

1.5 Some Major Themes of The Qur'an

Main Topics Covered

- Introduction (0:00 to 1:00)
- Stories in the Quran Are Real (1:00 to 3:10)
- God's Prophets Are Role Models (3:10 to 4:45)
- Similes in the Quran (4:45 to 7:15)
- Similes and Dreams (7:15 to 9:00)
- The Hereafter (9:00 to 10:00)

Themes in Quran

This module is a continuation of what we've been discussing about the themes of the Quran. We discussed the theme of [stories](#), but stories are not the only theme in the Quran. There are a number of other themes that the Quran is mentioning. And there a number of other themes that we could think about in terms of our topics and our divisions of knowledge and so on.

In terms of the stories, we should also know that the stories as a theme is an account of history that they really happened. Some scholars made a mistake of considering these stories to be symbols and not really real events, because they could not comprehend some of the events that happened in the stories and that is methodologically wrong.

Are the Stories in Quran Real?

So, when Allah tells us about the theme of stories and within that theme gives us things that we don't understand, the story of Prophet Solomon, for example. How he dealt with Jinn (the hidden beings), how they built palaces for him, how they wanted to move the palace of the queen of Sheba from Yemen to where he was in greater Syria. Or how he understood the language of the birds and ants and how he communicated with them...

Some scholars' view of science is experimental material science, that is a very narrow view, by the way; they thought that ants and birds don't have languages. This is just a metaphor of Prophet Solomon. Or Adam didn't transcend from Heavens, this is just a metaphor of evolution, even though the evolution could be true in other ways, it's a different story.

But then they reject the story when Allah said that Adam went down to the earth, or Solomon talked to the ants and the birds and they moved palaces by some sort of levitation. Or that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was fighting in battles with angels with him...

The miracles of the Prophets or the things that we don't comprehend from the other stories, not even of miracles of the Prophets, but gifts that Allah gives certain people. We shouldn't think that they are metaphorical and we should take them in a literal sense and we should tell ourselves that we really don't know how this could happen. Perhaps, science will develop one day and start to understand how the Prophets did these things and how Allah has given the power of certain things to certain people.

Were the Prophets Sinful?

Also, in the Prophets' stories, we should know that the Prophets are examples. They are free from sin, especially major sins. In some biblical stories, you read about the Prophets' sins and how some of them, God forbid, committed adultery even with their own daughters. And how some of them killed other innocent people, or how some of them disbelieved in God... That's why Allah corrects that in the stories:

It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved. (Quran [2:102](#))

Prophet David didn't commit any sin; it was actually a misjudgment in a court case, not a moral misjudgment and adultery, Allah forbid...

The Quran is correcting these "Prophetic sins" and saying that the Prophets are at the highest examples of human beings. Their "sins" are misjudgments in a war, or something of the worldly decisions.

Allah corrected, even Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on a couple of occasions, when he turned his face away from the blind man, when he misjudged the captives of one of the wars... But these are not sins, they're just misjudgments that Allah corrects about the Prophets (peace be upon them). But the Prophets are free from these sins.

Similes in Quran

Another very important theme that the Quran is talking about is similes (*amthal*). Allah is giving a simile of something that we can't see and we don't comprehend, something that is from the world of meanings giving a simile between it and something from the world of objects:

Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? (Quran [14:24](#))

Those who are lost in the nominal sense, those who lost their ways of belief are like people who had a fire, and then the fire went away so they were lost in the dark of the desert.

The other example of people who believe that there is more than one God are people who do not understand how partners differ and quarrel over things. And if Allah had a partner, then they would quarrel over the management of the universe. This would never happen.

So Allah is giving us dozens of these similes in the Quran that are very important because they teach us the connection between the world of meanings and the world of objects, which are closer to us as we understand the objects.

So, when we look at a tree, and I know that a word is like that tree. When I look at a piece of gold, I know that what benefits people, what I say, or spend in the way of Allah is like gold that will continue. And when I look at some dirt that is left on the surface of water, then I know that kind of dirt (what does not benefit people) is like the nonsense that people speak sometimes, it's like hey that is floating over the water.

When I look at a plant and Allah says that life is like that plant in its cycle. It starts green and fruitful and then it dies and fades away. Then I take a lesson from life because I can't see life by my own eyes but I can see a plant and I can take a lesson from the plant that Allah is giving me the simile.

Similes and Dreams

Actually the similes were the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) interpreted dreams.

When Abu Bakr interpreted a dream of honey falling from the sky as the Quran, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is actually referring to the Quran when it says that honey is a cure and the Quran is the cure. So if you see honey in the sky coming down, that is the Quran. Or if you see yourself eating honey, then you know that you're dealing with the Quran in a particular way.

When Allah says that *taqwa*, or heedfulness or piety, is like a dress and you see in a dream that you are wearing a certain dress, depending on that dress and how nice, long or short, then you question your faith because faith is like a dress. That is from the verse:

But the clothing of righteousness – that is best. (Quran [7:26](#))

When Prophet Muhammad saw his companions wearing different dresses with different features, he interpreted that as the fear of Allah, *taqwa*, or the heedfulness.

When Prophet Muhammad saw somebody with a chain around their necks, this is the simile of the Quran of those who are blind followers of others. In the Hereafter, they will have chains around their necks because they follow these people and they were slaves to those idols, yet they should be slaves of Allah.

The Hereafter

One significant theme in the Quran is the Hereafter. The Quran is telling us a lot about the hereafter and shifting our attention to the after life in many of its paragraphs. So we know that this life is not the whole thing. In fact, this is a small part of the journey. The rest of the journey, the hereafter, is the real life.

People actually are dreaming in this life, and when they die they wake up because this is the real life when they wake up. This theme is very important, because it teaches us a lot about the nature of life and about the real value of things because they will benefit you in the Hereafter and the insignificance of other things that will not benefit you in the Hereafter.

We ask Allah to guide us and forgive us.