmonious charm. You will see them moving towards one ultimate goal, in one exhibition, and no matter the difference in their letters, the contrast in their meanings, or the variety of their locations, they remain as one essence in nature and polish, in water and radiance. It is as if they lightly glow with a living spirit, and when you connect with them, they blend with your soul and mingle with your feelings, and you will not be anything but in one state with them. The words differ, but you see them only in agreement; they part, yet you only see them united. They move through the layers of expression, transition through the levels of eloquence, and all you feel is a spirit that carries you with joy, fills your heart with awe, and takes away from you the sense of difference you have when reflecting on all other speech... As long as you are immersed in the Qur'an until you finish with it, you will not see anything but a single image of perfection, even though its parts differ in structure, position, composition, the colors of imagery, and the purposes of the speech, as though they lead you to one unified message"⁶.

In this statement, Al-Rafi'i speaks about the instances in which words are perfectly aligned and the extraordinary uses of language in the Qur'an. This alignment appears miraculously, and the miracle lies in the phonetic harmony

¹ Al-Rafii, "The Miracle in Prophetic Eloquence," 159.

² Al-Rafii, "The Miracle in Prophetic Eloquence," 159.

³ Al-Rafii and the Issue of Quranic Miraculousness, research published online.

⁴ Al-Rafi'i, The Miracle of Prophetic Eloquence, 163.

⁵ Al-Rafi'i, The Same Source, 164.

⁶ Al-Rafi'i, The Miracle of Prophetic Eloquence, 166.

of each individual letter within a word, the phonetic harmony of words within a sentence, as well as the harmony of words within structures.

The words of the Qur'an, although they may contain what is considered strange by the Arabs, yet "with that strangeness in the arrangements of the Qur'an, one finds nothing but words that are cohesive and firmly established. The way they are woven together and their interconnection; not a single word is out of place, nor does it seek a direction other than its intended place in the discourse."¹

We conclude from all of this that Al-Rafi believes that the Qur'anic structure, which maintains a uniformity in the arrangement of letters according to their sounds and articulations, and which also manifests in its ability to empower meaning through the sense and qualities of the words, as well as its captivating placement in the discourse... After all of this, he affirms that the Qur'anic structure has a unique spirit that distinguishes it, giving it that particular character that cannot be found in any other speech, even if sought outside the Qur'an. It is the spirit of composition that has never been known in any Arabic speech other than the Qur'an. This spirit is what makes its structure distinct and beyond what humans can achieve. Without this spirit, the parts would have been inconsistent in terms of the meaning they carry and their placement.²

CONCLUSION

After this enjoyable journey through the book "*The Miracle in the Prophet's Eloquence*", we summarize the findings of the research as follows:

1. Al-Rafi believes that the miracle in the Qur'an lies in the way its structure is arranged.
2. The miracle in the structure comes through the phonetic harmony between the single letter within a word, the word within a sentence, and the sentence within the overall structure.
3. The Qur'an contains a miraculous phonetic harmony even in its strange words, as it astonishes the mind and delights the intellect.
4. The Qur'an carefully considers phonetic harmony between each word, sentence, and structure when using words, phrases, and compositions.
5. Phonetic harmony in the concept of miraculousness, according to Al-Rafi, is one aspect of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an.

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