# 209022 - The variation of pronouns in the Qur'an is a sign of its eloquence and miraculous nature

## the question

A non muslim wants to know the reason why the quran was also revealed in reported speeches. An example is where Allah says in Al Inshiqaq vs 24.And Allah knows best what they gather( of good and bad deeds). That is Allah mentioning his name in terms of 2nd person.

## Detailed answer

The Qur'an was revealed in a plain Arabic tongue; one aspect of the literary style of the Arabs is that the speaker may refer to himself sometimes in the first person, sometimes in the third person, sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural. This variation is part of eloquence and good style. No one can understand this except those who know Arabic and have a sufficient grasp of its different ways of expression.

The Qur'an was not revealed in only one style, as the questioner thinks; rather it uses a variety of different styles; this is part of its miraculous nature and eloquence.

Dr 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Mutayri says in his book Da'aawa al-Taa'ineena fi'l-Qur'an al-Kareem (p. 304): One of the literary styles of the Arabs is for the speaker to refer to himself in the first person and in the third person. For example, a speaker may say, "I did such and such; I went; I instruct you, O So and so, to do such and such." And sometimes he may also say of himself that "So and so – meaning himself – instructs you to do such and such, and forbids you to do such and such; or he likes you to do such and such." This is like when an ameer (ruler) or king says to his people: "The Ameer asks you to do such and such." What he is trying to emphasise is that his instructions are based on the fact that he is a ruler or king; this is more eloquent than saying to them, "I am the king and I am telling you to do such and such." Saying "The king instructs you…" is more eloquent than saying "I am the king and I am instructing you…"

This kind of style also appears in the Qur'an. The one who does not know Arabic may think that Allah cannot speak of Himself in the third person, and that He must say "I have sent down to you, O Muhammad, the Book with truth, confirming what came before it" and the like. But this reflects ignorance of the literary style in Arabic and how it is part of Arabic eloquence. Undoubtedly for Allah to speak of Himself in the third person is more eloquent than saying "Alif-Laam-Meem, I am Allah, there is no god but I, the the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. I sent down to you the Book with truth, confirming what came before it…" (cf. Aal 'Imraan 3:1-3).

End quote.

It is known from Arab literary custom that they do not persist in one style in their speech; rather they move from one style to another, even in a single passage, let alone when there are two different passages (on two different occasions). This is part of Arabic literary style that serves to keep the listener's or reader's attention.

Az-Zarkashi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Moving from one style to another serves to make speech flow more smoothly, helps the listener to focus, renews his interest and avoids the boredom that may result from always adhering to one style.

Haazim said in Minhaaj al-Bulagha': They become bored when the style persists in using the first person or the second person, so they move from second person to third person. By the same token, a speaker may change the pronoun and play with the words, sometimes using the first person to speak of himself, and sometimes using the second person or third person. Hence speech that persists in using a particular pronoun, whether it is the first or second person, is not regarded as good; rather it is more appropriate to move from one to the other.

Then az-Zarkashi (may Allah have mercy on him) gives different examples of such usage and their effectiveness in conveying the message.

See: al-Burhaan fi 'Uloom al-Qur'an by Badr ad-Deen az-Zarkashi, 3/314-330

For more information, please see the answer to question no. 606

And Allah knows best.